MYSTERIES, BRIDGE, AND A CULINARY TWIST

B. K. Barry
(nom de plume of Sandra Lach Arlinghaus when the latter is writing fiction)

Revised earlier individual short stories, modified to make a newer collection.

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* Primary contact for this document: sarhaus@umich.edu
Frontispiece
Preface

Read about the adventures of Charles and Judy Earl, a fictitious academic couple that travels the U.S. to bridge tournaments as they develop their side business, the Alma Mater restaurant chain (from St. Louis through Providence chapters). Their adventures often cause them to note their real-life interests in geography, mathematics and logic, tournament duplicate bridge, and haute cuisine. The fictional business is named for, and inspired by, the career of the real-life Alma Lach (Grande Diplome de Cordon Bleu de Paris). She greatly enjoyed these stories and always wanted to know more about “her” latest restaurant and possible adventures in haute cuisine derivatives delivered to the masses. The real-world Alma Lach Culinary Collections are housed in the Hannah Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center of the Joseph Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago.

I hope you enjoy my collection of short stories, organized from earliest occurring adventure to most recent—look for me, Binker Bear, in them (using my full first name, instead of my stylized nom de plume of BK—for Binker, and Barry—for Bear) along with my friends! Please accept with this book a beautiful floral frontispiece made of vegetables created by, carved by, and photographed by, Alma. The butterfly is carved from a potato, soaked to soften it, and then ‘butterflied’ to open it up with the spine of the culinary action following the body of the natural butterfly shape. Beet stems, triangular in cross-section, were cut part way through, with differential spacing employed to force changes in curvature and a twisted appearance. Alma also made the logo embedded in the cover, derivative of the Les Dames d’Escoffier International logo, for the Les Dames d’Escoffier Chicago Chapter (of which she was an initial member). It is currently in use by the Ann Arbor Chapter (of which Alma was a founding member).

Best wishes from B. K. with my photo and autograph!

All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental.
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Chapter 1: Memphis

Bridge Murder

Arrival in Memphis

“What I love about the game, Judy, is the logic of it, the puzzle of it all,” Charles Earl explained to his wife. Charles, a distinguished professor of pure mathematics specializing in algebraic graph theory, had another life in the world of tournament duplicate bridge. It was, of course, the card game of bridge to which he referred. “It’s great to be here in Memphis; the home-area of the American Bridge Congress (ABC), and even better to be here for an American Bridge Tournament (ABT),” Charles continued. “Sure,” commented Judy, “I will see if the The Emporium has a branch here where I can go play trivia and enjoy some local bar food.” Judy and Charles shared many interests; but, they had divergent ones, as well. “I also want to do something in association with the Mississippi River—that’s what I think of when I think of Memphis,” she said. Six weeks a year, at three ABTs, they pursued separate interests, but did so “together.” The rest of the year they did almost everything else as a unit.

“Even though a few Foundations and such have already been meeting (and no doubt been playing some rounds of bridge), I can hardly wait for the regular full-Board meetings to begin,” Charles
said anxiously. His passion for the game extended well beyond the play of the cards, although he was outstanding at that, ranking in the top 500 in the US on a regular basis. What he enjoyed even more was bridge administration; at that, too, he had risen to the top, as he sat on the Board of Directors of the national organization (the ABC). Charles’s expertise in logic led him in many different directions that involved clear, orderly thinking.

“Ten days of bridge plus four days of meetings—how lucky can a guy get,” Charles said. The usually mild-mannered, brilliant mathematician became lively and talkative, even effusive, at the thought of yet another trip to a national bridge tournament and Board of Directors meetings.

“Here we are, Judy…I think this is our hotel. I’ll turn the car over to the valet; you go and start checking in and I’ll meet you at the front desk.” The couple checked in and went to their room on the 22nd floor with a view of the river. “I’m going up to “The Suite,” Charles said. He meant the hotel’s “Presidential Suite,” occupied by the current President of the ABC, Ryan, and his wife, Jacquie. They were a delightful couple. Spouses of the Board often hung out together, and because Judy’s interests in life centered more on things that typically, at least in this part of the world, were regarded as “male” rather than “female,” she often went to places with male spouses of Board members. She enjoyed museums, field trips, sports, discovering how things work, and environmental puzzles. Her interests were wide-ranging whereas Charles’s tended to be more focused.

Life in The Presidential Suite
As Charles began to head up to The Suite on the 30th floor, he met colleagues, Kent and Joe, heading toward the elevator from their
meeting room on 22. “Are you guys going to be ready to go walking tomorrow morning?” asked Charles. “Sure,” Kent said, “four miles as usual—meet at 7:30 tomorrow morning in the lobby—I have a route planned and I have my pedometer—we'll walk from our hotel here to the hotel with the ducks in the lobby, and then across Beale Street to the Mississippi, and then back to our hotel.” “Is Sarah here?” Charles asked Kent, “Judy will be coming up to the Suite soon.” “Yes, Charles, she is; but right now I am more than a bit distracted—that guy Herb was acting up in the Human Rights Foundation meeting that Joe and I just came from—his behavior is incredible!” The elevator doors opened, and the group headed off to The Suite—a remarkable social network with a life all its own.

Each year the ABC funds the Presidential Suite as a place where its Board of Directors can talk, socialize, see entertainers, and work in unofficial ways outside the formal meeting rooms. Some might even think that more business gets conducted in The Suite than in the formal meetings. At the very least, it is a firm outlet for advocating for one's own agenda prior to decision-making meetings. During the meetings, only Board members and their spouses may use The Suite (in addition, of course, to ABC staff).

“Welcome, Charles…Kent…Joe,” said Ryan, “let me get you a drink and then come on over and look at this spectacular view!” “I'll just have soda pop,” said Charles and Kent in unison. “I'll just have scotch and water…you got bottled water? I don’t drink local, anywhere,” said Joe. With that, Joe went to talk to Ellen and Sarah, the wonderful women who helped the ABC President for the year run The Suite. “Well, Joe, you got lucky…here’s our last bottle of water…I’ll go get some more, but Sarah if anyone else wants water in a drink they will have to have tap water or wait until I get back,” noted Ellen. “Thanks,” said Joe, “it’s a fine drink—and after that
ridiculous meeting it tastes much better than usual.”

“So, Kent, what happened at the meeting of that Foundation?” asked Charles. “WELL,” said Kent, “we had elections to determine officers of the Foundation. Of course, you know that I am one and have been one for many years, including as an ex officio one when I was ABC President. So, naturally, I was in charge of handling the vote count. I think you also know that Herb doesn’t seem to have very many friends. So, when he declared himself as a candidate for the presidency of the Foundation, another member immediately threw his hat in the ring. Herb had of course been going to each of the members to twist their arms to vote for him. You know he’s such a pest…hard to get rid of…so, even though I don’t like to think that the others would say they would vote for him and then not do so, I would certainly understand why otherwise honorable people might engage in such tactics. Anyway, there are 11 Board members (two of us, only, are ABC Board members), so 6 votes are needed to win. Herb only got three votes. When I announced the count, he hopped up and down, shaking his fists; he demanded to know who had failed to vote for him. At that point, I got Joe to verify the vote; we reported it to ABC Staff, left the meeting and came up here with the ballots. The others are still down there. One of them texted me a few minutes ago and said that Herb is running around the room berating the people who said they would vote for him--calling them liars, threatening to sue them for some sort of slander that he imagines, and making threatening physical gestures in addition to the verbal assault. I have the ballots with me and right now I am going to explain all this to Ryan and he and Joe and I will take the ballots and lock them up in Ryan’s safe in the private study attached to the public area of The Suite.” “Wow! That’s quite extreme, even for Herb,” Charles noted in an even tone.
With that, Ryan, Joe, and Kent headed off into the private part of The Suite. “But Charles, come on over here...see that island out in the Mississippi, that’s called ‘Mud’ Island...look at the beautiful condos...quite the place to live, I understand,” announced Jacquie, Ryan’s wife. She continued, “I hear that the condo owners don’t even need flood insurance, can you imagine that...the base level of the condos is apparently higher than the western banks of the river in Arkansas so when the Mississippi floods, the runoff will go to the west.” Charles wondered where Judy was...this was the sort of thing she would love to hear about. “Judy, where are you...come on up to The Suite...Jacquie is telling us about all sorts of fascinating things” Charles quipped into his clamshell phone. “I'll be up there once I finish setting up my laptop so I can get at files in my computing cloud. I already set up your laptop,” Judy noted while talking to Charles on her smartphone—“Gotta get the networks all set...you’re a graph theorist—you should appreciate network analysis!” Charles did, of course, appreciate it-- but only abstractly—he was not one to tinker with machinery.

Shortly, Judy started getting ready to head up to The Suite. “Who cares about unpacking the clothes,” she thought, “just take care of the important stuff like the computers.” But first, she went into the hallway to find which door hid the bank of freight elevators. She did not like to take glass elevators: the vertical motion combined with the lateral view that moved was at best disconcerting and at worst had been known to make her sick. Thus, in a new site, she acclimated gradually to the glass elevators, taking an opaque freight elevator in the early part of their stay. “Aha,” she said with the ring of experience in her voice, “that looks like it.” Then she took one piece of duct tape that she had taped to her forearm (another remained on her other forearm) and wrapped it around the closure lock on the door that had been left ajar. A pre-cut notch in either
end of the tape fit snugly around the handle. Now she should have
easy access without bothering hotel staff and, hopefully, they would
assume that one of them had put the tape there and not remove it
for several days.

When Judy arrived in The Suite, Ryan and Charles were talking at
the door. “Charles, I want you to stand in the hallway here…you cut
a dignified and imposing figure. I do not want Herb in here,” said
Ryan. He pointed to the posted sign on the door which announced
to the world that The Suite was private and available only to ABC
Directors (and spouses or partners) and ABC Staff. “If Herb makes
a move to come in, at least point out that sign to him—that'll give me
grounds to throw him out,” stated Ryan. “I can do that much,” said
Charles, “but you do know that while I am firm and have strong
opinions, I do try to remain civil and pleasant in any event.” “That’s
fine,” said Ryan…”you do that part, I'll take it from there…don't
worry about that!”

The hotel hallway began to crowd up with animated Board
Members, delighted to see each other in sincere gestures of
friendship, on the one hand, and equally delighted to have a chance
to press the flesh and share their own viewpoints about bridge
administration. As a group of fairly tall Directors approached The
Suite, Charles noticed a small, slender man nestled among them.
Charles took advantage of the presence of the group…”please note
the sign on the door…I see that all but one of you are permitted to
enter tonight—welcome, and I hope you enjoy yourselves.
Herb, please step aside…I want to make certain that you have read and understood the sign on the door.” “OK, Charlie-boy…of course I can read” yelled Herb “but I’m surprised you can…I see you are really packing it on (as he punched Charles in the stomach)...better not go swimming in Lake Erie…otherwise downtown Cleveland might flood—ha, ha!!”

“Eureka,” noted Charles sardonically (as he thought that a mere extra 10 pounds should really not have elicited this response)..."Archimedes’ bathtub was smaller than Lake Erie. Please note, my name is ‘Charles’.” “What’s that have to do with anything, Charlie; you are an idiot, as well—get out of my way—I am going in to get what is rightfully mine!” asserted Herb. As Herb shoved on past him, Charles thought that he did (but perhaps shouldn’t) hope that Herb would indeed get what was coming to him.

“Where’s your jerky President, Sarah, and while you’re at it get me a scotch and water, woman…” commanded Herb. Sarah handed him a drink and went to get Ryan—she felt like throwing the drink at Herb but restrained herself. Herb took a few swallows of his drink and headed on over to the food, sneered at it, and walked over to an area filled with people. Ryan, in the meantime, had gone out the private entry from the study to the hallway and was engaged in conversation with Charles at the entrance to The Suite.
Another group of Directors came along, and with them came an Elvis Impersonator. “Who are you?” Ryan asked the Impersonator. “Your wife ordered me as a surprise for the group…nice, huh?” said the man in the garish bejeweled white satin suit. “Oh, yeah, sure,” said Ryan, “that is the sort of thing she would do…she knows there are a bunch here who loved his music—hope you will sing ‘Hound Dog’.”

“What’s all the noise?” Ryan said, as he ran in to The Suite from the hallway. Herb had slammed down his half-finished drink and had then hopped up on the marble table in the center of The Suite. “Listen up, you fools,” screamed Herb, “your great President allows this to go on…vote fraud…who’s behind it?…I had nine votes yet the counters said I had only three. I KNOW that can’t be true, I was promised votes by nine members…give me the ballots! I demand them! They are mine … mine … mine! I am the rightful President of the ABC Human Rights Foundation … with nine votes.” Ryan motioned to the Impersonator to begin singing “Hound Dog” and followed through on that arm motion by swooping Herb off his self-fashioned podium and shoving Herb out of The Suite door into the carpeted hallway, while singing in unison with the Impersonator “you ain’t no friend of mine!” “Pretty cute, huh, Charles,” said Ryan….”good timing…maybe I should go into show business, too!” “Ryan, might I get you a beer?” queried the ever-hospitable hostess, Ellen. “How about a scotch and water, instead,” said Ryan. “Well, I have to wait for the bottled water to come up from downstairs,” noted Ellen.
Just then the others from the Foundation meeting came upstairs...there were 11 members: 2 from the ABC Board of Directors (currently Kent and Joe) and the remainder, like Herb, were bridge players from around the world who had volunteered to serve after presenting credentials to the entire Board of Directors of the ABC. While that group of folks was not part of the group eligible to enter The Suite, after the altercation involving Herb, Ryan thought it made good sense to invite them in and talk to them. “You are lucky...you missed seeing me throw Herb (literally throw him) out of The Suite a short time ago...I’ll have that beer, never mind the scotch and water,” said Ryan. “Don’t worry about anything; we have the ballots secured and he is not elected. The count that was announced was correct. Don’t let him intimidate you. Now, you are in charge! I may be able to invoke Executive Privilege and have him removed from your Board and any other ABC boards on which he currently serves. Congratulations on standing your ground,” stated Ryan to these Human Rights Foundation Board members. Following his somewhat formal congratulatory message, Ryan took the group over to the bar, encouraged them to have whatever they wished, showed them to the food tables, and just generally served as their genial host.

Things began to settle down and there was even laughter as the Impersonator, who had just returned from a ‘musician’s break’, began singing “All Shook Up.” It was not hard to imagine, Judy thought, that Herb might be a bit shook up—his existing knee problems were about all that slowed him down in terms of standing on “his own two feet”!
Judy also recalled that Ryan could not get the drink he really wanted because there was a temporary shortage of bottled water at the bar. She tried to work her way past the beautiful fruit salad and elaborately laid out table of grazing snacks that Ellen and Sarah had worked hard on all day. There were hot meatballs (both beef and turkey), prosciutto, roast beef, ham, cheddar, Brie, Camembert, pickles of all kinds, freshly baked breads and spreads, cream cheese loaves draped with pepper jelly and other exotic spreads, and carved fruit and vegetable platters. There was an array of tempting desserts from homemade pies to petit fours to seven layer cakes. Mousses of different kinds served as a fitting finale. Naturally, when one was near either the food area or the open bar, it was difficult to navigate around the milling crowd. Judy did manage to make it to the bar where she told Sarah that she would go down to the room and get some extra bottled water (Charles and Judy always brought their own when they travelled). Eventually, Judy made it to the door to the hallway, where she was intercepted by last year’s President and her husband, one of Judy’s spouse pals on the tours. They chatted pleasantly about recent travels, tours, and various other topics of mutual interest.

Finally, Judy broke loose and headed to the elevator. On her way, she remembered that she was not yet acclimated to the glass elevator. She headed over to the door for the freight elevators. It was locked. She had taped the one on 22 but had she forgotten to tape the one on 30? She pulled up the sleeves on her long-sleeved shirt…no tape on either forearm. “Well, I must have forgotten to tape it (easy to do when exiting the freight area) and knocked the tape off my arm in The Suite,” she said to herself. So, she went back to The Suite to see if someone would go down to 22 and bring the freight elevator up to 30 and let her in…she did not wish to make a mess in the glass elevator. Ryan offered, as he had so many
times in the past (in addition of course to Charles), to assist with elevator arrangements. He went down to 22 in the glass elevator and was able to enter the area with the freight elevators because Judy had taped the access door (and the tape had not been removed). Both freight elevators appeared to be in use, but eventually one of them came and he took it to 30. He jumped out of the elevator, pushed buttons to call them both, and ceremoniously opened the hallway door for Judy. Now, the other elevator was coming. When the door opened, Judy looked in and gasped, vomited all over the place, and fainted on the floor. Herb was dangling in a noose from the elevator ceiling, clearly dead.

**Helping Judy Recover…**

“Come on, Judy, lie down on the bed,” Charles said when they arrived back in their room. “Ryan has called the police and he will let us know when they want to talk to us about these shocking events. In the meantime, we need to get into shape to do so. Let me help you—you have experienced a horrible ordeal. Here, eat this high-fiber, high-protein cereal bar and drink this bottle of water. Eat it up and drink the whole bottle of water.” Judy nodded agreement. After she was done, Charles cleaned her up and generally took charge—“Now, let’s take a nap for a while—here, let me hold you.” Judy rolled over into Charles’s loving arms—she was so lucky to have such a wonderful husband she thought as she drifted off into a sleep made more comfortable by being held firmly and reassuringly by the man she had loved all of her adult life.

“What time is it?” asked Judy, rousing from an alternately fitful and comfortable nap. “It’s time to get up and discuss strategy—as a ‘power of two’,” Charles stated firmly. “You know,” he continued, “that when we work as a team the combined effect is far greater than a simple additive one of each of our efforts…that’s because we
think alike in many, but not all, ways; and, where we do not think alike, we fill gaps in the equation so that everything fits, as it should—that is the ‘power of two’ that we joke (half seriously) about.”

“Yes,” Judy noted, “effective communication is central—shall we invoke our ‘Brain Trust’ of thoughtful communicators?” Charles and Judy both enjoyed collecting Teddy Bears…they were “pets” that required no care, gave hugs freely, didn’t eat, and didn’t need to be walked, groomed, or cleaned up after. Furthermore, the couple often used them as ways to communicate thoughts in a playful, but sometimes meaningful, manner. “Sure,” giggled Charles, “of course we didn’t bring them with us (in their physical forms) but they are really part of our worlds of abstraction and virtual reality so they are always with us in spirit.” “Introducing,” he continued with a grand gesture, “the Earl Family Brain Trust and Team of Special Agents Assigned to Memphis!”

**Theodore E. Bear:** 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.
**Binker Bear:** Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, *When We Were Very Young*] “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.

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**Tine E. Bear:** 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Earl Family: Special Agents Assigned to Memphis</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. C. Beale Bear:</strong> A native of Memphis—still a teenager in a leather, zippered jacket, but a thoughtful sort that blends in easily with a crowd his age. A.C. Beale has been playing tournament level duplicate bridge for his entire life...he says he was born into it, and perhaps he was. He is the youngest Grand Master in that world.</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="A. C. Beale Bear" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shade E. Bear:</strong> Also a native of Memphis. Shade E. is very proud of his beautiful hair and feels it sets him apart from the other bears, whom he views to be bald. His preoccupation with his hair leads him not to be taken seriously by many...a useful attribute for an otherwise altruistic spirit functioning in an undercover function (a natural function for a teddy bear). He is quite comfortable in his “blue suede skin.”</td>
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<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Shade E. Bear" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guillaume R. Squirrel:</strong> A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in otherwise drab, large area/height, surroundings in which swiftness of</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Guillaume R. Squirrel" /></td>
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movement is helpful. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.

| **Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou:** Like Binker, Eeyore is also named after a character from A. A. Milne’s classic children’s work and like Binker is originally from Paris’ Galeries Lafayette. Eeyore worries about his tail, of course, but in recent years has learned to enjoy greatly the fact that real-world versions of himself, an endangered species, are once again rising in number. He is a kind and thoughtful, though stubborn, creature. His plodding ways and stubborn persistence, along with his gray coat, make him an ideal undercover agent in complex, but physically bounded, situations that appear drab in color. He persists until he gets to the bottom of things. |

Charles knew that casting the situation in the abstract “teddy” world would help Judy, who is hyper-sensitive, to cope with the nasty events that had begun to unfold around her. He needed to get her to channel her large imagination in constructive ways.

**The Investigation of Possible Solution Paths**

“Now, let’s get to work,” said Judy. “How about,” she continued, “if we go down to the local branch of ‘The Emporium’ and play a little trivia…it’s only 10:00p.m. here so that should work…it’s near Beale Street…we can walk it. Furthermore, we can take the Brain Trust and A. C. Beale with us” (she winked at Charles).

“I'll just have a soda pop,” Charles told the waitress at The Emporium, “and maybe some chicken wings, plain, with ranch on the side.” “I will have a draught light beer” said Judy “and an order
of nachos with chili, guacamole, ground beef, and extra cheese. Also, please bring us each a gameboard box so we can play trivia.”

The barroom trivia that the couple liked to play was in some ways similar to duplicate bridge. In bars throughout the United States, everyone was playing the same game at the same time. It was all computerized; first, you competed against other patrons in the bar playing the game, and then the scores from one bar were pitted against scores from other bars across the country, all in real time. Your enemies became your allies—an exercise in world peace that Theodore E. Bear greatly appreciated. The game involved an elegantly-conceived use of computer technology that both Charles and Judy appreciated; they hoped that someday tournament duplicate bridge might follow a similar path...they noted that it’s on the way now, but not there yet. Then, they signed on using their registered player handles, Judy as “Binker” (another persona) and Charles as “CWE” (his initials).

They played two games and ate their food...not much conversation, just an unwinding time...Judy won the first game, Charles won the second. That put both of them on the Big Board of monthly results for that bar, but they failed to scratch in the top 20 nationwide.

Charles was creative in his logical approach to the game, making him the superior guesser of the two. Judy’s “out of the box” imagination occasionally yielded correct answers out of the blue (when she had had no clue as to the correct answer). Their respective abilities at this simple five-part multiple choice game also reflected components of their mental abilities in other arenas, as well.
“Now,” Charles said to Judy, “instead of thinking about parallel paths between duplicate bridge and duplicate trivia, let’s think about possible paths that might lead to a solution to this murder…OK?” “Yes, Charles,” Judy replied.

“Let’s start,” Charles began, “by thinking about anything that was out of the ordinary, or unexpected—could be something small or large—an out of place detail or whatever.” “That’s a good idea,” countered Judy, “I noticed that the bar was out of bottled water; that doesn’t happen—Ellen and Sarah are so well-organized. I also noticed that there was no duct tape on the door on the 30th floor and none on my second arm—that doesn’t often happen—sometimes I forget, but I really didn’t think I had this time.” “In addition,” continued Judy, “I noted that the Impersonator was clothed in a white silk jumpsuit with some black, a black shirt, and white gloves (he had an Elvis look to his head) but…he was wearing brown penny loafers….he should not have been wearing brown shoes with a black and white outfit.”

“It’s interesting,” Charles noted, “that you mention the Impersonator, Judy. I was in the hallway when he came to The Suite along with a crowd of others. He told Ryan that Jacquie (although he referred to her as simply ‘your wife’) had hired him. Ryan took it at face value, as I suppose one naturally would, and welcomed him to The Suite. I might have been a bit more suspicious…it’s hard to say…but, it was an unexpected event.”

“I think,” continued Charles, “that we will need to keep our eyes wide open in the quest for more items of this sort that will no doubt come up as the investigation proceeds…someone may trip himself up that way. Tine E. Bear is a great advocate of this sort of approach—of noticing the ‘small’. I’m sure the local police department will do outstanding work in resolving this case, but it never hurts for them to
have extra input from observant folks. I know that to be true based on your volunteer work, Judy, with our police department at home.”

“Yes, Charles, that’s all true,” said Judy, “now let’s organize what we do have and think about possible paths to send our ‘agents’ out on. Once we have their reports back, you can take the reports and proceed as the evidence, or lack thereof, suggests. So, let’s lay out direction—I will help them with computer and Internet research for their reports.” “It seems to me that what we need to know about,” said Charles, “are matters associated with the Impersonator and matters associated with tap water for drinking…at least those should be facts we can get at the outset and then logically piece together directions for further research. Judy, you and ‘the boys’ pursue those angles; I will continue talking to folks around the hotel to see what I can learn.”

**Initial Possible Solution Paths**

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<th><strong>Beale Street:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Undercover Agent, A. C. Beale Bear.</strong></td>
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**Mission:**
Find out if there are any Elvis Impersonators who perform there who wear brown penny loafers with their black and white satin, or other, costumes.
IMaGe Monograph #29:
B. K. Barry
Mysteries, Bridge, and a Culinary Twist

Follow along with A.C. Beale on your smartphone.

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<tr>
<th>Graceland:</th>
<th>Undercover Agent, Shade E. Bear.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mission:</td>
<td>Study Elvis’s actual clothing to see if there are any occurrences of brown penny loafers. Look at general style of Elvis garb.</td>
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Follow along with Shade E. on your smartphone.
Mud Island, Mississippi River Display, Mud Island Park Riverwalk: Undercover Agent, Guillaume R. Squirrel.

Mission:
Study the engineering of fluid dynamics along the river course as it might affect the drinking water distribution network for the city.

Follow along with Guillaume on your smartphone.

Wastewater Treatment Plant just beyond the north end of Mud Island: Undercover Agent, Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou.

Mission:
Determine if cross-contamination between water and sewer networks might be possible.
Follow along with Eeyore on your smartphone.

*Investigative Report of A.C. Beale*

Last night I spent from 10:00 p.m., when we all arrived at The Emporium, until 6:00 a.m. going into establishments up and down Beale Street. A number of them have Elvis Impersonators and a number of them were able to give me information about how to hire one of them. I had them check their records and not one of them went to our hotel on the night in question. So, the Impersonator in The Suite appears not to be one that works on Beale Street. While on Beale Street, I used my per diem from you to enjoy some outstanding Barbecue…ribs and pulled pork are my favorites. While eating in various establishments, I also looked around to see what the well-dressed Elvis Impersonator might wear (I’m sure that Shade E will soon have historical information for you, from primary sources at Graceland, as well). I saw no brown penny loafers—pointed toe boots (white) with a stacked heel were the most common.

- Most common: white suit with gold beaded trim and gold belt with large gold buckle, flared pant legs, a stand-up collar, jacket open at the top revealing either a red or black shirt with white, red, or black boots with a pointed toe and stacked heel.
- Black suit, embroidered with gold beads/jewels and black shoes
- Purple suit with gold beads and belt similar to that of Shade E. with tan boots with a two-inch stacked heel.
• Brown suit with gold trim, red panels in lower sleeves and below the knee with red boots, pointed toe, and stacked heel.
• Blue suit with red and silver beads, red, silver, or blue boots.
• Red suit with standup collar, gold beaded trim, white shirt and white boots with pointed toe and stacked heel.
• Black suit with gold and silver beaded trim, red shirt, and red boots or black slip-ons.
• Ivory suit with gold trim, red shirt, and ivory or gold boots with pointed toe and stacked heel.

Investigative Report of Shade E. Bear

I’ve been through the whole place at Graceland. I see a white silken, almost light yellow, jumpsuit on display there with associated ivory/light yellow shoes. There are a number of suits displayed in glass cases. Also, I see white and light blue jumpsuits—there are even some for sale here. Most slip on shoes appear to be black or blue (of course) and are not made the same way that penny loafers are—rather, there is, for example, a strap of gold, perhaps saying “Elvis,” across the instep. One pair of slip-ons is made of two-toned leather, tan around the outside and dark brown over the toe with some sort of ornamental strap across the instep—not a penny loafer. Other blue slip-ons look more like slippers and appear to be made of suede. There are also tie, oxford style, shoes--some blue; others look more like saddle oxfords; yet others look more like sneakers. Also, there are black and white wingtips. Finally, there are boots of many colors and styles. I see one pair of what might be called “penny loafers” in a very chunky style and of bluish cast in color, perhaps made of worn suede. There are also incredibly garish looking slip-ons with gold and light blue patterns all over them. I would say that
generally a great deal of thought went into the entire package—that a conscious effort was made to have the shoes an integral part of the entire outfit, although certainly one might see an all black outfit with black slip-ons and white socks.

**Investigative Report of Guillaume R. Squirrel**

I have run through the full length of the River Walk that represents the 1000 mile journey of the Mississippi, with 30 inches representing 1 mile so that the entire length of my run was about 2,000 feet. My stride is about 6 inches, so that’s 4,000 of my strides. Of course, I did need to do a bit of additional lateral scampering to stay out from under foot of the many tourists. No one suspected my reconnaissance work. During the course of my travels, I saw nothing particularly unusual about the described course of the river. In fact, the engineering management plan in place rivals that of even the most carefully engineered squirrel’s nest. Rivers and trees have a lot in common—they have hierarchical feed into them from the tiny branches, to longer branches, to the largest branches, and thence to the trunk and finally to the outlet where an inverted branching pattern tends to develop, either in a body of water (such as the Gulf of Mexico) on in the underground root system of a tree. While studying and associated map, I noted one place to the north of Mud Island where there appears to be some sort of outflow from a pipe into the river, as revealed by the characteristic inverted pattern, but I assume that Eeyore will find out more about that when he visits the wastewater treatment facility there.
Well, I decided to do a bit of research of my own, prior to going over to the actual site of the wastewater treatment plant just to the north of Mud Island. It seems that the Environmental Protection Agency has been working with them to eliminate unauthorized overflows of untreated raw sewage. Now, this project, as part of a comprehensive Clean Water Act, has been going on for a while (for perhaps more than one year). So, one would think that cross-contamination would not be likely. But, I supposed I needed to trudge on over there and look around a bit. So I did. Here’s an account of what I did.

I walked along the road that appears to enter the place. Here’s a mapped view, from overhead (below). Now, as I was walking along the road, there were numerous giant trucks, saying ‘yeast’ on them. Perhaps they use the yeast as some sort of biological agent in wastewater treatment—seems to me I might have heard of such a thing. I don’t really know…but we, from Poitou, need to speculate (about all sorts of things) lest we become extinct as a breed.
So, being a friendly sort, I followed where the trucks were coming from and went on into the structure associated with the trucks. A nice gentleman, named Ed, asked me how he might be helpful. I explained to him that the Baudet from Poitou is a tried and true means of hauling heavy objects; that we are quite reliable and do not require the sort of expensive fuel oil his trucks might require.

Additionally, I explained that we were an endangered species and that I knew he and others were working with the EPA so thought he might be receptive to other forms of environmental protection. After all, once a species is gone altogether you don’t know what unintended consequences in the balance of nature might arise. In 1977 there were only 44 of us left on the entire planet. There are more now and our numbers are slowly increasing. But, we need all the help we can get...a happy Baudet de Poitou is a good thing...and to be happy we need food and shelter for our
families….hence, jobs. So, I told Ed that I wondered if he might have any jobs for us, perhaps in hauling, but whatever he might need.

Ed said he was touched by this story but really just wasn’t sure where we might fit in, especially as the city modernizes its infrastructure. He offered to show me around and of course I was pleased to be offered such a tour. I am not a sanitation engineer, so I’m not sure that my understanding is that clear, but at least I can share some and offer, for your consideration, references that are more authoritative.

I gather that the sewage comes through pipes, by gravitational force, to vented fields, or covered lagoons, where it is stored and subjected to biological treatment. From there, it is sent to extract water from it (hence, “dewatered”). Then, the remaining dried cakes of material are stored in a surface disposal facility. The biogas generated by the covered lagoon system is sold to a nearby industry for electricity generation.

I didn’t think to ask him what they did with the water that was removed, but I’m confident from reading these references that they handle that situation, too. Guillaume noticed, from looking at the map above, some white foam in the river. Ed gave me a reference to that issue, linked to this QR code.
Although I had no scientific references to offer Ed in return, I thought he might enjoy this story about alleged yeast use on the farms of Poitou in France. You see, so the tale goes (not the donkey’s tail), there is a species of bird that likes to build its nest in the thick manes of the Poitou donkeys. This practice is more than a bit disgusting and has a number of health concerns associated with it. But, if the farmer sprinkles some yeast in the mane of the donkey, any birds already there pick up and leave immediately, never to return; no new nests ever result. Why? (I can’t help but chortle when I haul on these lines),

*Yeast is Yeast,*  
*And Nest is Nest,*  
*And Never the Mane Shall Tweet!*

Ed laughed, “a little Kipling goes a long way!” Sharing tall tales with friends is nice. I wanted Ed to know how much I appreciated his caring, scientific approach and I feel convinced that it is not possible that there is cross-contamination of the drinking water from the wastewater. I have no proof, of course, just the satisfaction of knowing a fine pubic official, eager to share solid information, whom I found trustworthy.

**Charles’s Report**

While Judy and “the boys” were busy following one strategy outside the hotel on field reconnaissance, I spent time within the hotel talking to various folks about the recent tragedy. I began by trying to piece together detail I saw with detail others saw. This process involved a great deal of conversation and I spare you all of the commentary but do think the highlights are worth including in this report.

1. First of all, I wanted to find out if the Impersonator who came to The Suite had actually been contacted by Jacquie, as the man had said earlier to me and to Ryan. When I spoke to Jacquie she said she
had, in fact, not contracted with him and had had no knowledge that he would show up. She was as surprised as we were, but she apparently assumed this was something someone else had arranged. As did her husband, Ryan, Jacquie took it at face value as a nice form of entertainment for the evening. Subsequent to my conversation with Jacquie, I talked to Ellen, to Sarah, and ABC Staff associated with running The Suite. It was the same story all around: no one knew anything about him and all assumed someone else had arranged for him.

2. Second, I wanted to learn more about Herb. Why had he died? Was it from being hanged or was there some other cause. Sarah told me that she had served him city tap water with his scotch. Judy said he drank only half his drink prior to jumping up on the coffee table from which Ryan eventually ejected him. Sarah also said that she had served tap water to no one else that evening.

3. Third, I needed to learn more about the Human Rights Foundation’s Board. Given Herb’s behavior, it surprised me that he had received as many as three votes; I should have thought that he might get only his vote. So, I set out to interview each member of that Foundation separately.

   a. Six of them that had apparently told Herb they were going to vote for him did not do so. Each of them told me they had deliberately lied to Herb to get him off their backs and that of course they would never have voted for him for any office. They said they voted, as a block, for one of them for President.

   b. Sam told me that he told Herb he would vote for him and did vote for him. Sam was a new member of the Foundation and new to service to the ABC. He said that Herb had taken him out to dinner a few times to sort of show him the ropes. He thought that Herb was just being a nice guy as a mentor to a new participant and so Sam said, of course he honored his commitment to vote for Herb. Sam told me that he and the
other members, except Herb and Peter, had gone up to The Suite together on the night in question. He also said that Kent and Joe (the ABC Board representation on the Foundation) had left almost immediately after the voting and that they took the ballots with them for safe-keeping. He said that Peter had left to go back to his room and change prior to going up to The Suite. He told me that they were all staying on the 22nd floor so that going back to the room from the meeting was a simple thing to do. He also said that he had found Herb’s berating of their colleagues to be outrageous and that he used his cell phone to text Kent and tell him about it. Shortly after the vote, Sam said he felt foolish and never should have voted for Herb.

c. Peter told me that he voted for Herb only grudgingly. Peter said that he, as a bridge pro on the international scene, valued Herb’s long-time experience on Foundations and with international bridge. He said he did not see a better candidate available in terms of those criteria.

d. So, the vote tally in Herb’s mind is: six votes plus Sam plus Peter plus Herb, himself—for a total of nine votes. Subsequent follow up shows only Sam, Peter, and Herb voted for Herb.

4. Fourth, I decided to get to know both Sam and Peter better to see if I believed their reasons for voting for Herb.

a. Since Sam seemed responsive to being taken to dinner, I offered to bring him up to The Suite and join us as a special guest. I wanted Ryan to see him, as well. Ryan recognized Sam immediately and said he was happy that all the remaining members of the Human Rights Foundation had come to visit. Sam contradicted Ryan…all but one came, he said. Sam came up with the block of six who not voted for Herb. Herb came up ahead of them. Peter had not yet come up by the time Sam left. Ryan nodded that certainly that was possible; he had simply assumed that they all came together—he didn’t know
any of them very well and by the time they got there the place was more than a bit of a madhouse anyway.

b. Peter, on the other hand, as an experienced player, would probably not be as responsive as Sam had been to an invitation to The Suite. Instead, I offered to play in an open pair event with him. He hesitantly agreed, informing me that he does not usually play with folks of my lowly caliber, except for money (at the rate of about $1,000 per day). He was relatively pleasant, in a business-like manner, although clearly impressed with himself. He was apparently one of the top players in Kyrgyzstan, a republic with emerging interest in tournament bridge as it reflected positively on their new-found freedom to move around. The game seemed to be going along moderately well; I estimated, going into the last round that we were having about a 56% game. On the penultimate hand of the session, we had the following bidding sequence…
West led the club K, glared at dummy, and I quickly took all 13 tricks (7 diamonds, 5 hearts, and a club). I decided to learn more about Peter. Rather than ask about his bidding, I thought it would be easier to ask Peter about Kyrgystan. So I said, “What do you think of Issyk Kul?” Peter replied that Issyk was a fine player, one of Kyrgystan’s best, but that he was now too frail to
travel. By now, the session was over (our score rose to 59%), and I thought it best to go share my findings with the others.

Putting It All Together

“All right,” said Charles, “let’s see where we stand now! Are you and ‘the team’ ready, Judy?” She nodded assent. Charles took charge of the commentary as all the reports had been turned over to him.

- We learned from the effort of A.C. Beale and Shade E. that a good Elvis Impersonator would be unlikely to wear New England style penny loafers and that a good Impersonator would also be likely to coordinate shoes with the rest of the outfit. Our Impersonator wore brown penny loafers with a black and white satin outfit—failure on both fronts. Judy mentioned once again that the Impersonator in The Suite had worn gloves—our undercover agents did not see gloves as a general part of an Elvis outfit. Beyond the clothing style issues, it appears from my own questioning of folks in The Suite and of ABC Staff that not one of them knew a thing, in advance, about hiring an Impersonator. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the Impersonator who came to The Suite was an Impersonator of an Elvis Impersonator…sort of a “meta” Impersonator.

- We learned from the efforts of Guillaume and Eeyore that it is unlikely that the tap water had become contaminated by wastewater. It might have seemed a bit far-fetched, as a possibility anyway—surely if the tap water were bad enough to kill someone (who drank only half a scotch and water, as Judy noted), others would have been ill from it too, and that did not appear to happen. However, when I was out walking with Kent and Joe early this morning, I noticed pump-like fixtures on the main street in town with signs on them that said “non-potable water, do not drink.” Perhaps that water came from the dewatering station? Perhaps it is water used to wash the streetcars that run on that street? We don’t
know. But, it leaves room to speculate that a killer might obtain non-potable water on a selective basis.

- A logical issue is to then consider whether the set of all nodes and pipes, viewed abstractly as a graph (vertices and edges) is planar or not. A planar graph is one in which the edges do not cross each other...a desired situation here so that wastewater pipes do not run on top of drinking water pipes (lest a leak in the top one filter down into the lower one causing contamination). Here, Eeyore and I are in the same boat...not enough information. I presume that the pipes run under the streets for ease in maintenance. I checked that idea out with one of my colleagues on the Board whose day job is in the wastewater division of a large municipal government of a city that is a model for environmental protection of various sorts. He confirmed that certainly I did not have enough information and he also told me that I would not be able to get the sort of information I sought. So, I contented myself with imagining a network with zones and that within each zone the graph was planar because there were no forbidden subgraphs forcing the network to be nonplanar. Thus, there would be no undesired crossings of pipes within service zones that I might suggest from a street map. Kuratowski’s Theorem came to life for me in downtown Memphis!

- I think, based on all of this—the efforts of Guillaume, of Eeyore, and of myself, that it was reasonable to consider whether contaminated drinking water might have been an agent used in the killing but I am satisfied that such was not the case. The drinking water system is fine and I doubt that there is any cross-connection with the wastewater treatment system.

- The case of my adventure with Peter.
  - When I played bridge with Peter, he made an error no professional would make. His pass of 6S showed no immediate loser in
spades, which is why I bid 7D and why the opening leader glared when dummy had a spade.

- Even more peculiar, Peter claimed that Issyk Kul was a bridge expert. In fact, Issyk Kul is a lake in Kyrgyzstan and one of the larger lakes in the world. It has a number of interesting characteristics. I’m sure Judy will back me up on that…I remember when she mapped it and the surrounding terrain along with the numerous streams that flow into the lake (with no apparent outflow).

- So, what is the matter with Peter? It is true that he speaks English quite well. I didn’t ask, but I assumed that probably he was educated in the United States. In any event, though, I think I need to know a bit more about Peter. So, I placed a call to my friend who is high up in the international bridge federation and has been so for many years. I asked him if he had a photo of a great Kyrgyz bridge player named Peter—a top player. He said he did. I asked him to email it to Judy so that she could get it on her smartphone. Judy, please check your email. Let me see…hmmm, just as I expected….this man is not the man I just played bridge with! It appears the “Peter” here is an imposter…he is not the Kyrgyz expert he claims to be—he is a pseudo-expert. Do we have yet another imposter?

- A lot of the pieces came together for me when my partner, Peter, got up to get a cup of coffee in the last round. As he walked past me, I noticed his nice new penny loafers (of course lots of men here wear them). I did not think too much about them until I saw on the bottom of one of them a piece of duct tape…surely a nice new shoe would not yet have developed a hole in the sole.

Now, I think I have enough information to weave the facts into a plausible theory. Let me try it out on the group here and then see
what they suggest I do with it.

Charles’s Theory
I am convinced that Peter murdered Herb in a deliberate, premeditated manner. Peter is a master of impersonation, first impersonating an Elvis impersonator and second impersonating a Kyrgyzstan bridge expert. Here is plausible support.

- Peter has been selling himself to unsuspecting bridge players as a fine Kyrgyzstan pro, using the name of an actual pro. He is an imposter and not a very good bridge player, himself. He bilked innocent duplicate players, wanting a playing lesson with an expert as one way to improve their game, of hundreds of thousands of dollars. He made a small fortune from this deception.
- Herb caught on to what Peter was doing and he was blackmailing Peter for a percentage of the take. In a similar manner, Herb demanded that Peter vote for him (and Peter did so).
- At that point, Peter could see no end in sight to Herb’s demands and consequent destruction of his professional and personal life. Therefore, he decided to get rid of Herb lest Herb bleed him dry. In Peter’s twisted mind, the benefits of murder outweighed its risks.
- Peter left the room after the vote, leaving Herb to make a fool of himself and set the stage for others to have motive to kill Herb.
- Back in his room, Peter put on an Elvis Impersonator suit he had earlier purchased on a visit to Graceland (as Shade E noted, they are for sale).
- Peter had checked out the freight elevator situation earlier in the day. That is why Judy found the door ajar when she went to tape it open. Peter had rigged a noose to the ceiling of the elevator and stored most of the visible part on the top of the elevator. He had conceived the rigging of the noose so that when the elevator went up, the noose was pulled up with it.
• After a bit of time, Peter left his room, dressed as Elvis, and went up in the freight elevator; Judy’s taping of the door was a fortunate turn of events for him.
• He exited through the door from the freight elevator into the hallway of the 30th floor when he heard a crowd in the hallway. That way it appeared as if he had come up in the regular elevator with the group in the hallway. He noted on his way through the door to the hallway that once again someone else had already taped it open.
• From there, you know how things went for a while. You can imagine his glee, under his makeup, watching Herb act like a fool and Herb’s eventual ejection from The Suite. Peter did not find singing like Elvis to be much of a problem. He knew the songs and the acoustics and noise level in The Suite were so bad that few, if any, would notice the quality of his voice. And, even if they did so, they would be likely to attribute it to the fact that he was not the real Elvis…little did they know, nor would they be likely to suspect, that he was not even a real Elvis Impersonator!
• Once Ryan threw Herb out of The Suite onto the hallway floor, Peter seized the opportunity…he had not been sure when opportunity would arise but Ryan’s action brought it to the fore. Peter immediately went on a musician’s break and ran out into the hallway, ostensibly to help the ailing Herb. Herb did not recognize Peter because of the Elvis disguise. Peter told Herb that he could help him and in real life was the hotel doctor and a chiropractor—that his role as an Elvis Impersonator was a gift from the hotel to the ABC. He offered to take Herb to a hotel room and take care of his knees. The unsuspecting Herb was agreeable and Peter took him to the “private” service elevator where he convinced him that the noose-like structure was analogous to a neck brace and a way to avoid any consequent spinal column injury from jarring of his knees in the elevator—that the hotel had approved its being there as part of service to the hotel doctor. Herb was in pain and said he would try anything. He did as Peter asked. Then Peter got into the elevator car, pressed the button to go to the 33rd floor (the highest in the building),
jumped out of the slow-reacting freight elevator, and as the elevator rose in its shaft, its machinery pulled on the noose, lifting Herb off the floor. Herb died quickly. If he made any noise no one could have heard it as the floors above 30 are for hotel use only, for the most part during the business day.

- Peter made a big mistake with the duct tape that Judy had placed on the hallway door on the 30th floor. He removed it to keep people out of the area, understandable from his vantage point perhaps, but he should have left it there so that whoever put it there would not become suspicious. So, when Peter was struggling to get Herb into the elevator, he dropped the tape he had carefully removed from the door jamb and it stuck tightly to the sole of his nice new Maine penny loafers. When I saw it during the last round of the bridge game, I also saw the notches in either end of the strip that Judy customarily cuts so the tape fits snugly around the door fixtures, such as knobs or handles. I did not attempt to get the tape nor did I mention its presence.

Then, I knew….for sure in my own mind…what had happened, how it had happened, and why it had happened.

“"I think it's an amazing theory," said Judy, "it makes good sense to me and I think it's probably correct." "You had better take it to the police, right now," echoed Theodore; "you know that Ryan is now their number one suspect because he was in the freight elevator area, alone, shortly before Judy and Ryan found the body." "Yes," Charles said, "I can see why they might come to that sort of conclusion. The problem there is that they are not duplicate bridge players and don't understand the workings of that world so they could never find Peter. Yes, Theodore, you are correct—I need to get to the police right away and explain all this—to protect Ryan and other potential suspects, to protect us, and also to see that justice is served!—thanks so much to all of you—your efforts were critical in coming to this conclusion !"
Several hours later the police arrived and unceremoniously arrested the unsuspecting Peter. The duct tape was still on the sole of his shoe. Justice had been served and the bridge tournament continued, minus two players who had come to play but never did play much and, clearly, never would play, anywhere, again.
Chapter 2: St. Louis Bridge Murder

Arrival in St. Louis

“As I have said before, what I love about the game, Judy, is the logic of it, the puzzle of it all,” Charles Earl, a distinguished professor of pure mathematics specializing in algebraic graph theory,” explained to his wife Judy. While Charles had a full life in academics, in teaching and publishing of research, he also had another life in the world of tournament duplicate bridge.

This time, the Earls were driving to St. Louis for a National bridge event, and they planned to supplement bridge with visits with academic friends coming to the tournament.

“Oh, look, Charles, I think that’s the famous Eads Bridge!” Judy exclaimed. “Yes, Judy, I guess I forgot that you hadn’t been here before,” Charles noted absent-mindedly, “the university at the eastern foot of the Eads Bridge, in Illinois on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River, is called “Catenary University (CU—or, ‘See-You’ as some of the locals spell it).”
“I came to St. Louis,” he continued, “when we were setting up the legal ground work for the chain of restaurants bearing your mother’s name—the ‘Alma Mater’ restaurant chain.” “Sure,” said Judy, “I remember that well—this one was the first one, in association with one of the greatest riparian confluences of them all: the Mississippi and Missouri. Well, at least we know one fine restaurant we can go to and have some classic French cuisine…it’s right across the river from CU built on the grounds of the terminus of the eastern end of the St. Louis pneumatic postal network—oh, Charles, this is exciting!” Judy loved to see academic connections to real world projects—and, Charles loved to show them to her.

Charles and Judy continued on a few blocks to their downtown
hotel, also, as Judy noted, on the path of the former underground pneumatic postal network. “Charles, while you are at ABC Board of Directors’ meetings,” Judy continued, “I think I’ll poke around in the basement of the hotel and other nearby buildings and see if I can find any evidence of the former postal network.” “Well, ok,” Charles said in a concerned tone of voice, “but be sure you have your smartphone with you…I’d far rather be in Board meetings than on some subterranean safari, but whatever floats your boat!” Charles remarked with amusement. With that, the couple pulled into the hotel, checked in, and began to unpack.

**Dinner with Bill and Sandy**

“Judy, you know I contacted our colleagues Bill and Sandy with whom we taught at a university long ago and far away…” Charles stated. “Wow,” exclaimed Judy, “you remember that Sandy and I were practically inseparable, as were you and Bill!” “Yes,” mused Charles “quite remarkable really…I think that they are at Catenary U now…we shall see—whoops, we have a phone message…I’ll get it. Hmmm….it’s from Bill—they want to eat dinner with us tonight at Alma Mater—OK with you?” “Absolutely!” Judy said, her voice filled with exhilaration. Judy thought that she was thrilled not only to see old friends but also would be thrilled to see their new restaurant for the first time.

The idea of combining a sports bar, including trivia, lots of big TVs, a strolling magician, and other entertainments for the entire family, with an haute cuisine restaurant had been one that intrigued her. Restaurants that specialize only in outstanding classical French cuisine typically have hefty price tags so one can only afford to eat in them infrequently; sports bars, on the other hand, are inexpensive but can attract a regular clientele that comes frequently. Judy had noticed that another nearby bar was often in the top 20 nationwide
in trivia contests—the area must be a hotbed of trivia enthusiasts! The sports bar offers a needed infusion of such a regular, predictable, and continuing income stream to support the luxury of an adjacent elegant eatery with, at best, a sporadic income stream. All in all a win-win situation, the extended Earl family had hoped.

“Well, Judy,” said Charles, “here we are: Alma Mater Restaurant and Grill”—he enjoyed the double meaning associating both the classical reference to the college from which one graduates with the Latinization of Judy’s mother’s name. “Look, Charles,” noted Judy, “the skytop café is open now—must have splendid views of the river and of Catenary U---oh, and over there you can see how the sports bar segment must have been added onto the older pneumatic postal building which I guess houses the haute cuisine side—I wonder if they have shared restrooms or what the various access arrangements actually worked out to be given the issues involved in teaming up this unlikely pair of functions in an unlikely pair of structures—old post office and new state-of-the-art techy building—let’s go in and see!”

Bill and Sandy were already there—the couples exchanged expected hugs, greetings, and small talk about families. After a round of cocktails was consumed, dinners were ordered, and the first bottle of wine was placed on the table as the conversation turned to more serious matters.

“Charles,” Bill said, “what do you know about the situation at Catenary University?” “Not much,” said Charles, “just what I see in CU publicity and what I read online in various documents—the Internet is in many regards the world’s greatest library, but there are few standards of inclusion and exclusion—that’s why we need fine academic librarians and suppose we always will,” commented
Charles. “Same old Charles,” giggled Bill while he poked Sandy.

“No, seriously,” said Charles, “here’s about all I know. I gather that the university was founded relatively recently and that in many ways it builds on the fine traditions of higher education already present in St. Louis. Certainly the Eliot family goes back a long way with T. S. Eliot’s grandfather founding one of the great American universities here.

I followed that because I think you may have known that my father had a Ph.D. from Harvard, and he chose my first and middle names, Charles William, in honor of Charles William Eliot, a member of that same Eliot family, who for many years was President of Harvard University.” “Further,” Charles continued in a dignified professorial manner, “St. Louis is also home to an outstanding Jesuit university—again, my family has had long and continuing association with the Jesuits in academics—it’s kind of all brought together sitting here with you, our dear friends, in our family restaurant—all very sentimental,” said Charles, now slipping into a more thoughtful, indeed sensitive, voice. Judy thought he might start crying—Charles was the one who could not watch a “chick-flick” without some sort of tearful outburst.
“Charles,” Judy said sharply, “we were talking about the idea of a catenary, weren’t we?” “Oh, yes, thank you for pulling me back on track, Judy” said Charles. “Anyway,” continued a more composed Charles, “I gather that CU was conceived as a technological university to factor in with the strong private and Jesuit approaches to excellence in the Liberal Arts. They train engineers and thus also have strong mathematics and physical sciences curricula.” “Yes, that’s the idea,” said Bill. “I have also read on the Internet,” noted Charles, “that the President is quite a character—not all that popular within the university but a real glad-hander and a terrific fundraiser.”

