



# **LAKE GENEVA BRIDGE MURDER\***

by

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***A Charles Earl Short Mystery, Featuring the Earl Family Brain Trust***

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*“Oh, what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we practice to deceive.”*

Sir Walter Scott, *Marmion*, 1808

## ***Arrival in Lake Geneva***

“Charles,” Judy exclaimed, “this can’t be right! It looks as if we are going into some sort of horse farm and then onto a dirt road!” “Just be patient,” the mild-mannered mathematician told his wife, “you will see. I’ll turn here, through this stone gate house and then the resort grounds will open up to you.” “How strange,” noted Judy, “I’ve never seen a resort that didn’t want to promote its presence...I wonder why this one doesn’t...the entrance, across from a waste water treatment plant is almost not there! Well, we are here for the Midwestern teams duplicate bridge tournament of the American Bridge Congress (ABC), so I suppose I’ll just need to focus on that and leave oddities such as this one off on the side somewhere.” “Oh sure,” thought Charles, “she’ll never do that!” But he said nothing and continued to drive through the beautiful and expansive grounds, past manicured golf courses, lakes, trails, woods, streams, and features that unfolded in the rolling Wisconsin landscape.

Charles and Judy Earl met many years ago when they were both young graduate students in mathematics at a major research university. After they got their degrees, they continued with the focus of their formal training, to be sure, but each also wore many other hats. Some of them were the same, while others differed greatly from each other. Judy’s interests, of all sorts, focused heavily on visual approaches, while Charles’s focused on logical approaches. Each was imaginative but in different ways; they had proven themselves a strong team in a variety of contexts: a true power of two.

“Furthermore,” continued Judy, “what kind of land use planning strategy would site a fancy resort across from a waste water treatment plant? It all seems very strange. Charles, you were here about six months ago, weren’t you? Tell me more...” “Yes, Judy, you are correct,” Charles noted, “I was here to set up a tea garden in association with our Alma Mater chain of restaurants. I am anxious to see how it’s doing and to show it to you...after all, it’s in honor of your mother, a great chef, and of our professional lives in academics...a true double entendre!”

Charles deftly wheeled the car around hairpin turns and finally pulled under the porte cochere at the front of the resort. The couple left the car there, under the care of an attentive valet, and went inside to the registration desk of the Helvetica Chalet, Resort and Spa. “Charles,” gasped Judy, “this lobby is spectacular! Look at the displays of animal horns of various kinds. Wow! The chandelier is made of antlers—the way the lights are interspersed makes the prongs on the antlers look like candles—how clever!” “Yes, Judy,” Charles stated calmly, “I am sure there are many exciting things to see here and I am equally confident that you will observe more of them than would most. But, for now, why don’t you sit down over there in one of the chairs around the round table under the antler chandelier while I go and get checked in.” Judy nodded agreeably and sat down. Soon Charles returned with two keys for their room that the clerk had confidently told Charles was one of their premiere rooms. Charles also brought the gratis drinks: a flute of Champagne for Judy and a flute of orange juice for himself. He sat down, and the couple relaxed for a minute or two.

“Charles,” Judy began, “do you think it’s ok to leave the car out there for this long?” “Yes,” Charles replied, “in fact, the clerk at registration encouraged it—this is a resort; it is different in attitude from a large urban hotel. In fact, Judy, you will find that this resort is unique in a number of ways which you will discover later. For now, let’s just settle down a bit here and then go find our room and unwind from the long drive; it’s always an effort to go all the way around Chicago, even though there is an absolutely marvelous freeway/tollway system to make it work.”

### ***Action in the Lobby of Helvetica Chalet***

“Eeeek,” shrieked Judy, “look at that huge stretch limo pulling in! Charles, I am worried he’s going to hit our poor little car!” “Very interesting,” commented Charles, “let’s sit here and see what happens next. Well, well, well. If it isn’t Huey, the ABC member best known for his love of excess. Watch this, Judy, let’s see what he does next. Evidently he loves huge cars. He is a man of huge girth and huge excesses of all sorts—if someone has a disease, he has more and worse diseases. If someone

has a beautiful girlfriend, he has a more beautiful girlfriend. Here he comes...”

“Charles, my dearest friend in the world” Huey said, “and this must be your gorgeous wife, looking younger every time I see her! How are you, dear thing?” “Excuse me, I feel ill,” Judy noted as she shot Charles a knowing glance and left to look at the antler display. “Oh, too bad,” said Huey, “I had hoped to introduce Jill to my nurse...where is that hopeless woman...” “Huey,” Charles stated, “my wife’s name is Judy, not Jill.” “Oh yes, of course,” Huey said nonchalantly. “Now where is that nurse? I figured she would get along with Jill...I know you are some sort of doctor and so your wife must know about nurses” continued Huey. “My wife, Judy, and I both hold Ph.D. degrees,” Charles said in an even tone. Undeterred, Huey went on in a self-absorbed manner, “you know that I have trouble now using both of my hands, my previous polio problems from my youth are coming back as I age, my malaria returns periodically as do a variety African diseases, and I continue to have the usual Parkinson’s problems and other issues associated with more common American diseases, diabetes, etc. etc. Of course and as usual, I bring my own custom-made visual and auditory support systems, made by my people in the Far-East, so I can see and hear at my special table that the bridge directors set aside for me and for me alone. I bring enough Braille cards and duplicate boards with me for the entire tournament in case there is a power failure—who knows in a remote, rural place like this. Naturally, a van with my special needs materials will soon be following my limo.” “I am truly sorry to hear of your problems, Huey,” Charles said sympathetically, while noting to himself that he had never figured out whether Huey was an expert hypochondriac or a really brave soul fighting a great many diseases...but, his belief pattern on this topic had a strong inclination in one direction.

“Well,” announced Huey, “I don’t know where that miserable excuse of a nurse has gone to. I shall just have to take matters into my own hands. Charles, why don’t you have Champagne? I’ll get some.” And, Huey went to register. In the meantime, other bridge players began arriving. When they saw Huey at registration, many of the men came and sat with Charles,

while some others and a bunch of the women went off to talk to Judy and look at the antler displays on the other side of the lobby.

“Charles,” gloated Huey, “here is a magnum of Champagne ... enjoy ... personally I never touch the stuff ... might interfere with my important medications, but you and these guys please enjoy, as my guests.” “Waiter, come and serve my friends,” demanded Huey of a waiter serving other guests in a nearby hotel restaurant. “Really, sir,” noted the waiter, “I can’t do that.” Huey waved a one hundred dollar bill at the waiter. “Huey,” Charles said, “I just finished filling the flutes. You don’t need the waiter. And, no, I will not take your money. Here, Ryan, Kent, Joe, have a glass of Champagne.”

“Well then,” Huey bragged, “I must tell you guys of one of the most intriguing things I’ve found recently...you know the TV ad where people on an airplane come up to a famous basketball player to show him their briefs? All they do is show him an edge of their briefs. Now, take a good look at these...the full nine yards!” And with that, Huey dropped his pants and showed the guys his briefs with clubs, hearts, diamonds, and spades on them. “And look at this special embroidery—when I found out the underwear factory headquarters are only a few miles from here (in Kenosha, Wisconsin), and that they are coming here for a conference while the bridge tournament is going on, I inserted myself into the tournament negotiations and cut a special deal for two dozen embroidered briefs—now come over here and take a closer look at the fine workmanship,” Huey said as he pointed to a location on the front of the briefs, “I had it made with NT—for ‘No Touch’...ha! And you thought it was for ‘No Trump’. There’s another one in back, too—clever, huh? I bet you guys wish you had these! I have other pairs for special occasions with special women, with a ‘T’ instead of an ‘NT’ in appropriate locations!” Charles was aghast. “Well,” Kent commented in his wry style, “I suppose his briefs would require nine yards of fabric to provide adequate coverage...” After Huey reassembled his clothing, Ryan, who was the President of the ABC, attempted to take control of Huey and gave him a stern lecture on some of the possible consequences of flashing. Charles got up and ushered Judy to their car.

