

Conflict



*I*t had started to rain – a typical hard evening rain in Florida, just a little later in the day than normal. So, my drive down Highway 29 to Immokalee was slower than I would have liked. I was also mulling over my statement to Lydia – ‘I can handle Joe’s problem’. Actually, I was wondering if I really could handle Joe’s problem! Maybe we’d all bitten off a little more than we could chew this time.

I suppose being away from Memphis and working in an unknown element and environment made those thoughts worse. But yes, I was concerned. It was obvious that whatever these people were doing exceeded just being immoral and illegal – it was dangerous and deadly. And the fate of those missing migrant workers would prove it.

~

*P*arked on the highway, and next to the Immokalee packing operation was a non-descript beige 61 Buick convertible. The motor was running, the headlights were off and there were two men inside. I hope they were the two cheerleaders Jimmy Ray Barnes had sent to help.



The rain had stopped when I parked the Oldsmobile behind their vehicle and walked up to the driver’s side. The person behind the wheel rolled down his window and looked up at me. “You Reno?” He growled in a deep voice.

The night Jimmy Ray Barnes came to my motel room I’d not gotten a good look at the two men with him – they’d remained in the shadows. I did, however, know that both of them were large men – very large men. Sizing up the two fellows sitting in the Buick, I figured they must be who I thought they were.

“Yes, I’m Carson Reno,” I spoke to them both through the open window. “And I assume Jimmy Ray Barnes sent you.”

Neither of them acknowledged or responded. Guess it was my turn...again.

“A man that works for me is being held somewhere on this property – held against his will. I’m not sure where he’s being held, but I was told in a small warehouse behind the packing sheds.”

“I know the place,” the passenger spoke.

“Good,” I nodded. “He’s supposedly being held by the Ramos brothers. And I suspect that...”

“We don’t care about any of that,” the driver interrupted. “We know the Ramos brothers. Jimmy said come help you out...we’re here to help you out.”

The passenger side door opened and the passenger spoke. “Get in – leave your car here.”

I obliged, walked around the vehicle, got in the back seat, then leaned forward. “I’m sorry, you know my name but I don’t know your names. What should I call you?”

They glanced at each other and grinned. The driver spoke without looking at me. “You can call me ‘A’. My partner here,” he nodded toward the passenger, “you can call him ‘B’.”

I leaned back in my seat and mumbled to myself. “‘A’ and ‘B’...that’s good enough for me.”

~

*I*t was already dark, but there were still several workers milling about the property – including a few still unloading trucks using flashlights. Pole lights were primarily located along the highway and near the office – so the Immokalee packing operation area was really quite spooky.

‘A’ drove around all the confusion, and then came to a stop about 50 yards from a wooden building, which was located only a few yards behind the packing sheds. There was a dim light on in the building, and visible through a small pane of glass in the single entrance door. I saw no other windows or doors.

‘B’ turned around to me, pointed toward the building and spoke. “If they’re holding your man on this property, I suspect that is where we’ll find him.”

“A’ turned off the engine, and we all exited the vehicle without conversation.

It was dark, but there was enough light from the trucks being unloaded for us to see each other as we stood next to the Buick. I looked at them both. They were staring at me and seemed to be waiting on some instructions. So...I did instructions. “Let me go and peek through that window before we barge in. I want to make certain we’re at the right place and that my friend is inside.”

‘A’ and ‘B’ looked at each other, grinned and shook their heads.

I must admit, that grin from my new friends did NOT help my confidence level. But, I sucked it up and slowly walked toward the building with the dim light shining through the glass window.

It was filthy, but I quietly removed dirt from the glass with spit and my hand so I could get a look inside. What I saw through that small window made my blood boil.

Joe was tied to a chair in the middle of the room, with some portable lights shining in his face. From what I could see, he had been beaten and blood was dripping from his nose and mouth.

Standing on both sides, and glaring down at him with fists clinched were Lou and Pedro Ramos – Lou on Joe's left and Pedro on his right. I couldn't hear the conversation, but they appeared to be asking questions and frustrated with the answers they were getting.

Just as I started to turn away, someone else walked into view. It was Lucas Lowery in his deputy sheriff's uniform! Apparently Lucas was there to hear what Joe had to say. Damn him.

~

I walked back to where 'A' and 'B' were standing. Both were grinning, and I expect they could see the anger on my face.