“Well, there’s more to it than that,” said Bill, “but that is the tip of the iceberg.” “Furthermore,” Charles commented, back once again on his academic podium, “it seems to me that the university must have been named ‘catenary’ because the Gateway Arch is of course a weighted geometric catenary, inverted perhaps—capitalizing on the idea that a river reflects things so that’s why Catenary U is across the river. Hence, the CU slogan of ‘Catenary University: Your Gateway to a Higher Education’. Also, the logo reflects, literally, the Gateway Arch catenary.”
“Of course,” Charles continued in an even mathematical tone, “one expression for a simple catenary is as the hyperbolic cosine function, $y = \cosh x$, which is equal to $(e^x + e^{-x})/2$, and with the exponential function involved, then I thought that the CU President is causing exponential growth of the student body and of funds…at least from the data that I saw! So, then, I wondered, when I read that he had received a vote of no-confidence from both the student government and the faculty senate—how this could be—he is apparently a charming and energetic fellow, excellent at building the university—why the unhappiness within? And that’s about all I have thought about it or read about it…perhaps you can fill me in, Bill?”

“I sure can,” said Bill, “one story, personal to yours truly, should give you the idea—but Charles, you seem to be assuming that I am still at CU—I am not.”

“As you know,” Bill continued, “we all taught together a number of
years ago and then, as often happens with young academics, we went our separate ways in pursuit of career goals. I left our shared university of that time a few months after you did to come to the newly-founded Catenary University. It sounded like an exciting prospect and a rare opportunity to be in on the beginning of a new academic venture—jobs like that seldom come along so naturally I leaped at it. My background in mathematical approaches to network analysis seemed to fit well with their mission: to train engineers solving real-world problems to think clearly about the mathematical and logical underpinnings of their science. It went well for quite a while; I had many students who found interesting applications of network analysis in the real world.”

Then,” Bill went on, “a couple of years ago, a team of two particularly bright young engineers approached me about doing a project involving the Eads Bridge. They had found an old map of a relic pneumatic postal network that used to run under part of the downtown of St. Louis. Large carriers, about six inches in diameter, were used to supplement mail service in the days before the automobile and truck were introduced into the postal service. The metal carriers had leather rings on either end that pressed against the tubing and made a tight seal so that air pressure would build upstream and force the carrier, containing packets of mail in envelopes, downstream to outlet tubes in various locations. I think you probably know that the eastern terminus of that network is under Alma Mater, the haute cuisine side.”
“Anyway,” Bill explained, “the students also found that there had been a proposal to extend the tubing across the Eads Bridge but that that proposal had never been implemented. They approached me to see if we might apply for a grant to implement the plan.”

“So,” Bill stated, “we applied for funding from a private foundation to pursue the possibility of implementing the project as some sort of mix of contemporary engineering and historic preservation—and possibly as an altruistic approach to bridging the digital divide. We were successful and received a modestly-sized grant; I foresaw promise of much greater things to come if the initial pilot studies bore fruit! One element of the proposal called for spending 9 months in Paris, France, to study the greatest pneumatic postal network of them all (albeit a bit different in physical structure), Le Réseau Pneumatique, sometimes referred to as Le Petit Bleu reflecting the little blue messages that were transmitted through relatively narrow tubing. So, Sandy and I and the students spent 9 months in Paris.”
“While in Paris,” Bill sighed, “my contract with CU came due. They sent it to me, and I signed it as usual—it was the same thing...I was continued as a distinguished professor of mathematics and network science. Then, three weeks later, I received another letter from the
Math Department Chair, Sean, stating that this contract was to be my terminal contract!”

“Charles,” Bill continued, “you can imagine my utter dismay…here things were going so well, I had thought. So, when I got back from France, I went to see our President, Alfredo (‘just call me Al’ as he says), to question this bizarre situation. He confirmed that in fact this was to be my terminal contract and noted that he would use Sean’s inept handling of the situation to destroy him too!” “What!!” gasped Charles in amazement, “how can this be?” “Well, that’s what I felt too,” said Bill, “and as Sandy and I talked about it, we eventually came to the conclusion that since we knew the fault was not on our end, the best thing was simply to forget about the nonsense and get on with our own lives. So, we are now living about 250 miles from here where I have another distinguished professorship of mathematics at a prominent national university.

But, that gives you an idea, Charles, of how votes of no confidence might have come about, from anyone who could see any of the inner workings of the administration.” “Absolutely,” said Charles, “I think I shall go check out this place for myself!” “Sure,” said Bill, “but I don’t think I’ll go with you. Sandy and I came here to have fun playing at the tournament!” And at that the two couples parted ways once again.

The Alma Mater/CU Social Network Experiment
Once they got back to their room, Charles checked his email and said, “Judy, let me show you the transcript of a digital audio recording that Bill just emailed me of the classroom antics of President ‘Al’ in a recent trip to Alma Mater—clearly Bill, while doing great both personally and professionally, is still upset by the way he was treated (as he managed to obtain this recent transcript).”
“Wow, that’s fast,” said Judy. “Apparently Al, as part of his glad-handing and so forth,” continued Charles, “takes his students out to local restaurants (with Italian of course being his favorite) to study cross-cultural behavioral response patterns within social networks--to see how people in the service business react when presented with adversity or other out-of-the-box behavior. It’s quite interesting in certain ways and in fact you might even find it somewhat amusing if you imagine trying to put yourself in the position of being in a restaurant with someone behaving as Al does here…Here goes!” announced Charles.

“My good man, we need a table for 15 of the finest from the university. The round one over there in the corner should suit us well,” President Al commanded. “Yes, sir,” the accommodating host said. “You mean, ‘Yes, Dr. President’ my good man…I am the President of Catenary University and I expect to be treated with dignity and addressed by my correct title and not as some sort of random, ‘sir’,” asserted Al. “Yes, Mr. President. My apologies. I hope you will have a pleasant time at Alma Mater. Please let me know if there is anything I might do to assist you and it will be my pleasure to see that you are well served,” the host said in an even tone while ushering the group to their large round table and offering a menu to each of them.

“I will have bacon and eggs with a bowl of oatmeal to begin with,” Al told the waiter. “Sir, we have breakfast items only until noon; it is now 6:00 p.m.,” the waiter stated in a matter of fact manner. “But, I must have my oatmeal…and, your menu says you have it, so I want it and I want it now. Furthermore, you must address me as ‘Mr. President’ and not as ‘Sir’, young man,” Al complained. “So, what do you have to say…why can’t you make me oatmeal,” continued Al, “I want it and I want it now!” “Excuse me, Mr. President, I shall
go see if the kitchen can handle it at this point,” the waiter said in a saccharine tone. “Mr. President, I have spoken with my superiors about this matter and they say that they need to keep a consistent approach and have available to you only what the restaurant is willing to make available to the random patron. That is our policy,” stated the waiter. “Well, all right, I suppose…now, let’s see, I think I will have the fried catfish. What kind of oil do you fry it in; I must have olive oil,” asserted Al. “I will check,” said the waiter. “Mr. President, we do not use olive oil for frying on a broad surface cooking vessel that accommodates a variety of dishes; the smoke point is too low and it will not work,” the waiter explained upon his return, “we must use one kind of oil for the entire surface and olive oil won’t work for that.” “Well, then I will go to the supermarket across the street, buy a cast iron pan and some olive oil and bring it back to you and have you take it to the kitchen and cook my catfish in it,” said Al. “Look,” the exasperated waiter said, “I am happy to serve you but you are beginning to try my patience—please, let’s see if we can find something on the menu for dinner that you would like.” “Well, how am I supposed to know what I would like from a printout—I need to see real food—I’ll fix that,” said Al. And, with that, he got up, stomped around the restaurant and looked at the food of other patrons; he walked over to one table, bent over, stuck his nose an inch from the food and announced “that smells as if the cook didn’t wash his hands after he used the bathroom.” At another table, he looked at the duxelles sauce on a patron’s plate, ran his finger through it and noisily slurped down a finger full of sauce…”not bad,” he noted, “but it should have more mushrooms and they should be more finely and more uniformly chopped that they are here. Too bad they don’t serve the sauce here that is named for me, ‘Alfredo’ of course.”
At that, the waiter went to the manager to ask to be relieved from serving this table. “OK” the manager said, “I’ll send over David; he knows the President and has considerable experience handling ‘high-maintenance’ types.” The meal continued without incident. “So, Judy,” continued Charles, “I heard from the manager that the restaurant picked up the tab for all affected patrons and offered them free lunch coupons for a return trip. I think it all got settled, but once again President Al got a vote of no-confidence…this time from the staff of Alma Mater Restaurant and Grill!”

Charles’s Meetings at Catenary University
“Judy, today I’ve made an appointment to meet with ‘Al’—I want to see what this guy is like, in person—study his body language…see how it tallies with his spoken language…listen to him more than talk to him and just generally study him. I’ll be back in the room in time for dinner I hope; if not, I’ll give you a call. See you later—my cab should be here any minute.”

After an uneventful cab ride, Charles arrived at Catenary University. “Hi, I’m here to see the President…have an appointment for 10 minutes from now. My name is Charles Earl.” “He is expecting you, Professor Earl. Please have a seat. May I get you a cup of coffee or a soft drink?” asked the friendly, stocky young man helping out in the office. “Sure, a cola drink would be good,” replied Charles. “Here you are, Professor Earl—it’s a real pleasure to meet you in person—I am a mathematics major and I’ve read your seminal work on automorphism groups of graphs—quite a feat solving that major, previously unsolved problem!” noted the office helper. “Well, how nice,” Charles commented modestly, “for the most part my professional mathematical work does not draw a fan club! Tell me, what are you interested in? Do you plan to go to graduate school?” “Actually, I am interested in social networks, kind of a combination
between social science and graph theory—studying patterns of connection in human communications and that sort of thing—my name is Brendan; I'm a Senior. Yes, I do plan to go to graduate school, sir. Oh, here's the President!"

“How do you do, Mr. President? My name is Charles Earl.” “Yes, Charles, we were expecting you with great anticipation—but, please dispense with the formalities—just call me Al. Come on in to my office and let’s talk; then I’ll take you around a bit. I am glad you got to talk to Brendan for a bit; he is a fine young man and of course we are very proud of him. Please have a seat in one of the comfortable chairs and I’ll take the other one. Charles, I have followed your work over the years as your theoretical approaches relate to my more pragmatic interests involving communications systems and social networks. I am eager to tell you about some of the work taking place here at CU.”

With that, Al ushered Charles over to the floor to ceiling windows and put his hand on Charles’s shoulder while pointing with the other hand “Charles, do you see that tower just to the left along the river?” “Yes,” Charles replied, finally being given a chance to get a word in, “it looks like a hyperboloid of one sheet.” “Absolutely, Charles, you are a man of fine perception as well as one of well-known integrity and brilliance—we are so fortunate to have you as our guest today, here at CU! And of course, as you know,” Al continued, “the hyperboloid of one sheet is a ruled surface, in fact doubly ruled, so that each point on the surface has two straight lines passing through it, making it structurally a very stable form—with cooling towers for power plants, such stability is of course critical.”
“We have our own power plant,” Al went on, “and supply all our needs in that way; you will also see numerous onsite retention ponds in which we capture rainwater and allow it to rest and then release it gradually to the river. We use a slight gradient to our cut-down curb and gutter system to direct a gradual flow to these ponds, as well as gradual overland sheet flow, so that we control local flooding possibilities here adjacent to the river—naturally, other governmental authorities deal with river bank and river issues. But we work very hard in support of those environmental issues and follow current practice in attempting to become both self-reliant and self-sustaining—a real ‘green’ university.

We like to think of ourselves as thoughtful not only of our students, faculty, and staff, but also of the broader community and their goals, including environmental goals. The community responds by sending their young people here, and as word of our grand effort spreads, so too does our pool of talent as well as our endowment. We plow a lot back into furthering these altruistic causes and have been quite successful with this sort of boot-strapping approach at creating the extraordinary physical plant you see today—some of it, though, is underground in order to reduce the amount of impervious surface and consequent polluted runoff, but certainly I think you get
the idea from looking at the part that extends above the surface of the Earth.” “Quite impressive,” noted Charles.

“You can imagine,” commented Al, “that a number of students have found projects at turning theory into practice in association with catenaries, arches, suspension bridges, hyperboloids and cooling towers, stream bank erosion patterns and Bernouilli’s brachistochrone characterization, and so forth…of course you are familiar with all that, but it is quite exciting for our students to have the entire ‘universe-ity’ as their laboratory. During the first two years, we try to make sure that students have a strong foundation in mathematics, English, and science. By the end of the second year, we want to them to think about integrating elements of their theoretical studies into a real-world project of some sort. Then, in the third year, they may take specialized courses or may do field work of some sort in support of their project. Then, in the fourth year, they bring it all together in the form of a thesis or some other publication. We also focus during the first part of the fourth year on making sure that they have the skills they need to do well in their next phase, be it graduate school, the business world, or whatever.

Students who do well here are often self-starters and are heavily goal-oriented and not terribly responsive to peer-pressure,” Al continued as he carefully ran Charles through an overview of the curriculum. Charles thought that this was indeed the sort of man who no doubt was very successful at fund raising—if the listener were not taken in by all this superficial ‘charm’ and did not actually want to give funding to the cause, he/she might wind up giving just to get Al to shut up! “Yes, indeed,” noted Charles, “your altruism is admirable, Al.”
“Charles,” Al continued, “you have a general overview of the university—might I indulge your kindness to listen to my pet project? One that draws the history of technology together with contemporary practice, in the context of social/communications networks?” “I’d be delighted to hear about it,” said Charles. “Good,” said Al, “it’s about lunch time, let’s go to lunch at my favorite place, just at the other end of the Eads Bridge…we’ll drive across the Eads Bridge. The restaurant is named ‘Alma Mater’—an obvious connection of course with a university but I understand that there is a double entendre there…turns out the owners are an academic couple one of whose mothers is a fine chef and whose first name is ‘Alma’. It’s a deep dark secret who that couple is…I’ve tried to find out and failed…maybe someday, who knows.” Charles laughed inwardly as a gentle smile crossed his face; he would have to remember to tell Judy about this conversation—she would think it hilarious.

“Remarkable,” Charles noted, “sounds like an interesting place with a fascinating story associated with it.” “Yes,” replied Al, “I generally go there once a week on the same day…the staff there on that day all know me, although recently I did go on a different day with a group of students…most of the staff was different then. Today is not my regular day, so we shall see…”
Luncheon with Charles at Alma Mater

“Hi,” said Al, “we would like to sit in David’s section, as long as he is not serving in the rooftop garden.” “Very good, sir,” said the host as he proceeded to seat the pair at an attractive table for four.

“Charles, I insist that you be my guest for a fine luncheon,” Al said in a commanding voice, “I am quite familiar with the menu and would be happy to order for us, a set of small, but rich, dishes to share—OK?” “Sure,” said Charles, “whatever works for you…very kind of you. Thank you.” Al told the waiter, David, “we will have a bottle of Champagne along with Potage St. Germain, Salade de Tomates, and some nice French cheeses, whatever the best are that you have today--associated appropriate breads and so forth. For dessert we will have Poires Belle Hélène along with some Armagnac.” “Al,” that is quite an elaborate and expensive luncheon,” quipped Charles, “please permit me to contribute.” “No, no, no, I won’t hear of it, Charles,” Al insisted, “you’ll see…won’t cost either one of us anything.” Charles chose to say nothing.

“Now,” said Al, “I want to tell you about one particular project. Do you know that St. Louis once had a pneumatic tube mail service?” “Yes,” Charles noted, “my wife, Judy, is interested in things like that, so I think I had heard about it although really I only know a very small amount. I gather that the hotel that is hosting the American Bridge Congress (ABC) duplicate bridge tournament that we are here for is located along the path of that network. Of course that network was a revolutionary way to deliver postal mail in the early twentieth century…it became outmoded when the automobile and truck became commonplace for delivery. Therefore, what was once an exciting technology had, before the end of the twentieth century, become a defunct technology.” “Charles,” Al said, “once again you display your erudition and breadth of knowledge. But, I must correct
something…the service, while it was defunct by 2000, is now no longer defunct!”

“Really,” exclaimed Charles, “tell me more, Al.” “You see,” Al remarked, “the original plans called for a possible extension of pneumatic technology across the Eads Bridge. In the early twentieth century both the bridge and pneumatic technology were quite avant garde…seemed natural to forge them and build something even more than the sum of the two parts. But, that promise was never fulfilled…that is, not then…but, now it has been!”

“Remarkable,” said a seemingly astounded Charles. “Yes,” Al continued, “a few years ago, I thought that the importance of demonstrating the possible synergy of forging the old with the new, as a way of helping to erase the “digital divide” would illustrate to nations less fortunate than ours that, instead of worrying about being left out, that they look to the stock of creations that had been unique to them in the past and figure out ways to use them as transformative forces within the contemporary technological context.

So, I gathered together a team of students and we applied for a grant. At first, we had a small one and were able to send a small team to Paris to study the largest pneumatic mail network. That effort did not yield too much. So, I made a few appropriate personnel changes and then took over the grant myself so that I could insert my own research perspective on social networks. That approach netted me a substantial multi-million dollar grant and substantial international attention. It involved, among other things, the construction of the Eads extension of the St. Louis historical pneumatic network. I’m pleased to say that just recently all this work paid off: the extension is now complete and functioning. We continue to test it of course, especially in conjunction with a partial restoration (funded by the grant) of the relic network, but so far so
Al continued, “my colleague in the Math Department, Sean, has been helping with the testing phase, as has my assistant, Brendan, whom you met at my office. You might have a chance to meet Sean at the bridge tournament. He enjoys duplicate bridge and has been talking for the past year, at least, about a national ABC tournament coming to St. Louis. He plays with a woman named Nancy; Sean tells me that when Nancy comes to the table all heads turn and no one even notices that Sean is there. I think Sean views this situation as a huge advantage...that they get ‘gifts’ they might not otherwise see because Nancy’s good looks are such a distraction—and I gather that she tries to make the most of this distractive power in the way that she dresses!”

“Well,” said Charles, “it sounds, from his name, as if Sean is Irish in background—if I see him, I will try to introduce him to our current ABC President, Ryan O’Brien—it would be swell to do so on St. Patrick’s Day, don’t you think?” “Charles, you have such a fine sense of humor,” Al noted, “but, yes, in fact Sean is of Irish descent—I went to high school with him on the south side of Chicago—he was from an Irish neighborhood and I was from an Italian neighborhood. We’ve known each other forever, it seems. I will mention your kind offer to Sean the next time I see him. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have thoughts about this project; I would value them greatly.”

David brought the exotic pear dessert and the two men enjoyed it along with their snifters of Armagnac. “A beautiful luncheon, Al—many thanks,” said Charles. “Sure thing—all paid for by my grant—it’s of research value to explain my project to highly-trained ears,” noted Al, “I’ll probably be back again tomorrow—it’s my regular day
here, with David, Armagnac, and more.” Again, Charles kept silent but added to his stock of mental notes. Instead, he noted to Al, “I must get back to work and then to the hotel; today is the anniversary of my mother-in-law, Alma.” Al stared at Charles in a perplexed manner as Charles swiftly exited the front door and walked back across the Eads Bridge to CU.

A Visit with Sean
“Professor Earl, a great pleasure to meet you in person—just call me Sean,” commented the robust Irish mathematician as he extended a beefy paw to Charles. “Not only have I read your research on graph theory, but I have also followed your career in bridge, particularly in bridge administration. You see, my mathematical interests center on applications of graph theory in real world networks, so of course I have a natural shared interest with you in that regard.” “But,” he continued, “I was particularly eager to meet you in conjunction with our shared bridge interests. You see, here at CU, in order to put theory into practice, we often need to experiment in the real world. Now as you and I know, there are difficulties involving human rights and the experimentation, involving ideas, on human subjects—many legal snags can be encountered.
We have had some difficulty with that here at CU—President Al has had some problems involving taking groups of students to private establishments and conducting verbal experiments to see how much abuse a social or business network can withstand. He runs on the edge with that—the last episode involved a problem at Alma Mater Restaurant and Grill. Al eats there frequently and timed his experimentation run to coincide with changes in shift so that he is well-known to one set of staff but not to another. Personally, I seldom eat there—can’t afford it—anyway, it’s not my thing. I like a soda pop and a chili dog for lunch myself—there’s a good hot dog vendor outside this building—would you like one now?” “No, thank you,” said Charles, “I have already eaten lunch.”

“Anyway,” Sean said picking up the previous theme, “there’s a guy in the biology department here that has done experiments involving the effects coffee enemas have on human health issues of various sorts—he uses students to do a variety of nasty jobs and promises them grades of A for doing the work and keeping their mouths shut…that one is also on the edge, and I think, over it.”

“But, what these things have in common,” continued Sean, “is the testing of systems. We all know, especially in our current swiftly-moving technological environment, that the testing of systems to stresses of various sorts is critical. Some of us use automated testing while others resort to different testing strategies. Personally, I tend to favor the automated approach, but perhaps that is the logic of the mathematician—maybe my colleagues in the human-oriented sciences prefer other approaches. Have you heard about our experiment to extend the historical pneumatic postal network of St. Louis across the Eads Bridge—to fuse historical with contemporary technology?” “I believe I have heard about that—fascinating and important research. All too often the lessons from the past evaporate as new people enter any system and too much time and
effort are devoted to re-inventing the wheel,” commented Charles. “Yes, well-said,” noted Sean, “I used to be more involved in the project though I still am in the testing phase now that the physical tubing is complete—but, Al has moved me more into the administration of CU—challenges everywhere, I suppose.”

“Tomorrow,” Sean continued, “I look forward to going to the bridge tournament and playing with my regular partner Nancy—a real looker—we get a number of gifts, but she is a fine player independent of all that—at least, she plays as well as I do, so she is a fine partner for me. At our local club, we have been using bridge scoring units—you know, these wireless devices placed on the table that are designed to take advantage of contemporary technology to give real-time readout of scores across the field. I have not been to an ABC nationals to see how they work there and so am looking forward to that, greatly! Three issues concern me:

1. The scalability of the wireless network.
2. Problems parallel to those of a wired network such as possible attenuation issues, that is, degradation of signal due to distance or other impediments.
3. Network security and the presence or absence of back-up systems.”

“Sean,” Charles said, “I really don’t know the answers to all of these concerns, but I do know that the technology scales well from the club level to the sectional and regional level and even to the national level. I do not know, however, the limits to scaling. As to signal degradation, I gather that walls and other solid objects greatly interfere with the signal transmission. I believe that the signal transmits well over a distance of about 300 feet of open space and then begins to degrade. On the security front, I think that the Director-in-Charge has the system passworded as one form of security measure…and of course there are security cameras present in many rooms. The cameras are a good idea; these small
electronic devices are often left unattended in the playing area. But, you are right; it is a fascinating topic.”

Charles continued in an inviting tone, “my wife Judy and I would like to invite you up to the Presidential Suite in the hotel tomorrow between sessions for an Educators Reception; I think you might enjoy meeting our current President Ryan O’Brien. It would give you a direct chance to interact with leading folks in bridge administration. As you suggested earlier, there is a great deal in common between bridge administration and academic administration. There should be a good deal of food and drink, as always, but perhaps even more so given that it will be St. Patrick’s Day. The women who do the food and bar, Ellen and Sarah, are marvelous—you would have a wonderful time and also get to see the inner workings of bridge administration.” “Wow, Charles, fantastic idea! Of course I will be there—many thanks!” said an elated, Sean. The two men parted company and Charles headed back to the hotel to write down his mental notes from the day.

**Bridge on St. Patrick’s Day**

“Charles,” said Judy, “we had a great time with old friends at Alma Mater—while you are playing bridge at the tournament today, I’ve made arrangements to go to Alma Mater with another old friend, Ann. She and I are having a late luncheon there; you know, she remembers my mother, and her terrific effort with haute cuisine, from when we were both in school together—it should be fun.” “Yes, Judy, it sounds terrific,” Charles commented while reflecting on a variety of bridge conventions he might play today. “I want to go today,” continued Judy, “before Ann and I both get heavily involved in our various duties with ABC committee work. “Right,” said Charles, “go for it. Meantime, I’ll head on down to the bridge game.” “Charles, oh, Charles…over here,” yelled Sean, “I want you to meet
my mixed pairs partner, Nancy.” “Hi, Nancy,” said Charles, “I’ve heard nice things about you from Sean; hope you will enjoy the event today.” Charles headed off to find his partner keeping his focus on his game; he had really been looking forward to this game and was geared up to win his first-ever national championship.

Sean headed off to the room they would play in while Nancy bought an entry. Charles hoped that today the wireless scoring devices would in fact be working properly…they had not been doing so, at least in some of the sections, on previous days.

After four rounds of mixed pair play, Sean commented, “I’ll be back in a minute, Nancy—I need to check my text messages.” Five minutes later, Sean returned, “Nancy, this is one our very best students, Brendan—a Senior with a straight A average, very rare indeed—I have been called away suddenly to take care of a serious problem, in fact an emergency, at the university—please meet Brendan—he is a fine player who was kibitzing at another table; he’s helping me with systems testing as part of an independent study he is taking with me and has all that he needs with him to complete his phase of the testing—he will take my place this afternoon (I have already cleared all of this with the Director-in-Charge). I hope I will be able to play this evening and later drive you to the airport to catch your red-eye to the coast for your meetings. Sorry about this, but you may both be better off anyway…I’ll catch up with you later…gotta run.”

At Sean’s table, Brendan took over Sean’s north position. The tournament director called a hospitality break. Nancy took advantage of the hiatus for a bathroom break. Brendan checked his pockets to make sure he had what he needed to take Nancy to the airport and conduct testing as ordered by Sean. After he was
satisfied with the arrangement of materials, he got mentally ready to take over at the bridge table, and also took advantage of the brief stop in the action to leave the table for a few minutes and went to look around outside the room as Sean had suggested. Soon, the tournament director called for the action to continue, and so it did. Brendan proved to be a fine partner for Nancy—they completed the rounds swiftly and without further ado.

After the last board of the afternoon, again finished swiftly, Brendan told Nancy that he would need to stay at the table and then absent himself for a few minutes to do as Sean had asked in terms of the network testing. Nancy, and the opponents, took advantage of the early finish to get some coffee and a snack. Brendan arranged things with regard to materials in his pockets sorting them out on the table. He reloaded his pockets and got up and left the room. After a few minutes, both he and Nancy returned from separate directions; others were still playing the last round. Shortly after their return, the Director-in-Charge got on the microphone and announced that once again the wireless devices had failed to transmit to the server, at least in some of the sections. He informed the group that directors on the floor would come to each table and read the cache in the individual units of the affected sections in order to retrieve the scores from rounds 6 to 13 and that therefore there would be a delay in the determination of results.

It became clear that Charles's hope at the outset of the game was not to be realized. The units had once again gone crazy, apparently due to some combination of transmission failure from the units on the tables to the master server perhaps caused by a combination of impediments to signal transfer—all within a hotel with an older digital environment. Charles smiled at the irony as he looked at his paper beverage napkin embossed on one side with the hotel name and on
the other with a QR code. He thought of Sean and wondered if Sean were reflecting on the parallel of this situation of lost communication in the wireless bridge world with similar degradation of signal in a wired environment caused by attenuation—signal degradation caused by cables of excessive length. Sean, however, was of course totally unaware of this situation as he had already left the tournament and was heading toward CU.

**Luncheon with Judy at Alma Mater**

Judy met her long-time friend Ann at Alma Mater, where they chose to sit in the rooftop outdoor café to enjoy a light luncheon. “What a spectacular view,” commented Ann, “the Arch on one side of us, the Eads Bridge across the river, and the nice new university across the river…looks as if some of the buildings might be underground…I love watching the river traffic…but, I do hope we will get to see some of the Clydesdales coming along the street, perhaps in a parade!” “Hello ladies. My name is David, and I will be your server this afternoon. What might I get for you?” They ordered a bottle of Dom Perignon, the Paté Sampler with Paté de Foie Gras and Paté de Campagne, and a small platter of soft, ripe French cheeses with a fresh baguette. Soon the drinks and cheeses arrived and David noted, “this is Laura; she is shadowing me today to learn more about fine service here. I hope you will not object. Please let either or both of us know if you have questions or concerns. Your remaining food should be up in about 20 minutes or so, but I thought you might like to get started now. The kitchen is a bit backed up.”

The women enjoyed the champagne and the cheese as they looked out over the river and relished, in silence, once again being together. Judy reflected on similar feelings as she and Ann had enjoyed high tea at a tournament in Canada. “So Ann,” said Judy, breaking the comfortable silence, “tell me about the current crop of
horses that you have…” “Well,” said Ann, “right now I’m raising quarter horses.” After a bit, Judy mused “and if you have four of them then you have a whole horse…four quarters make a whole…ha, ha!” “Very funny,” Ann said sardonically. Before the somewhat silly, but fun, exchange could continue, noise from the street below drowned them out. When finally they could talk again, the ever-optimistic Ann said “well, that sounded as if a wagon broke an axle…maybe the Clydesdales are down there…certainly there is a large crowd gathered around near the curb!” Judy moved tentatively toward the edge, which had a railing high enough to suit her; she carefully looked over. As she did, she lost it all…champagne, cheese, breakfast, and everything, right over the side. “REALLY, Judy,” noted Ann in a disgusted tone, “you are not that high up here and there’s a good rail….sit down and get hold of yourself!” “No, no, Ann, it’s not that at all,” said Judy, “…a man looks dead…he is lying in a pool of blood in the gutter…there is no wagon and there are no horses…”

**Activating the Earl Family Brain Trust**

Ann brought Judy back to the hotel just as the afternoon session of the mixed pairs was ending and explained briefly to Charles what had happened. Charles had already heard about the event; the staff at Alma Mater had texted him. Charles helped Judy to relax a bit and generally took charge. “You need to know, Judy, that the man who died was President Al,” Charles noted gently, “the police are questioning Bill, probably among others—it sounds as if Al had many enemies. Apparently Al was a regular at Alma Mater each week, like clockwork. He was there when you were and had just left the restaurant when he was apparently killed. Of course, the police are investigating the matter.”
“Judy,” Charles said firmly, “there are things I need to do associated with this shocking turn of events. I need to talk to various people. Soon, I need to go to the Presidential Suite, for one thing. Then I have to hustle back to work.” But, there are many other avenues that might be pursued, as well. Once again, I hope you will take charge of those, and invoke our Earl Family Brain Trust—I have already designated some St. Louis special agents for you. I’d like all reports back before the start of the evening session.” Charles knew that casting the situation in an abstract, seemingly playful, world would help Judy to cope with the nasty events that had begun to unfold around her. He needed to get her to channel her large imagination in constructive ways. “Introducing,” he continued with a grand gesture, “the Earl Family Brain Trust and Team of Special Agents Assigned to St. Louis!”

**Theodore E. Bear:** 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.
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<th><strong>Binker Bear</strong>: Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <em>When We Were Very Young</em>] “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.</th>
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<td><strong>Tine E. Bear</strong>: 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.</td>
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### Earl Family: Special Agents Assigned to St. Louis.

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<th>Character</th>
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<td><strong>Almer Bear</strong>:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td><strong>Ludwig von Bearthoven</strong>:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td><strong>Im PossumBle</strong>:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td><strong>Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou:</strong> Like Binker, Eeyore is also named after a character from A. A. Milne’s classic children’s work and like Binker is originally from Paris’ Galeries Lafayette. Eeyore worries about his tail, of course, but in recent years has learned to enjoy greatly the fact that real-world versions of himself, an endangered species, are once again rising in number. He is a kind and thoughtful, though stubborn, creature. His plodding ways and stubborn persistence, along with his gray coat, make him an ideal undercover agent in complex, but physically bounded, situations that appear drab in color. He has a background in problems associated with the hauling of materials. Eeyore persists until he gets to the bottom of things.</td>
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<td><strong>Guillaume R. Squirrel:</strong> A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.</td>
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The Investigation of Possible Solution Paths

“All right, guys,” Charles said to the assembled group, “here’s how Theodore, Binker, Tine, Judy, and I think we should proceed. In addition to things at the bridge tournament, there are three key areas to investigate: Alma Mater Restaurant, the pneumatic network, and Catenary University.” Each of you has a new smartphone.”

Charles continued, “we want Guillaume and Eeyore to handle the pneumatic tube network and perhaps CU (text me if you need me). See if you can find the historic network. Find the new one over the Eads Bridge. Are there remnants of the historic network? Do they still function? Guillaume’s size and agility should be very helpful in that regard. Eeyore’s knowledge of hauling practices in the 20th century, and his brute strength, should also be very helpful. Basically we need to check out that what we are told exists, actually does exist—there seems to be a lot of funding tied up with it.”

“Then,” Charles noted, “we want the rest of the special agents to go to Alma Mater, the site of the disaster: Almer, you keep your ears open and see if you note anything out of the ordinary in the recent past involving staff or patron behavior in regard to food or beverage knowledge (or lack thereof)—anything, however small, that might seem a bit out of place. Ludwig, we would like a similar report from you but in regard to entertainment rather than in regard to food and wine. Finally, Im, I think it would be good for you to hang out in the kitchen…it’s hard for the others to be in there in an unnoticed capacity but it should be easy for you. The staff will be looking at the food and not at the rafters…hang from a rafter, a pipe, or some such and again report on anything out of the ordinary.” With that the group disseminated and headed to their respective assignments.
Investigative reports of the special agents.

I spent time in the dining area, talking to the host who seats people and generally circulating among the seated patrons. In addition, I had some opportunity to shadow the wait staff. I chose mostly to shadow their best and most experienced waiter, David. I think you already know that President Al went to Alma Mater a few weeks ago with a group of students and made a real pest of himself conducting some sort of weird social networking experiment to demonstrate how staff might react to obnoxious behavior. Other than that, he was there for lunch with you (the day before he died) and then of course the final time. That’s about all I picked up with regard to Al’s activities—nothing out of the ordinary for him. As to food, you know what Al ate with you. For his last meal, Al had Entrecôte and Pommes Frites, you know, a form of sirloin steak and fries; I gather that when he came with someone he wanted to get money from or otherwise impress, that he ordered expensive items. But, for his regular weekly visit usually had something simpler, as he did that day. By, his eating choices, it appears that Al had no premonition that disaster was about to strike.

In addition, the wait staff was laughing about some other guy who came in some time shortly before Al did and ordered a glass of
“Armoire” as an after-lunch drink. I gather that the host was good about correcting him although David told me the fellow was quite insistent about the name because he said his boss always had a glass of it.

David also mentioned that his “shadow” that day had been the one he had recently acquired, the would-be waitress, Laura. So, I also talked to Laura; she had little to offer. I gather she is a student at CU with interest in the Eads Bridge pneumatic project and may be involved in some testing of it—I worked a bit with Im on this issue and will leave that to him for his report. From what I saw, I am generally quite impressed with the way that restaurant is run: a fine group of young folks serving outstanding food and fine beverages—they all seem to know their stuff.

*Report of Special Agent Ludwig.*

I heard the same set of stories as Almer. The lighting in the place is quite good, clearly bright enough to see one’s food, yet understated enough to permit entertainment of various sorts. Of course, both the pattern and the intensity of light can be adjusted to respond to various entertainment requirements. I gather that there was nothing special regarding the lights when Al was there for the last time. So, visibility should have been quite good at normal lunchtime, mid-afternoon lighting.

During the time I was there a fine magician had been hired to go
from table to table—apparently he works there on a variety of afternoons, through dinner, in an effort to draw family trade. He was really extraordinary; I tried not to lose my focus but the way he seemingly pulled light bulbs out of my ears was quite something! The young children enjoyed him, but I think many of the adults enjoyed him even more. I know I would go back there just to see him; then again, entertainment is my thing! Apparently he was there when Al was there. I gather that President Al seemed to enjoy him as much as anyone did; and I was told that quite a crowd had gathered around Al’s table when the magician was there, each one wanting a different balloon animal…all very cute. Al left before the crowd around his table had dissipated; next thing they knew, he was lying dead in the gutter. The area was quickly cordoned off, so I couldn’t get a really close look even though the event had taken place several hours before I got there.

Report of Special Agent Im.
While I was hanging around in the kitchen, I saw nothing unusual in the preparation of the food. It all seems to be carefully done and of course I assume the kitchen meets code—all seemed quite clean. The staff seemed quite careful about washing their hands and also fine in the way they handled food to avoid cross-contamination of
any kind.

I was, however, glad to hear that Almer had talked to Laura. Some aspects of her behavior seemed a bit different from that of the other servers. I found the terminus of the historical pneumatic network there. It appears that the network still works. Around dinner time, two pneumatic carriers (you know, one of those cylindrical containers like we see at banks these days) arrived. Laura took each one out of the old tubing and placed it in a newer tube and launched it off, elsewhere.

So, I texted Almer to have a conversation with Laura devoted to this topic—separate from his routine investigation. Almer texted back that Laura’s strange actions were all part of the testing of the Eads Bridge pneumatic tube in association with the older network. Her manual transfer of pneumatic carriers from the old to the new tubes was one non-automated factor in the CU testing of this extended technology.

The local manager at Alma Mater was happy to support this experiment in higher education. He saw pneumatic technology as one that has some ‘green’ components, and of course vastly preferred this sort of scientific testing to Al’s earlier abusive experiment with his staff.
Report of Special Agent Eeyore.

Well, here I was enjoying a nice shower and singing my favorite song when Guillaume texted me to meet him in the lobby. I got out of the shower, shook myself off, and plodded on down to the lobby. Judy had told me earlier that she had noticed large regularly-spaced grates in the sidewalks outside the hotel. We supposed that they might provide an air exchange for some sort of underground network.

So, Guillaume and I headed outside to look the situation over. I was able to pick up a grate and lower Guillaume down to a ledge below the sidewalk. He texted me that in fact we had found, through Judy’s keen observation and deduction, a way into the historic pneumatic network. He noted that in addition to the tubing that was suspended in tunnels, there were footpaths apparently for maintenance of the networks and perhaps of materials that might get flushed in from gutters, in-wall vacuum systems, and the like.

He told me to come on down, too. Well, it’s not easy for one of my girth and stiffness to get down there, but I did so—reluctantly, I’ll tell you. But I supposed I had to support my friend and I do like to give things a really thorough checking out.
Soon after we were situated below the streets, we heard a swooshing sound—a pneumatic carrier travelling through a tube. It was quite thrilling to think that this network built over 100 years ago in the bowels of St. Louis could still function—even if only in some limited manner. We watched but did not see another one come by. So, we decided to walk along the path using the light from a smartphone to guide us. Guillaume hopped up on my back and we trudged along, sort of like my distant ancestor “Sal” who walked along the banks of the Erie Canal as she and others helped to haul barges using tow ropes. After a bit we came to a place where there were some empty pneumatic containers and what looked like a place to put them into the system of tubes.

Well, that Guillaume is such an adventurer! The next thing I knew, he had crawled into a cylindrical pneumatic carrier and was asking me to close the lid and launch him into the system by giving him a push (we supposed that if we were above ground, gravity would launch the carrier). He said he would text me when he came out on the other end. It was against my better judgment, but I did as he asked—as I gave my friend a gentle push, I worried that he might wind up losing his beautiful tail out the back…or worse. So, I went back up to the light of day so I could receive his text, trotted on back to the hotel, and sat in the lobby. I was worried sick about the fate of my dear friend.

As I awaited a text from Guillaume, I reflected on the events of the day. Sometimes it is good, even when one is worried, to sit down and try to put things in a logical perspective…I was sorry Theodore wasn’t there to help with this. Just as I felt I was getting my act together, my smartphone beeped. It was a message from Guillaume! It was one word “hmmmmmph”—that meant he was ok
and acting like good ol’ Guillaume. He sent a photo and of course it had latitude and longitude coordinates attached. I presumed it was a photo of where he was. I knew we could find him. I texted him back to stay put and told him that help was on the way—that I would use my Global Positioning System software to find him. Then I went upstairs, got my saddle bags, and headed on over to the appropriate geographic coordinates.

*Report of Special Agent Guillaume.*

Thank goodness Eeyore came to the rescue! It turns out that I was in some sort of storeroom in the underground area of CU. After I got in the tube when Eeyore gave me a push, I was dumped out, still inside my pneumatic carrier, in a kitchen. Then, some young woman picked up the carrier and I thought for sure she would look inside and help me out. Hmmmmpf!! But, NO! She didn’t even look! I saw Im hanging around, overhead but didn’t indicate anything for fear of blowing his cover. The woman just shoved me, inside my carrier, into another pneumatic tube and I took off again, but much faster this time. In no time at all I landed in this storeroom. An automatic arm of some sort pulled the carrier out of the tube, lifted the lid, and with a fork-like hand, reached in and picked me up and dropped me in a bin that also contained a small package in a manila envelope. First, I texted Eeyore. Next, I was going to look in the envelope, but just then I heard someone coming. So, I scampered into a hidden spot and a person came in and did
something. When I checked, it turns out he/she had emptied the bin—taken the manila envelope away somewhere. Six minutes later, the person returned—I think it was a man, but the storeroom was pretty dark—no windows (apparently underground), only light from the door left ajar—and I really didn’t want to use the light from my smartphone when someone else was in there. But the shoes appeared to be large men’s shoes, so I assume but do not know, that the person was male. Anyway, he put something in a wastebasket and left, muttering to himself something about getting out of here. About 15 minutes later, Eeyore arrived. He was indeed a sight for sore eyes. I told him about the wastebasket, so he reached in and scooped out the package. It looked like the same manila envelope I had seen earlier in the bin where I was dumped from the pneumatic tube. I told him to put it in his saddle bag; I hopped in the other saddle bag, and we returned to the hotel. It was quite an adventure—the tubes might have possibilities as some sort of an amusement ride for folks my size…but, the system needs to be made more pleasant than what I experienced…I can tell you that!!

Charles’s Report

“After I left Judy and the Team, my time between sessions of the mixed pair was split between making an appearance in the Presidential Suite for a between-session reception for educators and talking to tournament directors. In my capacity as a technology expert on the national Board of Directors of the ABC, I needed to consult with the Director-in-Charge, Eric, about the unfortunate events of the day involving the transmission failure from the wireless scoring units.”

In the Presidential Suite

I found Sean near the elevators, poring over the hand record from
the afternoon game. I asked him casually how he did and escorted him to the Presidential Suite where he and Ryan (ABC President) exchanged casual chit-chat about the luck of the Irish, bridge, St. Patrick’s Day, and so forth. Ryan was always a genial host. Ellen showed Sean around to the various tables loaded with delectable food tidbits and then took him to the bar and introduced him to Sarah, who happily got him an Irish beer. Meanwhile, I was talking to Ryan about the unfortunate problems with the wireless scoring units. When I saw Sean coming over, I thought it was probably best not to talk shop in front of him so went to him and sat down with him. He wanted to go over the hand record one hand at a time, and we did so. We compared results, one for one, and also as if we were comparing board-a-match convention cards and International Match Point convention cards. I think he enjoyed that very much. I also introduced him to a few world champion bridge players who were in the Presidential Suite that evening as well as to an astronaut who was there. He seemed to get engaged in conversations with them, so I left to go about my duty downstairs with Eric, the Director-in-Charge. Sean said he planned to stay in the Suite until shortly before game time and then go back to the second session of the mixed pairs.

**Wireless Scoring Units**

Eric told me that apparently there were more than the usual number of “Director” calls in the later part of the afternoon session. He said that when the transmission from table-top wireless scoring unit is working properly, it is largely an automatic process; that when floor directors are not overly busy, they may check that it is working properly, but that when they are busy elsewhere, it runs largely unattended. The latter situation is apparently what happened during the last half of the afternoon session in the mixed pairs. Thus, the transmission failure which began in round 6 continued, unnoticed,
until the end of the game.

When such failures arise, each machine must be checked manually to extract the results from the memory cache in the machine—the individual entering the score does not know that it failed to transmit. While it takes only 3 minutes for a director to extract the scores from the cache of an individual machine, there are many machines in use. This afternoon, for example, there were 169 tables in play in thirteen sections of 13 tables each. The units in six sections were affected; that’s 78 tables. So, instead of having real-time instantaneous scoring, which is what we have when the system works properly, we had a delay of at least 234 minutes to account for. Naturally, the more directors involved in reading the caches, the faster the scores get out.

I stayed down on the floor with the directors to study the whole situation for as long as it took. Eric was able to marshal the services of 3 other directors and they had the situation under control, after somewhat over an hour, just before the start of the evening session. The affected units appeared to have been those farther away from the server, which was partially blocked anyway by a marble floor-to-ceiling column: “attenuation” in the wireless world. Only one unit appeared different—it had no scores in it at all, not even from the first five rounds. That anomaly appeared to be attributed to the location of the unit on a table distant from the server and behind a pillar that went from floor to ceiling of the ballroom—so a double column blockage. So, scores for that one section were delayed even longer as the directors sought to find players from that section who could fill them in with results. In the worst case, they would have had to wait until the start of the second session to find players to fill in gaps. Technological failure may offer a variety of surprises. I had hoped I might pick up some tidbit that would help us to unravel
the nasty events of the afternoon that were not yet widely known.

**Charles’s Theory--Putting It All Together**

I have a simple statement from the Police: Al was knifed in the back with his own steak knife at Alma Mater—perhaps some sort of literal statement of giving back, to someone whom he had figuratively knifed in the back. Anyway, the knife was wrapped in a napkin so there are no finger prints on the handle or blade. Apparently, he was knifed at his table in the middle of the crowd watching the magician; he got up, staggered out, and fell into the street. The police found droplets of blood on the floor from Al’s chair, leading to the curb. Some sort of professional analysis was needed to confirm that these small areas of discoloration on the patterned carpet of the restaurant were in fact human blood, and not steak juice, catsup, or some other food material. So, our murderer must have been present in the crowd.

There are plenty of people who could not stand Al. Like many “heroes” there were those who loved him, those who hated him, and very few in between. Our dear friend Bill is course a primary suspect; Al fired him for no apparent cause and did so in a particularly vicious manner. But, Bill’s story checks out; he is doing better now than ever before; I believe him and I know in my heart that he is innocent. But, I know I must be able to offer objective and logical support for those feelings. Only then, will I offer my theory to the police.

There are of course many who had good cause to dislike Al: the head of the Faculty Senate at CU; the head of the Student Government at CU; some of the wait staff and management at Alma Mater; and, no doubt, a host of others with whom Al came in contact. I found him to be an affable and charming man in some
ways. Yet I was equally certain that he was a liar who twisted facts to fit his own preconceived agenda and to cloak his distortions in an air of altruism…a very dangerous man.

Naturally, the police will focus on his connections at the university and will look at alibis in relation to university activities (teaching classes and such). But Judy, you and I both know that university professors have tremendous flexibility; classes are easily replaced with take-home exams and so forth…there are no rigid hours when one has to be on campus. Many outside the academic profession do not understand that individual accountability is what drives successful universities, and so it is particularly heinous when that trust is violated. We are held to higher standards of personal accountability than are many others, especially as we serve as role models in all regards for the best and brightest that are coming along as the future. We are, in some respects, always on call. So, if someone in the academic arena had motive sufficient to plan to kill Al, might he not look outside the academic environment to some more structured institution in order to create an alibi that would be easier to verify than an alibi within the flexible academic institutional structure? An ABC National Tournament is a highly structured event…perhaps just the sort of institutionalized structure that might offer an academic the sort of needed alibi structure to commit premeditated murder elsewhere.

Then, we return to the question of motive. Again, I focus on the concept of risk-benefit analysis. To risk murder is to risk one’s own life. Almost always, the risk vastly outweighs the benefit and so murder is an uncommon event. In my mind, only two individuals at CU might have motive—a situation in which the benefit might outweigh the risk. The heads of Faculty Senate and Student Government, as well as many others no doubt, certainly did not like
Al. But they had channels, as in votes of no-confidence and such, to express their dislike. For them, as well as for folks working at Alma Mater, the risk greatly outweighed any benefit so I no longer looked there.

That left two candidates: our dear friend Bill, and his former colleague, Sean. Each might have had similar motives: Al had stolen the Eads Bridge pneumatic tube project from them. First, Sean stole it from Bill and got Al to fire Bill. Then, Al stole it from Sean and marginalized Sean’s role on it. Meanwhile, Al pulled in multi-million dollar grants in association with it, got fine students to work on it, paid himself a handsome consulting fee on it, and generally turned himself into a local hero in association with it…Al used the project to boost enrollments, to get personal and institutional national media attention, and to obtain favorable international press coverage. Often, this coverage cited the work of this altruistic and heroic Midwestern American university president who was doing pioneering research on the digital divide and doing it in a manner that would benefit the peaceful, global interchange of information. I gather that academic gossip had it that Al might have been in line for an award from an international selection committee in association with the world’s greatest existing Peace prize.

Surely both Bill and Sean must have been more than a trifle irritated that their work had been stolen and that Al had attempted to destroy them professionally in order to glorify, and in an academic sense, deify himself. Indeed, Al had even co-opted Sean’s pet student, Brendan—who adopted Sean’s manner and style of dress as is often the case with students who admire a professor—as his own personal assistant. Bill, however, had gone off on his own and was enjoying great success elsewhere. Bill’s clear and sensible account of what had happened here made sense both before and after I
talked to others. So, I turned more of my attention to Sean.

But with Sean, we have to wonder how he can be in two places at once—both at Alma Mater and at the hotel playing bridge. Doesn’t the fairly rigid structure of the bridge tournament offer him an alibi? Here is where the evidence that Judy and the Team assembled becomes critical. Let me show you how it might have worked. Recall that Guillaume and Eeyore brought me a packet that had been sent through the combined old and new pneumatic system, ostensibly as a part of the testing of this system. Sean told me that he believed in the importance of the testing of systems and in particular of automated testing of systems. So, when Guillaume rode the length of the test track, he hit one snag in the automation of the testing when he got into the carrier and needed a shove from Eeyore to get started…that part, whether the start was from below ground with a physical push or from above ground with an assist from gravity, was not automated. Nor was the transfer of the carrier from the old system to the new system. Laura, the trainee at Alma Mater, was part of the testing team of the Eads Bridge project and Al paid her from his grant to serve as the human interface necessary, at least for the time being, to transfer carriers from old to new technology. She did the job she was paid to do, and although might be viewed as some sort of accomplice, in fact was truly innocent of any deeper wrong-doings. Looking inside the carrier was not on the agenda that Sean had given her and that is why she did not react to Guillaume. Once the carrier arrived in the Math Department storeroom at CU, automated equipment emptied the carrier, moved the contents to a bin, and shoved the empty carrier back in the tubing. Guillaume witnessed how that works and his observations in that regard are important.
But what Guillaume and Eeyore did that was critical was return the package that arrived shortly in advance of Eeyore. I opened it and saw that it contained a wireless scoring unit. Thus, it did appear that someone with access to the Math Department at CU had wished to know what was going on at the bridge tournament without being present. Again, either Bill or Sean would fit that picture, presuming that Bill could still have keys if he wanted them.

Im’s work confirmed Laura’s role in the testing of the equipment at Alma Mater, while Ludwig’s observations explained how the murder took place, in a crowd distracted by a magician. One seemingly innocent tidbit from Almer, however, made it clear to me, again, where the logic must point. He noted that someone had ordered a glass of “Armoire” as an after-luncheon drink. My colleague Bill, who had recently spent nine months in Paris, would never have confused “Armagnac” with “Armoire”—a ridiculous confusion of brandy with a dresser/closet—and, Sean had told me that he did not generally eat at Alma Mater and apparently preferred hot dogs and beer to French food and wine. So, my mind was now swinging heavily toward Sean. Still, I did not have what seemed to my mathematically trained mind as “proof.”