## ***In their Guest Room at the Helvetica Chalet***

“Charles, this room is fabulous!” gasped Judy, “look at the view—a manicured golf course, wooded areas, a lake with aeration fountains spewing water high into the air—I don’t need to play bridge—I could sit here for a week and just immerse myself in the beauty of the landscape! And, look, isn’t that a wooded island out in the middle of the lake?” “Yes, Judy, it is,” said Charles, “let’s go out and sit on our own private patio.” With that, Charles opened the glass doorwall and led Judy to the table and chairs on the fieldstone patio overlooking the golf course, lake, and island.

“Judy, do you see that small building nestled in the trees on the wooded island?” queried Charles, “that is the new Alma Mater TeaGarten. I think your mother would be very pleased; we will have to bring her here one of these days.” “Oh, yes, absolutely,” said Judy enthusiastically, “but for now, let’s sit here and take in the spectacle that Mother Nature is offering; I see all sorts of birds—I know the names of most of them, but I don’t know what that one is—looks like a sparrow but has a small yellow patch on its head—cute—there is a whole group of them; of course I see Canada Geese on the lake and golf course...look there is a family of them...eleven young ones; and ducks...mallards, wood ducks; wow, and there is a parade of swans swimming on the lake, one adult followed by two young with another adult in the back...keep the kiddies in line, I always say!” “Judy, that’s enough about birds for now,” Charles countered, “let me tell you more about this place.”

“As usual, Judy, your observations when we were pulling in were right on target,” commented Charles, “this place was in hiding for a number of years. Let me tell you a bit about its history and fill in the facts with some logical speculation...sort of ‘educated guesses’. This place was built in the middle of the twentieth century, as a resort for wealthy men who wanted a private place to come and be catered to in all the pleasures, good and nasty, that the world has to offer. There was a bevy of beautiful young women who lived here and saw to all the needs of these men—‘bunnies’ I think they were called. You will note that one of the lakes here is shaped like a rabbit head, although shoreline erosion has diminished the clarity of

the outline over time. You might find that old-time locals here refer to this place as 'The Hutch', presumably a reference to earlier illicit activity and some sort of contraction of the name, from 'Helvetica Chalet' to 'HCh' to 'HutCh.' ”

“Anyway,” Charles continued, “you will see that there is a private airport on the grounds, in the back of the complex, away from the road—presumably to fly in high profile wealthy men for a weekend of illicit pleasures. You already noticed that the site of the resort is across the street from a wastewater treatment plant. Perhaps that is a reflection that in the mid-twentieth century the only land the local planning board would allow zoned for such activity was on a large parcel that, although beautiful, was locally unwanted because of its proximity to the treatment plant. As you know, it is not uncommon to site one locally unwanted land use (lulu) next to another. And, surely, this sort of facility must have been viewed as a den of iniquity by the conservative, wealthy, and morally upright community of Lake Geneva.”

“Even the architecture reflects the tone of the history of this place,” Charles lectured in a professorial manner, “as you might note, the buildings are low-slung and fit into the rolling landscape, much as a bunker might...the buildings are hard to see from the road even when close...an angry and suspicious wife who found the place might still have trouble finding her husband! There’s a central lodge to the chalet, and then there are attached long arms of buildings following the contour of the landscape. The arms are sequences of three story buildings, with the lower levels built into the sides of the hills; not all levels are visible from the parking lots. The buildings are built like fortresses—very solid, which is why cell phones only work on the top floor when inside even though there is service--you can use them outside. The navigation within the buildings is a bit on the crazy maze-like side; no doubt deliberate to offer security to those who did not wish to be found or found out. The style is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School, and perhaps that is not surprising, as we are not far from Taliesin here. You will no doubt find out more as you look around here...see, look at that little light that marks the way along the path

at night...looks like a Wright style of design, doesn't it? Here's a map showing the layout of the place."

"Oh, Charles," Judy said in a playful tone, "I can just imagine myself in the indoor or outdoor pools, frolicking with the bunnies...ha, ha, think I might fit in?!"



"Today, of course," continued Charles, "the bunny page of history is totally in the past. Once that was over, large amounts of money were poured into this place to make it the vibrant, well-cared for resort it is today. Look, they also have a full program of activities. The owners continue to invest in activities that they think will draw people not only from metropolitan Chicago (which is of course a substantial draw) but also from across the nation. This regional bridge tournament draws very well; there are top-flight players here from all across North America. The thoughtful Board members, Teri and Tom, designed a schedule that caters not only to the typical ABC member but one that also caters to the interests of top flight players—there is a knockout event every day. It's a wonderful concept. You remember Teri and Tom—she serves on the Board of the ABC with me. Because the tournament is held at a resort, rather than at a hotel, we have all these wonderful amenities at reasonable prices. Resorts have seasons; hotels do not. So, coming here off season is a fine idea!"

"Last fall," Charles went on, "I was able to approach the management here to see if they would like, in support of enhancing the experience of their guests, to have the Alma Mater chain of restaurants enter their picture.



The success of our flagship “gateway” restaurant in St. Louis was helpful in convincing them. So, we created a plan for a ‘teagarten’ on the wooded island. Look to the left, just below the central lodge—there is a sequence of about 100 steps leading from the footpath down to the golf course and then to a pergola; from there, there’s a path to a wharf and there’s a cute covered ferry to take folks from the wharf to the island. The ferry runs twice an hour during times when the TeaGarten is open. While folks wait for the ferry, they can enjoy complimentary flutes of mimosa and snacks in the pergola, where there are benches and tables. The ferry is limited to 12 people at a time; Alma Mater TeaGarten only holds 25, so reservations are required; and time limits, as to how long one can stay there, are enforced within the restaurant. I hear it’s already quite popular. We need to make reservations just for the routine tea in the afternoon. There are also other activities there...star-gazing from the deck on some nights; moonlight cruises on others; bird watching from the deck at dusk on other nights. You get the picture...a real class-act.”



“Judy,” Charles continued, “there are many activities available at the Lodge, as well. In addition to swimming, a spa, a fitness center, all of which you are used to finding in the hotels that host bridge tournaments, there is obviously golf; there is also tennis, and a variety of other outdoor activities, including skiing in the winter. I suspect you and I will confine ourselves to walking to get our exercise with a few trips to the fitness center. You might also enjoy some of the planned indoor activities, though—it’s kind of like being on a cruise ship—trivia, games, and so forth.

I probably won't have time for that sort of thing, although I'd like to, because I am playing only in knockout events. But you are playing in side games and have more flexibility in scheduling. I gather they have a trolley that makes trips around the grounds and also that they have a tour bus to take guests on local tours."

"Do you remember," Charles reminisced, "when we were graduate students in math, hearing about the great observatory associated with our university? Remember, it was in Wisconsin on a lake? Well, guess what...it's only about 10 miles from here. I thought you would love to know that...just on general principles for sure, but all the more so because we met as graduate students in mathematics at its mother institution!"



"Yes, of course I remember!" said Judy, as she thought about all this with great satisfaction, "I'm glad I brought along my university sweatshirt that our son Ed gave me when we all went to reunion there...it says 'alumna' on it! Wow, a trip to Yerkes Observatory, home of the world's greatest and largest refracting telescope, is in my future...I always wanted to go there...wonder what we might find there! Charles, if we don't make it out to Yerkes on this trip to Lake Geneva, perhaps we can plan ahead and both go out there on our next trip?" "Aha, thank you Judy, very thoughtful," Charles said in admiration of his wife who just loved museums and all things associated with academia, "it's no wonder the locals here wanted a star-gazing deck and small refracting telescope installed on the wooded island when we built the Alma Mater TeaGarten. I might have assumed

they would want a bird-watching area, but their first thought was for a star gazing platform...bird-watching came only as an afterthought when I brought it up. But I guess now I see why. They have been conditioned to think that folks will want to look at, and learn about, the nighttime sky. After all, we are in the cradle of modern astronomy and astrophysics!

