

Headers and Stretchers

By Philip W Baker

Chapter 1 : Fanny By Streetlight

He took her out on to the road.

It was naturally dark but not too cold or even unpleasant.

The street light was one of the older types, sodium vapour or something like that, he supposed. But the standard wasn't too tall and the lamp gave an orange glow.

His subject was a good-looking slim young woman who wanted to be a model.

He stood her up against the brick wall of an old industrial building and, using his skills as a photographer, posed her to give the best effect he could envisage.

The simple scene, the street light, the way she was dressed and her smoothly chiselled features clinched it.

The finished photograph was spectacular. "Who needs to travel or use expensive backdrops when there is such a free and natural scape just along the road!" thought Terry.

Terry Goucher's interest in photography had started at school when a classmate formed a photographic society.

Alan, the founder, and members Gerald, Mickey, and Terry had gone to London one Saturday and ridden around on the tube trains. That was more fun than taking pictures but they did do some photography as well. The Monument, Trafalgar Square, other landmarks.

Terry guessed that Alan had a father who was into photography because of the expensive equipment he toted around and his precise knowledge of the subject.

But Terry wasn't envious or put off by it, he simply learned what he could from Alan, while he could.

After leaving school Terry did several types of job and played around with cameras, lighting, and so on at weekends.

Items like fish-eye lenses, filters, dish warmers, enlargers and all that kind of stuff he found fascinating.

Techniques like smearing petroleum jelly around the edge of a plain glass filter to give a blurred effect, and so on, and so forth, added to his love of the subject.

The 'lamp post' model was named Helen. Quite a good name, Terry thought. Helen of Troy: the face that launched a thousand ships.

He once had a family doctor, a local GP, named Helen and tagged her "Helen: the face that launched a thousand scripts" because of the incessant flow of repeat prescriptions those people have to deal with.

Helen the model didn't launch scripts, though, she launched herself: with some help from Terry.

The photo won a competition in a magazine and readers wanted to know the details. What camera, what lens, what settings, what medium was it captured on, where was it taken, who was the girl, did he enhance the original, who was the girl?

Yes, the interest in the model did account for the majority of enquiries, even though some were 'disguised' among a number of questions so the enquirer's real question wasn't so obvious. To Terry, and no doubt to the magazine editors, it was all quite transparent!

Some readers came straight out with it "Has she done any nude or topless work?"

Terry didn't know. He hadn't asked her and it was not of any interest to him. There were plenty of sleazy studios specialising in that kind of production. His interest was different, not in human forms, simply in artistry itself.

Chapter 2 : Cadavers By Candlelight

The body was found by an estate agent who was checking out the premises before showing a customer round.

The building was a steel framed yellow brick affair at Camden Town and had once been used as a laundry and dry cleaners. The customer was looking for somewhere to start a small business in a niche market.

Other prospects had looked around and Richard Payne was hopeful of letting the unit soon, hoping also that the new tenant would be someone who didn't produce waste liquids.

The back wall of the building was at the edge of the canal and Richard cringed as he thought about what earlier occupiers may have discharged into the water in violation of environmental law. He must be sure to mention the rules to the prospective incoming occupier. It was on the check list, after all. Couldn't have the Environment Agency coming after the Estate Agency!

A police Inspector had to be present at the scene of a suspicious death and it wasn't long before the detectives and crime scene people arrived.

Richard was questioned at length and asked the same things different ways round to see if what he told the police was consistent. The gut feeling of those who asked the questions was that he was innocent and had just been there to do his job.

The water in the canal was not a particularly nice colour. Algae was growing on the concrete and bricks of the building's rear wall and it carried the scars anyone might expect to see on a building of that age.

Police photographed the wall from a boat and from the far side of the canal. It was gone over from bottom to top to see if any evidence had been left. Torn clothing, marks from climbing equipment, anything that might help the investigators.

The identity of the corpse was not known for a while. Male, white skin, age mid twenties, about 1.73 metres tall, short light brown hair, dressed in a buttoned casual shirt, grey casual trousers, black laced shoes, plain socks.

Prima facie the dead person didn't look like a junkie, a drunk, or a gang member.

The single gunshot wound through his heart did not give the investigators an immediate feeling that it was any kind of execution. The modus operandi of those was usually different. This seemed more like an unplanned thing. There was no real evidence to support that notion, it just seemed that way.

The investigation continued.

Chapter 3 : Body Count

The second body was found in a building in Kensal Road, West London.

The building was of an unusual design with round columns about one metre in diameter, seemingly way over size for a building of only two storeys.

The concrete floors were very thick and investigators reasoned that the building may once have been used for the production of armaments or explosives of some kind.

Their theory was that in the event of an explosion the walls would blow out but leave the floors and columns in place: a kind of directionally controlled safety valve.

The back wall of the building was at the edge of the canal.

A brick chimney rose up through the flat roof and one of the investigators noted the brickwork had been repointed, perhaps not too long ago. But the repointing wasn't continuous to the top. It ended about twelve feet up from the roof level.

The question was why. One suggestion was that the workman didn't have a long enough ladder, or perhaps the budget was exceeded. Unlikely the chimney was going to be lowered! But who knows, and does it matter?

The body was that of a young woman named Sally Granger. She had been good looking, with long natural blonde hair, a good bustline, flat tum and generally seemed nicely proportioned and healthy: until the time of death anyway.

Later the autopsy would confirm some of those initial beliefs. Sally had not been sexually assaulted, no contraceptive device was found on or near her and she had not been on the pill.

She was not virgo intacta, which was no surprise to the investigators, who imagined she would have been very popular with the lads and found it hard to resist their advances, even if she wanted to.

Chapter 4 : Two Plus One Equals

The third body was found in a temporary building whose back wall was at the edge of the River Brent at Perivale.

The river meanders through golf courses and is about eighteen miles long.

The body was that of a nun, aged fifty six. Her real name was Myrtle Birch and she had joined a convent near Marble Arch some years before.

Unlike Sally, though, she did have some contraceptives on her person. Plain male sheaths of a popular brand. Thirty six of them in total.

Myrtle Grant had a name assigned to her by the convent but the investigators would use her real name.

The autopsy on her body revealed that Myrtle was virgo intacta when she died.

Chapter 5 : The Joker Is Wild

The leader of the investigation team warned everyone in the briefing room to leave all ribald jokes and comments out of it. When entering the room he had heard some mutterings of "returned unopened" and other petty but expected "lame witticisms" as he called them.

"We are here to conduct a murder enquiry, not to audition for jobs as stand-up comedians at a stag night piss-up!" said Gil Potts. "If the media hears any of you making smutty throwaway remarks about sisters of the cloth or anyone else in these cases it will put the reputation of the police force back decades. There will be casualties and whoever utters the smut will be among them.

I am going to leave this room for five minutes. When I come back in there will be no more mention inside or outside work about Sally's big tits, the Camden Town bum bandit, cucumber patches, Benny dicked us or anything else. Remember your oath of allegiance to the Queen, get the silliness out of your system and keep it out. Your five minutes starts NOW!"

He left the room and made one quick phone call, ensuring he opened the door again exactly five minutes after saying "NOW".

Gil had been there, on investigation teams, for a long time and knew morale was important. He also knew, as he climbed the hierarchichal ladder, that things got very political near the top and pressure from "upstairs" was always there, sometimes very intensive.

He was the buffer between "upstairs" and "downstairs".

"You are a kind of constabulary's Mr Hudson", his wife had once said, referring to a character in an old television costume drama series.

