

30-MINUTE DELIVERY

By Douglas E Wright

“Look guys. Another one!”

The squad room funneled into Stinger’s tiny cubicle as Harry sat behind his computer monitor. He blotted sweat off his brow. A grin spread across his face. He pushed his swivel chair backwards, not once taking his eyes off the screen. “Hotmail address this time.”

Harry undid the top button of his pressed shirt. Behind him, the open window allowed the night breeze to blow in, fluttering sheaths of paper, scattering them over his old oak desk.

The email’s subject bar blinked like a blue strobe: *30-Minute Delivery*. Harry wiggled his fingers and then cracked them one by one, returning his hands to the keyboard. Narrowing his eyes, he focused on the PDF attachment. Though the picture looked like a PDF; the file extension ended with jpg. *A picture file*.

He tapped the ‘+’ key and enlarged the killer’s clipped message. The photo-shopped attachment grew into a colorless blur. He tapped the ‘-’ key twice. The image grew sharper as it shrunk. Harry’s voice came out low. Almost nonexistent. “The same letter only from a different email address. Like the other thirteen,” he said.

Alphabetical letters bobbed about on the screen as if in a bowl of dark electronic soup. Strung together in a make-belief PDF document.

A golden thread zapped over the screen. Harry hopped from his chair and punched his fists to the heavens. As if he’d just discovered Jesus Christ. “Holy shit! A face. A goddamned face,” he shouted.

The features rapidly broke apart and washed into a sea of white noise before slowly returning in cutout letters in a field of crackly fuzz. Each one reemerged in a rainbow color, glittering behind the monitor’s dusty glass. Every letter hovered and twirled until they assembled into a fractured steeple image. Each letter mounting the other, until they

finally came together in a rough likeness of a man's face. And then just as fast, dissolved into a fancy-font message.

"Damn. He's gone." Harry scrunched up his face. "Shit, he's good. I'll lay bets that he's some kinda techie." *Gotta get off the booze*, he thought. *I'm now prone to hallucinations.*

"Or Computer hack," an officer from the back of the crowd said.

"Sure. Hack. Whatever. All I know is I gotta get him. And super fast."

"Any thoughts on who it is?" a young policeman asked.

"No idea. Never saw him. 'til now. I guess." Harry slapped the monitor's side with his palm. The image returned, cartoon like. Then, it readjusted from the broken apparitional face into a solid email attachment. Harry grabbed his vest, holstered his revolver, and snatched a dull-black jacket from a coat hanger. He quickly pushed through the crowd, and before shooting past the cubical entryway, he said, "Even if it kills me, I'll find that drug dealer killer."

"You mean Mister Gloom and Doom," Joanne said, waltzing down the narrow corridor toward him.

"One and the same," Harry answered, winking at her. "God. You've been gone so long, I thought you went to Brazil for the coffee."

She smirked as she blew past her cubical. "Very funny . . . How many's that make now?"

"Fourteen," Harry said. "C'mon. We gotta go. We've got ten minutes. And believe it or not, I think I know what he looks like."

Joanne slapped the take-out coffees on a desk that she was passing. She brushed her wet hair back with her fingers as she shoved through the dispersing crowd in Harry's office. She swung around the desk. "No we don't," she cried. "Did you see the time on this thing? Only sent six couple minutes ago. He's given us thirty. And he's only about five minutes away. Man, I think we've got him this time."

"C'mon girl. Use your training," Harry shouted. "The message was timed." He snatched a pen off a passing desk. "Tell me. Have we saved anybody yet? What leads do we have? Can't answer? Then do me a favor. Get your fat ass in gear, girlie!"

Joanne tossed her hair over her shoulder and brushed past what was left of the tiny crowd. She burst out of Harry's workstation. "We've never got there on time," she confirmed. "Always ahead of us." As she rushed past her own stall, she scooped a vest off a chair by her entryway.

She kicked open the double doors, shot down the stair steps and shadowed her partner to the electronic glass doors.

One after another, both of them charged into the underground parking lot.

Stinger took a quick breath. "Smoke and water," he said. "He's not where he says. He's at the coal dock." He swung to an unmarked black Dodge Charger. He glanced to the barred underground gate to where an overweight security guard stood outside smoking a cigarette. "Crank it," Harry yelled.

###

From inside the car, Joanne said, "I don't get it. Why the coal docks?" She surveyed the underground garage.