### ***The Wooded Island: Alma Mater Tea Garten***

“Oh, Charles, this is just gorgeous!” purred Judy, “Mom would love it too, I am certain. From this table we can see the little catamaran with its cute canopy that says “Alma Mater: TeaGarten” on the side. Oops, I think I see Huey coming in this boat load...let’s get our order in.” Just then, a handsome young waiter came to the table, “Good Afternoon, my name is David. I hope you will enjoy your visit to the wooded island this afternoon. After tea, if you wish, you might enjoy visiting our outdoor deck area with an astronomical station for viewing the nighttime wonders of the universe (if you stay long enough) or sitting quietly and viewing the birds and wildlife, as if in a blind. Now, what might I get for you from the kitchen or bar?” Well,” Judy said, “I think we will have your special Martinis and a small ‘Swamp Platter’ as grazing food. Let’s get the ‘Endive Sun’ plate, too.” “A delightful choice,” David noted, “and if you like, Alma has made some of these recipes available online, you know.”



*Look at page 4 in the free preview file for the Martini recipe.*



“Don’t I know you, David? Have we met somewhere else? I can’t quite put my finger on it...” said Charles. “Hmmm,” David said as he stepped back and took a long look at the couple, “oh, yes, perhaps from the St. Louis Alma Mater site? I was just transferred from there to here...it’s our most successful store and the owner asked, I gather, to have some of the more experienced personnel transferred up here to get it off to a good start. We’ve been open only one month at this location, you know.” “That’s it,” Charles smiled, thinking that David had no clue he was in fact talking to the owners, “thanks.”

“Charles, my good man, over here,” Huey yelled across the elegant small restaurant, “I want you to meet my friend, Fern.” He brought a tall, buxom blonde over to the table. “I just had to bring her out here, given her name and all that; in addition, she just loves birds, so after tea we will spend some time alone together on the deck watching wild life.” Charles wondered which set of underwear Huey might have on, but quickly erased that thought from his mind and focused on the elegant aspects of his surroundings, instead. Charles and Judy watched the little boat make a trip back to the dock as they savored their cocktails and food. A new flock of people filtered into the pergola to enjoy Champagne and a few tempting tidbits, including deviled eggs served on a turtle platter, prior to departing for their scheduled visit to the island.



“Uh oh,” moaned Charles, “here comes Daisy, Huey’s wife, in the next boat load. This ought to be interesting...let’s see how Huey scrambles on this one...kind of hard to believe he really has all these illnesses. I tend to think they serve as a convenient cover for his various activities. Anyway, let’s see what happens next.” “Charles,” Huey commanded, “you and Jill must try these deviled eggs; they are the best I have ever had. Also, you must try the tea sandwiches on this ‘Swamp Platter’—some look like little black snakes and, as with the eggs, there is frog in middle! They are fabulous! I insist—here, help yourselves while I escort Fern to the bird-watching deck on the other side of the TeaGarten.” Charles noted that the deck was separated from the restaurant and that much of the deck was not clearly visible from the restaurant. Soon, Huey rushed back into the TeaGarten alone; Fern was out of sight.





“Darling,” gushed Huey, “what a wonderful surprise! I was just sharing a bit of food with my friends Charles and Jill here, but let’s get a table so that you and I can be alone...how romantic! Charles, Jill, I think perhaps you have met my beautiful bride, Daisy?” “Oh, yes,” Charles said, “our pleasure.” “You must see our gorgeous hotel room,” continued Huey as he winked at Charles, “it is off on a dead-end fork in the ramped part of the navigation network...true privacy for us to enjoy quality time together, if you know what I mean old man.” “Oh, Huey,” giggled Daisy, “you are such a romantic! I hope you are as fortunate as I am, Jill.”

Huey and Daisy sat at another table and Huey ordered more cocktails and food, a 'Tower', which David delivered discreetly. After they ate, Huey arranged some sort of story to get Daisy back to their room and once she was safely on shore, returned to the deck and retrieved Fern. Again, Huey ordered drinks and food, delivered by David with dignified aplomb, and then after a bit he and Fern went to the deck together to enjoy whatever pleasures they chose on the deck. "I don't think I want to go out on the deck today," said Judy, "it's been a strange time here—somewhat amusing yet clearly disgusting. Let's come back some other time; I love the place, the concept, and the food and would like to spend time here without all this nonsense from Huey." With that thought, Charles and Judy left for the shore on the next boat.

### ***Bridge in the Convention Center***

"Charles, oh Charles,...over here," motioned Huey, "that miserable wretch of a nurse never showed up. Anyway, I'll get another...they are like interchangeable parts on an assembly line. If one isn't right, throw it away and get one that is. In fact, maybe I'll get a whole team. Eric, the Director-in-Charge told me I should use this motorized wheel chair—pretty slick. It was nice of him to care, don't you think?" "Oh, yes," Charles agreed, "Eric is one of the very best, absolutely a fine director—he knows more than anyone about certain aspects of running the games." "Well, good luck today," said Huey affably, "that is unless I play you in which case I wish you bad luck." Charles laughed pleasantly. "Maybe my partner Sophia and I will see you and Jill tonight in the hospitality suite after the game," noted Huey. "Judy and I might be there," stated Charles. "Good, see you both then," came Huey's response. Charles just shook his head; that man never seemed to listen to, or think about, anyone else.

Charles went off to find his partner, Kent, who had come in from the east coast to play in this regional. They were teamed up with another pair with whom Charles had had great success in the past. Certainly, this team was one of the top ones in the field; at many regionals, they would clearly have been the top team...but not here. This regional drew from among the very

best in North America. Kent and Charles settled in for a long afternoon of tough bridge.

Suddenly, there was a loud 'DIRECTOR!!!' call from Huey's table. Eric came over to hear Huey sputtering "these people are trying to cheat me, and I demand redress." Eric said, "Huey, it is not ethical to call opponents 'cheaters.' Now please explain what happened."

Here is the hand and the bidding, Huey is North:

|             |  |  |               |
|-------------|--|--|---------------|
| North--Huey |  |  |               |
| ♠ K 10 9 8  |  |  |               |
| ♥ A J 4 2   |  |  |               |
| ♦ A         |  |  |               |
| ♣ K Q 7 5   |  |  |               |
| West        |  |  | East          |
| ♠ J 6 5 4 2 |  |  | ♠ 7           |
| ♥ 9 8       |  |  | ♥ Q 5 3       |
| ♦ Q 8 7 4   |  |  | ♦ K J 6 5 3 2 |
| ♣ A 6       |  |  | ♣ 9 4 2       |
| South       |  |  |               |
| ♠ A Q 3     |  |  |               |
| ♥ K 10 7 6  |  |  |               |
| ♦ 10 9      |  |  |               |
| ♣ J 10 8 3  |  |  |               |

The bidding was as follows:

|              |             |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
| 1C           | 2D !!       | P            | 2S          |



|     |   |     |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 2NT | P | 3NT | P |
| P   | P |     |   |

The 2D bid was alerted as showing the majors, but East had forgotten they were playing this convention and just bid a bad hand with diamonds. East's bid affected the final contract; without it N/S should have wound up in 4H instead of in 3NT.

East led a diamond against 3NT. Huey said, "I knew as soon as dummy hit that East didn't have the majors so I tried to make 4 spades, 4 hearts, and a diamond for 9 tricks. But I lost the heart finesse and made only 7 tricks—3NT goes down. We are sure to make 4H, and I want the score adjusted."

Eric asked East why he bid 2D. East said that they had only recently added that convention, and he forgot it. Eric checked and it was on the E/W pair's convention card. So, Eric told Huey, "under the rules of bridge, you are not protected from memory lapses by the opponent. So the result stands." Eric chuckled to himself, that this rare situation (rare, indeed, usually it is the pair who has the memory lapse who suffers) had happened to, of all people, Huey!