So, I took the wireless scoring unit to Eric, the ABC Director who is the expert on these systems. I needed to check on how to extract the content from the cache. He showed me how, it was as I had thought, and he also did it himself. What we both found, independently, was that this unit had been keyed to Sean and Nancy’s table. Now, I was convinced that it must have been Sean who committed the murder, but I wanted to tie as many loose ends together as possible before turning everything over to the police.
Nancy had returned from her trip to the coast. She told me about Brendan filling in during the afternoon for Sean; no doubt Sean had chosen Brendan, in particular, because a casual observer looking at the pair, and focusing on Nancy, could have easily mistaken the younger Brendan emulating his mentor, as Sean. She said that when she read about the murder at CU, she assumed in retrospect that the text message that Sean said he got regarding an emergency at CU was after the murder…and not that Sean was going to cause the emergency!

Follow up with Brendan revealed that Sean had promised him an A in the independent study if Brendan did as Sean asked; and, he threatened Sean with destroying his perfect average and opportunities for a fine fellowship to graduate school if he did not do as Sean requested. In fact, I had to pressure Brendan myself, telling him that being any sort of an accessory to murder would be far worse that losing a few points on his grade point average…he was smart enough to see that!

So, he said that during the first hospitality break after round 4 Sean had given him an apparently empty wireless scoring unit to carry in his pocket. It would have been a simple matter for Sean to pick one up before the session, perhaps when Nancy was buying an entry. Sean knew, from my conversation with him yesterday, that he should get one from the tournament hotel site (rather than from his local club) because it was likely they had all been passworded together under a single username. Sean could have easily kept it in his pocket during the first four rounds and then handed it to Brendan after round 4, during the hospitality break. Sean instructed Brendan to continue entering scores into the unit already on the table. Then, after the last round, Brendan was to remove the device on the table and replace it with the empty one from his pocket. It would have
been easy to do this; Brendan was alone at the table and everyone else was too busy to notice. Brendan had been told to make the transfer out of the line of sight of the evident security cameras—Sean assured Brendan that it was all set with the tournament officials and so there was no need to cause a frivolous disturbance by commenting or asking questions. Brendan was then instructed to send the wireless device from the table, to Sean. He was to use a provided manila envelope, and then put the envelope into the entry to the relic pneumatic tube network, near the men’s restroom, that Brendan checked out during the hospitality break. He was to transmit the material sometime after the game was over, but well in advance of the evening session. Brendan did so, functioning under the assumption that all the directions of Sean were ethical and part of the testing of this system that was not yet fully automated. Brendan was serving the above-ground role of launching a pneumatic carrier that Eeyore had assumed below.

Sean must have returned to CU following the murder and taken advantage of the flexibility afforded by the academic environment. No doubt, he talked about having been in the underground testing lab for the past few hours or some such, and then went about university business as usual for the rest of the afternoon. He might have noted that he had been checking up on the testers at the bridge tournament and at Alma Mater and that he was going to continue doing so in the coming evening. There are any number of plausible comments he might have made. Then, when the staff left for the day, he headed to the underground storeroom/lab area where he found the wireless scoring unit, as expected. He quickly extracted the content, threw the unit away, and headed back to the tournament site with a convention card full of scores. He had to have the information prior to returning to the tournament, otherwise he knew he would risk being exposed by his ignorance of the later boards. He knew nothing of the transmission failure from the
wireless scoring units.

Sean’s plan might have worked if there had been no transmission failures. The directors would never have noticed that one unit was empty and different from the others. They only looked at the individual units in advance of the evening session because they needed to do so to extract the scores. They were under great time pressure to do so, and because they attributed the totally blank unit to some vagary of technology failure had not bothered to record which table it had been associated with. When the evening session started all was reset and that evidence was destroyed.

Had the scores been transmitted in the expected wireless pattern, as they had been in rounds 1 through 5, Sean would have been home free with a clear alibi of having been there. Sean knew all the scores—he had discovered, at his local duplicate club, how to retrieve them quickly from the unit’s cache—the six minutes that he had the machine out of the storeroom was all he needed to get the information and enter it on his convention card; then, he could converse with the finest about the game of the afternoon; no one would think to question him or Nancy about a murder at a restaurant a few blocks from the hotel. The units would have been reset as usual at the beginning of the evening session and no one would ever have known that one of the units had been different from the others. Sean had constructed a “perfect” plan: it was the failure of technology that did him in!

Even so, Sean might have recovered from the unexpected transmission failure if only he had known of it. Brendan might have texted him, but Brendan thought nothing of the transmission failures as he was innocently following instructions exactly as commanded—
a short-coming in Sean’s abuse of a student. Had the transmissions for the afternoon gone as expected, it was a reasonable plan for Sean to throw away the wireless unit at CU, where no one would think anything of it, in the trash which probably often had any number of strange-looking technological items in it. If instead Sean had taken the “liberated” unit back to the game, and replaced the blank that was there with the real one that had been there, Guillaume would never have found the liberated unit and the Directors might never have found the blank—and, but for a seemingly inconvenient misfire of technology, Sean might well have gotten away with murder.
Chapter 3: Lake Geneva Bridge Murder

“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 cochère 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
“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.”

“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 wheelchair—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.
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**

♠ J 6 5 4 2  
♥ 9 8  
♦ Q 8 7 4  
♣ A 6  

**East**

♠ 7  
♥ Q 5 3  
♦ K J 6 5 3 2  
♣ 9 4 2  

**South**

♠ A Q 3  
♥ K 10 7 6  
♦ 10 9  
♣ J 10 8 3
The bidding was as follows:

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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.”

**Earl Family Brain Trust**

| **Theodore E. Bear:** 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. |
Binker Bear: Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, When We Were Very Young] “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.

Tine E. Bear: 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.

“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.

SPECIAL AGENT ASSIGNED TO LAKE GENEVA, Guillaume R. Squirrel: A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.

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 handing 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 “hoot.”

**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 Beethoven:** 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.

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.
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!”
Chapter 4: Bay City Bridge Murder

“Double, double, toil, and trouble; Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.”
Macbeth, William Shakespeare

Arrival in Bay City
“Oh, Charles,” Judy Earl purred to her husband, “this setting is even better than you said. The Saginaw River is spectacular, and so are the parks on either side with their adjacent river walks.” “And hence,” Charles noted in his even-toned mathematical logic, “the name of our hotel, the ‘DoublePark’, reflecting the presence of parks
on the river floodplain as a double on either side of the river. It's a national chain that works in conjunction with state-level departments of natural resources to promote environmentally-responsive urban development. I hope the folks running the bridge tournament at the DoublePark are able to capitalize in their decorative materials on the coincidence of the term ‘double’ both in the dual hotel and bridge contexts.” Charles then deftly maneuvered their car into a parking space with a view of the river and Judy and Charles Earl got out and went into the new hotel at the edge of the Saginaw River floodplain. The couple crossed the immaculate lobby and headed to the registration desk when a smiling young woman gave them a 2-dollar bill (a ‘double’) and offered them hot, freshly-baked cookies. “Judy, you go sit down over there where you can watch the bellhop unload the car and I’ll make sure the room is as we reserved it—with a view of the river—it’s almost noon so we might well be able to check in,” Charles commented. Judy got comfortable and noted to herself that apparently the hotel does allow, true to its name, double parking under the porte cochère. Soon, Charles returned, and the couple sat on a lobby sofa, as they awaited the bellhop with their luggage, enjoying the warm chocolate and walnut cookies while they watched a swarm of bridge players enter the lobby.

“Well, well, well, if it isn’t my dear friend, Charles” clucked a woman carrying two dogs, one beagle under each arm. “Oh, Charles, you act as if you don’t remember me! You know, we met in the Presidential Suite at one of the national tournaments of the American Bridge Congress (ABC) last year.” “Hmmm,” Charles noted apologetically, “the voice is familiar and no doubt we did meet, but I really can’t place a name…” “I’m Elise,” the woman said, “and I’m sure you must remember my husband, Jeremy…probably when you see him, it will all click.” “No doubt, I’m sure it is all as you say,” Charles said politely while at the same time thinking to himself that
his memory was excellent and that he knew a ‘Jeremy’ but ‘Elise’ did not ring a bell. Even though he met hundreds of different people at each ABC, in his role on the national Board of Directors, he was certain he remembered all of them.

“No matter,” Elise said with a dismissive wave of her carefully manicured hand, “you must meet the boys here; this is ‘Snookums’, and this is ‘Sweetums’…now you boys sit down here on this love seat while Mommykins goes to check us in.” “Good grief, Charles,” Judy whispered, “do you really know her?” “I’m clueless,” Charles noted carefully, “let’s see what happens next.”

**Lobby Action**
Elise strode over to the registration desk and told the friendly young woman that she and her husband Jeremy would be staying for the entire bridge tournament and wanted two rooms, one with a river view and the other across the hall. The woman appeared happy to oblige the requests, pushed a couple of keys in her direction, and then caught sight of the furry couple on the lobby love seat. “Eeeek, what are those…they can’t come in here,” shrieked the woman behind the desk, “we do not allow pets or tobacco products in this fine hotel. Please remove them immediately, Ma’am!” At that, Elise grabbed the woman by her corporate uniform and shook her by the lapels until her clip-on necktie fell off. “You listen to me, you two-bit pencil pusher,” snarled Elise, “these dogs go anywhere I want them to go; they are service dogs, and I have papers to prove it. Furthermore, they are probably cleaner than you are.”

At that, Elise whirled around and scooped up Sweetums from the love seat and put him on the front desk. “Now take a look,” Elise continued, “the pads on his feet are as clean as the day he was born; when he walks on pavement or dirty hotel floors, he wears
little shoes—here, smell his foot! Nothing but nice clean soap smell.” “Really, ma’am,” sputtered the woman. At that Elise shoved the dog’s paw into the woman’s face.

Soon, other bridge players arrived in the lobby and were waiting in line for registration. Undeterred, Elise continued with her dog’s physical examination “now in addition to the feet, you will see also that his tongue and teeth are immaculate….they get brushed three times a day…open wide, Sweetums, and show the nice lady, no doggy breath…furthermore, his anus is clean…see, it’s pink and does not smell, and his private parts, although he is not fixed, are also clean.” Elise pulled back the dog’s foreskin to prove the point and the dog began to shudder in apparent delight. “Not now, Sweetums,” Elise cooed, “Daddykins will take care of you later.” At that the woman behind the desk fainted. Elise scooped up room keys and the dogs and headed toward her rooms. Meanwhile pandemonium reigned in the lobby and Judy was somehow reminded of her colleague, Dr. Fred, whose number one rule of life was ‘stick with your own species’.

Charles walked around, shook hands, and made casual chit-chat with the many bridge players whom he already knew in an effort to restore some semblance of order within the shocked crowd coming to the regional bridge tournament in Bay City. Meanwhile Clara, a long-time friend of the Earls, came and sat down with Judy. “You know,” Clara commented, “I don’t know that woman, but she does remind me of someone. If I can piece together where I know her from, I’ll let you know. But, I think the memory is from way back. The dogs are new to me.” “Yes, DoubleDogs and DoubleTrouble at the DoublePark,” mused Charles as he thought about a doubled double as a redouble.
‘Double, Double…’

“What a terrific view!” exclaimed Judy, “and look, that bridge that spans the river is one that opens up to let large ships come through. Oh, Charles, I hope we can see a Great Lakes Freighter come through.” Judy so loved to see all the fascinating things the world had to offer, and Charles so loved to show them to her. In almost 50 years of marriage, that excitement had never waned; nor had their love for each other.
“Charles,” Judy asked, “with whom are you playing bridge?” “Primarily with Dewey, you remember him,” noted Charles, “he’s a linguist (professor), and he always wears a dashiki. He has quite a collection of them; formal as well as informal including a simple gray-scale one that he wears to the gym. Many of them have really beautiful and colorful patterns—a West African sort of shirt. You have old photos of some of his from the last time you saw him. Indeed, they are quite distinctive.” “Oh Yes, I’ll look forward to seeing which ones he brought with him here,” said Judy.

“Anyway, it’s time for me to meet Dewey at the game,” Charles said, “do you want to come with me and say ‘hi’ for yourself, Judy? He will have been to the gym earlier, but by now should be wearing a
colorful dashiki.” “Nope,” Judy said, “not now. I am going to look around the DoublePark and then go to the gym to work out. Later…”

**Outside the DoublePark…**

Judy left the hotel and headed across the vast stretch of lawn to the river walk. As she walked along the fenced, attractively laid-out sidewalk, she could see oil slicks in the river from various ships. When she leaned over the fence and looked more closely, she saw giant carp slurping down the oily water. “Interesting,” she thought, “wonder if the oil fattens them up. In any event, hope no one eats them!” Farther along the walk, she came to a tall ship anchored at a mooring on the river walk. “Well, I guess the water must be fairly deep even right here next to the land,” she said to herself as she admired the handsome ship. It was a beautiful day, and the clear blue skies of the Lake Huron watershed reflected appealingly in the Saginaw River. Scenes such as these were stress-defeaters! She hoped she might see the tall ship sail on the river.
As she contemplated the sailing tall ship picture in her mind’s eye, a long blast came from farther downstream. Soon a magnificent Great Lakes Freighter came into view. It was riding high in the water and its girth left little room in the river for much else. Tug boats helped with navigation through the channel, pushing and pulling the boat upstream, perhaps to pick up a load of sand or gravel mined from some moraine or other glacial feature; or maybe to haul cement made locally to some distant port of call; or perhaps to fill up on lumber, the root historical industry of this region. Judy wished that Charles could be there to enjoy the splendor of these ships and to participate in imagining useful or exotic local cargoes that might fill the ship on its return trip up the Saginaw River, into the Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron and thence into the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. But Charles enjoyed adventures of the mind, alone.

Suddenly, the beautiful sunny day became overcast with thick, gray clouds, snapping Judy back into reality. She rushed to get back to the DoublePark in advance of any possible storm.

Toil...
The location of the gym inside the DoublePark had clearly been carefully planned. One set of elevators, in the center of the building, took guests to the guest rooms. In addition, there was a freight elevator at the south end of the building, large enough to accommodate a cleaning cart of the sort the staff uses when cleaning guest rooms. To find the gym, one was required to use the freight elevator and take it to the first floor (lobby level). Exit from the freight elevator on the first floor was to a staff area and the gym; NOT to the lobby itself. There was no guest connection between the gym and the lobby. While this might initially have been confusing to guests, a little reflection showed that sweaty guests, or
guests in swimming suits, never appeared in the lobby—a win-win situation for regular guests who might not enjoy having sweaty guests near the restaurant and for modest guests who wished to minimize their public exposure in a swimming suit. Judy thought about all of this as she removed her outdoor clothes and donned her gym suit. Then, she headed to the freight elevator and the gym. As Judy shuffled back and forth on the elliptical cross-trainer, her mind tended to wander. This elliptical was right next to a bank of three treadmills. In the past, Judy had been known to break out in raucous laughter as she imagined the treadmills as giant conveyor belts in the supermarket. A long-legged scrawny woman wearing chartreuse tight pants became a bunch of celery riding toward the cashier; a portly woman with large thighs wearing pink tights became a ham on its way to be checked out. But, Judy decided that she would work hard today to restrain her often over-active imagination.

TV sets in the gym were enjoyed by some; Judy found them unexciting. She preferred to look out the window. Just on the other side of the bridge that she could see easily from her perch was the outline of an underutilized pergola.
What a wonderful spot for an Alma Mater TeaGarten, she thought, as she looked through the door to an exterior ground-level patio. The Earls owned a chain of restaurants, named to honor Judy’s mother Alma and also to honor the long-standing connection of both Charles’s and Judy’s family associations with the academic world. She would have to mention it to Charles and see if he thought there was sufficient market appeal in the area to make a go of it.

From the restaurant possibility, her mind drifted to looking at cloud formations. The puffy white fair weather cumulus clouds had given way to a bank of gray clouds, which had driven her indoors, of various degrees of darkness and shapes. The multiple layers were really quite beautiful as they tapered off toward a lighter horizon. At the edge of the cloud bank, in the distance, she saw a waterspout that had perhaps drifted onshore from Lake Huron. It dissipated quickly.

Judy was drawn sharply back to reality when she heard the whirring noise of a keycard in the entry system. “Well, hello Judy! Nice to see you; we’ve just been enjoying a bit of a view from the patio” said Jeremy. “Hi Jeremy, long-time-no-see,” replied Judy, “and what are you doing with those dogs?” “They belong to my wife, Elise; all this is probably new to you since the last time we saw each other at a
national tournament several years ago,” Jeremy noted. “I gather that Elise made quite a scene in the lobby this morning,” he continued, “she goes over the edge if anyone insults, or if she thinks someone insults, her precious pooches/service dogs; anyway, apologies on behalf of our little ‘family’ here. I need to exercise the dogs a bit more; it’s getting too nasty outside, so we’ll just use the treadmills as we did before we went out to the patio.” Jeremy then lifted each dog, outfitted with small sneakers on each paw, onto a treadmill, tied it to the rail with the leash, and set it on a low speed. Then ‘Daddykins’ got up on the third treadmill and the apparently happy group exercised.

Judy’s mind now drifted to watching Saturday morning cartoons on TV with their son Ed, many years ago when he was quite young. Ed would roll on the floor laughing as the cartoon dog, ‘Astro,’ went faster and faster on a treadmill and was soon pitched off by the ever-increasing acceleration. Judy thought to herself that she had better leave this happy little situation lest she not be able to keep her promise to control her imagination and her response to it! “See you around, Jeremy; say ‘hi’ to Elise,” Judy commented as she left the gym and left this cul-de-sac in the bowels of the DoublePark.

Trouble…
Back in the hotel room, Judy once again changed her outfit; she wanted to look nice for Charles and his friend, Dewey. Until time to meet them for dinner, she sat down at her computer and began to work on three dimensional building files while she listened to Mozart, Symphony Number 40 in G Minor, K. 550. She had built the basic building for the DoublePark, and geo-referenced it properly; now, what remained was to adjust the surface detail: windows, bricks, doors, rooftop elements, and so forth. Buildings, as well as people, could be clad in beautiful fabric. Adjustments in textures
were relatively easy to do but a bit time-consuming. One needed to focus tightly on the effort: do perspective cropping to convert trapezoidal images into rectangular textures to apply to the sides and top of the rectilinear building, remove the foreground from photos and get free-standing trees, and a host of other small issues to make the model look ‘real’.
As she became absorbed in constructing detail on her 3D model of the DoublePark, a faint noise seemed to penetrate her intensity. “Aha,” she exclaimed, “it’s a knock on the door! Yes, who’s there?”
“Room service,” said the voice in the hallway. Judy opened the door, “Madame, here is your order,” said the handsome young Frenchman whose nametag read ‘Jean-Pierre’, “you will see that the boeuf is exactly as you ordered it, one pound of raw ground tenderloin with two separate cereal bowls.” “But, but, but…” sputtered Judy, “Jean-Pierre, I ordered nothing from room service. Here, let me take a look at the tag…this is room 318 and the tag says it is to go to room 318/2…perhaps it is to go to rooms 381 and 382, where someone rented out two rooms across the hall from each other for some reason (we do that with sleeping compartments on long train trips so we have a view of the scenery on both sides of the train)? “Oh, Madame, merci mille fois, you have my deepest apologies for the confusion; your logic makes parfait sense. Again, thank you,” gushed Jean-Pierre.

Then the anxious waiter covered the raw beef with the silver dome and pushed the cart down the long hallway. Judy watched as he went. Soon, she saw a door open at the far end of the hall. The waiter pushed the cart into a room. About a minute later, she heard him shriek and then saw Jean-Pierre run down the hall to the elevators as he muttered an explosive string of French. She was able to pick out a few words here and there: ‘cochon,’ ‘merde alors,’ and a few others. Although her French was really quite good, with a Parisian accent coming from having gone to French private schools in Paris for three years as a child, her knowledge of adult swear words was really quite limited; they were not part of the standard curriculum of those fancy prep schools.

Judy thought about following up with Jean-Pierre but decided perhaps it was not her place to do so. He had seemed like such a nice young man. However, it was now time to go to meet Charles, Dewey, and others and go to dinner. Judy hoped they might eat out
on the hotel patio, overlooking the river and a glorious sunset following the rainy afternoon.

**Dinner on the DoublePark Patio**
As soon as Judy saw Dewey in his colorful black and red dashiki, she remembered him immediately. The fabric was gorgeous and certainly made a handsome shirt.
The patio was packed with bridge players, but Charles, Judy, Dewey, and their mutual friends, a couple from Texas—Don and Davida, were able to get a table for five at the far end of the patio adjacent to a line of arbor vitae. “The view of the river is terrific from here,” Judy told Charles, “and look at that—there is another patio on the other side of the arbor vitae—it’s empty. Charles, it’s the patio that one can access directly from the gym.” Judy then related the events of the afternoon to Charles while the others ordered drinks and discussed bridge hands.

Dinner was outstanding—the daily wine/food special; homemade soups of various kinds, local walleye with white wine, fresh home-baked breads, salads with locally grown produce, and the special DoublePark dessert of a chocolate-walnut lava cake topped with fresh strawberries and whipped cream. All were nicely paired with appropriate wines. Service was impeccable as was the set-up: fine bone china with paper-thin wine glasses. Toward the end of the meal, Judy heard some commotion from behind the arbor vitae. “Charles,” she said, “look, there’s Elise with the dogs, wearing little sneakers and sweaters, leaving through the door from the gym to the patio; she’s able to take advantage of the separation to conceal the dogs—they never have to go through the lobby as long as they use that entrance.” “Clever,” noted Charles, “not nice, but clever.”

Fire Burn…
After an excellent meal in an extraordinary setting, the group decided to take a walk to get rid of some of the excess from dinner. Don and Davida headed north along the river walk to check out a public concert in front of the tall ship, while Charles, Judy, and Dewey headed to the south, toward the bridge. Judy wanted to walk under the big bridge and show Charles the pergola on the other side with an eye to using the adjacent vacant lot as a site for a future
Alma Mater TeaGarten. Dewey came along because he enjoyed conversation and worried that concert music might interfere with discourse.

Soon, Charles and his group caught up to Elise and the dogs. “Hi Elise, lovely evening…hello Sweetums; how handsome you look in your sweater, Snookums,” said Judy, as she wished things to remain on an even keel with Elise. “Oh, thank you Judy, you are so kind,” Elise gushed, “yes, they are handsome…actually, I knitted the sweaters so that we would have a good fit!” Charles’ group continued on to the pergola on the south side of the bridge, leaving Elise and the dogs on the north side.

“Hey, Dude, you got a buck for a f**kin’ cup of coffee?” demanded a guy lying in the pergola, next to a fire where he was roasting a carp. Charles and Judy ignored him as they looked at the adjacent vacant lot as a site for a business proposition. Dewey, however, as linguist-extraordinaire, engaged him in a philosophical conversation as to what it might mean for a cup of coffee to be able to engage in such an activity. Charles marveled at how suitable Dewey’s name was, given his penchant for organization of thought and language; one might envision a ‘decimal’ system within Dewey’s brain.

After about 20 minutes of lecture/questioning, the bum looked as if he were sorry he had asked…”look, Dude,” he said, “you gonna cough up a buck or not?” “Aha,” commented Dewey, “you raise yet another interesting idea; were I able to ‘cough up’ money, would that be a violation of federal law? Indeed, if all humans were able to do so, what would become of the value of money…would it become worthless? Would I be asking you for funds?” At this point, the guy stoked his bonfire and turned over the carp that he had apparently netted from the river. “Alls I know,” responded the man, “is that
coffee would be good with carp; maybe now I’d be better off with a shot or three of booze!” The encounter continued. Charles and Judy admired some colorful skyrockets being launched from the park on the other side of the river and then headed back toward the bridge, the river walk, and the DoublePark, leaving Dewey to his own entertainment with the street person.

Cauldron Bubble…

“Look, Charles,” said Judy, “there are some kids fishing under the bridge. I’m going to talk to them.” “How do you guys know where to drop your lines?” queried Judy. “Well, ma’am, in the daytime we can see the fish, and we scoop ‘em out with a net. But, the best ones feed at dusk; you can see where they are by the bubbles…bigger bubbles mean bigger mouths and so bigger fish! We walk along and look for bubbles.” “Sounds like fun,” exclaimed Judy, “mind if I join you? You can keep any fish I find.” “OK,” the kids said, “you can use our net if you want but fishin’ poles are personal.” “Does the noise from the concert or from the fireworks bother the fish?” asked Judy. “Naw, they are mostly underwater…but WE do try to keep quiet.” “Oh, yes, pardon me, not another word,” noted Judy apologetically.

Charles wondered about his little group; first his friend takes up linguistic debate with a street person, and then his wife runs off with some kids looking for bubbles in the river. He headed off to look for Don and Davida.

Judy and the kids began to notice bubbles that were quite a bit larger than what they had seen previously. In fact, the farther north they moved, the larger the bubbles became. “But, I don’t see no fish,” one kid proclaimed. “Watch out for those dogs tied to the fence down there….they might bite,” the other one noted. “No, no,”
said Judy, “they are friendly dogs, I know them.” By the time they
got to the dogs, the bubbles were at least ten times larger than they
had been under the bridge. Judy walked over to the dogs.
“Sweetums, where is Mommykins?” Judy asked the dog although
she felt more than a bit silly doing so. Sweetums moaned and
bayed; then he turned and poked his head through the partially open
gate in the fence. “Oh, no…” howled Judy. “Charles,” she
screamed, “come here, something terrible has happened”—and at
that she fainted on the sidewalk.

Charles ran back to where Judy was, and pulled with him his friend
Dr. Bob, a retired emergency room doctor whom Don and Davida
had been talking to at the concert. Soon, the group of four arrived
to revive Judy and then they looked over the edge to see that Elise,
aka Mommykins, was lying partially submerged in the river. Dr. Bob
took charge: “Judy, call 911 on your smartphone; guys, help me pull
her out of the water, it’s deep here; Davida, try to keep a crowd from
forming and you and Judy help to calm the dogs.”

After they got Elise out, Dr. Bob went
to work on her. “It’s no use,” he said,
“she appears to have been shot—
may have been shot dead just before
being shoved into the deep water—
but, we will await a coroner’s report
on that. We need to keep this quiet;
it’s VERY peculiar, I assure you. We
need the police here. Look, the gate
in the fencing is, in fact, ajar.”
Activating the Earl Family Brain Trust
Charles and Judy returned to their room. “Well, I think we need to get to work and see how we might be helpful,” Charles said to Judy. “Oh, yes, I agree,” replied Judy, “it’s time to trot out the boys and see what they think, too.” Charles and Judy reverted into their abstract world, using their collection of teddy animals to reveal various aspects of their respective human personalities: a strategy especially useful in times of high stress.

**Earl Family Brain Trust**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theodore E. Bear</th>
<th>Binker Bear</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theodore E. Bear</strong>: 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.</td>
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<td><strong>Binker Bear</strong>: Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <em>When We Were Very Young</em>] “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.</td>
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**Tine E. Bear:** 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.

“Theodore,” Judy queried, “what do you think about all this?” “What do I think about what? I cannot answer questions like that one; I need a noun after the word ‘this’” replied the pensive Theodore. “Theodore,” Charles intervened, “what we need here is action…something terrible has happened and we need to move forward…PLEASE!” “Well, all right,” the reflective bear replied, “I agree that we need immediate action. There have been a few strange events we detected and I expect there may be more beneath the surface. We need to uncover them. Binker, Tine, do you agree?” “I always agree with that sort of approach,” commented Binker—a part-time mystery writer himself. “Yes,” replied Tine, “so do I and I think we need a team of special agents to be deployed immediately.” “Here is my thinking on the matter,” the diminutive bear continued, “there are things that people still outside will have seen that we did not—we need to listen in, right now, while the topic
is hot and shocking:

1. On the patio downstairs there are statues of owls mounted on perches attached to the light poles at the edge of the patio. They were brought in from Florida; their heads swivel in the breezes and the idea is that they are to scare away the seagulls that prey on patio food. Naturally the seagulls are too smart for that and just walk onto the patio; in fact, I have even seen a seagull sitting on top of a scare-owl’s head! The point is, though, that Oscar would fit in easily; no one would think his presence on a perch above the patio as out of place or otherwise strange. I recommend sending Oscar down there immediately.

2. Many people are congregating along the river walk. Again, there will be a lot of gossip and speculation; maybe even some facts that we could pick up. Send Im out there to ‘hang around’. He will not be out of place. People think it’s charming to find giant carp in the river; they don’t know what to expect. If they notice Im hanging from a light pole, they will simply think that is more of the charm of native urban wildlife. Again, immediate deployment to capture as much information as possible is critical.

3. Something weird happened up here late this afternoon involving Judy and this French room-service guy. Send Guillaume down to the kitchen to talk to Jean-Pierre when he comes on duty tomorrow
morning. We need to find out why he shrieked and went running down the hall muttering to himself in a string of emotional French. Guillaume is bilingual (at least, as Guillaume is fond of noting).

4. Charles is an expert bridge player. He needs to hang out at the tournament tomorrow morning and be ready to respond to any situation that might arise.

5. Also, Charles needs to follow up with some particular conversations tomorrow. He needs to talk to Clara and see if she remembers whatever it was that was bugging her when she talked to Judy in the lobby. He also needs to follow up with Dr. Bob and find out what was so strange about this particular corpse. We are fortunate to have such wonderful friends, including a world-class medical expert here in our midst.

Those are Tine E. Bear’s thoughts, group!

“OK,” announced Charles, “that’s it. Fine, Tine. Let’s go. Oscar and Im, please leave now for your respective posts. Guillaume and I need to go to bed to be ready for action early tomorrow morning. Judy, please stay up and take care of anything else that arises and also keep your eye on things out of the window—we need a central command post, here, from our room. That’s you, Judy. If you see something that needs attention, call Im or Oscar on their smartphones. Explain where you would like them to move. This situation is most likely to arise with Im; the river walk is quite long and we have a good view of a broad expanse of it from our room. Im’s view will be more localized. Oscar’s territory is more compact; he should be able to gauge what is going on in all of it, directly, from a single vantage point. Now, I’m off to bed.”
**Special Agents Assigned to Bay City**

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<th><strong>Guillaume R. Squirrel:</strong> A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.</th>
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<td><strong>Im PossumBle:</strong> 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. He has experience in parallel situations, centered on a view from above, as well.</td>
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**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, as well as other outdoor locales, and to report back on nocturnal activities in these areas. Some of his friends refer to him, in jest, as a “hooter.”

**At the Bridge Tournament**

“Charles,” whispered Eric, the ABC Director-in-Charge of the Tournament, “I must speak to you immediately. See that guy over there? His name is Harold. He is having an absolute fit. His partner didn’t show up, so I found him someone else. Now Harold refuses to play with the guy…says he isn’t good enough. Harold keeps muttering something about his partner Jeremy and says Jeremy’s wife died last night but that that’s no excuse for not showing up and not giving a call. Anyway, this guy is disrupting the whole place. Got any suggestions?” “How about,” Charles offered, “if I play with him. I know what kind of a player Jeremy is; he’s a fine player to be sure, but I have a better reputation (and am a better player) than Jeremy. I can keep Harold quiet.” “Thanks, Buddy,” said a relieved Eric, “I owe you a beer.” “And since you won’t drink it,” giggled Eric, “I’ll drink it for you.”

“Hi Harold,” said Charles with an engaging smile, “I’m looking forward to playing with you; I hope I will be at least a somewhat reasonable fill-in until Jeremy arrives. I haven’t seen him in a few
years, but of course do know him and know of him.” “Oh, Charles, how delightful,” countered Harold, “it is an honor to have you play with me, even if only for a few boards. You know, Jeremy and I were regular partners for a number of years, then he had a situation that kept him away from bridge, and now we had decided to renew our, ah, friendship. I am just so looking forward to that. So sorry to hear about his wife; I had not known he was married. I gather that is something that is relatively recent, as are the dogs—I saw them on the treadmills in their adorable little running shoes when Jeremy was exercising them—really over the top!” “Yes,” replied Charles, “I saw him at a distance, yesterday. My wife saw the group in the gym, too.”

Charles and Harold sat down and began to duplicate the boards. “You know, Charles,” commented Harold, while engaging in casual chit-chat, “I hope I am not taking you away from a game you already had planned…” “No, it’s fine,” countered Charles, “I am playing most sessions with Dewey but we do also take time off periodically to regroup a bit.” “I don’t believe I know Dewey,” said Harold. “Actually, you probably do—you just don’t know his name—he always wears a dashiki,” Charles explained. “Oh, yes, now I know,” Harold remarked thoughtfully. Soon, the two men were engrossed in the play of the cards.

On the very first hand, Charles and Harold reached 4S (Harold as declarer) with Charles holding

♣ A J 4 2; ♥ J; ♦ K 6 5 4; ♠ K Q 5 3

and Harold holding

♣ 9 8 6 5; ♥ A 8 2; ♦ J 8; ♠ A J T 4
After winning the heart lead with the ace, Harold led a low spade, and the next hand played the K. Harold won the A and surprisingly continued a low spade. The hand with the K had started with K Q 10. He won the 10, cashed the Q, and now Harold had to lose a heart, two spades, and the diamond A. Down one on a hand everyone else made.

Later, the opponents played 3NT on the following cards

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<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
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<tr>
<td>♠ A 10 3 2</td>
<td>♠ K Q J 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ Q 8</td>
<td>♥ 10 5 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ A 9 5 4</td>
<td>♦ K J 8 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ Q 10 3</td>
<td>♣ K 8</td>
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<th>West</th>
<th>South</th>
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<tr>
<td>♠ 4</td>
<td>♠ 9 8 7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ J 8 7 6 2</td>
<td>♥ A K 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Q 10</td>
<td>♦ 10 7 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 7 6 5 4 2</td>
<td>♣ A J 9</td>
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The bidding was as follows:

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<th>North</th>
<th>East Harold</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>West Charles</th>
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<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3NT</td>
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Declarer won the opening H lead with the A. He then led the 9 of S, losing to the J. A heart return was won on dummy. The club Q was covered with the king and A. Now declarer led the 8S, and W discarded a club. In the end, declarer only had 8 tricks, because spades broke badly. But declarer ducked two rounds of diamonds, cashed the A of spades, and discarded a spade on his long H. Declarer’s last card was the 5 of spades. Harold had to discard one of the KD or KS. Remarkably, he discarded the KS, even though declarer was known to hold another spade.

Charles found Harold’s careless plays surprising.

**Investigative reports of the special agents.**

![Image of a squirrel with a piece of cheese]

*Report of Special Agent Guillaume.*

Well, I can certainly see why Jean-Pierre was shocked! When he took raw meat to room 381 a guy answered the door. The man was wearing a black lace bra, apparently padded with some sort of soft foamy material, and black lace, see-through panties with padding in the back, only! He had Jean-Pierre bring in the meat, scooped it out into the two cereal bowls and put them on the floor. Naturally, the dogs came running (each had little leather bedroom slippers on). The bra, panties, slippered dog combination set Jean-Pierre running down the hall. He is still upset.
While I was talking to Jean-Pierre, I asked him more about his job. He said that his function as a room-service person is in addition to his regular job in the gym, handling the towels, water, and related supplies. He also monitors the condition of the equipment. He showed me around the gym. I tested the treadmill and I must say it is in excellent condition; it was able to sense my weight of about one pound!

Jean-Pierre said that in the late morning before the murder a guy came in wearing a black and white dashiki and took it off (had a T-shirt under it). He worked out for a while and then left. But he forgot his dashiki. Shortly thereafter, Jean-Pierre left to respond to a flood of room service calls; when he returned late yesterday afternoon, the dashiki was gone, so he assumed the guy came back to get it.

*Report of Special Agent Im.*

The smartphone, with Judy’s assistance sure helped me to navigate through the crowd on the river walk! I went up a pole near where the body was found and hung from the cross-piece. There was a lot
of wild gossip that I overheard but the most consistent piece was that a man wearing a dashiki was hanging around this area. I texted this to Judy and she sent me back some photos she had taken of some of Dewey’s dashikis—one of a red and black fabric and the other of a black and white fabric as well as a few others.

I climbed down and showed the images to one young man who seemed a bit more rational than most of the others. When many of the folks heard the word ‘dashiki’ they thought immediately of Dewey. It seemed to me as if a lynch mob mentality were forming. Anyway, this guy was quite certain that the dashiki he had seen was the black and white one of Dewey’s.

Report of Special Agent Oscar.
The patio was filled with people when I got there. I overheard the
same pattern as Im had with regard to the dashiki, and yes, the same assumption about Dewey. Judy also sent me the photos. When I showed them around, I got the same identification consistently—the black and white one. Again, I was alarmed as to what the mob-mentality might do to Dewey. I thought we needed to protect him. So late last night, I sent Special Agent Dewey Bear to stick like glue to Dewey (the human); he has experience with security ‘cover’. They apparently debated about the merits of the decimal system versus the Library of Congress classification and any number of other academic topics. They are a Dewey Double!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dewey Bear: A native of Ann Arbor, MI. The source of Dewey’s name may be seen in his University of Michigan football jersey. From his vantage point the number on it looks like ‘10’—the base of the decimal system. Despite the football jersey and the stadium security blanket, he is truly a scholar—a bibliophile of the first rank and an ardent proponent of the Dewey Decimal system for library classification.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Report of Special Agent Dewey Bear.*
I stayed with my human counterpart as you recommended, beginning late last night and into the rest of the day today. Really, he was quite easy to shadow. We did, indeed, debate the merits and drawbacks of different library classification systems. We also talked about movies and discussed various aspects of political correctness. His approach there is quite different from mine, but that difference made for engaging conversation.
Eventually, I was able to move the discussion to dashikis—he was pleased to show me his whole collection. He has them catalogued according to his Dewey Dashiki System. The fabrics are quite beautiful, as Judy had noted earlier. He was, however, horrified to find that his gym dashiki, which apparently he wears to the gym as others might wear a sweatshirt, was missing!

So, we went down to the gym to see if it were there. No dashiki. We talked to Jean-Pierre who noted that it had been there the morning before Elise was murdered. He said that he took a bunch of room service calls and returned to the gym in the late afternoon, at which time the dashiki was no longer there.

Charles’s Report

*Bridge with Harold*

Harold certainly seemed distracted, as is illustrated by the two extremely careless errors he made. He kept muttering about Jeremy’s standing him up.

*A Conversation with Clara*

I was quite interested to hear Guillaume’s account. You see, our friend Clara recalls the following situation from about 20 years ago. She said she was at a national tournament, and, while she was sitting in the lobby of the hotel, a sexy-looking woman came in and started flirting with young men in the lobby, apparently trying to pick someone up. She went up behind the woman and said gently, “Jeremy?” He whirled around and grabbed her—“shut up, Clara—go away—you are interfering.” So you see, that was Jeremy dressed in drag, trying to pick up young men for the evening—imagine the surprise the pickup was to get later! Elise reminded Clara of that woman from many years ago...older, of course, but somehow reminiscent. But, that was 20 years ago, when gays
needed to resort to different behavior patterns; now society was more tolerant of openness.

_A Conversation with Dr. Bob_

So, I asked Dr. Bob what was so peculiar about this corpse; he must have seen plenty as an Emergency Room physician. He said it was obvious she was wearing a wig—nothing terribly unusual about that—but, when he began to feel the body to get a sense of how much earlier death might have occurred, he said it was quite clear that Elise had male genitals. He knew that news would inflame the gossip and so wanted to keep this extra fact out of that limelight at least until the police and coroner had had a chance to look at everything.

**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.

We don’t have ‘proof’, but when we combine observations from Guillaume’s interview of Jean-Pierre with my interviews of Clara and Dr. Bob, it appears that Elise and Jeremy were one person—a
double identity—in fact, Jean-Pierre apparently saw ‘Jeremy’ becoming ‘Elise’ when he took the raw meat to one of their rooms. One might speculate that Jeremy was gay; perhaps even engaging in inappropriate relations with the dogs, and that Elise was his cover for his dog fetish. While all of that is bizarre, it is hardly grounds for murder.

Dewey is the clear suspect to whom everyone is pointing. There is, however, no logic there—just the coincidence that perhaps whoever committed the murder was wearing one of Dewey’s dashikis—‘double dashikis’. What motive would Dewey have had? I think there is no motive there, so I assume Dewey did not commit the murder.

In fact, I do not believe that he had the opportunity in terms of timing, either. He was with me and Judy on the river walk. We did pass Elise and the dogs, but we were beyond her on the other side of the bridge. We left Dewey at the pergola debating with a street person. When Judy and I came back past Elise, she was already dead.

I went back to the street person and showed him Judy’s photos of the dashikis. He positively identified the red and black dashiki, and not the black and white one, as the dashiki Dewey was wearing that night. I was certain the guy would remember; it’s probably not every day that he gets engaged in philosophical discussion with a linguist! I think we should buy him a little outdoor grill and associated tongs and such for his effort…let him see that work brings reward.

Thus, Dewey had neither motive nor opportunity. He was just recognizable because of his unusual choice of clothing. We are left with the question of why someone would wish to murder Elise?
Motive

Taken on her own, and at face value, Elise seemed a somewhat silly woman, apparently happily married to Jeremy (although of course we never saw them together). The only tangible connections between them were the dogs. If Elise were not murdered for her own actions, then I think we need to look at her in relation to someone else. I think that it was the fact that she was Jeremy’s wife that did her in. Remember, Clara thought she saw Jeremy dressed in drag, long ago, trying to pick up young men. Perhaps one of these young men came to the tournament, in his mind to renew his relationship with Jeremy, and found Elise, Jeremy’s wife.

That idea brings to mind my bridge partner, Harold. He stumbled, verbally, over the idea of renewing his ‘friendship’ with Jeremy. Was that because he was really thinking something else and so being a bit awkward with what actually came out of his mouth? Perhaps.

Now, I do think that Harold is our best suspect—not from merely that awkwardness, but I believe he is the only one we know who had both motive and opportunity. Let’s see if it all fits.

Certainly, when I played bridge with him he appeared to be dreadfully distracted…. I think Harold clearly did not know that Elise and Jeremy were one and the same. Elise was standing in the way of his relationship with Jeremy. With her out of the way, he thought he would be free to pursue his earlier affair, from years ago, with Jeremy. He noted, as had Clara, that Jeremy had been out of circulation for a number of years—perhaps in the military, or overseas elsewhere, or who knows what. In any event, this meeting with Jeremy was something that Harold had long-anticipated. Finally, he was to return to a hoped-for permanent relationship with the love of his life. But, Elise stood in the way. In fact, Harold only connected Elise with Jeremy through the dogs. I suspect that Harold was in the crowd in the lobby when Elise caused a ruckus.
with the dogs on checking in. Then, later (mid-afternoon), Harold saw Jeremy with the dogs in the gym.

Now, in terms of the gym, here is the timing I see. In the morning, before the tournament, Dewey went to the gym. Jean-Pierre was there taking care of the towels. After about half an hour, Jean-Pierre got a bunch room service calls on his smartphone and he left the gym. A few minutes later, Dewey left the gym and forgot his gym-dashiki. After some time (early afternoon), Harold came in and used the cardio machines for a while (maybe 15 minutes) and then went into the weight-lifting area. While he was lifting free weights, Jeremy and the dogs came into the cardio area—he could see them in the mirror. Harold saw them and thought about greeting his old friend/lover, but when he saw the dogs a sense of rage and betrayal came over him. At that point, he absent-mindedly picked up the black and white dashiki and hastily left the gym. Jeremy continued exercising the dogs on the treadmills. After some time, Jeremy and the boys went out on the adjacent patio for a bit of fresh air and sunshine. While they were out there, Judy entered the picture, got on the elliptical cross-trainer and started day-dreaming. As the weather got worse, the patio group re-entered the gym and continued working out on the treadmills. Then, Judy left. Of course, everyone in the gym assumed that things were as they were claimed to be: that Jeremy and Elise were a man and woman married to each other with two pampered service dogs. It was only through the dogs that people were able to connect Elise to Jeremy. After quite some time, Jean-Pierre returned, noticed that the dashiki was no longer in the gym, and naturally assumed that Dewey had returned to pick up his forgotten item. Much earlier, Harold had gone back to his room, with the dashiki absent-mindedly tucked under his arm. As he sat alone, his emotions deepened and swung back and forth between heartbreak and seething anger.
Somewhere in the midst of these overwhelming feelings, he must have concluded that getting Elise out of the picture was his only clear path to happiness and a long-term relationship. I think it was probably the case that his ‘affair’ with Jeremy had begun as some sort of almost-innocent emotional relationship which, at some point, crossed the line to a full-blown physical affair (probably Jeremy pushed him across that line). I suspect that the naive Harold remembered the full range of feelings…perhaps his first involvement, while the more experienced Jeremy just saw Harold as one of many passing ships in the night.

When Harold saw the dashiki lying on his bed, he picked it up as he considered it as a possible disguise later. As was the case with others, he knew that most people identified Dewey by his dashikis and not by his name. Thus, he put on a light T-shirt, stuffed the black and white dashiki in his pocket, and armed himself with a small, but potent, gun he carried when he travelled. Now, he waited for the perfect opportunity to execute this plan. He had plenty of motive and circumstances prevailed to present him with a natural plan. He had no idea, however, that in getting rid of Elise he would also be getting rid of his beloved Jeremy.

Opportunity
Each evening, shortly after dusk, there was a fireworks display in the park across the river from the DoublePark. Crowds gathered along the river walk and folks marveled at the beauty of computer-guided pyrotechnics. Harold had planted himself on a bench along the river walk and was waiting for a possible opportunity to use the noise from the fireworks to cover the noise from his gun.
You can imagine his adrenalin rush as things unfolded to fit his plan. First, Elise—not Jeremy—came along and was walking the dogs for their evening outing. Soon after, you and I and Dewey passed between Elise, who was looking at the river, and Harold who was sitting on the bench. Once we passed, it was an easy matter for Harold to slip on the black and white dashiki. Shortly before we got to the pergola, Elise probably tied the dogs to the fence to protect them, and herself, from their possible sudden reactions once the fireworks began. The dogs were accustomed to being tied up, as they had been on the treadmills in the gym. Judy had seen that earlier.

Once the fireworks began, it was an easy matter for the dashiki-clad Harold to leave his bench and, in the crowd, press up behind Elise, and time shooting her with the predictable pattern in the fully regular display of fireworks. With the dogs tied up, they would not interfere. Alternating sections of the fencing opened up, so it was simple for Harold to push the body through the fence. Probably no one saw that, and even if they did, it would be natural to conclude that some sort of accident had happened when someone, perhaps a sailor, had inadvertently left a fence gate ajar.

It was a fine plan, and perhaps Elise would have sunk to the bottom and no one would have known. As Judy noted from seeing the tall ship tied up to the bank, the river must have been quite deep, even right next to the river walk. But, Judy’s natural curiosity uncovered the plan too quickly.

Because Judy got interested in the kids catching carp, and expressed interest in the pattern of bubble related to the size of the fish, she found Elise. The female undergarments, with their bubbly foam and other padding materials, trapped air and released extra-
large air bubbles as the body began to submerge, gradually, in the river. Even though this action with the bubbles accelerated discovery, still Harold had time to remove his dashiki and vanish into the crowd. Clearly, though, a number of folks remembered seeing him in the dashiki. He was right; the disguise he chose was a good one.

Now, I suspect he still has that dashiki in his room; when he picked it up from the gym, when he was not thinking clearly, he absent-mindedly tucked it under his arm. I suspect the extra pressure that Judy’s discovery put on him forced him to respond in a similar manner. Thus, I would encourage the police, first and foremost, to search Harold’s hotel room where I bet they will find the dashiki, probably somewhere in the bed. But for Judy’s natural instincts, Harold might well have gotten away with murder!

Well, what do you all think? “Charles,” Judy said, “call the Police and tell them all of this. It makes perfect sense. But, it is YOU, Charles, and your impeccable skill with logic, which kept Harold from getting away with it!” The police found the black and white dashiki as Charles had suggested. After a bit of investigation and interrogation, they escorted Harold to a police car. Later, Charles and Judy went to have dinner on the patio and enjoy a romantic and spectacular sunset together in advance of this evening’s fireworks display.
Chapter 5: Louisville Bridge Murder

“Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur.”

Caesar, Gallic Wars
Arrival in Louisville

“Charles, this will make the third time we’ve been to Louisville for a conference of some sort,” commented Judy Earl to her mathematician, bridge-playing husband. “But, the first two times were for math meetings, remember?” noted Charles “I hope this will be more fun! American Bridge Congress (ABC) tournaments are usually carefully orchestrated events!”

With that thought in mind, Charles Earl deftly pulled the car into the valet parking area of their hotel, The Gallia, with its towers overlooking the Ohio River on the north and the rest of the historic city of Louisville on the other compass points.
“Judy,” Charles explained to his wife, “the hotel (as was Gaul) is divided into three parts. Two guest towers, the Belgian and the Celtic, and residential apartments in the House of Aquitaine. I think you will enjoy the feature they have linking the two guest towers!” But, first, let’s go to the lobby and check in; if our room isn’t quite ready, it should soon be set to go.”

**In the Lobby of The Gallia**

“They said it would be ready in a few minutes, so let’s wait and see—have a seat, Judy ” the handsome mathematician motioned to his wife. As the couple sat on the lobby sofa, other bridge players began to enter the scene and queued up at the hotel registration desk. “Charles, do you know that diminutive woman over there?” queried Judy, “she seems to be making quite a ruckus—I think I’ll walk over and see what’s happening.” Charles laughed to himself; his wife’s insatiable natural curiosity had gotten them into interesting adventures in many different venues. He hoped that perhaps life would simply be a calm adventure of bridge hands at this tournament. “Actually, Judy, I do know who they are; they are not particularly friends of mine, but she is ‘Eleanor’ (an extremely wealthy and powerful woman) and he is ‘Cass’ (her husband whom she maligns and ridicules on a regular basis)—they are ‘characters’ as I recall,” Charles noted in an understated fashion.

“Listen to me you idiotic pipsqueak, I always have the Royal Suite. I don’t care if the King of Prussia did show up unexpectedly….and I don’t believe you…that’s a town in Pennsylvania…don’t give me that hogwash….I WANT the Royal Suite. I deserve it; you have no right to give it to anyone else!” Eleanor sniped at an overworked young man wearing a hotel uniform. “Ma’am” offered the registration desk worker, “we are prepared instead to let you have a lush apartment in...
the House of Aquitaine—the view of the River is better from there than it is even from the Royal Suite; the apartment also has more square footage than that Suite and has a better kitchen with a full-sized refrigerator/freezer. You could make elegant delicacies for your guests…it is truly a gorgeous place. Furthermore, it is close to our magnificent gym atop one of the guest towers. You would be able to look down not only on the Ohio River as you do your daily workout, but also on the apartment building. This deluxe apartment’s cost is about double that of the Royal Suite, but because you have been inconvenienced, we would let you have the apartment for the same cost as the Suite.” “Eleanor, honey bunch,” Cass purred, “that sounds wonderful; let’s accept that offer.” “I don’t know what you know about much of anything, you worm,” retorted Eleanor, “a hole in the ground is where you belong. Independent of what you say, I am willing to accept this feeble offer but under the following condition. It must be the case that no smoker has stayed in that apartment. I will not immerse myself in someone else’s smoky stench; naturally, though, I plan to smoke.” “Madam, this is a smoke-free hotel; we do not allow guests to smoke in guest rooms, apartments, or public areas. If they do so, and we find out, they are charged a substantial fine,” the clerk told Eleanor. “So, what’s the cost of the smoking penalty, per day?” demanded Eleanor. “It’s 1000 dollars per day,” the young man said. “Cass,” ordered Eleanor, “pay him upfront in cash for our 10 day stay…you easily have that in the allowance I gave you this morning. Young man, I’ll need a receipt.” Cass dutifully peeled off 10,000 dollars from his roll of bills and handed them to the shocked clerk, who looked as if he wanted to rescind his kind offer on the discounted apartment price. Eleanor stormed out of the lobby with Cass following an acceptable number of paces behind her.
“Charles, did you hear all that?” asked Judy. “How could I miss it; indeed, characters,” said Charles. “While you were watching them,” he continued, “I checked on the status of our room. You can imagine that all this commotion has left the hotel staff a bit unsettled. Anyway, it will be an hour or so before we can check in to our room. I gave the clerk your smartphone number. They will phone us when the room is ready,” Charles told Judy—“now, let’s go have some fun while we wait.” He loved to show Judy new and exciting places; she pounced all over them.