"Email said he was taking out that drug dealer Muncho Greer out back of Walmart's Dunbury location." Harry blasted the car up the ramp and bounced onto a desolate side street. Within moments, they stormed down a grimy artery, pushing them into the city's industrial wasteland.

Then as he reached the James and Water Street intersection, he cranked the steering wheel hard right. The car screamed around the corner. He quickly braked into a slow roll. The red light district flashed into view. Girls and guys, young and old, stood anchored in empty doorways and trashed alleyways. All but a few displayed their crimson lace and tight leather.

"You watch your side and I'll watch mine," Harry said, swerving past a large pothole that decorated the middle of the street. "You not notice the email's subject?" he asked.

"Guess not," she replied. "I usually take more notice when I'm dealing with domestic disputes."

"And I take notice if it has anything to do with druggies."

"Guess it's all about us, eh? Our areas of expertise," Joanne said.

"Yup, sure looks like it." He slowed the car down even more. "Anyway, the subject said, *coal burning passions*. While the message did mention the location, it also said, sparking home fires this winter night.

"Guess I really missed it."

"Obviously."

As the Charger floated beneath the last row of flickering streetlights, a flaming barrel peeked out through a tangle of shrubs in an overgrown lot.

"What's over there?" Harry pointed.

"Nothing. Couple kids warming."

As he eyed the road, he also peered at the desolate factories and apartment complexes lining the street. "These all should be torn down."

"If the city hasn't money to keep the public roads safe, what makes you think they have cash to waste on poor people?"

"Christ. You're all heart aren't ya?"

"The money just isn't there. That's all. These nobodies can get a job like regular people. Quit living off the state and make a living like the rest of us. Contribute instead of take."

"Okay Miss Independent."

Joanne shot Harry an icy glare. "What're you talking about?"

“God, guns and big business. Seems to be all you believe in these days. Your homemade recipe for society’s ailments. And about your name? Keeping yours and not taking his? That’s independence.”

“You know. It’s almost three a.m. and I’m too tired to argue. We’ve got to find this guy soon.”

“Okay,” Harry said, drifting the car around another corner.

More vacant lots and fiery oil drums came into view.

“You’re sure about the river docks?”

Harry shifted in his seat. “Yup. Just makes sense.” He nodded his head at the car’s hood. “Just keep your eyes glued to the road. Especially the gutters. You might see more than you want.”

Joanne rolled down the passenger window and peered into the overgrown bushes and black alleyways. She swept her sights over the ragged grounds that partially hid caved-in townhouses while the night hid the rest.

“Any movement?” Harry asked.

“None. Nothing other than drunks, druggies and pretty boys.” She turned to Harry. “I don’t get it. You hate druggies, but defend these lowlifes. All they’re doing is searching for connections.” She shook her head. “Just look at ‘em all. I don’t get you.”

Harry glanced to her. “It’s not that I agree and you know that. It’s what has to be done to clean them up. That’s what society misses. God, it’d sure be a different story if it were you or someone you love . . . or would it?”

“No it wouldn’t. But what I can say is this guy’s way too smart to be hooked up with any of these freaks.”

“What makes you say that?”

“Cuz he’s got computer access and by the type of emails we’ve seen, it looks like he’s fluent in computer hacking.”

Harry snickered and kept his eyes pinned to the narrow roadway ahead. “Yeah. You got me there. But there’s one thing he does that makes me think he’s also literate.”

“What’s that?”

“Those attachments. They’re j-pegs. And the letter-fonts look like they’re outta newspapers and magazines. Each cut and pasted to form the j-peg note. That’s stuff straight out of the 30s and 40s detective novels.”

“I noticed that, but that stuff’s been around forever. It’s in every private eye TV show or movie I’ve ever seen.”

“Yeah. But it means he’s got access to TV, movies or books. And I’d like to hope he’s literate. Don’t wanna think I’ve been conned by a reality show watcher.”

Joanne laughed as Harry rolled the cruiser around the next corner. He hammered the gas and rocketed the car up the hill. The headlamps swept from the earth to the sky before spreading over the Spirit River’s calm diamond-like waves. He swept down onto a dilapidated coal dock.

Joanne clutched the fringes of the bucket seat as Harry blew past a deserted grain elevator and its padlocked doors. The car crashed down onto the pavement. “Look at the plywood windows”

“Holy shit!” Harry said. The Dodge skidded toward a fire burning in the middle of the coal dock.

Swinging her door open, Joanne bailed onto a grassy knoll beside the dock. She rolled down a slight incline and finally stopped on a sandy beach. She glanced to where soft waves lapped against rotted piers.