Huey exploded, "I always knew you were incompetent, and I shall see that you are barred from ever directing again!" Eric said calmly, "be quiet and continue play, or you will come before a conduct committee." Huey subsided, but related his woes to all who were condemned to listen to him later. Eric was extremely annoyed but just said, "consider the source."

### ***The Hospitality Suite***

After the game, Teri and Tom and their local colleagues set up an impressive display of snacks. Many who came thought they were coming only for the free drinks, but most wound up in pleasant conversation with friends, while others made new friends. Suites of this sort contributed heavily to the social aspects of bridge and offered opportunity to reinforce principles of goodwill enunciated by the national goodwill committee. Judy,

who was a member of that committee, therefore tried to take opportunities to participate in events such as this one.

“Oh, there are Charles and Jill,” announced Huey. He grabbed a tall dark haired woman, wearing a low-cut dress showing a good deal of cleavage, by the hand and sauntered over toward Charles and Judy. “Here comes trouble,” Charles whispered to Judy. “Charles,” Huey crooned, “I know you met my friend this afternoon, but I also want Jill to meet Sophia; she is a great bridge player. I am sure you know of her from reading about women’s events. And, Jill, I’m sure you girls will have lots in common given that you are both associated with wonderful men.” “Excuse me, I think I’m ill,” Judy said. “Charles, your wife seems not to be well—that’s the second time I’ve seen this happen to her,” Huey noted. “I think it’s a passing thing that my wife, Judy, is experiencing,” Charles said. “Interesting to see you again, Sophia, perhaps Judy and I will run into you later,” Charles stated blandly, “now please excuse me, there are folks over there with whom I need to talk bridge politics. I hope you will enjoy the Suite along with the others who are here tonight.”

### ***Power Failure***

As Charles moved away from Huey, the lights flickered once or twice and then the Suite was engulfed in darkness. How dark it gets here when the power goes out, Charles thought. “Never fear, Huey is here! Folks, I keep a full section of Braille cards in my van so that we have backup at the tournament if the power goes out...Eric doesn’t bother, but I do. Anyway, I know how to read Braille, of course, so I can lead you to your rooms if you would like. Also, I note in passing that if you have to play against me in a Braille section I will clobber you at the bridge table. But, this is Huey your hero speaking now. Just let me know and I will walk you to your rooms. It will be pitch black in the hallways of The Hutch but there are Braille markings throughout, right below the room numbers attached to the walls.”



Charles opted, instead, to stumble around and eventually find his way outside. Shortly after he got outside, his phone rang. “Hi Charles,” Judy said cheerfully into the phone, “I gather you made it outside, too, so that we could at least be connected on our phones. We are not far from our room. We are the fifth patio from the end in the same building as the one the Suite is in. I will sit in a chair there and wait for you. Then, we can go in together. I think I inadvertently left the doorwall unlocked. We shall see. I am almost there. If you want, stay on the phone with me and I’ll help guide you. I used the light from my smartphone to guide me along the sidewalk. Once we get inside, we can wind up our solar battery powered radio and charging station and be all set. Just keep talking as you walk...there, now I see you and will shine my light in your direction.” The two met up on the patio and went inside. They got ready for bed and got under the covers, feeling safe and secure in their room.

About 15 minutes later, the sound of a key card in the door to their room penetrated the darkness. Huey, Sophia, and some others walked in. They were apparently engaged in some conversation about group sex. “Wait just a minute,” shouted Charles, “what is the meaning of this! You are in the wrong room, get out of here right now! Huey, you have misread the Braille!” The group beat a hasty retreat and Charles grabbed the phone but then thought better of disturbing the front desk at this point. Still, it kept him awake wondering how the group could have entered the room using unique numerically encoded plastic keys.

In a short while the power came back on. Charles was still awake and so he decided to walk up to the front desk to find out what might have happened with the key situation. On his way there, he ran into Tom in the hallway who told him that Teri had been stuck in the freight elevator during the power failure and that in fact, it had been a short-circuit in the electrical system in the elevator mechanism that had caused the power outage. “Is Teri, OK now?” Charles asked. “Oh sure, she’s fine...a bit shaken up and all that, but she’s tough you know,” commented Tom, “well it’s off to bed now...see you tomorrow.”

After going up and down a few flights of steps, and up a few ramps, through the interior navigation maze, Charles eventually arrived at the front desk. He explained what had happened with the keys. “Oh, dear,” said the night manager, “that should not happen but it does on occasion when we have a new person. You see, you are in Building 2, in room 112 on the first floor. You know you and your wife probably each wanted a key, so the clerk assigned the same code to both keys, of course. Sometimes a new clerk will, in an effort to be efficient, assign the same code to all rooms numbered 112 (thinking there is only one such room), independent of the building they are in. So, you are in room 2112. Probably someone from 3112 (for example), that is room 112 in Building 3, has the same key code. I will make you new keys right now. Then you will be fine. I really appreciate your taking the trouble to tell me about this. We will rectify the situation once the new clerk is back on and I can figure out what happened.” Charles felt he could at least rest secure that no one else would be able to enter his room using a key. Apparently, Huey must have read the 112 part correctly but failed to note the building number...understandable, Charles thought...not nice that it happened but certainly understandable.

## ***Fire issues***

Charles had been happy to return to the room with his new keys, and even happier to get under the covers and get some much needed sleep in preparation for his bridge game in the morning. About 3:30 a.m., Charles and Judy were awakened by a blaring buzzing noise. “Oh, no,” exclaimed

Charles, “that is the fire alarm. I think we are supposed to wait a bit and if a second blast occurs, then evacuate the building.” “What,” Judy said groggily, “what is going on?” Charles sniffed the air, “Judy, do you smell anything? I smell smoke.” “I’m still half asleep,” Judy said, “maybe it’s just the smell of the heat from the furnace.” “Well, get up and get dressed and prepare to evacuate,” commanded Charles, “use the bathroom, get your purse, your phone and charger, emergency radio, and so forth.” Judy did as he said and just then a second blast began and continued. Apparently there was a real fire.

Charles and Judy sat outside on the patio in their overcoats while volunteer fire departments from all around parts of southern Wisconsin came to the scene over the next hour and a half. After that time, guests were told that they might return to their rooms so long as they were not in building 4. Apparently the problem had been in that building up close to the central lodge.

The next day, Charles walked over to the front desk. He was detoured around charred carpet near the freight elevator. He surmised that the fire had been caused by the same short-circuit in the elevator machinery that earlier in the evening had caused a power outage. The manager at the front desk confirmed that theory.

### ***Knockout Bridge Tournament***

“Well, Charles, I guess we start against you today,” Huey commented, “I am all set with my medical network now; my wonderful wife Daisy is here. Things are looking up, and I’m ready to beat your brains in at the bridge table!” “We shall see about that,” said the even-tempered Charles.

At the end, when the group compared scores, Huey discovered that his team had lost by one International Match Point (IMP). “One IMP, hmmm,” mused Huey, “I think we need to check over the scores at least one more time. Charles, you are a mathematician, is this really right?” “Yes,” said Charles, “I will report the score right now.” “Well, what’s a guy to do...think I’ll head over to Alma Mater TeaGarten and then go play some golf this afternoon. That Eric is an idiot,” snorted Huey as he stomped over to once

again yell at Eric and then headed out of the Convention Center toward the Alma Mater TeaGarten.

### ***On the Golf Course***

Judy and one of her friends were just teeing off, “Oh, no,” Judy said to her friend, “this guy coming up behind us is a real pest. I hope he doesn’t hit into us or run his cart close to me, or you, when we are trying to focus on a shot. He seems to think the world owes him a living...we’ll have to keep an eye on him.” Huey and some of his medical network sat at the first tee; they had decided to order some curled hot dogs (“Curly Dogs,”) stuffed with chili, from Alma Mater to be hand-delivered to the first tee. “These are far more than mere hot dogs; wait until you see the beautiful hand-carved garnish; Alma is a personal friend of mine and she does these just for me,” Huey stated arrogantly. Soon David arrived with a handsome box of food and some fine wine. The group enjoyed lunch and then got set to play golf.



