

The Scarlet Sentinels



A Novel

JOHN C. SMITH



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The Scarlet Sentinels

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the men and women who wore, and still wear, the uniform of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I tell this story like it is, through my eyes and experience as a detachment watch commander, to illustrate the complexities of police work – the tragic, sad, happy and sometimes satisfying events that are experienced by members of the Force, in their efforts to provide professional police service to Canadians. *Maintiens le Droit.*

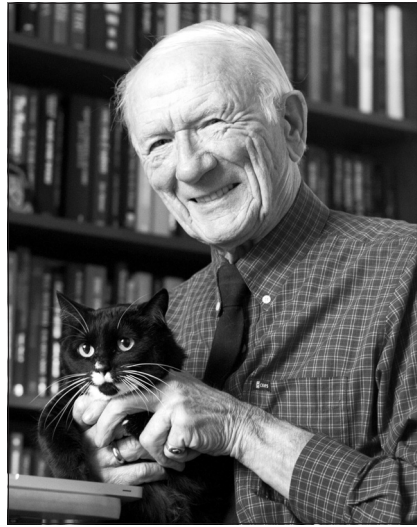
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NOTE TO READERS

Author John C. Smith, a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for twenty-five years, served at six different police posts in British Columbia and was an instructor at the Canadian Police College, Ottawa. Much of his service was performed in what is called ‘General Duty’ policing, where most law enforcement is carried out.

The Scarlet Sentinels spans a period of one year at a large detachment in the Interior region of British Columbia. Although written as a novel, this story accurately reflects the kinds of events that typically occur in the police world, presented graphically and in the lingua franca that is particular to this work. Readers will enter the lives of members of this famous police force at the detachment level, learning how they operate in, and adapt to, continual challenge and change. Past and current members of the Force may well recognize a part of themselves and others, in this narrative, although it should be considered a work of fiction and all characters are composites of many individuals known to the author and his imagination.



The author, with his cat Benny who regularly insists on helping out on the keyboard.



PART ONE

1

It was early September, 1988. Sergeant Jack Sterling reported for work at 6:30 p.m., half an hour early as he wanted to do two things – check the ‘still under investigation reports’ (SUI) workload of his watch members, and to introduce them to the *Parkton News* reporter, Charlie Preston, as they reported for work and let them know what was happening. He’d have both corporals and twelve constables on duty tonight – three constables being away for a variety of reasons.

The reporter was being allowed, with the permission of Inspector Edwardson, the Officer in Charge of the detachment, to accompany members of the watch on patrol, over a four-week period, to learn how police work was carried out at the local level, with the idea of writing a series in the paper about his experiences.

The sergeant knew the idea would not be overly popular with his members. They were always guarded when the press was around. Most didn’t like to feel inhibited in their speech and manner, out of the public eye. Sterling was going to explain to them the ‘Rules of the Ride-Along’ to try to ease their minds. He knew the reporter well enough, he thought, to know that the man would not betray a trust. He’d explain the situation to Preston, and felt he was mature enough to understand. If it didn’t work out, Sterling would simply stop the ride-alongs.

He decided to take the reporter out initially himself – to assess how Preston acted and reacted during these outings – before turning him over to members of his watch.

Sterling would take it upon himself to debrief the reporter and

the accompanying police officer at the end of each patrol, to assess the value of this exercise and whether to continue. Besides which, the inspector wanted frequent feedback too.

It was Monday night and statistically not terribly busy. After everyone had been introduced and dispatched to their patrol areas, he said to the reporter, “Okay, Charlie, ready to go out?”

“Sure, I’m ready. What kind of activity can we expect tonight?”

“It should be fairly quiet, but in police work, you just never know.”

“I take it you’ll fill me in on what to do during any emergency that you may get involved in – what I’m to do, Jack?”

“Absolutely. Let’s get out on the road first,” he replied as they walked to the parking lot. Sterling unlocked the doors to 10-Bravo-7, put the key in the ignition, started it up and checked all his lights, turn signals, emergency lights including the roof-mounted ‘alley lights’, siren and loud hailer. Opening the trunk, he checked off the equipment contained inside against a laminated list – a Remington .308 rifle with scope (in scabbard covering), tear gas gun and cartridges, first aid kit, a 24-foot-long retractable measuring tape, red reflectorized road safety triangles, road flares, rolls of yellow ‘Police – Do Not Enter’ tape, an axe and shovel, a yellow traffic vest in a plastic case and, last but not least, the spare tire (inflated).

“That’s quite an arsenal of equipment in there,” noted Preston as Sterling closed the lid. “Plus the shotgun.”

“Yeah, you noticed it in the car.”

“Why not have the rifle in the car too?”

“Well, a couple of things, I suppose. First, where to put it and, secondly, rifles seldom get used – they’re for shooting longer distances, of course, whereas the ‘scattergun’ is more effective for close-range use. You ready to roll?”

They got in the patrol car and Sterling checked the gas gauge – almost full, he noted.

“Right, we’re good to go. *Radio, 10-Bravo-7, 10-8 with Charlie Preston as ride-along,*” Sterling announced into the dashboard-mounted

microphone. Turning to Preston, he added, “You’ll get used to the call numbers we use pretty quickly. I don’t stay on the road for more than an hour usually. I suppose I don’t really need to since I have two senior corporals who remain out for most of the watch and keep an eye on things, but I like to keep a finger on the pulse of activity too. I also think it’s good for the guys, and the one woman, to see me on the road. I can also assess how they are doing. I don’t go about this surreptitiously, sneaking around, so to speak. I’d have no credibility if I did that. Every now and then I have to have a word or two with a member, usually something minor, and I never do that in front of other people.”

“Sounds logical,” Preston said.

“I have a lot of paperwork to do and keep an eye on a myriad of other things that go on during my watch. And, of course, I always keep an ear to the radio transmissions. I try to be available to help members when they bring in arrested people, and assist with locking them up if they get a bit boisterous. As well, I discuss issues with members of the other sections – General Investigation Section (GIS), Traffic, Identification people, and so on. On the night shift, all these people report to me when necessary. On some weekends, that number can amount to upwards of forty bodies, plus civilian staff.”

Preston was making notes on a lined pad.

“You’ll see as I drive that I also – if I’m near enough – cover a member attending a potentially dangerous call, and I usually stop and wait when I see someone doing a traffic stop. I position my car so that it is visible to the occupants of the vehicle and the member. That way, they both know another police car is close by – that will tend to brook any arguments or possible assault on the police person. You may see me do that tonight.

“Let’s talk about emergency situations. One thing I need to remind you of is the insurance coverage. You’ve signed a waiver and are aware that you ride at your own risk?”

The reporter nodded.

“When I’m out of the car, I have my portable radio. If I get into a messy situation that in your view requires some assistance on your part, such as someone trying to kick the shit out of me, the first thing you need to do is report the incident to the dispatcher. When that happens, all the other cars on the road will hear. Someone, usually one of the zone corporals will direct help my way. That means, of course, that you have to say exactly where we are and ask for instructions. Again, a corporal will more than likely respond and you need to do as he asks, please, in spite of how you may feel about helping me. It all depends on circumstances and that mainly rests on how close, or not, police assistance is. That will be addressed by the NCO who may ask you to help until the police arrive. Okay with that?”

“Yes, I understand,” replied Preston.

“Alright. You can see my radio microphone on the hook on the dash. The watch commander’s car is always 10-Bravo-7. To radio the office say, ‘Dispatch or Radio, 10-Bravo-7, emergency call.’ When you get an acknowledgement, tell them as succinctly as possible about the situation. So, let’s say I’ve made a stop at Columbia and 9th and two males bail out of their car and start pounding on me. What would you say and do?”

“Pick up the mic, call Dispatch and say, ‘Sergeant Sterling being assaulted by two men at Columbia and 9th. I’m Charlie Preston, his ride-along.’ I guess I’d listen to the next response or two to determine whether or not I should get out of the car and get into the fray.”

“Good, and just to allay any worries you may have, it hasn’t happened yet. Don’t want you to think this is a regular occurrence. By the way, always wait for the dispatcher to acknowledge your call. Now, if I stop a car or a pedestrian, I’d like you to stay in the car and just keep an eye on things. Roll the window down if you want. I don’t think I need to point out to you, but just to make it official, you have no police powers. What you *do have* is a citizen’s power of arrest. That’s defined in the *Criminal Code of Canada* under Section 494: ‘Any one

may arrest without warrant a person whom he finds committing an indictable offence.’

