

Monday, October 24, 2005

Missing Person - Episode #1

Episode 1: The Man in the Mask

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I didn't kill him.

I didn't even plan to kill him. I had a gun, but I just wanted to hurt him and stop him from attacking me. I had no idea why this stranger was hitting me, and it was ticking me off.

This morning Anne Prado, one of my students at the University of Southwestern California, came to my office. She said she had a problem and she needed my help. Her sister, Sarah, was missing. We were on our way to Sarah's apartment to find her, when halfway up the front steps of the building, a man ran toward me and started punching me.

I hit the man in the ear. He screamed with pain. He was small, but a tough son-of-a-gun. I stepped back, and hit him hard in the stomach.

“Oh my God!” he moaned. I think I hurt him that time.

I knew he was in pain. I pushed him down to the ground. He fell onto the grass in front of the steps to the apartment building. Now it was my turn to take control.

I stood over him and asked, “Who are you? What do you want?” He didn't answer. He had a ski hat on, so I couldn't see his face.

“Just get the hell away from this apartment building! You're not welcome here!” he said.

I grabbed him by the shirt, pushed his face into the ground, and put his arm behind his back. He yelled even louder now. I think he was finally ready to stop fighting.

“Now, who are you? Why can't I go inside the apartment?” I was getting angry and wanted some answers. I saw a few people come out of the apartment building to see what was happening.

But the man still didn't say a word. He lifted himself up suddenly, and pushed me away. He looked at me coldly for a second, then ran into the street.

I turned to find Anne to make sure she was okay. “Do you know who he was? Have you seen him before?” I asked.

“No, Dr. Reeves. I don't come to my sister's apartment very often. I don't know who he is.”

Let me back up a minute: This morning in my office Anne had explained that two days ago, she was supposed to have lunch with her sister, Sarah Salas. When her sister didn't come to the restaurant, Anne called Sarah's apartment. There was no answer.

Anne went to her sister's apartment right away and knocked on the door, but there was no one home. She called Sarah's work. Her boss told Anne that Sarah had been missing for two days. So Anne decided to ask me to help find her sister and her sister's husband, Bill, who was also missing.