The first couple of holes that Judy and her girlfriend played were uneventful; it was a beautiful day and things were progressing smoothly. On the third hole, Judy topped the ball and it only went about 80 yards—on one of the longest holes on the course. “I think I took my eye off the ball a bit,” Judy commented, “perhaps I was distracted thinking about Alma Mater TeaGarten just over there to my right, on the wooded island...Charles and I had such a fine time there yesterday afternoon.” While she was thinking, a golf ball dribbled up about 10 yards behind her ball. Huey was standing on the tee, jumping up and down and shouting foul comments about what he wanted to do with the golf ball...soon, Judy heard loud noises coming from the tee. She looked back to see Huey throwing his clubs and attempting to break his driver. Eventually, he came up to his ball and to Judy. “Why, Jill, how nice to see you,” blubbered Huey, “I see that we are both in the same frustrating situation here. I had hoped to par this hole, but now that seems unlikely. Come on over here and tell me what you think of my lie...I’m sure you will have fine advice for me.” Judy walked over, carefully marshaling her thoughts so as not to get into trouble with Huey. As she got near the ball and leaned over to examine its lie, she felt Huey’s meaty paw around her. At the same time, she heard another sharp, cracking sound. As she turned around to slap Huey for his fresh approach, he fell on the ground at her feet, bleeding from one small hole in his forehead. “Help, help,” Judy screamed at Huey’s medical staff who were back on the tee, “something awful has happened here...and Judy also slumped over on the ground.”

### ***Activating the Earl Family Brain Trust***

Charles returned to the room. “Judy,” Charles said firmly, “there have been many peculiar things going on here. Huey was apparently shot, as you saw. He is dead; murdered we think. The police have been here. The body is in the hands of the medical examiner. We will know more from them later. In the meantime, I want to look a bit more carefully at what happened. You know how it is; the police will run a fine investigation, I am sure. But, they are not part of this world and so may miss out on subtle implications or may interpret things in a way, within their own context, that does not lead to a valid conclusion.”

“There have been strange events prior to Huey’s death,” Charles continued, “there are plausible explanations for each of them. But, I am not sure I care for the way they all hang together—in fact, I don’t think they do hang together...not really.” “I agree,” nodded Judy, “and I think we need to consult with our Family Brain Trust.” “Yes,” said Charles, “bring them on.”

| <b><i>Earl Family Brain Trust</i></b>   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|    |    | <p><b>Theodore E. Bear:</b> A sedentary philosophically-inclined bear. Kind and thoughtful. A clear-thinker interested in the balance between pragmatics and abstraction. He worries about personal issues, such as being made into the bed, as well as broad-ranging issues involving world peace and global politics among all creatures, real and imaginary. He views himself as a dignified and proper teddy bear wearing a tuxedo—NOT as a panda. He is a native of Detroit, MI.</p>                         |
|   |   | <p><b>Binker Bear:</b> Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <i>When We Were Very Young</i>] “imaginary” friend Binker, as in “you can’t see Binker.” He lives largely in the realm of the imaginary, in the world of abstraction. In his “bear” persona he is physically quite large; he has a number of other personae he has been known to adopt. He is known to keep his cards close to his chest. Binker is originally from Paris, France, and was born at Galeries Lafayette.</p>                   |
|  |  | <p><b>Tine E. Bear:</b> Named for his diminutive stature. Tine focuses on the pragmatics of life. He feels he has to do so...as a small creature in the world of giants. He enjoys playing duplicate bridge, as an equalizer, and has a fine partnership with Binker who is large enough to use a bidding box. Tine emigrated from Paris with Binker, but is originally from a US Zone in Germany (as his tag says). His genealogy is rooted in the Vintage (mohair) Branch of the prestigious Steiff Family.</p> |

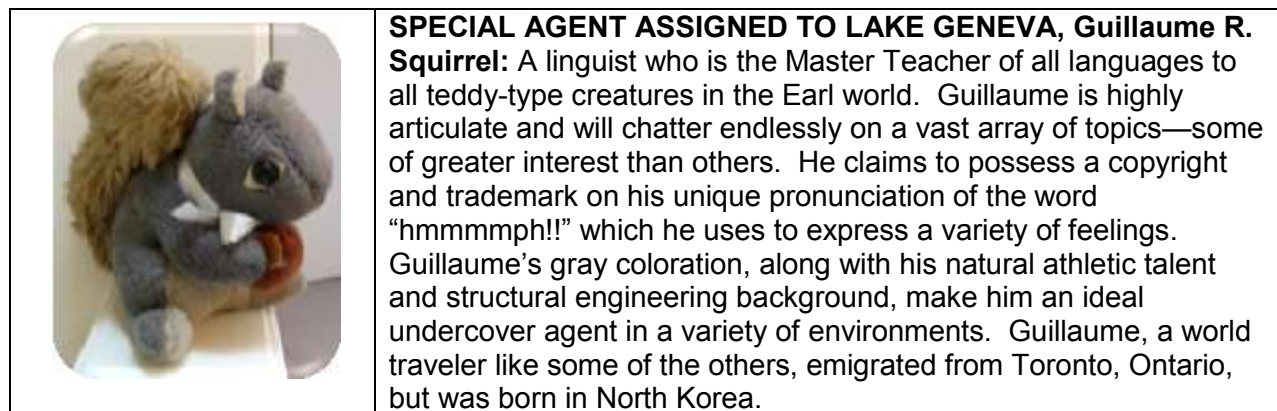


“Theodore,” Charles asked, “what is your take on what has been going on around here recently?” “Well, I do agree with you and Judy,” said Theodore, “that there is a particularly strange concatenation of events. But, for me, there is one piece of the situation that I would choose to focus on.” “What is it?” demanded Judy. “I would want to know what has been, or is, going on inside various guest rooms around here,” Theodore continued “...not by asking directly but by looking in...I’d start with all the ones with the number 112. But, basically, we need a systematic way to see what is going on without being seen...the maze of internal navigation makes it too hard to know what is going on. When one can’t get things straight, there is almost always danger. This is a dangerous place.” “Yes, I see what you mean,” commented Charles, “but do you have any ideas of how to implement such a broad plan?” “Yes, I do,” stated Theodore, “I should not have made the comments I did, otherwise. Here’s my thinking:

1. We learned from the power failure that there may be something funny going on in the 112 rooms. That is speculation, however, and needs verification.
2. We learned from the fire situation that the smoke spreads amazingly quickly throughout this huge sprawling complex. That is a fact and it is a startling fact. I would feel quite certain that it spread through the duct work that must be present in order to provide quick response to in-room thermostat change in demand for central heat and air conditioning.”

“Now, it would be nice, Theodore mused, “if we had a video camera in each room that reported back to us. But, we do not. Thus, I would recommend strongly that we employ a special agent to run through the duct work and check out what is happening in the rooms from the open grates in the duct work inside each room. He can take photos using his smartphone; the camera will work even though the phone, email, and text capabilities will not. You will see that there is an access panel to the duct work, held in place by two tiny screws, in the ceiling of the entry hallway in our room. So, implementation should take place by:

1. Lifting Tine up to remove the tiny screws in the faceplate of the entry to the duct work. Charles should be tall enough to do that; the architectural focus here has produced relatively low ceilings in the guest rooms.
2. Activating special agent Guillaume R. Squirrel to run through the duct work and report back what he sees (include photos), initially perhaps in the six other 112 rooms and then elsewhere. Again, Charles can lift him up to insert him through the opened access in our room.



Once we have reports back from Guillaume, then maybe we can begin to piece together some of the bizarre events that have been transpiring.”