When he re-entered the room the few residual whispers quickly faded and he didn't mention joking again.

He knew the team members were pretty loyal and expected them to behave appropriately, so enough had been said.

They also knew that he did have teeth and would use them if necessary. It was never a matter of motivation by fear or commanding respect, with him it was a matter of earning respect and Gil Potts thought he had achieved that.

The obvious question "are these killings related?" was asked after the second body was found and again after the third. "We don't need a fourth", was the common sentiment.

The "serial killer" theory was also high on the notional check list, not least because of the locations where the bodies were found.

Later, from near the the incident room door Gil did overhear one of the female member of his team, Pat Bourne, telling a couple of the guys a very old joke.

"Why is making love in a punt like cheap beer?" she asked.

"Don't know."

"Because they're both fuckin' near water!" she said.

There was the usual response of laughter but it wasn't about the murder victims so he let it go.

Clearly the topic of canals and narrow rivers had been raised and no doubt that had spurred the punt idea.

"Maybe they were on to something", he thought, "Suppose someone did get access to all three of those buildings from the water in a flat bottomed boat!"

Chapter 6 : Sheer Murder

Although nothing had been confirmed at the onset of each case, the detectives had to consider that all three deaths were suspicious and were linked.

Be open-open minded but be prepared they had been told. The long history of criminal investigation around the world dictated that you should never rule out anything. The simplest explanations were the true explanation in most cases, but not all.

There was some weird stuff out there. Sometimes you had to be a little weird yourself to grasp it!

Gil knew that some individuals were too honest to be a cop. He also knew that some individuals were too normal to be a really good cop.

As the reports rolled in it was confirmed that all three deaths were suspicious and to be treated as murder.

The single gunshot wound to the Camden Town victim was already known about.

Sally's demise was caused by asphyxiation. She had been suffocated, possibly by a plastic bag or other membrane covering her face.

Myrtle's end was brought about by heroin poisoning. After the condoms were found the topic of drug mules had been raised, almost immediately.

It was well known that people in various countries were recruited, often by blackmail or other threat, to swallow honey-dipped condoms and carry them within their body to an overseas destination.

Deaths of mules when faulty condoms leaked was not uncommon and their end was probably extremely painful.

The investigators couldn't imagine Myrtle, a nun with a strict religious order, being involved in drug trafficking and thought the worst scenario might be that she acquired condoms for someone else, not necessarily drug related.

It was not unheard of for convent members to help in the community and perhaps she was trying to assist an overburdened mother to avoid unwanted pregnancy, something like that. A convent is not exactly a family planning clinic, and some religious orders are against contraception, but stranger things have been known to pass.

It looked like Myrtle had been "force-fed" the heroin. Not in a condom, but directly down her throat.

There was no evidence that two people had assaulted her, so it may have been a person working alone.

How powerful must they have been? Hard to tell, although their victim was an ageing woman, not especially fit or healthy, and probably not too physically strong.

It is known that people under threat of death can find extraordinary strength in some circumstances, but there was not much to suggest she had struggled especially hard, if at all.

Neither was there evidence of a sudden heart attack brought on before the drug invaded her system. The way it was introduced into her throat was not known.

Three murders. Gunshot, Asphyxiation, Poisoning. If the murders were linked, what was the link between them? What was the motive?

Police photographers and forensic scientists took numerous pictures of the crime scenes.

The outsides of the buildings were photographed from all approaches and compared.

The news hounds were very quick to reach the crime scenes and also had a lot of photos and video recordings.

Chapter 7 : I Should Say So

Arthur Coe was a junior member of the murder enquiry team.

As he looked at her he thought "This is my lucky day." Almost as quickly, he thought if the guys at the station heard me say that they'd Spoonerise it into "This is my ducky lay!" To hell with them, though!"

She was tall, a bit over six feet. She had long blonde hair, brushed down past her shoulders, and stood upright. Most women that tall would bow their heads a bit or bend forward slightly to conform with the majority, those of average height, but she carried herself naturally and with pride.

He had seen her walk steadily along the road from Stockwell tube station toward Balham. She was looking at a poster advertising a live music concert, but instead of bending or crouching to read the smaller print near the bottom she stood back, stayed upright and kept her hands in the pocket of her raincoat.

As he walked nearer he could see the raincoat was open at the front. She wore a flowered blouse and a longish skirt. She was almost completely flat chested, but he didn't care about that. Women with boob jobs were a complete turn off to him. Why pay half your life savings for an operation to pretend you are something you're not?

He imagined she had bony hips under the skirt and that was who she was. A tall, slim, young woman of perhaps twenty something who looked appealing. A fashion model? Looked the part.

"What time shall I pick you up?" he said.

"Did you just ask me out?" replied the blonde.

"Yes."

"Why? We are strangers."

"You looked interested in the poster, I thought you may like to go to a concert and maybe you'd allow me to take you."

"Very forward, aren't you!"

"Only for you. Sadly, that poster is out of date. It shouldn't be there anyway because fly posting is an offence, but they are at Victoria on Saturday, if you'd like to go!"

"An offence? You sound like a policeman!"

"I am. Arthur Coe, how do you do."

"Are you really a policeman? You're not wearing a uniform, are you one of those plain clothes cops or are you having me on?"

"I really am a cop. I can show you my warrant card but I don't want to spook you or anything unpleasant. This is an honest invitation."

"Show me the card."

He did, told her he was a murder squad detective, then said "Where shall I pick you up?"

"Euston Road", she replied.

"Railway station or police station?" he asked, smiling warmly.

"You're the detective, you tell me."

He started to answer but she interjected.

"Tell you what, if you can guess which Euston Road I meant I'll let you take me to Victoria, but I'll meet you here."

"How long have I got?" he asked, hoping the conversation would never end.

"Tell you what, I'm just going along the road there to drop something in to my sister. If you're here when I get back tell me what you know. Deal?"

"Deal he said."

As soon as she was out of earshot he phoned the station using his mobile and asked the switchboard to get someone to look up all instances of Euston Road in Southern England then get back to him ASAP.

They called back about twenty minutes later, shortly before she came into view.

He half expected she might cross the road or turn and walk the other way. But she kept on walking, not hurriedly, a controlled, steady amble.

"Croydon", he said.

"Right." she said.

"Marilyn Carter. I am very well, thank you. How do you do?" She extended her hand and he noted her long, slim fingers with well manicured nails and varnish the same colour on each finger and thumb. Her hand was tepid but not cold.

As they travelled to Victoria on the underground train the following Saturday evening he confided to her "I have a nickname."

"What is it?" she asked, with an amused smile.

"Coco."

"What, you mean like hot chocolate?"

"

No", he explained, "My mother said when I was a baby she called me her baby Coe and that turned to Coe Coe, you know, the way parents repeat things to small children."

Marilyn nodded.

"I have a brother, Albert, or Bert as most people call him. He became Coe and I am Coe Coe. Some people say it's because I'm the older one, respect your elders kind of thing, so I should have the longer title. If someone writes it, it's usually spelt 'Coco'.

He added "My grandfather said if I'd been born earlier people would call me a clown because there used to be a circus performer called Coco The Clown. Luckily the guys at work don't know that, or at least I hope they don't."

She laughed, then said "If it makes you feel better, remember there was Coco Chanel, she was nobody's fool and certainly not a clown!"

"Thanks for your undying support to the cause", he said. They both smiled.