"He's in there, along with the Ramos brothers and a deputy sheriff." I paused a moment and looked at them. " 'A', I want you to go left," I pointed with my hand. " 'B' I want you to go right – and I need you both to find a way into that building - somehow. I didn't see any other doors or windows, but y'all know the place – I don't."

They glanced at each other but didn't speak – they just continued grinning.

"When you're out of sight, I'll count to 30 and then I'm going through that front door with gun in hand. I don't plan on shooting anybody unless necessary, but I will have no problems doing so."

They glanced at each other again, then 'B' spoke. "And you are sure that both Ramos bothers are in that building?"

"Yes...yes I am sure."

They nodded and gave me that silly grin again, then they walked toward the building. I counted to 30.

~

I hit the door with enough force to open one twice as big. It swung against the inside wall with a loud 'bang', and everyone immediately turned toward the noise and my intrusion.

Waiving my .38, I shouted instructions. "I need to see everyone's weapon on the floor – NOW! Don't make any other moves and don't make me ask twice, because this gun will be talking next."

I moved my .38 back and forth between them, and saw Lou and Pedro momentarily glance at each other. They thought about it, then reluctantly removed .45 automatic revolvers from their waistbands and dropped them to the floor. While they were doing that, Lucas moved from the center of the room and to my right, but didn't drop his weapon.



I pointed the .38 at Lucas. “Do what I said or I’ll shoot you where you stand - along with the rest of these sorry bastards. Lucas...don’t tempt me – I’m angry enough already.”

Still moving away from the center of the room, and without speaking - he pulled his service revolver from its holster and dropped it on the floor.

“Now,” I said pointing my gun and attention at Lou Ramos. “I want you to untie Joe – remove those ropes and no tricks. I don’t want to shoot you, but I will if necessary.”

Lou looked at me, weighed his limited options, then - as instructed removed the ropes from Joe and let them drop to the floor. Joe rubbed his face, wiped blood from his nose with his shirt sleeve and slowly stood up.

“Joe, are you hurt?” I asked.

He didn’t answer. Instead he took a full swing at Lou Ramos, connecting with his jaw and sending Lou sprawling onto the concrete floor. Then he did the same to Pedro Ramos, sending him back over the chair he had just been tied to.

Joe stood quietly for a moment – admiring his work and glaring down at his accomplishment. “I’m just a little hurt Boss, but it all feels much better now.” I think I saw a little grin through his grimace.

My attention had moved from the Ramos brothers and to Joe. Lou Ramos took full advantage. From the concrete floor where Joe had put him, he picked up his .45 automatic and pointed it at me. Expecting the worst, I ducked to my right and started to shoot.

But, before pulling the trigger, I heard a shot. Then I heard another shot...then another.

Lou Ramos was doubled up on the floor in pain – but that pain wouldn’t last long. ‘A’s first bullet had caught him in the spine. ‘A’s second bullet hit him in the neck. Lou Ramos was staring at me when he took his last breath – never knowing where those death bullets had come from.

Pedro Ramos had tried to use the confusion to run – he didn’t get far. ‘B’s bullet hit Pedro just below his left eye, and he was probably dead before hitting the concrete.

It was a bloody mess.

But, my friend Lucas Lowery was not in the room. Somehow he had slipped by me and out the door I had entered. Somehow he had missed all the excitement. I really hoped Lucas had taken my advice, I hope he had his running shoes on. Lucas would need to run but I wasn’t going to chase him – others might. He needed to run far and run fast.

~

*J*oe grabbed me and held on until I saw ‘A’ and ‘B’ appear from the shadows.

“Can you fellows clean up this mess?” I asked them both.

“Yes,” ‘A’ answered. “Get your friend out of here and to a hospital. Tomorrow, nobody will ever know anything happened here.”

Then ‘B’ added, “And the Ramos brothers will be having breakfast with the alligators in the Glades – their treat.”

“Thank you,” I said, before helping Joe out of the warehouse and to the Oldsmobile I’d left parked on the highway.

“Get in the back seat and lie down,” I said while opening the passenger door. “I’m taking you to a hospital.”

“No hospital,” he said hurriedly. “And I’ll ride in the front seat like a normal person. I’m not hurt, except for my feelings, a bloody nose and busted lip. Just get me to your motel room and find me a strong drink of whiskey – I’ll be okay.”

I didn’t want to argue, so I slid behind the wheel and pointed the Oldsmobile toward La Belle.