“Great plan, Theodore,” said Judy, “Charles, do you agree?” “I think it has merit,” Charles said, “and it is low risk, which I like, and it is logically derivative of our observations to date.” “Yes, good points,” Judy continued, “what I see that we need to do to get ready to go is the following:

1. I will take Guillaume over to the spa and have them give him a manicure and a pedicure; there is some noise in the duct work when the heat comes on, but Guillaume’s nails would make much louder scratching sounds and they are fairly long right now, following his adventures in St. Louis where he did not really have an opportunity to engage in tree climbing or other activities that keep his nails naturally shorter.

2. While I am there, we will invent a reason for them to put little rubber caps on the nails, after they are trimmed, to cut back even more on the potential for noise.”

“I like that, too,” commented Charles. Let’s do it, starting today, and then tomorrow see what we know.

## ***Special Agent Guillaume Goes to the Spa***

“OK, Guillaume,” said Judy, “I’ve put a double layer of thickness of towel on my shoulder. Hop up; I think my skin is protected so your nails don’t dig in.” “Sure,” said Guillaume, “let’s go, I am ready to charm the folks over at the spa...let me at ‘em!”

Judy and Guillaume headed across the interior drive to the Spa and Fitness Center, a lavishly appointed building filled with highly athletic types in sharp juxtaposition to the carefully coiffed spa clientele. It is a common mix of functions, to be sure, but one which brings opposite types of clients together: one set focused on the deep functioning of muscle mass and the other on superficial cosmetic issues.

“Madame, do you have an appointment?” queried the attendant at the front desk in the Spa, “and, might I add that we do not allow pets in the Spa; he is adorable, to be sure, but still not permitted.” “Well,” Judy stated firmly, “then we have a serious problem here. You see you made the appointment for him, Guillaume S. Had you asked for last names, you might have had a clue. But, you did not. Furthermore, my psychiatrist says I need him for my mental well-being, and that I need to take him everywhere. My attorney supports this statement and is prepared to, and has done so in the past, defend my right to take him anywhere I am allowed to go, in much the way that guide dogs have that permission.” “Oh, dear, please excuse me, Madame, it is my error I am certain. Now what is it that Monsieur Guillaume wishes to have done today?” asked the attendant in a snotty and condescending tone, all the while raising his eyes to the ceiling to the other attendants as if to say, ‘wow, we have a live one here’. “And may I say, Monsieur, that I just love your name—we French folks need to stay together, I always say,” continued the arrogant attendant.

“Eh bien,” said Guillaume, “I had hoped to have a pedicure and a manicure so that I might ride on Madame’s shoulder without injuring her. You see, I have been abroad, and they simply could not do justice to my needs. I feel certain that you and your fine staff here will be able to do so. In addition, I do like to have a custom-fitted set of 20 rubber nail guards crafted after each pedicure and manicure so that when my nails do grow during my travels, the guards shield my nails so as to not accidentally scratch someone in the process of moving around with Madame. They need to be made of a rubber that is quite flexible so that it will stretch as my nails grow. I am certain you can understand the appropriateness of extra sensitivity toward fellow travelers; it makes for better international relations and adds to the cause of world peace, which I am sure you would not wish to deny, n’est pas?” “Oh, Monsieur, vous êtes magnifique: please follow me,” the attendant stated, “Madame, you may be assured that Monsieur Guillaume will be in only the finest hands.” And, with that, Guillaume hopped off Judy’s shoulder, asked her if she would be ok for a while without him, was reassured, and then went with the Spa attendant. An hour later, he reappeared, nails trimmed, and carrying a little leather case with twenty rubber nail shields in it. “Let’s get out of here before I throw up,” Guillaume told Judy.

### ***A Plan for the Special Agents***

“Charles, you should have seen Guillaume handle the folks at the Spa,” Judy bragged, “he was marvelous! And, we got everything we wanted. He is all set, now.” “Good,” said Charles, “I have complete confidence in my Special Agents, so I am not surprised in the slightest. Congratulations, Guillaume.” “I do think,” Charles continued, “that a few more Special Agents would be helpful. Here’s the general pattern to my thinking. Huey was shot between Building 2 and the wooded island while he was on the third hole of the golf course; it’s about a 550 yard par 5. We do not yet have access to a police report and are unsure of the direction from which the shot came. We have Guillaume handling the interior of the buildings. We need someone to handle the outside and the golf course and someone to handle the wooded island.”

“That’s a lot of territory” Charles explained, “so I am going to suggest teams of two in each location. I would like ImPossumble and Oscar Owl to work the area of the wooded island, including the deck at Alma Mater. Im can be in charge of daylight surveillance and Oscar can be in charge of nocturnal surveillance—whatever works for them. If anyone notices them, they will not seem out of place...they fit in the wooded environment. In addition, I would like to have Almer Bear and Ludwig von Bearthoven conduct surveillance of the outside of the buildings, the golf course, and the interior of Alma Mater. I think that since Almer and Ludwig both have official standing working for the Alma Mater chain, they will not seem out of place inside the restaurant. And, I also think that since they work there it would be natural for them, when they are not working, to stroll around the pedestrian paths, play golf, and relax. Again, I do not believe that they would arouse any suspicion in these roles.”

“So,” queried Charles, “any objection to that plan? No? Good, then let’s get to work. I would like reports back from Guillaume, Im, Oscar, Almer, and Ludwig as soon as possible.”

### ***Special Agents Assigned to Lake Geneva***



**Im Possumble:** A native of Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he was handmade by a specialist. Im is an expert at both “hanging around” and at dealing with situations which might otherwise appear impossible to handle. He has been known to hang out at Alma Mater restaurants although that fact is often discovered only afterwards. He serves as a consultant in matters involving corporate restaurant spying and has even had a role on a mass media production that shows hidden cameras revealing restaurant and server inadequacies.



**Oscar Owl:** A native of Detroit, Michigan. Oscar is an expert at observation from high platforms, especially at night. He has been known to frequent wooded areas and to report back on nocturnal activities in these areas. Some of his friends refer to him, in jest, as a “hooter.”



**Almer Bear:** A native of Chicago—Almer is the mascot of the Alma Mater chain of restaurants. He has been known to enjoy his share of haute cuisine and is capable of holding his own in the most erudite discussion of fine food and beverage. He makes periodic visits, involving quality control and other matters, to each of the restaurants in the chain.



**Ludwig von Bearthoven:** A native of Troy, Michigan, and a member of the illustrious Gund family. Ludwig is from a musical family and serves as the corporate Director of Entertainment for the Alma Mater chain. He also has considerable “undercover” experience as his soft hugs have lulled many to sleep. This experience translates elsewhere in a natural manner.

## ***Investigative reports of the special agents.***



### **Report of Special Agent Almer.**

Well, Ludwig and I spent time at the TeaGarten, on the golf course, and on the pedestrian paths. I think that I learned the most, though, from being in the TeaGarten where I spent some time talking to the waiter, David. He told me that on the day Huey was killed Huey and Sophia had come there for lunch. David did not arrive when the place opened; his shift started a bit later. Nonetheless, he was there when Huey and Sophia arrived. He said they had an intimate little luncheon, eating from the same plate, feeding each other, and enjoying a martini or two each. They were there for about an hour. Then Huey left to play golf and David saw him again when delivered food and drink to Huey's group on the first tee. That was the last David saw of Huey. Sometime after all the commotion surrounding the murder, he said he saw Fern in the restaurant, eating alone. That was shortly before I arrived. So, I went over to talk to Fern and we had a nice conversation. She is a very interesting person and probably was excellent as support staff for Huey...that is, as medical-type support staff even though of course we all think there was more going on than just that. It turns out that Fern was in the Marines when she was younger. I gather she even knew one of the past Presidents of the United States...not sure why. Anyway, as she got older, she was able to turn her physical prowess and fine training into a job caring for infirm people. I tried to find out what was actually wrong with Huey, if anything, but she wasn't talking...claimed she was too upset to talk about him. That's about it, I think.