“Note the wording *any one* means just that. An indictable offence is a more serious criminal offence for which imprisonment is five years or more.

“I know what you’re thinking – ‘how the hell do I know which offences are indictable?’ Don’t worry about that. You have two things going for you in a situation like this. One is ‘Common Sense’ and the other more important one is called ‘Reasonable and Probable Grounds.’ So, if I’m in a fight, any right-thinking person could be led to believe that the fight or assault could lead to serious injury to me or my death, then that is certainly an ‘indictable offence’ and he or she would therefore be protected from later criminal and/or civil action, by taking appropriate steps in coming to my assistance. So, punching me is one thing, cutting me with a knife or using a weapon of some kind is serious. As you can see, there’s no clear answer sometimes to these situations. Each incident has to be assessed and treated on its own merits. Sorry I can’t be more explicit, Charlie. Now, if you want to call it a night now and leave, I’ll understand.”

“No no, I fully understand, Jack. You’ve explained it quite well. If a situation arises, I just hope I can do the right thing.”

“Okay, to continue then. One of the most common things you’ll hear on the radio is members checking vehicles and sometimes people on foot. It’s a police responsibility to do that. For our info and the protection of the public, we need to know who’s ‘out and about’, or to use the old British expression which I like, ‘who’s abroad in the land.’

“The overwhelming majority of those checks are benign and most people don’t take exception to them and understand the need to do so. Most bad guys have wheels and it’s good to keep tabs on them and to arrest when a warrant has been issued. I also firmly believe that these continual checks help prevent some percentage of crime – petty or serious stuff.”

“Do your officers develop a sixth sense about vehicles and people they check? I mean, they do it so much it seems,” said Preston.

“Good point. Yes, they do and acting upon it often pays off with an arrest. The civil liberties people call the checking we do ‘harassment of the public’ believing that we need reasonable and probable grounds or as you hear on TV shows, the American term ‘probable cause.’ I’ve had a Canadian kid say that to me, ‘You don’t got no probable cause.’”

“Bet that pumped up your heart rate a bit, eh?”

“Don’t get me going on American TV cop shows. They’re what I call the sanitized version of the gritty Canadian ones and don’t get close to reality either.”

By the time they reached Victoria Street, the main road through the downtown area, twilight had faded into darkness, but that did not affect this street. The City had recently installed bright new incandescent lights and those, together with bright store-front windows and illuminated multi-coloured business lights announcing the names of the stores, had turned the thoroughfare into a ‘Vegas Effect.’

“The brighter the lights, the better we like ’em,” said Sterling.

Just ahead was one of the better-known pubs – better-known to the police that is – the Stallion aka the ‘Horseshit Saloon.’ There were two pubs with similar labels on this street. The Stallion boasted a western motif, consisting of photos of rodeo events – bronc riding, barrel racing, taking down heifers with lassos, etc. – and items like western saddles, bridles and bits, horseshoes and old cowboy boots, hanging from the booze- and smoke-infused cedar walls. As Bravo-7 drove slowly past, the bat-wing doors were flung open to emit a couple of the ‘inmates’, the raucous blast of some twangy western music, and the stale smell of beer and burgers.

“Surprisingly busy for a Monday night. Wait ’til the weekend when it’s packed,” said Sterling. “We do good business there.”

“Charlie-3, Radio,” the Traffic patrol driver called in a clipped, urgent voice.

“Charlie-3, go.”

“I’m west-bound passing the Thomson Valley Shopping Centre on the Trans-Canada following a car at over 160 K. He won’t stop. Is there anyone ahead of me?” he said over the noise of his screaming siren.

His call was quickly answered by Corporal Bibernann who said, “Charlie-3, this is Bravo-8. I’m on Columbia Hill west-bound and can be on the TCH in about two minutes. Any other cars in the area?” he asked.

10-Bravo-12 responded that he was near the Sub Division building and would hold there. The dispatcher remained quiet knowing that the matter was being handled.

“Bravo-15, I’m in Riverside Park,” called Marv Peterson. “I can get up to the highway in a few minutes, okay?” he said to Bibernann as he activated his emergency lights and siren.

“No, stay where you are,” said the corporal.

Sterling said to Preston, “Charlie-3 is a city traffic car,” he explained to his passenger. “He’s got a 350 hp Interceptor motor and it’ll go but it sounds like the pursued car is just as fast. I believe the traffic car has a set of roadblock spikes in his car but, of course, they’re useless unless he can get ahead and roll them out onto the road. Let’s see what happens,” he said as he stopped talking to concentrate on his own high-speed driving.

On their way up to the highway, they listened to the radio chatter. Other patrol cars not involved stayed off the air. It was obvious the fleeing vehicle was trying to outrun the police and in terms of public safety, it was a question of whether to continue the pursuit or not – a call to be made in most cases by the constable chasing. In this case, it was on the four-lane main highway, in the middle of the evening with low vehicle density, dry weather, so the chase was being continued.

“The next detachment and available police car is at Ashville, about 35 miles west,” explained Sterling. “They’d probably have one car out now. There is a Highway Patrol unit there too and he could use his

spike block, unless the car turns south on Highway 8A, the winding country road to Highway 3, the southern, east-west trans-provincial route.”

In thinking this through, Sterling called the city dispatcher and asked her to call the next detachment west, to put them on alert and to request the HP car assist if possible. He asked the driver of the chase car to try to keep the car in sight, and called off the two city cars that were following now. They’d soon be out of the detachment area and he didn’t think that was necessary.

In a few minutes, Sterling pulled over onto the gravel shoulder and parked. He asked the dispatcher again to call Ashville and to ask how many cars they had to attempt a road block procedure and to confirm that they possessed a set of spikes blocks.

But Ashville’s involvement did not become necessary. Charlie-3’s driver came on the air and said that the pursued car had crashed. As it turned south on 8A without scarcely slowing down, the vehicle had rolled several times. Sliding to a screeching stop, the constable gave his 10-7 and asked for an ambulance and assistance from another police car.

A minute later, the city dispatcher received an update.

“Radio, Charlie-3.”

“Charlie-3.”

“No need for anyone to rush. The lone occupant appears to be deceased. Ask the Coroner and a Sub Division HP car to attend, please. This is way outside the city limit. I’ll be out of the car.”

“Well, that was short and sweet, and fatal,” said Sterling to the reporter.

“I wonder why people try to outrun the police? He must know they set up roadblocks,” observed Preston.

“There’s lot of reasons,” replied Sterling. “Maybe he’s wanted, his DL is expired, not carrying insurance, HBD – that’s short for ‘had been drinking’ – it may be a stolen auto, he may be carrying drugs, or

simply the thrill of winning a race – take your pick. At least he won't be able to do that again."

"Isn't that a bit cynical? If you don't mind me saying."

"Yes, I suppose it is and police officers tend to develop a thick skin when it comes to fatals caused by stupidity, carelessness or outright criminal behaviour.

"We take the view that if the driver dies and doesn't take an innocent person with him, he won't get a second chance. Many men under thirty don't think about that concept. They *know* they are invincible. It's a shame, I suppose. Do you want to go to the scene?"

"No, thanks, I'll pass," Preston said.

Sterling turned the car around to head back to the 'barn' and drop off his passenger.

The reporter said his thanks for an interesting time on patrol and that he'd see Sterling next week, maybe a different night.

2

The evening was miserable, dark and cool with a steady drizzle. The scraping of the wipers across the windshield grated on Joe McKillen's mind and irritated him. He was feeling down anyway. His wife Jody and their two young children had been away from home for two weeks now, visiting her mother in Sydney, Nova Scotia, where he was from as well.

He was sick of his own cooking and lonely. He longed for the warmth and security of being in his wife's arms again, the good clean smell of her shiny hair – 'that was one of the things that attracted me to her,' he reflected – and of course, the touch of her warm responding body.

Scrape, scrape. Scrape, scrape.

"Scrape away, you bastards," he muttered at them. "In two weeks time you can drive somebody else nuts!"

That was when his car, a 1986 Ford Crown Vic, getting old by police standards, was due to be traded in. By now, with just over 160,000 kilometres on the clock, it was in the garage more often than not. The windshield wipers were doing nothing more than smudging the glass as they laboured their way back and forth. When McKillen had mentioned this to the Administration NCO, his reply was that he wasn't going to spend twenty-five dollars for a new set of blades when the car was to be traded so soon – "Live with it," he'd said.

The only thing that was good about the old Ford was the AM/FM radio. Joe McKillen tuned in to *Easy Listening* on CKPK, the local station, which had just finished a break with the 10 p.m. news and weather.