In the Conservatory
“Charles,” gasped Judy, “this is fabulous! Look at the giant plants, with huge broad leaves, that shield the greenhouse-like effect that could come from having this glass three-story connector of the two guest towers. I just love it—I could stay here all day!” Charles knew that his wife would like the elevated, multi-story conservatory that linked the two guest towers of the hotel on the second floor; he noted that so far she had only noticed the plants. “Judy,” he said nonchalantly, “did you see the bar? It’s part of the Alma Mater Bar and Grill franchise system. I set it up a few months ago; it runs in conjunction with the Casino over there on the side where you enter the other tower.” Charles knew that Judy would love to see that the Alma Mater chain had an outlet in The Gallia. Charles and Judy owned the chain that was named to honor Judy’s mother, Alma, a great French chef. In addition, it honored the long-standing academic traditions of both of their families. Charles was heavily involved in the business end of things and often traveled to investigate new sites and hire local staff to help get them started.

“Ooooh,” shouted Judy, “and look at the fish in the bar…not just a few goldfish like in a doctor’s office, but it looks like a 100 foot aquarium with some fish as long as a foot, plump and well-fed; other
shiny multi-colored tropical fish; look, there’s a catfish. Can we sit at the bar right now….please, please?!! I’ll have a glass of house red and watch the fish swimming underneath my glass. Wow, I’ve never seen anything like this!” “Judy, you have not yet asked me why the bar has a connection with the casino,” Charles noted. “Oh, OK, Charles, why does the bar have a connection with the casino,” Judy obliged in a perfunctory manner.

“David,” Charles called out to the handsome young man behind the bar, “I’m sure you remember us from other times we have been at Alma Mater pubs elsewhere? Please explain to my wife what your job is here and why you were brought, just recently, to this particular franchise.” “Oh, yes, Dr. Earl, of course I remember both of you,” David replied. “Naturally,” he continued, “I can help with tending bar when there is a crowd, but the main reason I am here is to run and supervise the ‘fish races’ that we hold every day. You see, we are capitalizing on the general reputation of Louisville as a racing town. Notice that the bar is shaped like a racetrack; it is a loop. The fish swim around the whole circuit. The casino over there is called Pisces Pieces; they will sell you markers to put down on the bar as a way to place bets on particular fish when the race is on. Do you see that every three feet there is a clear curtain that can roll down into the water, inside the tank? We hold the racing group within one of these pods. Then, we throw food into the next pod, open the curtain, and the fish race to the food. We do this opening and food placing sequentially around the loop. Naturally, we want to keep the racing fish somewhat hungry. Short races send the fish around once. Longer races go around more times; like horse racing.”

“Amazing,” shrieked Judy, “simply amazing…what a brilliant idea! When is the next fish race? I want to be here for it. In fact, I’d like to come every day!” “Our next race is at 7:30pm today,” David
noted in a professional tone. “Now, while you enjoy your wine, might I offer you some of our homemade bean dip with soy rice crackers or homemade bread? It is a fine treat, excellent flavor, and a healthy food.” David went over to the dumb waiter and sent an order for the bean dip to come up to the bar from the kitchen on the first floor. Soon he brought the dip and excused himself saying that he now needed to put on latex gloves and clean the inside of the fish tank in preparation for the evening’s event.

“You know, Charles, this bean dip is really good—would you like some?” asked Judy, “otherwise, I’ll probably eat it all myself…oops, there goes my smartphone. It’s the front desk, our room is ready.” “Good,” said Charles, “let’s go and get unpacked; we’ll come back here later. There are other interesting things here in the Conservatory, too—you will see them later!”

**Off to the Hotel Room in The Gallia**

“Judy, I found an elevator for you that is not intimidating,” Charles said to his wife. “We need to go into the House of Aquitaine, to the far end, and then up to our floor and then out into the guest tower. In theory, that elevator is only for long-term apartment guests, but they let folks such as us, where someone is hypersensitive, also use them…certainly makes good business sense—who wants a guest who loses control of bodily functions riding in an elevator that causes such a reaction!” “Thanks,” she noted, “let’s go. I’ll get familiar with the routine very quickly…I’m highly motivated…I want to get back to the Conservatory as soon as possible!” The couple wound around hotel floors, in and out of the different hotel ‘kingdoms’, and eventually settled in their handsomely-appointed room with a gorgeous view of the Ohio River.
Judy unpacked the electronic equipment and set it up, while Charles put away their clothes and toiletries. After about an hour, they were done, and the room was all set for the 10 days of their visit. “Charles,” Judy commented, “you know that sometimes I worry about things and about what the future might bring….in any event, I think I’d like to activate our Earl Family Brain Trust right now, just in case we need them later…if not, no harm. They are fun, too, after all. I hope that there will not be anything funny going on here, but the way things look, I’m worried that we might need them.”

“Whatsoever you want,” Charles told Judy. This man of logic held his wife’s sensory capabilities in the highest regard; he apparently thought that while logic could handle many situations, it could not handle all of them—that there were events that came about for which there appeared to be no logical explanation—perhaps they were based on faith, on premonition, or whatever. But, he never poo-poohed such insights from Judy; she had been right on the money all too often in the past. No doubt it was all related to her hypersensitivity and high creativity.

“So, now that we are all set up in the room, permit me, my dear, to introduce the Earl Family Brain Trust: Theodore E. Bear, Binker Bear (also a part-time mystery writer himself), and Tine E. Bear. They have submitted their credentials for all to peruse,” Charles said in a good-humored manner. “Wonderful, Charles,” said Judy, “and now can we leave them here and go back down to the Conservatory—I want to learn everything there is to know about it!”
**Earl Family Brain Trust**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theodore E. Bear:</th>
<th>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.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Binker Bear:</td>
<td>Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <em>When We Were Very Young</em>] “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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tine E. Bear:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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Back in the Conservatory

“David,” Judy cooed, “tell me all about the various wonderful things that go on here in the Conservatory…if you have time before the evening fish race!” “Sure, I have time,” noted David. “One interesting program that Alma Mater introduced recently is called the ‘IcePik’. It’s a toothpick-sized icicle loaded with bar fruit, as a skewer for a fancy drink. Some of them are colored and flavored; others are just made from clear water. On the drink menu, drinks that come with them are marked with a small dagger. OokPik, one of Dr. Charles Earl’s associates, is here to help me introduce the new item. He has a background based in arctic climates.”

OokPik: From his strong Inuit family background, he has a keen sense of survival in difficult climates. He is an adept swimmer; his seal skin and albino northern wolf fur exteriors, while not currently politically correct, have made him impervious to icy arctic waters. OokPik, himself, is an urban creature; he emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, from a gift shop in the Royal York hotel. Thus, most of his experience with swimming has come from an occasional venture in the ubiquitous in-home urban swimming pool known as the toilet bowl. For a brief period of time, long ago, he took frequent dips in the Earl family bowl in order to delight their three-year old son, Ed. Lessons in survival that OokPik learned as a young owl have stuck with him throughout his adult life.
“Patrons suck on the icicle,” David continued, “eat the bar fruit, and allow the icicle to disappear, one way or another, on its own. It’s a fine bar addition; unlike a toothpick, there is no extra clean-up for this way of delivering bar fruit in a drink. You may have seen me use the dumb waiter to bring stuff up from the kitchen—no need to truck stuff back and forth with the IcePik…it disappears on its own…very clever.” Judy agreed.

“Probably, Dr. Earl,” David went on, you have noticed that the Conservatory is filled with beautiful plants, some of which have large leaves and strong stalks and serve to shade out the late afternoon sun so that patrons might enjoy the glassed-in space in comfort. There are a variety of seasonal environmental items to notice, as well. For example, when I arrived here a few weeks ago, the Ohio River had flooded and was out of its banks. We had water lapping up against the side of the hotel, and water came up the ramp that you can now see cars coming up on from the river road, under the Conservatory, and into downtown. That was all flooded and there was no access—up here, it was almost like being on a river boat, especially as I reflected on gambling on races!” “Marvelous,” said Judy, “I love it; you are clearly a very thoughtful and sensitive young man; I am sure your family must be pleased with you in many ways.”
“Well, thank you” David said as he blushed, “I’m glad you find it all interesting—I know I do. Now it’s time for me to set up for the race tonight—how about more drinks and bean dip, perhaps a burger, first?” “Sure,” Charles said, “bring us a meal—whatever looks good!”

David brought the food and drinks, and the couple enjoyed a pleasant meal in a delightful setting. After a while, people began to come in for the fish race. Judy bought some markers from Pisces Pieces and bet them on the catfish she had noticed earlier, whom she affectionately named “Kitty.” This evening, however, Kitty was not the liveliest fish in the track; a smaller tropical fish won the prize this time. Kitty came in third. Judy noted that she would soon return and the pair went off to their room to get ready for events the next day.

At the Bridge Table
“Today, Judy,” stated Charles, “I will be playing bridge with my friend and humanitarian, Dr. Bob. We saw him recently when we were in Bay City. We are playing in an open pair event today. Let’s meet in the Conservatory after the afternoon session. I know you are going on a tour of the baseball bat factory with our friend, Roger. So, I’ll see you after the game, but right now I’d better get downstairs to talk about conventions with Dr. Bob.” “Oh, yes, and have a good time at the batting cages!” Charles chuckled as he thought of his highly competitive, and athletic, little wife sticking it to some of the macho guys at the batting cages.

The first few rounds of the afternoon session were uneventful. Charles and Dr. Bob had a few fine scores and a number of average scores. The next table they were to go to was that of Cass and Eleanor. The second board at that table contained the following
hand:

North, Eleanor:
   ♠ A T 6 3
   ♥ T 8 5
   ♦ 4
   ♣ A 9 8 4 2

East, Charles:
   ♠ 4
   ♥ Q 9 4
   ♦ K J 7 6 3
   ♣ Q 7 5 3

South, Cass:
   ♠ K J 9 8 5
   ♥ K 7 6 2
   ♦ 8 5
   ♣ K T

West, Dr. Bob:
   ♠ Q 7 2
   ♥ A J 3
   ♦ A Q T 9 2
   ♣ J 6

The bidding was as follows:

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<th>North</th>
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<tr>
<td>4S</td>
<td>P</td>
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Cass’s play of the hand was less than perfect, and he failed to make the contract. Eleanor’s behavior, however, was far less than perfect. She commented that his one spade opener was a bit on the light side. That was the last reasonable comment she made. She ridiculed Cass for his lack of planning in the play of the cards and noted in a variety of vulgar ways that any fool could have done better. As Charles and Dr. Bob left that table, they noted that the tirade from Eleanor continued to escalate. No doubt Cass would be making many more bad plays, a natural and spontaneous response to verbal abuse from partner, throughout the afternoon. Charles also was left with some sort of vague and uneasy sense of déjà vu in regard to the whole board.

Yon Cassius Has a Lean and Hungry Look
Following the afternoon session of the Open Pairs, a number of bridge players rushed to the bar. Not surprisingly, Cass was one of the first ones there. He ordered a drink with IcePik in it and some of the bar’s signature pinto bean dip and bread. Soon, Charles and Judy arrived separately as did a variety of others. Roger came over and complimented Judy for hitting eight of the ten balls in the batting cage, especially after the attendant had patronized her and asked if she wanted extra slow pitches and a lighter bat…Judy wasn’t having any of that. She and Roger talked about that for a bit as the bar began to fill up.

Charles, meanwhile, greeted friends Kent and Joe, his early morning walking pals (and fine bridge players) and sat down with them at a table in the bar area. He also encouraged his friend from the Great Lakes area, Whitey, wearing his orange velour University of Tennessee slippers (in Kentucky!) to come over and sit down. The group chatted for a while about bridge hands. Whitey left and
went to look at a game on TV—much to his dismay right in the middle of a group of University of Kentucky fans who spent more time ridiculing the orange slippers than they did watching the game. “Hey, Whitey,” shouted Jules, a bridge-playing psychiatrist, “you gotta hear about this hand this afternoon—you hold K J 9 8 5; K 7 6 2; 8 5; K T—you are the dealer—what’s your opening bid?” “I think I’ll pass, although one spade is tempting, but I think I’m a bit light for that; I’ll wait and see what happens,” Whitey noted. He reflected that he was so happy to get away from the rude sports fans that he didn’t have the heart to tell Jules that he had just heard all about this controversial hand from Charles. “Ah, yes, the conservative approach. Well, I’ll tell you,” Jules said thoughtfully, “I just finished hearing about this hand from Cass, the guy sitting over there, and while the hand itself is somewhat interesting, I found far more interesting the human behavior pattern associated with it—I gather Cass’s wife didn’t approve either of his bidding or play of the hand and let everyone in the ballroom know about it. The human mind is an amazing thing! “Yeah, sure Doc,” Whitey replied, as he made some excuse to leave the Conservatory. He’d known Jules long enough to know that there would soon be an obscure lecture to follow on some of the famous psychiatrist’s published works.

After his conversation with Jules, Cass settled in to enjoy a solitary drink and food as he admired the many fine plant specimens. His garden at home was his pride and joy—he had spent many an hour getting it just right. Naturally, he remained highly appreciative of fine horticultural work from others. The bar was a lively and convivial place full of relatively happy people.

All of that was about to change, however, as Eleanor entered the happy picture. Cass sauntered over to her, and in a friendly gesture said, “here, Sweetheart, have a drink and some pinto bean dip. The
drink has their special new IcePik holder in it and the dip is homemade—excellent—only the best for my dear wife!” Eleanor looked at the slender IcePik and commented in a loud voice “well, it is harder than you ever get and bigger, as well…no wonder you want small boys instead of a real woman.” Cass recoiled, stunned by her lying vulgarity. He grabbed her IcePik and rammed it into the meaty flesh of her upper arm. “You incompetent fool,” she screamed, “here you want to hear about baseball like these two (motioning to Judy and Roger), take that!” she yelled as she scooped up some of the bean dip in her hand and threw it at Cass. Cass ducked and the dip flew down the bar to where David had the fish tank open. The dip plopped into the fish tank. “What are you people doing?” David said in a restrained voice. “We cannot have that sort of behavior in here. I must insist that you leave the bar immediately, and, if you choose to come back another time, we will demand civil behavior.” Eleanor licked her fingers and then stomped off shouting to Cass as she left that she would lock him out of the apartment, and he could sleep in the Conservatory with his plants…with something as sessile as he was.

David continued with his preparation for the evening fish race. Judy eagerly purchased a number of Pisces Pieces and put all of them on the head of 'Kitty', her pet catfish. Last night, Judy and Kitty had not won the prize; tonight was different. Kitty was the victor. Charles and Judy stayed for quite a while at Alma Mater to celebrate the victory.

At the Fish Races…for the Third Time
“So, David,” noted Judy, “I see you that mess cleaned up last night just in time for the race!” “Actually, it’s harder than it might look,” he said, “you see it’s not simply a matter of cleaning up some dip. The fish love the bean dip. They are trained
water they need to race to get it. Now, I had my gloves on when that happened because I was working in the tank so I could respond quickly. I tried to get as much dip out as I could. We don’t want the fish to eat anything that is not on their rigid racing diet…an overfed fish is a sluggish fish and not a good racer. So, I have cleaned the tank multiple times. I hope none of the fish ate extra dip; I must monitor their behavior in terms of racing pattern to see if it that they are still in top form. Fish races are big bucks for the bar and the casino. Please let me know if you observe anything out of the ordinary in their behavior.” “Wow, David, I didn’t realize the complexity that Eleanor introduced last night!” said Judy. “Of course I will try to be helpful to you.”

“Beyond all that,” David continued, “my co-worker OokPik has swum the entire route of the tank, several times, to see if he can find any stray particles of bean dip. He takes a small special microfiber cloth that we cut from one of those large mops, like the ones they use to keep basketball floors shiny. I think he’s done a great job, but even just a few particles of extra food can interfere with fish diets, especially with the diets of the smaller fish. Running fish races is not hard as long as the tank is kept pristine; as soon as it gets any contamination, we have problems. This episode is the worst yet; I hope we never have another customer who throws pinto bean dip around…I know, I know, it sounds kind of humorous, but obviously, as you note, it has complex implications as well. I just hope there are no unintended consequences that turn up.”

Judy decided that she would not bother David any more tonight. It had obviously caused him difficult times. Instead, she ordered some food and sat back to get ready to bet on “Kitty” in tonight’s fish race. She edged over to the line at the casino and bought some Pisces Pieces to place on the bar, on “Kitty.” When she returned with the
markers, she walked around the bar to look for “Kitty.” “Do you see my pet fish, ‘Kitty’,” she yelled to David. He shook his head, no—he was busy getting set up. As Judy neared the far end of the aquarium loop, she saw a mass floating on the surface. As she approached, she saw it was her pet ‘Kitty’—belly-up and dead in the water. “David” she shrieked, “Kitty is dead…over here! I can’t imagine what happened. I had become quite attached to her”; and at that, Judy fell to the floor. Soon, David and others revived Judy and assured her that they would work to figure out what had happened and that they would refund the money she had wished to bet on her ‘Kitty’ that evening.

At Derby Downs
Charles was happy for Judy’s sake that the following evening there would be no fish races for her, and that instead the two of them would go to another event at the world-renowned Louisville venue, Derby Downs. Charles and Judy and various other bridge administrators, and those who could otherwise wangle an invitation, had been invited to a special event in the inner sanctum of this home of horse racing. Charles was happy to keep Judy away from the Conservatory, at least for an evening, until she had recuperated from the loss of a ‘pet.’ He was also happy that they had no pets at home—just stuffed animals who were no trouble at all, made no demands, gave unconditional love through warm hugs, and didn’t wind up belly-up somewhere.

“Charles, look!” cried Judy, “we get to walk through starting gates to enter the party. Now I feel like I’m in a horse race…wonderful and amazing…’and we’re off’– come on, let’s go see what else they have in here.” Charles and Judy entered the circular track interior of the clubhouse at Derby Downs. Clearly it was a marvelous site for venue catering: weddings, birthday parties, and even large groups
of bridge players! There was a surprise food station around every turn. Judy expressed the delight of a small child as she rode the interactive race horse display and chatted with the food bearers as they passed tidbits of fancy food around the group. Charles talked about bridge politics with a group of people Judy did not know.

“Judy,” Charles announced, “see that crowd of people over there at the bar? They are waiting to get mint juleps. I’ll go over and get one…we should try one. OK? Back soon.” “I’ll have one drink,” Charles told the server. “Right you are, buddy” the man said “one is all you get. We have a limit of one mint julep per person; they are deceptively powerful. Personally, I never touch the stuff…but, the tourists seem to love to come to the track and have one. Anyway, here you go…y’all enjoy it!” Charles took a sip, and then another sip. Then he returned to Judy. “Tell me what you think of it,” Charles said to his wife. “Well,” Judy said after she had sloshed the fluid around in her mouth, “it has good flavor and I like the mint leaves that have picked up the Bourbon flavor, but it is way too strong. I cannot drink this, even though I am used to occasionally drinking wine and beer; you are not even used to drinking those drinks. So, I urge you to put it down somewhere and walk away. Let the servers take care of it.” Charles did as Judy suggested. As they moved away from the abandoned drink, they spotted Eleanor and Cass arriving through the starting gates. “Well, well, well,” Judy whispered to Charles, “look at what is just now arriving…I suppose she must be one of the guests who wangled an invitation through creative means, perhaps by buying her way in, as with smoking in the room?” “Hmmm, we shall see…,” mused Charles. “Cass, my dear, please get us two mint juleps,” Eleanor stated in a saccharine tone, “that is what one does here, in ‘this neck of the woods’ I am told.” Soon, the browbeaten man returned with two mint juleps, one for himself and one for Eleanor, commenting “I practically had to sign my life away to get the server
to let me bring you yours. But, I convinced the young woman that I would simply be doing the job of one of the circulating servers, and they were all busy...that I would be helping her.” “Cass, you are so kind, thoughtful, and introspective,” his phony wife noted as she gulped down her mint julep. “Well, that’s it for that one. Now, give me yours,” she demanded in a tone that was reflective of her earlier behavior. “I really think, dear, that you should be careful with these; they pack quite a wallop,” Cass said. Charles and Judy moved away from the couple, leaving them to their own devices, and headed on over to talk to their friend, Dr. Bob.

Soon, the first call for dinner (a formal, seated affair in a private room in the center of the clubhouse) was announced. As some of the crowd moved to the dining area, still others lagged behind while they finished their conversations and their mint juleps. All of a sudden, Charles, Judy, and Dr. Bob heard a cry of panic from near Judy’s abandoned drink. “Help, help, please someone help me...” yelled Cass, “is there a doctor in the house?!?” “Oops, gotta run,” commanded Dr. Bob...”come with me, pronto.” “What happened here,” Dr. Bob demanded of Cass as the small group gazed down at the now unconscious Eleanor. “Well, we were having our drinks and a not too unpleasant conversation,” Cass blurted out, “when all of a sudden her color changed dramatically and she passed out....nothing like this has ever happened before.” “Oh, she gulped down that abandoned mint julep over there,” noted one bystander. “Yeah, I heard it was her third one...imagine that!” commented another. “Right, she slugged them down and passed out—give her a few shots of coffee and she’ll be fine,” stated a third. “Enough,” Dr. Bob said firmly, “Judy, call 911 right now and inform them that we have a severe medical emergency here at Derby Downs; I will continue to examine her and then be in phone contact with the paramedics. Cass, I will ride in the ambulance with her to the
hospital. You follow us in a car that Charles will drive. Now, everyone else, go in to dinner, we will take care of this situation. I am an emergency room physician.” While they waited for the paramedics, Dr. Bob told Charles that there was far more going on here that mere over-indulgence. “I’ve seen a case like this once before,” the kind physician noted, “the key is her skin color and temperature; I don’t like it. We need to get her in and taken care of immediately; she is still breathing. I’ll talk to the doctors once we get there.” Soon, they could hear the sirens as the emergency response team quickly made their way to the scene. “Oh, dear,” commented Judy, “those sirens will upset the high-strung race horses in the barns, I’m glad we already activated our Brain Trust…Theodore, please handle the horse situation so we don’t have extra problems tonight from that source.”

Comments of Theodore E. Bear
Well, Judy, as you know we were already on the scene, thanks to your fine intuition and sense of premonition. So, I had already taken action in the Conservatory, where I assigned Oscar Owl to help supervise his cousin, OokPik, who is also an owl. I thought that since we already had one owl working at Alma Mater, that another sitting in the trees would not be very noticeable. Besides, Oscar has good experience with investigative procedures, having served us well in Lake Geneva and Bay City. He has been sitting in the Conservatory trees, watching and listening to the activity for several days now; in fact, he’s been there from shortly before the bean dip incident, when I first requested his service when you were on the way back to the Conservatory just after you got the hotel room set up.

In response to your frantic request tonight, in regard to temperamental race horses, I dispatched Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou.
You know, donkeys are sometimes used as pets to calm racehorses. Now Eeyore doesn’t have the built-up rapport of the sort of arrangement where a small donkey shares the stall of the horse in a planned long-range calming strategy, but he is quite creative and surely knows more about managing these beautiful creatures than do any of the rest of us. I have great confidence in Eeyore. Please consider the situation under control.

I expect to have reports in hand from a number of sources, including Eeyore, fairly soon. I will keep you posted. In the meantime, let’s hope that Eleanor will recover quickly from the problem…whatever the cause might have been.
### Special Agents Assigned to Louisville

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<th><strong>Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou:</strong> Like Binker, Eeyore is also named after a character from A. A. Milne's classic children's work and like Binker is originally from Paris' Galeries Lafayette. Eeyore worries about his tail, of course, but in recent years has learned to enjoy greatly the fact that real-world versions of himself, an endangered species, are once again rising in number. He is a kind and thoughtful, though stubborn, creature. His plodding ways and stubborn persistence, along with his gray coat, make him an ideal undercover agent in complex, but physically bounded, situations that appear drab in color. He has a background in problems associated with the hauling of materials. Eeyore persists until he gets to the bottom of things.</th>
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<td><strong>Oscar Owl:</strong> 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, as well as other outdoor locales, and to report back on nocturnal activities in these areas. Some of his friends refer to him, in jest, as a “hooter.”</td>
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### Dr. Bob’s Report

Ricin, Charles, it was ricin. You remember, I said I thought I had seen something like this before? It all came together for me in the ambulance. I recalled a pattern of similar symptoms involving
clammy skin and an off-color skin hue. It happened to a teenage girl (who had clearly not been drinking mint juleps) who had been absent-mindedly chewing on a Jamaican necklace. She suffered from ingesting a small amount of low-grade ricin. We treated her and she recovered. Similarly, Eleanor is being treated along those lines; she appears to be responding to treatment and we expect that she, too, will recover shortly; she is in fine hands.

What we don’t know is what caused this. What quality was the ricin? How was it inserted into her body? When was she exposed to it? Answers to these questions will indicate the delay, or lack thereof, in response time to the ricin. The mint juleps caused an immediate reaction, of course…imagine three of them in a petite woman. But the real problem was poisoning from ricin, an extremely deadly substance. “We were very fortunate that you were there” noted Charles, “AND that you were willing to come forward when the call went out for a doctor…The entire bridge community owes you a great debt for your service.”

Investigative Reports of the Special Agents
Well, I was glad to be able to help with the Derby horses. By the time I trudged on out to the barn area, they were all in a state of panic. Naturally, I hadn’t known any of them before, but I did figure that a strategy of distracting them from the flashing lights and sirens might work well. So, I drew on experience from a hobby of mine that I don’t think I’ve ever mentioned to you. At times when you don’t need me to help you or otherwise be with you, I like to go out to the dance hall. Here, let me show you some photos I have in my smartphone from one of my favorites: the Pioneer Farms Dance Hall. It’s part of a chain, you know. The facility is mostly outdoors and it’s a place where animals of all backgrounds and persuasions can get together for fun times and perhaps even meet a life-long partner.

At the one I go to on a regular basis, there are often Watusi cattle as well as other guests from various parts of the world. These cows have huge horns and they are really nice guys and gals, but it’s a little hard to get close to them…that is, to dance physically close to them…the horns get in the way. Anyway, a number of years ago, they developed a dance they could do without hugging a partner, and called it the “Watusi.” It even caught on with humans! We still do it out at Pioneer Farms, often to an older song called “Wah-Watusi.” It’s fun, but many of the rest of us don’t require the separation aspect that these cattle require.
So, I talked to some of the other Baudets de Poitou who frequent the place and we decided to write our own dance, the “PoiTusi”. It seems to take two forms: the athletic version, and the line dance version. Here, look at this beautiful ladyPoitou…see the come-hither look in her eye—gorgeous long coat…she sees me coming to visit! Well, never mind all that.

Anyway, often when I’m there, I do the athletic version of the dance if I think she is watching (I like to impress her with my prowess, you know). In the next photo, you will see a young male Poitou; he is waiting at the gate to get into the Dance Hall; he would very much like to dance with my friend with the beautiful long silky coat. When we have a group, we do a line dance version; it’s illustrated here, through the QR code, with a single Poitou doing it (feel free to skip any extraneous materials that come up in the link). But, it’s not hard to imagine a group of Poitous doing it, holding onto each other in a manner that the Watusi cattle could not. We call the music the “Pwa-PoiTusi.” Everyone loves it—who knows, maybe some day it
will also catch on with humans.

Well, of course all this led me to think, if Poitous can line dance the PoiTusi, why can’t race horses. They are fine athletes and sensitive. They should be able to coordinate body movements with music. So, I went out to the barn, played the Pwa-PoiTusi music I have in my smartphone, taught them the steps to the line dance, and led them in the dance. Before we knew it, they were all having a wonderful time and had forgotten about the events in and around the clubhouse. I hope it was a positive contribution and also hope that it is a tradition they will adopt for their own comfort in the future. After I got the group settled down, I also thought it might be prudent to ask them if they had seen anything out of the ordinary that evening prior to the medical emergency. They said that often there are groups of individuals who come to the clubhouse for special events and that, as far as they could tell, this group had been no different from a typical group. So, I left, and they went back to dancing.
Athletic Version

Line-dance Version
Report of Special Agent Oscar

I’ve been hanging around the Conservatory almost from the beginning of your trip when Judy first called on Theodore. Theodore asked me to go down there and stake the place out…keep my eyes and ears open; advise OokPik as needed. Now, I don’t have any sort of wild night life activities on which to draw as Eeyore apparently does, but I did accumulate some facts that I hope will be useful to you.

- The first afternoon I was there, I spent time getting my bearings and talking to OokPik. I observed that you and Judy did not notice me when you came back to the Conservatory from upstairs (Theodore had not informed you of my dispatch, at my request, as a way to test my cover).
- The second day was the day of action, following the afternoon session at the bridge tournament; it was the first day of the tournament. It was also the last time that Eleanor was in the bar—when she flung bean dip at Cass.
- Cass had arrived in the bar in advance of anyone else that day. He came in muttering to himself, clearly quite upset at the way that Eleanor had treated him at the bridge table.
• He spent time admiring the various plants. When he thought no one was looking he took samples from various of them. He took a flower from one of them and put it in his lapel. He took some seeds from another and put them in a handkerchief in his pocket. He wore clothes that were much more traditional, indeed classical, than did most bridge players…always well-dressed in a suit, so the flower did not look out of place on him.

• After he got done looking at the plants, he sat down at the fish bar and ordered a fancy drink with an IcePik in it (OokPik assisted on that) and a bowl of their pinto bean dip. He ate some of the dip and tasted the drink. After a while, a man came over and sat down and showed Cass a bridge hand. They discussed it a bit, and then the man went off and talked to other bridge players.

• When Eleanor came in, Cass pulled the handkerchief from his pocket and wiped off the glass and the edge of the bowl so that the presentation would be proper. He then took the dip and drink to her, and you know what happened from there.

• Today, Cass came to the Conservatory and spent time admiring the plants. Again, he had one drink with bean dip.

• Probably Judy knows as much as I do about the other folks in the Conservatory. She really enjoyed it! I am sorry her ‘pet’ fish died. Apparently a number of other fish died, as well. Anyway, because OokPik is impervious to water, he was a big help in swimming around inside the water-track to clean it out and assist in guiding the remaining fish to safe areas while all the water was replaced in successive pods.

• The only other person who came as regularly as Cass and Judy was a psychiatrist who seemed interested in people-watching; I think he may have been the man who sat down briefly with Cass the first night. I did fly down and sit close enough to him to listen in—that’s how I know his profession. He seemed interested in evaluating how tournament duplicate bridge players might react to a wide range of
topics, including, but not limited to, bridge hands of various sorts. I think he tried to talk to Judy, but she was engrossed with the fish and showed no interest. Also, he talked to a variety of other bridge players whose names I do not know.

Charles’s Report
These reports all offer great information. Here is a logic I see that would plausibly fit all the pieces together. When I tried to check up on it, as more than simply a plausible chain of reasoning, it appeared to make sense.

When Judy and I entered the Conservatory for the first time, she immediately noticed the large plants. In fact, she noticed them even before she noticed the fish—that surprised me. Oddity in the ordering of events often yields insight. Cass, who also knows his plants, was also taken by these huge plants that were growing successfully indoors. I looked them up and found that they are a plant called a castor bean plant. They grow commonly on tropical islands and elsewhere in the tropics, but with care can be cultivated in other climates, including indoors. At some times of the year, their pods contain castor bean seeds. These seeds look a lot like pinto beans. The oil from the seeds is extracted and used to make commercial castor oil. The residue from the extraction process is highly toxic and contains ricin.

All very interesting. So, we can imagine that the teenaged girl that Dr. Bob mentioned, must have been wearing a necklace with at least some of the seeds on it being castor bean seeds from a tropical island. She chewed on them and extracted a tiny amount of ricin, which made her quite ill. That was a case of accidental poison. So, what was the case here? We now have a source for the ricin. But, how and why did it get from the plants in the Conservatory into Eleanor’s body?
It’s very unlikely that the hotel-made bean dip was made with any of the castor beans. It might be tempting to think so because the castor beans look quite a bit like pinto beans. And, it might also be tempting to imagine a scenario in which the insertion of beans somehow involves the use of the dumb waiter from the Conservatory to the kitchen downstairs. But, it takes work to systematically extract ricin from the beans. So, no, that’s not an option in my mind. Here Oscar’s report is helpful. He observed Cass picking some beans from the plants. I gather that the mere act of picking the beans would be insufficient to release the ricin. Remember, though, that Cass put the beans inside a handkerchief in his pocket. The action of keys rubbing against the beans, either accidentally or deliberately, might have been sufficient to release a small amount onto the cloth. Later, when Cass wiped off the glass and the dip bowl, some of the ricin might have been transferred to those surfaces—presumably a very low quality toxin in a miniscule amount. Eleanor threw the dip, and then licked her fingers. That must be how she ingested the low-grade poison that would subsequently affect her on the following evening.
The residue in the fish tank must be what killed the fish that ate it. OokPik cleaned all the surfaces, but perhaps too late for some of the poor fish. Naturally, he was not affected because he is impervious, as a consequence of his birth structure...he’s waterproof and more. It was a good call on the part of the team to encourage OokPik in that direction; we probably saved a bunch of fish.

Eeyore’s report, after we get through the fascinating detail of his personal nocturnal activities at the Dance Hall, seems to validate the idea that nothing of any particular importance to this case went on at the Derby Downs—that freed my mind to focus on the events in the Conservatory. As Dr. Bob noted, there was more going on there than met the eye of the casual observer (many of whom would have walked away from Eleanor, assuming she was merely drunk). Now, we can account for a source of the ricin, its quality, the manner in which it might have been introduced into Eleanor’s body, and the slowness or timing of her reaction to the poison.

So, let’s think about this a bit more. Cass certainly could have recognized the castor bean plants when he saw them. The knowledge he gained from gardening might well have equipped him to do so. Also, he might have known about the connection of this plant to ricin; that is information I found in 30 seconds. He might well have known it; apparently it is common knowledge of a sort. Did he decide to attempt to use his keys (or some other hard object in his pants pocket) to deliberately damage the castor bean hulls sufficiently to extract a tiny amount of ricin? He certainly could have done so, and done so in a manner which would never have been detected. But, even if he deliberately tried to release ricin and cause his wife to ingest it, why did he want to make her sick or kill her? Sure, she is one of the more obnoxious people I’ve
encountered, but he stayed married to her...for her money or power? Hard to say; but why murder her? Why not just get her help for her behavior problems?

The answer may lie in the bridge hand Dr. Bob and I played against them. You will recall that I had a vague sense of déjà vu with that hand. I looked it up. It's a famous hand, card-for-card, that was played almost a century ago. Apparently the play of the hand and the bidding went the way they went at our table. At the end of the hand, one player murdered the other over the bidding and play of the hand. Sydney Lenz and Eli Culbertson have given an account of what might have happened in terms of the bridge detail in this case, the so-called “Bennett Case” in which John Bennett (holding Cass’s cards) was murdered, using a gun, by his wife (holding Eleanor’s cards).

Now, what are the odds that a given duplicate board will hold the famous Bennett deal? Those odds are, of course, the same as those they will hold any other particular deal. Here, I’ll calculate that. Let’s see, there are 52 cards and we want 13 in each of four hands, so that the number of possible different deals is:
(52!) / (13!)^4

From using my calculator app, on my smartphone, that value works out to be, 53,644,737,765,488,792,839,237,440,000, or 5.36 x 10^{28}. So, the odds of any one particular deal are one in 5.36 x 10^{28}. It’s possible, but extremely unlikely, that the deal would appear (anyone betting on horse races or fish races would likely agree, I should think). I think it’s far more likely that someone would find a way to introduce it into a duplicate board, deliberately, at the beginning of the session, just for his own amusement or for some other reason.

Here, Oscar’s observations come into play again. I think it’s not far-fetched to consider that the psychiatrist, Jules, might have introduced this deal, as some sort of research-style experiment involving bridge and human nature. It would not be too hard to execute, especially if the hands were pre-dealt—then they could easily be inserted at the beginning of a session in which the players were instructed to “shuffle and play” the first two boards. He could have arrived early at the table and told arriving opponents that he had already made the first board.

Jules’s motivation might have been to test people to see if they would remember the hand; most top-flight bridge players know of this story. Or he might have wanted to see what reaction, if any, it caused. So, when Jules talked to Cass about this hand right after the session in which it was played and given the state that Cass was in following an afternoon of bullying by Eleanor, a plot may have clicked in Cass’s mind to solve his problem using ricin, made on the spot from the castor beans. That is, Cass was programmed by the bridge hand and its history to guide his actions the way that they went.
So, to try to find out some facts, I went to talk to Jules. And, yes, he did introduce the hand from the Bennett case. He was, in fact, overjoyed to hear that once again it had caused a serious fight between husband and wife—in terms of studying patterns of human behavior. But, he told me he certainly never thought that any physical harm could come of it because now the hand was being played in a wide-open area filled with many people instead of in the privacy of a four-person game in an apartment. He said he was quite concerned about the outcome and in fact offered to help in any way he could.

I explained my theory about the ricin in the bean dip; he found that idea fascinating. Also, I asked if the stress Cass was under might have, in some bizarre manner, ‘programmed’ him to take nasty action. Jules is a nice guy; but, get him started on the subject of the human mind, and he never shuts up—really dedicated to his profession. I guess that’s a fine professional trait, but it can be annoying. After I listened to his lecture on the human mind might go in any direction, I told him that I had decided to take him up on his kind offer and asked him to come with me to talk to Cass, to see what Cass had to say about the bean dip.

So, Jules and I set up an appointment to meet with Cass in the Conservatory. When I explained my full theory to Cass, he began sobbing. He said that yes, he had in fact put his hand in his pocket to scratch the surface of the beans so that a bit of low-grade ricin would fall into his handkerchief. He said he just wanted to make Eleanor a bit sick. He wanted to show her that she should be a good girl; that good things happen to good girls, and bad things happen to bad girls—and that he had the power to make bad things happen when she was bad. I gather that he had planned to tell her all that after he rescued her, as her ‘hero’. It was bizarre logic, and
an over-the-top approach: but, plausible in a certain way.

So, a bunch of fish were murdered by Cass (with an assist from Eleanor), and a woman was deliberately made ill. I understand that The Gallia has instituted a review board to examine the plants in the Conservatory and remove any that might have parts that are possibly toxic to humans. Further, because ricin entered the picture and because there might be a question of attempted murder, Jules and I turned the material over to the police, and they, along with attorneys, will determine a correct course to be taken against Cass in terms of possible punitive action.

“Oh Charles,” Judy giggled, “so, I accuse--Cass did it, in the Conservatory, with the bean dip.” The group laughed as they reflected on the fun they had all had in the past playing a classic children’s murder board game.

The author acknowledges the fine animals kept at Domino Farms in Ann Arbor, Michigan, some of whose photographs appear here.
Chapter 6: Phoenix Bridge Murder

“The notion of the phoenix rising again from its ashes…”

Herodotus, II.73.
Don’t Fence Me In…

“Charles, I am so happy we took the train to Flagstaff rather than driving the whole way,” Judy Earl said to her mathematician, bridge-playing husband. “Let’s go pick up the rental car so we can spend the day tomorrow at the Grand Canyon before we go to Phoenix,” Charles said in an encouraging tone to his wife, “after all, think how exciting it will be; neither one of us has ever been there!” The couple had planned carefully to make time for this important visit prior to driving through the desert, down thousands of feet of elevation, from Flagstaff to Phoenix, for their two week stay at the American Bridge Congress (ABC) tournament housed in two hotels in downtown Phoenix.

The next morning, Charles and Judy set off on their adventure to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. In under an hour, they were parking the car near the small railway that would take them to the canyon.
Once aboard the vintage train, the couple saw a number of other bridge players who must have had a similar idea; all had taken trains from either the west coast or Chicago to Flagstaff and had arrived yesterday. Now, this parlor car served as a rendezvous for a subset of bridge players who would ultimately arrive in Phoenix. The Earls sat in their assigned seats and watched as other passengers did the same. “Get out of that seat!!” a large, truculent woman shouted. “I want it…it’s got the best view and it’s facing forward…I won’t ride backwards!” “Charles,” Judy asked in a hushed tone, “who IS that woman?” “Oh, her name is Lila,” Charles said, “just wait and see what she does. She is well known for being self-centered and domineering and for other things too, but we shall see what aspects of her character come out on the train. Don’t be surprised by her behavior, though.”

Soon, a set of guys masquerading as Wild West bandits came running through the train as it chugged along the rails through the desert, north to the canyon rim. Then, a mock Sheriff’s posse came through and questioned passengers. Kids loved the scene…interactive games in person! “Charles, this is so much fun,” said Judy. Charles thought that it was no surprise that Judy would be thrilled with the antics of the actors on the train; she was still a kid at heart and had been the entire 50 years he had known her. He got up and went and got soft drinks to enjoy on the train ride. Next, Rex, a singing cowboy, came through the parlor. The crowd sang along with him to familiar tunes. Judy stood up and began conducting the group as she sang along. Rex came over and congratulated her on her skill and asked her to choose a song. But, before Judy could do so (she had thought about “By the Time I Get to Phoenix”), Lila brought her wine over. “Hey there cowboy, if you want to see some real dancing, watch my girls dance…” and with that Lila raised both her wine glass and her blouse and started
bouncing around while singing raucous, off-key music. “Lila,” Charles commanded, “sit down and behave yourself.” He escorted her to her seat and plopped her in the chair as he pointed a menacing finger in her face and instructed her not to leave her seat again. “Oh, Charlie, you are so cute…,” Lila cooed. “That’s enough!” Charles stated emphatically.

Another hour passed and the group arrived at the railway station at the Grand Canyon. They left the train and headed to a bus that was to take them on a tour of vantage points along the road bordering part of the South Rim. “I must have the seat in the front,” Lila demanded, “give me land, lots of land…ha!” The driver clearly enjoyed his job and had numerous geological and historical facts at his fingertips; he also seemed to be able to handle Lila. He issued a warning that it was illegal to pick up anything from the grounds and remove it from the National Park. He showed examples of rocks, animal feces, samples of wood, and assorted artifacts one might find on the grounds. Further, he instructed the group to stay at least one body-length back from the edge when looking at the awe-inspiring Colorado River spectacle.

Nonetheless, when the group stopped at the first vantage point, someone climbed out over the fence to get a better picture; the
driver successfully retrieved the woman and told her that she was engaging in a dangerous practice. As he lectured her on the importance of her survival to her children and grandchildren, others took advantage of the distraction, out of sight of the driver, to collect items of interest from the grounds and put them in their pockets. Rocks, pine cones, and other natural trinkets were generally those most collected. One person, apparently a geologist, even had a vial and took a soil sample.

After the first stop, the challenge of flaunting the local rules seemed to subside, and the group spent time more constructively: photographing the sites, reading the signs, talking to each other and to the driver, and generally having a fine time seeing one of the greatest Natural Wonders of the World. Later, they returned to Flagstaff, enjoyed a pleasant dinner in a restaurant near their motel, and went to get a good night of sleep in preparation for their trip to Phoenix the following morning.

**By the Time We Get to Phoenix...**

“Did you see that very pregnant woman on the train yesterday?” Judy asked her husband as they began their car trip from Flagstaff to Phoenix. “Yes, I did,” said Charles, “she and her husband are both fine bridge players: Dolores and Jack...nice people, too. Maybe we’ll see more of them in Phoenix.”

“Charles, it should be remarkable to see the drop in elevation as we head from high in the mountains to the valley containing Phoenix,” Judy noted. Yes, Charles thought as he remarked on the imaginative working of his wife’s mind...we move from “very pregnant” to “mountain”...makes sense in a certain way I suppose, but I think now we are going to see Judy the Geographer on this trip. “In fact,” Judy continued, “it should be a fine opportunity to observe
directly the effects of altitudinal zonation on desert vegetative patterns. Naturally, I have my topographic map with me; I almost feel as if I can see the contours out there in the landscape—that’s what I sometimes tell rookie students in the field—don’t trip on the contours—ha, ha.” Yes, Charles thought, definitely we have Judy the Geographer in the car now. “There’s a rest area up ahead, Charles—please pull over—look at the fabulous road cut on one side and the view down a small canyon exposing the different vegetation patterns going up the steep slope…truly remarkable,” lectured Judy. Charles obliged his enthusiastic wife. “Those are really nice picnic tables out there on that ledge—I could get wonderful photos from there—I wonder why no one is sitting at them; it’s wonderful sunny weather,” Judy continued. “Charles, just stop here; I can get out and go over to the tables and get wonderful photos.” At that, Judy hopped out of the car and started over to the tables. She stopped suddenly, took a few photos, and then ran back to the car and shut the windows. “What on Earth?” asked Charles of his wife, who was clearly shaken. “Here, look at this photo,” said Judy, “let’s go.” The couple left the rest area and Judy was silent for much of the rest of the trip. In the afternoon, Phoenix came into view, and the couple proceeded to their hotel.
IMaGe Monograph #29:
B. K. Barry
Mysteries, Bridge, and a Culinary Twist

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The Presidential Suite, Phoenix

“Well, Judy, it looks as if we have a wonderful room, once again,” Charles noted to his wife. “I love the view,” Judy said, “mountains rimming the valley floor with the sun-drenched buildings…and more gorgeous sunsets coming up!” After the Earls unpacked and got settled in their room, they headed on up to the Presidential Suite in the hotel where Ryan, the ABC President, was hosting the higher-ups in the ABC administrative hierarchy for a late supper in advance of the beginning of the tournament.

Folks in the Presidential Suite were full of useful local information. A number noted the need to drink plenty of water in the desert climate; both skin and air passageways dry out more quickly than one might imagine. For the most part, all seemed to be looking forward to a fine, hopefully uneventful, tournament. Judy also hoped for that but had to wonder if perhaps the group was being a bit overly optimistic. She and Charles left and went back to the room where they went to bed in preparation for a busy next day and next week.

Around the Hotel…At the HerBARium

“Charles,” Judy said the next morning, “do we have another ‘Alma Mater’ branch here in this hotel? I seem to recall that you mentioned we might have opened one recently.” “Yes, Judy, it’s on the Fourth Floor; let’s go look.” As a sideline to their academic careers, the Earls had created a chain of fine food facilities, named in honor of Judy’s mother, Alma, and also in honor of the Earl’s lifelong interest in academics. That sort of double entendre greatly pleased them both. Judy served as CEO of the chain and Charles oversaw the implementation of the plans in his role as President. The couple owned the chain jointly. Judy was particularly interested in seeing this most recent acquisition but was sorry that her mother, who had died (at age 100 years) shortly before its opening, was not
there for the grand opening. Alma had loved hearing about the success of the headquarters in St. Louis and of the branches in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and in Bay City, Michigan.

“Well, Judy, here we are,” announced Charles, “‘Alma’s HerBARium’! All the herbs used in making interesting bar drinks and bar food are grown right here in our rooftop herb garden near the pool area. There are little signs identifying the herbs by name so that the staff does not get confused, although of course we do expect that after a while waitstaff will learn to identify the herbs by leaf shape, color, taste, and smell. In addition, we make luncheon salads and cater small special evening events around the fire pits surrounded by sofas. During the evening events, we feature Alma’s Curly Dogs™ when we host sports parties in front of the large screen TV mounted on the wall over there. It’s all been a big hit in the first month!”
“Charles,” Judy said, “let’s stay here for lunch. It looks so inviting!”
“OK, Judy. Do you remember the waiter named David? He’s here somewhere training waitstaff. I’ll go get him,” Charles told his wife. While Charles disappeared into the back area, Judy occupied a round table near the outdoor lap pool. Water fountains spurted clean water from a wall into the pool through gargoyle-like heads mounted about 15 feet up the wall. The sequence of water arcs was stunning—almost reminiscent of an alley of pleached chestnut trees lining the promenades in a Parisian park. Judy studied the detail of her surroundings and of the menu. Her enjoyment, however, was abruptly interrupted when Lila once again appeared on the scene.

“Waiter, get me a bottle of your finest white wine and your menu,” the bossy woman commanded. At this point, David appeared with a bottle of nicely chilled fine white wine “would Madame care to taste this bottle, perhaps?” “Garbage…smells like pig urine…take it away…bring me a magnum of Dom Perignon, instead,” Lila announced to the group that had been happily assembling around the pool and along the side the herb garden. “Yes, Madame,” David said in the even tone of an obsequious waiter. Lila continued, “and I will have the house asparagus salad, onion marmalade on the side, but I want extra pine nuts—beaucoup de extra if you know what that means—and I want it all stuffed into three halves of avocado of course all freshly peeled with no evidence of oxidation anywhere—serve it within 90 seconds of cutting it, otherwise it goes back to the kitchen.” “As Madame wishes; your wish is our command,” David noted wryly. Charles thought that perhaps David was laying it on a bit too thick, but Lila seemed to enjoy it. Lila’s salad appeared and she ate it and drank the magnum without further ado; then she got up and staggered out of the bar, over to the elevator, for elsewhere.
David continued to wait tables and served Charles and Judy each a spectacular curly dog stuffed with homemade chili and small house salads. The couple left the poolside bar and herb garden shortly after they finished and headed toward the bridge game.

In the Hotel Ballroom—Afternoon Session
Charles bought an entry for the pair game for the day. The couple sat down, north/south, at a table in the center of the large room which soon filled up with other pairs waiting to begin the first board of the tournament. The boards proceeded in an orderly fashion; Charles and Judy’s game seemed a bit above average by the middle of the afternoon. In the distance, Judy spotted Lila, still drunk, making an obnoxious pest of herself at some other table. It appeared that Lila was part of an East/West partnership; Judy hoped that Lila would not come to their table, although Charles had often said that he loved to play against people in that sort of condition and really take them to the cleaners. Judy reflected that perhaps that was at least one reason that Charles was so much better at bridge than she was; Judy preferred most other aspects of the game. Each, however, enjoyed coming to the national tournaments in his/her own special way.

As Judy’s mind was drifting across various topics, and not focused sufficiently on bridge, she was jolted out of her somewhat dreamy state by an altercation in the sandwich area just outside the playing area. “Owwww…..Eeeekkk……Yuckkk!!!” screamed a hotel staff member; a male bridge player had ordered a pre-made sandwich, paid his 8 dollars, opened up the sandwich, looked at it, threw up in it, and then took the sandwich and said to the kind female staff person, “you couldn’t serve this swill on a hog farm and expect to get any takers…here, take that!!” as he smeared the altered, smelly sandwich in the face of the hotel worker. Directors came running from all around. Some helped to clean up the staff member and
console her while others looked in vain for the man who had engaged in this vulgar action. But, he was nowhere to be found…apparently he had vanished into thin air. Judy was visibly shaken by the entire event, but managed to finish the rest of the boards for that afternoon. The Earls retired to their room between sessions, where Charles ate some take-out food and worked to calm Judy in advance of the forthcoming evening session.

In the Hotel Ballroom—Evening Session

“Judy, I think I’ll head on down to the game area now; maybe I’ll be able to figure out who we might play against tonight,” Charles volunteered to his wife. “Good idea, you know how much I appreciate that sort of thing; I’ll be down soon. Just give me a few minutes,” said Judy. Charles left their room. He always liked to beat the crush in the elevators around game time. This particular hotel had only one tower, served by eight elevators. That meant that in the half hour before and after game time, the elevators would be overloaded. Right now they were fine; Charles hoped that Judy would also avoid the madhouse scene.

Judy followed in another 15 minutes or so. When she arrived at the game site, she quickly found Charles, sat down at their table, and started panting for air and gagging. She also looked extraordinarily pale. “Judy, what on Earth happened to you?” Charles asked excitedly. “Well, I got into the far elevator on the right side and you know there were a bunch of others in the elevator. At first, I thought that someone might have had a bean salad and simply passed some gas. But, that wasn’t it. The stench in the elevator was just dreadful. It smelled like urine does when one eats asparagus; I can’t imagine the whole thing. One woman started to faint. Probably I should have hopped out; we stopped often but it would have been hard because I was penned in. In any event, maybe
someone had an accident of some sort in that elevator. A couple of the men on board went to find hotel staff to get to the source of the problem. I assume it will be cleared up shortly. Right now, I just need to catch my breath and try to clear my head so I’m ready to be a good bridge partner tonight!” said Judy.