### **Report of Special Agent Ludwig.**

I don't really have anything to add to what Almer had to say about being in Alma Mater. We did play part of a round of golf, however. Almer is a much better golfer than am I; we did not see anything unusual, at all, as we moved along the fairways. I hit one shot harder than I have ever hit the ball...but, it went off to the side. When I went to find it, I saw Daisy, Huey's wife/widow, out on her patio. So, I picked up my golf ball and went over to see her. I am pretty good at comforting people, so I spent some time doing that. You know, she seems to be a really nice, sensitive person—but, heartbroken. She is also quite attractive, I think. I cannot for the life of me understand why Huey would engage in adulterous behavior when he had such a wonderful wife. She showed me pictures of their beautiful children and of their little grandchildren; she enjoyed sharing her family with me and of course you know that we teddy bears are suckers for little children. So, that's not really anything specific; just extra impression about someone directly involved about whom we previously knew next to nothing. Then I went back and played a bit more golf with Almer to give credence to our cover.





**Report of Special Agent Im.**

I took the day shift, hanging around on the wooded island while Oscar took a nap in a tree. I chose to hang down from a tree branch over the deck at Alma Mater, playing possum as appropriate. Anyway, that woman, Fern, is quite the bird-watcher. She watched them in the air; she watched them on the water. She was already there when I got there and she stayed past the end of my shift. Seeing an interesting bird seemed to really excite her; she had to restrain herself at times from jumping up and down and shouting. It appeared she spotted Egrets, Great Blue Herons, swans, Canada Geese, ducks of all sorts, as well as hawks and vultures. At one point, she vaulted over the deck and went down to the water, I presume to get a closer look at a bird on the water. She appeared to be quite athletic; that observation would tally with Almer's observations, too.



**Report of Special Agent Oscar.**

At dusk, I took over for the evening shift at the deck. Fern remained on the deck and now seemed just as enthused about looking at the stars. She tracked the moon from low on the horizon to higher in the sky; she may also have been following the progress of other constellations across the night sky. David told me that she had been hanging out on the deck to watch birds and stars with great frequency. She left when Alma Mater closed for the night, probably about midnight after their moonlight cruise that they have once a week.



**Report of Special Agent Guillaume.**

For starters, just let me say that I apologize for my appearance. Running around inside heating ducts has gotten me filthy and squashed the longer fur on my tail. I hope that Judy will take me back to the spa when my service in this regard is over. I would like to have a nice body shampoo, massage for my aching joints, and a custom tail-fluff. "Sure," Judy chimed

in, “I’d be happy to arrange for all of that for Monsieur Guillame—I’m sure they have not forgotten you!”

Anyway, here is what I did. To begin with, I tested the noise level by doing a tap dance in the duct work in our room. You didn’t seem to notice, although you did have Mozart’s Exsultate Jubilate (with Joan Sutherland singing the Alleluja) playing at a moderate volume, but I presumed that others in different rooms might have TV sets going, water running, and so forth. In any event, I was satisfied that I could avoid detection. Then I took some photos of our room through the vent (using my smartphone) to serve as a sort of benchmark as to how photos taken in this manner would look.



Now, I know that our room, 2112, is the fifth room down from the end room in the building that has a four-panel door wall (all the others having two- or three-panel door walls). So, as I went from building to building, I was able to locate the 112 room by such counting logic...there are of course no room numbers printed inside the duct work. I looked in each of the rooms numbered 1112, 3112, 4112, 5112, 6112, and 7112. In all cases, I saw no person in any of them. Some had been made up by housekeeping; others had not. It appeared from what I could see that the rooms were occupied by a single resident. When I looked in the bathrooms I saw only a single toothbrush and I saw makeup, lipstick, and materials I would associate with a female occupant, so I assume each of these rooms had one female occupant. Here, if you want to see some photos of these materials, I have them on my smartphone.

Then, I moved over to where I could look in the bedroom area a bit more carefully. One thing all these rooms had in common was a pair of men's underwear (briefs) in them that had not been put away—the briefs seemed to have clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades on them along with the letter 'T'. I didn't see other clothing lying around. Anyway, I presumed that these women were also bridge players.

You had also mentioned that you might like to have me look in other rooms, as well. I thought it might make sense to look in Huey's room, that Charles had told me was off on the dead end of a fork in the ramp part of the navigation system...it was not hard to find—there was a dead end in the ventilation network--and as far as I can tell this room is the only isolated one like it in the whole place, inside Building 3 (but of course I don't know the room number). It is very private, indeed. Daisy was there, crying and sobbing almost out of control and holding a pair of similar underwear with clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades and 'NT' on it. She muttered something about the NT standing for No Trump. I don't play bridge myself, so I'll leave the bridge interpretation to those who do know. That's about it...please let me know if you need me to go back into the system (while I am still a filthy mess).

### ***Charles's Report***

First of all, thanks so much for your outstanding efforts. Now I will share my findings with all of you. Really, the main thing I wanted to follow up on was to go back to the front desk and find out about this key situation—you may recall that I did get new keys for our room at night when Huey and company walked in on us, and you may also recall that the night manager said he would make suitable adjustments for the other 112 rooms when the day shift came on, but we don't know what the follow up was there.

So, I went back and talked to the day manager. The night manager had speculated that new clerks, not realizing that there are generally 7 distinct rooms all with the same three digit number, sometimes try to save themselves a bit of work by coding all the keys the same. Now, the day manager told me that that had happened once, ten years ago, and that

since that time all new personnel are carefully instructed about the encoding of keys. He doubted seriously that that had happened. So, he was as confused, and troubled, about the situation as I was.

The day manager arranged a special meeting of all staff who have the capability to encode keys and he invited me to join them. It turns out that when Huey registered, he registered not only for his room in the cul-de-sac that he and Daisy occupied, but also that he attempted to register for all rooms ending in 112, as places to support his medical support staff. Of course, the clerk processing this request was more than a bit stunned that a single guest would be renting this many rooms. Huey asked him to key all the 112 rooms the same; the clerk forgot to check and so gave him seven identical keys, not realizing that 2112 had been rented to someone else (us!). The code that came up in the code generator was the one that had already been assigned to our room...they keep it that way by default in case a key gets lost. Then, when we check out they change the code, but they keep it as is upon check-in. So, Huey now had seven identical keys—six for his medical support staff and one for himself, plus a different one to the room that he and Daisy shared. That explained what happened that night—Huey probably didn't misread any Braille...he didn't care...any 112 room (other than ours) would have served his purposes. He should have read the building number though...a careless act in his tangled web.

### ***Charles's Theory--Putting It All Together***

You have all done an absolutely outstanding job of bringing in relevant pieces to this puzzle. Here is a chain of logic that would sew them all together in a plausible manner. Of course, I do not know if it is actually correct, but if you all think it plausible as well, then I will turn it over to the police for their consideration and action.

As I think I have noted on previous occasions, people do not engage in actions of extreme risk, such as murder, unless they feel that that risk is justified...that the benefit the murder will bring outweighs the risk of being caught and losing their life. In essence, they need to feel as if their life is over if the person remains alive.

So, let's look at all the accumulated wisdom in that context and see how we can fit it all together and consider what inferences we might make and what conclusions we might draw.