The background music penetrated his thoughts and he turned it up a bit. It was Barbra Streisand singing one of his favourite hit songs – *‘People, people who need people...’*

Ordinarily, he didn’t care that much for her singing. He thought her technique was too ‘arty’, too forceful and pretentious at times, but he had to concede that this was one song she could sing well and with feeling. He turned the volume up a bit higher and filled the car with beautiful sounds. In the privacy of his own little world, out on the rain-slicked streets, he raised his voice in harmony with hers and sang –

‘Lovers, are very special people...’

The melody and lyrics resonated in his heart, but only served to make him feel even more depressed.

‘A feeling deep in your soul—’

“All cars, North Zone! All cars!”

Judy Benson’s voice cut through his self-pitying reverie halfway through the song. She had a different inflection in her voice and when she called ‘All cars’ twice he knew that she had something urgent to say. His was the second car to respond: “10-Bravo-3.”

After the other general duty cars and one traffic unit had quickly responded, she came back on the air.

“All cars, report of a pedestrian hit-and-run, junction of Oak Crescent and Eighth Avenue. Vehicle described as older model, tan General Motors product, possibly Chevrolet, one head light and one tail light out, lone male occupant, heading north on Eighth at high speed. Ambulance dispatched. Member attending, please?”

“Radio, 10-Charlie-1, I’ll take that,” the traffic man replied.

It was 10:15 p.m. and McKillen had been on duty just over three hours.

‘God, the drunks are out early tonight,’ he thought as he pressed the mic button and said, “Radio, 10-Bravo-3, I’ll take the suspect H and R car. I’m on Leigh at Eighth Avenue now, about ten blocks from the scene. Anybody cover me?”

Dick Ketchum, driving 10-Bravo-6, said that he'd back him up. No sooner had McKillen hung his mic back on the dashboard hook than he had to pick it up again as the offending vehicle, still on Eighth Avenue, came into view, on his left, travelling at speed. 'Boy, here we go again,' he said to himself. 'Wish I had a newer car.'

There weren't too many things that Constable McKillen did not like doing as a policeman, but high speed chases were not his 'bag'. He had been injured in one, a couple of years ago, and the experience had reduced his youthful zeal a bit. That was not to say, however, that he did not give the matter his best shot. It was just that his previous attitude of 'I'll get you, you son of a bitch, if it's the last thing I do' had almost become a tragic reality, and he was now somewhat more circumspect.

"Okay. I'm on his rear, Dick, still north-bound, speed one hundred plus. It's a gold Chev. Radio, I'll get you the plate number as soon as I can get close enough."

"Bravo-3, copy."

Dispatch said, "10-Charlie-1, ambulance should be there shortly. This is possibly a fatal. See the witness, Sheila Clark. Copy?"

Over the noise of the pulsating scream of his car's siren, the driver of 10-Charlie-1 answered, "Ten-four."

Ketchum said, "Joe, I'm on Railway Avenue North now, west of you near the City limit. Let me know which way he turns when he gets to the tracks."

"Okay. He's really moving. He'll have to slow down if he wants to make a turn," McKillen said as he got closer to the T-intersection.

A moment later – "Dick, the idiot didn't make a turn, he went up the bank at an angle onto the tracks!" McKillen shouted into his mic. "Christ, would you believe he's now driving along the bloody tracks!"

"Which way is he heading?"

"West."

"Are you following?"

"Yeah, I'm paralleling him along Leigh Avenue coming toward

you. Why don't you wait by the next crossing and I'll follow back here," replied McKillen.

"Okay, but—"

"Radio, 10-Bravo-3, Judy, call the railway dispatcher and ask him when the next train— never mind, there's one on the tracks now! Jesus Christ, they're going to hit!" he shouted.

The Chevrolet, bouncing and swaying along the ties, sparks spraying up from the undercarriage whenever metal scraped against the rails, was still moving at a fairly good clip. The car had entered a right-hand bend in the track just as the lead train engine was halfway through it. Driving a little bit back and to the left rear of the car, McKillen knew the car's driver had seen the huge single, oscillating headlight of the locomotive. The red light on the left rear of the car, the only one working, glowed a brighter red momentarily as the driver futilely applied his brakes.

The screech of the locked train wheels on the rails and the horrendous grinding crash of that head-on collision were clearly heard by those in the radio room and all cars on the air. In his disbelief at what was about to happen, Joe McKillen was still clutching the mic in his hand, in a death grip, button open, when the train struck the car.



Later, just before dawn, when the mangled body of the driver, including a pair of separated feet, had been removed from the wreckage, came the post-mortem discussion of this event.

Half a dozen policemen, meeting in Mama Elsa's All-Night Deli, relived their respective parts in, and views of, one more momentous occasion.

Dick Ketchum said, "Jesus, Joe, I was gonna tell you the god-dammed train was coming but you cut me off, not that it would've made much difference anyway."

“You got that right,” replied McKillen. “That bastard was doomed as soon as he got on those tracks. Why the hell would he do that?”

“Good question,” somebody said. “Wasn’t he a bloody mess!”

“Just a mixture of hamburger and metal,” replied Ketchum. “The only way I could tell it had been a human being was by the feet I picked under the mess after the CNR crane had pulled the wreckage off the tracks. I’m wondering why he went onto the tracks? Maybe it was a suicide attempt, it was such a crazy move, or maybe he was well over the alcohol legal limit. The autopsy blood test will reveal the latter, but not if he purposely meant to kill himself, unless he has a history of such crazy behaviour.”

To the junior man on the watch, Constable Henry ‘Hank’ Deleeuw, those words represented the very essence of exciting police work. He took in every word with avid attention, and of course had to use his very limited opportunity to get his views in too, using the vernacular quite acceptable and expected among policemen.

“Yeah, shit, I had a look at the car just now. Man, the only way you could tell it was a Chevy was by the emblem still intact on what was left of the trunk lid.”

“No kidding, Hank, that’s very observant of you. You keep that up and you might make it onto the GIS squad.” Those words, from Corporal Don Cliff, the Traffic Analyst Specialist, who had just finished his exhaustive examination of both the scene of the hit and run – luckily not a ‘fatal’ as it turned out – and the crash on the tracks, were not meant to be vindictive, and Deleeuw realized that.

“How bad was the pedestrian anyway, Corp?”

“She’s still unconscious, serious back and head injuries but she’ll live, I’m told. What gets me is she’s only six years old, same age as Avery, my daughter, and that could’ve been her lying there,” said Cliff.

Munching a bacon-on-a-bun and sipping an inevitable Coke, Joe McKillen had to agree. “You know, I can go to any fatal MVA and it doesn’t faze me, so long as it isn’t a kid. When that happens, my two

little monsters get some extra lovin' from their dad when he gets home.”

When they had wrung all they could out of the previous evening's events, the talk turned to other motor vehicle accidents, each, to an outsider listening in, seeming even more spectacular than the previous. Vivid adjectives to describe them and some degree of embellishment upon the actual facts were acceptable, but one had to be careful that none of the listeners had been at the same accident being described. After the last drop of beverage was finished, it was back to business.



McKillen joined the Force at the age of twenty-four, having spent four years at Dalhousie University, getting his undergraduate degree. He really didn't know why he majored in history, except that he was good at the subject in school, and maintained his interest. In reviewing the usefulness of his degree as it applied to police work, he had to conclude that something like psychology, sociology, law or a sciences subject would have had better application. In any event, he was glad to get away from sixteen years of being a student and to get into some active, meaningful, paid work. He'd met his wife at the university. She graduated with a B.Ed. and wanted to teach. They were married right after both left university, and within six months, McKillen was in police training at Regina's Depot Division. He was the only man in his troop from Nova Scotia and was constantly reminded about his Cape Breton accent with laughable and sometimes irritating imitations.

After graduating from the Academy, McKillen was posted to the West Coast on General Duty policing and spent the next three years at a large municipal detachment, driving around in the rain.

Jody had found her teaching job at an elementary school, and by the time they arrived in Parkton a year ago, the family had increased

to almost four. Jason was now two, and Mary-ellen had just turned ten months.

McKillen came from a family of three brothers and two sisters and, as the eldest, had shouldered a lot of responsibility in his formative years, helping out his mother and crippled father, and extensively with his siblings. His mother spent five to six days a week away from the home, cleaning houses. He was bright enough to win entry to university on a scholarship. His parents could never have afforded the tuition. By the time he entered the Force he was a very mature and sensible person, well adjusted and most suitable in many ways for his new role.