They enjoyed the concert together and during the evening they found out a bit more about each other.

Chapter 8 : Lock, Stock and Brickwork

The weekend after their concert date Coco and Marilyn went to see the paintings on display at Camden Lock.

He appreciated art and had often visited galleries and street displays in Britain. He also had an interest in structures such as buildings and bridges.

A couple of times he had been to New York to see the Brooklyn Bridge, the Flatiron Building, and other such edifices with what he thought were interesting histories. One of his work colleagues, Vic Stone, used to go to Colorado every year looking for old railway trucks. Arthur preferred buildings and bridges.

As the cop and his stunning blonde date sauntered along by the lock they saw a collection of paintings and some enlarged photographs with a brick wall theme.

Coco had seen urban murals in various places and admired the artists who could envisage how something would look on the end of a two or three storey building before they put a ladder or scaffolding anywhere near it.

He also admired how graffiti on the New York subway had been turned into an art form.

The images they saw at Camden Lock included perspectives, face-on, isometric and orthogonal views, comedy such as Mr Chad, 'Kilroy woz ere', and even toilet humour.

One framed offering showed a hand-painted brick wall with a scrawled rhyme:

"A toilet poet, when he dies
should have erected where he lies
in solemn tribute to his wit
a monument of solid shit"

They both grinned, but the work which caught Coco's eye was a copy of Terry Goucher's lamp post model picture. He bought it.

"I'd like to be able to take photos that good", he said.

"You can. Want me to pose for you?" said Marilyn mischievously.

"Would you really do that for me? You'd blow her away!" he said tapping the glass covering the print he'd just bought.

"If you want me to. She's a nice looking chic and I can't take that away from her, but I have my secret advantage, well maybe not that secret."

"What's that?" he asked.

"Haven't you heard? Blondes have more fun!" She flicked the glass too, giggled and ran off toward a refreshment stall she had spied earlier.

It wasn't the model in the picture that had caught Albert's attention. It was the wall of the building"

On the back of the frame was a label showing the artist's details.

Coco caught Marilyn's eye, put a finger up to tell her he'd only be a minute, then went back to the vendor to ask if he knew the photographer, Terry Goucher.

"Not personally", was the reply. "My colleague saw him. Mr Goucher called into our shop and asked if he could sell on commission. We have this stall on weekends only and brought a selection of stuff along to see how it would sell".

"Any idea where this photo was taken?" he asked.

"Not for sure. Looks like the kind of style you see round here so it may not be too far away. Hey, that girl you were with, elegant isn't she, quite a stunner!"

"Sure is. Better get back to her. Thanks!"

First thing Monday he would follow it up.

Chapter 9 : Artist's Impression

Terry Goucher was very helpful.

He liked walls, especially brick walls. He admitted that the purpose in capturing the girl in the light from the street lamp wasn't just an experiment in photographic technique. He liked the wall. He liked the bricks and the way they had been laid.

Terry had noted the contrast in colour between the brick faces and the mortar, and the way straight lines sometimes fool digital cameras.

He gave an example of cooling fins on old motorcycle engines he had photographed. Instead of looking straight they looked wavy. So did clothing like striped dresses or tee shirts. It was to do with how the electronic sensors interpreted light and compensated for contrasts.

It didn't happen with older roll film cameras but was common with modern digital devices.

When the digital images were zoomed to a different resolution the stripes or parallel lines looked normal.

His fascination was with trying to get the courses of bricks to look right in each study.

In the conversation with Coco, Terry had without knowing it, confirmed that the building with the lamp post outside was the building in which the first body was found. The gunshot victim.

Arthur Coe asked about Terry's movements, trying to see if there was a link or if Terry may have seen something which could help.

Terry Goucher, Richard Payne, Helen, the model in the photograph. Coco now knew her name and address.

Chapter 10 : Building Relationships

Murder enquiries mean busy times for investigators,

But Arthur Coe still found time to meet with Marilyn and take her out sometimes.

She told him her sister was named Sandra, was a couple of years older, and lived in a flat in Balham. She worked as a nurse at a London hospital and had moved to her flat so commuting was simpler.

Marilyn still lived with her parents in a former council house in Euston Road, Croydon.

When the topic of bricks arose during casual conversation she said "You should come and meet my dad, he was a bricklayer for years and did brick arches, twisted columns, and all sorts of stuff."

"That would be nice", replied Arthur.

When they had been out together Arthur and Marilyn met at pre-arranged places like stations.

He hadn't been to her home, but soon after their chat her family invited him to dinner and she introduced him with bubbly enthusiasm.

Arthur was normally wary of people's reaction to having a policeman in their home. It didn't suit everyone. Some were concerned about what the neighbours might think, and so on.

There were no concerns that evening, though, and he got along with her parents very well.

After the most superb roast beef dinner he had tasted for years, Arthur sat down with Marilyn's dad and they talked about bricklaying whilst Mrs and Miss Carter insisted on doing the washing up, partly so they could discuss him, the way girls do.

Dad got a couple of illustrated books out.

Arthur didn't realise how much there was to brick walls...and the terminology!

Header, stretcher, rowlock, bat, sailor, soldier, shiner.

The brick sizes, type of mortar, types of pointing, all too much to take in during one evening chat,

Then there were the types of bond. English bond, English cross bond, Flemish, Monk, Sussex, Scottish, American.

"I once saw a wall with two round holes then seven bricks. It was called a Double-O seven or James Bond", said Marilyn, who had suddenly appeared and was obviously in one of her mischievous moods. "Anyone for coffee?"

"Bring him again", said Mum after Coco had left. The dating couple hadn't mentioned his nickname, just in case her parents knew about Coco the Clown. Keep it positive they had agreed.

Chapter 11 : Brief Encounter

The investigation team had regular briefings and exchanged notes on findings, notions, etc. Sometimes "brainstorming" was encouraged, so was lateral thinking.

Officers were assigned specific tasks but also had freedom to raise any general matters they thought may be relevant.

The barrack room humour continued at times.

"If a woman was arrested and searched and the police found heroin in her bra would it be called a drugs bust?" quipped one of them.

It elicited the usual grins and guffawing but one of the female members raised a serious point.

"Sir, what do we know about nuns and their clothing. I mean, does anyone ever search a nun?"

"What's your point, constable?"

"Well, Sir, most people treat nuns with respect and wouldn't say boo to them. They are viewed as special people for some reason, devoted their life to god or whatever, but suppose one of them, some of them were used as drug mules. Could even be someone posing as a nun for the purpose."

"Your point is well made and well taken", said the boss. "How would you approach it?"

"Sniffer dogs, any electronic detection that applies. We know some nuns travel by plane on pilgrimages and that kind of thing and have to go through the same security checks as everyone else, so they know they are not exempt from that, but around the street of London it may be easier.

Suppose we checked out the convent where Myrtle used to hang out to see what comes up!"

"I'll take it under advisement and let you know. Good thinking!" said the boss.

Coco asked permission to take a look at the Kensal Road crime scene, saying he had a notion of a link but would like to get a bit more information before he made a complete clown of himself.

The boss consented.

Chapter 12 : Pointing Out The Errors

"Do we know who did the pointing on that chimney?" Coco asked as he stood on the flat roof.

"No, but I'm sure we can find out. Why do you want to know?" responded the local investigator who had met him there.

"It's been done wrong", explained Coco, then enlarged on what he meant. "A friend, an expert in brickwork, told me that pointing of brickwork is important in this country, so is getting the mortar mix right. If the mortar is too strong it can cause damage to the faces of the bricks.