Ludwig made an interesting observation. Why on Earth would any man with a wonderful family and a beautiful loving wife even think about ruining that situation by engaging in adulterous behavior? One further thing to note is that Huey was a man of great financial wealth and therefore power. I have noticed, given that I am regarded as a man of some power within the bridge world, that there are women out there who are attracted by power and want it (embodied in the man) for themselves. The usual strategy is that they flirt with the target male; if he is friendly back, they take that as a favorable response even though it might well not be, particularly if the man is not a sexist but just a friendly person. Once they make friends with the man, they begin to take him into their confidence and attempt to have private conversations for his ears only. The prowling woman may make claims that she can do everything the target male's wife can do...and more. That in turn may lead her, through subtly (or not so subtly) placed comments, to make negative insinuations about his wife. If he buys in to these discussions, I suspect that then it is not long before she comforts him in various ways. At this point, he may have been brainwashed into thinking that his loving wife is an awful person, rather than a fine person. The woman engaging in this activity will often rationalize it saying 'well, if he's really happily married then what I'm doing can't hurt'—but it does when another part of the tactic is to convert the happily married man into one who believes that he is unhappy. From what I have seen, I would guess that Sophia functioned in that manner and that Huey bought into it. Having gone down that road once, he was easy prey for others. So, Ludwig, that tells you how these things can happen, usually to men of fame, power, or wealth. If the man doesn't know to look for this, and stop the process when he sees it beginning, rather than being flattered by it, then who knows where it goes.

Then, that brings us back to the big question: why would someone murder Huey? There are probably any number of people who are glad he is gone. Most bridge players I know could not stand the man. All tournament

directors detested him—he was such a pest—he would harangue them for hours after a game, holding up scores, because something didn't go his way or whatever. But, these are not reasons for murder; the risk of the consequences for murder far outweigh the benefits of killing Huey for all of these individuals. Eric, on the other hand, was threatened by Huey for losing his livelihood; one might think that Eric is therefore a viable suspect. A little reflection, however, shows that not to be the case. I saw Eric directing a bridge tournament at the time of the murder; and, in any event, it seems doubtful that Huey would have had sufficient power with the ABC to get Eric permanently dumped (even though Huey might have thought that he did have such). Eric is smart and would know that. So, I would not view Eric to be a suspect, although I gather that the police have been questioning him quite a bit.

What about Huey's medical staff? That brings us to another set of interesting questions. Are they really medical staff? They were all women. Was "medical staff" simply a term he used to cover the fact that in reality they were all mistresses? I suspect that at least some of them had some credentials for medical matters and that independent of that they all functioned as his mistresses. From the comments I heard when Huey and a group mistakenly entered our room, I'd guess that some of them, at least, knew about others of them. Huey was presumably paying each of them in cash, offering them opportunity to travel free of charge and to live the high life. Why would one or more of them wish to kill the goose that kept laying golden eggs? There might be reasons not readily apparent, in which case any one of them might be a suspect, but nothing appeared evident on the surface.

Then, there is the question of Daisy. If she knew of her husband's activities she might feel that her life as a wife was over. Would such feeling cause her to kill her husband, along the lines of 'if I can't have him, then neither can anyone else'...maybe, but then again there are other ways of getting him out of her life, a normal response to adultery.

So, from looking at things from the perspective of logic cast in the risk/benefit context, no clear suspect emerges. That is why it became necessary to have Special Agents to gather more information.

Guillaume's information is critical. It puts to rest, clearly, the issue of whether Huey's so-called "medical staff" members were also involved as his mistresses. They were. Each one of them. Remember that when we checked in, Huey was showing off his underwear. He noted that the 'NT' stood for 'No Touch' and that on other pairs that he wore at selected times with selected women, there was instead the letter 'T', presumably for 'Touch.' Guillaume's photos clearly show the 'T' underwear in each of the 112 rooms, each occupied by a woman. These were his "conquests." He made a fool of his wife—told her that the 'NT' was for No Trump—of course she believed him. She trusted him. He apparently loved his wife in some weird way and would not have her partake of his dirty little secret involving letters on his bridge underwear. So, he wore the innocent underwear when in her presence.

Guillaume's outstanding work answers one question completely. Still, we are no closer to establishing suspects. But, we have a much greater understanding of the situation. By the way Guillaume, I do not believe we will need you to go back into the heating ducts...Judy, please schedule him at the Spa and get him anything he wants. He deserves it—spare no expense!

Im and Oscar both saw essentially the same thing out at the Alma Mater deck. One of Huey's staff, Fern, was apparently an avid bird-watcher and star-gazer. She spent many hours using the telescope on the deck to watch birds in the daylight and stars at night. But, what else might one see from that telescope? Might she have been able to look in the 112 rooms and see what action was going on in there? It would have been easy to do at night. So, why did she bother to spend so much of the day on the deck, too? Apparently she really did enjoy watching birds?

Now, I just recently received another report: from the Police. You will recall that Judy had bent over to examine the lie of Huey's golf ball and



then Huey was shot, and killed, with a single shot through the forehead. The Police said that this was the work of an expert marksman, probably a hired assassin. While that is nasty, to be sure, I am certain that Judy is grateful that the intended target, and not a nearby one, was hit! I know I am and I'm sure we all are. All that aside, who would hire an assassin?

Now, if we factor in Almer's conversation with the Police report and the observations of Im and Oscar, we may get somewhere. According Almer, Fern had served in the Marines and had possibly known a President of the United States. One reason that could account for knowing the President would be if she had been a Marine Sharpshooter assigned to the group protecting the President, in addition to the Secret Service, as he gave speeches in football stadia and other large, difficult, unprotected venues.

She would clearly then have had the capability to shoot with the required accuracy. If she had concealed a weapon inside the telescope, she could shoot it when the opportunity arose. That would account for her desire to be there during the daytime. But, why would she need to be there at night? Was being a peeping-tom the real reason? I think not. I think she needed to be on the deck during the entire time Alma Mater was open in order to protect the weapon hidden in the telescope. If someone else came along and wanted to use it, she would feign enthusiasm for what she was doing and then tell them she would soon be done, encourage them to have a drink inside on her tab, and tell them she would come in and get them when done. Of course, in that hiatus, she would hide her weapon in the bushes, to retrieve it when they were done and put it back in the telescope when alone again.

But, no one did come. Remember from Almer's comments, there is implication that David did not know that she was on the deck because he had not opened the restaurant that day; she came earlier than he did and he was busy inside. When the opportunity arose and she had a clear view of Huey on the golf course, she shot Huey, and then removed the weapon carefully while jumping up and down in her enthusiasm for bird watching (Im could not see anything but the jumping), and vaulted off the deck and

took the weapon down to the water and put it in the lake, where I suspect the Police will find it once led to the location.

So, that explains how the murder could happen. It does not explain why, however. Her motive is an old one. Here is the high-profile woman with her career ended by being too old to continue to serve as a prominent member of the Marine Corps. She had plenty of medical skills and could easily sell her services to someone who needed them and could pay her well and offer her a life of travel and interesting times (much as the Marines had). In the beginning, she got what she wanted—the thrill of the travel with a high roller was interesting and fun. But, she had not counted on the prostitution angle...no mention had been made of that at the outset. Her altruistic nature got the better of her. She told Huey that she would tell Daisy of his exploits and she had gathered a great deal of evidence using modern networks, as we have...she was well trained in gathering intelligence. To keep her quiet, Huey paid her large sums of cash and gave her anything she wanted. But, despite his great wealth, Huey either was, or felt he was, being bled dry. He told Fern that he was going to explain all to Daisy and beg her forgiveness...that he could not go on paying her extortion. Fern saw her own life ending...already, she had lost one career to which she had devoted her life. Now she had found a substitute life, and that too was to come to an end. In her warped mind, the risk of the consequences of murder were less significant than the loss of yet another career/life ending action. And, of course, because she was an expert in marksmanship and intelligence; she was confident she could fool the local authorities.

She might have gotten away with it had there not been both a power failure (and consequent strangeness with keys) and a fire. Those tipped us off to the presence of Huey's network of concubines: the power failure, and associated mis-key, to a group of illicit contacts and the fire to the interconnection among buildings through the ventilation system enabling Guillaume to collect positive evidence of this network. In fact, she might have gotten away with Huey's murder had Huey, himself, not have become tangled in his web of deception with consequent sloppiness in reading Braille! In the end, he was his own worst enemy.

Well, what do you all think? “Charles,” Judy said, “call the Police and tell them all of this. It makes perfect sense. You talk to them and Guillaume and I will go over to the Spa and get him all pretty again!”

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\* All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.