Entering the Mounted Police, going through six months of very rigorous training and then on to active police work had been something of a culture shock, but after a few months of sober second reflection, he concluded that he had made the right decision. With no babies yet on the scene, both he and Jody had adjusted quite well to the different shifts and new lifestyle in a new province.

He had wanted to hold off for some time before having children. He told his wife he needed to 'dig the adult scene' for a while. A 'while' turned out to be two years before his first-born arrived, which under the circumstances, was just about right, he thought.

He was reasonably happy to be on the West Coast, much different than the Atlantic coast. The cost of living was expensive and it was a good thing his wife had a job. The incessant rain, forty-three days in a row one winter, and grey skies eventually got to him, to the point where getting a transfer to a sunny climate, even if it meant enduring sub-zero winter temperatures, was almost an obsession.

During his personnel interview two years ago, he told the Staffing Officer about his desire. Well, he had to stay three years he was told, so he persevered. Here in Parkton rainy days were few and far between, and the change in scene and climate was most welcome. Tonight was one of those exceptions, so that the inclement weather combined with his family's absence and some inner unease that McKillen

couldn't quite put his finger on, made him somewhat morose and quiet. His mood was obviously reflected in his eyes, face and demeanour for, back at the office to fill in his notebook and write up a couple of complaints he had attended, the watch commander noted this and asked him if everything was okay.

"Yeah, sure, Sarge, I'm fine. Why?"

"Oh, I just noted you look a little down tonight. Did that train accident bother you?"

"No."

"Okay, if you say so. Just remember, uh, if I can help you any time, just ask, okay?"

"Okay, Sarge. Thanks."

His relationship with the other members of the watch and his sergeant was always positive. He was a likeable person, with an open, honest, forthright disposition, not given to speaking a great deal of bullshit and, in keeping with his Scottish ancestry, careful with his money. It just wasn't true, he told a few of the other members over coffee one night, that he squeaked while he walked and that he washed and dried his Kleenex. He just wasn't cheap like some other members he knew, looking meaningfully at the others around the table.

In a few months, McKillen would have to decide on whether or not to sign on again; 're-engage' as the official document called it. His original five-year contract was due then and in a way it was a turning point in his life. It was a time of taking serious stock, re-appraising one's service, experiences and so on, and deciding whether or not to break away and do something else, or go on. For most who made the choice of 'going on', it was almost in all respects a commitment to stay in the Force for a long time to come, at least until pensionable service at twenty years or beyond.

Even for many of those who did leave, life outside the Force, or 'civvy life' as it was referred to, was not at all what they thought it to

be. In fact, it was often rather bleak, cold and unfriendly and sometimes financially disastrous.

‘Maybe that’s what’s nagging me tonight,’ he pondered. ‘Maybe I’ve got the ‘five-year itch’. Okay, suppose I did get out. What would I do? Well, with a few more credits maybe I could teach, but that doesn’t really grab me, and anyway, I have to eat. Sell insurance or real estate? No, I’m not the aggressive type. Somehow I need more, more than the daily grind of picking up drunks, breaking up fights, refereeing domestic disputes, investigating accidents and checking door knobs at night. I suppose what I’m saying to myself is that things aren’t challenging enough....’

‘What’s ‘challenging’?’ he asked himself. ‘Maybe I should apply for a transfer to some other duty, say, General Investigation Section and do some detective work, or the Commercial Crime Branch and go after white collar criminals in the business world. Different kind of assholes to deal with but they’d probably be more polite.

‘How about Security Service or the CPIC computer centre in Ottawa, or even Financial Services, where all the money is? I don’t know. Maybe I should request to go back to university and get a degree in psychology or law; either of those would be more useful in the long term. Maybe I should shut up and be thankful for having a good, steady job, after all, there are lot of people out there who would pay to trade places with me. I wonder if everyone else, in any other work or business, goes through this kind of mental turmoil? What a dissatisfied bunch of bastards human beings are,’ he concluded.

Joe McKillen went home to bed at 7:30 that morning feeling worn out, physically and emotionally – and lonely.

3

September 15. Tonight was to be his fourth Annual Watch Meeting, when most of his people were back on duty after the long summer holidays. Sgt. Jack Sterling felt it was important to review police matters with his people annually and to reiterate a few operational reminders. He smiled briefly when he remembered his first one, introducing himself as the new watch commander four years ago. Since then, half the people on his watch had changed including his two corporals. While his approach had also changed a bit, he still recalled it as being brief but effective, as his minutes reflected...

It was four o'clock in the morning in mid-September 1985 when that first meeting was called to order, if that was the right way to describe the motley gathering. Members of 'A' Watch were draped over chairs, filing cabinets and propped up against the one bare wall in the small office. The room had no drapes but did have one-way glass. No one could see in, even at night with the lights on.

The meeting was scheduled for now because Sunday night shifts were usually the quietest time in the week for criminal activity. Most of Parkton's citizens were in bed recovering from a multitude of weekend activities except for a half dozen inebriated ones in the detachment drunk tank, sobering up for an early Monday morning release. For a short period of time, all the patrol cars had been pulled off the road, after the sergeant was assured that thorough property checks had been conducted in the business areas at least once, earlier in the night.

Sergeant John Matthew (Jack) Sterling was born in the United

Kingdom in 1940. At 6-foot-one, 175 lbs, with light brown hair, blue eyes and according to the admittedly biased opinion of his wife, Jocelyn, 'good looking,' Sterling had taken over command of 'A' Watch one month earlier from E.R. 'Earl' Raymond, who'd been transferred. At the time of the change of command – mid-August – half the watch was not on duty. Several members were on annual leave, mostly those with school-aged children on summer break, one was on sick leave recovering from injuries received in a police car accident and one was on temporary assignment with 'E' Division Headquarters Joint Forces Operations Team in Vancouver.

This, then, was the first occasion where all but one of his team were working and, as the sergeant well knew, perhaps the last opportunity for some time to see most of his crew together. Shifts were chronically shorthanded for a variety of reasons. It wasn't uncommon to work a shift with half the authorized manpower; maintaining full strength was a constant battle. Anyway, he thought, it was an appropriate time for him to call his first meeting. Certain things needed to be said, so that all the members 'knew where he was coming from,' as the current expression put it.

"Okay, everybody, settle down, please," he said as he entered the noisy room and the chatting subsided to a murmur and then stopped. He went to the small desk in front of the window and stared at the occupied chair behind it. The occupant got the message and got up and moved. "Thank you."

Standing behind the desk, he looked around the room at all the faces and said, "Thanks for your attention, lady and gents," thereby including the one woman on his shift.

"This is quite an occasion, for me at least. It's the first time since I arrived that I've seen all but one of you under one roof at the same time. What I am about to do may seem a little bit unorthodox to you but I want to open this meeting with a brief prayer. Would you join me, please?"

Those who were sitting slowly stood and shuffled somewhat

awkwardly amid some looks that said, ‘What the hell?’ ‘Do you believe this!?’

Someone at the back of the room whispered, “Shit, that’s all we need, a goddamn evangelist watch commander. Gimme a break!”

The sergeant raised both his arms in the air, just like a TV preacher and said, “Dear Lord, I pray that all these people gathered before you tonight have the ability to use what little brains and talent they have been endowed with, to help me get through my term of office at Parkton without too many major screw-ups before I transfer out, or retire or get committed. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

“I said it was going to be a short meeting,” he continued as everyone sat down or leaned against a wall. “There are three items I want to discuss and for you to remember. First – diary dates. Some of you are in the bad habit of allowing them to lapse without updating your SUI files. Neither I nor the secretarial staff wish to go hunting for overdue files that are still under investigation. You *will* keep open files current. Failure to do so will mean a confessional period with me and, if that doesn’t work, the matter will be reflected in your annual appraisal report, or a strong suggestion from me that you need to rethink and review your service in the world-famous Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and look for some other line of work.”

The room had gone very quiet.

“Second – notebooks. I want you to ensure that you use them religiously and according to the Rules of Proper Use. You know damn well you may have to produce them in Court. Well kept and accurate notes reflect your police professionalism – or lack thereof if you don’t maintain them properly. While I’m on the subject, make sure you have your caution cards in them, and, if you don’t do it now, make a habit of reading the card to people under arrest; don’t reel the caution off from memory. Why is that?” he asked, looking around the room.

“Well, so as to prevent making errors in giving verbal cautions and to avoid a hassle in Court with Defence Counsel,” someone said in a voice that suggested the obvious.