Charles waited patiently. He did not have the heart to tell Judy that in the second round they were going to be playing against Lila. Instead, he started with the ‘good news.’ “Judy, remember the pregnant woman and her husband from the Grand Canyon trip—Dolores and Jack? I think they will be our opponents toward the end of this session. They are very nice people and I think you will enjoy having them at the table,” Charles told his wife. “Hmmm,” said a recovering Judy, “and why is it that I am waiting for the other shoe to drop?” “Well, yes, then again it appears that we will be playing against Lila and her partner in round 2 tonight; and I think that Lila has had even more at dinner—perhaps she was drinking her dinner,” Charles said, “but Judy, look at it as an advantage—if she is drunk she won’t play well—never mind any of her antics—that’s how you get top scores against people like that. Don’t let them get to you.”

The first round of the evening session was uneventful. Charles estimated their scores to be about average. “Now, Judy, don’t react emotionally to anything Lila says or does—just focus on getting top scores from her. Remember, her partner is under far more stress than anyone else at the table,” Charles pointed out to his apprehensive wife.

“Well, if it isn’t Chucky-Ducky, how are you sweetheart!” drawled Lila in a drunken voice. “Pick up your hand, Lila,” her partner said. Charles opened the bidding, using the bidding box on his corner of
the table, with one diamond. “I bid one spheart” announced Lila in a loud voice. “Lila, which do you mean—spades or hearts? Please use the bidding box; we no longer speak our bids,” Charles directed. “Oh, all right Charlie Boy, make it two sphearts,” Lila, stated. Then, she laughed uproariously “Charlie is so cute…if you don’t want him, dearie, just let me know and I’ll come right over and take him—I’m shure I can do better than you,” Judy reflected on Charles’s admonition before the round, but let slip “well, you can just get in line with the 47 other sluts who want to come after him, too.” “Director!!” shouted Lila, “this bitch (pointing at Judy) called me a slut.” The Director pulled Charles, and Lila’s partner, aside and they discussed the behavior at the table that round. They all agreed that Lila should be removed from the playing area and that the Director should find a kibitzer to fill in for her. They returned to the table and informed Lila of the decision at which point she jumped from her chair and landed in Charles’s lap “ooooh, Charlie, you used to tell me how pretty I was…(only in your wildest dreams, Charles thought); don’t let them take me away from you,” Lila shrieked.

Soon security arrived and escorted her out of the playing site. Charles was the dummy on the next hand and he asked permission from Lila’s partner and the kibitzer to excuse himself so that he could check his clothing for rips or tears. It was not easy to have a 300 pound woman plop in one’s lap. Naturally, they were sympathetic and Charles headed toward the men’s room, thinking as he passed security cameras in the main playing area that these cameras clearly had a place in the playing area but that he really didn’t care for them in the men’s restrooms. Judy quickly played the hand, made her contract and an overtrick, and excused herself from the table and headed off to the elevator area where she noted a hotel cleaning crew scrubbing the carpet with a dry shampoo in the offensive elevator.
The next few rounds moved along well. Charles had estimated a clear top against Lila and perhaps another on the second board. In the rounds that followed, Charles suspected that they had done quite well. Judy had said that when Charles got upset, she could just feel the adrenaline flowing from him and that the unwary opponent was likely to be dealt several blows by Charles. Such was the case in the rounds following the encounter with Lila.

“Well Judy, two more rounds to go,” Charles said, “here come Dolores and Jack. Hi, Folks-Dolores, you look beautiful as usual! When is the big day for baby arrival?” “We think it's in a couple of weeks, but of course it's hard to be sure,” the pregnant woman noted. Bidding on the first hand took place and Dolores wound up playing 3NT. After the opening lead, she studied her hand and the dummy. All of a sudden, she began shrieking and writhing in pain. “Oh, Jack…I can’t stand the pain…ooooh, moan, groan, aaaarrrgghh,” and the pregnant Dolores collapsed on the floor under the table. Charles took charge and told Judy and Jack to monitor her and try to keep calm; in the meantime he went off to find his helpful medical bridge playing friend, Dr. Bob, and to contact the local emergency paramedics. Soon Charles returned with Dr. Bob, and a few minutes later the paramedics arrived. “Perhaps premature labor?” one of the young paramedics noted. “I don’t think so,” Dr. Bob stated firmly. “Look at her skin color and feel the skin…more likely an allergic reaction of some sort, even food poisoning. The pregnancy is a distraction to correct diagnosis.” Charles thought how fortunate Dolores was to have Dr. Bob, and his many years of experience as head of one of the most highly regarded emergency rooms in the U.S., offer an opinion.

Soon, the paramedics had Dolores loaded and ready to go. Dr. Bob went with them and said he would stay with Dolores and Jack just to
see that things went smoothly. The paramedics rang for an elevator. The one that had been recently cleaned arrived, Judy noted. When the door opened this time, a body rolled out of the elevator. It was Lila—“oh, is she drunk?” asked Judy. Dr. Bob leaned over and felt her. “No, she is dead” he said in a matter of fact tone. “Charles,” Bob continued, “phone the police—I can’t do anything for her, so I’ll go with Dolores where I might be some help.” The group got another elevator and rushed Dolores to the ambulance; Charles did as he had been directed. Then, he and Judy went to the room for a good night’s sleep.

**Calling all Assistants!**

Charles awakened ahead of Judy. He leaned over to awaken her--“Judy,” Charles commanded, “get a grip on yourself. We need to see if we can construct a logical context in which to fit all the puzzle pieces, and you are our expert on that. Fortunately we have all of our assistants here with us in Phoenix, as they came to pay tribute to your mother with the opening of the new Alma Mater subsidiary, ‘Alma’s HerBARium’. Here, look at a couple of photos; they may help you to regain your focus. One is of the group sitting around at the event and the other is a photo of Alma’s favorite frog platter of fancy tea sandwiches; it was the last one she enjoyed.
IMaGe Monograph #29:  
B. K. Barry  
Mysteries, Bridge, and a Culinary Twist
“Yes, Charles, you are right,” Judy sighed, “I do feel as if I am getting back on track now; it was quite a sequence of events downstairs, though! I think the assistants that we should press into service, at a minimum, are the basic team, the Earl Family Brain Trust, of Theodore, Binker, and Tine, as well as Special Agents Guillaume, for his expertise with plants and small spaces, Ookpik for his skill with water, and Oscar, who can get a vantage point from a high perch without being noticed. We are fortunate that the whole group is here; that way we can easily pull them into action immediately!”

**Earl Family Brain Trust**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theodore E. Bear:</th>
<th>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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Binker Bear:</td>
<td>Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <em>When We Were Very Young</em>] “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. He is also a part-time mystery story writer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tine E. Bear:** 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.

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**Special Agents Assigned to Phoenix**

**Guillaume R. Squirrel:** A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmp!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.
OokPik: From his strong Inuit family background, he has a keen sense of survival in difficult climates. He is an adept swimmer; his seal skin and albino northern wolf fur exteriors, while not currently politically correct, have made him impervious to icy arctic waters. OokPik, himself, is an urban creature; he emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, from a gift shop in the Royal York hotel. Thus, most of his experience with swimming has come from an occasional venture in the ubiquitous in-home urban swimming pool known as the toilet bowl. For a brief period of time, long ago, he took frequent dips in the Earl family bowl in order to delight their three-year old son, Ed. Lessons in survival that OokPik learned as a young owl have stuck with him throughout his adult life.

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, as well as other outdoor locales, and to report back on nocturnal activities in these areas. Some of his friends refer to him, in jest, as a “hooter.”

“Speaking of being able to pull them into action,” said Charles, “where are they? I don’t see any of them!” “Oh,” Judy replied, “I forgot to tell you that Theodore mentioned late last night that he was going to take the entire group out to the HerBARium for drinks and food—as a brunch.”
At the HerBARium with Theordore and Colleagues

“Charles, oh Charles, over here near the pool,” Theodore motioned with the wave of a hefty paw, as Charles entered the bar area. Hmmmm, Charles thought to himself, I hope that bear hasn’t been drinking too much mead. Charles joined the group and noticed a few others as well. “Eeyore also joined us and I think there are others from home who came for the bar/restaurant dedication.

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| Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou: | Like Binker, Eeyore is also named after a character from A. A. Milne’s classic children’s work and like Binker is originally from Paris’ Galeries Lafayette. Eeyore worries about his tail, of course, but in recent years has learned to enjoy greatly the fact that real-world versions of himself, an endangered species, are once again rising in number. He is a kind and thoughtful, though stubborn, creature. His plodding ways and stubborn persistence, along with his gray coat, make him an ideal undercover agent in complex, but physically bounded, situations that appear drab in color. He has a background in problems associated with the hauling of materials. Eeyore persists until he gets to the bottom of things. |

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But beyond that, Charles,” the gregarious bear noted, “you must meet our new friends who are here at another convention in the hotel, that of the Montgolfier Society. Please welcome Gordon the Dragonfly, François Poodle, Froggie, Honey, and L.C. Cow. In honor of Honey, I have taken the liberty of ordering a round of Mead Cocktails (which David makes and serves beautifully) for the entire group…I figured it would go on the corporate account. I added in asparagus salads and eggs benedict with a side of caviar for those wishing them.”
Friends Attending the Montgolfier Society Meetings

Gordon Dragonfly and François Poodle
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At that point, L.C. broke into tears...she had been flirting with Eeyore (who might have been a bit flattered); subsequently, Guillaume told her ‘to stick to her own species’. Theodore worked to console her and told her that Guillaume was a linguist and just liked to turn a clever phrase, sometimes without regard to the feelings of others. Froggie in the meantime had expressed his personal concern to the rest of the group that he might wind up in the center of a platter of tea sandwiches and that such a position might be life-threatening to him. Again, others worked to reassure him of his safety and that this gathering was one big, happy, and supportive, group.

“Never mind the accounting now,” Charles muttered as he decided not to burden the group with corporate ethics (which he would straighten out later with Theodore), “it is true that you seem to be having a delightful time and I’m happy to see you enjoying yourselves and that you are pleased with the restaurant.

Nonetheless, things have happened that will require pressing your greater talents into service. Theodore, think about it—see if we might constructively add to the team with any of the others who are here. Let me know...now I have things I need to do...please get back to me quickly. I'll be in the room.” On his way out, Charles instructed David to put the bill for the group on the Earls’ personal hotel bill.

**Deploying Special Agents**

Shortly before noon, Theodore returned to the room with the entire group from around the poolside table at the HerBARium. Charles briefed them on the unusual set of events to which Judy had referred and then sought advice from Theodore as to how he
thought the agents might be deployed. “Well,” said the introspective, and now sober, bear, “here are my thoughts. But please let me know if you think I’m off base; after all, I do not yet have any direct knowledge and, as you know, primary sources are always best. I will enumerate the set of events and suggest which teams of agent(s) to assign to which location. I have also designated team captains.

**Theodore’s Team:** We have the sandwich-throwing incident. I will take that one and will sit near the concession stand to see if I can figure out if that were an isolated, random event or whether it might somehow be linked to these other events as part of a broader pattern. I’ll take Eeyore with me (and L.C. wants to come along). I think that looking for broad context fits well with my skill sets and that discovering how transportation and circulation patterns might fit within that context fits well with Eeyore’s skill sets. We will soon go there.

**Oscar’s Team:** We have incidents of various sorts in one elevator: smelly urine and then later a dead body. Oscar could perch up high in the elevator to observe any further conversations or activities there. Also, Honey and Gordon could observe unobtrusively and at differing height levels; they would also learn and benefit from Oscar’s previous detective work experiences. They would be extra eyes. François said he would be willing to be used as the scapegoat for where the urine came from should that become an issue; so he is willing to ride in that elevator on occasion. I believe that the police have now released that elevator and that it is once again functional (or soon will be). I am guessing that the elevator may be critical so I would like to have multiple eyes involved.

**Guillaume’s Team:** We have Lila’s various activities and patterns of incredibly obnoxious behavior. With regard to
those at Alma’s HerBARium, I would assign Guillaume because I believe that he can scamper around unobtrusively on the patio. He is also an expert on trees and plants and can look in the herb garden as part of natural squirrel behavior. Also, I would assign Ookpik to the same general location, having him focus on the pool area; he has swimming experience, and I might add, that when we were just at the HerBARium, he enjoyed a brief swim in the pool along with Froggie, who has asked to join this team.

**Binker’s Team:** In the bridge room, we have unusual incidents associated with both Dolores and Lila. There I think it best to introduce a pair of players into the next game, beginning shortly. Binker and Tine have an established partnership, so they should be able to penetrate that arena effectively without attracting too much attention.

So, what do you think, folks?” queried the thoughtful bear.

“It sounds like a fine plan to me,” said Judy, “and I would add that I will serve as command central; you all need to check that your smartphones are charged and that the coordinated network is working effectively. Test the phones from various parts of the hotel as you move around; the speed or quality of transmission may vary with respect to how much insulation the signal needs to travel through. Be prepared to use the cameras and share both text and graphic information with the group. Try to get the information coming in as soon as possible—a report format is also useful.”

“And,” Charles added, “I will consult with Dr. Bob, hotel staff, and others as the need arises.” With that the group disbanded and headed off to various parts of the hotel to begin an afternoon and evening of work on this second day of the tournament.
Reports of the Investigative Teams
For the next four days, these four teams went around the hotel, played bridge, studied patterns of human behavior at the HerBARium, in the elevators, at the concession stand and wherever else they happened to be. The reports they returned to Judy and Charles are reprinted below.

Report of Theodore’s Team (Theodore, Eeyore, and L.C.), presented by

Theodore

Eeyore and L.C. and I sat near the sandwich concession stand. It’s really quite elaborate. The hotel does a fine job; and the sandwiches, cookies, and drinks are nice. I had honey baked ham with Muenster cheese with lettuce, tomato, onion and pickle. The ham was baked on site—none of this pre-sliced deli stuff. Then I had house-baked honey-nut cookies for dessert, and a glass of juice. It cost me ten dollars and was well worth the price; no one should have any complaints. The service was also great: friendly and efficient.

Anyway, it all seemed to be going well. It was hard to imagine how that disgusting incident happened earlier. So, I decided to shake the system up a bit and see what would happen. I asked Eeyore and L.C., both large and slow-moving but deliberate, to stand in line
and kind of tie up traffic to see if we would get any response that was out of the ordinary.

Sure enough, there were bridge players who were pushing and shoving trying to get in. Some tried to push Eeyore…a BIG mistake…nothing more stubborn than a relative of a donkey! They pushed and shoved, jockeying for position. A few grabbed cans of soda and left without paying. None of that was too surprising. After a while, a tall man of wiry build, wearing white sneakers and socks, blue jeans with roll cuffs, red polo shirt, and red baseball cap and sunglasses sauntered to the front of the line, grabbed the mustard bottle and squirted it in the face of one of the women selling sandwiches. Then, he grabbed another sandwich, spat in it, and smeared it on the face of one of the astonished on-looking hotel staff members. The man vanished into the crowd.

Now, it’s easy to understand why the hotel is losing even some of its most established staff members. I might quit too in the face of this disgusting nonsense. But, what they don’t seem to get at is the importance of catching the guy. When this happens, the emotional response gets in the way of the logic. So, once again, he disappeared into the crowded situation that Eeyore and L.C. had managed to create. The system works well, but it is apparently easy to disrupt. Thus, it may be a source for distraction.
We spent way too much time in that elevator for my tastes! Phew! We have all bathed carefully but still I have disgusting odors in my recent memory. I hope we do not offend anyone. We have seen quite a bit, looking down from above the tops of heads. But, there are no cameras in the elevator so in essence we were fulfilling that function. I’m glad that Judy noted that this elevator seemed to smell of asparagus-urine odor. In fact, I think that her analysis was entirely correct.

We also saw the wiry man that Theodore described. On a number of occasions he entered the elevator on the fourth floor or below, urinated in a corner and then left. Later, he would enter again and do something with his smartphone…read something, type a quick message and then leave.

I know from the tests of our phones that Judy had us do, and from sending her photos of what was happening in the elevator, that the phones worked differently in the elevator from elsewhere, presumably because there is less insulation in the elevator shafts than in other parts of the hotel. We thought that in warm climates
they probably saw no need to spend extra dollars on the shaft and so in essence treated it as if it were outside and simply covered it. In fact, within other parts of the hotel, the smartphones were using the hotel wifi to connect; within the elevator, however, they were using the same general network as we would use if we were outside. Apparently the elevator shaft functions as a hole in the hotel…it’s just a covered hole, but nonetheless a hole in terms of what’s insulated and what is not.

Judy rode in this elevator early in the tournament. By the time we got there, almost no one other than this guy rode in that elevator…I guess word of mouth comment about the odor had travelled quickly, much as rumor and gossip seem to in this world. One exception to that was Lila. I gather, from talking to David, the waiter at the HerBARium, that she made frequent trips to the bar (yes, even though she was here only one day of the tournament) and she seemed to like to take this elevator. Perhaps it was a way for her to hide her activity—I gather she ran to the bar between rounds. After a few rounds, she was probably oblivious to the odor that had sent Judy and others away.

Somewhat later, the elevator opened at the fourth floor; the wiry guy got on the elevator with another wiry guy. We were amazed…they were clearly not twins when viewed side by side, but if we had seen them separately we might not have known they were two different people. They were about the same height, weight, and wearing the same type of outfit. They both urinated in the elevator; clearly they had been eating the asparagus salad in the HerBARium. Honey and Gordon had the opportunity to sit on the visors of their baseball caps. I think that Judy has photos of them.
Another time, when just one of them was in the elevator, we used François as a source of distraction so that Honey and Gordon could fly around and get good photographs of the situation. Honey had the opportunity to fly down and buzz around the guy’s smartphone as he was using it. She photographed what he had typed onto it: 16, S, 6C. Then it was sent somewhere.

When François left the elevator on the second floor, the cleaning crew was there. As he strode past the men, he apologized profusely, in his best French accent, for his accident in the elevator. They seemed amazed that such a small dog could cause such a large stench. Then, François mingled in the crowd for several hours where he made numerous friends (he is very cute). He overheard a group in the corner speaking French, but not with a Parisian accent—seemed like folks from all over using French as some common form of communication. So, he wandered over to the group and made some small talk with them in French. Naturally, they loved it; bent over to pet him; and gave him some of their food. All that sounded quite normal.

However, his description of the group is far from normal. There were six guys, all tall and all wiry. Each one was wearing white sneakers and socks, roll-cuff blue jeans, red polo shirt, red baseball cap and sunglasses. He could distinguish one from the other, but it was not all that easy. As he sniffed around at their feet and ankles, he noticed that each of them had a numeral embroidered on the cuff of the blue jeans, ranging in value from 1 to 6. How odd, he thought, but said nothing and instead wandered off as a friendly dog might do in quest of yet another set of people.
Report of Guillaume’s Team (Guillaume, Ookpik, and Froggie), presented by Guillaume

Well, these are certainly unusual activities that Theodore and Oscar note; we have a few to report, too. Yes, we saw the group of guys at the HerBARium, too; usually two of them during the time when bridge was being played and often all of them between sessions. They usually drank seltzer water and ate asparagus salads. Sometimes a couple of them drank beer. They seemed to drink large quantities of fluid; then again, they were quite tall and would surely drink far more than we would.

One time during a bridge session, I overheard two of them (a non-playing pair during that event) speaking in Ancient Hittite (I studied it when I was a student in theoretical linguistics)—it belongs to the Anatolian Branch of the Indo-European Languages. Anyway, I went over to them and sat up and acted cute. In Hittite, they said they were impressed with their outfits; that people had trouble telling them apart and that in particular the outfits served to disguise which one of them was the client. They noted that every detail that could give them even the slightest edge was important. I guess I seemed quite interested because one of them pointed at me and said that I looked as if I were listening. They laughed and said no, that couldn’t be true because after all I was just a dumb animal…hmmmpphh!!! I
swatted one of them with my tail and left their table. Of course, I could never get close enough, as François did, to study the cuffs of their pants; most humans think dogs are ‘cute’ and ‘safe’; they won’t let an adorable, smart squirrel very near them though…

After that, Ookpik and Froggie continued the surveillance from their vantage points in the swimming pool. Apparently those two just continued talking, and eventually began comparing convention cards before they got up and went to the smelly elevator. Meanwhile, I went over to talk to David. He told me that he had observed the same sort of behavior pattern from this group of six men as I had. He added that they had been, on occasion, quite friendly to some of the other patrons, as well. In particular, they had spent time with Lila. One of them had offered her extra pine nuts for her asparagus salad; another had offered her extra herbs for the onion marmalade that comes with the salad. Subsequent to that, she complained that the asparagus had not been properly cleaned—that it was still gritty. Apparently another one of that group is a medical doctor; apparently he talked to her about the various prescription drugs that she took and, who knows, may have offered her more.

I gather that sometimes the hotel guests take a great interest in the herb garden. This time, though, David told me that one of the hotel guests, or someone else, had apparently switched around the little signs identifying different herbs and plants. He commented that the most disturbing switch might cause folks to think that a bucket of daffodil bulbs, ready for planting, were in fact onions (as he noted that the daffodil bulb is poisonous and really should not be eaten lest it make one sick). David said that he had not discovered who had made the switches but noted that it would be fairly easy to do, particularly at night when there were guests around the fire pits near
the herb garden.

Report of Binker’s Team (Binker and Tine), presented by Binker
Tine and I had an interesting time at the bridge table; we picked up a pair and played in a team game. We did play one set of boards against a pair of guys wearing the outfits others noted. Of course, we saw all four guys on that team and they all looked very much alike. Apparently, they had just arrived and were playing in our event as a kind of a warm up session for their system. They were very friendly; said they were a professional team from all over the world and wore similar outfits as a way to suggest world unity and global peace. One fellow noted that to him it seemed particularly appropriate to be playing in the United States of America—that the unifying approach of their team seemed to fit with the ‘melting pot’ and ‘unification’ ideals underlying the foundations of this country. After I listened for a while, I was beginning to wonder if I had come to a beauty pageant where every contestant stands up with a flag-waving routine and world peace as her platform to winning the event. Of course, I know that’s a bit silly, but seriously it did make me wonder if they were trying to distract us. Nonetheless, we were of course very friendly and told them that we hoped that they and their team would have a wonderful time at the tournament.
It was intriguing to play against guys who apparently are world-class players. One hand I thought Tine played flawlessly, toward the end of the first half of the boards. The bidding seemed straightforward and led to a 6S contract. I didn’t see any way to play it other than how Tine did. But, he went down one trick. At the other table they were in 6C, making—I couldn’t figure out how they got to 6C. Charles, care to take a look at the hand and see if you can figure out either where Tine went wrong or how one might get to 6C?

North, Binker
♥ Q
♦ K 5
♣ Q T 9 5 4 3

East
♥ J T 9 8
♦ J T 9 7
♦ Q J 8
♣ 7 2

South, Tine
♥ K 5 2
♦ A 4
♣ A K 8

West
♠
♥ A 8 6 4 3
♦ T 9 7 6 3 2
♣ J 6
The bidding was as follows:

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<td>1S</td>
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“Well,” said Charles, “in 6S certainly you must lost the heart ace and a spade. So, Tine played it just right. The bidding looks normal to me. Now the 6C idea is a very strange one, indeed. Here is a sequence that could lead to that contract, but even if you had gotten to that contract, it makes only with South as declarer because if North is declarer a spade lead gets ruffed and the heart ace is also a winner, down one again. Anyway, here it is.

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<td>6C</td>
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If someone bid that against me I might well make a report of some sort—but I might not—makes it a ‘good’ bid (or cheat?). It would appear to me that in this latter auction, Tine would have bid 6C (rather than bidding the 5D cue bid) only if he knew in advance what was going to happen.”

Binker continued: Certainly our opponents talked, at the time, about how unlikely it would have been to be in 6C and that it made only from the South seat—but, I wasn’t sure—I needed to hear it from you, Charles. Independent voices are good. We played the next
set of boards after they came from our teammates. When we compared scores at the end of the match, we were of course shocked to find that South at the other table had bid and made 6C. The rest of the match was pretty flat so we lost handily based on the result of that one board.

Charles’s Analysis
These reports all offer great information. Here is a logic I see that would plausibly fit all the pieces together. When I tried to check up on it, as more than simply a plausible chain of reasoning, it appeared to make sense. Let me go through this as I think it unfolded in my mind.

To some extent, the reports seem a bit confusing. If, however, one considers that there are two issues here, then it all seems to mesh quite well. First, there is a premeditated plan, involving bridge, and then there is a spontaneous plan, involving murder, when it appeared that the bridge plan might be uncovered.

The people involved are the team of six players all of whom dress alike. I believe that they came with a, ah shall we call it, ‘business plan’ (I’d call it cheating) scheme that would virtually guarantee their client a win any time the plan was implemented, either in a team game or in a pair game. For this, they were paid handsomely. They were all involved in implementing this plan, but only four at any single time. Their plan was masterful. Lila, however, had the misfortune to get caught up, or appear to get caught up, in it. I believe that Lila stumbled (perhaps literally) into the heart of their scheme and threatened, by doing so, to interfere with the functioning of their communications hub. I don’t think she knew that she had done so, but they could not take a chance and thus needed to get rid of her. Evidence from Binker and Tine also corroborates
this idea, as does evidence from the rest of you.

_The Premeditated Bridge Business Plan_

After I heard back from Binker and Tine, it became apparent that there was a lot of money at stake here for these professionals from all over the world. I asked around a bit among my friends who play pro bridge and they said yes, that members of this team were being paid over a million USD each, per year, to play with the man known as ‘number 6’ (whose favorite phrase was ‘I am not a number’). Their mission was to deliver wins, not points, to number 6. Using the numbering system that I’ve heard made reference to, and that François uncovered, here is how I think they did it. For the sake of discussion, I will say that numbers 1 to 5 are all professional bridge players from various parts of the world and that number 6 is the client. In using this numbering, I am assuming that the numbers 1 through 5 describe various roles. Number 6 is the ‘client’ role. The business plan involves the use of orchestrated distractions and creative smartphone usage. It might have been implemented as follows.

Number 1 is in charge of causing distractions in the hotel; throwing sandwiches and so forth. His mission is to keep the hotel staff off guard so they don’t notice anything peculiar in association with bridge. It’s better yet for the ‘business plan’ if established hotel staff leave; new staff might not recognize what is ‘peculiar’ and what is not ‘peculiar’ behavior. Thus, Theodore, Eeyore, and L.C. observed Number 1 in action (and we had all heard about some of his earlier actions).

Number 2 is a transmitter of information. He carries, as do all the team members, a smartphone in the breast pocket of his polo shirt. Naturally, he is supposed to turn it off in the tournament. Instead, he turns off the ringer. At a key
moment, he bends over and flips on the record feature along with auto-forward so that the recording is sent to a pre-set number. He keeps that running during the auction when the players are using bidding boxes. Then, after the bidding cards are returned to the boxes, he asks for a review of the auction. That review is automatically recorded and sent to someone. But, where is it sent? It cannot be sent to another player in the tournament or to anyone else within the hotel network; to do so, and violate written ABC policy, could cause the team to forfeit and to be banned for a period of time from other tournaments, costing each player as much as a million dollars.

Number 3 is the receiver of information from Number 2. He is in the elevator, outside of range of the hotel camera network (recall that even the men’s rooms had cameras). The danger of being observed in the elevators comes from other bridge players riding in them. That’s where the importance of the urine comes in. It’s a simple way to keep people out and make one elevator their own center of communications. But, now they need to get the information from the elevator back into the bridge room, to the other table. Here the regulations of the ABC were exploited. The ABC does not permit the reception of any messages, except by licensed medical personnel, and then only from a phone outside the hotel, as evidenced by coming in over a network different from the hotel’s internal wifi network.

Number 4, a medical doctor, was therefore critical. It was easy for Number 3, in the elevator shaft and consequently outside the hotel network, to relay the information to Number 4 using the LTE—Long Term Evolution—network, outside the hotel’s wifi network. As licensed medical personnel, he was
free to receive the transmission, read it, and act on it. Clearly this couldn’t happen on every hand, but once in a session would have been more than enough to give fine players a nearly guaranteed win. Binker and Eeyore saw this in action when they went down in 6S, and their opponents made 6C!

“Yes,” noted Tine, “the one man did bend over to pick up a pencil he dropped under the table and the other man did ask for a review of the auction. After the hand we discussed it, including saying out loud what didn’t make and what did and how difficult it would be to bid 6C and the fact that it made only when South played it. And yes, Honey, it was Board 16—so probably what you photographed in the elevator was our hand being sent to our opponent, the doctor, sitting in Binker’s seat! It all seemed so normal we didn’t even include most of it as part of our report…but yes, you are right! Outstanding analysis! What a ‘business plan’—I guess when they said they were testing their system that we didn’t get what it was they were testing—it worked all right—gave us a bottom board.”

*The Spontaneous Murder Plan*

As I said, I do not think that they came here with the idea in mind of murdering Lila; she must have gotten in their way somehow and so they killed her out of necessity to protect their business deal. To do so, they needed an on-the-fly, spontaneous plan. I think they did it as a group, each contributing a piece, so that no individual was solely responsible for the murder. Because they looked alike, if someone placed one of them at any single location it would have been easy for him to prove that in fact he had been observed somewhere else at the stated time.
The group had noted that Lila rode all too frequently in what they had pre-determined as their private elevator and communications hub. She had adopted it as her own, and this was an adoption they could not afford. She had to be removed, whether or not she knew anything. Using a group effort of individual tactics, no one of which was sufficient to kill her by itself, was the strategy they came up with. No single person would have cast the deciding stone, as the murderer.

Depending on who was playing bridge at any given time, various of them filled each role of the business plan. But now, to achieve this new end and secure their business plan, they created ad hoc roles for players Number 5 and Number 6 and added to the role of the doctor, Number 4. Yes, they even had to bring the client in on it more directly.

Number 5 was to be a ‘charmer’ and sit in the bar with Lila; offer her all she wanted (and more) to drink. Find out what she knew or didn’t know.

Number 4, the doctor, added to his role: he was to find out her list of medications and offer her any added things she thought she might enjoy or to suggest creative increases to existing dosages with promises for refills. He also got to study interaction possibilities of her medication list with food and drink.

Number 6, the client, handled food for Lila. He was the geologist with us on the Grand Canyon trip and had innocently collected not only a soil sample at the Grand Canyon but also some deer turd (which the tour guide had noted were poisonous). Now, I do say ‘innocently’ only in reference to murder; clearly he was willing to bend the rules when such bending served him in either the cause of
science or in the cause of bridge. He offered the greedy Lila extra pine nuts (deer turd look like pine nuts) knowing they were poison; when he did so, some of the soil must have fallen on her salad causing her to think the asparagus had not been properly cleaned. He was probably also the one who switched signs on herbs (a red herring) and on the bucket of narcissus bulbs, again with full knowledge that eating narcissus bulbs would make anyone who ate them quite ill.

I gather that David was of course not at the bar the whole time; he had some new help who no doubt innocently made some onion marmalade from the narcissus bulbs and served it to both Dolores and to Lila. Dolores got sick from it, and only from it. Lila on the other hand had been hit with deer turd poison, alcohol poison, and medicinal overdose—with a final blow from narcissus poison. Did one of them also introduce either rattlesnake or scorpion venom? Certainly from what Judy saw, that might have been possible. By the way, I did check back with Dr. Bob about Dolores, the pregnant woman. Both she and the baby (in utero) are in the hospital under observation; they appear to be fine, but the medical staff is being careful. They believe that she suffered some form of allergic reaction or low-dose poisoning from food. They are running tests and we may know more later.

Dolores was an important piece to this puzzle--she was not the target of poison. You see, if Lila had been the target, and the person doing the poisoning had only a physical description, one might mistake the very pregnant Dolores for the morbidly obese Lila. Notice, please, that Dolores only received enough poison to make her sick—not to kill her. It was the latter point that got me to thinking along these shocking lines of group murder and created a cascade of thoughts that caused the wonderful information you all brought
back to fall into place.

Well, there you have it: A logical chain of events accounting for all that we have seen and leading to the appropriate result along with a plausible rationale for that result. What do you think? “I think,” said Theodore, “you should head right over to the Phoenix Police Department and explain it all to them and turn over all the evidence we have from our smartphones in support of it—brilliant work, Charles!” “Bravo,” the group cried! “Ah, yes,” said Judy, “instead of a bird rising from the ashes, we have bridge hands rising with the elevator—a new twist on the classical image of ‘Phoenix’!”

The author acknowledges the fine balloon animals sculpted by Gordo the Magician in Ann Arbor, Michigan, some of whose photographs appear here, with his permission. The photo of the Curly Dog™ was modified by the author from an original by Alma Lach (who invented the cutting board, prepared the food, and photographed it).
Chapter 7: Dallas Bridge Murder

The eyes of Texas are upon you
All the live long day
The eyes of Texas are upon you
And you cannot get away

Do not think you can escape them
From night till early in the morn
The eyes of Texas are upon you
Till Gabriel blows his horn

John Sinclair, 1903
Training Wheels?
“Charles, riding the Amtrak Texas Chief is so much fun—I think we are coming up on St. Louis—see, there’s the Gateway Arch; beautiful at night,” Judy Earl exclaimed to her mathematician, bridge-playing husband. “The last time we came to Dallas to an American Bridge Congress (ABC) national tournament,” she continued, “the timing was different, so we are seeing different things this time. Great!” Charles and Judy Earl sometimes drove their car and sometimes took the train to national or regional bridge tournaments. When they did take the train it was usually on long trips…with a roomette for each of them, across the hall from each other. That way, they had a view out of both sides of the train. Charles Earl didn’t really care too much about the view, but his wife, Judy Earl (a geographer), just loved to see all that there was to see. “Look, Charles, at the lights reflecting in the Mississippi—Wow—there’s an orange harvest moon in back of the orange twinkling lights on the bridge we just went under. High-crime lighting serves many purposes! You know I was also reflecting on our last trip to St. Louis. I remember that that was when we first opened the Alma Mater chain of restaurants…thought I saw the headquarters when we passed the Arch…hard to tell at night, though.” As a sideline to their academic careers, the Earls had created a chain of fine food facilities, named in honor of Judy’s mother, Alma, and also in honor of both of the Earls’ (and their extended families’) lifelong interest in academics. That sort of double entendre greatly pleased them both. Judy served as CEO of the chain and Charles oversaw the implementation of the plans in his role as President. The couple owned the chain jointly.

Finally, Charles spoke: “Yes, Judy, the initial one was in St. Louis at the foot of the Eads Bridge. It’s doing well. We have one in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin; one in Bay City, Michigan; one in Louisville,
Kentucky; one in Phoenix, Arizona; and, our most recent one opened up just a month ago in Dallas—I think it’s quite different from the others. You’ll see it when we get there. Perhaps the most important person in seeing that these new places get off the ground is the young waiter named David; I understand that he is currently working in Dallas. He really does a fine job training new staff and is particularly good with menu items to fit local tastes…he has a knack for quickly grasping local preferences. For example, the asparagus salad was a big hit in Phoenix, but I don’t even know if it will be on the menu in Dallas. We shall see…”

As the train wheels created a rhythmic clickety-clack over and over again, Judy began humming and singing in anticipation of their arrival in Dallas—jumping back and forth between two songs, interspersing lyrics from ‘The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You’ and ‘I’ve Been Working on the Railroad’… “What fun, we’ll have, Charles!” Charles quietly closed the door to his roomette.

The Big D—The View from the Top
In the morning, the train arrived in Dallas. It was a short walk across the lobby, through an underground connection passage, to their hotel. They rolled their suitcases onto the escalators and took them
up to the lobby and checked into the hotel. Judy noticed that the view from this level looked out over a grassy area; she gasped as she noted the Texas School Book Depository Building that she remembered from when JFK had been assassinated. She forced that sad, nostalgic moment from her mind; she knew when she came to Dallas that that memory would arise. She had not known how evident the view of long ago images would be from the lobby area. They rolled their suitcases to an elevator and went up to their room on the top floor.
“Charles,” Judy commented, “this room is just perfect—nice room itself, but more important, a great view! Look, we are up here among the skyscraper towers, and the sky itself seems to go on forever, a deep blue, that reaches out at infinity to embrace the Earth’s crust on the horizon—wonderful—I can gaze at that for weeks and not tire of it, I’m sure.” “I’m glad you like it,” her husband replied, “in fact, it is quite similar to the view from our new restaurant in the Alma Mater chain. Now, let’s get unpacked and then go see for ourselves and also have a bite to eat there, perhaps a late lunch.”

The Dallas Alma Mater

“Well, hello there David,” greeted Charles, “how’s it going here at the latest in the Alma Mater chain?” “Fine, thank you, sir! May I suggest a seat on our outside rooftop patio area?” “Great,” said Judy, “sounds good to me and yes, the view is breathtaking.”

Charles and Judy sat and enjoyed the scenery; colorful umbrellas shaded them from too much sun. An attractive bar had been set up along one edge of the patio, close to the doors to the interior. At one end of the bar, there was a refrigerated cabinet filled with soda pop of various kinds, bottled water, and fruit juice bottles, presumably open to guests. The opposite wall held refrigerated carts, grills, and basically an entire outdoor kitchen loaded with interesting food: salads, protein to suit every palate, and desserts. At the far end was a coffee/hot drink area complete with Styrofoam cups, lids, and assorted bags of tea, sugars, and dried creamers. Privacy nooks around the edges offered opportunity for more intimate conversation; one of them contained a fountain feature. Each was unique.

“If you order a beefburger, as many do when they come to Texas, please make sure to specify how you wish it cooked,” noted David,
“if you do not, it will come well done; that appears to be the default in a number of restaurants I’ve seen in the broad region here; furthermore, if you order medium-rare, emphasize ‘rare’…err on the side of the undercooked term for your preference. That’s just general advice; if you place your order with me, the reverse might be true. I might add that our beef is excellent, absolutely the best—that is why I am going through so much discussion about it.” “OK,” said Charles, I’ll have a burger, plain, and fries.” “And, I'll have the half avocado stuffed with shrimp salad…is the onion marmalade that comes with it the same recipe as in the Phoenix restaurant…on the side of the asparagus salad (which I note you do not have here)?” asked Judy. “Yes, it’s the same onion marmalade…tastes seem to vary from region to region and we try to respond to that idea in our menu selections,” David said, “I will get those orders placed for you. Would you care for a drink while you wait? How about an ice cold craft beer from our bar?” “Fine,” said Charles, “you select, David…one for each of us.”

The couple enjoyed the sunny day and their beer and food. Other bridge players began to enter the patio and the indoor part of the restaurant. “Judy,” stated Charles, “this area is also the Concierge area for the hotel. Guests who pay a premium get to eat a free breakfast and have free food (but not alcohol). There is free soda pop and stuff in the refrigerated cabinet over there—that’s for anyone who wants it. Regular guests use this area as a general hotel restaurant where they pay, on their room charge, for everything except what’s in the soda pop cabinet. Our room keys have an electronic designation built into them so that whatever we choose to have we do not get charged—I understand the breakfast buffet, $21.95 (all you can eat) for regular guests, is quite nice. We’ll see tomorrow morning.”
“Now, Judy,” Charles continued, “I think I’ll go downstairs and see about studying how the bridge events are set up and checking in with old friends…general reconnoitering…” “Go right ahead,” Judy said, “I’ll stay right here and have dessert and study the people and enjoy the nice day…see you at the bridge game this evening—I’ll eat the happy hour food as my dinner. Come back if you want; eat with your friends if you want…whatever works.” Charles left and took one of the elevators down to the floor that he guessed would house the headquarters office of the ABC. Judy ordered chocolate lava cake with raspberry sauce and a large framboise dessert cocktail.

She waved at a few bridge players she knew from elsewhere. Soon David and other waitstaff appeared and began stocking the outdoor carts with nicely prepared vegetables and dips, puff pastries of various shapes apparently stuffed with different items and sauces to go with them, deep-fried shrimp, and beefburger sliders with suitable accompaniments. Ah ha, it’s getting to be happy hour time…that’s part of our premium deal. Soon, guests started lining up. Hotel staff did ask for the room key. It all seemed very well organized. After a while, there was a break in the organization…David went running over. “Ma’am,” he said clearly, “we do not allow that sort of activity in this facility,” he said as the woman began to dump the entire platter of sliders into her Gucci purse. Judy felt her eyes bulge…what was this attractive older woman, with a white pageboy hair cut, long dark dress, expensive shoes and leather purse to match, doing?…surely she could afford to pay the premium on the room or just pay for the buffet. Judy thought this woman looked as if she belonged in a several million dollar condo on Park Avenue or somewhere in Manhattan near the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The woman never said a word but put the platter back and took a seat with the man she had come in with. She had a sour look on her
face and seemed to turn up her nose at the whole crowd and situation.

Judy sat and watched and took her time with her large framboise cocktail. Soon, the woman went back to the buffet and helped herself to a large, but reasonably-sized, plate of food. Her male companion did likewise. After they returned to the table, she opened her bag and removed another bag from it. Then she sent her companion off to run an errand. While he was gone, she slid all the food from both of their plates into the bag she recently extricated from her purse. When her friend returned, she made an excuse and left the room with only the bag containing food; she left her purse at the table. After about 10 minutes, she returned to the patio—carrying no bags. She went back to the food and got another plate full, pulled out another bag, and repeated the same process. Judy observed this same activity four times in a row. After the fourth time, the woman pulled some knitting from the purse…clickety-clack, clickety-clack went the needles….sounds as if I am back on the train! But, no, now I have a good name for her: Madame Defarge—the Big D, indeed!

**The Breakfast Buffet**

“Well, Charles,” Judy said, “I think we are all set now with the bridge…the game last night was a good one. You are playing this morning and we will play this afternoon and evening. While you play this morning, I’ll go on a tour of Dealey Plaza and all the JFK stuff. Now, let’s go try out the breakfast buffet.”

David ushered Charles and Judy to the same table on the patio that they had enjoyed yesterday. They went to the buffet and helped themselves to beautiful berries: strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, and blueberries. The eggs benedict with a side of grits
with cheese were excellent—far better than the fast food take on the same—fried egg, Canadian bacon, and somewhat melted cheese on an English muffin with a side of hashed brown potatoes. “Charles,” Judy noted, “see that woman who just came in with the white hair and long dress? Let’s watch her and see what she does—notice her bags.” “Judy,” Charles said, “you watch her, I am going to ‘watch’ a soda pop and another plate of food!” With that, Charles got up and went to the refrigerated cabinet for a soda pop. The woman with the white hair was standing there, rummaging through the contents of the cabinet. “You don’t stock enough diet soda,” she yelled at David, “no one drinks soda with sugar, yechhh, in it anymore!” “I’m sorry ma’am,” David said, “our aim is to please all tastes.” “Shut up, you fool, didn’t you hear me,” she continued, “I said no one drinks sugared slop any more. Fill it up with diet soda.” “Excuse me,” Charles commented, “I not only drink sugared soda, and enjoy it, I also believe it is healthier to drink cola with sugar in it rather than with a bunch of chemical sweeteners in it…not that either one is very good for you…both appear to be comfort foods. David, I think you have the right idea in stocking some of each kind.” Then Charles helped himself to a plain, sugared, cola and went back to his table. The woman in the meantime stomped off to the buffet.

Charles related his adventures at the soda pop cabinet to Judy and then headed back to the breakfast buffet. When he saw that his new ‘friend’ was there helping herself to more food, he decided to back off and take Judy’s advice and just watch. Judy had uncanny instincts for reading people, sometimes just from scant evidence and small details she observed. Now the woman Judy called Madame Defarge pulled a stack of large Styrofoam coffee cups and lids from her purse. She dumped the bowl of strawberries into one, covered it, and put it back in her purse. She did the same with each
of the three remaining bowls of berries. In the meantime, Charles helped himself to some honeydew melon, cantaloupe, watermelon, and pineapple chunks—there were still full bowls of those—the kitchen staff and David were rushing to try to keep things filled. Madame proceeded as she had on the earlier evening…left with one bag. Came back, pulled out a new bag—took all the melons; left with that, came back, and so forth. Again, she made four trips. Judy said, “I think I’ll make a little photo essay of her activities and then turn it over to management.” “Be careful,” Charles said, “we do not know why she is doing this—could be some sort of mental instability—who knows what else she might do—she is skinny as a rail—she can’t be eating all that food herself.” Charles left to play bridge and Judy went on her way to the morning tour she had set for herself.

**Happy Hour on the Patio**

“Come on in, folks,” David said, “tonight we have a special program. Just as we try to tailor our menu to regional tastes, so too we try to create an entertainment program that responds to different groups staying in the hotel. Right now in the hotel we have two conventions: the bridge players at the ABC tournament and participants of the Steiff Society meetings—many of them are fanciers of stuffed animals and some brought stuffed animals, as well. Tonight we honor the latter group with a ‘Schnitzelbank Party’—come and join in this traditional German-American fun! We are featuring our signature dish, Alma’s Curly Dogs™—a spectacular variant on a chili dog—of course, in the interests of presenting regional fare, we use a Texan chili recipe here.”
“Oh, Charles,” Judy said, “think I’ll phone our Earl Family Brain Trust and others who came with us; they would love this idea!” “Sure, why not,” Charles replied, “in fact I think it’s a fine idea—perhaps
they can help us figure out what Madame Defarge is up to—where does all that food go?” With that, Judy whipped out her smartphone and called Theodore E. Bear and explained the idea to him; Theodore assured her that he and the group that came to Dallas would be there immediately.

**Earl Family Brain Trust**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theodore E. Bear: 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.</th>
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<th>Binker Bear: Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <em>When We Were Very Young</em>] “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 even when he is dummy. Binker is originally from Paris, France, and was born at Galeries Lafayette. He is also a part-time mystery story writer and trivia player.</th>
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Tine E. Bear: 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.

Soon, Theodore, Binker, and Tine appeared on the scene. “I’ve phoned Ludwig, Guillaume, Im, and Eeyore, to join us, they’ll be along soon,” said Theodore.

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. “Freude !!” is a favorite greeting of his.
**Guillaume R. Squirrel**: A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.

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**Im PossumBle**: A possum 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.
Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou: Like Binker, Eeyore is also named after a character from A. A. Milne’s classic children’s work and like Binker is originally from Paris’ Galeries Lafayette. Eeyore worries about his tail, of course, but in recent years has learned to enjoy greatly the fact that real-world versions of himself, an endangered species, are once again rising in number. He is a kind and thoughtful, though stubborn, creature. His plodding ways and stubborn persistence, along with his gray coat, make him an ideal undercover agent in complex, but physically bounded, situations that appear drab in color. He has a background in problems associated with the hauling of materials. Eeyore persists until he gets to the bottom of things.

The happy group sat around a fire pit near the nook with a fountain. Soon, they were joined by a small turtle who climbed out of the water. “What’s your name, kiddo,” asked Guillaume, “my legal name is Achilles, you know from Achilles and the Tortoise, but my friends call me Speedy,” the turtle replied. “What are you doing here, Speedy?” Judy asked. “Well,” Speedy said, “it’s a long story…you see about 4 months ago I went to a meeting of the Montgolfier Society in Phoenix along with a bunch of colleagues. I had a bit of trouble keeping up with them and when their rides came, I got left behind. So, I started to walk; I just now got here…it’s nice to see friendly faces…maybe I saw some of you in Phoenix? Anyway, if you give me a head start, I’m fine; otherwise, I have trouble keeping up with the crowd.” Speedy joined the group and they offered the tired turtle a nice chair along with some water and snacks.
Theodore had motioned to David and asked him to bring drinks for the entire group. “And, let’s throw in three bottles of Cremant d’Alsace for the group,” the generous bear stated, “I want my friends to have some bubbles, too!” Shortly, another group entered the patio. They were the German contingent attending the Steiff Society meetings in the hotel. “Oh, David,” Theodore called out, “please bring an extra bottle and ask that group to join us in celebration, as well.” “Judy, I think that bear is getting to be a bit too gregarious, not to mention loose with our hotel tab, don’t you?” Charles asked his wife. “Well, he is a bit over the top, but we are having a good time, too—I think….Uh Oh….here comes that food thief and I guess her partner or husband. Let’s at least make sure THEY don’t join us….maybe a large and diverse crowd is a good thing here,” Judy told her husband as Theresa and Ernest ‘Defarge’ entered the Alma Mater rooftop patio.
Speedy, the turtle, relaxes in Dallas after a 4-month long trek from Phoenix.

Soon the bears, the turtle, and the others were having a fine time singing along with Schnitzelbank and eating German food, drinking German beer and Alsatian ‘bubbly’. In the meantime, Theresa took food from the various food stations in quantities way too large to feed her slender frame. Only the bags under her table and near her feet enlarged. While the others sang and had fun, Judy watched as Theresa’s food stash grew and grew.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friends Attending the Steiff Society Meetings</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="T. B. (pronounced, Tay Bay)" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>T. B. (pronounced, Tay Bay), born in U.S. 1944 but lived in a German-speaking family.</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Baby Watson, in the plaid. From the U.S. in the 1980s; part of the same German-speaking family." /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Watson, in the plaid. From the U.S. in the 1980s; part of the same German-speaking family.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘I wonder how Theresa will get all of that out of here, Judy thought to herself. In between food-grabs, Theresa pulled out her knitting; it appeared to Judy that she was knitting a long, thin rectangle. After a bit, she started fiddling with it as if she were completing something. Maybe a scarf, Judy thought; it looked like a nice piece of work; nice even rows, tasteful coloration.

Soon there was a break in the Schnitzelbank merriment. Judy took the opportunity of quiet times to fill in the Earl Family Brain Trust on the activities of Theresa and asked for their help in figuring out where all the food could be going. Tine, who himself ate very little, suspected that perhaps there were unregistered guests in her room whom she was feeding. Theodore speculated that if that were the case, there would be a great deal of extra garbage and that the hotel staff would soon catch on—apparently they had not yet done so, and so he thought that perhaps she was doing something else with the food. Some of the others wondered if she might have an eating disorder of some sort.

As they sat there pondering the issue, Theresa jumped up and ran to the staging area of the patio where the Schnitzelbank props were. “Listen to me you fools…never mind this slop…here, is a real show!” With that she ripped off her shirt and bra and took her knit piece, pulled it down over her head to cover her breasts and started singing Edith Piaf songs while gyrating to the music…”now, that’s the Möbius Strip!”
The stunned guests gasped. Hotel staff rushed the area and contained her. As staff worked to remove her from the patio, she screamed, “I must have my luggage…bring it downstairs to the sidewalk, I’ll get a cab…and be careful with it; it contains precious materials and if you open it and anything is missing you will be guilty of stealing.” “Eureka,” Judy exclaimed to the group, “now we know how she planned to get all that food out of here; with a convenient distraction that would even get hotel staff themselves to do her dirty work…nasty, but smart. I wonder what else happens with her knit works of art…”

To settle the crowd down a bit, Tine, who is a Steiff bear, suggested that Ludwig, of Germanic musical heritage, lead the Schnitzelbank singing as David pointed to elements of the poster, to really focus the crowd on this aspect of the planned evening fun. The rest of the evening proceeded in good fun and the Earl Family contingent headed off to bed at an early hour in preparation for the bridge events the next day.
At the Bridge Table  
“Charles,” Judy calmly stated, “I have the bears ready to go; their smartphones are fully charged and the network functions. They are set to see what they can find out about Theresa and the food; while you and I are playing bridge, they will look around. Theodore suggested having Mausie ride in Theresa’s handbag—she’s used to such activity apparently. However, someone will need to watch Baby Watson, so Zotti and T.B. are doing that when needed. Speedy will also assist our group; I gather he has spent some time in the fountain and is happy to go back there where he will not look out of place or arouse suspicion. Im will hang around outside on the rooftop patio, Eeyore and Guillaume, because of their natural gray coloration, are suited for darker or shadowy areas. Ludwig will continue as master of entertainment at Alma Mater. Tine and Binker will play bridge. And, as usual, Theodore will direct the activities when we are busy elsewhere.”