Harry braked to a stop in front of the crackling bonfire.

Joanne clutched her nose and grabbed her gun. Burning rubber filled the air. She choked back the smoke.

Harry dropped out of the car and scoured the property from behind the open door. Acidic smoke and the fishy river smell filled his nose. He reached into the car, grabbed his binoculars off the console and pulled them back. He swung his sights to the bleak elevator building. An embankment of soil and wild grass hugged the structure’s hillside foundations. He regarded the watery inlet that cut through a jut of land. Where the

elevator once loaded grain into Chinese freighters. Nothing came into view. Not movement or noise. He wrinkled his nose. The reek of rotted meat. He shimmied from the car and looked into a swamp of cattails banking the inlet.

Still, nothing.

He glanced to the hilled street. Remnants of rotted houses, empty stores, and dark trees stained the night.

Joanne raced around a rundown night watchman's booth. Staying low to the pavement, she skittered over a rock pile. "Harry - Harry?" she called. "You okay?"

"Yeah. We're late . . . again." He rose from the ground as she crept along side the boarded guardhouse. "Oh my God," what's that stink?" she asked, cupping her nose with her hand.

Harry fidgeted with his gun. The crackling flames died and the dense smoke began to thin.

Joanne moved to the Charger, raising an arm to block the car's headlights. "What's burning?"

Harry toed the smoldering mound, spreading embers over the pavement. Strings of melted plastic stuck to his feet. As he lifted his foot, hard winking embers scattered over the pavement.

A smoking skull rolled to Joanne's feet.

Startled, she hopped backward, hitting the car. "Christ!"

Harry grabbed and yanked her. "You alright?"

She gulped a breath. Shifted her eyes from the skull to the charred bones. "Yeah. I'm fine," she sputtered. She knelt to the ground. Harry shadowed her. "Look," she whispered, nodding to the grain elevator. "On the roof. By the Terror Siren."

Harry locked his gaze on the siren. He remembered when the city and received several grants from the federal government to help to defray the costs of installation. Not long after the Terror Sirens, the conservative government instituted ball and chain street sweepers at the expense of federal funding of culture, art and literacy. Soon afterwards

came the newer, grander prisons, and the erecting a ten-foot cement reinforcement wall along the international border, all in the hopes of nailing crime and terror, all at a time when felonies hit its lowest ebb in more than thirty years.

He traced a dark outline waffling over the corrugated steel roof. The noise of the shadow's footfalls echoed softly into the night. The bulky figure looked as if it dangled a stick by its side. Harry shifted his gaze to a wobbly fire escape.

A rush of patrol cars bounced over the paved hill, down to the dock. Their red and blue strobes streaking the night.

"Look," Harry said. "This isn't just a body burning. Look at them bones. They've been cut. Not broken. And none are whole."

He turned back to the elevator roof. The hulking shadow had vanished; the battered Terror Siren took its place.

"I don't get it," Harry said, turning to the five police cars braking into a straight line. "Who called them?"

A Sergeant stepped out of a cruiser. "You all right?"

Harry grasped the door handle. "Yeah. We're okay." He looked to the cruisers. "Who called?"

"Anonymous. Got a call about two suspicious individuals lurking about the grain elevator. Starting a fire and all." He looked to the burning embers. "You two do this?"

"Yeah right," Harry said.

"Thought you were out hunting your email killer. Weren't you two supposed to be on the other side of the city?"

"Well, if you check out that roof, you're going to find someone lurking up there. As for the fire, you better get the coroner. This body's been burning for a couple of hours."

The officer waved a hand to four officers and pointed them to the abandoned building. "Don't go in, just check the perimeter." He glanced to the roof. "If there's anyone up there, they're probably gone by now." He returned to Harry. "God. Some people's kids." He lit a cigarette and squinted at Harry. "Heard about your new email.

Also heard you know what the guy looks like. Just didn't realize it was going to bring you down here."

Harry looked to the sky. "Didn't mention the dock or elevator, but with the word coal in the message, I took that as a clue," he said. "As for the face on the computer screen, I think it was my imagination more than anything else." He returned his gaze to the bones. "You know. None of these murders have taken place exactly where the messages said they would. And that's when I started looking for other clues. And tonight I got lucky. But, it took me chasing the wrong horse in the wrong direction too many times to finally figure it out." He watched the winking embers. "If I were you, I'd check those bones up close and personal. These aren't like the others. They've been cut. Probably by a cordless Skilsaw."