“Yeah, you’re right,” the sergeant replied. “It could mean the difference in getting a conviction or not, and, it helps keep Judges happy too. As we all know, their happiness is paramount. And one last important thing; make a note in your book every time you caution someone. I go one step further. I tell the suspect that I’ve done that. If the matter goes to trial, a copy of your notes goes into the Prosecutor’s file.

“Okay. Final point. Uniforms. I’m not expecting you to come to work dressed like graduation day in Regina. On the other hand, if you’re going to have creases in your shirt, make sure they’re straight ones and in the right places. I don’t expect a spit shine on your shoes or boots, but I don’t want to see blobs of muck on them either. Trousers are a free issue so trade them in before they get to the point they’re so shiny that light reflects off them. Once in a while an application of polish to your leatherwear would make it feel good.”

Looking around the room, he asked, “Any questions? No? One more thing; you know that I’ve just arrived from the Canadian Police College as an instructor on the Senior Police Administration Course. I’m a bit rusty on my General Duty responsibilities after four years in Ottawa and I’m counting on *all* of you for your help. I’m not new to this line of work, having spent most of my service at the detachment level and ran my own shop in the Okanagan. So you could say I’ve ‘been there, done that.’ Alright. Thanks for your attention. Don’t forget my catchy little saying – ‘the watch that prays together stays together.’ Now go out and do good things in the world. Would the two zone commanders stay, please.”

On their way out to the police parking lot to resume patrols, one of the members said to his companion, “Well, what do you think of the new sergeant? Is he weird or isn’t he?”

“I think he’ll be okay. He’s got a different sense of humour. He may have just arrived from police academia but he’s got lots of general duty experience in a variety of detachments including being in

charge of his own for four years. He'll eventually come around to our way of thinking just like we trained Earl."

"I don't know about that. I think he's very much his own man and won't put up with any sloppy shit from us. I wouldn't want to press him on the issue. I think we've entered a new era. Time will tell, I guess."



By 1988, Parkton City Detachment had a complement of 110 sworn (regular) members, of whom 72 were attached to four watches – A, B, C and D. The remaining were engaged in a variety of work in eight sections – Traffic, General Investigation (GIS), Drugs, Identification and Forensics, Community Relations, Court Liaison, a Police Service Dog Unit and a few responsible for Administrative duties.

Currently, on 'A' Watch, Corporal Al Hawkes was in charge of North Zone and Corporal Walter 'Walt' Bibermann in charge of Centre and South zones. Both had arrived in the past two years.

North area included most of the City north and west of the Thompson River and was a mix of light industrial, residential and the International Airport complex. Hawkes also had the main Canadian National Railway station, plus the CNR track ran through his territory for several miles.

Centre included the very busy city business centre, the Canadian Pacific Railway station, most of the major hotels, and older residential homes, while South area, much more spread out, was a combination of light industry, newer and new houses, in large subdivisions.

Further out were hay fields, smallish horse and cattle ranches, orchards and, more recently, fields of a new crop, called ginseng. This land was bisected east-west by the Trans-Canada Highway and included a small First Nations Reserve on the north side. The two corporals' population numbers and work loads were about even.

In spite of their distinct personality differences – Hawkes was a

‘hail-fellow, well-met’ kind of guy with a loud laugh while his peer was reserved, religious (he never swore but tolerated it with his men) and soft spoken – they got along quite well. They didn’t socialize off duty except when some special occasion called for having a beer or two, generally with other members of the watch. Bibermann was a non-drinker and would have soft drinks.

As he normally did after each meeting, Sterling asked his corporals to stay for a quick discussion and any recommendations they may have. This year, he needed their views about the 12-hour watch system.

“Sure, I like it, how about you, Al?” asked Bibermann looking at Hawkes, who nodded his assent. “Why do you ask, Jack?”

“Well, the inspector has been quietly reviewing the issue. He’s a bit of a traditionalist and had a hard time changing from the 8-hour ones a year ago. I think he still thinks that the members getting three full days off after each four 12-hour shifts, and then five days off after they’ve finished, is too much. He also believes they are too tiring.

“I think he’s going to call a meeting of unit heads soon about the matter and I’d like to go prepared with my arguments to continue this system. He’s partly right about them possibly being a bit tiring. I see a few of our guys looking a bit bleary-eyed around four a.m. but the graveyard shift is only for two nights. I can recall, as I’m sure you can, feeling quite tired after working five night shifts in a row on the old 8-hour shifts, from twelve midnight to eight a.m. Am I right?” he asked rhetorically.

The corporals nodded their heads in agreement.

“Listen, I’d appreciate a short note from each of you listing the positive aspects of this system. It would be good to go to the meeting, when and if one is called, with your support and reasons. I do value your help and advice. Thanks.”

4

Jack Sterling was home alone; Jocelyn was with their three sons downtown at the Y pool taking swimming and lifeguard courses. It was three o'clock and he was watching the end of the B.C. Lions vs. Calgary Stampeders football game coming from Calgary. With 20 seconds to go in the last quarter, the Stamps were ahead 21–15 and the Lions had just gained possession of the ball at the Calgary 47-yard line. It was now or nothing, thought Sterling, eyes glued to the screen. Quarterback Matt Dunigan took the snap, ran back five paces, when Sterling's phone rang.

'Damn!' he thought. 'Helluva time to call. Pick up or let it ring until the play is finished?'

Dunigan let go with a 'Hail Mary' pass, sending the ball in a high arc toward the Calgary end zone. The ringing continued insistently. A bit exasperated, he grabbed the receiver and quickly blurted, "Yes?!" – not his usual response in taking a call – as the ball was dropping rapidly into a crowd of players behind the goal line.

"Jack, that you?" Staff Sergeant Hall asked.

Sterling replied quickly, "Yeah, gimme a minute," as he saw one pair of hands reach higher than the rest and snatch the ball. *Who caught it!?* Watching the referee eventually throw both arms straight up indicating a touchdown for the Lions, Sterling yelled, "Yes, yes!" A tied game!

Turning his head to speak into the phone, he said, "Excuse me, who's this?"

"Jack, it's Jim Hall. Sounds like you're watching the game."

"Oh, hi, Jim, sorry. This is a nail biter. Only a few seconds on

the clock for the final play, a convert attempt coming up. If Passaglia makes the kick, the Lions win 21–20.”

“Okay, I’ll stand by. Let me know what happens, then we can talk,” said Hall.

The kicker took a few paces back, the ball was snapped and placed, a boot made contact and the ball sailed through the goal posts for the single point. Game over.

“Yes!” shouted Sterling, punching his fist in the air and picking up the phone. “Go ahead, Staff. I guess you heard me, eh?”

“I suppose you could consider my call pretty good timing, eh? Right at the end of the game. Anyway, you and your crew are going to have to go to work early today. There’s been a prison break from the Regional Correctional Centre and three bad people have escaped. They knocked a guard out on the way. They may have been met by someone outside the main gate – that’s unconfirmed.

“We need extra manpower out now to help ‘D’ Watch members set up roadblocks and help handle normal calls. Get your zone supervisors to call their people and get them to the office ASAP for a briefing before being dispersed. Tell them to hurry the calls. I’d like you to come in right away. Can you do that?”

“Sure, Jim. Let me leave a note for my wife and get into uniform. See you there,” he finished. He called Hawkes and Bibermann and set the wheels in motion.



Al Hawkes was at home. It was just after three o’clock on Saturday, a nice fall day in October, with the afternoon temperature at a warm 21 degrees centigrade. On his transfer to Parkton two years previously from a small detachment in the North, he’d been promoted to corporal.

He and his wife purchased an older home, almost a ‘fixer-upper’ in a modest area on the North Shore, ‘modest’ in this case meaning

cheap. It was their first house and all they could afford. He'd been making improvements to the property ever since. These 12-hour work shifts allowed him to have several days off consecutively and really get things done.

For the past two days he'd been putting up a four-foot-high cedar fence, a kind of lattice style that Shirley, his wife, had seen in a gardening magazine. It was a bit 'picky' to work on, but he liked 'messing around with wood' as he put it and was satisfied with the look of what he'd achieved so far. He was about half finished. Today, he was putting in concrete footings for the four-by-four posts for the remainder of the fence. He was particular with measurements. He followed the rule his carpentry instructor in high school told them – 'measure it twice, to make it nice.'