“Good,” said Charles, “now, let’s go play bridge!” The couple left their room early enough to avoid the usual crush of bridge players in the elevators. Hotel elevator networks were not designed for activity of this sort where all the occupants want to take an elevator within a few minutes of each other. The more experienced tournament players studied usage patterns and went during gaps.
“Judy,” Charles warned, “there are a number of nice players in our section today; there are also a few you might not find as nice. Please try to remember not to let them upset you…remember my approach…if they are nasty, probably that is more distressing to their partner than to you. Hence, seize the opportunity to take a top score from them. It’s not about socializing; being pleasant is important, yes, but keep focused on the game…keep that in mind and maybe that will help you.” Charles was very protective of his wife’s sensitive and caring nature toward others. It was a fine quality in many ways, but it did not always work well at the tournament duplicate bridge table.

The first few rounds of the afternoon game were fairly straightforward. The opponents were reasonable, and the scores the Earls earned were reasonable. Charles was a much better player than his wife but nonetheless was delighted when she would agree to play with him; he hoped for a nice time at the table. The next round, a couple of men came to the table and brought an extra chair with them. “Our kibitzer is in the ladies room,” one man announced to Charles, “I presume it won’t be a problem to you if we start before she returns?” “No problem,” Charles said, “thanks for asking.” They played the first board and had begun bidding on the second board when the kibitzer returned and sat down to kibitz one of the opponents—it was Theresa. “Oh, boy,” Charles thought to himself…”I hope she doesn’t upset Judy.” Once the bidding was over, and prior to the opening lead, Theresa looked at the dummy and yawned. Then, she reached into her purse and pulled out her knitting…clackety-clack, clackety-clack. Charles thought that at least on the train when Judy was singing he could close the door so as not to be distracted; here, however, there was no such possibility. Not only that, as he looked at what she was knitting, it looked like
another long skinny rectangle but this time with coloration to illustrate that six colors suffice to color any map on a Möbius Strip—did she know that?...the mathematician part of him wondered about her.

Further, he also thought about her antics of the previous evening and her ongoing food theft issues. Finally, it was Charles, not Judy, who took action: “Madam, you are barred from kibitzing; please leave the table immediately.” “What?” she said, “what did I do?” “The knitting is distracting in a number of ways,” Charles told her. “I’ll put it away,” she said. “Too late,” Charles stated a bit abruptly. “F*** U !!” she shrieked. “Director!” Charles announced clearly and immediately.

The Director came quickly to the table. After the situation was explained to him, he told the kibitzer that in the first place any bridge player has the right to bar one kibitzer per session and does not even need to give a reason. Charles had been completely within his rights and in fact had gone above and beyond what was required in explaining his rationale. She was also told that her behavior was one for which the ABC had zero tolerance; thus, she was required not only to leave this table but also would not be allowed to kibitz at any other table for the duration of this event. Theresa stomped off in the direction of the elevators. Charles hoped that Mausie wasn’t getting banged around too much. Judy wondered if this distraction too, like the Möbius Strip of the previous evening, were part of some premeditated devious plan.

The Earls finished the round against Ernest and his partner. The rest of the afternoon session was pleasant. Charles and Judy saw no further distressing events, enjoyed the game, and looked forward to a pleasant dinner at the Alma Mater Rooftop Patio.
At the Patio, Again.
As the Earls entered the patio, Speedy came rushing (for him) up to them…”there’s a man floating in the fountain pool…I can’t figure it out…I tried to talk to him and he didn’t respond. I dove under him…there’s no action there. The water turned color…honest, I used the men’s room…when I came back…well, he just appeared there while you were playing bridge. I don’t know him.” “Take it easy, Speedy” Charles said calmly to the anxious turtle. “Have I failed in my job?” Speedy asked. “Here, you come sit with me, Speedy,” Judy said, “Charles will go check it out.”

Charles and David checked out the under-utilized fountain nook. Sure enough, the man was dead. It appeared his throat had been punctured and slit in some strange pattern. “Call the police immediately, David,” Charles commanded. Soon officers and paramedics arrived, cleaned up the area, took the man away, and cordoned off the area with crime scene tape.

“Charles,” Judy asked, “did you know who he was? You know tons of bridge players from all your years in high-level bridge administration.” “No, Judy, I never saw him before in my life. I thought perhaps he was with the other conference, so I phoned Baby Watson (you know he has some background in investigative matters) and Zotti and T.B. They had never seen him either. So, we don’t know which group he goes with, if either. Perhaps we will find out later.”

Reports of the Investigative Teams
After the stunning situation was removed from the rooftop patio, Charles, Judy, and their team sat down at a large table to discuss
the events of the day and to try to enjoy a few hours of rest, good food, and companionship before returning to the bridge table during the evening session. To keep things organized, they decided, as they had in similar previous situations to have formal reports, regarding the activities of Madame Defarge, from each of the special agents or teams of special agents.

Report of Eeyore’s Team (Eeyore and Guillaume), presented by Eeyore

Guillaume and I went to the hotel Event Planner and told her what we had all observed regarding food theft. She said that the hotel had had occasional experiences of this sort with other groups. Since the hotel didn’t really understand why folks do this, they generally just check to see if there are unregistered guests staying in the room with the thief. Guillaume and I volunteered to masquerade as food service people delivering meals to guests in rooms. Naturally, if we made a mistake in knocking on a room door where food hadn’t been ordered, we would apologize…but, we’d get a look in that room. While she said that of course she could not really authorize such activity, she did let slip in our conversation where the freight elevator was. We knew that we could get hotel uniforms from laundry bins being trucked up and down there, so we went and found a couple of suitable sizes, washed and dried them, and put them on. We also commandeered a food delivery wagon
and some empty plates with covers on them that hotel guests had left in the hallway. We put fresh flowers from the rooftop garden in a glass, and had really a nice looking room service array...a fake, without food, but who knew.

Anyway, when you went down to play bridge, we went to her room with the 'meal.' No one was there. We listened at the door for a while and heard nothing. The hallway seemed quite empty, so I boosted Guillaume up to look through the transom; he is really a good jumper...almost as if he has spring in his feet...very helpful! He saw nothing. The room seemed quite bare. No extra people, no extra luggage. In fact, no extra food or extra trash. Clearly she was not harboring unregistered guests nor was she storing the food in her room.

Later, we tried again, and this time she answered and said that she did not order anything from room service. We apologized, but only after I had pushed the cart all the way into the room over next to the windows. I started to raise the windows for her...told her that some of them tend to stick and that I was really quite strong. I know the windows don't go up very far, but they do go up far enough to slide food through and out onto the fire escape or ledge. I looked. There was no food out there either. Then I dropped something on the floor and used that as an excuse to go in the bathroom and get a wet towel to clean up what I had done, of course apologizing about how clumsy I am. I saw nothing in the bathroom either. I noted that her Mobius Strip scarf was lying on a table and was able to feign more clumsiness that enabled me to get a snapshot of it. Here it is; quite a beautiful and intricate piece of handiwork. You see where it's tied together: knit a rectangle, give it a half-twist, and then tie the ends together. Very clever—untie it (see the bows in the photo) and it becomes a two-sided scarf. If we had not known so already, it
became quite evident that we were dealing with a very smart, and crafty, woman.

So, we have concluded that whatever she is doing with the food, she is not using her room as the center of activity. That’s about it from us.

*Report of Ludwig*

After that outrageous ‘Möbius Strip’ performance of hers, things settled down on the entertainment end at Alma Mater, both inside and on the patio. I enjoyed time singing my favorite “Freude” as well
as other German songs, such as Heidenröslein, Die Forelle, and other Lieder, that I had learned from my family over the years. I did notice that there was more activity on the patio during the afternoon session than I might have expected. But, I really didn’t see anything terribly unusual about it other than its mere presence. I couldn’t hear conversations though. Perhaps Im will be able to enlighten us there. He really is very good at hanging from tree limbs and looking absolutely sound asleep when he is not…I know, I know, that’s where the phrase ‘playing possum’ comes from…it’s obviously natural to him!

Report of Im

Yes, I agree with Ludwig. There was unusually heavy traffic on the patio during the time when folks should have been playing bridge. Now, I am not a native speaker of German, but some of these folks were, I believe, speaking German, so I assume they were here with the Steiff Society and were not bridge players. I hung from a tree limb over one group of men who milled around in the fountain nook and nearby. They were all bridge players from the New York City area. I can’t give you a number because one would stay for a while and then leave. Perhaps they were sitting out a match on a six man
team. I don't know. It is possible that the man who was murdered was among them at some point. I did not get a clear look at his face in the pool around the fountain, but from what Speedy tells me, it is entirely possible. Anyway, that might offer a lead to his identity...check out if he is a bridge player from the New York City Area...not a small task I'm sure.

In terms of conversation, these men talked some about bridge hands, but not as much as some bridge players do. So, I assumed they might not be top flight players. In addition, they seemed to engage in some gossip about local players in New York, their marital problems, professional occupations, and so forth. It was the kind of conversation that would have seemed of no interest to anyone outside their local area, although they were all quite interested in all aspects of the discussion. At one point, the group dwindled down to two in size and the conversation in the nook became too quiet for me to hear. At that point, I needed to use the men's room. When I went in there, I saw Speedy just leaving to go back to the pool around the fountain. When I returned, of course, there was chaos; the man in the pool had been found. No one was sitting at the table where I last saw two men.

Report of Tine's Team (Tine and Binker), presented by Tine
Our afternoon was also quite uneventful. We did, however, play a round against the two men, and Theresa was kibitzing (so we
played them before Charles and Judy did). You had thought earlier that Ernest was Mr. Defarge. In fact, that appears not to be the case. Theresa is not married. She is engaged to Ernest and was kibitzing him. Theresa is apparently a widow. On the first hand we played, her behavior as a kibitzer was fine. On the second hand, I played it and Binker was the dummy. It was a tough hand. She looked at the dummy and pulled out her knitting. Ernest’s partner was on opening lead and quickly led a heart.

North, Binker
   ♠  8 7 5
   ♥  4 3
   ♦  A Q T 9
   ♣  K T 9 3

East, Ernest/Theresa
   ♠  J T 3 2
   ♥  A K T 9 8
   ♦  5 3 2
   ♣  2

South, Tine
   ♠  A 9 4
   ♥  Q 5
   ♦  K J 8 7
   ♣  A Q 5 4

West, Opening Leader
   ♠  K Q 6
   ♥  J 7 6 2
   ♦  6 4
   ♣  J 8 7 6
The bidding was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>West</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3NT</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1NT P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

West has a difficult problem on opening lead. Both heart and club leads are from four to a jack, not necessarily appetizing. The club spots are a little better than the heart spots, but the opponents probably don’t have a major suit fit. The King of Spades lead might find partner’s suit. Yet West led a heart instantly, so I had no chance.

A club lead gives me 9 tricks at once (4 clubs, 4 diamonds, and a spade). With a spade lead, I must find 4 club tricks by myself. But when I cash 4 diamonds, I will discover East has 3. I would deduce that East had at least 5 hearts (without a H lead) and probably at least 2 spades (West didn’t bid). So, East should have no more than 3 clubs, so cashing the A and Q of clubs will reveal the true club situation.

*Report of Speedy*

I am new to all of this. I think all I did was find the body. I was badly shaken up by that. In fact, I still am; I did report briefly at the time and hope that report will be enough. Judy has been very kind. She
knew that Gordo is our handler at the Montgolfier Society and she phoned him to come rescue me. I gather that he is here now, so if you don’t mind, I am going to leave and go home with him. I hope to see all of you, my dear new friends some other time, but it has been a harrowing four months since Phoenix. Best wishes to you all.
Report of Mausie’s Team (Mausie, Baby Watson, Zotti, and T. B.), presented by Mausie

I rode around all the time in Theresa’s purse. The rest of the team was available, when asked, to say who was (or was not) a member of the Steiff Society (we get directories when we register). So, they were able to say that the group of men being talked about were not Steiff folks.

As for riding around in this woman’s purse…what a mess! All sorts of yarn and knitting needles. There were little sheets of paper…looked like graph paper with sequences of dots and blanks. Might have been some sort of knitting instructions. It was easy for me to get lost in the balls and skeins of yarn. The knitting needles were of differing weights and balance. I was able to snap my claws against them and hear that they gave out different musical notes depending on weight…much as one might do with glasses of water. She seemed preoccupied much of the time so I was able to look around quite a bit and sometimes even peek out of the top of her bag.

After Charles had us thrown out of the tournament, we did go back to the hotel room. I saw Eeyore and Guillaume when they came, although I presume they did not see me. As they observed, I saw no extra guests and no stash of stored food. Then, we went up to the rooftop patio. We must have arrived just as Im was on his way to the men’s room. Theresa saw the two men and eavesdropped on them for an instant or two. During that time, I heard one of them say the words ‘Ernest’ and ‘telling’…so, I don’t know whether the reference was ‘telling something to Ernest’ or ‘telling something in earnest’ ….the two words sound the same even though they are spelled differently. I found an opportunity and left the bag to see if I
could scamper around in back of the bar to talk to David. When I got to where I could see again, there was a body in the pool and a lot of chaotic activity before the police arrived.

Report of Theodore
I see all these reports as they come in and have a bit of a sneak preview of them in advance of Charles and Judy. So, my thinking was a bit like Mausie’s…that perhaps David should be talked to. I went up to the rooftop garden and talked to him while the group was coming up to get seated at dinner. He did verify that Theresa had been there shortly before the man had been killed. He did not see the man being killed because he was busy at the bar. My take on this is that Theresa had the opportunity to kill the man and the means to do so. She could have slit his throat with one of her sharp knitting needles. Police analysis will tell that, no doubt. But, the real puzzler is why? What motive would she have had? Who was this man that no one seemed to know? Personally, I think she did it, but we have nothing to hang a plausible theory on if we have no motive. Charles, help!

Charles’s Analysis
Once again, you have all done a terrific job. Congratulations! Let me tell you of my findings and of my analysis of them when coupled
with yours.

More Evidence
This morning my friends Kent and Joe were ready to start our early morning walking group again. We walked about four miles around downtown Dallas. It was a fine walk. While we were out, I recounted our story of this woman we thought looked as if she were from New York and how she had been stealing food. Kent knew immediately who we meant and verified all of our assumptions. He added more information, as well. Her name is indeed Theresa, although of course Defarge is our last name for her. He knew about the food stealing. He’d seen her dump berries in cups, soda pop in her bag; he’d seen her clean out drawers and the refrigerator and then complain to staff about the stocking of the refrigerator. He’d seen piles of bagels go in her purse, along with butter, cream cheese, and so forth. Just as he was finishing saying what he had seen, we noticed that the trash barrels on the sidewalk near the hotel seemed to have unusual amounts of food in them; a group of street people hovered around. Perhaps we had become conditioned, from thinking about this situation, to looking for food? He also had a few extra tidbits for us. He said that she is a fine bridge player, and in addition to tournaments also plays in various clubs in the broader New York metro area...he has played in clubs when she was playing there, always with a man. He thought that she had some sort of advanced academic degree. He said that local people are wary of her because the local story goes that she and her boyfriend might have murdered her husband. Then she apparently turned in her boyfriend for that murder and is engaged again. Kent said there is no proof of this, and it may all be idle gossip, but that some of it can no doubt be checked.

So, I did a bit of checking, as much as I could using my smartphone
between rounds. I phoned my colleague, Neal, in a major research university’s mathematics department in New York. I described this woman to him, but gave him no name. She is easy to describe and people seem to react with certainty as to whether they know her. Anyway, Neal said “oh, yes, that sounds like Theresa.” Neal has been there, as department chair, for over 35 years. Theresa came back to graduate school as a non-traditional student and got a Ph.D. in Mathematics, in Coding Theory. Subsequently, she took on dangerous missions in developing nations with various clandestine agencies.

She retired a few years ago, returned to New York, and apparently attends ‘Math Tea’ at Neal’s place—it’s a grand old tradition in a number of universities—faculty go there and try to impress others with how much they know, and graduate students do likewise. Since her retirement, Theresa spent time lording her bridge expertise over the other mathematicians at Math Tea who liked to play bridge. A small group of them could sometimes be seen off in a corner with a few decks of cards with Theresa berating her colleagues on their shoddy play of the hand.

Theory
Theodore, I agree with you that Theresa must have done it. You are correct that she had both means and opportunity. With the new evidence above, I think we can now construct a logical motive. See what you all think. There are a number of issues here; some are more important than others, but I think we have sufficient evidence to explain them all.

Theresa’s distracting behavior was, I think, something of a red herring. She was smart; she knew she was smart, and she liked to show off and also to shock people in various ways. We’ve probably
all seen smart aleck teenage boys who do that; a bit more surprising in a woman who looks like Theresa, but it’s the inner self and not the outer, superficial trappings that matter. So, the intolerance of the Schnitzelbank may have come about from her experiences in the developing world; she is old enough that she may focus only on nasty associations with Germans. Too bad, and her behavior was ridiculous, but not really harmful. And, certainly it was a clever way to get food out of the hotel rooftop.

Judy wondered if her behavior at the bridge table the next day was planned. Perhaps. I know I had wondered if she were aware of what she was doing in terms of coloring sufficiency on a Möbius Strip. Perhaps it was that nagging curiosity that caused me, once I heard from Kent that Theresa had a higher degree, to assume that it was probably in mathematics and to use my precious phone time to choose to call Neal, a topologist (whose hobby is making tops!). Following my conversation with Neal, I became confident that she knew exactly what she was doing. But, so what…why flaunt it as a kibitzer at the bridge table? Brilliant people often do show off, but to whom was she showing off? Most bridge players have probably not heard of a Möbius Strip let alone of coloring problems in the plane or on other surfaces.

4 Color Theorem: Coloring the Plane

So, I thought, perhaps her knitting does have to do with bridge. Here information from the Tine/Binker partnership, coupled with an observation from Mausie, were important. Remember that Theresa
was an expert in coding theory. The clackety-clack of her needles upset me…perhaps it was the pattern of them that upset me. Was there a code to the dots and spaces in the knitting pattern and the associated noise from knitting needles that might translate into bridge information? Remember that she only pulled the knitting out when Ernest was defending and not on lead. I think that she was tapping out a code to tell the leader either what to lead, or what not to lead. Evidence from Tine’s report suggests that--the killing heart lead was whipped out at his table following her knitting. At our table, she tried the same thing, but I had her thrown out before she could transmit the information…hence her frustration with me. I have some understanding of coding theory myself, and perhaps I can later get a look in her bag to see if there is tangible support for this idea on the sheets of dots and spaces that Mausie saw. Again, it is an absurd waste of talent, but harmless in the broad spectrum of things.

Then, we have the unsolved mystery of what was she doing with the food. We now know that she spent time in developing nations doing very difficult and stressful work. I have known others who have, as well. Sometimes, they become hostile toward the excesses they see when back at home. Generally, though, they just comment on it, or devote their lives to folks in the developed world who are having a very hard time…as tireless workers devoted to various altruistic causes. They are wonderful folks with motivation that they transform from the hostile to the helpful.

I think that this motivation went over the top with Theresa. Think of it perhaps as the ‘Robin Hood’ syndrome. She was stealing food from the rich and giving it to the poor…in this case to street people or others…remember, when tossed out of the Patio party she had her bags sent to the street rather than to her room. Maybe she just
put some of it in trash barrels on the streets, knowing it would be found by those who need it for survival and not as additional pleasure. Recall that on the morning walk we had noticed possibly unusual amounts of food, and activity from street people, in association with the trash barrels on the sidewalks near the hotel. Probably Ernest had figured some of this out...after all, how could he miss it when she took food off his plate...but perhaps he didn’t really care. He might have found it a bit bizarre, but harmless and well-meaning. He loved her for the caring person she was; caring about the world’s most needy is not a negative trait and it must have been that trait that Ernest focused upon.

What Ernest probably did not know, however, was her history with her previous boyfriend. I suspect that the Robin Hood mentality with food got transformed into a much deeper, and sick, behavior pattern. She married a wealthy man, used up much of his wealth on her various ‘altruistic’ ventures, and then got rid of him when she thought he was no longer of use. I would add in passing that Ernest is quite a wealthy man.

Now, note that my friend Kent knew Theresa from club-level bridge in New York. I am guessing that he will also have known the murdered man once the identity is revealed. Perhaps the murdered man came to this tournament and saw Theresa hanging around with Ernest. He probably also knew Ernest. Mausie noted that someone might be mentioning Ernest’s name shortly before the murder...important information. Theresa overheard this and assumed, perhaps correctly, that this man was going to tell Ernest about her past, to warn Ernest away from marrying her, and so she punctured and split his throat with her knitting needle and dumped him over into the pool...all perhaps in a hugging, touchy-feely scene
that would not have been noticed in this remote nook of the patio. Keeping her past quiet would have been a strong motive, I believe; she wanted the Ernest goose to lay plenty of golden eggs for her to pass on to the poor.

So, to my way of thinking we now have all of means, opportunity, and motive. I would not be inclined to worry about her ‘altruistic’ nature: she is a murderer plain and simple, with no rationalization available. Shall I take it to the police and encourage them to search around for a bloody knitting needle? Did Madame Defarge once again make the heads roll as she sat around knitting her intricate patterns of life?

The photo of the Curly Dog™ was modified by the author from an original by Alma Lach. The photo of Speedy’s handler is Gordo the Magician, Speedy’s creator. Custom bridge hand and analysis created by William C. Arlinghaus. The author acknowledges the fine photos contributed by Christa Schwing Broderick (Vassar College roommate of Judy’s alter ego) of her stuffed animals that in this story were attending a fictional Steiff Society meeting. In addition, she is the yarn sculptress that knitted the Möbius Strip. Christa is shown in the photo below modeling the strip as a scarf, while Baby Watson looks on.
Chapter 8: Providence Bridge Murder

Dedicated to the memory of Jeff Johnston

“They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.”

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*
Arrival in Providence—Monday morning

“Charles,” Judy Earl said to her bridge-playing, mathematician husband, “that was a tiring trip; how about if I sit over here in the lobby while you check us into the hotel?” “Sure, fine, Judy.” Charles still enjoyed doing small, thoughtful things to please his wife of many years. The Earls had arrived in Providence to play in a national bridge tournament held by the American Bridge Congress (ABC).

Judy walked over to an area with comfortable black leather sofas and arm chairs. Two well-dressed women were sitting there, also waiting for something or someone. One of them had a beautiful cat on her lap. Both women admired the cat, as they stroked its silky long fur in various directions. Soon, the cat looked up at them and began rearranging its messed-up coat, using its tongue, according to its own specifications. Then, it jumped off the lap of the one woman and went behind the registration desk. Judy wondered if it were a hotel cat or if it were the pet of one of the women. If the latter, then she wondered what other pets she might see in the hotel. If the former, she wondered what sorts of pests might cause the hotel to keep a cat.

“Judy Earl…long time no see…you are still a good-looking broad!” shouted a man from across the lobby who was just entering the hotel, apparently for the first time. Judy recognized Mickey, an acquaintance from long ago when Charles, Judy, Mickey, and Mickey’s first wife, were all graduate students. “Hi, Mickey” Judy said in an even tone. “Well, come on, Judy, how about a hug…you are OK…I don’t know about the guy you married, though…let me know when he bores you—I could really thrill you—just say the word.” “Really, Mickey, cut it out…you will never be half the man that Charles is,” Judy jabbed back at their arrogant academic acquaintance, as she continued… “Charles wrote his dissertation and completed his degree…unlike others I can think of!” “Touché, Judy” Mickey commented
and winked at her “but unlike you, I did mean what I said…let me know when you are ready for ME.”

Soon the cat wandered out from behind the desk “hmmm,” Judy thought, “guess Mickey is the sort of pest the cat is supposed to get rid of…Ha!” The cat wandered over and looked at Mickey, then crossed the lobby and hopped up into Judy’s lap. Judy was happy to pet the gorgeous animal that had now apparently rearranged its coat to its liking. “That cat had better not barf on me” Mickey shouted across the lobby at Judy, “I have my expensive three-piece suit on and I won’t have it sullied by that lower animal.”

At that, the cat began licking its coat, rearranged it once again, hopped off of Judy’s lap, trotted across the lobby and vaulted into Mickey’s lap. As Mickey began pushing at it, the cat dug its claws into Mickey’s thighs causing Mickey to bounce up and down in anguish. Soon, the cat regurgitated one hair ball after another on Mickey’s suit. Mickey shrieked, grabbed the cat around the belly and threw the cat across the lobby against a concrete pillar going from the lobby floor to ceiling. As the cat flew through the lobby, the folks checking in turned around in response to cat-shrieks in time to see the cat hit the pillar and hear the agonizing crunch as the cat’s neck broke. The crowd gathered around the dead cat, lying on the floor of the lobby. “Ha, that’ll teach that cat…Mickey is a man of his word…I warned him that he had better not barf on my suit…once he stiffens up a bit, atrophies as it were, you all can say it was a ‘cat-astrope’—man, am I clever!” The arrogant man strutted off to the hotel elevator bank and stairway where he vanished as the stunned crowd looked on.

In the Hotel Room—Monday noon
“Judy, come on, let’s go up to our room” Charles said as he guided his shocked wife to the elevator, “let me help you.” Soon the couple entered their room on a high floor. “Look at the view, Judy—it’s the
Rhode Island State House...beautiful, isn’t it...imagine all the links to history that this physically tiny state has.” “Charles, do you think Rhode Island is named for the classical island of Rhodes? You know, the Colossus of Rhodes, and all that...colossal Rhode Island!” queried Charles’s inquisitive wife. “I don’t know Judy, you tell me; here are some links I found while we were on the train—just trying to anticipate some of what I thought you might think about” Charles noted as he saw his wife beginning to relax following the outrage in the lobby:

Rhode Island, Origin of Name
Rhode Island State House

With this motivation in hand, Judy quickly set up the laptop and other electronic equipment she had brought. Then she settled in to read online about her new surroundings as Charles unpacked the suitcases and made all other arrangements.

“OK, Judy, I’m done,” Charles announced, “I think I’ll go check out the rest of the hotel and see what it’s like while you stay here. OK? Then I’ll meet you at the first session of the tournament this afternoon.” Judy nodded her head in agreement. Charles always liked to study how the tournament setup was progressing. He enjoyed seeing the diligent ABC workers setting up the rooms with tables, changing light bulbs in the ceilings and perhaps setting up security systems, and the many other tasks often unappreciated by those who come once all is done.
Soon, Charles headed back to the Lobby. He found that the local police were there. He volunteered to them to help find Mickey—he hoped that his personal knowledge of Mickey might expedite their efforts. Charles related to them that Judy had overheard Mickey’s comments about staying for the entire tournament and shared with them that it was his sense that that would be precisely what Mickey would do. Charles described Mickey’s appearance and described the three-piece suit he was last seen wearing. He also told them that Mickey was now an attorney and that the Mickey he had known many years ago was a master actor, of sorts…not trained as such, just a natural talent. Mickey had been working on some combination of philosophy and theoretical linguistics in his graduate study. He could mimic voices, noises, and speak a variety of languages with a native accent, all the while discussing implications of cross-cultural variation in subtlety of meaning of various words. When combined, his various capabilities could render him difficult to recognize even though he was not wearing a mask or other items of physical disguise—he knew how to select what people would remember when describing him…clothing, accent, oddity, and so forth. In this case, it was the three-piece suit. The police were appreciative of the offer to help. They assured him and the hotel staff that animal abuse of this sort would not be tolerated. Charles agreed, and made yet another offer—that once Mickey was found, Charles would ‘persuade’ him to make an offer of restitution of some sort (in addition to
legal punishments that might come his way)—perhaps a gift of $10,000 to the local shelter for cats or some such. The hotel staff was very supportive of this idea. Then, Charles joined Judy in the convention center for their first session of bridge.

At the Bridge Table—the First Session—Monday afternoon
“Judy, we have a few minutes before the start of the session…enough time to grab some food at the Café on the way to the game…it’s another in the Alma Mater chain, you know,” Charles said. Charles’s reference was to a chain of restaurants that the Earls had established in various locations nationwide. The name was a double-entendre of sorts. Judy’s mother had been named ‘Alma’ and was a great chef. The ‘alma mater’ reference was linked to the profession of the Earls: Charles was a professor of mathematics and Judy was a professor of geography, both in major universities. In the last few years of Alma’s life, she had much enjoyed knowing about this chain her daughter and son-in-law had named in her honor. And of course the Earls enjoyed the extra hobby of running them: Judy as CEO of the chain who oversaw the business records and Charles as President who implemented site selection, building, acquisition, and all aspects of the actual running of the businesses. “Sounds good to me,” Judy said, “let’s go.”

Alma Mater Café was located in the convention center just beyond the convenient second floor link from the hotel to the convention center. The hotel was linked to a mall in another direction. The covered second floor links were much-appreciated barriers protecting them from the frosty Rhode Island late autumn weather. After a quick bite to eat, they were soon seated north-south at a bridge table; Charles had needed a double north-south because a recent wound, now well on the way to healing, had made it uncomfortable for him to get up and down off chairs frequently. East-west opponents came by and the couple settled in to play. After four rounds, they had a couple of tops and a zero and an average. Two
pleasant men came to the table in round 5. Charles, sitting north, opened 1D. East bid 1H. Judy passed. West bid 2H. Charles passed. East bid 1H. Charles asked him if he would care to make his bid sufficient. East noted that he found the comment insulting but said he would prefer to bid 1NT anyway. At that, Charles called for a Director. A Director came over, straightened things out and the pair played a 4H contract down 5. The next hand East opened the bidding with “1 Oyster.” Charles looked at Judy. Again, Charles politely informed the man that the bid was not appropriate and called for a Director. This time, ABC Chief Director Eric, a long-time friend of both of the Earls, came over. “And what seems to be the problem here?” Eric queried. Charles described the situation. “Sir,” Eric said a bit sardonically as he tipped his Director’s hat at him, “we try to leave dinner topics in the restaurant; I am a great admirer of Rhode Island seafood. Did you perhaps enjoy some seafood for dinner along with a few glasses of wine?” “No,” snapped the man. Then, East began shaking uncontrollably and started banging his head against the table. Then he fell off the chair onto the floor and lay there in a pike position. “Let’s call the paramedics…Judy, use your smartphone,” Eric ordered. The thoughtful Director sat down at the Earl table. Soon, the ambulance and paramedics arrived; the man was given an injection, and then taken off on a stretcher. The pair withdrew from the event, as did Charles and Judy. Charles kept the pair count even that way and it also gave him an opportunity to take his shaken wife away from the scene—the dead cat and the sick man were a bit much for his hypersensitive wife.

The Quest for Mickey—later Monday afternoon
“Judy,” Charles suggested, “I think you need a rest. I will activate our team of agents to assist me in finding Mickey—take them all down to the Café for a few drinks while we discuss background, context, and strategy.” Judy nodded agreement as she lay down on the bed and turned on the TV. The ‘agents’ to whom Charles referred were their family ‘Brain Trust’ team who often travelled with
the Earls.

**Earl Family Brain Trust**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theodore E. Bear:</strong> 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.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Binker Bear:</strong> Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <em>When We Were Very Young</em>] “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 even when he is dummy. Binker is originally from Paris, France, and was born at Galeries Lafayette. He is also a part-time mystery story writer and trivia player.</td>
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Tine E. Bear: 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.

“Ahhh,” said Theodore E. Bear (aka ‘Ted’), “there is David...he’s the head trainer of waiters for the Alma Mater chain...let’s get him over here and get a round of Mead for all...I’m partial to honey in all forms, but particularly to Mead!” David soon brought a round of Mead. Charles passed on it, so Ted had his own drink and Charles’s as well. The other bears enjoyed Mead, too, but Tine could drink only a bit so Theodore wound up drinking close to three glasses of it.

Soon the group was plotting strategy on how to find the elusive Mickey. They synchronized their smartphones. “OK,” Theodore waved with a gesture of a large paw, “we have a plan. I will stay in the hotel room and direct it—making good use of electronic network and smartphone technology. I think we’ll use FaceTime and camera reversal when needed in tracking.” “Then,” the bear continued, “Tine can hang out in small areas where he will not be noticed...elevators, corners, and so forth. And I want Binker to stay here at the Café...they have trivia boxes and I’m guessing...
that Mickey might enjoy the game…Binker is an expert player…let him look
around while playing. He might even play more than one wireless trivia box
at a time to try to build a crowd and perhaps attract Mickey.”

“Furthermore,” continued the thoughtful bear, “I think we need some extra
agents; the connection of the hotel, kind of sitting in the middle, between a
linked mall and a linked convention center, makes it easy for someone to
disappear. So, I’d like one agent assigned to the mall, one agent to the
hotel, and one agent to the convention center. But, let’s do an initial
reconnaissance prior to making such assignment. Leave now, look over
the extended hotel site, and then come back together right here for a late
dinner. OK? Then we will go from there.” It sounded like a good plan to
this small group and they headed out to do a bit of field study in order to
understand their new surroundings.

Dinner at Alma Mater
Reports of the Brain Trust Agents—Monday late afternoon/early
evening.

Report of Theodore E. Bear

Well, I got all the networks set and ready to go. The wireless networks in
the hotel work well. If we need any printouts, we just email the file to the
front desk and they will print it out. I have the appropriate email address
and in fact created a word-processed document containing that information
and had it printed—just to test the system. The other testing, of the human
networks within the hotel, did not go as well. We need to know how room
service works, location of service elevators, electrical boxes, and so forth.
Most of it I now know and it too is summarized in the little report I printed
out and gave you each a copy of. Where the test failed, however, was with
room service. I called and placed a substantial order—some for this
evening, some to be put in our room refrigerator, and some to be stored on
a shelf for later.
So, I ordered a number of containers of Greek yogurt with honey (they had my favorite kind with the separated, but attached, little container at the side of the yogurt cup), tea bags and small jars of honey, an empty ceramic teapot, several quarts of mixed berries (raspberries, black berries, and blueberries), a jar of maraschino cherries, and a magnum of Mead. When room service came, they tapped on the door. I was otherwise occupied so could not get to the door to let them in. After about 20 minutes, I was able to get to the door. There were three trays on the floor outside, but to my amazement, almost nothing on them! A couple of stray berries lay on the carpet; a few were smashed. I photographed the scene and then called room service. They came up and checked our room (I presume to establish that I was not fibbing) and then assured me that they would again deliver another order at no extra charge. They did ask, however, that I answer the door and let them in with the food. I gather that they think there may be a thief in the hotel who steals food and drink left on trays by room service. Judy and I both wondered ‘might it be Mickey’? What a world!

So, later I let room service in and it was all very nice. I macerated a bunch of the berries in sugar and honey. Later, after we finish dinner here, we will return to the room and have dessert. I’ll top the berries with a dollop of Greek yogurt and a Mead-soaked maraschino cherry. We will have tea with honey and Mead with the dessert as we contemplate moving forward. If anyone wants a cigar he will have to go outside; however, I think that only Jean-Pierre Bear smokes cigars and I don’t see him here. Nonetheless, forewarned…ah! Here comes Judy…I had hoped she would come down and join us here.

*Comment of Judy*

Ted, I think that we might have to revise our view that the food thief is Mickey…maybe it is he; however, we now have another possibility to consider. When I was waiting for the elevator just now, Theresa and Ernest Defarge got off the elevator at our floor. I watched them and they
are staying in the room next to ours. Remember, Theresa was stealing food from the hotel at the Dallas tournament; in fact, she may be a murderer…but she is slippery and clever—a brilliant coding theorist/mathematician. The Dallas police must not have been able to find sufficient evidence to convict her of the murder there (any more than the New York City police had been able to convict her of the murder of her first husband). So, she is here, and may be back to her old ways of stealing food that she finds a ‘luxury’ (what you ordered from room service would qualify as such) and giving it to the poor. In any event, we need to keep our eyes open…who knows what else we might find on our quest for Mickey.

Report of Binker Bear

I played trivia at the Café for a while. David (whose handle at the game is ‘Person’—mine is of course ‘binker’) was able to sit down and play too. After a while, a couple of guys who were scouting out the site for a future meeting of the Montgolfier Society joined in. They were Ossi Dog and Otto Octopus. Ossi is the Chief Scout. Otto is the Scrivener for the Society and so they refer to him as ‘Bart’ after the classic short story (‘Bartelby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street’) by Herman Melville (1853). Anyway, Bart is here to evaluate and to sign any formal contracts—he is multi-dextrous—could play more than one trivia machine at a time. They were swell trivia players; smart and alert.
Together we played a total of eleven machines but were unable to generate much interest in the game. People looked, but they seemed to be rushing around getting their bearings at the tournament. Thus, after a while, I decided perhaps I should do the same. I toured the convention center, taking both the escalators and the elevator. It’s actually quite interesting from the standpoint of numbering system.
When we leave the hotel, we are on floor 2 of the hotel. We walk through a set of walkways, without going up or downhill, and arrive in the convention center on the level called 3. That’s counterintuitive and I can see why folks need a bit of adjustment time. To further the confusion, if one takes the escalator down, one arrives on level 1. What happened to 2? Also, if one takes the escalator up from 3, one arrives on level 5. What happened to 4? Now there is some access to 4, but 2 remained completely hidden. Then, when I got in the elevator, there were buttons for each of 1 through 5. Naturally, I went to each floor. It appears that the building administrative offices are hidden, tucked away on 2. What a place to hide!
There are other places, right on floor 3 in plain sight that might offer opportunity for hiding. There is a beautiful mural with benches in front of it, right across from the Café. The mural itself contains intricate other images; notice the turtles, almost as ‘tracks’ in the lower left-hand corner. Behind the mural is an interesting thin empty area that could certainly hide something.

In fact, someone (probably an ABC staff member) is already using a similar space, behind the sign advertising this ABC tournament, as a place to hide.
the large cases for transporting that sign. The place is crawling with hiding spaces!

When we first met, someone mentioned that we might need extra agents. Part of our goal in this reconnaissance was to determine positions for extras. So, yes, I certainly think an added agent in the elevator, and elsewhere, in the convention center would be a fine idea—let’s see if Mickey has figured out where the hidden floor is or where other hiding places might be!

Report of Tine E. Bear

How about that—I too found a numerical oddity in the mall. As you say, Binker, we leave the hotel from floor 2 of the hotel...no change in elevation on the walkway linking the hotel to the mall. Yet, when I arrived at the mall building, I was on floor B. I got into the glass elevator which went to either 1 or 2 as well as levels A and C. Well, I heard that the food court was on level 3. Turns out, that to get there by elevator, I could take the glass elevator to level 1 (passing floor C on the way up from B to 1), get out on 1, walk to the rear of the mall and take an internal elevator up to 3, 4, or 5.
Again, not very intuitive…easy to get lost. But, I did not find any ‘hidden’ floors. Just an awkward circulation pattern, perhaps designed to walk patrons past a variety of commercial establishments in the hope of encouraging impulse-buying, but also perhaps because there was careful planning in the use of infill development in an older city. I am quite sensitive to how the mindset of ‘small’ can translate into the environment. It seems to me that our smallest state might be, too. It appears to have high density of development executed by thoughtful planners…I think the mall makes use of floodplain property. You can even see this careful planning philosophy in our hotel room; it’s a small room as these things go, but it is one of the best organized I’ve ever seen. We have more space for our things than we have had in many larger rooms…every square inch is used constructively and creatively…even to the extent that there is the illusion of some open space in the room. I am a great admirer of such strategy—compactness works.

Anyway, someone like Mickey might be able to take advantage of the unusual layout of the mall to ‘hide’ in the open. People are thinking more about the logistics of getting around than they are of what other mall patrons might be doing or might look like. Yes, I would agree that having an agent focused on people-watching in the mall might be a good idea.

**Assignment of Added Agents**

“I think we have a good idea,” said Theodore, “of where we would like additional agents. Otto/Bart is an expert at camouflage and is quite intelligent and good at figuring out mazes and complex circulation patterns—traits of his species. I gather that those facts, coupled with the ink supply that he carries in his sack make him uniquely qualified for the role of Scrivener.” “Binker,” Theodore continued, “would you be willing to see if he would also be interested in helping us? If he could replace his ink supply with helium, then he could float around in the mall and do people-watching not only at ground level but also from above, as he drifted
from level to level. That would be great!”

“Oh, yes,” Judy contributed excitedly, “it reminds me of my own fascination with helium balloons—the best ever when I lived in Paris, the home of M. Montgolfier. I would be happy to assist Bart in this venture.”

Judy as a child in Paris: Champs Elysses

“Sure,” continued Theodore, “so we have Bart (if he agrees) and Judy covering the mall. Then let’s see if Ossi will help us in the elevator in the convention center. I have seen several small dogs over there; some being carried, some walking on a leash. He would not seem at all out of place in the elevator, escalator, or in the rooms where they are playing bridge. He can always claim to be a service dog...after all, he is in the service of the Montgolfier Society! In addition, we may need an agent with him with a bit more experience, so I would suggest adding Eeyore who is quite strong and has good, if plodding, endurance. Further, I think that Binker could use extra help in the Café so that he can choose to roam if desired...but we do need always to keep that covered. Ludwig von Bearthoven would be
perfect; he is already the Entertainment Director for the Alma Mater chain, so his presence there would be natural.”

“Charles,” Theodore stated, “and the Brain Trust will cover the hotel...we will keep an eye on room service trays in the hallways…Mickey will need to eat. I’d like to add Guillaume Squirrel into that group—he has lots of experience in hotel hallways, duct work, and other long thin spaces. And, like Mickey, he too is a linguist.” “That all sounds like a fine plan to me,” Charles said, “Binker, please phone your friends from the Montgolfier Society and see if they will help.” Binker did so and said that they agreed, although at first Bart had said that ‘I would prefer not to...’ But, when Binker mentioned the use of helium, Bart agreed.

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**Ludwig von Beethoven:** 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. “Freude !!” is a favorite greeting of his.

**Guillaume R. Squirrel:** A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments.
Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.

**Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou:** Like Binker, Eeyore is also named after a character from A. A. Milne’s classic children’s work and like Binker is originally from Paris’ Galeries Lafayette. Eeyore worries about his tail, of course, but in recent years has learned to enjoy greatly the fact that real-world versions of himself, an endangered species, are once again rising in number. He is a kind and thoughtful, though stubborn, creature. His plodding ways and stubborn persistence, along with his gray coat, make him an ideal undercover agent in complex, but physically bounded, situations that appear drab in color. He has a background in problems associated with the hauling of materials. Eeyore persists until he gets to the bottom of things.

With their initial reconnaissance of the site complete, and a team in place, the group of assistants settled in for an evening of dessert and Mead, followed by a sound sleep. Charles and Judy went, instead, to the Presidential Suite of the hotel where they enjoyed seeing long-time friends in a convivial setting.

**In the Presidential Suite, Monday Evening Late**
John and Joanne Harlow, the charming ABC presidential couple, welcomed guests for the evening. Joanne was nearing the end of her year as ABC President. She and John had toured most of North America in the effort to spread goodwill about the game of tournament duplicate bridge. In the Suite, John helped with the bartending duties, while Joanne ushered in guests and made them feel at home. As always, the food was spectacular and the liquor flowed...
freely. So too did some of the guests.

Judy sat with some of her friends who were interested in promoting goodwill in the ABC while Charles hung out at the bar and discussed bridge hands from the afternoon with a number of the expert players there. As the couple helping with the food began to bring out more delicacies for the dining room table, the group began moving around to follow the food trail. A bowl of local seafood made an appearance as did any number of dips, chips, brownies, cookies, cheeses, fresh fruit salad, and a gorgeous cheesecake topped with cherries. Charles came over to Judy who was helping herself to a slice of cheesecake. “Oh, Charles, old boy” came a voice from a stocky guy at the bar, “grab me some of that stuff the broad next to you is getting…looks like something with raspberries on top…just scrape off the raspberries and put them all in a bowl for me and bring me the bowl…I just love raspberries!” Judy marched right over to the bar, “you, sir, are a shameful excuse for a ‘guest’—greedy pig is more like it—I am not some ‘broad’; those are not raspberries, they are cherries; and, how dare you grab all of them!” The man went to John, shoved Joanne out of the way, and said “you are the President, throw that broad out, she was rude to me.” “First of all,” John replied—his voice shaking—“I am not the President, the nice woman you pushed out of the way is. So, let’s see what SHE has to say…” “Get out! Now!” Joanne told the man firmly. “What did I do?” he demanded. “Just leave…no one here invited you” Joanne said. “Oh, well, I didn’t realize this was some sort of elitist hoity-toity, or should I say toilety, club…I have money…what’s the initiation fee…I can buy and sell this entire group…but then again why would I want to hang with you creeps,” the man shouted as John escorted him out the door.

“Charles, who was that man?” Judy Earl asked her husband. “He’s Van Silverman” Charles said “…a bit on the obnoxious side and he also can’t ever seem to get anything right. He offends people all the time and doesn’t seem aware of what he’s doing. No one knows if it’s an act designed to throw you off your game or if he is just a confused person who needs some
professional help. This afternoon we played against him the round before the guy fainted at our table...you might not remember given the upsetting times with the cat and then the fainting...when he sat down he demanded to know how I got a double north-south entry. I told him I was injured and could not move around, up and down, easily. He commented that I should be required to pay extra; his poor partner told him that when someone had a serious physical problem that it would be unkind to require them to pay extra...that in fact the ABC was doing the right thing by taking good care in such situations. Van scoffed at that and told partner he was a fool. I think that’s one of the reasons we got two good boards from them.” “Oh,” commented Judy, “what a swell guy—takes all kinds I suppose—nonetheless folks like that are distressing...let's go down and go to bed and see if we can manage a better day tomorrow.”

Tuesday Morning
“Wow, Judy, talk about strange things,” Charles said to his wife as they went off for their morning workouts at the gym, “we enter on the eighth floor and exit on the sixth floor...more strangeness...more opportunity for hiding...did you see the guy watching us as we went downstairs? A big burly sort...I wonder...might have been Mickey? I was distracted by the whole arrangement and didn’t really pay that much attention...that’s Mickey, though, ubiquitous and there when you least expect him. If we go back, he’ll be gone...” “But,” Judy noted, “once you get there, the machines are nice...good selection and well-maintained. Now, I need to get on with it,” and she pulled out her smartphone and headset and listened to Mozart’s Exsultate Jubilate as she hopped on the elliptical crosstrainer.

After about an hour, the couple left, returned to their room and laid out plans for the day. Charles was to play bridge all day in the premier ABC Gold Ribbon Pairs event while Judy and the group tried to track Mickey. They assumed that Mickey might not be
playing in the Gold Ribbon event, but rather in one of the many team events and that he might well participate on six person teams so that he could go about his other unusual activities undetected while others were playing bridge.

Charles and Judy headed off toward the convention center; Charles to play bridge and Judy to meet with Theodore and crew at their pre-arranged rendezvous point in front of the mural with turtle tracks on it—across from the Alma Mater Café.

**Tuesday Afternoon, Tracking Mickey**

“Theodore,” Judy commented, “I must compliment you on your choice of a rendezvous point…turtle ‘tracks’ when we are engaged in a ‘tracking’ venture…very cute, indeed!” “Thank you,” the friendly bear noted, “now let’s get on with it. Judy, I gather that you think you might have seen Mickey this morning near the gym…so, it appears he is still around and up to his old tricks. I hope we will be up to tracking him down and bringing him to justice. Now, let’s go! We will meet back here shortly before dinner.”

**Theodore’s report**

Well, the first thing I did was place an order with room service. I ordered what got stolen before and added a few goodies to the order: peanut butter and bagels for Guillaume and a magnum of Champagne and some caviar for myself (I hope you don’t mind…all this is hard work). Then, Guillaume went to work in the hallways and elevators in the hotel to see what would happen. Of course, I remained in touch with him over my smartphone. Here is what we found out…shortly after I placed the order, I began to smell burnt toast. Guillaume said it was coming from next door, from Theresa Defarge’s room. Once the food arrived, she came out into the hallway and took some of it—but she left some, as well. I could see that activity through the peep hole in the door (we have a handicap room, so
there is a low peep hole). She apparently took the bagels and peanut butter, perhaps as a replacement for her burnt toast. Soon, Guillaume phoned to say that there was a group of young street people on our floor heading for the food—they took it all and left in the elevator. We assume that Theresa must have a network much like ours and she phoned them to come get the food—her approach to altruism.

Now, we did wonder how these folks got upstairs; after all a key is needed to go above 8 in the elevator, even if someone else has pushed a button. However, one way to get in is to first push a lit button (that someone with a key has activated), hold that button in, and then simultaneously push a different ‘locked’ number…I remember when I was just a cub many years ago that reverse Polish notation calculators worked in a similar way…but I digress. Anyway, Guillaume figured out how these non-residents were able to access a locked floor and in doing so explained also why there would likely be a lag between Theresa’s activity and their arrival…they had to wait for a registered guest to press one locked floor button.

So, Guillaume and I concluded, as Judy had previously suggested, that Mickey was probably not involved in stealing food from room service trays. Instead, we decided that we had uncovered some sort of plot of Theresa totally unrelated to our concerns. Thus, I reported what we had discovered to hotel security, including the trick with elevator buttons. Then, I reassigned Guillaume to the convention center while I continued to man the center of operations from the hotel room.

Ossi’s report

When I got to the mall, on the top level, there was a man in a fine gray suit hosting a dog show of some sort. Little battery-operated dogs were dancing around on the floor; some did gymnastics. I knew I could join in with this group and not be noticed. It was fun and many children convinced their parents to buy them a toy dog. Naturally, it was the toys, and not the
man, that were the center of attention. After a bit, I could see Judy in the distance; she was apparently coming upstairs after she had made her rounds in the mall in search of Mickey. When the man running the toy dogs saw her, he ran away. I decided quickly that perhaps he was Mickey; after all, Judy is the only one of us that would recognize Mickey. I looked up, saw Bart hovering overhead, and motioned to him to follow the man in the gray flannel suit. He did so, and I’ll let him pick up from here.

*Bart’s report*

It was very strange; that man ran straight for the women’s restroom. When he went in, all the women in there came running out and caused quite a scene outside the door. It would not have been possible for someone to get in there through the throng of screaming women and others who started panicking simply because there was an ‘event’ of some sort. Fortunately, I was able to drift right in. But, I was confused. I did not see the man I had been chasing. There was one occupied stall. It may sound a bit gross, but I was able to hover over it and observe what was going on. I did not see anything in there that would lead me to think the person was a man. What I did see was an elegant gray suit and carefully manicured hands. Soon, mall security guards came in. They spoke to the person in the stall, who replied in a feminine voice. She came out, walked gracefully, hips swiveling a bit, and talked briefly to the security men and expressed her horror at the idea of a man having been in there while she was (fortunately) locked in her stall. They left; the woman adjusted her hair, and soon after that left and headed toward the hotel.

*Binker’s report*

Once again, we set up to play trivia with lots of machines. This time we were successful in attracting a group of players. By now, I think folks were familiar with the logistics of the place and were a bit more relaxed. They seemed to enjoy playing trivia while they waited to play on their five or six
person bridge teams. You all know how much I enjoy playing trivia; with this many good players in the group we were able to score in the top 20 nationwide, as a bar, in most of the games in the early afternoon. Then again, there were only about 3000 players (nationwide) in most of the games...still a fine performance I think. There was, however, one unhappy camper. I don’t really know what his problem was; I think that probably Ludwig can give us greater insight on that. In retrospect, that fellow may well have been Mickey.

*Ludwig’s report*

I signed onto the trivia box with my usual handle of ‘Ludwig’. This unhappy guy to whom Binker referred was unusually upset; he claimed that that handle belonged to him and that I had no right to use it. He said he was a descendant of Ludwig Wittgenstein and that he owned the original *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and that such ownership entitled him to use the handle ‘Ludwig’ as he wished. We debated this for a while, particularly in the context of Wittgenstein’s picture theory of language; eventually, he adopted the handle ‘Witt’ instead. He was a fine player; he had wild and crazy looking hair and seemed to speak with a German accent. He ordered some Cutty Sark and referred to it as Irish whiskey and as appropriate to Rhode Island. I corrected him, showed him some pictures, and turned around to bring him a drink. When I came back he was gone. As Binker commented, we suspect that ‘Witt’ was, in fact, Mickey.
**Tine’s report**

I spent all afternoon on the escalators and in the elevators of the convention center. While there were a number of odd things that happened, I did not see anything that I would attribute to Mickey. But, you decide.