The officer scattered the bones with his boot. "I'll call for the corpse-mobile and a bagger."

Harry turned to the sparkling river.

"Don't tell me we've lost him again," Joanne said.

The Sergeant tilted his head. "Haven't heard about any killings tonight."

"Except this one," Harry said, rotating back. "For all we know these bones could be out of a graveyard. I can't see a body burning this bad without a raging fire."

"I'll call the fire department. We'll check out that roof," the officer said. "Who knows? We just might catch your killer."

"Doubt it," Harry said, "but seeing you're here." He laughed. "Time for us to go," he said, taking Joanne's hand. He grinned. "How about dinner?" he asked her.

"Watch it, Harry. She'll have you on sexual harassment," a voice said.

"Not likely," Joanne answered. She looked to Harry. "You're favorite place or mine?"

Harry walked her to the passenger door. "Let's hit Wendy's. I know how much good food means to you."

###

"So how's life been treating you?" Harry asked.

Joanne shifted in her seat as she played with her cold baked-potato. "Well. You know. Colin still hasn't found anything. He's not used to this. He's worked his whole life.

"Hard on him, eh?"

She sipped from her cup. The sweet smell of hot chocolate drifted over the table. "Yeah. But that's not the worst of it." A tear filled her eye. She flicked it away. "He's accusing me of fooling around."

"No way. Why? Is there any reason ---?"

"Don't be stupid. I love him too much. With all my heart . . . but honestly, I don't know how much more I can take." She reached into a pocket and pulled out a tissue. She blew her nose. "Know what I found the other day?"

Harry shook his head.

"Weird pen and ink drawings."

"What kind of drawings?"

"Sketches mainly. But horrible scenes. Dead and chopped up people. Says he's trying to learn the horror market now."

"Has he ever done these before?"

"He used to be a graphic artist. He likes to doodle. But this is the first time I've seen him so serious and dark. And the weird part is he hides the art. Like he was ashamed. He's never been embarrassed by anything he's done before. He likes to draw and loves making Drupal modules. Hell, he even taught me how to make plugins for Wordpress. But, for him to hide art from me," she shrugged, "just so strange."

"Maybe he thinks your reaction might be over the top. You are a domestic violence investigator, you know. Maybe you should tell him it's okay. That his happiness means the world to you."

Tears rolled down her cheeks. "But he thinks I'm screwing around. And I don't know how to get it through his head that I'm faithful."

"Why's he think that? Has he told you he thinks that?"

“Dunno why. And yes. He’s practically taken me by the throat with his accusations.”

“Have you done ---?”

“Jesus Harry. Don’t be an idiot.”

“No. I mean. Anything he could mistake for fooling around. Like taking your calls in another room or having more than one email address.”

“Nah. He never used to be jealous. He understood my job and me. It’s all happened since he lost his last web design position. And his story writing has taken a plunge too. He’s just not right.”

Harry pushed back in his seat, out of the light that pooled over the table from above. He sniffed. Unconsciously, raised his palm to a teary eye. He leaned ahead. Brushed his hand over the table. “Has he seen anybody? I mean professionally.”

She grunted. “Yeah, right. He’s not that type. He takes care of himself. He doesn’t believe in mind healers.”

“Then. What about drugs? He used to do those.”

“Nah. He gave that up years ago. Nowadays he just keeps to himself. He draws and paints. He’s got loads of talent.”

“With you and his talents, he doesn’t seem to be doing so good. If he doesn’t get help, you both could be hurt. And I mean more than emotionally.”

“The guy doesn’t mean any harm. You’ve met him. It’s just he’s given up.”

“No. I’ve never really met him. Do you really think he’s that depressed about finding a job?”

“It’s more than that. He’s not solid about him and me.”

“You don’t really mean that. You two’ve been together . . . for what? Ten years?”

“Eleven next April.” She chuckled. “On April Fool’s day. Ain’t that too much?”

Harry shared the chuckle. “Never knew that. Too funny.” He reached across the table, grazed his fingers over her hand. “Why don’t you go home? Spend what’s left of the night with him. Show him he matters.”

"I did plan to book sick last night. Then that email came. I couldn't leave you to handle this by yourself."

Harry looked at his watch. "Look. Only a couple hours left, you take off."

"I'll be okay," she said. "I'll spend time with him later."

Harry shrugged, "I know you're okay. But there's nothing going on. So, go ahead. Buzz off."