After a few minutes, Joe looked at me and spoke. “Who were those two characters you brought to the gunfight? I didn’t recognize them, but they sure came in handy.”

“They’re friends of the union boss Jimmy Ray Barnes. Guess I’ll owe him a big favor, but figured I might need a little help – not knowing exactly how much trouble you had gotten yourself into.”

“I assume David Morales is the one who sounded the alarm.”

“Yes he did. And from the way things looked your troubles were only going to get worse. Tell me what happened.”

“Somebody blew my cover, and I suspect it was that cop who was standing there and watching them beat on me. Do you know who he was?”

“Yes, it was my friend Lucas Lowery. But I certainly didn’t mention anything to him about you. I can only assume that after learning I had Lydia here, he put two and two together and figured I would have someone working inside. You were a new worker and non-immigrant, so he probably had no trouble fingering you as an associate of mine.”

“I thought he was your friend. What’s up with that guy?”

“A good cop gone bad – the smell of money can do that to some people.”

“Those two Ramos brothers came to the grove and dragged me away at gunpoint. That cop was waiting at the warehouse when we got there.”

“What kind of questions were they asking?”

“All kinds of things, and things I knew nothing about. Payroll records, personnel records, documents of immigration – I had no idea what they were talking about.”

“Did they think you had those documents?”

“Well...I don’t think so. But, they seemed to think you had them or knew where they were. And since you knew, then I must know. The more I denied it, the harder they punched.”

“I’ll bring you up to speed when we get back to the motel. Were they asking anything else? Did they mention the murder of Rachel Worsham?”

“No, it never came up – and I thought that strange. But they did talk about Billy Worsham. I got the impression that they thought he had given you some documents when he was in Memphis.”

“Interesting,” I muttered.

“And that cop never uttered a word during the whole affair! I couldn’t believe he was just standing there watching them beat on me.”

“Knowing Lucas, he was probably just as scared as you were. But, now his world has folded up under his feet. He’ll run, but I suspect he won’t run far.”

“Carson, what happens now?”

“When we get to the motel I’ll call Charlie Weaver and give him the details. He’s got people to deal with these things, so I’ll let his people handle it. Garrett Waste doesn’t have the Ramos brothers to do his dirty work, so I suspect his ass is headed for high ground. He’s responsible for Billy Worsham’s murder, and I’ll let my friend Sergeant Lewis Romeo handle Mr. Garrett Waste.”

“Hmm,” Joe mumbled. “Did the Ramos brothers kill Rachel Worsham too?”

“Unfortunately...I don’t think so. You’ll understand why when I explain those documents the Ramos brothers were so interested in.”

“So...we really haven’t done what we were hired to do – find out who murdered Rachel Worsham.”

“Nope...not yet,” I nodded.

~

L Lydia was waiting downstairs and helped me get Joe up to my room and onto the couch.

“What happened,” Lydia kept asking over and over.

“Joe can tell you all about it after you get him cleaned up. There’s a first-aid kit in the bathroom, so patch everything that’s leaking and see if anything is broken. He wouldn’t let me take him to the hospital, but I might overrule that after you check him out.”

“No hospital,” Joe said louder than necessary. “I told you I don’t need a hospital. What I really need is a drink.”

Lydia and I looked at each other.

She headed to get the first-aid kit and I headed for the Jack Daniel's.



"Here," I said, handing Joe a glass of whiskey. "Go easy on it – we've got plenty."

He drank it in almost one swallow – then handed me the empty glass. "Another Boss," he smiled. "I'll go slower with the second one."

I poured him another glass of whiskey, and then walked over to the motel phone. "Catch Lydia up on your adventure, and she can share with you what's been happening here. I think maybe then you'll understand why they were asking you about documents - although I'm not sure I really understand myself."

Joe took a sip of whiskey and nodded.

"It's been a busy day here already, and I've got to make some phone calls before it's over."

"Who are you calling?" Lydia had heard my comment and spoke when she returned to the room with the first-aid kit.

"Our client, Charlie Weaver. And while I have him on the phone, do I need to ask about the autopsy and coroner's report? Did he come through as promised?"

"Yes...yes he did. A courier with an envelope from the Coroner's Office delivered them about a half-hour ago. They're over in my room – I'll go get them."

"No, you take care of Joe and bring him up to speed on everything. I'll take a look at them after my phone call."

