

**Monday, January 02, 2006**

**Missing Person - Episode #10**

**Episode 10: The Bartender Shows Up**

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Episode 10: The Bartender Shows Up

It was time to try a different approach. I decided to find John Costello first and talk to him. I wanted to find out why his car hit Anne's and almost killed her. I knew Costello lived in Santa Monica, so I drove up the freeway and got off near Main Street. I went to the address Officer Cho gave me and knocked on the door. No one answered. I knocked on the apartment manager's door. An old woman answered. "Excuse me, I'm trying to find John Costello. He lives in number 503."

"Mr. Costello lived--past tense--in 503. He moved out two months ago," she said.

"Do you know where he lives now or where he works," I asked.

"I don't know where he moved to, but I think he still works at the bar on 4th Street."

"Thanks for your help." I got back in my car and drove down to the bar. It was only 10:00 a.m., and already there were cars parked outside the place. Some people like to start drinking really early.

As I walked down the street toward the bar, I heard two gun shots. I immediately reached for my gun, which I keep on my belt. The gun is registered, of course, but I only carry it with me when I think there might be trouble. I ran toward the bar, and I heard another sound, like the wheels of a car turning very fast. I slowly opened the front door of the bar and looked around. There was a man standing over a dead body. The floor was covered with blood.

"Don't shoot!" the man yelled at me.

"It's okay, I'm a private detective. What happened here?" I asked.

"Someone just ran in here and shot John! I think he's dead," the man answered.

"John? The dead man's name is John?" I asked.

"Yeah, he is--was--the bartender. His name's John Costello."

"Someone call the police," I said. "Did anyone recognize the man who shot Costello? Did anyone see what he looked like?" There were four men in the bar. Each man looked at the other. Everyone just shook their head.

"Uh, I didn't really see him very well," said one man.

"Yeah, it's dark in here. I didn't see his face," said another.

I decided not to stay at the bar. I didn't want the police to find out about Sarah's kidnapping, and how Costello may have been connected. I drove back toward downtown. I stopped to have lunch at my favorite sushi bar and thought about the case. I was now more confused than before. This morning I guessed that John Costello might be the kidnapper. Now Costello was dead. The girl at the beach store might be involved, but I had no evidence of that. I was stuck. At around 2:00 p.m. I went to the hospital and picked up Anne. She was feeling much better, and was happy to see me.

"Have you heard anything from Bill about giving the money to the kidnappers?" I asked her.

"No, Bill hasn't called."

"Well, let's go over there and see what happened." We drove over to Bill and Sarah's apartment, and we were surprised to see two police cars outside the building. Bill was sitting on the steps of the building crying.

"What happened?!" Anne said to me as we parked the car. "Why are the police here?"

"I don't know, Anne," I said. "Let's just try to stay calm and find out what is going on." As we walked toward the apartment building, I had a feeling in my stomach that something was wrong--very wrong.

"Oh, Anne, she's dead! She's dead!" Bill cried. He jumped up to hug Anne. "Sarah's dead!"

"Bill, what happened?" I asked. "Did the kidnappers call?" I saw that Anne was in shock. She couldn't believe what Bill was telling her.

"No, I made a terrible mistake," Bill said. "I got scared, so I called the police this morning. I told them everything. I told them that Sarah had been kidnapped. Then two hours later...she was dead! I found Sarah's body in the street in front of the apartment building!"

Bill began to cry again, and Anne looked like she was going to fall down. I grabbed her arm and helped her sit down on the steps. I turned to the police officer standing next to us. "Where was the body found?" I asked.

"In the street, like Mr. Salas said," he answered. "We got here about 30 minutes ago. She was already dead. She had been cut in the throat by some type of knife or piece of glass."

It was over. I had tried my best, but Sarah was now dead. I thought about all the things that had happened. I even blamed myself. Maybe I should have...? But you can't blame yourself. Sometimes, you just have bad luck. There was nothing more I could do. I shook hands with Bill and gave Anne one last hug. I decided I would call my friend Officer Cho and tell him what I knew.

Maybe they could find the person who killed Sarah. As I was about to leave, I noticed a list of names on the mailboxes of Bill and Sarah's apartment building. I don't know why I decided to look at the list. Sometimes you just do the right thing at the right time and get lucky. This was one of those times. I recognized one of the names on the list. I couldn't believe my eyes, so I looked more closely a second time. Yes, I was right. The name on the list read "Costello, John--Apt. 1A." John Costello lived in the same building as Bill and Sarah Salas.