In winter moisture soaks in and when the water freezes it expands. You know, water expands by about nine per cent of its volume as it freezes.

If the mortar is too strong or protrudes too far out the water, and the brick trapped by the water, has nowhere to expand to upward, downward or sideways, so it expands outwards and the front face of the brick gets pushed out, breaks away and drops.

There are different types of pointing. Recessed, bucket handle, weatherstruck, and so on.

"What's bucket handle?" asked the local guy.

"You know those old galvanised steel buckets they used years ago, they had a handle made from a flat strip of steel that had been bent to form a 'C' shape so it didn't cut into your fingers, well I think the idea came from there.

If you lay a course of bricks then run your finger along the mortar joint you can make a kind of curved recess a bit like a shallow letter 'C'.

The bucket handle is reckoned to be the best compromise in pointing. It allows a bit of expansion but also protects the wall.

They normally use offcuts of round wooden dowel or metal pointing tools to do it.

But that pointing isn't like any of the types I've seen illustrated, so I think it was done by a layman, someone who didn't know the difference."

"Why does it matter?"

"Because it appears to have been done recently and maybe whoever did it knows something! We should find them."

"OK, I'll get on it".

Chapter 13 : Litigious Society

"The guy who did the pointing is named David Prescott", the team was told.

"He used to live in London and was in the fire brigade. Never learned to drive and said he wanted to invest in property instead of wasting money on cars, which he only saw as a depreciating asset.

He got a mortgage on an old three storey house, lived in the attic and let out the rest of the place so his tenants helped pay off the mortgage.

He did an HNC in Mechanical Engineering after leaving the brigade and got a job in the firm that was, at that time, operating in the crime scene building at Kensal Road.

Later he got a better paying job as a manager with a firm in Mitcham. Used to travel by train to Colliers Wood and walk down Christchurch Road. The employer paid for his season ticket instead of giving him a company car, because he still chose not to drive.

The firm at Kensal Road was run by a man named Rodriguez who owned several businesses and owned various intellectual rights which provided a source of income.

The building was used for production but his machines were old technology. He closed the production for a planned amount of time and sent the machines to a firm called SMT in New Mexico, USA to have them automated, evidently at much less cost than buying new machines.

When they came back they didn't perform as promised so Rodriguez started a lawsuit against the American firm, damages arising from breach of contract, that kind of thing.

Meanwhile the machines were returned to have the modifications removed and the building was mostly empty.

Because Prescott had been there earlier Rodriguez wanted him for depositions about previous production output and so on. To do that he enticed Prescott back to work for him, gave him some fancy director job title and a big salary.

After the depositions were done and the lawsuit was under way, Prescott wasn't needed any more so Rodriguez gave him notice of about three months.

But instead of paying him off and sending him on his way he got him doing odd jobs around the place to 'work his notice', so to speak.

Prescott said there wasn't anything to do but Rodriguez said "That chimney needs pointing, go and do that!". Prescott was OK with ladder work, ex fireman and so on, and was quite happy to do it. He wasn't bothered too much about quality but enjoyed being out in the fresh air.

We spoke to Prescott at his home in Enfield. He'd bought a house there, was married with a baby daughter, and was busy creating a dormer bedroom he'd got consent for. He was fitting plasterboard to the ceiling when we called. He stated he didn't recall anyone else visiting the Kensal Road place while he was there.

The chimney pointing at Kensal was done several weeks before the murder. Prescott had moved on as soon as it was finished.

It all seemed to check out and we don't see him as a suspect in any way.

Rodriguez died suddenly of natural cause a couple of weeks after Prescott left, Simple coincidence.

We didn't find any connection between either of them and the murdered girl."

Chapter 14 : The next briefing

"Has anyone cracked any of these cases yet?" the boss asked as soon as the team members assembled for the latest update.

"No? OK."

He had found it prudent to ask first. It had been known in the past for senior officers to order feedback from investigators in a strict order. After listening to someone plod through their stuff for half an hour the next speaker announced they and their partner had made an arrest the previous night and the case was all but closed.

This officer didn't want to waste time or manpower on anything unproductive.

That said, he did encourage everyone in the room to listen carefully to what the others said. It could trigger thoughts and had been known to shorten investigations.

"Update", he continued. "The dead person found at Camden Town, the gunshot wound victim, has been identified as William Van Der Tuijn. He was a London resident and appeared on the database in a couple of places.

Despite first impressions he was a drug user, but only in the context of 'own-use, recreational'. It seems our William was a bit of a wild child, got high sometimes and was not the kind of responsible offspring most parents would hope for.

He had a Honda car and, according to witnesses, once drove downhill in the wrong lane in a high street, overtaking a long queue of cars which were in the proper lane, turned right against a red light and continued along a narrow side road where the Honda glanced off a number of properly parked cars on the left.

He had three passengers who corroborate this when they were interviewed and a bit of pressure was applied. The matter was whitewashed in the magistrates court, we think because of influence up the line.

The car damage was covered by insurers and the matter largely faded away.

The other matter was an altercation William had with another man of around the same age. Van Der Tuijn got a police caution.

We don't think there was enough juice in either event to justify a revenge killing and we believe the shooting was unconnected to them.

Would you like to do your bit, George."

"Thank you, Sir, said another member of the team, George Flint.

William's father is Mark Van Der Tuijn who is MD of a financial services type company involved in investment capital, start-up loans and that kind of thing.

Something like the millionaires on the Dragons Den TV show lending money to entrepreneurs. Not quite the same, but almost. Sometimes they pick up failures or near failures cheap, do asset stripping and that kind of stuff.

The firm has a small office in one of the buildings at Golden Square, Soho, near the Nordic type bakery, if you know that.

It fits that William Van Der Tuijn was spoiled by daddy's money and may never have had a serious job of his own.

We interviewed the parents and after the sad bit and condolences it seemed they were even relieved in a way. Their son had brought home a lot of bad news and was in danger of disgracing them with his uncontrolled behaviour.

We don't know about suspects because we don't know enough yet about his associates or what other mischief he made.

Chapter 15 : Wall To Wall

"Coco, you had something to say?"

"Yes, thank you, Sir."

"This is more a hunch than anything. The buildings in which the murders occurred all had an associated brick theme. Two were brick wall buildings. The temporary building by the Brent was used by a group named Kangaroo. It is a charity for rehabilitation of offenders and the site was used for training ex cons to lay bricks.

The name, from what we were told, comes from kanga, which is an African garment of some kind and ROO for Rehabilitation Of Offenders. The founder came from Africa and made his money in the rag trade, hence the kanga bit.

It is supposed to signify that, symbolically, someone comes out of jail with nothing, has a cloth around their waist for modesty and jumps into a job through retraining.

The founder chose bricklaying because of the demand. Despite all the advances in construction techniques, people still like brick walls so there are plenty of jobs out there. Not too many people ask about criminal records as long as they get their wall built.

From what we learned it seems the trainees build brick walls outside the temporary building to practice, then knock the wall down, clean the bricks and start again. They use weak muck so the recycling is easy, or clean it off before it hardens when they make the higher walls.

From a distance, especially if viewed through the trees near the river, a trainee-built wall could look like permanent wall.

I know that sounds far-fetched and a little bizarre, but we all know stranger things have happened.

The murder at Camden was in a building where, not long before, a model had been photographed standing by a brick wall.

The murder at Kensal Road was in a brick building where a brick chimney had been repointed not long before.