~

*I*gnoring instructions about not calls from the room, I dialed the number answered almost immediately.

"Howdy son," I heard from his *been expecting your call.*"

"Oh really," I responded with some

"Son," he added a laugh. *"I've got ears everywhere – you outta' know that."*

"And I bet one pair of those ears belongs to David Morales."

"It does...it does," he laughed, then paused a moment. *"Tell me - how are things down at my Immokalee operation?"*



making long-distance phone for Charlie Weaver. He

unmistakable voice. *"I've*

curiosity. *"Why's that?"*

"I can tell you that you're going to need another District Manager. Garrett Waste is in the wind, and probably traveling with a sack of somebody else's money – your employee's money. And if you find him before the Memphis police do, I hope you'll make sure they get their hands on him. They'll be looking for him regarding the murder of Billy Worsham."

"Hmm," he mumbled.

"And I suggest you get 'your people' down here tomorrow before the sun goes down. Things might be a bit unorganized at your Immokalee operation, and I know how you respect organization...in your organization."

"Have my people got any mess to clean up?"

"No, and you can thank Mr. Jimmy Ray Barnes for that. He's been a big help. Please pass along my sincere appreciation for his cooperation."

"Yes, Jimmy Ray can be quite useful at times," once again he paused a moment. *"And what about those Ramos brothers...are they still causing problems?"*

"Not any more. You won't have to deal with those two – ever again. But you do have some serious internal problems at your Immokalee operation to deal with, and I expect Jimmy Ray Barnes can help you with those also."

"I understand," he said slowly. *"Why don't you give me a quick rundown so my people will know what they need to take care of when they get there?"*

I spent the next twenty minutes telling Charlie Weaver everything I'd uncovered. I didn't share details about what happened at the warehouse, but I'm sure he understood. Charlie listened without asking questions until I finished.

"Okay, we'll take everything from here. But what you haven't told me is who murdered that little girl...Rachel. Were any of my people responsible?"

"Charlie," I paused for a moment. "I don't think so. I do think they intended to kill her – or certainly retrieve those documents from her. But I don't believe they ever got the opportunity."

"I see," he paused again. *"And I'm confident you'll get to the bottom of that,"* he spoke slowly and with conviction. *"What should I do about that deputy sheriff...your friend? What was his name?"*

"Lucas Lowery, and if you intend to clean-up all this mess you'll need to get some details from him. I don't plan to chase him, but...well...he needs to answer for his activities."

"Spoiled and soiled by my friend Garrett Waste, I suppose."

"Money has a way of doing that – and I'm sorry it happened to my friend."

Once again he paused for a moment. *"I'm going to need some local law to handle these varmints when I round them up. Can I trust that Hendry County Sheriff...Sheriff Nelson?"*

“Charlie, I’m just not sure – wish I could give you a better answer. And if I get a better answer, I’ll let you know. But I guess for now, he’s all you’ve got.”

“I see,” he said again.

“Now, the important question,” I spoke slowly. “Are we still working for you until we resolve Rachel’s murder?”

“Absolutely. Ain’t that what started all this mess in the first place?”

“Yes it did. But I’m not sure that *Morhart Growers* had anything to do with the murder of Rachel Worsham.”

“Son, you solve that girl’s murder – find out who did it and find her killer. You’re working on my nickel until you do.”

“Talk to you later,” I added before hanging up.

~

Lydia had finished cleaning Joe’s wounds and patching up his injuries. She was sitting next to him and sharing his whiskey when I got off the phone.

“Have we still got a job?” She asked.

“Yep, we do,” I answered before nodding at Joe. “How’s he doing? Does he need a hospital?”

“No hospital!” Joe shouted.

“I think he’ll survive,” Lydia chuckled. “Fortunately they were just beating on his hard head – so no permeant damage was done.”

“Good,” I looked at Joe and smiled before returning my attention to Lydia. “Now, I’d like to take a look at that autopsy and corner’s report.”

She stood up. “I’ll go get them, but before you do that you need to call Marcie.”

I glanced at my watch. “Why? It’s almost eleven PM. Can’t that wait until tomorrow?”

“Apparently not,” she shrugged. “The police are looking for you, and in particular Sergeant Lewis Romeo is looking for you. She’s got his home number with instructions for you to call him tonight regardless of the time.”

“Damn,” I mumbled. “Did she say what he wanted?”

“Nope. She gave me his phone number, but if you don’t talk to Marcie first she won’t quit calling – you know that.”