First, there was a man lying on floor in front of elevator. A woman was hurriedly looking in her purse, apparently for medication. She was well-dressed and was carrying a Coach bag. A man was also kneeling over the ill person, apparently taking his pulse. The kneeling man was wearing a beautiful gray flannel suit; he had well-manicured hands…very graceful. I assumed he must be a doctor; he carried himself with great confidence. I never saw his face, although I tried. Small stature is sometimes an advantage; and, sometimes it is not.

Second, I gather that there had already been a van delivering medical goods to the hotel; I heard that someone in the bridge game had fallen on the floor and slithered on his belly, across the ballroom, to the men’s room. Apparently he was ok, but needed some supplies. I don’t really know
because I did not witness it. But, I did verify that a medical supply truck was parked in front of the hotel. Of course, the paramedics also came.

Third, I noted that a man in a paramedic jacket was present in the convention center as if waiting to see what would happen next. He was sitting on a bench near the mural. Given what had been going on, the idea made sense in some ways, although of course I had never seen that behavior before from a paramedic. This man was a bit on the chunky side but of course I don’t know if he had extra padding in his jacket.

_Eeyore’s report_

For a while I played trivia with the group in the Café. I do enjoy that but wasn’t really sure it was the best use of my talents. So, I decided to help David with some of the heavy bottles, kegs, and barrels in the bar. That’s a real workout you know, even for someone with my steady legs and portly build. By about the middle of the afternoon, a man in a paramedic jacket came and asked me to help him. Of course, I was happy to do so. He had a heavy box behind the mural that he wanted me to lift and put behind the screen advertising the tournament. I was happy to do so; he told me the box was quite fragile and to handle it gently. I did as he wished and then went back and helped David some more. That’s about it from this Poitou!
Guillaume's report

When I left the hotel, Theodore and I agreed that I should switch on Face Time, use the camera reversal feature, and track my progress with Theodore who had been following the progress of others back in the hotel room ‘command central.’ That way, Theodore could efficiently direct me to go to places the others had not been and see what was happening there. I gather that the picture he had been getting from phone calls from the others was becoming quite interesting.

So I turned the camera on when I entered the hallway linking the hotel to the convention center. The hallway was lined with an array of planters of various kinds. Naturally, I felt that I could investigate these without being noticed. Squirrels are quite at home in trees!
I noticed that in the base of each of the large planters the attractive stones were arranged not only around the base of the tree but also around a plastic cup of some sort. One of them was open, so I looked in. A nearby hose suggested that these cups were part of some system for watering plants. Another cup had its lid closed. I opened that expecting to find some stagnant water, at worst. Instead I found a used condom! Disgusting!! I made sure that Theodore understood what I had found and then went on my way.

As I neared the doorway to the convention center I saw a group of men, in heated discussion, speaking Bulgarian. They were blocking the doorway, functioning as a dam to cause a buildup of bridge players trying to get through the door. I went and tickled the ankle of one of them who was wearing a particularly attractive gray suit (I am partial to gray). He jumped, moved, and then so did the others. Guillaume does a good deed, I thought. Then I went on past the “bridge” sign, toward a room where playing was going on with screens in use.
Theodore felt that I had an advantage over the others in looking around in the room with screens. I gather that there may have been some fouled boards, but perhaps not of much consequence. My capability to move quickly, and scamper across tables, through the opening in the screen, and around table legs is an advantage. So, I hopped right up on a table and through the door in the screen along with the tray. The woman on the other side was delighted…she thought I was so cute…she reached out to pet me. Of course, I do like that sort of thing so was happy to oblige. While she was petting me, I looked in her purse and saw that she had two duplicate boards in there. I pulled them out and flung them on the table; she picked one up and tried to mash me with it. But, I was too quick for her, mocked her, and ran off. Theodore meanwhile was having a fit, at my behavior, on the other end of the phone. A squirrel has got to have some fun! That is our nature.
But, I obliged the Bear and got back to serious work (some of these bears are so involved in ‘deep structure’ that they lose sight of fun). I didn’t really see anything of particular note, although I did stop and tell Eric of the boards in the purse that I uncovered.

I left that room and ran out, past the rendezvous point and past the Alma Mater Café, into the main area of the convention center with the long escalators. As I passed the Café I noted a peculiar odor. I said something to David and he said that he did not smell anything unusual, but also commented that he had been working with kegs of beer and had spilled a bit on himself so might not. As I neared the escalator, the smell kept getting worse—it smelled like rotten meat in a supermarket. I hopped up on the stands selling candy; they were fine. It was coming from somewhere else. When I looked behind the big sign announcing the tournament, the box in the sunlight reeked of something awful. I went and got Eric. Together, we opened the box. We had found Mickey—apparently a discontented man in a gray flannel suit. He was dead. His neck had
been snapped. How ironic, I thought as I reflected on the fate of the poor cat whose neck Mickey had snapped not long ago.

**Tuesday, Dinner: Charles Puts the Pieces Together**

I think you have all done outstanding work. You show clearly the power of team work. We can all see things beginning to take shape. Even though you might have thought you were not tracking Mickey, clearly you were! Ossi, you were correct, I am sure. The man running the show of toy dogs was clearly Mickey. He ran into the women’s room where Bart tracked him. That gave him an opportunity to alter his appearance a bit and to get out and away from Judy under different cover. When he came to the convention center, he ruffled his hair, played trivia for a while, then left and found the man on the floor near the elevator. Finally, I think that Guillaume saw him speaking Bulgarian. Mickey was the man in the gray flannel suit and the man of many personae; from man, to woman; from wild ‘Witt’ to native Bulgarian. And then of course we tracked him to his final resting place. Thanks to your good work, those pieces of the puzzle fit together easily and well.

But, there is the remainder. Why did someone kill Mickey? Who killed Mickey? What about the other strange things that some of you observed? I think I know the answers. It all came about through a bridge hand.

Now, as to timing. I looked in the records; of course, Mickey was not playing under his own name. But, there was a player named L. Witt. We know from the trivia game that Mickey did use ‘Witt’ when pressured. This afternoon, L. Witt was playing on a six person team. He did not play the first half of the afternoon session; he was supposed to play the second half but did not show up. Thus, I think that we can conclude, given your observations of him, that he was killed shortly before the second half of the afternoon session started, during a break perhaps.
My own bridge game this afternoon was largely uneventful. The last round, we played against Van Silverman and his partner. Van came to the table and referred to women as ‘broads’ (as we have heard him do before) and ‘sluts.’ His commentary about women was at a new vulgar low, even for him. I said something to him along the lines of how would you like it someone talked about your wife that way…that didn’t seem to disturb him in the slightest…just good ol’ Van, I thought. The first hand everyone passed. The second hand was an interesting one. Here it is. Everyone is vulnerable.

North:
- ♠ K J 8 7 6 5 3
- ♥ T 5
- ♦ 2
- ♣ 7 6 2

East:
- ♠ 4
- ♥ 4 3
- ♦ A 9 8 6 5 3
- ♣ K T 8 3

South:
- ♠ A Q 2
- ♥ A K Q J 9 8
- ♦ K J
- ♣ A J

West:
- ♠ T 9
- ♥ 7 6 2
- ♦ Q T 7 4
- ♣ Q 9 5 4

We (North-South) had a careful auction to get to 6S, vulnerable worth 1430. But, Van (EW pair) sacrificed in 7C virtually without warning. We
(NS) defended perfectly, setting it 5 tricks for +1400. Only three other pairs sacrificed and they all sacrificed in 7D doubled, down 4 for -1100 EW. So, we (NS) got only 3 matchpoints. It was very strange. I became quite suspicious of him at the time; figured maybe he had seen the hand before. Then again, with Van, it’s hard to know. Now that I hear of all the events of the afternoon, I have to wonder if perhaps Van was distracted because he had murdered Mickey only a short while earlier and so sacrificed in 7C instead of 7D.

But, still, we have to wonder why? Did he know Mickey? What would cause a man with Van’s temperament, that lashes out anyway whenever he feels like it, to get upset enough to murder someone? Now, I go back to Guillaume and another of his discoveries of the afternoon—the used condom. Was Mickey having sex while he was out roaming around? If so, where? Recall how aggressive he had been with Judy in the hotel lobby. In the convention center he was seen only on the main level. So, let’s suppose that Mickey was having sex in a hidden area near enough to the planter to use it to hide waste—perhaps in the space behind the mural—behind our rendezvous point. Remember that Eeyore was asked to haul a box from that area to behind the screen where Mickey’s body was found. The two locations are near each other. In fact, the space behind the mural is about equidistant between the planter in the hallway where a full condom was found and the hiding space behind the poster where the full box was found.
Don’t worry Eeyore, you could not have known (Charles had to reassure the sensitive Poitou). I think that Van Silverman was the unlikely paramedic that Tine saw—that Eeyore helped. But, why? Van just picked up a jacket left behind from all the other activity which had called for real paramedics; he is like that—he’d take candy from a baby. When he saw his own wife behind the mural having oral sex with Mickey, he became enraged—remember his particularly nasty comments about women. Van is not that large, but he is powerful. I am sure an enraged Van could easily have snapped Mickey’s neck.

If you all agree, I am going to go talk to the police. I think we have enough observed evidence connected by a plausible chain of reasoning; I will suggest to them that they find Van Silverman’s wife and talk to her very carefully about her activities (I would guess that she might not have been a willing participant with Mickey) and about what she saw. Again, just
guessing, when Van jumped Mickey, I'd guess she ran off and didn’t even see that it was Van who was ‘rescuing’ her (although ‘rescue’ was probably not the intent here). In addition, I will turn over the used condom and suggest that their lab might find interesting extra evidence behind the mural and in the hallway as well as elsewhere in the convention center.

If the police see things as we do, I’d guess that Van may be locked up for quite a while. In addition, since Mickey cannot make good on a contribution to a cat shelter, I will contact his first former wife, Cindy, whom Judy and I both knew long ago, to see if she will do so; we never understood how a nice young woman like Cindy wound up with the likes of Mickey!
Chapter 9: Lake Geneva Bridge Murder, Again!

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forest of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry.

William Blake, The Tyger, Songs of Experience, 1794
Arrival in Lake Geneva

“Charles,” Judy Earl noted to her bridge-playing mathematician husband, “I remember so well the last time we came to the Helevetica Chalet—what a gorgeous resort...AND…” Judy continued, “do you remember that awful man who was murdered here? I think his name was Huey. That was in sharp contrast to the rest of our fine time!” Charles Earl nodded assent as he parked their car under the Porte Cochère of the Helvetica. The Earls had come to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, for the Midwestern teams duplicate bridge tournament of the American Bridge Congress (ABC). They travelled all over North America following their hobby. Charles and Judy Earl met many years ago when they were both young graduate students in mathematics at the University of Chicago—this year, they would celebrate 50 years of happy marriage. 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.

“Judy, go on in and see about our reservation; I’ll park and check out the grounds a bit to make sure that in fact room 2112 is the one we still want, given our last little adventure here. In fact, sit down and have a drink; I’ll join you and if I find any of our friends over near the convention center I’ll bring them along, too; it’s past check-in time.”
In the Lobby Lounge
Judy exited the car and left her husband to go about checking things out; she knew that Charles loved to make sure that everything was in order in advance of bridge so that he could devote his full focus to the tournament itself. The last time the couple had been to the Helvetica had been about four years earlier; Judy expected to see change in the lobby and elsewhere but was pleasantly surprised to see, that although some of the rugged outdoorsy trappings were gone, there remained enough to illustrate those roots of the beautiful Helvetica lodge.
She sat down at a table in front of the large windows of the Lobby Lounge with a panoramic view of the South by South East of the property...over the outdoor pool, across the golf course and pergola, to the wooded island in the lake, complete with an Alma Mater TeaGarten—a chain that the Earls owned, named for Judy’s late mother. She ordered a glass of Cabernet and enjoyed a peaceful time sipping the wine as she watched patterns in the clouds drift from west to east, reflecting the prevailing winds coming off the Great Plains. Judy was a professor of mathematical geography in a research university and sometimes, especially when in pleasant surroundings such as these, her mind roamed through aspects of her professional career even though she was otherwise involved.
Soon, Charles came back with their friends Herman and Jake. Judy had enjoyed many fine conversations with these guys who much enjoyed hearing about the various research projects that the academic Earl couple often engaged in. After a round of handshakes, the group sat down and got to the serious business of discussing bridge over drinks. Judy played the game with Charles, but all of Charles, Herman, and Jake were ranked in the top 500 in North America and Jake was a top-level pro; Judy was nowhere near that level of player so she was sitting out this team game in favor of another, better, fourth, for Charles to play with.

The happy group enjoyed some more beer and wine as they waited for their fourth to arrive. Herman declined to eat any of the ‘small plates’ the group ordered to go with the drinks: “I don’t generally eat in restaurants. There are two restaurants in this town that I eat in, in addition to an occasional bite at the resort: one is a Chicago-style pizza place where I have stuffed pizza and the other is a lakeside rotisserie place. While the food at those places is nowhere near the quality that I carry with me routinely, they are all nonetheless interesting cultural experiences to share with company, such as you, with whom I enjoy spending time.” Judy thought that some might find Herman a bit odd, but she and Charles liked him a great deal—he was direct in his manner of speech—that was all. Herman continued, “tomorrow night Jake and I will have Royal Red shrimp, I am having them flown in from Biloxi (Mississippi) this afternoon (the valet will handle it), along with red quinoa salad with baby kale, and crème brûlée for dessert. When I leave here soon, I will go up to the room and unpack the two convection ovens, the microwave, the blow torch, and the small refrigerator. Of course, I tip the valet and the maids quite well.” As Herman continued with his erudite culinary commentary, Judy once again found her attention wandering. “CHARLES,” Judy shrieked as she jolted out of her mental
meanderings, “look at the huge car that just pulled up!! It’s just like the car that Huey arrived in four years ago!” Soon, a somewhat dapper looking foreign gentleman, in a slightly tattered beige suit, emerged from the expensive, over-sized vehicle. I’ll bet that vehicle reflects his ego, Judy thought unkindly. She noted the contrast between the shabby suit and his beautiful hand-carved teak cane, inlaid with intricate brass filigreed pattern. “I am Dr. Singh” the man announced to the whole lobby and to the registration clerk, “you have my reservation for me and my two slaves for this next week; in the room with a private ramp and adjacent to an exterior door—Suite 3120, I believe; we have practices that might be of concern to your other guests and I try to be a sensitive person and please all. You can call me Dr. Singh.” With that, the man unscrewed the head of the cane and withdrew two long leather straps, attached inside the cane head, and snapped them with whip-like precision in the air, “Louie and Dewey, come…your Master commands it!”

Two large middle-aged (apparently) American men emerged from the vehicle—“coming Master.” They obediently brought in a pile of suitcases, trunks, and duffle bags. When Judy saw this she began sputtering, “Charles, I have not had that much to drink have I? Those two men are carbon copies of Huey…but he was murdered? Am I seeing double or triple? Am I imagining it?” And with that, Judy fainted with a moan before Charles could reassure his hypersensitive wife that in fact there was nothing the matter with her.

**In Room 2112**
Charles and Jake and Herman escorted Judy to the Earls' room and put her to bed. While Judy slept, Charles went out to see what he could find out about the situation today. After a few hours she had
calmed down sufficiently to carry on a coherent conversation. “Judy, I have had a chance to ask around about Dr. Singh and his entourage,” Charles told his wife. “It appears that Huey was one of three brothers and that they look a great deal alike. Dr. Singh and Huey had been in some sort of strange business, perhaps involving the sale of customized underwear for larger men. The brothers were models, of sorts, for the business. When Huey died, Dr. Singh took over the business. The car you saw was indeed Huey’s car, the one you saw years before. They are staying in the same suite here that Huey had stayed in four years ago. I gather that they have become regulars here. Don’t be surprised by things they do; apparently no one takes them very seriously and no one likes them. They have been known, however, to upset innocent people, such as you, who have only passing experience with them. I have seen Singh in various places; he likes to micromanage low-level bridge administration. I regard him simply as a pest. Others have stronger feelings.” “Thank you, Charles,” Judy said. “Furthermore,” Charles continued, “I would like you to spend the rest of the day just relaxing. Go to the wooded island; enjoy drinks and appetizers at the Alma Mater TeaGarten. In fact, I will contact our comfort ‘Team’ and have them join you: Theodore, Binker, and Tine, our core group (as a Brain Trust), and also Guillaume.” “Judy,” Charles reminded, “just be sure that Theodore does not go overboard with ordering Mead…either for himself or others. He means well, but sometimes needs to be reined in a bit!”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theodore E. Bear</strong></th>
<th>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.</th>
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<td><strong>Binker Bear</strong></td>
<td>Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <em>When We Were Very Young</em>] “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. He is a part-time mystery story writer, too, known as ‘B. K.’.</td>
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**Tine E. Bear:** 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.

**SPECIAL AGENT ASSIGNED TO LAKE GENEVA, Guillaume R. Squirrel:** A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.
Charles and Judy headed toward the boat dock at the pergola to get a catamaran ferry to take them to the wooded island and the TeaGarten.

At the Alma Mater TeaGarten: Background
“Judy,” Charles reminisced, “it was just a bit more than four years ago that I was here to set up a tea garden in association with our Alma Mater chain of restaurants in honor of your mother, a great chef, and of our professional lives in academics...a true double entendre! I know that since then, you have been heavily involved in teaching the Chef Corps of the chain to make the fine platters, both large and small, that you created in celebration of Alma’s love of cocktail food and yours of geometry and symmetry. So, please, take the time to order as many as you would like so that we can gauge how things are going. Ahhh...here comes the group...over here, Theodore!” The group of loyal friends, Theodore, Binker, Tine, and Guillaume trotted over to the TeaGarten to join Charles and Judy at their table in the secluded spot on the wooded island.

“Theodore,” commented Charles, “the Helvetica 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’. It 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.’ ”

“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—we remember Huey and his wife Daisy from four years ago, but that’s another story! 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.”
There are also other activities here…star-gazing from the deck on some nights, through the refracting telescope; moonlight cruises on others; bird watching from the deck at dusk on other nights. You get the picture…a real class-act."

“Do you remember, Judy” 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, the University of Chicago!”
“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—with a 40 inch lens—is in my future…I always wanted to go there…wonder what we might find there!

“And, Judy,” Charles said, “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 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 observatory was created in 1897!”

“Well,” Charles concluded, “it is time for me to get back to the mainland and see if my scheduled bridge partner has arrived yet. I have a backup plan: Dr. Bob is here and he will play with me. If Kent, whom I thought was coming, actually makes it in from Connecticut, then we will play as a five man team. Anyway, ENJOY!”

**Enjoying the Alma Mater TeaGarten**
A handsome young waiter came to the table, “Good Afternoon, my name is Brian. I hope you will enjoy your visit to the wooded island this afternoon. After tea (a term we use loosely), 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, some
Mead-tinis, and a small ‘Swamp Platter’ as grazing food with some veggies to munch on.” “A delightful choice,” Brian noted, “and if you like, Alma has made some of these recipes available online, you know.”

“Furthermore,” Brian continued, “I hope you understand that the Swamp Platter will take longer to come out than the veggie platters. All of our items are handmade, small works of art. Alma believed that presentation was critical and we take great pride in remaining true to her philosophy. When you have a platter from us, you receive a unique item. No two of our platters are ever the same. Your drinks and the veggie setup will come quickly; you made wise selections.” And with that, Brian wheeled around and went off to get their order moving. “OK, group,” Judy said, “when do I tell Brian that in fact I designed the platters and trained the Chef Corps for the restaurant chain?” “Never,” said Theodore. “Hmmmpphhhh,” noted Guillaume, “if you’ve got it, flaunt it! But first see if they do it right!” “I think,” Judy said, “that I will opt for middle ground. But, yes, waiting to see is a good idea; it just strikes me that Brian is an enthusiastic sales person and would probably enjoy knowing of the connections around the table here. Binker was particularly close to Alma; she is the one who found him in Paris and absolutely insisted that he must come to live with us.”

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Tine and Binker and Judy reminisced a bit about their respective travels in western Europe and their return to the U.S. via ship. Shortly thereafter, Brian arrived bearing drink and food. “Mead for the gentleman,” Brian said as he served Theodore a handsome ‘Mead-tini’, “and for you sir, and for you, too,” as he served Mead-tinis to the other two bears, Binker and Tine. “I created a special one for you, Monsieur Guillaume, substituting hazelnut liqueur (I hope Frangelico is a satisfactory ‘noisette’) for Mead” the enthusiastic waiter noted.

“Now, in regard to the veggie platters, there is a story to go with each. A caprese salad is common-place these days. Please note, that our veggie ‘platters’ are discrete in nature; there is a central decorative plate that leads to adjacent separate plates. For example, our Caprese platter has a fanciful tomato-flower centerpiece in which cherry tomatoes are carved and stuffed with local cheddar staymens and pistils; individual flowers are linked with stems of fresh dill, gracefully arranged to suggest a plant responding to a gentle spring breeze. The decorative center piece is then flanked with individual small plates of traditional Caprese salad made from heirloom tomato slices of various colors with the tomato slices separated by slices of different varieties of local Wisconsin cheese and home-grown basil leaves. We offer the usual olive oil and balsamic dressing as well as a fine curried and dilled mayonnaise, made with a special curry from Madras, home-grown dill, and mayonnaise made in our kitchen from cage-free eggs; the dill in the dressing of course echoes the dill floral stems on the central decorative platter.”

“Where the other veggie platter is concerned, please note once again the graceful dill stems forming the structural framework for
another set of flowers. Also again, there is curried and dilled mayo to go with the derivatives suggested by the floral arrangement; I think of this as a combination of differentiation and integration, but that is perhaps another story with interesting mathematical roots. I digress. The flowers are formed on a cucumber calyx, as were the tomato flowers on the other platter. The blooms on this one, however, are formed from slices of giant stuffed green olives topped with slices from miniature heirloom carrots. The stuffing for the olives varies: the usual pimiento, blue cheese, garlic, pickled pearl onion, and anchovy butter. In dishes surrounding the edible floral centerpiece, you will find olives in a variety of shapes and colors from various parts of the world as well as dippables for the curried and dilled mayo: cucumber slices, baby heirloom carrots, small skewers of white anchovy-wrapped pearl onions. Everything is edible; we hope you find everything beautiful and enjoyable!” With that Brian left the happy group to enjoy their first round of food and drink.
Soon, Judy noted the catamaran coming across the water. “Look at that,” she said, “the boat is VERY low in the water! I wonder why...Oh, it’s that Dr. Singh and those two huge gentlemen who work as models for him. I am not a huge fan of the group. After Brian comes back with our next round of drinks and our food then let’s get out of here.” At that, Brian ushered in Singh’s group, complete with suitcase on wheels; they had asked to sit outside. He then returned to bring the next round of drinks and the small Swamp Platter to Judy and crew. “Now, let me tell you a bit about this platter,” Brian said. “Please note how we try to unify your order; there is continuity from the veggie platters to the compact Swamp Platter. The frog in the center of the “Swamp” is carved from a cucumber and has eyes made from stuffed olives. There are frog-
leg (cucumber) sandwiches, snake (black olive) sandwiches, tulip sandwiches (note the continuation of the tomato flower on a dill stem), small skewers of locally crafted sausage and cheese, petite ham sandwiches topped with curried and dilled mayo and a slice of red bell pepper, and all of the swamp is bathed in the sunlight cast from the devilled eggs. Enjoy!”
“Well, Brian,” Judy said, “I want to compliment you on your terrific presentation. You have captured the true spirit that Alma intended! I know…I am her daughter and am the head trainer for the Chef Corps of this restaurant chain. Before she died, I made each of these for Alma, in some variant, and she loved them all and of course made numerous constructive comments in association with their development. Congratulations—the Chef here has done a fine job with the food and you do an excellent job with the presentation and story-telling!” Brian, was for once in his life, left speechless…totally non-plussed.

With that, Judy gathered the group to leave; Theodore wanted to stay and have more Mead-tinis, but Judy told him no (as she remembered Charles’s admonition in this regard). Guillaume insisted on staying and learning more about Dr. Singh and his group because he saw that the Dr. had upset Judy. Guillaume prided himself on the special care he liked to take of Judy when Charles wasn’t there. Sometimes, he even rode around on her shoulders; squirrels could do things that bears couldn’t.

Tyger, Tyger, Burning Bright; In the Forest of the Night
Guillaume walked with the group to the catamaran dock and once he saw to it that Judy had safely negotiated entrance to the boat, he headed on back to the TeaGarten. He ducked under the shrubs and headed around to where the outdoor elevated deck was located. There he climbed one of the tall trees and found a good vantage point where he could observe and hear Dr. Singh, Louie, and Dewey. He pulled out his smartphone and texted Judy where he was and told her of his plans to photograph and otherwise record their activities on the deck in the forest behind the TeaGarten. Soon Brian appeared, “and, would you gentlemen care to have me light the fire pit? It can be a bit chilly out here as the sun goes
down?” “Do it,” stated Dr. Singh, “and then bring our drinks; I demand only the best service for myself. Many young men are disappointing; I hope you won’t be one of them.” “I will make every effort to please,” Brian said with a bit less than his usual enthusiasm. With that, he lit the fire pit for the group, brought up individual small tables and then left, apparently to get the group whatever they had ordered before Guillaume took up his perch. Brian returned; Dr. Singh had ordered the special ‘Silver Bullet’ martini and Louie and Dewey each had a local Wisconsin craft beer selected for them by their ‘Master’. “And, Sir,” Brian said, “you ordered our Earth Platter, a personal favorite of mine…” “Who cares what YOU like,” Dr. Singh, interrupted, “what matters is what I like and I will decide on that and not be pressured into it by a bunch of marketing hype; and, I am Dr. Singh to you, not just some random and patronizing ‘Sir’.” “Yes, Dr. Singh,” Brian astutely responded, “and may I add that I admire your tan suit; it’s a beautiful color for such fine fabric!” Up in the tree Guillaume texted Judy…”this guy Singh is disgusting; I hope I don’t throw up listening to all this…it would blow my cover!” “Now, as to the Earth Platter,” Brian continued, determined to do his job properly, “it represents one view of the world and Mother Earth’s diversity of foods (and consequently of her peoples): dairy, vegetable, and protein, with a curried and dilled mayonnaise at the center of it all; the curry is from India…the cultural center not only of food but of the Earth’s civilization!” “Yuck…” Guillaume started to comment “that Brian can sure spin an obsequious yarn”. “That’s all very nice,” said Dr. Singh, “but Indian curry is not of one type; I need to know where this one is from.” “It is from Madras,” Brian said in a matter of fact tone. “Fine, I will eat it,” replied Dr. Singh, “now give me our bill.”

Brian handed the bill to Singh. “Here is 500 dollars; I am sure that will cover our bill and your tip,” Dr. Singh said slyly, “and in addition
we will need privacy out here for the next hour; you see, I am in a business that involves shooting movies and you have been honored by being selected as a site for background shots but we need complete control over what happens in this space. If for some reason you cannot free things up let me know and we will work out something else. Now take the cash, do what you want with it, but go away and don’t come back and see to it that no one else bothers us.” Brian took the cash and reported this chain of events to the others at the restaurant. They agreed to leave Singh alone while keeping an eye on things out the window; they also agreed to put the extra cash in the tip pool. In the meantime, Guillaume determined that he was absolutely correct in his insistence on tracking this group.
Once Brian was gone, Dr. Singh unpacked the suitcase. There were cameras and lights of various types. There was also a pile of tiger-striped fabric. They spent some time setting up camera equipment on the deck: at the edge of the deck, around the firepit, and also near the small refracting telescope used to look at the stars. After a bit, they all sat down. Singh said to his models, “I want to tell you about a new merger we are trying to form; it’s all very hush-hush right now, but it could be really big. A male enhancement company has approached me about forming a merger with our plus-sized male underwear company, but first they want to see how marketing might work. So, we are going to have a film shoot to create such a display. I need the two of you to wear our tiger-striped briefs…here, take these. With that, Dr. Singh pulled a portable folding bamboo screen out of his suitcase and set it up to block off the light coming from the inside. Louie and Dewey stripped and put on only the tiger briefs. Singh photographed them around the fire pit, in various poses, and then they jumped over the railing and he photographed them in the forest. He also appeared to struggle a bit to get photographs of them through the telescope. It all seemed quite weird to Guillaume; he made a mental note to himself that he needed to reflect on this a bit more. Then, an hour was up, the group packed up and left. Guillaume hopped on the catamaran roof and scampered back to the hotel room.

A Visit to Yerkes Observatory

“Judy,” Charles said to his wife, “we do have a five-man team. Kent finally got here. His flight from New York was delayed. So, Herman is sitting out. He wants to go to the Observatory; would you like to go, too? I can go another time but I do know how much you want to go.” “Oh, yes, Charles! Definitely. I remember how much I enjoyed receiving a plate with the Vassar College observatory on it as a gift of appreciation for service to my class” Judy said, as she fondly
thought of classmates from many years earlier.

“And I will accompany her,” stated Guillaume. Charles and Judy and Guillaume left the room, leaving the rest of the group to enjoy the beautiful view from the room with a patio overlooking the golf course, lake, and wooded island…“not too many Mead-tinis, Theodore!” Charles admonished.

Charles headed over to the bridge game at the Convention Center while Judy and Guillaume went out to the parking lot to meet Herman. Guillaume buckled up in the back seat of Herman’s SUV and the group headed west to Yerkes in Williams Bay. During the car ride, Judy heard about the intricacies of making the perfect crème brûlée and the need for proper knives, blow torches, and other kitchen equipment. Herman really had a deep level of insight into the kitchen. Judy imagined that he could have continued the discussion for hundreds of miles. However, it was not long until the impressive dome of the Yerkes Observatory came into sight, ending
“Herman,” Judy said, “I gather that this observatory is the home to the world’s largest refracting telescope and that it weighs a tremendous amount; it is quite long, hence the need for the huge dome we see. They open a slit in the dome and peer out of it using the telescope; the inside of the dome will probably be about as cold as it is outside…sort of like keeping condensation off the windshield.” Judy paused and said, "so, Herman, make sure you bring your sweater from the back seat.” “Hmmmph,” said Guillaume, “I am not a sweater!! It’s my fur and I’m not giving it up to any one…no scalped squirrel!!” “Very funny, Guillaume,” said Judy, “now hop up on my shoulder and behave yourself.” Herman parked the car and the group got out. As they did, they
were greeted by a bulldog. Guillaume immediately jumped off Judy’s shoulder and jumped at the dog and wagged his tongue at him. The dog backed up and looked ashamed of himself. Guillaume walked up to him, put a paw on the dog, and conversed with him. Soon, they were exchanging smartphone numbers and comparing pictures of families. Guillaume marched back to Judy and Herman “he’s a fine fellow; his name is Hyde. He was enrolled in an astrophysics program at the University of Chicago. The scientists here adopted him as a pet. They also work together on various experiments involving the feasibility of sending animals into outer space. He has a fascinating life here and will be quite friendly to us. Now, let's go!”

**YERKES OBSERVATORY PET**, Hyde Bulldog:
Hyde is originally from the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, as his University of Chicago sweatshirt suggests. He has studied astrophysics and serves as a fine pet for the scientists at Yerkes. He is in charge of their ‘animals in space’ program.

Once inside, they were struck by the beautiful inlaid patterns in the wall. As Judy was admiring them, another group came in to join the tour: it was Dr. Singh and Louie and Dewey. Guillaume whispered in Judy’s ear that he would keep his eye on them and watch out for her. Judy, however, had already determined that she was not going to let Dr. Singh bother her and was keeping a tight focus on the geometry she was observing. She asked the tour guide, himself a scientist, a lot of questions about the length of the telescope, its
weight, climatic variation and the nighttime visibility of stars. Finally, another man asked why there was a ‘swastika’ on the wall. The guide explained that the observatory had been built long before World War II and that what was on the wall were geometric stars of all sorts…that what had come to be known as a ‘swastika’ was in fact simply a four-armed star. Judy jumped right in and noted that indeed that was correct and that a four-armed star could have either a clockwise or counterclockwise orientation and that the swastika typically associated with the Third Reich had a clockwise orientation whereas the ones on the walls here had a counterclockwise orientation so that calling them a ‘swastika’ was incorrect. The man who had asked the question glared at Judy; but, she went on, oblivious to the situation she was creating. She commented that one could generate such stars, using the fractal concept of self-similarity, and drew a picture on the program illustrating the process although she noted that such process was better when animated as it was in a recent article she had written with a colleague (and gave them all the url: [http://www.mylovedone.com/image/solstice/sum14/arlgri.html](http://www.mylovedone.com/image/solstice/sum14/arlgri.html)). She also noted that the fractal sequence could be used to produce tiles and asked the guide if they had used tiles such as the one she drew to cover the bathroom floors.
At this point, the Guide had had enough. “While this is all very interesting, at least to some of us, I would like to encourage more general questions in advance of moving the group upstairs to the dome. The scientists here are quite willing to talk about issues related to the observatory on a one-on-one basis, too. Please let us know. But, on the tour, we do try to keep things to items of general interest to a large group of people. I do not see other questions, so I’d like to inventory the group to get an idea of total weight; you see, the platform in the dome that surrounds the telescope moves up and down for optimizing the capability of scientists of various heights to view the heavens through the eyepiece. That platform is held up by ropes that hold only so much weight. Also, the weight needs to be distributed across the surface of the platform. Sirs, the two of you may need to stay off the platform,” he tactfully remarked to Louie and Dewey.
“Well, that is no way to talk to my colleagues,” remarked Dr. Singh, “they are an integral part of my business. And while we are at it, I wish to see one of your scientists today to talk about the problems of using a refracting telescope with a camera. You see, I am making an important visual display, involving movies and still shots, and need to use a telescope in the process. If I need to pay cash, I will do so...here, take some...but I must proceed with this. How about NOW?” “Sir,” the worn guide remarked, “please put your cash back in your pocket. We do not respond to bribery; we are an academic institution. But, let me see how I can help you.” “Thank you,” Singh declared, “but my name is NOT ‘Sir’; you may call me Dr. Singh. I believe I may be a relative of Dr. Chandrasekhar; maybe that will be of greater interest to you than cash?” “Yes, Dr. Singh,” the harried guide said, “but I would advise you to drop action and comment that might suggest bribery, name-dropping, and other unsavory approaches IF I am able to set you up with our expert in the use of cameras with refracting telescopes.” “Thank you,” Singh noted. Judy and Guillaume winked at each other; they had never heard the Dr. be so polite; he must really have wanted that interview!

The group headed up the flight of stone stairs to the dome; an intern escorted them. Soon the main guide returned. He told Dr. Singh that he and Louie and Dewey could see the expert immediately and that they would need to do exactly as they were told when visiting parts of the observatory not generally open to the public. Judy thought that the Guide had handled this very well...he was going to get Singh to be quiet by getting Singh what he wanted, and also remove the hazard of having these two large men walk out on the platform...Judy always admired a real win-win situation. Singh and the models vanished from sight as the Guide took them away.
As the group headed up the stairs, Herman slipped and banged his leg. It appeared to bleed a bit and so Judy encouraged him to go to the men’s room and get it fixed up although she had wanted to have him present; Herman listened carefully and often asked subsequent penetrating questions. Judy and Guillaume continued on up the stairs to the interior of the dome. The group walked out on the platform and got to see the giant refracting telescope up close. It was quite an impressive sight. Guillaume jumped off Judy’s shoulder and ran up to the top of the giant telescope and looked over the edge at the amazing 40 inch lens.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yerkes_Observatory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yerkes_Observatory)

“Get that squirrel out of here!” shouted the intern. Guillaume was immediately escorted to the lawn of the building; Judy said, to no avail, that Guillaume was in fact her ‘service squirrel’ but the intern was not impressed. Guillaume agreed to remain outside. He phoned Hyde and the two of them sat on the large lawn, surrounded
on three sides by abutments and on the fourth by the lake, and exchanged stories about their remarkable lives.

After about an hour, Judy returned to the SUV. Herman was already there—he had found the cook at the observatory and gotten some ice for his leg. Guillaume was sitting in the back seat, telling Herman all about his adventures running up the telescope and getting evicted from the observatory. Soon the group was heading back to Lake Geneva. Herman contacted Jake and Judy called Charles and they all agreed to meet at their favorite downtown restaurant for rotisserie chicken while looking at Geneva Lake.

**Chicken Dinner, and More**

“Let’s get the big round table; we can see the lake from there,” Judy said, “we have a party of seven: Charles, Jake, Kent, Dr. Bob, Herman, Me, and Guillaume.” The group was seated and started with pitchers of local beer, loaded nachos, and other salty snacks including popcorn. Soon, the four who played bridge were talking about the hands from the afternoon and sharing them with Herman. Judy and Guillaume were talking about Guillaume’s adventures with Hyde. All were having a good time.

Judy asked Charles what the results were and Charles said that that was an interesting question given that on one hand a director had made an error that caused no end of difficulty. He explained it to the group.

North:

♠ K Q 10 7
♥ K 10 7 4
♦ A Q 7
♣ K 5
East, Kent:
   ♠ A 3
   ♥ 9 8 6 3
   ♦ 10 8 5
   ♣ J 10 6 2
South:
   ♠ 5 2
   ♥ Q 5
   ♦ K 9 6 4 3 2
   ♣ 8 7 4
West, Charles:
   ♠ J 9 8 6 4
   ♥ A J 2
   ♦ J
   ♣ A Q 9 3

The bidding was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>West</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1NT</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>2S</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3NT</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“When South bid 2S, North said ‘Transfer.’ Before I passed the last time, I said ‘what did 2S mean?’ North said 'it’s a transfer to clubs'. Kent, thinking that South had clubs, never considered a club lead. In fact, South did not have clubs. And the explanation of ‘transfer’ was incorrect; 2S was a 'relay' to 3C which could then be corrected to diamonds. So North had misled us. A club lead would have beaten 3NT, but given the misdirection, North/South made 3NT.

After the hand, I asked North some more questions and discovered the truth. I then called the Director. After consulting with another Director, the first one let the result stand. When I asked (no one
returned to tell me) if the ruling had been changed, she said 'no, and you’d better be careful'. Now, I don’t intimidate as I’m sure you know, and so said to her 'OK…I’ve had wrong rulings before' and then subsequently appealed to the Head Director, Eric, who changed the result to 3NT down one. The actual process took way too long to sort out; it should have taken about 4 minutes if the first Director had performed her job correctly instead of digging in her heels over her initial wrong ruling. The difference was of course significant to the entire team."

Herman became enraged, “That’s the worst ruling I’ve ever heard! She should drop dead! Some people just don’t deserve to live! If I had an extermination button, I could take care of that for you!” “Well, Herman,” the even-tempered Jake noted, “I certainly agree that it’s an ill-considered ruling, but there are many worse things in the world; so, I can’t say that I agree with the rest of your characterization of the situation.” “No, Jake, you are wrong,” Herman insisted, “see these salt and pepper shakers? They are upright, functional, ready to go, and not causing any trouble. That’s the way the world should be.
Suppose I balance the shakers, without leaning them against anything. Now the world is in a precarious state; a slight shake of the table one way and the world is right again; a slight shake the other (and Herman slammed on the table with his fist) and all is awry...salt and pepper, guts and gore everywhere!! The world has gone from upright and stable to marginally balanced to fallen!” By
then, Herman’s voice had risen to a feverish pitch; waitstaff came running wanting to know if all were ok...mothers shielded their children’s ears.

Judy noted that Herman had, himself, fallen at the observatory; Charles asked for the check and the group left hastily and forgot about ordering the chicken dinners; they were restoring ‘balance’ within the group.

A Phone Call from Hyde
As Judy and Guillaume and Charles got into their car, Guillaume’s smartphone began to ring. “Hi, Hyde, what’s up,” Guillaume asked of his new friend, “sure, sure, we will be right there.” Guillaume hung up, put his phone away, and told Charles that the group had to head out to the observatory immediately; that there had been some sort of accident possibly involving a bridge player. “I had,” Guillaume continued, “been bragging to Hyde about the two of you—so he knows that you are both professors and scientists, that you are here with the bridge group, and that you have experience involving difficult situations. That’s why he phoned me—to get to you.” “I see,” said Charles. “Furthermore,” Guillaume said, “it may be the case that the accident involves Dr. Singh who was at the observatory today with us. Apparently the platform floor of the observatory has fallen and there may be some people trapped. Hopefully no one is squashed.”

Soon the group was back at the observatory. Hyde greeted them and introduced them to some of the scientists there. Louie and Dewey were there but had refused to talk to the scientists because they did not have permission from their ‘Master’ to do so. Charles persuaded them that they did have permission to talk to bridge players and showed them his ABC Life Master Card to illustrate that
he was a bridge player. They explained that Dr. Singh had been in a private meeting with a scientist who was an expert in using cameras in association with refracting telescopes. That fellow’s office was on the level of the observatory below the movable dome floor…off to the side. But, when the floor fell, that office became inaccessible. No one had seen either the camera expert or Dr. Singh since the floor fell. There was no window to the office. The group was awaiting a ‘jaws of life’ machine from the State Police in order to lift the floor and see what was going on there.

While they were all discussing the events of the day, the Police arrived and went to work. It was not long until they discovered a body: Dr. Singh. He had been totally flattened by the floor. Death must have been instantaneous. There was still no sign of the scientist. After another hour of work, they managed to get back to his office door and get it open; he was inside, scared and shaken, but OK. Dr. Singh had been leaving the office when the floor fell; very unfortunate timing, indeed.

Activity reports--Back at the Helvetica.

Report of Guillaume.

Well, I guess I’d like to start by saying that it’s been a remarkable
few days around here. And, while Dr. Singh was surely not well-liked in the bridge world, and perhaps elsewhere, I am truly sorry, as I’m sure we all are, to learn of the tragic accident at the observatory. But, I do think that Charles is right; that to gain greater understanding of the entire situation that it is useful to pool our observations over the recent past.

I first came into contact with Dr. Singh after I went with Judy and the rest of my group to the Alma Mater TeaGarten. We had a wonderful time; a few drinks, fine platters, and all around convivial times. Judy seemed to relax following her earlier run-in with Singh and I was relieved to see that. Then Dr. Singh and crew arrived at the TeaGarten, so Judy and the others left soon after that and I stayed to see what he was up to.

Here’s a summary of what I saw and heard. They asked to be seated on the deck, where there’s a small refracting telescope for looking at birds and stars. After Judy and the others left, I sneaked around behind the deck and positioned myself in a tree where I could see and hear all without being noticed…after all, what’s unusual about a squirrel sitting in a tree in the forest! Brian came out and was extremely nice to them, as he is to everyone. He lit the fire pit for them, brought them drinks and beautiful food. Singh paid for it immediately; gave Brian 500 dollars in cash to leave them alone on the deck for an hour, saying he needed privacy to make a movie. Then, Singh began unpacking the large suitcase he had….it was filled with cameras, photographic equipment of all sorts, portable bamboo screens, and tiger-stripped fabric. He sat the models down and told them that he was negotiating a big merger between his men’s plus-sized underwear division and a male enhancement company. He then had the models strip and put on tiger-stripped briefs that left very little to the
imagination. He photographed them in various poses around the fire pit and then sent them off into the woods where he made some feeble attempts to photograph them through the telescope. All this was done to make a promotional video in support of the proposed merger. After just less than one hour, he folded up his tent and left, as he had said he would. It was all quite odd, but he did what he said he was going to do and he did it on time. When I left the woods, I felt a need to reflect a bit more on what I had seen; I felt as if these were pieces of a puzzle which made sense but that I was missing the frame into which they all fit together with each other. Later it came to me as I drew from my background in linguistics: Sanskrit—the mother language of India. The Sanskrit word for ‘Tiger’ is ‘Vyagara’—now I saw why Singh was so wrapped up in this possible merger and why he thought HIS underwear company could land it. He had what was probably a unique take on things given his own cultural background.

So, the next day, Judy and Herman and I went to Yerkes Observatory. Fascinating place. As you know, Dr. Singh and his crew came to the tour that we were on. As usual, he made a pest of himself and obviously came to try to learn from experts how to make good videos using a camera with a telescope. I know from watching him on the deck at Alma Mater that he obviously wanted clear telescopic photos of what his guys were doing in the woods in their Tiger briefs at night, but he was having trouble getting the kinds of photographs he wanted. So, he pushed until he got in to see the expert at Yerkes, probably the world’s leading expert at this using a refractive telescope. As I noted before, Singh was extraordinarily motivated to close this deal.

Much of the rest of the time I was there, after I was evicted from the dome, I spent talking to my new friend, Hyde, a bulldog. He is a fine
fellow and I hope that some time you might all have a chance to meet and get to know him. I told him about all of you, in glowing terms. He told me about life around the observatory. It’s all quite remarkable. The observatory is adjacent to Geneva Lake…it has a considerable interface with it. He told me that they receive their summer postal mail by boat, by something called “Jump Mail”! Apparently postal mail boats circle the lake without stopping. They hire athletic teenagers to jump off the boat to deliver mail and then jump back on as it continues past the dock. If a kid misses the boat and winds up in the lake, he/she just gets out and continue the route, still wet. Amazing! Here’s a link to a video you might enjoy: I’m not sure how it all hangs together, but these are the interesting activities I’ve been involved in recently.

Report of Theodore on behalf of himself, Binker, and Tine.

You might think that you all know where I have been and what I have been doing during the entire time. And, for the most part, that is true. However, after Charles and Judy and Guillaume left the room for Charles to play bridge and Judy and Guillaume to go to the observatory, I must confess that I took Binker and Tine as my guests over to the bar in the resort. Our room was a bit cold and they had a nice fireplace and drinks to warm the heart and the mind in the bar. Don’t worry, Charles; if need be, I will pay our bar tab.
The Wisconsin honeybee population makes a very nice Mead, I must say, though.

Anyway, as we were enjoying several glasses each, a man came over to our table and engaged us in conversation. I noticed that he had a British accent and so I asked him where he was from. He appeared to think that I, as an American, was some sort of simpleton. I told him that folks at this table, despite their American accents were also originally from Western Europe. He warmed a bit to that and asked where. When Binker said Paris, the man began talking French. He said he had been a sailor stationed in the Mediterranean and also at Limoges. He commented that there was nothing in that town. Tine mentioned the fine China, plates, small cups (of particular interest to Tine) from Limoges. All this was told to him in impeccable Parisian French. He seemed to have trouble understanding; I put it down to regional variation in accent. Subsequently he told us that he needed to get back to work; he had a Gucci Carrier bag with a beautiful leather strap and papers, scrawled upon, strewn across his table at various angles. He said he was working on translations involving classical languages, particularly with these documents in Latin. We noted that we all had taken Latin; he commented that it was important to know Latin in order to understand works of Cicero and Pythagoras....hmmm...I thought to myself, I'm not a linguist but I am a philosopher and Pythagoras was Greek. Was he testing me? Hard to say, so I just sat there. Then the conversation turned to other things classical, including music. He said he liked the Russian composers, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, and Dostoyevsky (I looked askance at him on the latter). What sort of fool did he take me for? It all seemed quite odd. Finally, he commented that he was waiting for someone from India, to help him with Sanskrit, a classical Indian language, in association with some business merger. Clearly, he thought the
Indian fellow also a fool of some sort, as he noted that the man had paid him upfront, in a good amount, for the service. The 'linguist' noted that the client was late; he took that opportunity to pat himself on the back by saying that even though he had the huge prepaid sum, he was nonetheless waiting for the late client even though he didn't have to do so. He could have taken the money and run. It all sounded quite peculiar...we left before his appointment showed up. By then, he was on his third Vodka martini that we knew about; I don't know what happened after that but I think we all concluded that he was some sort of phony.

Charles’s Report
First of all, thanks so much for your outstanding activity reports. As I think you know, most of my time here has been spent at the bridge table. The first time I got to see many people was when a group went for chicken dinner at the Rotisserie Restaurant. I suspect Guillaume has relayed that adventure to you, so just let me hit the highlights and say that it was quite clear to me that the trip to the observatory had been a somewhat stressful one. Herman went over the top in the restaurant with his ‘salt and pepper’ theory of life and the universe. I see you are nodding your heads so I gather that Theodore, Binker, and Tine have already been filled in on this. Going on from there, I think you all know that Guillaume got a phone call from his new friend Hyde, at the observatory. We all went out there, found that the platform in the dome had fallen and that this unfortunate accident had crushed Dr. Singh causing his immediate death.

What you do not know, any of you, is the following. I spent more time at the observatory after you left. The scientists showed me around the building. It is an interesting question as to WHY the platform fell. At first, some thought that Louie and Dewey caused it
in some way due to their immense size. But, no. I talked to the Guide from that tour and he told me all that transpired (Judy, I gather you gave him quite a time in advance of Dr. Singh!). Anyway, the Guide said that he took Herman to the washroom on the ground level of the building to clean up his leg; then he took Dewey and Louie to a waiting room that was not under the platform, but was on the ground level of the building. Finally, he escorted Dr. Singh under the platform to an office at the far end of the building on the ground floor. While that was all interesting, it shed no light on why the platform fell. I asked what had secured the platform to keep it from falling. He said there were thick ropes that no shears could cut through. I asked to see the ropes. We picked our way through the rubble to find the ropes. Lo and behold, the ropes were frayed and were singed a dark color as if they had been burned—not from years of friction, but from high, intense, concentrated heat. That was not an accident. Now we knew we were dealing, instead, with murder.

**What Immortal Hand or Eye Dare Frame Thy Fearful Symmetry—**

**Charles's Theory**

Here is a chain of logic that would sew the events 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, rational 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.

Dr. Singh was a pitiful person. I would have thought he was his own worst enemy; evidently that was not the case. No one I knew liked him; a few people tolerated him; most walked away from him; and, a few shot nasty insults in his direction. But murder? Why would anyone want to murder him?

We looked at his business and his business associates. Clearly unsavory types were attracting each other. But, it appears they were doing nothing illegal. Stupid, perhaps. Ego-driven by incredibly self-centered men (Huey, and Dr. Singh)...for sure. Pest? Yes. Some folks wanted to scream when they saw him coming; others wanted to hide. But, reasonable people handle their feelings toward boors in various ways; not typically with murder. It’s not worth it.

With these thoughts in mind, I returned to the observatory; the scientists out there were so helpful. They were as eager to get to the bottom of this as we were. Again, I went over what happened. This time, I talked also to the cook in the kitchen. It had been closed when we were last out there. She said that she had seen Guillaume and that he was upset at being evicted; she reassured him that he was adorable and then he looked happier and went on his way to find Hyde. She said she had also seen Dewey and Louie and given them some cookies she had made; she noted that ‘those boys could eat.’ She met Dr. Singh briefly, offered him cookies, and I gather that he told her that he would need to inspect the premises to make sure they exceeded code before he would even consider touching any food. She met Herman and gave him ice for his leg and wrapped it. Of course, he was appreciative and kept talking about
kitchen equipment to her, as we probably would all guess that he might. Then, she was called out by a scientist to bring some coffee and food to a lab for his meeting with his assistants. When she returned about 20 minutes later there was no one in the kitchen and she saw no one else while the tour was going on.

That leaves 20 minutes unaccounted for with four people on the loose in the observatory. I think we can assume that Dr. Singh did not tamper with the ropes. He was totally absorbed in his own agenda of promoting his precious merger and was consumed with cameras and telescopes. That leaves Louie, Dewey, and Herman. One might imagine that Louie and Dewey were sick of the abuse heaped on them by Dr. Singh. But, would their lives be worthless if he remained alive? Hardly. In fact the contrary was the case. He was their meal ticket. All they had to do was follow the silly charades that fed his equally silly ego and he would take good care of them…other forms of bigotry have worked in that way. That leaves Herman. I have no doubt that he and many others hated Singh. But, they cared too much for themselves, their families, and their own lives to throw their lives away on someone they regarded as an idiotic fool. Still these three had the opportunity. Perhaps they had the means. But I could see no motive.