All three sites are near shallow water.

Water and bricks. There may be a link between one or both.

"Excuse me, Sir", said a female member. "If the walls are knocked down each day and not left standing overnight, and if a brick wall was the connection, it suggests the death could have occurred during the day, whilst the wall was still standing."

"Good point, Gemma", said the boss. As he resumed his role as speaker.

"Check out the movements of all trainees and let's get the low-down on all of them."

He continued.

"The question you asked about sniffing round the convent, we got a dull green light. Proceed with caution, gently does it.

The dog handlers have been briefed and the lab boys have some instruments ready. Talk to Charles Pond and he will advise what needs to be done. PR will also have a word first. Let me know if there are any ripples."

Chapter 16 : Sniffing Around

The investigation team was told to go over the evidence again to see if something had been missed, even if it was something they felt was a dead end.

The convent near Marble Arch was checked for the presence of drugs. Some evidence was detected so a more extensive search was undertaken after a search warrant was obtained.

Cars in the parking area were checked, the minibus was checked. Dogs were used and electronic detection equipment was used.

It was concluded that nuns had been carrying drugs. The convent was closed and sealed as a crime scene.

While that was under way two officers checked the details of the altercation William Van Der Tuijn had with another man. The record showed the person's name as Alan Atkins.

They learned he was an electrician who had lived in east Kent originally then moved to the Greater London area, possible to find more work opportunities.

Some of Sally Granger's friends were found and interviewed. They said she had lived with her parents at Shirley Park Road in Addiscombe, near Croydon, up to the time she died.

The various people the police interviewed gave some rather frank accounts once they knew she had been murdered and that there may be a drugs angle.

Sally had worked in the office of a manufacturing company at Hackbridge in the borough of Sutton. She did secretarial work for the firm's technical manager and was known to most of the staff because it was a fairly small company.

One former work colleague said she was quite friendly with the people in the R&D lab and sometimes went to a local pub with some of them at lunch time, perhaps once a week, usually Friday.

Asked if Sally had ever used drugs to her knowledge, Yvonne Rosendale told them she once went to Beddington Park at lunchtime with Sally and two of the guys, Norman Blake and Kelvin Pike.

One of them had some cannabis resin which they all smoked in Norman's car whilst they were in the car parking area at the park.

Another colleague, Brenda Skinner, said Sally hated hearing people use the word "tits". She thought it was because Sally was well endowed and may have heard it used in reference to her own breasts, perhaps too often for her to feel comfortable with the word! She said Sally would get uptight and, even in mixed company, say something like "I hate that word, don't say it, it's horrible!"

A third colleague, Nicola Stokes, said Sally told her she'd had sex a fair number of times but had never experienced an orgasm.

A story several of the work colleagues agreed on was about Sally's former boyfriend Alan Atkins.

"She was quite crazy about him", said Yvonne. "They went out for a short while then he dumped her. She was very upset about it. A number of guys around the firm asked her out but she wasn't interested.

She was a friendly and likeable girl but all she wanted was this Alan. Her parents said they were going away one weekend so she arranged a party at the house purely so she could invite Alan. I was there. Alan turned up, she answered the door. He took her straight upstairs, was there with her for perhaps half an hour, then he came downstairs and left."

She volunteered a bit more.

"We all thought she should have taken the hint by then. He wasn't interested in her and it wasn't likely to change. But Sally was still obsessed with him and kept trying to get in touch. If he'd made her pregnant, if she'd always had wonderful sex with him, or some other big news item it might have made sense for her to keep following him around, but not the way it was with them.

What kind of work did he do?"

"She said he was an electrician, wired building, that kind of thing, moved around a lot. I didn't fancy him myself but maybe he met a lot of women in his travels and like to play the field. Can't blame a single person for that!"

"You know for sure he was single?"

"Sally said he was. He was about the same age as her, early twenties, didn't wear a ring of any kind."

"That may have been because of his work. You know, electric currents and all that."

"Maybe but my dad's an electrician and he wears rings all the time. I think Mum would have something to say about it if he didn't. They wear insulated gloves if they go near live conductors, so I don't think that's it. I think Alan was single."

Chapter 17 : Getting The Lowdown

So, Sally Granger was not a total stranger to drugs and had an obsession with an ex boyfriend. She may have been a party girl but seemed to have a "red mist" intensity at times.

Alan Atkins did not have any entries on the police database but some facts about him were looked up by investigators.

Myrtle's family members were traced eventually, although it took a lot of searching. Two maternal cousins were contacted and told the investigators what they could.

The detectives heard she had been an insecure child, never found romance, kind of gave up on life and wanted somewhere or something to belong to.

She joined the order at the convent but didn't contact any of the relations afterwards. They were very saddened to hear of her unfortunate end and said it was very unfair because even though she was unhappy in herself years ago they knew she had a heart of gold.

The possibility of William's murder being somehow connected with his father's business was considered. If the firm put people at a disadvantage and foreclosed on them, so to speak, it could spur a hate killing and perhaps someone targeted members of his family. William's mother was interviewed and seemed sure that there was no such situation. His father said likewise.

The business was conducted through lawyers and very few clients knew much about the Van Der Tuijn family he told them. The MD didn't meet many clients and the named people they dealt with were members of his junior staff. No threats had ever been received.

It was also discovered that Van Der Tuijn senior did have friends on the force and knew a few magistrates, both lay and stipendiary. It was intimated that he had bailed out junior more times than was on the official record.

Chapter 18 : Building Blocks

Coco had read some more about bricks because the subject had grabbed his interest. Marilyn was quite happy to look up facts with him, and for him, because she found some interest in it too.

"What are those hollows in the top called?" she asked.

"Frogs." he replied. "They may have other names as well but the popular term for them is frog."

"How did you find that out?" she asked.

"Reddit, reddit", he said, grinning, and added "You asked for that one, Blondie!"

"Funny names", Marilyn said. "Flettons, Phorpres, Frogs. It says here that Engineering bricks are less absorbent than normal face bricks and are often used below ground level so they don't soak up so much water."

"Sounds about right", replied Coco. "They also use them in buildings that house large water pumps, the local pumping station, you know. They are used below and above ground in those places. They don't look as nice as normal sand faced bricks in my view but it's all done for a reason. Horses for courses, I suppose!"

She nodded and continued looking up facts.

Chapter 19 : Rootin' Tootin'

The police found Alan Atkins at a construction site near Tooting Broadway. He was asked to help with enquiries and went to the police station voluntarily.

Atkins was asked to confirm that he knew Sally, the nature of their relationship, how it ended and so on. He was asked about his movements around the time of the incidents, although they didn't give details of any specific incidents, simply gave dates.

He was asked if he had worked in the Ladbrooke Grove area of London.

When he answered some questions he seemed a bit cagey and the officers thought he was being slightly evasive. Their impression was that he was the kind of person used to asking questions but not so experienced in answering them.

They asked if he knew William Van Der Tuijn.

"Old Dutch crutch, yeah I knew him." was the reply.

They asked how he knew Van Der Tuijn and moved on to the disagreement that led to William Van Der Tuijn receiving a caution.

"You were one half of the matter, why didn't you get a caution?"

"Didn't do anything wrong, that's why!"

"So Van Der Tuijn attacked you?"

"That's about it!"

"What was the argument over?"

After a number of cat-and-mouse-game questions and answers they elicited the fact that it was about drugs. Van Der Tuijn could provide them, Atkins wanted some but there was a delay so an argument evolved.