I picked up the phone and made another long-distance call to the *Peabody Hotel* and Marcie's room. She answered on the first ring.

"Why don't you ever call and check-in?" She spoke hurriedly. *"I thought that was the plan."*

"Why aren't you asleep?" I asked, ignoring her comment. "Isn't this past your bedtime?"

"YES, and you can expect to see overtime on my timesheet! You put me up here at this hotel to work and coordinate things, but if you don't communicate I can't coordinate!"

"Okay...okay, I understand and apologize. But what's up with Sergeant Romeo?"

"I don't know. He called today and was extremely upset to learn that you were out of town. Apparently he needs to speak with you and said it was urgent. He even left his home phone number for you to call. That sounds pretty urgent...don't you think?"

"Alright, I'll call him. What's the phone number?"

"I gave it to Lydia earlier. Are you going to call? I don't want to deal with him again tomorrow!"

"Yes...yes, I will call him now. Go get some sleep and one of us will call you tomorrow. Okay?"

"NO, it is not okay! I was supposed to hear from each of you daily. Joe and Lydia don't seem to have a problem calling...but you...you've not ever called!"

"We're all together now, so you don't need to be so concerned about everyone calling."

"So...does that mean I can go home now and feed my cat?"

"I thought your cat was with you."

"He...he was. But Fred was having trouble sleeping in a strange bed. So...well so I had to take him back home."

"Good night Marcie. We love you and will talk with you tomorrow." I hung up.

I looked at Lydia. She understood and handed me the phone number Marcie had given her earlier.

~

I dialed the number while shaking my head. I could not imagine what Sergeant Lewis Romeo wanted at this hour of the day.

"Hello," he answered on the first ring.

"Sergeant Romeo, this is Carson Reno. I understand you need to speak with me."

"Where are you?" His tone was not pleasant.

"I'm out of town and working on a case for a client. Why is that important?"

"It's important because I've got a dead man here by the name of Billy Worsham, and your name is associated with that dead man. He was carrying your business card in his pocket and visited your office a few hours before turning up dead. Your fingerprints are all over this thing. Billy Worsham was murdered and that murder was made to look like suicide – and I believe you know why."

"Oh," I said with a chuckle. "Is that what this is all about?"

"Look Reno, the Chief is up my ass looking for answers and I don't have any. He said you can either talk, or he'll have me arrest you and you can talk to us through the bars of one of our comfortable jail cells. So, unless you want to follow that path, you've got some serious explaining to do and I need that to happen now!"

"Are you accusing me of killing Billy Worsham?"

"Don't play bullshit with me Reno. I just told you, the Chief is all over my ass and we both know you haven't been truthful. So, either tell me what you know now or I'll send some officers over to bring you down here to my office – where we can talk face to face."

"I'm in Florida," I said with some sarcasm.

"I don't care if you're on the moon! I need some information about Billy Worsham's murder."

"Okay Sergeant Romeo, have you got a pencil handy?"

"What? A pencil? No I don't have a pencil. Why do I need a pencil?"

"So you can write this down. Billy Worsham was murdered by two brothers named Leo and Pedro Ramos. That hit was ordered by a man named Garrett Waste. He works for *Morhart Growers*."

There was silence for a moment. *"What? What did you say?"*

"I said Billy Worsham was murdered by Lou and Pedro Ramos, and the hit was ordered by a man named Garrett Waste. What part of that didn't you understand? See, I knew you needed a pencil."

"What? Why...I mean why did this Garrett Waste want Billy Worsham dead? Why did he send those two guys to kill him?"

"You'll need to ask Garrett Waste that question. I think I know the reason, but best you get the answer from him."

"You can bet I'll ask him! Where...where can I find Garrett Waste and these brothers – Lou and Pedro Ramos?"

"I can't tell you where to find Garrett Waste – I'm sure he's running and I don't know in what direction. But I heard the Ramos brothers had an unfortunate accident and won't be available for your questions. I know that's disappointing, so I suggest you ask Mr. Garrett Waste about the accident. He should be able to add some details."

"What?" Sergeant Romeo wasn't handling this very well.

"Besides Sergeant Romeo, Garrett Waste is the person you want anyway; he was the person who had Billy Worsham murdered."

"Unfortunate accident! Reno, what the hell are you talking about? If those brothers murdered Billy Worsham, then I intend to arrest them along with this...this Garrett Waste."