Shirley was at work as a pharmacist assistant in a small shopping centre located close by on Adanac Avenue, just off the Airport Road. She walked to work and their two children, Sandra, 8, and Shaun, 6, walked to their school only two blocks from the house, with either Mom or Dad – all very convenient for everyone. Today they were off and visiting friends down the block. So, for Hawkes, it was a quiet time which he appreciated. He was a contented individual, reasonably happy with his job and his private life.

The house phone rang. Dropping his shovel, he ran up the back steps into the kitchen, grabbing the phone off its wall cradle on the third ring. It was Sergeant Sterling.

"Al, it's Jack calling. Sorry to bother you at home but we have an emergency situation going on. There's been a break-out at the provincial jail and three nasty fellows are on the loose. Inspector Edwardson wants our watch in pronto to augment 'D' Watch members. You'll get the details when you arrive. Now, I've called Walt Bibermann and he is calling his people in and I'd like you to do the same. Emphasize promptness. Round up as many as you can. Don't waste time explaining. What this means, of course, is that we'll start our shift early and go on through to 7 a.m. tomorrow. You okay with this?"

“Yeah, Jack, will do,” he replied. “I’m going to call Shirley and put her on notice so that she can pick up the kids from their friend’s house when she gets off. I’ll be as quick as I can.”

He was lucky to contact six out of his seven people. Constable Kart didn’t pick up, so he left a message. In twenty-five minutes he reported to the office and eventually all but two members of ‘A’ Watch arrived and immediately went into a briefing given by Staff Sergeant Jim Hall, the Operations NCO. Inspector Edwardson was not present as he was at the TV station talking to the news media.

Hall began by introducing the *Parkton News* reporter, and saying thanks to ‘A’ Watch members for coming in, then handed out photocopies of the mug shots and descriptions of three escapees.

“These three,” he said, “are from Montreal and members of the gang underworld in that city. As you may know, they were being held without bail at the RCC, awaiting a preliminary hearing on charges of Possession for the Purpose of Distribution – methamphetamine, coke and heroin. They were picked up by Salmon River Detachment two weeks ago at a road check and transported here pending the preliminary hearing.

“These bastards are as bad as they come. All have records for armed robbery and serious assaults and one got off on an attempt murder charge. They all travel armed and while it is believed they were not so when they broke out, there’s no doubt they soon will be, or are already. The utmost caution then must be exercised, particularly around our citizens. I won’t go into the escape details except to say they injured a guard at the main gate. Because of this, no one saw how they got away – on foot or by vehicle. At the moment, we don’t know if this was an inside job or whether anyone picked them up. GIS are investigating at the jail. If I had to guess, I’d say they’ll try to make it to Vancouver where they were headed with their load of drugs when stopped. Of course, knowing we know that, they could be trying to head back to Quebec.

“Okay, concerning operations. Because we have a finite number

of vehicles, I'm sending you out in pairs, and of course, for safety reasons. For this operation, I'll be in overall charge, while 'D' Watch commander will be responsible for the North Zone and 'A' Watch commander for the Centre and South areas. There will necessarily be a mix of members from both watches in all areas of the City and you'll be assigned a car shortly." Looking at them meaningfully, he added, "There will be no 'watch rivalries' on this mission, ladies and gentlemen.

"In case you don't know, this escape is being carried on local TV and radio stations, together with the pictures and full descriptions of the escapees. We are already receiving a fair number of tips.

"Two cars with four members are stationed east and west on the TCH for roadblock duty, and you will relieve them in due course. As well, we have members at the downtown bus station, both railway stations and one at the airport although it's unlikely they will fly out of Parkton. Roving patrols in designated areas will be made. Obviously, we have to continue responding to regular calls and complaints, MVAs, etcetera – the routine stuff.

"We have extra complaint and dispatch staff on duty. I'll be here as long as it takes to coordinate matters and get this thing over with. Naturally, I'd like to see us get lucky and the sooner the better. I don't like having people like these roaming around our community. Members of 'D' Watch will stay on duty at least until midnight if required. Before you get your assignments, any questions, observations?"

Sergeant Sterling stood up and asked, "Staff, I'm wondering if it might be timely to review the Force's shooting policy, given the background of these individuals?"

"Okay, Jack, wouldn't do any harm. Just so I get it right, would someone bring me a copy of RR&O's and the *Criminal Code*."

Both were produced. Hall quickly began by reading Section 25, sub-section 1, sub-para (1)(b) of the *Code* which said, "*Everyone who is required by law to do anything in the administration or enforcement of the law... as a peace officer is, if he acts on reasonable grounds, justified in*

doing what he is required or authorized to do and in using AS MUCH FORCE AS IS NECESSARY FOR THAT PURPOSE,” said Hall, emphasizing the last nine words. “I’ll read sub-section 3. In essence, it says that *you cannot use excessive force* – and I’m going to again emphasize these words – *UNLESS HE (the police officer) BELIEVES ON REASONABLE AND PROBABLE GROUNDS THAT IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRESERVING HIMSELF OR ANYONE UNDER HIS PROTECTION FROM DEATH OR GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM.* Rules and Regs more or less reiterate the same thing, including the term ‘good judgement.’”

He paused a moment to let that sink in and continued, “This is NOT an easy position for you to be in because of what does, or does not, constitute ‘reasonable and probable grounds.’”

“I note that Section 25 does not use the word ‘imminent’ and to me, that is the key. Of course, even that word is subjective. What the hell does ‘imminent’ mean? In other words, the onus is on you to determine ‘imminent threat of death or bodily harm’ as quickly and accurately as you can. The answer to your decision is settled by the Courts later on. The Force’s policy on this issue is predicated on Section 25. So, if you do have to use your weapon, remember your firearms training – aim for centre mass.

“Alright, if there’s nothing else, hit the road and let’s see if we can pick these bastards up. Oh, and remember Sergeant Jablonski’s parting words to his people on *Hill Street Blues* before they hit the streets,” Hall said, raising his right hand and right index finger, “Be careful out there!”



“Bravo-9, your Twenty?”

“Bravo-9, TCH and Carson Drive,” Al Hawkes replied to the dispatcher’s call.

“House B&E in progress, 1176 Greenwood Drive. Possible escapee suspects involved. Time 23:29. Your ETA?”

“Radio, we’re about three minutes away.”

“Ten-four. Closest other members, please.”

“Bravo-13, we’re about four minutes. Will cover.”

“Roger. Coordinate with Corporal Hawkes.”

“Bravo-9 and -13, go to Tac-three, cars and portables,” instructed Sergeant Sterling, monitoring the conversations. “No sirens or lights. Stop short of the house. Advise when arrived. Bravo-7, Delta-1, what’s your twenty, Dale?”

The Dog Master replied that he was on the Trans-Canada Highway, in mid-city, and that his ETA would be seven minutes or so. “I heard the previous transmissions,” he added.

Racing along the highway, Hawkes instructed Constable Oliver to meet him on Greenwood – lights out. And to the Dog Master he asked if he could meet them, same place. “Walk Shadow towards us.”

“Delta-1, ten four.”

“Bravo-9, Bravo-7, I’ll be there in less than ten minutes. Keep me apprised, please,” said the Sergeant. The air waves went silent for sixty seconds, enough time for each officer en route to the scene to ponder what was ahead for them. They didn’t get many calls like this.



At 1176 Greenwood Drive, a man, dressed in a pair of tartan boxer shorts and an old work shirt, was standing in his garage, breathing heavily, with a gun in his hand pointing it at a male lying prone on the concrete floor. “You move, you son of a bitch and I’ll shoot! You hear me!” he exclaimed. “The cops are on their way. You and your buddies – are you the three who escaped from jail?” No response.

To emphasize his position of authority in this case, he added, “You might wanna know I’m a retired infantry sergeant and I’ve killed people in my service. It won’t take much for me to blow you away.

You got that?” he yelled again, which elicited a feeble nod of the head from the man.

Marty Williams and his wife June had retired for the night to their bedroom at eleven p.m. after watching the ten o'clock *News*, as was their custom. The TV station had carried a clip about the escape.

They lived in a split-level house with three upstairs bedrooms. The two other rooms were occupied by their seventeen- and fifteen-year-old daughters. Both parents usually read in bed, as they had tonight. Williams had served twenty years as a soldier in a Canadian Light Infantry Regiment and had seen active service in Cyprus and Bosnia.

He'd retired and was now a transit driver in the city. He was also a member of the Parkton Rod and Gun Club and owned a Remington 12-gauge shotgun and a Glock 17L, a 9mm, competition 'longslide' handgun. Both were locked in a gun cabinet in the master bedroom. At 11:25 p.m., they turned off their matching set of bed lamps and settled down.