It happened in a pub and the bar staff called the police because it was causing a disruption and bad for business. Evidently William Van Der Tuijn became very violent and even though he was not heavily built he was so intense and enraged he frightened onlookers.

The police were going to charge him with several offences, including property damage, but by reading between the lines, and looking through the original report from the time of the caution, it seemed phone calls had been made and daddy got William off the hook yet again.

The police caution was agreed largely as a public relations exercise because so many witnesses had been present in and outside the pub. There had to be some kind of penalty, just in case the press asked!

The investigators now had two drug users in their sights, plus a third, Sally, if they chose to count smoking a bit of cannabis as drug use. The feeling was that the Beddington Park lunchtime frolic was exactly that. A few youngish people having some fun as a kind of safety valve.

Some opinions were that the cannabis didn't actually heighten anything and it was more the concept of naughtiness and getting high on atmosphere that excited them: the expectation of "going on a trip" rather than actually going on one.

The nearest the investigators got when they'd asked others at Sally's workplace about that particular day was that there was nothing spectacular or even unusual. Evidently the four "day trippers" seemed better behaved than when they returned from the pub on a typical Friday.

Sally was not regarded as a drug user in any serious light, but her ex boyfriend may have been and he knew William, who was.

William and Sally were now dead and Alan Atkins was a suspect!

Chapter 20 : Sally Forth

They returned to the subject of Sally.

"When was the last time you saw her?" Atkins was asked.

"Let's think. She had a house party and I dropped in for a while."

"Was that when you took her upstairs then left?"

"Where'd you get that idea from?"

"How many other people were at that party?"

"Plenty, I'd say!"

"Let's say some of them gave us that idea" the officer assured him, avoiding specifics.

"So, I gave her one, That was what she wanted. She invited me there, I obliged and went. No point in staying after that, was there?"

"We heard she was quite crazy about you, Alan, why do you think that was?"

"I don't know, why don't you ask her?"

“We wish we could!”

“What does that mean?”

“Because she's dead, but you knew that anyway, didn't you!”

“No I didn't. What do you mean dead? What happened to her?”

“We are still trying to establish what happened to her. Tell us again about the last time you saw Sally.”

“I just did!”

“We think you saw her after the house party, a number of times. We think you saw her quite recently.”

“Think what you like, you don't KNOW anything.”

“Do you keep polythene bags in your van Mr Atkins? Or polythene sheets?”

“Sometimes, why?”

“Are there any bags or sheet plastic in your van now?”

“Probably, I don't clear it out every day.”

“Where is the laptop computer you use for work?”

“At my home.”

“Why not in your van?”

“Because I was charging the battery.”

“Don't you charge it from the van electrics?”

“Sometimes, but it was already on charge and I didn't want to interrupt it. That affects the battery memory and makes it less efficient.”

He seemed relieved to get away from the grilling and on to technical things which were more his cup of tea, so to speak.

“We will need to take a look at that laptop!”

“Well you can't because it belongs to the firm and I need it for work.”

“Oh, don't worry, the legal owner has already told us its OK. We'll collect it shortly. Use it for downloading porn do you, Al?”

“Who needs that stuff, I've got women coming out of my ears!”

Then he asked “What was that you said about Sally being dead? What happened to her?”

“Oh, sorry, must have slipped my mind, thought we told you when you first arrived. Yes, she was killed and it's being investigated. We are speaking to everyone who ever knew her. If there's something you know, something on your mind, now would be a good time to tell us.”

“I told you all I know already.”

“When you had sex with Sally did you use protection, a condom, something like that?”

“Getting very personal aren't you. I thought what goes on between consenting adults was their business, not yours!”

“Be very clear, Mr Atkins, this is a murder enquiry and not a school picnic. We need to know facts, detailed facts about Sally's life so we can establish facts about her death. Stop being coy and shy and answer the damn question.” The tone had changed and Alan now looked more than a little concerned.

“No, I didn't use any johnnies or anything. She was no angel and had been with other blokes before me but she was clean so I wasn't worried about catching the boat up or anything. Using condoms is like wearing socks in bed so I don't bother with them.”

“Was she on the pill?”

“Not as far as I know but I didn't watch her all the time so I wouldn't know, would I? I don't think she was worried about getting knocked up and you were right, she did have a thing about me so if I'd knocked her up she probably would have rejoiced. I wouldn't have but she might.”

He thought for a moment then asked “Was she pregnant then? Is that why she died. What haven't you told me? What are you leaving out?”

“Do you listen to the news, Alan. Didn't you hear about a young woman being found dead in Harrow Road?”

“Yeah, I did catch something but I didn't know it was her.”

“I think it was a different road, Bud”, said the other officer present, Harrow Road was the stalker in the ladies toilet. I think you got confused for a second. Wasn't the dead woman a bit further south off Ladbroke Grove somewhere.

“Sorry, you're right, all these naked bodies so close together on the same day muddles your mind!”

“Sally wasn't naked!” Atkins suddenly said aloud.

“What did you say?”

“I mean, what a horrible thought, that's all. You said she was dead, had been killed but didn't say how. Then you asked about sex stuff. I thought maybe you meant she'd been raped or something.”

The two officers made eye contact briefly, but without giving anything away to Alan Atkins. They had worked together before in interviews and jumped in to help each other out intuitively.

No reports of a stalker had been filed but the reaction from Atkins told them he knew more than he was willing to share. The drill was to keep working on him.

“Ever been to that part of the world?” asked one of the detectives. “Isn't there something in an old pop song about Ladbroke Grove. Leo Sayer was it?”

“Before my time. Anyway I like heavy rock!”

“Well, have you?”

“May have done, I go to many places, can't remember them all.”

“Your boss said he was asked to quote for rewiring a small factory or something around there somewhere. Were you involved with that?”

“May have been. I can't remember and all your bloody questions are confusing my mind.”

“We have to ask questions, it's our job! So if we look on your firm's laptop computer and find an estimate you did in west London it will confirm you have worked in that area, yes?”

“I suppose so.”

“Further to that, if we find that estimate was only put together recently, maybe not even finalised or submitted yet, it may indicate you were not only in the area but also at a particular address VERY recently, yes?”

“If you say so, officer.”

Chapter 21 : Ask The Employer

The detectives dealing with the Alan Atkins element had spoken to his employer, the owner of a small electrical contracting business based in Portland Road, South Norwood.

The employer confirmed they had been asked to provide an estimate for rewiring a business premises in Kensal Road W10 and Atkins had been asked to make contact with the customer, get access and collect all the necessary details.

It was a three phase supply job for industrial use, plus a single phase ring circuit for the offices at the front of the building.

He said Alan Atkins had a company-owned laptop computer with purpose-designed estimating software installed and kept the laptop with him all times except for software updates and auditing.

The police said they would need to check the laptop and the owner gave his consent. “Think of it as an audit!” he had been told.

Chapter 22 : No Jumping To Conclusions

Two officers were tasked with checking out all the trainees who had been to the Kangaroo project, plus all the trainers and other staff in the organisation.

They started by going to the site itself, getting clearance from the forensics people to look around, and doing just that: looking around.

Inside was a storage room used for tools and equipment, a kind of mess room with a stainless steel single drainer sink unit and cabinet, an electric water heater, probably for hand washing, etc, some coat hangers on the wall and a few stacking chairs.

In one corner was a chemical toilet closet with a wall vent.