"Good luck with that, but you should know that Garrett Waste is on the run and he's got a head start. So look hard and look quick."

"On the run...where? Carson, how do you know all this? What proof do you have?"

"I suggest you contact *Morhart Growers* and speak with their CEO – Charlie Weaver. I'm sure he can fill you in on details and offer proof about what I'm telling you. And who knows, he might even know the whereabouts of Mr. Garrett Waste."

"Carson, you're lying about something. Why?"

"Look, I just solved a murder for you. Take what I've told you and go arrest Garrett Waste for the crime. What else do you want from me?"

"The Ramos brothers and the truth!" He wasn't happy.

"Sergeant Romeo, I've told you all I know. I'm still in Florida and working to solve another murder. Go find Garrett Waste and he can answer most of your questions."

"Are you telling me that the Ramos brothers are dead?"

"I'm not telling you anything about the Ramos brothers. I'm telling you I heard they experienced an unfortunate accident. Find Garrett Waste and ask him about it."

Silence – Sergeant Romeo didn't say anything. So I did.

"Look, it's late and I've had a busy day. So, I'm going to have a drink and go to bed. I suggest you do the same."

I hung up the phone.

Lydia and Joe were staring at me.

"Trouble with the police?" Lydia snickered.

"Not really, just a frustrated policeman who can't believe he's solved a murder and hadn't done anything to make that happen."

I went looking for the whiskey.

~

Lydia had placed the autopsy and coroner's report on the table. I picked them up and looked at her.

"You've scrutinized these – what did you find?"

"First, there was no evidence of sexual assault – even though most of her clothing had been removed."

"Removed or torn from her body – as in a struggle?"

"Torn away, according to the coroner – but he found no defensive wounds."

"That sounds like they were removed after she was dead."

"Yep," Lydia nodded. "It sure does."

"And the cause of death?"

"Rachel sustained a massive blow to the left temple from a blunt object – probably a tree limb. The coroner found splinters of raw wood and bark in the wound."

"Hmm," I muttered to myself. "Was there anything in the reports about this weapon being recovered at the crime scene?"

"Nope, I guess they didn't look for it – or chose not to. But the blow wasn't fatal – or at least not immediately. She died from asphyxiation – strangled with a piece of nylon jute twine. The twine was still around her neck when the body was discovered."

"Jute twine?" I asked.

"Yep, jute twine – it was orange colored twine. It's a common item used in farming and harvesting operations. You can find it most anywhere around here. It's used to tie product together or bound baled hay. I'm afraid trying to trace the murder tool to anyone wouldn't be very productive. The farmers and harvesters leave this twine lying around everywhere."

I poured myself a glass of whiskey, walked out onto the patio and read both reports in detail.

There was a footnote on page 4 of the autopsy that caught my attention, and I walked back into the room.

"Lydia, did you notice that the coroner noted a bee sting on Rachel's neck?"

"Yes, I saw that - but guess it wasn't important. Besides, there are bees everywhere, and it could have happened postmortem."

“Highly unlikely,” I frowned. “If she was stung by a bee, it would have happened before death – not afterwards.”

“So,” Joe interrupted. “What does that mean – getting stung by a bee? Can that be important?”

“I don’t know,” I said almost to myself. “But I want to visit the Peel residence again tomorrow and get a better look at that bicycle. If it belongs to Rachel Worsham, and I suspect it does, we need to find out how it got to *Peel’s Grocery*. Get a good night’s sleep and we’ll drive down in the morning.”

~

*J*oe sacked out on my couch and Lydia went to her room. I knew it was late, but I needed to think.



Walking out onto the
while enjoying my nightly
whiskey. This wonderful
I was ready to go home.



patio, I stared at the full moon
cigar and another glass of
Florida weather was nice, but

I didn’t believe the Ramos brothers or Garrett Waste had anything to do with Rachel Worsham’s murder. And not because they wouldn’t have murdered her – I just don’t think they ever got the opportunity.

I was also having trouble accepting the fact that Albert Peel murdered her. Opportunity...yes. Motive...I couldn’t find one. They may have had a lover’s spat or a more serious argument, but Albert had no reason for murder. Yes, it could have been an accident – of course. I was going to need to talk with Albert again about that possibility.

However, I still couldn’t get over the bicycle being at the *Peel Grocery*. Somehow that bicycle was the key to solving Rachel’s murder...but how?