

"What have we got?" Sharon Pilot demands...

Detective Lewis doesn't bother checking his notes as he replies, "Both witnesses—the neighbor across the street and the female jogger—have positively identified the suspect in a lineup. Both still have reservations about the hair, mustache and sideburns, though."

"I can handle that at trial," Sharon advises.

Lewis continues. "The victim's house is filled with fingerprints from the suspect. He claims that he was there to install software for the victim on a Saturday when his truck was seen parked in front of the house, but his former employer neither authorized it nor could they corroborate that he was ever there for any service." He shifts his weight and adds, "He could have been there to case the house. We suspect that his wife doesn't know about it, but we haven't interviewed her yet."

"That's something we need to nail down," Sharon states sternly, drawing a deep breath, her chest expanding under her modest dress, hinting at the fullness she was carefully concealing. "Why was he there that day? That may well be the motive we're looking for."

Lewis advises, "When we first visited him, he said he didn't know her."

"Was he trying to hide it?" Sharon asks.

Lewis shakes his head as he replies, "I'm not sure. He said he couldn't remember her name, but if we had shown him her picture, he would have remembered her instantly." He pauses a moment before continuing. "He says he almost never watches the news, so he didn't even know about the murder."

"Maybe that's true," Sharon comments. "What else?"

"He frequently drove past her house, almost on a daily basis. We've confirmed that. Forensics concludes that the weapon may have been a scalpel, but we went through the entire trailer and found nothing. However, when we searched his truck, we found three wrinkled neckties and a small case holding a scalpel under the passenger seat. Those items are being analyzed now, but a preliminary test revealed that one of the neckties bore a blood stain. We found no other trace evidence of blood anywhere else, and there should be some, unless he disposed of his clothes and washed somewhere else. That murder scene was drenched, but we didn't find any other blood traces in the trailer, on clothes or even in his truck."

Lewis turns to leave, but Schneider lingers, finally speaking up. "What about the ex-husband? A life insurance policy in force on an ex-wife bothers me."

Sharon looks up at Schneider and asks, "What was his explanation?"

"That's another thing that bothers me," Schneider laments. "He's hiding behind his attorney."

Sharon shows a little aggravation as she asks, "What did the attorney say?"

"The ex-wife has tax implications for the ex-husband, since they were still married part of the tax year," Schneider responds.

"That's a legitimate need, detective," Sharon advises. "Have you established a connection between the ex-husband and Schell?"

"Not yet," Schneider replies timidly, but adds, "but what if it's not Schell? What if it's somebody who looks like Schell?"

Snarling with aggravation, Sharon Pilot immediately spits, "Do you have a suspect that looks like Schell? Do you have a connection between this suspect and the ex-husband?" She glares at Schneider impatiently...

Both detectives nod, stand up and turn to leave the office. Lewis opens the door and walks through, followed close behind by Schneider, who closes it. Schneider softly states, "I don't like it. I think the ex is the key."

Lewis frowns at his partner. "You should listen to the lady. She's taking a lot of heat. Everybody's outraged, so we need to work with her."

"I understand the outrage," Schneider comments, shaking his head as they slowly traverse the hall in the District Attorney's office complex. "Don't you want to nail the real perpetrator?"

"Yours is a hunch," Lewis replies, confidently. "The real evidence, while circumstantial, is considerable against Schell. Sharon Pilot has an enviable conviction rate. What have you got?"

Schneider does not respond. He drops back behind his partner, frowning. - pages 67-70