She smiled, wiped her face with a paper napkin. "You sure?"

He nodded. "Sure." He picked up her hand and kissed it. "Feel better?"

"You bet."

Harry's cell phone rang its croaking bullfrog ring. He reached to his belt, unclipped it and glanced at the display. "The office," he said. He spoke low. "Yeah? What? You sure? What's it say? The gang still there?" He snapped the lid shut. His smile returned. "Time to get going." He scraped the plastic chair over the chipped-tiled floor.

"What's up?" Joanne asked.

"Nothing."

"C'mon. Give it up."

"Okay . . . but you're heading home. Right?"

"Yeah, yeah . . . sure."

"Another email."

"On your computer?"

"Nope. Everybody got a copy this time."

"How's this guy getting the addies?"

"Who knows?" Harry slipped on his jacket.

"Well. What did the attachment say?"

"Nothing." Harry led her as he helped her slide on her coat.

"What do you mean nothing?" she asked as they left the fast food joint.

"Just what I said," he unlocked the car door and jumped inside. Pressing the interior button, he unlocked the passenger door.

Joanne hopped in. "I don't get it."

"Short. Not many words."

"Gonna keep me in suspense?"

"No. Taking you to your car."

"Sure. Why so secretive?"

"Because you're heading home."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. No worries."

Harry smirked. "All right. The email subject said thirty-minute delivery. And all that was in the note were the words: coal docks. Only this time it was sent from the same email address as the last one I got."

Joanne swung around. Her face contorted in confusion. "What? The same email address? And you're saying he's at the coal dock? We just left there."

"Yep, coal dock Sounds to me that the shadow on the roof is probably armed."

"Thirty minute delivery? Think it's the same guy?"

"Sure. But with no other clues I'm guessing this guy's ready for another killing. Number fifteen."

"That settles it. I'm coming with you."

"Nope. We've got an army of police surveying the place already. It'll be over by the time we get there."

"Can't be dangerous," she said. "He only kills druggies."

He pulled into the police underground parking lot. "Just go home. I'll handle the paperwork later." He kissed her cheek. "Just be ready for work tomorrow."

"Oh all right."

"Besides. You need a life. And being home early will do your marriage a lot of good. Take care of that ol' man of yours."

###

Harry pulled in beside the string of cruisers. The same ones he had left earlier. "Sergeant," he said getting out. "What's up?"

"Black is down."

Harry spun to the commanding officer. "Black?"

"Yessir. Took a hit. Got it at the top of the ladder. Multiple shots. Fell fifty feet."

"How many times was he actually hit?"

"None."

Harry frowned. "What are you talking about?"

"Appears he fell. No gunshot wounds."

"Then what?"

"Killed instantly. His head caught the foundation wall."

Harry looked to the roof. "Gunman still there?"

"Not sure."

"What do you mean? Not sure?"

"Every time we move toward the building, he peppers the area with bullets."

"The last email must've been also timed," Harry said.

"Yessir. Looks like you were right."

"Right?"

"Yeah. Remember you said the hint in the last email made you come here instead of city center."

Harry looked at an ambulance. "Black?"

"No. His body's already on route."

A shot rang out. Echoed between the dilapidated structures nearby. Everybody kneed behind the cars.

"Snipers?"

"Yessir. Ready and waiting."

The smell of sulfur floated around them."

"Take him."

"You sure?"

Harry twisted to the Sergeant. "What?"

"Just asking if you wan' him dead? Want to be sure."

"It's our advantage if he dies. No trial. No incarceration. No lefty dildo protests," Harry said.

"But sir. We know who he is."

"So? A sheet on him?"

"No sir."

"Then what? Spit it out."

"He's Colin Bishop."

Harry dropped back. Whispered. "What?"

"Yessir. Joanne Bishop's husband."

Harry looked to the roof. "Makes sense. He's had problems with drugs in the past . . . looks like he still does. He might think he's doing the government a favor by killing dealers, but we're the law. Not him."

"Still want him snuffed?"

Harry blinked, looked to the pink sky across the river. He sniffed the smoky air. "No. Lemme try and talk him down. He's obviously sick."

"Your game sir." The officer radioed the snipers. His voice came across low. "Hang back. 'til I signal."

Harry ran his eyes across the dock and then up the elevator. He glanced to the cattails and floated his sights along the grassy hill to the elevator's padlocked doors. "Keep me covered and shine the floodlight over the roof." Harry crept away from the Dodge, stayed low to the uneven pavement, until he reached a rotted pier post. He waved to the troops.