A large jar of coffee granules, some sugar, milk powder, mugs, spoons were on the drainer, looking as if they had been left in disarray as the users left hurriedly.

The body had been found in the larger room, on the right as you enter through the building's only entrance door. There was a second inner door and it had been open when the body was found.

The body had been discovered by a jogger who took exercise along near the river bank several mornings a week.

He had passed the building before but usually it was locked and silent at that time of day.

When he saw the door open he stopped by to say hello, purely as a social gesture, called out "Morning, anybody at home?" but got no response. Wondering if there had been a break-in or something, he stepped inside cautiously, called out again, then saw the nun.

He checked to see if she was breathing, but was sure she was dead from the very unpleasant physical signs. He had a mobile, called 999 and waited outside the building for the police to arrive.

The witness checked out cleanly and was not regarded as a suspect. He was instructed by the police to say nothing of what he found to anyone.

The room where the body had been found and the rest of the interior of the building had been gone over by the forensic people and they would have any fingerprints, hair, or whatever was found. Today, the detectives were approaching things in the "bigger picture".

Outside the building, between the back wall and the river bank was a concrete hardstanding with a large plywood sheet placed central on top. The plywood looked a good quality and may have been a marine grade with good weather-resistant properties.

Laid on top of the plywood was a sheet of thick polythene. Being high density it was partly opaque.

Nearby was a roll of lighter weight polythene and the detectives thought it may be used to cover brickwork in the event of sudden rainfall, to stop the weak mortar from being washed away. They had seen brickwork covered that way on building sites, home extensions and such like.

Two other sheets of plywood with mortar smears on their surfaces were stood on edge, leaning against the back wall of the building.

A large pile of bricks was not far away.

The detectives put on gloves and started moving the bricks, one at a time, to a new location not far away and making a neat, logical stack.

They mentally recorded what they found, spoke to each other about it, paused at times to take photos and make written notes.

After working through the pile they walked to the river bank, looked carefully along the water's edge, and took some more photos.

In the water, sitting on the bed, not too deep, were five bricks. One of them was hollow.

Chapter 23 : Say That Again

“Sally has a piece of plastic tubing in her handbag. Any idea what that was for?” The officer asked Alan Atkins.

They didn't tell him that they found a compact bicycle pump in her handbag too.

“Did Sally ride a bike?”

“Not as far as I know. Probably would have fallen off if she had, a bit top heavy, if you know what I mean!”

“You don't seem to have much respect for that poor girl, Alan. We just confirmed she was dead and now you're making throwaway remarks about her body shape while that young body is still warm. Did you really despise her that much?”

“I didn't despise her, she was boring, that's all. A bit of fun for a while then she started getting all starry eyed dreaming of shoes and rice and all that garbage. Not for me!”

“When was the last time you saw her?”

“Already told you that.”

“Tell me again.”

“When I went to the party.”

“Sure?”

“Absolutely. Are these question going to go on forever, you are getting as boring as she was!”

“Going to write us off as well are you?”

Alan ignored it. He wasn't too bright at interviews but not completely naive either.

When was the last time you saw William Van Der Tuijn?” the officer asked next.

“Ages ago.”

“A witness suggested you met with him in Camden quite recently.”

“Well the witness is wrong.”

“So if we checked that on the laptop at your house as well we wouldn't find any jobs in or near Camden, is that what you are saying?”

“I don't remember any jobs in Camden Town, but if you have my compute I'm sure you'll look anyway.”

“Not your computer, your employer's computer: and I didn't say Camden Town, you did.”

“What's the difference, Camden is Camden and West London is West London, so what?”

“Those two areas are not far from each other and you have been to both of them recently, in sequence, One first, then the other, haven't you!”

“You're the one with the crystal ball, why don't you tell me.

“I think I just did!”

Let's take a break and we'll talk some more afterwards”, the officer added.

Chapter 24 : Guidelines

Not too many trainee bricklayers had been enrolled onto the Kangaroo Project and the investigator were glad of that: fewer records and less legwork needed to get answers.

The offenders had been convicted of a range of crimes, among their number. Only nine of them so far, but the project hadn't been running for long.

Five had a history of drug use. One had received a drug related sentence, two had been users before their arrest, two had started taking drugs whilst inside.

The investigators used profiling techniques to estimate which of the nine were most likely to re-offend and who was most likely to be involved in drug crime in the near future, if not already.

Criminal statistics show a “rule of thumb” for some types and although not a perfect technique, rules of thumb can be helpful in many walks of life. It is partly true because if the same rule of thumb is used ongoing it is being tested against an increasingly large sample.

Electricians use rules of thumb in their work, so do bricklayers. Most likely drug barons do too!

Why would someone leave bricks in a river bed?

Coco had quickly gained a reputation for being the brick guy. He wasn't a trained specialist officially but had learned more about bricks and bricklaying in a few days than most officers learn in a lifetime.

“Sometimes bricks are soaked before being laid so the mortar doesn't soak into them too quickly”, he began.

It could be that the trainees used the river as a ready made reservoir to soak their bricks to avoid big utility bills. Protect the charity funds, that kind of thing.

Maybe they washed some of the bricks there after knocking down a training wall.”

“How about washing away evidence?”, asked one of the team.

“A strong possibility, but what kind of evidence?” Coco asked.

“Not sure yet, but we may find something later. How about the hollow brick, what do you make of that?”

“Some people have used bricks with hollow interiors to hide spare keys, leave messages and so on.

One type has a false front which matches the other bricks and can be opened by pushing, like some doors with spring catches. It's called a 'trick brick' and there are many variations of the idea.

Usually they are placed high up so a step or ladder of some kind is needed to reach them. That's so they don't get spotted too easily from the ground and interfered with”

“So if a trick brick in a fixed position can be used used to conceal a key or note or something, presumably such a brick could be used to conceal other things, perhaps among a lorry load of bricks”, Coco was asked.

“As we all know, that kind of thing has been done in the illegal drug trade. Maybe the hardest part for those on the receiving end is spotting which brick is hollow.” They both laughed at the thought of someone staring at a lorry with seven thousand bricks on board trying to decide where to start.

Chapter 25 : Sparks

One of the useful aspects of being an electrician is that you meet other electricians.

Alan Atkins had an old college pal who had specialised in higher voltage stuff.

Jack Diplock had completed a 'High Voltage Consumers' Course' with EMEB in the West Midlands and currently worked as a member of the operations staff at an iron foundry in East London.

The foundry had a four megawatt electric furnace into which offcuts of steel and other ferrous scrap was tipped, then melted ready for pouring into moulds. Coal dust was added to some batches to increase the carbon content.

Alan had kept in touch with Jack since they qualified and sometimes called in for a chat at his workplace when he was in the area.

The revolver was already in pieces and access to the furnace was easy. Alan simply got Jack to walk him through the room and dropped the parts in when he distracted Jack's attention for a few seconds.

In a few hours the gun bits would be white hot and pourable. It didn't matter if different metals were there, the melting pot has no conscience and all the dross gets separated.

Chapter 26 : Ballistic Statistics

No shell case was found at the Camden Town crime scene.

Officers had looked all over the site, in wheelie bins and whatever other places they could imagine were reasonable search areas . There was the canal, there were drains, moving open back vehicles, so many possibilities, so many variables.

The murder weapon may have been a revolver which retains the shell case in the chamber. That may be the the right conclusion, but it was still worth a local search to be thorough.