Not yet asleep, Williams heard the muffled noise of a door closing somewhere downstairs. In quickly getting out of bed, he glanced at the large red, luminous numbers on the bedside clock – 11:27. Flicking on his light, he nudged June, who was almost asleep and whispered loudly, “Honey, there's someone in the house, downstairs. I'm going down. Go get the girls and bring them into this room and lock the door. Be very quiet, okay?”

Coming alert very quickly, she started putting on her dressing gown while Williams unlocked his cabinet, took out his Glock, rammed in a magazine of pre-loaded 9mm ammunition and set the gun. “You ready?”

She nodded and he could see she was shaking a bit. Putting both hands on her shoulders, he said, “Don't worry, it'll be okay, Sweetheart. Put the light out before we leave the room.”

With his gun in his right hand and a small penlight flashlight in his left, Williams slipped out as June opened the door for him. She

went left along the landing while he crept slowly down the short first flight of stairs into the main floor hallway and turned left down the next set of steps that led to the door into the garage. At this point, he heard a ‘Shh!’ from upstairs and a *click* as a door closed. Putting his left ear close to the thin wooden garage door, he heard something drop and another ‘Shh!’ from the other side, followed by a couple of low voices. ‘So,’ he thought, ‘at least two people in there. Be careful,’ he told himself.



The three men had entered the garage by jimmying the side door by means of a small garden shovel they found stuck in the earth near the door. Having no flashlight, they had to resort to turning on the garage light momentarily to get the layout and to find the door into the house. The place was big enough for two cars but occupied by just one as the other was in the driveway. Spotting a wall-mounted tool rack over the work bench, one of them took down the largest, long-shafted screwdriver to open the inside door into the house. Switching off the light, and leaving the side door open for some limited light and a quick escape, they made their way around the car. With the three of them in close proximity to each other, it was inevitable that they would collide, resulting in the screwdriver being dropped on the concrete floor, the sound amplifying in the half-empty space.

“Ssh. Prenez garde!” said the lead man, in a loud whisper.

On the other side of the door, Marty Williams, gun ready in his hand, took a deep breath. Steeling himself, he gripped the door handle and slowly turned it.

‘Here goes nothing,’ he thought as he violently shoved it open.

The door swung outwards, hitting the first man in the chest and sending him crashing into his two companions behind him, knocking both to the floor as well.

Williams's flashlight picked out surprised looks on three faces as he yelled, "Hold it right there or I'll shoot!"

The two who were behind the leader quickly scrambled on all fours around the front of the car toward the door they had entered by. The man in front had been struck by the door and lay winded on the floor.

"You move, you son of a bitch, and I'll shoot, you hear me!?" pointing his gun at the man's chest from three feet away. Turning his head slightly, he shouted through the doorway, "June, call the cops – 911!"

The auxiliary wall phone by the work bench had a red light to indicate when the house phone was in use. It came on, indicating to him that his wife had heard and was making the call. He needed to secure the guy for the police. Keeping his flashlight directed at the prone man, he stepped over him, placing his gun on the roof of his car. He reached up to the wall on his immediate left, and felt for some electrical cords that hung there. His fingers curled around one length and he pulled it quickly off the nail.

He thought about turning on the garage light, reconsidered momentarily and decided against it. Make him too easy a target if the other two returned. He placed his flashlight in his mouth and knelt down beside the man, putting his right leg across the man's thighs. "Put your hands behind your back," he said.

"Quoi?"

Williams realized then that he was a French Canadian with little English and took both arms, crossing them behind his back, tying them with the cord. He stood up and took another cord from the wall and tied the man at his ankles. During the two minutes it took to do this, he had been listening for the sound of approaching police sirens and for any movement behind him in case the other two men had returned for their buddy – but it was eerily silent.

Picking up his gun, he tried to remember the French for 'stay here' and it came to him – "Restez ici!" he said forcefully. Satisfied

that the individual was not going to move very soon, Williams slowly walked to the open side door and peeked out.

There was some ambient light from the nearby street lamp but he could see or hear nothing.

‘Damn,’ he thought. ‘What’s keeping the police – I need them here *now*.’

Just as he was about to go back to check on his prisoner and to shout to his wife to call the police again, he caught a glimpse of the silhouettes of two men at the end of his driveway. Thinking they were the two men who had run away, he raised his gun at them and was about to yell, ‘Hold it!’ when he was bathed in bright light, momentarily blinding him.

A voice, in North American English, loudly commanded him to, “Drop your weapon – do it now!”

Williams immediately did as he was told by placing his gun on the pathway, stood up and raised his hands. “Are you the police?”

“We are,” a voice replied.

“We’re the people who called in,” said Williams, hands still in the air. “I’ve captured one of them and he’s in my garage.”

“Okay,” said one of the officers, “we’re going to walk toward you. Step back from your weapon and stay as you are, please.”

When the two officers got to him, Williams said, “Jesus, it’s good to see you guys. I didn’t hear any sirens and I was going to get my wife to call you again.”

One of the constables picked up his gun while the second gave him a quick pat down and let him lower his hands. Seemingly satisfied he was who he claimed to be, the constable said, “It’s standard police practice for us to approach situations like this as silently as we can, so we don’t spook the burglars. Sorry about the pat down but you understand? Let’s see who you’ve got here,” he added, returning the gun.

Before leaving Williams, with the prisoner in tow, Corporal Hawkes, who had covered the rear of the house, shook his hand and

thanked him for his citizen's services, telling him he would be asking the Officer in Charge of the detachment to consider sending him a letter of commendation.

By one o'clock it was all over. The other two escapees were found by the police dog hiding under an old tractor in a lean-to shelter in an apple orchard at the end of Greenwood Drive. Like most people, these two had a healthy respect for German Shepherds and gave up quietly.



Al Hawkes called his wife at daybreak, apologizing for waking her up, to let her know he was okay, would be home at the usual time and reminded her about his favourite breakfast. He was home, tired, at 7:30 Monday morning. Walking into his house, he immediately smelled pork sausages frying, and the aroma of fresh-brewed coffee.

"Ahh, smells good!" he said, hugging his wife closely and then his two kids. They examined him with looks that seemed to be checking to see if he still had two arms and two legs – a whole human being. All three went to work and school respectively, feeling good about the day and proud of husband and father.

As Hawkes went to bed after his great breakfast, he reflected on the night's activities and was very thankful that no police officer had had to rely on Section 25 of the *Criminal Code* last night to 'do his duty.'

'I just hope I never have to,' he thought. He slept well.

5

She drifted across the wooden floor in full battle dress – a ‘Ferrari red’ silk one. The manufacturer had obviously run out of material. The top started just one inch above her areola and the hemline one inch below her – you know. She was literally just two inches from legal arrest for a violation of the indecency section of the *Criminal Code*. No foundation garments either – nil, zip, nada. A man can tell. The only other apparel was a pair of matching red high heels. Out of those shoes stretched a pair of identically shaped legs that looked as though they had been turned on the same lathe. Her upper right arm boasted a tattoo of a heart with ‘Love Mom’ inside. Hair: bottled blond and spiked. Face: smothered in ‘Tammy Faye’ powder and eye lashes with similar amounts of mascara, complete with lip-glossed, dress-matching lipstick and large, matching red-plastic hoops on her ears. Age: rough guess, twenty-eight.

All conversation in the pub quickly ceased. Not to carry a metaphor too far, the silence was pregnant. It was six o’clock Friday evening and most of the tables were full.

She selected one of the remaining stools at the bar and sat. As she did so, the red dress rose even higher and legs and thighs became unbearably prominent.

The bartender was the first to recover. Summoning all his will-power, he looked her in the eyes and asked for her order. Tapping her long red stick-on fingernails on the bar, she ordered a Coke and paid for it from a red clutch purse.

The buzz of conversation slowly resumed.

“What the hell were we talking about?” Ray said to his three

friends, sitting at a small round copper-covered beer table no more than six feet from *her*.

“Goddamned if I know. Who can think rationally sitting this close to heaven?” one said.



This was the first day on her temporary assignment that Constable Alice Conway had gone ‘fishing,’ as Corporal Kenneth Brandt, in charge of the Detachment Drug Section put it, earlier that evening. “By the time we dress you up—”

“—More like down,” she interrupted.

“—You can get information about drugs from anyone. Men will bare their hearts and souls to you,” he finished.

“It’s not their hearts and souls I’m concerned about them baring. Looking like this, I’ll have to fight them off,” she replied.