They scoured the abandoned grain elevator with handheld spotlights. "Colin," Harry cried. He searched the rooftop.

A splash from inside the cattails grabbed Harry's attention. "Colin?"

"Didn't kill him. Never did a thing to him," Colin said. "The cop just got tangled and fell. Had nothing to do with me."

"I'm sure it didn't," Harry returned. "How about we end all this commotion right now."

"No."

"If you come with me, it'll be easier on you."

"No. I have something to say."

"Okay."

"I wasn't always like this."

"I know."

"I wasn't this upset when I had work."

"I've heard."

"What's your name?" Colin asked.

"Harry. Harry Stinger. I can help."

"Stinger?"

"Yeah. I work with your wife."

"I know."

"Colin. I know how it's been going."

"Do you now?"

Harry saw the man peek out of the reeds. He recognized the face. The same one that haunted his computer screen earlier. "Yeah. Those dealers deserved punishment," he said.

"Dealers harm and maim. But most of all, they led me to Joanne's excursions across the city, and then to you."

"To me? Okay. I agree. Dealers need to be smoked. And if you look out here, you'll see all of these police are right behind you. They think you're a hero."

Colin sniffled. "I don't understand."

"You will. When you come with me. We can talk about everything."

"No."

“Why? I don’t want to see you hurt more than you already are. Think about your wife. Do you want to hurt her?”

I think about her all the time. That’s what’s brought you and me together tonight.”

Harry took a breath. “Now . . . I don’t understand.”

“You’ve been screwing her, haven’t you? She’s always late. Always sending secret emails. Addresses I don’t know about.”

“You’ve lost me,” Harry said. “What are you talking about?”

A spotlight exploded outside the cattails. Ignited the heads of the fat fluffy brown and white sticks.

“Kill it!” Harry shouted.

The brilliant white light snapped off.

Harry pulled out his revolver, aimed into the cattails and said in a low tone, “Colin, come all of the way out. I don’t wanna hurt you.”

Tall grasses shifted apart on his left. As if a deer was wandering through. A female voice came from within. “Harry. I can’t let this happen.”

Harry turned to Colin. A muzzle flash ignited what was left of the night. A burning sensation tore into his shoulder, threw him backwards. He crumpled into a mound on the pavement. Screams of gunfire erupted from the surrounding territory.

“Stop!” Harry screamed. “Stop. Goddamn it.”

The gunfire rattled through the cattails, reeds and tall grasses that edged the property. And then just as fast as the gunfire erupted, it halted, white smoke blending with the pink day-lit fog that floated over the diamond waves.

Harry rose, eyeing the area closest to him. Then the last voice he had heard echoed in his mind.

Water splashes erupted from within the cattails.

“Hold on,” Harry yelled. He threw a hand up and gripped his shoulder with the other.

The cattails parted, Colin waded through the swamp with his hands raised. Just as he reached the pier post, he dropped to the soggy ground. Tears flowed down his cheeks. "I don't want to hurt anybody. I just want my wife back."

The police Sergeant yelled from behind. A group of officers surrounded him while others raced to the long grass. "Harry," the officer said. "Come quick."

As he walked toward the group of men, he noticed that some had turned their faces away while others had removed their caps.

"What?"

He pushed to where the men stood; their stances enveloping a body slumped backward over a large granite rock. Joanne had multiple bullet wounds cut over her head and through her legs.

###

"I don't get this email business," the Sergeant said.

"From what I understand," Harry said, "Joanne's wireless laptop had recorded several IP addresses that were linked to the killer's emails on your computer. But the last message was definitely from her husband. Looks like she had a bigger problem with his drug dealer friends than he did. So much so, she killed almost all of them."

The Sergeant looked into the empty cubicle next door. "What made her husband go over the top?"

Harry shrugged. "He thought his wife was having multiple affairs across the city."

"When in fact," the Sergeant said, "she was sending emails to you from various locations using different web mail addresses, hoping not to be caught."

"And on top of all that, Colin thought I was one of her so-called lovers," Harry said. "So after awhile, not having a job or enough money to leave her, his spirit finally broke. And I became a target. Her only affair he thought he could end."

"Then that last email, what was that all about?"

"From what I understand, he uncovered her email sent files on her laptop. She kept the addresses in her laptop and he was able to break the password in one of them. And

after achieving that, he sent the email using the same subject line from the same web address . . . guess without knowing it, he had given me my thirty minutes to live.”

THE END