I thought about Theodore and his reflective nature. So I sat down and just started to let my mind drift. I thought about the Jump Mail Guillaume told us about. Might it have been that someone took the place of one of the regular jumpers and found an interesting way into the observatory…possible as a means, but again what would be a motive? In addition, having the opportunity at desired times might be difficult. So, we keep 'jump mail' in mind but only as a prospect fulfilling 'means'--motive and opportunity would still need to be filled in.
From there, my mind went to the odd phony linguist that Theodore, Binker, and Tine had encountered in the resort bar. He apparently had some sort of loose connection with Dr. Singh. He might have had motive if Singh had figured out that he was running a scam of some sort selling translation services without stated qualifications. Of course, I don't know how much Singh paid the guy and whether there might have been blackmail of some sort there--but, he was such an obvious phony that it must have been difficult for him to pass himself off as what he was claiming to be. We have only the linguist's word that Singh was late. I did talk to the bartender, and it turns out that the linguist had been in the bar most of the afternoon, drinking his lunch; I gather that he is a regular and also a pest. In any event, the 'linguist' might have had a motive, but he was probably unlikely to have had means or opportunity at Yerkes--lies and translations were the tools of his trade. And, in terms of motive, unless blackmail of some sort concerning credentials was involved, it might have been more as if he were going to run some sort of scam on the egomaniac. Killing the goose that he wanted to lay the golden egg was probably not part of the equation, but again, a possibility of some sort.

Finally, my mind drifted back to our Chicken Dinner at the lakeside restaurant. Herman had asserted that some people ‘deserved to die’. Then he wove this odd ‘salt and pepper shaker’ theory of the universe to defend it. Judy and I put that off to an odd reaction from our friend who had just taken a nasty fall on stone steps. It was also odd that he had fallen; the steps are old and uneven, to be sure; Herman, however, had always appeared well-coordinated. Of course, accidents happen, or did he deliberately create a diversion in order to separate himself from the group so he could go after Singh?
In Herman’s mind, perhaps Singh did not deserve to live--part of his theory of the universe; was Singh a pest of no merit who deserved to be exterminated? Would Herman's world order be improved with him out of the way--the salt and pepper shakers back upright on the table? Would restoration of order be 'worth' it? Perhaps…but what about means? Judy said that Herman talked about his kitchen equipment, including his crème brûlée torch on the way out in the car. Perhaps he always carried it with him, not wishing to leave it where others might use it? I know that Judy does not allow anyone else ever to use her favorite knives. Perhaps Herman felt that way about his blow torch. When cook was away for 20 minutes, that would have given him time to partially rupture the rope support structure of the platform so that it would fall when he was no longer in the area. But, how then would he know that he would kill Singh and not others?

So again, we are left with a scenario that has interesting elements in it; the means are there if we concede that Herman might routinely carry a blow torch in some sort of sensitive Chef attitude. The motive is there only if restoration of Herman's view of world order is more important to him than his own life--and, from what we have seen, that is some sort of oddly altruistic world-view to be considered. The opportunity is the shakiest issue in this construction, however. It was just luck that Herman had time to go on the tour at all; he did not arrange the delay of Kent's plane in New York that forced us to have a five man team. Once we did have it, then Herman could arrange to be 'off' and he did so at the time of the observatory tour, perhaps so he could be nice to his friend, Judy. But, how did he know that Singh would be on the tour? And, how did he know that Singh would separate himself from the group? The answer is that he could not have known. So, was
Herman just laying in wait, doing what he wanted to do, assuming that when an opportunity came along that he would be ready to seize it, in order to rid the universe of this person whom he had determined no longer deserved to live? Still I was left with the question of why he went ahead in this manner in which he might have killed any number of others and not Singh, himself. Then it came to me...Herman didn’t care. In terms of his world view, only those would get hit and crushed who deserved it; whether he 'got' Singh or not, he would get someone who deserved it. He was doing the world a service and what better place to offer salvation to the world than in an observatory that studies the patterns of the heavens. What I had missed was that the symmetry in risk/benefit analysis was predicated on things happening in a usual rational universe. There was a certain sort of logic to Herman's world view although many might not have considered it as such.

Of course, I have no tangible evidence to support this sequence. I went to Herman and discussed all this with him. His plausible response, of course, was that his salt and pepper analogue was just so much of a bull session around a bar table. Plausible in a certain way, and perhaps reasonable in concept: some people didn't deserve to live. But not something that he would implement and not something he would expect anyone else to implement. He noted that there are many true concepts in the world, and that there are many who are flexible enough in thought to be able to implement them in a variety of ways. Naturally, he claimed to be smart enough to be such a person although he maintained steadfastly that he had not implemented this plan.

I asked him if he routinely carried a blow torch with him. He dismissed that, too, as complete nonsense. He did say that he was
pleased that Singh was no longer around to topple the world of low-level bridge administration with his compulsive, over-bearing, ego-maniacal micromanaging approach to life; Herman expressed pleasure in knowing that some part of that world had been returned to stability.

Personally, I came away from the conversation believing that my theory involving Herman was correct; but, I also came away thinking that no one would ever be able to prove the theory in a court of law. On the way out, I grabbed Herman's sweater that Judy described he had worn to the observatory; perhaps if I gave that to the police, along with my story, they would be able to tell through some sort of laboratory analysis of the fabric, if he had been carrying a blow torch. On the other hand, we might be left only with the admonition of our dearly departed friend, Bob, successful prosecutor of so many murderers, that 'we only catch the dumb ones.' As with so many things, time will tell...did Herman's 'immortal' hand restore symmetry and stability to one of his world's?
Chapter 10: Washington D.C. and Meridian MS Murder

They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon.
And hand in hand, at the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon.
Edward Lear, The Owl and the Pussycat, 1871

Dedication from B. K. Barry:

To William Charles Arlinghaus and Sandra Judith Lach Arlinghaus and
Their Great Grand-daughter, Adeline Arlinghaus
(‘Arlinghaus’ is derived from the German for ‘House of the Earl’)
on the occasion of their nearly simultaneous celebrations of
50th wedding anniversary and 1st birthday, respectively.
Two nearly coincident landmark celebrations!
Arrival in DC
“Oh, Charles,” Judy Earl commented to her husband, “look there’s the Washington Monument, the Capitol—how exciting—let’s see what else we see from the window of the train as we pull into Union Station in DC.” Once again, Charles Earl and his wife Judy were heading toward another international bridge tournament held by the American Bridge Congress (ABC). This time, however, instead of driving, the couple had chosen to take the train.

A few years ago, they had purchased a winter home in Meridian, Mississippi, where their son Ed and his family live. Now they were traveling from Meridian to DC for the tournament and after two weeks would return to their home in Meridian. Ed owned a craft beer ‘Brewtique’ there and was planning to use it as a venue to celebrate his parents’ 50th wedding anniversary shortly after their return from the tournament.

Soon, the couple arrived in a cab under the porte cochère of their giant hotel overlooking Rock Creek Park, near the National Zoo. Charles had stayed there many times, but it was a first for Judy and, as usual, she was enthusiastic about being in a new place!
As they entered the lobby, Charles saw a long check-in line and invited Judy to sit down around the obelisk center point. “Charles,” she said, “this makes me think of Alexandria and Eratosthenes and his great measurement of the circumference of the Earth. Look, the obelisk is pointing up to a skylight to let in the sun—reminiscent of the sun’s rays going into the well at Syene!” Judy was a mathematical geographer and she often looked at things from a vantage point that might surprise others a bit. “Well,” Charles said, “I do agree that it reminds me of Eratosthenes, but when I think of him, I think of his prime number sieve!” Charles was a mathematician specializing in algebraic graph theory and number theory. Each saw different worlds, but by and large they complemented each other; hence their almost 50 years of a happy and successful marriage.
Judy went and sat at one of the seats around the lobby obelisk, adjacent to the Lobby Lounge. While on the train, she had spent time playing Pokemon Go on her smartphone but had had trouble collecting enough Pokeballs to capture many Pokemon; the train went too quickly past most PokeStops. Now, at the obelisk, she

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eratosthenes
noted that she was sitting at the intersection of two circles surrounding two local PokeStops. With GPS drift, she moved from one to the other, and managed to snare a fair number of PokeBalls and other desirable items. There was a Gym across the street, but not in range of the PokeStop. More important, she saw that both nearby PokeStops had had lures placed on them so she was able to capture numerous Pokemon while she waited for Charles. She had fun photographing the Pokemon in real-world settings, mixing animated imaginary animals into real-world settings: Pidgey checks in at registration, she thought! Of course, with a busy hotel lobby, it was difficult to isolate the Pokemon; people walking through the background often interfered with the sort of photo she might have liked to have. After a while, Charles reappeared. Judy was hesitant to leave her new-found post, but Charles insisted that they go to the room and unpack.

In the Room
“What a great view, Charles!” Judy said, “we can see the dome of the Capitol to the right, in the distance…look at the shrubs over there…I wonder what they are; they don’t look quite like our azaleas or our crepe myrtles in Meridian, but they are somewhat similar…” Charles listened but offered no comment; his knowledge of plants and flowers was non-existent. But, he was happy his wife enjoyed them. Eventually, he did offer what he knew. “See the bridge over the parkway? Under the bridge, we have built a café called the “TrollGate Café” as one in the Alma Mater chain of restaurants.”
The Earls had created a nation-wide chain of restaurants, with various specialties, commemorating Judy’s mother, Alma, a great chef of the 20th Century, and also tied to the Earls’ profession as professors in universities...a double entendre that amused both of them and also had delighted Judy’s mother (who knew of a few of them before she died). “We will have to go there,” Judy said to Charles, “but in the meantime, let’s get settled quickly—I want to get back down to the Lobby and collect more PokeBalls and Pokemon.”

**Back in the Lobby**

Soon, Judy left to go back to the Lobby and capture more Pokemon. Charles just shook his head; he had no interest in Pokemon and thought the whole thing was a bit silly. But, then again, what could he say; he had come to play cards with thousands of other people. Perhaps running around hunting for Pokemon was not a whole lot
different from hunting for tops at the duplicate bridge table and associated master points. Both of the Earls were more than a bit on the compulsive side and both enjoyed collecting all sorts of things: from postage stamps, to coins, to master points, to Pokemon…was one different from the other? In many ways they all had elements of an ‘augmented’ reality to them.

Charles left the room and went down to the ABC office to see how the tournament itself was being structured and to talk to the many bridge administrators he knew during the decades he had served as one himself. Now, he had retired from that service, but really just couldn’t let it go!

Judy took out her smartphone and began collecting items from the nearby PokeStops and capturing Pokemon. There was not too much of a challenge involved, but it was fun. In addition, the appearance of being occupied with the game let Judy engage in people watching and listening without arousing suspicion. Soon, a very attractive middle-aged woman from Finland, with beautiful blond hair on top of her large, tall, athletic frame--scantily clad in a black off-the-shoulder dress--sat down a few seats from Judy. “Well, well, well,” Judy thought; “let’s see what/who turns up next.” Judy was not disappointed; after about 2 minutes, a man in his early 60s sat down next to her. He told her he was a great bridge player and asked about her; was she a beginner? Did she play Stayman? The woman told him she was here practicing for the World Cup team of which she was a star member. Undaunted, the man continued to try to impress her; he picked up his smart phone and apparently phoned a fellow bridge player to apologize to him that he could not keep his lunch date with some world-class USA bridge player because he was in the lobby having a conversation with a beautiful, fascinating woman and they could not bear to part
company. At this, the woman yawned loudly. Still, the man
continued, as he changed his ego-oriented assault to one that
attempted to get her to talk about herself. It turned out that she was
a pediatric psychoanalyst. He asked her about her cases and she
informed him, somewhat brusquely, that she did not discuss her
patients with others and was certainly not going to discuss them with
him. Now he reverted to his previous style, given the latest rebuff,
and told her that he was an operations research professor who
taught chemistry and mathematics at a major university in New York
City, and that he did so for no pay as his kind donation to the world
at large. He claimed also to be an expert on autism and tried this
approach to finding out more about her patients. He asked if she
had heard about the most recent research, using the concept of a
one-to-one correspondence, regarding autism and brain cell
structure. The woman gave him an icy stare. He evidently
interpreted that look as a lack of comprehension and so told her,
incorrectly, what a one-to-one correspondence was….at that, Judy
(who clearly knew the man was lying) dropped her phone on the
floor lest she begin to take the man to task (verbally). Again he
picked up his cell phone, and this time called his parents and talked
to them briefly. When done, he explained to the woman what a
loving and caring man he was, despite the incredible burden he was
carrying with his own parents. At this point, the woman, who had
perhaps been amusing her psychoanalytic mind with him, seemed
to tire of playing with him, and simply stated that she was there
waiting for her husband. Now the man dropped his phone on the
floor and as he picked it up, pointed across the lobby at some short,
undernourished, scruffy-looking man, and asked if that were her
husband. She said no, as she stood up and walked away with a tall,
handsome, muscular middle-aged man. At this point, the
prospective suitor uncoiled himself from the chair and ran into the
bar.
Life in the lobby was interesting. In addition to an occasional glimpse into the personal lives of some people, which oddly enough they wish to flaunt in open public spaces, there are the more usual comings and goings. It appears to take a certain mindset to want to show off in a hotel lobby. Indeed, it may even be a somewhat dangerous set of mind. The routine continued, oblivious to this odd interchange between two strangers. A man with a broken lower leg used a wheeled cart/scooter to get around; one leg was on the seat of the scooter and he used the well leg for normal walking. Judy thought about the strange pattern of footprints that an arrangement of that sort would produce in the snow or in the mud. Soon, a hotel bellman came to remove an upright piano from the lobby, which he did easily, alone. The wheeled piano seemed to glide across the polished floors with merely a slight touch. Judy reflected that those wheels must have brakes on them; otherwise the piano might go flying off under the pounding of an overly-enthusiastic pianist! Charles’s and Judy’s friend, Dr. Bob walked by, in a hurry, but as always gave a big, pleasant ‘hello!’ He had been so helpful to Charles and to many others at various bridge tournaments; it was always delightful to see him, even if only for a fleeting minute—Charles and Judy had known the now-retired MD since he was a teenager.

Judy began to adjust her focus on a single woman sitting alone, and looking uncomfortable, on the other side of the lobby, close to the Lobby Lounge. She was wearing noise-cancelling headphones. Her slender body was coiled into a ball in a large over-stuffed chair. Judy thought this was a bit strange given that the acoustics in the lobby seemed quite good so that the noise level was certainly not overbearing. She was about to move over closer to this woman when she heard a voice from the other side of the lobby shout, “Hi Judy!” Judy put away her phone and went over to greet her friend,
Faith. Faith and Bryan were just arriving; Bryan headed off to find Charles, with whom he was playing in a number of events, and Faith walked over toward Judy. “Let’s go to the Lobby Lounge and sit and eat and drink and talk,” Judy told her friend. Faith looked unsure but eventually agreed; it seemed as if she had something else on her mind.

In the Lobby Lounge
“I hear the crab cake appetizer here is fantastic…and, large enough to share as a mid-afternoon treat” Judy said in an effort to get Faith back on track. “Sure, sure, Judy….whatever,” Faith noted in a distracted manner. Soon, the attentive staff had brought the two women glasses of Merlot while they waited for their crab cakes. “Judy,” Faith said, “we have a problem. You see, last year the wife of our dear friend, Bob, died; it was all very sudden and of course very sad. Now, I had often been a guest in their home. As you and I do, they also collected teddy bears. I had admired one beautiful bear that they had had hand-made from an out-of-style mink coat of hers. It was her favorite pet. About a month ago, Bryan and I received a package in the mail. From out of the blue, Bob sent us this bear. Naturally, I was delighted to receive the beautiful bear; we hadn’t heard from Bob since his wife’s funeral, so we were a bit concerned about what it might mean…much as some give away a pet prior to taking their own lives. Well, we have had numerous conversations since with Bob and we encouraged him to get some professional grief counseling. He is doing that and I am very happy to say that he seems to be returning to his old self; obviously it is all very difficult. But, what we had not realized, until just recently, is that Bobby Bear (we named the mink bear in honor of his human family roots) also has a difficult problem.
As you know, we are here to play bridge. It turns out, however, that there is another small conference in the hotel: the Stuffed Animal Psychiatric Society (SAPS). We took Bobby to a specialist therapist at home where he was diagnosed with some sort of skin confusion identity crisis disorder that causes him to think he is a ‘coat’ rather than a bear. The therapist at home told us that this is a relatively recent disorder; it emanates from environmentalists who sprayed mink coats to keep women from wearing them. It’s quite
stressful, I understand. Not only does the poor bear not know what
he is, but he often suffers from some of the same syndromes as do
victims of terror attacks; he worries that people will pop up out of
nowhere and attack him with cans of spray paint. We were told that
there would be experts at this convention who were well-versed in
the treatment of this problem. So, we brought Bobby with us; I have
him right here. Isn’t he beautiful?” “Oh, my,” commented Judy,
“yes, he certainly is. Let’s put him right here. Will he leave your lap
or do you want to wait until he is more secure?” “I think we should
wait,” Faith said, “and please, don’t touch him…I know it is tempting
to want to pet his lovely fur but he is overly sensitive right now.”

The two women enjoyed the crab cakes and wine along with casual
chit-chat and some discussion about bridge hands. Bobby said he
wanted to play some three-handed bridge and so Judy pulled a deck
of cards from her purse and deftly did a riffle shuffle followed by a
cascade of cards. Bobby was delighted and asked for more…again,
and again. After about the fifth time, the woman in the lobby near
the Lounge, who was wearing the noise-cancelling headphones, ran
to their table and grabbed the deck of cards and took it, saying she
was hypersensitive to sound and could not stand the sound of cards
snapping….here, at the bridge table (where she always wore
headphones), or anywhere else. Bobby began sobbing…Judy
snatched her cards back and the woman grabbed Judy and threw
her on the floor and started elbowing Judy in the ribs. At this point,
Dr. Bob came past again, pulled the woman off of Judy, examined
Judy, and sent her up to her room as he and Faith carted the
hypersensitive woman off to hotel security.

At the Alma Mater Trollgate Café
Soon after Judy returned to the room, Charles came rushing back;
Dr. Bob had found him downstairs and told him what had happened.
Naturally, Charles was quite concerned about his wife and was
relieved when he came back to the room and found Judy looking around for Pokemon. “Looks as if you are doing ok….I hear you got mugged! Sassy, with the headphones, found you…she’s nuts” Charles said to his wife, “how about going over to the Alma Mater TrollGate Café?” Judy agreed. “But Charles,” she continued, “can we bring our network of assistants? You know they have been so helpful in the past in other locales. I think I’d feel a lot better, given what has happened, if I had their support. Also, I saw our friend Faith today and she brought along a pet; I suspect Theodore and the boys might get along quite well with him.” Charles agreed and so the whole group headed over to the TrollGate Café for drinks and food.

**Theodore E. Bear:** 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.
**Binker Bear:** Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, *When We Were Very Young*] “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. He is a part-time mystery story writer, too, known as ‘B. K.’

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**Tine E. Bear:** 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.

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After some time, Bryan and Faith and Bobby also entered the Café. “Charles, let’s have them join us,” Judy said. Charles agreed and the two groups got together and performed introductions. “Bobby,”
Theodore insisted, “you must share some of my Mead; it is a particularly fine honey wine—do you know it?” “Well, I am not sure,” the timid bear replied. “I think he could have a taste,” Faith commented, “just not too much at once. It is very nice of you Theodore and indeed perhaps just what the doctor ordered. You see, Bobby has been in analysis all afternoon and one of the things the expert psychoanalyst recommended to help him over his skin identity crisis was to associate with other teddy bears and participate in their various conversations and rituals. I didn’t know teddy bears drank Mead, but I suppose it makes sense. I don’t think Bobby has ever had Mead, though.” Bobby appeared to enjoy his drink and his dinner companions; after dinner the group went their separate ways, but Theodore took Bobby’s smartphone contact information and promised to get back to him soon again.

At the Bridge Tournament
“Charles, I don’t know if I can stand much more of this,” Judy complained to her husband; “that woman with the headphones, Sassy, is driving me crazy—it is very hard to play bridge against her, and since the episode where she mugged me, all she does is glare at me as she goes around the room. I don’t know what security must have done to her, but clearly she has become even more hostile since that event.” “Judy,” her patient husband noted, “you need to take advantage of people like that. She is distracted; at the bridge table, it is good when the opponents are distracted, but to gain benefit from it, you need to keep a tight focus on the card game…they are not and they will do dumb things and you need to take advantage of the opportunity.” Charles knew he was wasting his time; he had explained this philosophy to Judy on many occasions. All good bridge players knew this. But he knew that Judy was too reflective and sensitive; fine qualities in a person, but not qualities that paid off at bridge tournaments. So, he did not
pursue the discussion but simply led by example and kept his own focus. “Next board,” he said.

The next few rounds went fairly smoothly and Charles was happy to snag a few average plusses and one top that he manufactured out of whole cloth. Then, all of a sudden, Sassy jumped up out of her seat about ten tables over, and shrieked “you filthy card-snapping pig…you should burn in hell…I hope your smoked oysters catch on fire and choke your pet cat…” and ran from the room with a howl trailing behind. Judy dropped her cards all over the floor and began shaking and sobbing…”I can’t take it! I just can’t take it.” A director came running over; the game stopped while the head director conferred with some of the others. Charles got up from the table and went over to join the group as they consulted. After about 10 minutes, Charles returned to the table and said to his wife, “Let’s go.” Sassy of course had been ejected (and so her partner left too). Charles volunteered to withdraw their pair in order to balance the movement.

**In the Lobby Lounge, Again**

Charles took Judy to the Lobby Lounge for a glass of wine and a bite of food. Just as they settled down at a table, they heard a big “Hall-o-o-o-o-o” emanating from the other side of the bar…it was Theodore! They went over to their table “Join us,” insisted the happy bear, “we are just having some Mead…I am buying for the table…” “Theodore,” said Charles, “don’t you mean that in fact *I* am buying for the table…aren’t you charging your extravagance to our room?” Bobby looked worried…Binker reassured him that it was just an ongoing joke between Charles and Theodore and that all was fine. “Well, Charles,” the bear said as he waved an expressive paw, “I wanted to make our new friend comfortable…you know, when I order one round of four, Tine only drinks a few drops, and
Bobby is just a beginner…Binker and I drink most of theirs. We are thus only on our fourth round…” Charles noted that that was probably more than enough, but that he was glad that Bobby was relaxing with the group. “Next time, though, please ask first,” admonished Charles.

With that settled, the group had fine times comparing odd or interesting experiences of the day. Judy spent most of her share of the conversation going on about the antics of Sassy and photographing Pokemon in interesting situations. “See,” Judy waved in pointing out the woman to the bears, “there’s Sassy over there in her characteristic pose, curled up in that large chair near a plug in the wall, playing on her smartphone, and sporting her headphones….irritating just to look at!” Charles was more interested in discussing bridge hands, but found few receptive as others appeared more involved in the fine points of Mead and other honey products. Bobby seemed to relax and come out of his shell and enjoy being a teddy bear; the analyst from SAPS had apparently given him good advice and Theodore, Binker, and Tine were all very helpful; they were a diverse group in many ways, yet clearly still teddy bears. Bobby could see the similarities and also appreciate that differences exist within the kingdom of teddy beandom.

As the bridge game ended, and other players came down to the Lounge area, the hotel staff wheeled the upright piano into the lobby near the bar. The local arrangements chair announced that tonight’s post-game entertainment was a joint venture between the ABC and SAPS. She introduced Roddo the Great, a world-class bridge player who was also an outstanding pianist (as the ABC rep) and Gordo the Great, an animal balloon artist, (as the SAPS rep). Judy had long been a fan of both Roddo and Gordo. Apparently, Bobby had seen Gordo in action earlier; SAPS hired him to illustrate to the stuffed animals with identity crises that there were kingdoms of all
sorts, including a balloon animal dom one. Gordo worked the crowd while Roddo thrilled the group with both classical and contemporary music. Gordo came running when he saw Judy...he had known both Judy, and her mother Alma, for years. He took special pains to make a special balloon sculpture; Bobby was thrilled.

“Wow, a squirrel,” Bobby exclaimed, “but you see, feel his skin...it’s different, but that’s ok...I know that and he knows it...you see, he is happy in his skin, AND SO AM I. I love being here with all of you!” As Roddo finished his last piece and Gordo finished his last sculpture, the crowd began to dissipate.
Judy said to Charles, “let’s go before I have to look at that woman again!” Charles agreed and the group got their stuff together, ready to head upstairs. Charles took a cursory glance in Sassy’s direction; hmmm, he thought, she looks odd—somewhat gray in the face. “Judy,” you and the boys go on upstairs; I will be up, but it might take a while.” With that, Judy left and Charles rushed over to the piano where he had earlier seen Dr. Bob talking to Roddo. He found the good doctor and the two of them went over to where Sassy was sitting. “No doubt about it, Charles,” Dr. Bob announced, “she is dead….probably strangled with her phone charging cord…would be easy to do, especially in a crowded room with people mesmerized by two incredible talents.” “Oh dear,” commented Charles. “Charles,” the doctor continued, “you stay here and keep people away and I will go get the authorities.” With that, the doctor left; Charles, in the meantime, took a nearby napkin and secured the items he found near the scene (and took a look at Sassy’s smartphone while he had the opportunity) so that no fingerprints would accidentally get smudged by passers-by. Soon the police arrived, escorted by hotel security and Dr. Bob. Charles remained to talk to them; he had had considerable investigative experience, albeit totally amateur, of course. But, he was a master at logic and at creating plausible sequences of logic from otherwise apparently unrelated events. About all he could comment on at this point was to give the police Sassy’s full name, details about the city in the Midwest she was from, and describe her quirky behavior patterns and consistent use of noise-cancelling headphones. He also noted that any bridge player who had been somewhat regular at national tournaments in the past decade would have known her and would have found her to be one of the most irritating people in the room. That is, motive based on dislike might be abundant; however, murder hardly seemed a likely response to her persistent, irritating behavior.
**Back in the Hotel Room**

Charles returned to the room to find that Judy and the boys, including Bobby, had ordered tuna salad sandwiches and Merlot for the group; they were having fine times. Thus, it came as a particular surprise when Charles announced to Judy that they were leaving on the next train to return to Meridian—in the morning. He said that he had talked to Bryan and Faith, and that if Bobby wanted to come with us to Meridian, it would be fine with them…he could visit for a while.

Then, as Judy began quickly packing, Charles explained what had happened and that he was certain it was best for Judy, at least, to get back to one of their homes. They all agreed, and Bobby said he wanted to travel with them; he noted that he had originally travelled to Faith and Bryan inside a box and that he could do it again; for now, though, he wanted to be with his new teddy bear friends although of course he loved Faith and Bryan very much and would miss them.

**On the Train**

After a final good night’s sleep in DC, the group climbed on board the train for a long trip back to Meridian (at least 22 hours). Theodore, Binker, and Tine had only once been on a train; it was a brand new experience for Bobby. The group was fortunate to get seats on short notice in Business Class; it was much better suited to this group than Coach Class, whereas Sleeper Car accommodations seemed hardly necessary for a trip of only one day. There were just a few others in the car with them so they were able to spread out and get comfortable. They plugged in their smartphones so they could play games, drink, talk, and eat, until they fell asleep yet still have fully charged phones when they got off in the morning. Charles took out his laptop and played bridge.
online; Theodore ordered a round of Mead for himself and the boys; Judy hunted for Pokemon.

After some time of sleeping, playing, eating, drinking, and gazing out the window, the train arrived in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. They knew it would not be too long until they arrived back in Meridian. Judy phoned their son, Ed, to let him know where they were. Ed said that he might be tied up when they arrived and unable to meet them at the train station; apparently there was some sort of issue involving Dirk, the front of the house guy, at the Brewtique. But, Ed told her that he would phone his friend Donny to see if Donny could pick them up instead. Ed promised to text back soon to confirm arrangements. Soon, a text came from Ed saying that Donny would be on the platform to help them in Meridian and that he would then bring the entire group to the Brewtique for lunch.

**Arrival in Meridian**

Soon the train drew to a halt and the conductor helped the group onto the platform at Meridian. “Hi, Donny” Judy said, “hope you didn’t have to wait too long!” “Oh, no, it was fine,” Donny replied, “let’s go over to the Brewtique and play some trivia. I walked; it’s a beautiful day. Let me pull your suitcases for you.” As they walked, Donny filled them in some on Ed’s difficulty; Donny worked part-time at the Brewtique as a game show host. It appeared that Dirk, the front of the house manager at the Brewtique had been mishandling hiring practices and inventory management as well as other items. Ed had needed to stay at the bar because he was in the middle of doing some emergency inventory work and needed to keep track of his counts of beer kegs. Soon the group had walked the two short blocks in the pleasant Mississippi weather to Ed’s craft beer bar which boasted more craft beer on tap than any other place in the state.
After greetings were exchanged, the group sat down to play Buzztime Trivia, a favorite of all the humans there, as well as of Binker. Theodore, Tine, and Bobby chimed in when they thought they knew an answer, but it was Binker, Judy, Charles, Ed, and Donny who were core players, along with John and Jill, RK and Susan, Kelvin, Timmy, Jake, Alice, and Rick, who were not there right now. Indeed, the Brewtique consistently finished in the top 20 in North America, under the guidance of subsets of this team, and were often in the top 10. In fact, the last two times they had played together, they had ranked Number 1 and Number 2 in North America, as a bar. As Donny had noted on more than one occasion, ‘Practice Makes Perfect.’ They were quite serious when they played! Thus, when Dirk interrupted them, saying “well, you don’t look as if you are doing very well this game; probably won’t be in the top group,” it made Judy feel as if she had not left the unpleasant bridge game in DC. Charles admonished her “focus, Judy, focus—it’s just ‘Dirk the Jerk’ popping off!” The team played six games and scored in the top 20 in all of them; Dirk (whose negative predictions had not come true) left shortly thereafter while the group stayed on and enjoyed some fine local Mississippi craft beer (that cannot be exported out of state) along with local ‘hoop’ cheese, custom sausage, and deep fried beer-steamed sauerkraut balls, as a charcuterie platter to go with fine beer.

Soon, the conversation turned to Dirk and his various inadequacies. Ed told the group that as the Brewtique had been in need of extra staff in the recent past, and Dirk claimed he had no applications of any merit, Ed had discovered a whole pile of applications, including one from Donny who had over 12 years of experience in the food service business and outstanding references. Dirk had put that one at the bottom of the pile. Dirk had also sorted the applications
according to biological sex and had put at the bottom of that pile any women who were married or might be older. Naturally, when Ed saw this, he devoted more time to investigating the activities of a man whom he had trusted to oversee this business while he worked at building more new businesses and employment opportunities in support of the renaissance of downtown Meridian. While Judy and Charles were away, Ed discovered kegs and kegs of hidden stored beer, as well as hundreds of extra bottles of beer. Despite the huge backlog, Dirk continued to buy the usual order, twice a week, from the beer distributors. At best, Dirk did not know what he was doing. Ed was interested in completing the inventory as quickly as possible so that he would have iron clad support, along with unpaid bills, for firing Dirk. Most regulars had come to dislike Dirk, as evidenced by their cute nickname of ‘Dirk the Jerk’ which they often used in front of him, but that alone, even when coupled with suspicions of other problems, were not sufficient for firing Dirk…at least not in Ed’s careful mind. He said he hoped to have Dirk out by the end of the month.

Judy told Ed that that was enough about restaurant administrative issues. Meanwhile, she was focused once again on taking photos of Pokemon in interesting positions. Ed had set a lure on the PokeStop next door so the hunting was spectacular. Judy was particularly amused at capturing a Pokemon in a pint of reddish Mississippi Hibiscus beer, ‘Dracula’s Delight’! The group had had a great time at lunch and in the early afternoon and now it was time to move on while retaining the positive energy of friends and fun.
Back Home, Country Club Drive
“Welcome back!!” a high-pitched voice yelled from the bedroom. “Guillaume,” Judy shouted…”great to hear you!” Guillaume R. Squirrel was yet another in the group of assistants that sometimes
accompanied Charles and Judy to bridge tournaments. This time, he had requested to stay home so that he might assist Ed in planning events for the Earl’s upcoming 50th wedding anniversary parties.

**SPECIAL AGENT, Guillaume R. Squirrel:**
A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.
“Look, Guillaume, we brought you a present,” Judy said, “remember Gordo the Great? He made a balloon animal especially for you! Charles named it Guillaume le Deuce. I call him ‘Deuce’ for short.” “Hmmmmph,” Guillaume retorted, “I suppose you think that’s ‘cute’….well, it’s not! Downright insulting, I’d say…no self-respecting squirrel would have anything to do with him…only good thing is his name…’Deuce’ indeed, well at least he knows his place, as secondary to moi! But, I will do my job and train the interloper to talk…he won’t hang around for long, though. Ha, ha, ha….that’ll deflate him!”

“Guillaume,” Charles said sharply, “I want you on your best behavior…be nice…we also brought a wonderful houseguest, Bobby Bear; he is a kind and sensitive fellow; you be nice!” “All right, all right,” the mouthy squirrel chattered, “if it isn’t one houseguest it’s another…and I suppose I need to be nice to Charles’s brother, FranJo, when he comes for your anniversary celebration…you could express appreciation…the Franjo mints I ordered for you arrived…work, work, work, that’s all your squirrel does while you are out galavanting around in DC, a squirrel’s work goes unnoticed and unappreciated…poor moi!” “Guillaume, that’s enough,” Judy said, “you know we appreciate you…now, what’s this about celebrations and mints?….you know Charles absolutely loves Franjo mints!” “Ooops,” Guillaume said, “spilled the beans, or do I mean mints…then again, maybe I just made it all up…now, where is Bobby, I want to meet him and assess his linguistic potential.” At that, Guillaume took Bobby and Deuce on a tour of the house and grounds; Bobby was particularly fascinated by the outdoor pool area.
A First Birthday Party

After the house tour, Guillaume got busy making arrangements for a party in honor of the first birthday of Charles’ and Judy’s great granddaughter, Adele. Soon the entire extended family would arrive: the Earl’s son Ed, his friend Alice, Ed’s son Rick, Rick’s partner Kim, and their two children, Adele and Eddie. Ed also arrived with Charles’s brother FranJo who had taken the City of New Orleans train from Chicago south to Jackson where Ed had picked him up and driven him to Meridian. FranJo had been the best man at the wedding, nearly 50 years earlier.

Guillaume set up everything outside around the pool: a cake with one candle, platters of food, and various decorative items. Theodore set about setting up a Mead bar for the bears while Ed was bringing growlers of craft beer. In fact, Ed and Rick had created a custom ‘beer tail’ called an “Alma Mater” in honor of Judy’s mother, Alma. Mississippi craft beers were blended in a formula to create a beverage that tasted like scotch...beer that tasted like a blended scotch whisky, Alma’s favorite.
Bobby was quite excited but Theodore warned him to protect his eyes when around small human children. He took Bobby down the driveway and showed him a tree. “Wow” Bobby exclaimed, “I have never seen a tree like that!” “It is a quince tree,” Theodore replied. “Some of the fruit is ripe; some is still green. We must harvest the ripe ones so that we can enjoy them in various ways.” So, the two bears each picked up one of the heavy ripe quinces that had fallen off the tree and carried them back to the house; they did so a number of times. After that, they were ready to sit down and enjoy a nice party.

Soon they were all enjoying cake and tea sandwiches and drinks around the pool. Adele and Eddie splashed in the pool with their parents. As the sun set on the happy group, all was well in Meridian…or at least that is what everyone at this party thought.

More Parties
The next day, the entire group went out to Northside Country Club for a New Orleans style feast of double pork chops, garnished
artistically with microgreens and accompanied by a fried green tomato and crab stack with house made remoulade. They returned to the Earls’ home for wine, Mead, and cake. There, Guillaume brought out his gift to the Earls: a 50 pound bust of Charles carved out of Franjo mint chocolate…the little squirrel was absolutely beside himself with delight as he giggled uproariously at his surprise for Charles! It was a marvelous small party for family and friends in celebration of the 50th wedding anniversary of Charles and Judy. Finally, on Sunday, there was a large party that Ed hosted at his Brewtique. There was fine bar food, cake, custom craft beer tails, and more. Some of the group played trivia; others played Pokemon and took interesting photos; yet others sat around and talked about any number of topics of mutual interest. At one point, the group demanded to know from Charles and Judy the formula for a long and happy marriage; that was simple, as Judy announced “enjoy good times together—everyone has problems; focus on the good times to create ever-lasting memories that will bond you together for life.” After much food and beer, over the course of six hours or so, the group finally broke up; the bar closed and people went to their respective homes for a good night’s sleep following much partying. They had indeed had good times together.

A Gruesome Discovery and Sadness
In the few days following the fine weekend, there were difficult times at the Brewtique. In the course the continuing detailed inventory of the beer kegs, the staff had found a number of ‘hidden’ untapped kegs. There were way too many kegs; the inventory had been badly mismanaged for quite some time. Ed, with his characteristic care, insisted that the group get way back inside the gigantic cooler; it was dark and cold in there. They went in with flashlights. There was evidence of corrosion from a leaking keg of hard apple cider; a drink with pH representing the acidity of many colas that would
dissolve a penny. It also looked as if there were leakage from the backup kegs of 'Dracula’s Delight,' the brilliant red Mississippi hibiscus beer.

Ed was naturally quite concerned about the leaking and went back into the dark recesses of the cooler. There he found that it was not the hibiscus beer that was leaking; instead, he found a gruesome scene. There was a human arm on the floor behind one keg, and a leg behind another. Soon, he found Dirk’s scowling head looking up at him; it had a smartphone charging cord around the neck. The blood red carbonated fluid on the floor of the cooler was indeed blood; Dirk’s blood had mixed with the leaking hard cider. It was not the hibiscus beer.

Some of the staff fainted. Ed phoned his friends in the Coroner's office and in the police department. Soon a whole group arrived from the nearby City Hall. After the shocking scene, of course the bar closed. Investigation continued. Charles and Judy came to the aid of their family.

Have Good Times Together?
Right now, the Earl family was not having good times together. Judy reiterated, however, that everyone has bad times...what’s needed are the good ones to keep things on an even keel and flowing ahead in constructive directions. Some did not appreciate her logic—these times seemed way too hard; others, however, did. Theodore, who could turn any situation into a party, did so now. “Come, come,” the philosophical bear said, “let’s sit together and talk about what has happened, why it might have happened, and how we can constructively support each other. I will get drinks and food as we ponder the deep structure of the situation. Mead all around, please! And, Guillaume, you have something for the group,
I believe? And, Bobby, you do too?” As Theodore returned with the Mead, Guillaume brought out an extra box of Franjo Mints that he had ordered, and Bobby trotted out of the kitchen with a platter of sliced, fresh quince. Theodore quipped:

“‘They dined on mints, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon.’

Now, let’s think about the structure of that couplet which is now an altered form, in spelling and meaning, but not in sound, of Lear’s original. Please note the similar sound, but different spelling of ‘mince’ and ‘mints’. It is a good thing they are spelled differently for otherwise one could not distinguish the fruit filling of a traditional British Christmas pie from an after dinner piece of candy. This is an important idea, certainly in terms of language structure, but perhaps elsewhere in the world, too. Things that look or sound identical may not be. What we sense in one way, may in fact be something else when looked at in another way. Then, in a perhaps, or perhaps not, related manner, we see the word ‘runcible’ which is, according to dictionaries, not really a word that exists in any human language; only in the poem by Edward Lear. Yet, even though we cannot ascertain its meaning through traditional means, we do, I think have a sense of what it means. Guillaume,” the thoughtful bear continued, “what do you think when you hear the word ‘runcible’?”

“Well,” the squirrel linguist stated, “I am confident that it is a spoon that one can eat from and that it is a very beautiful spoon because the poem has romantic overtones and the spoon needs to fit in with those.” “Thank you, Guillaume,” Theodore said. Charles interjected that he thought Lear had simply made up a word that would fit with the meter of the poem. Undeterred by this pragmatic approach, Theodore asked Binker the same question that he had asked of Guillaume. “I think,” Binker said, “it’s a spoon that has a bad flavor on it, sort of rancid, and that’s because owls and pussycats should not be dating each other—it’s unnatural, just a like the adjective
‘runcible’ is unnatural.” “That is an interesting point, Binker” Theodore commented, “would the rest of you agree that ‘runcible’ is an adjective?” They all agreed. “And how do we know it is an adjective? It’s because of its context; sometimes context can tell you more than single isolated facts and their technical or formal meaning. The meaning of ‘runcible’ is irrelevant in determining its part of speech. Yet, if you saw only the word with no context, you could not tell what part of speech it was; you might guess it was an adjective but you would not be certain. True?” They all agreed--everything Theodore had said was true. A number of them also thought that they had had enough of this sort of conversation for the day. Theodore had successfully distracted their minds from the tragedy of the day. But now one part of the group left. Only Theodore, Ed, Binker, and Judy remained behind; they continued the discussion and let their minds dance by the light of the moon as they debated whether a carrot has a rational soul.

Logic Rules
The following morning, Charles called the whole group together on the patio at the edge of the pool. “As usual,” he said, “even though Theodore’s musings often give me a headache after a while, he does have some good points that have set me to thinking in terms of developing a logical train of thought about what might reasonably have happened in regard to the tragedy discovered yesterday at the Brewtique.

First of all, it seems clear that Dirk had harmed many in his general mismanagement. He had threatened staff with firing; he had offended folks who deliver beer; he had upset customers with his inattention to detail, and he had mishandled inventory. Perhaps most serious, he had denied opportunity to earn a living to well-qualified individuals. Almost anyone in town might have had a
desire to get rid of him; but murder? It seemed to me that only those who had applied for jobs and not gotten them might have a motive for murder—getting him out of the picture was retaliation for his abuse in not considering qualified individuals and it also opened up his job which would then need to be filled by a qualified individual. Before Ed came over here this morning, I texted him to bring me the stack of applications of those whom Dirk rejected or did not consider. While I was waiting for all of you to gather here, I had a chance to sort through them briefly to see who might be particularly well-qualified within that stack. I would like to go over thoughts with all of you; please interject as you have comments or pieces of information.

First, there was a married woman, named Grace, who was 55 years old. She was applying for the position of cook, at a time when we needed one. She had worked as a sous-chef in a major New Orleans restaurant and presented well-known names in that world as references. She had at one point owned her own small restaurant. She had a degree in culinary arts from a recognized culinary school and she submitted a transcript showing good grades and offered to follow up on it with an official transcript. Although she was married, her husband had been injured and was confined to a wheelchair. She was the sole source of income for her immediate family. In addition, she had four children, one of whom still lived at home while he went to college. Dirk did not even give her a thought. Instead, he had moved a 21 year old nightclub singer, single woman, to the top of the heap. She had no restaurant or culinary experience and offered no references. It appeared she was a high school dropout who may have spent some time in jail, perhaps for prostitution. Certainly the older woman would have had a substantial grievance here.
Then, there was a younger man. You know him—Donny, the guy who met us at the train and who works as a game show host part time at the Brewtique. Ed noted that Dirk was not happy when Ed hired Donny as a part-time game show host. Now we know why. Dirk had dismissed Donny from any serious consideration for regular employment at the Brewtique. But, Donny also had impeccable credentials. He had 12 years of service in the food industry with some of them in a bar not unlike the Brewtique. He had been a cook and had a culinary degree from a fine school. He had worked in a restaurant in New York City where he still retained connections with some of the top chefs there. He identified persistence, creativity, and imagination as his strong suits and said he enjoyed the challenge of creating paired food/beverage and entertainment events and that he had worked on such in helping to create the large scale ‘Taste of Chicago’. While in Chicago, he had enjoyed helping to cater events in the spectacular Presidential Suite of the Chicago Hilton and Towers that had once been the home of Elizabeth Taylor. Indeed, he had led a fascinating life to date and bringing that experience to the Brewtique would have been a big plus to us in helping to put our bar on the map and perhaps in line for a feature on the Food Network. But Dirk did not even consider him. Donny must have been devastated. He had returned to Meridian from the large city scene because his aging parents needed him; having a good job was critical. Of course, with his talent he could find another job, but finding one that was right up his alley, such as ours, was not easy. Further, it must have been aggravating for him to come to the Brewtique every week in his hosting capacity and see Dirk, ‘the jerk with a smirk.’

Now, these were the top two (in terms of motive) as far as I could tell, although I did not even want to conceive that either one of these terrific people might have been pushed over the edge by Dirk’s outrageous behavior. Nonetheless, I persist with reasoning. So, the
next question is, when was Dirk murdered? It appears to me that he must have been murdered during the time we were having all these parties. It was well-known that we were doing so. And, it was during those times that Ed, Rick, and others were not at the Brewtique. Dirk was there, sometimes alone, at night. Fortunately, both Ed and Rick have alibis; they were with us! Either Grace or Donny knew their way around a kitchen, knew how to butcher large animals, and of course would know that putting a body in a cooler was a good way to interfere with timing of decay. Such practice could serve as a way to create an alibi. They also both knew, from previous employment, how to handle beer kegs, and both knew their local craft beer types, and thus could no doubt have imagined using Dracula’s Delight as a cover for blood. They both had the means. Alas, we will know more about the timing issue only when we hear back from the coroner. For now, I will assume that the murder took place during one of our parties, until I hear to the contrary, about any other possible opportunities in time.

So, based on the initial assumption involving decisions about hiring as the strongest motivator, I think it’s pretty much of a tie between these two: Grace, at age 55, was far less employable than the younger Donny although both have great talent. Donny is probably physically stronger than Grace, but that may not have been relevant given the dismemberment. Donny has a key to the Brewtique as a consequence of his part time work, but again that seems largely irrelevant because any time Dirk would have been there the place was probably unlocked anyway. Seems like a toss-up at this point. Then I began to think about what our brilliant philosopher, Theodore, had to say last night. Are there two things that look the same, but in reality are quite different, as in ‘mince’ and ‘mints’? And, are there isolated pieces of information which seem to have no function or meaning, but when put into the proper context have a clear function
or meaning, as in ‘runcible’ or ‘a runcible spoon’ (where it becomes clear that ‘runcible’ is in fact an adjective)? I will refer to the first phenomenon as ‘double’, or perhaps I should say ‘deuce’ (inspired by Guillaume le Deuce), and to the second one as ‘context’.
One thing that is often asked of suspects is to produce an alibi. I had heard, via gossip at the Brewtique, that Grace was going to Dallas to visit some of her children and grandchildren. I don’t know when she was going or how reliable the information might have been. I do know that the only flights that leave Meridian go to Dallas. She could have timed things to make what appeared to be an airtight alibi. But, that can be determined and checked out. It is logical that she might have grandchildren and that she might visit them; but it is premature to check all this out until we have scientific evidence on the time of death.

Where Donny is concerned, he has no apparent alibi; he was here in Meridian the whole time. He met us at the train; then he played trivia with us and came to a big party where he appeared to be his usual peppy self.

But, when I began to think about this a bit more, that smartphone cord around the neck kept nagging at me. I had seen one before. Are all smartphone cords the same? Indeed, I had seen one around the neck of Sassy in DC and then around the neck of Dirk in Meridian. Both were murdered. Was this a ‘deuce’ situation like the sound of ‘mince’ and ‘mints’? What might be the difference in ‘meaning’ behind the two murders? The murder of Sassy was odd; she was an irritating woman, but hardly seemed the sort someone would kill; the risk of doing so was greater than any possible benefit. Or at least it appeared that way. So, perhaps Sassy’s was a ‘random’ murder of some sort. Whereas, it seemed obvious that Dirk’s murder had been carefully planned and carried out.
But that consideration brings up the question as to whether it was possible for these two murders, almost a thousand miles apart, to have been committed by the same killer. Without Theodore’s comments, I might never have considered this idea. I know that Donny is a very intelligent young man. I would expect that if he were to plan an elaborate murder that he certainly would provide himself with an alibi. So, the fact that he appears to have none is odd in and of itself. He was in Meridian the whole time, he says. Perhaps, then, that is an alibi for NOT being in DC—that is, being in Meridian is an alibi, in itself, for some other event? But, if he were not in Meridian the whole time, and were in fact in DC, how did he work the arrangement of picking us up at the train station? The answer of how this could be done has to do with different ticket classes on the train. Remember, we were in Business Class. There is also Coach Class. When Ed phoned Donny, assume Donny was on the train (unbeknownst to Ed), in Coach Class. Donny agreed to pick us up. The train stops first to let off riders in Coach Class. Donny got off. Then, the train moves forward to let off passengers from Business Class. We got off; Donny was already on the platform. Remember, he said he did not have to wait long for us. He also said he had walked to the train station. Those statements could all have been true. We assumed that when Ed contacted Donny that both were in Meridian; however, that need not have been true. Smartphones are great; Ed played right into Donny’s hands when he phoned him to pick us up—if we hadn’t all been on the same train, Donny could simply have told Ed he was busy and not have aroused suspicion. Being able to fulfill Ed’s request, however, made a much stronger alibi for him—the alibi that he was in Meridian and not in DC. So, from a logistics standpoint, Donny could have taken off for a few days and still appeared to have been around given that he picked us up at the train. This is a ‘context’
issue; we assumed because we saw him pick us up that he was coming from the Brewtique, whereas in fact he, too, had just come from the train. A check at his day job might reveal information about timing possibilities.

Even though that is all possible, why would Donny want to go to DC and murder some woman he presumably did not know by strangling her with a phone cord? There we look to meaning, again. The real focus, carefully planned, was in Meridian. Perhaps the DC murder was part of that plan. Assume that Donny has never murdered anyone. We know him to be a careful person; indeed, many times I have heard him, while playing trivia, comment that ‘practice makes perfect’ or, ‘that was just a warm-up game.’ When he was planning the perfect murder of Dirk, he needed to practice, and he needed to do so in a different locale in order to avoid detection, should he be awkward in his first effort. Thus, he went to a large city to a hotel hosting a major conference. He did not know that we would also be there. So, why did he choose Sassy? She was probably convenient; she sat alone and others stayed away from her because no one could stand to be near her lest she accuse them of abusing her with excessive noise. Also, she was quite slender so Donny could learn how much force he needed to apply to a phone cord in order to choke her quickly. Once he had gauged that, he could determine if ramping up the force would work for the beefy-necked Dirk.

Now, in this case, I do actually have the possibility for getting some evidence. I noticed the other day that Donny often wears white tennis shoes and that they are quite clean in appearance. Yet they do not look new. So, I assume that he is careful about keeping them clean. After Sassy was murdered, I had the opportunity to ‘take’ her recent smart phone photos from her phone. You will recall
that she took many photos and played with her camera and Pokemon images in much the way that Judy does, by superimposing Pokemon characters on real world scenes. The last photo she shows is that of a person wearing white tennis shoes, apparently near her, with a ‘Pidgey’ on his feet. The shoes had a mark on them that appeared to be some sort of nasty black crescent-shaped smudge on the left shoe on the instep side and flopping over to cover the top of the laces. Judy, may I see your smartphone?” The group waited with baited breath. Charles shook his head; “ah, yes, and here we have it. A Meridian photo of what appears to be the same feet (this time with a Goldene on them), with new shoe laces but bearing the remnant of the crescent mark on the side of the shoe and on the tongue of the shoe between the laces. The next photo in that string shows a full shot of a young man wearing those shoes; I believe it is a photo of Donny.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I think we should all congratulate Theodore as the hero who has helped to solve this murder case. At this point, with your support and permission, I would like to turn my theory over to the Meridian police department. They will have wonderful experts who can validate, or not validate, these theories and, if needed, work in conjunction with the DC police. I am confident they will appreciate having various trains of thought to consider as they await the return of results from scientific testing. At that point the sobbing crowd cheered for both Charles and Theodore; they were deeply saddened at the apparent action of their friend Donny but they were at least as proud of Charles and Theodore. It was a mixed bag; or as local Meridian folks have been known to say during a sunshower, it was ‘the Devil beatin’ his wife.’
THE END