“Alice, we’ve schooled you in drug dialogue and dealing activities. You’ve already shown you can be cool under pressure when you were in uniform. Look at this exercise as just another bunch of ignorant, low-life assholes you have to deal with. You’ll be amazed at what they tell you. Just keep the entrapment rules in mind and the gist of your conversations for your notes later. You’ll be fine and although you have no wire, for obvious reasons, we’re close by. Again, you know the ‘assistance needed’ signal?” he asked.

“Yeah, scratch my right ass,” she said.

“Well, close enough. Your right ear would be more ladylike,” he laughed.

“Listen,” Brandt continued, “don’t worry if you don’t score this evening. As much as anything, this is a trial run for you. We need to find out if our info about an increase in illegal drug activity at this pub is true or just fiction, okay?”

Turning to her two back-up people, he asked them if they had anything to add before they left on this assignment.

They said no, they'd already gone over the plan and were ready.



It took a minute or two for his eyes to adjust to the dark interior, even though two TV sets were showing an NHL pre-season game. It was the Vancouver Canucks versus the L.A. Kings, and Wayne Gretzky, recently traded to the Kings in August, had just scored his first goal. The pub crowd roared in approval, still uncertain though whether to cheer for the 'Great One' or their own team.

As bars go, the Pioneer Pub, decorated in a western theme, wasn't too shabby, and mostly inhabited by clientele from working-class backgrounds and close to where the policeman lived. As he went forward toward the bar looking for his buddy, Wally Rheingold, he spotted a female sitting on a bar stool, wearing a bright red dress. There were two vacant seats to her right so he slid onto the one next to her with the words, "This taken?"

She gave him a cursory glance, shook her head 'No' and went back to her drink, a Coke, he thought.

Constable Alan Burns was 28 years old, occupied a six-foot frame, weighing a proportionate 190 pounds, with his head covered in a short brush cut of black hair. He was relatively good looking, grey eyes, his nose a bit on the large size, the result of minor league hockey games action. He was also unmarried and very heterosexual.

After ordering dark ale, he leaned forward over his folded arms on the bar to get a better look at the woman's face and said, "Busy tonight, eh?"

No response.

He tried again. "Hi, my name's Al. Yours?"

At first glance, he took her to be about his age and she certainly had a beautiful profile, at least in the dim light. He detected a slight but very agreeable perfume coming from her body, and the dress she was wearing, showing a lot of cleavage, especially in her position

slightly bent over the bar rail, left absolutely nothing to the imagination, top and bottom. Sitting up straight, she turned her head slightly to the right and eyeballed him for a second or two and said, "I don't think you need to know that."

"Oh, sorry," he said, a bit nonplussed by her reply. Not one to give up easily and like many men, he was convinced that he had a 'way' of chatting to women. This was reinforced in his mind by the fact that he'd managed a few 'affairs of the heart' as he liked to put it, meaning mostly one-night stands.

Not willing to give up – the next stool was for his friend and there were no others available, nor tables either – Burns just couldn't sit there in silence. With five years of service, he'd learned quite well, through osmosis as much as with training and experience, about human psychology and how to 'read' people. In two or three seconds, he diagnosed, by judging her body language, attitude, limited use of words and by the important fact that she was alone and apparently not expecting anyone – she could have lied about that – that further effort was worthwhile. He noticed her scanning the room and he thought that she may be looking for another seat away from him – time to strike again.

"Look, once again I'm sorry. Let me buy you a drink, on one condition."

Looking at him straight on, she asked, "And what's that?"

"That you don't have to talk to me."

A slight smile crossed her face momentarily and she replied, "In that case, it's a deal: a glass of Chardonnay."

Keeping his silence, Burns dutifully waited for the drink to be delivered and watched her take a sip.

"Hmm, that's quite good. Thanks," she said.

"Permission to speak?" he asked with a straight face.

She nodded.

"Glad you like it. I don't always drink beer."

"Come here often?"

“Not really,” he replied, limiting his language. He’d learned, through interviewing hundreds of witnesses and suspects, that silence, on his part, often induced people to fill the void with talk, and it worked once again.

“So, I take it the friend you are waiting for is a male, or you wouldn’t be trying to pick me up – or would you?” she asked.

He laughed and said, “No. Surely I don’t look that needy?”

“How needy are you?”

Al Burns was not sure where this was going, and he was a bit surprised at the tenor of the question. Was this just verbal sparring or more than that?

Deciding to escalate the conversation more into the realm of physical needs, he said, “Well, on a scale of one to ten, I guess I’d be approaching ten, truth be told.”

She had a beautiful laugh and he was about to continue when he felt a hand on his right shoulder. “Hi, Al, how’s it goin’?” Wally asked. “This seat for me?”

“Hi, Wally. Yeah. Go ahead,” he responded and at the same time thought, ‘Goddamn, Wally, poor timing.’

Rheingold, having seen his friend talking to the lady in red, sat and reached across in front of him and extended his hand to the woman saying, “Hello, my name’s Wally,” and then, a bit lamely, continued, “Of course, you already heard that,” as she peremptorily took his hand and said, “I’m Alice.”

Rheingold picked up on the awareness of the situation for his friend and said, “Look, excuse me for a few minutes. I have to make a call and I’ll do it on the exterior phone; it’s too noisy in here.” With that, he left.

Turning to face the lady in red, he said, “So, it’s Alice, is it. Nice name.”

“Thanks. What’s Al short for – Alan, Alexander, Aloysius?”

“It’s Alan with one L – similar to Alice with one L.”

“What do you do, Alan-with-one-L?”

When asked that question by a stranger, he preferred not to say what he did for a living because by doing so, it put a different dimension on any subsequent conversation with someone he did not know and who was not a member of the Force. He generally said he worked for the ‘Government’ and when pressed for further information would say something like, ‘Oh, it’s mostly clerical work, not very interesting,’ which was only a tiny part true. He was responsible for preparing the monthly statistical Crime Report for his watch, a job which took an hour at most.

Alice Conway knew he was hedging and merely said, “Oh, sounds exciting,” in a slightly sarcastic way.

Before he could ask the same question, Conway asked him if he was from Parkton. She’s ‘fishing,’ he knew and his verbal guard increased. He needed to be truthful but careful as well. It was just too early to divulge much information should this ‘association’ progress further.

“I’m from Trona,” he said.

“Trona?” she said quizzically, screwing up her face. “Oh, you mean *Tò-ron-to*.”

“That’s what I said – Trona.”

She laughed. “Reminds me of a famous line from an old George and Ira Gershwin song, ‘*Let’s call the whole thing off*.’ You know the line? ‘I say to-mah-to and you say to-may-to.’”

“Oh, yeah,” he replied, vaguely wondering what she was talking about. Before she could probe further, he asked her what she did for a living.

“Oh, just taking some time off between jobs.”

“I take it you live here then?”

“No, I’m from the Vancouver area but I have a cousin who lives here.”

Burns was about to press for more information when the room erupted into cheering and whistling as his team, the Canucks, scored an early goal in the first period, evening-up the score.

When the noise settled down, he felt he had lost the momentum on the personal stuff that she, like him, didn't want to discuss further.

Looking into the mirror on the wall behind the bar, he noted two men looking at his reflection and when he made eye contact, they both quickly averted theirs. A 'caution' flag appeared in his brain as he studied them a few moments longer.

Both were maybe slightly older, stocky builds, one with black long hair, the other with shorter dirty blond (at least in the pub light) and both verging on 'scruffy'.

One was wearing a referee's vertical black-and-white striped shirt and the second, a nondescript high-necked grey sweater, all this information gleaned from a two-second scan. He diverted his eyes, but his suspicions had been aroused and he stole another quick sideways glance at them.

'Alice' was saying something to him and he said, "Sorry, Alice, what did you say?" as he looked at her, face-on. He liked what he saw.

"I said you look a bit distracted."

"Oh, I don't mean to be, certainly not with you. If anything, I'd like to be a bit more preoccupied."

Just as Burns was about to get that way with her, Rheingold sat down next to him again.

"Can I get you guys another drink?" he asked before ordering one for himself.

She said, "Look, I have to go – sorry. Nice meeting you, Al. Maybe we'll run into each other again. See you, guys."

With that, red purse in hand, she slid off the stool and walked toward the exit.

Burns watched her as she did so, noticing her shape from the rear and saying to his partner, "There goes a classy-looking lady. You really have lousy timing, Wally Rheingold."

As she swung open the big, wide front door, letting bright sunlight stream in, he also saw the two guys seated close to the door get up and leave, one throwing a brief glance in his direction.