The area commander had insisted everything should be done thoroughly. Strict adherence to the PACE Act, no flying kites, no perjury, no planting evidence or anything that may contaminate a safe conviction. Dead druggies was no big deal, but a murdered nun was!

The lead bullet found in William Van Der Tuijn's chest was identified as 0.357 inch calibre, or 9.07 millimetres as some prefer.

The specialists suggested it may have come from a Smith & Wesson revolver.

No gun was found at the murder site.

Other evidence was sought but there had been a lot of foot traffic in the building, people viewing it with a view to renting and so on . Shoe prints were difficult to isolate and fingerprints likewise.

Chapter 27 : Practice Shots

Terry Goucher was asked if he had any photos or video records of the building where William Van Der Tuijn's body was found.

He handed over a number of "Test Shots" he had taken before he took Helen the model out to the street for the photo shoot proper.

The photos were all good quality, high resolution, showed scenes along the street in both directions and across the street in both directions.

Terry had included some daylight shots he took earlier when trying to decide how he would frame everything.

He said he had thought about taking the model out there during the day but reckoned a daytime pose would lack the mystique of the night time shot. He was glad he made the right decision, so was Helen.

So was Coco who really liked the framed print he bought. Marilyn thought it was great. Coco thought Marilyn was great. How's that for a success story!

There he was, Alan Atkins, walking into the building where William Van Der Tuijn was shot. In clear daylight, around 11:47am two days before the murder.

Why was he there?

Chapter 28 : Incriminating Evidence

Atkins was shown the photo and asked why he was there.

“Private business”, he said.

“What kind of private business?”

“Can't tell you, it was private!”

It was going to be one of those sessions, thought the two detectives.

“Private but not confidential. Who did you meet with?”

“Was it him?” Alan Atkins was shown a photo of William Van Der Tuijn. It was a photo given to investigators by Mark Van Der Tuijn and showed William at an earlier time in a different road.

Both photos had been adjusted in the police photo lab so they looked as if they could have been taken from the same camera on the same day, in the same place. It wasn't outside the rules any more than an old “Photo Fit” picture.

The detectives reasoned that Atkins was unlikely to remember what William was wearing on the that day and may have believed both he and Van Der Tuijn had been captured on a security camera or something before meeting.

Alan Atkins admitted he has met William Van Der Tuijn there during the day and said William owed him some money for a private wiring job he'd done.

“How did you first meet him?”

“I was working in an office in Soho and I bumped into him on the staircase. He asked what I was doing and we got chatting. His father worked there or something.”

“Who else did you meet there?”

“Just the bloke who placed the order, um, um, Charles Finning.”

“Was it a long job?”

“No. A couple of days. Simple circuit for a little kitchen they did lunch in, microwave, that kind of stuff.”

The investigators thought Atkins was being nicer now, now they were getting closer to whatever he had been up to!

Chapter 29 : Fashion Parade

“Incontinence pants!”

“Mind you language” came the quick retort, then “What about them?” The detective frowned as he asked his partner.

“That's the link between the nuns and the outside world.”

“How so? Is this a joke?”

They were in the administration office at the convent, looking through papers of various kinds, and had got to accounts for ordered items and payments.

“No joke. These women have been ordering large quantities of incontinence pants, mostly styles designed for men. It may be a comfort thing and maybe they are all incontinent but it seems very odd. There are so many of them.

There's a brochure here with one of the invoices. It shows 'Tear-off side strips for easy removal', 'Plus', 'Super', 'Maxi', and other types. All looks very odd to me!”

“Better get the lab boys on it, better safe than sorry! Does it say that in the brochure as well?” They both laughed.

Police are often the victims of derogatory remarks and worse from the public and the media, some allegations being well deserved.

That aside, officers do have to deal with some horrific scenes at times, perhaps on a par with those attended by the fire and rescue services and ambulance crews: perhaps worse!

When professional conduct is demanded despite the horrors, the only relief outlet may be a bit of humour. Old jokes are recycled and witticisms are rife among members of investigation teams and they make no apology for what is said between them.

The “top brass” understands this, some having been there, and usually aren't concerned. Only if a member of the public or a reporter overhears an inappropriate remark does it get uncomfortable.

The two detectives were in a convent but the nuns were corralled in a different part of the building. Nobody else heard the joke exchanges in the admin office.

Chapter 30 : Old Boys Clubs and Urban Warfare

Some of the civilian advisers to the police service were former members of the armed forces.

They knew about the horrors police officers may face and the risk of injury, perhaps fatal injury, whilst on duty.

One of them, Joseph Milford, remembered being told in the Army about use of bayonets.

“You don't just stick it in and pull it out like you see in the films and comic books”, the instructor had told them. “You stick it in, hard, then turn the rifle right round, like this, move it about, then pull it out. That way you'll drag out the enemy's guts and he won't be going anywhere.

Stab him with the bayonet and he may survive and come back at you. Too many squaddies have made that mistake and never saw Blighty again! See these serrations on the back of the blade, that is what they are for, to disable someone. Use them.” The instructor had demonstrated as he spoke.

Joseph Milford knew the wars today were terrorism and drugs. Yes, people got stabbed, usually with knives, and firearms were everywhere, despite laws.

But it wasn't bayonets that tore out people's insides. It was chemicals, illegal drugs. It was tearing the inside out of society and bringing misery to millions: directly for some, indirectly for the masses.

He knew about the dangers police officers faced. Was it worse than in a world war? Probably not. A British population of seventy million? In world two more than half that number of Russians were killed. The UK population then was under fifty million.

Joseph was one of what younger police officers called “The Village Elders”, or “VE” for short. The “youngsters”, as Joseph called them, joked that people like him were old enough to have been around on VE day or V and E were the first two letters of “VEteran. In America they had what they called “Nam Vets”. Here we have “EuroVEts”.

It was only the usual “letting off steam” kind of humour and pretty harmless, but it was tinged with a small amount of resentment because serving officers didn't like the thought that old civilians were dictating how they ran their 'business'.

Heads of regional command centres, members of ACPO, IPCC, and others, had sometimes reminded critics of the system that funds for policing were made available by civil servants at the Home Office, local funding was approved by non uniformed people within 'Police Authorities', and to start and end international wars decisions were made by men in suits.

Joseph rose above all that. He was someone who, to use a popular cliché, saw the bigger picture. That was why he was retained as an adviser. He wasn't too close to the woods to see the trees.

“There is, most likely, a drugs connection”, his wisdom told him. In turn he told that to the senior officers.

He had been told about the convent and other paperwork that was found there.

“Do you know about the Kangaroo Project?” he was asked.

“Not sure if it's the right one, but there was an initiative called the Kangaroo Group set up in Brussels to do with the abolition of border controls and trade obstacles within the EU, what was called the Common Market.

As far as I recall, it was founded by a couple of Euro MPs. Karl von Wogau and a Brit, Basil de Ferranti who was also Chairman of the Ferranti group over here. He died from cancer some years ago.

They had a quarterly newsletter 'Kangaroo News' or something which was posted out free to subscribers. The 'kangaroo' idea was that they'd make it easier to jump across borders. See where that got us with all the refugees today!”

“Very interesting, thanks for that, Joseph.” said the prime interface, who was full of tact. “Unfortunately the one we are interested in doesn't quite line up! Our focus is a charity involved with offender rehabilitation and a few other social goods.”

“Tell me more!”

“We found a link between our kangaroo and the nuns at the convent.”

“Wallaby blessed!” uttered Joseph, demonstrating his own, perhaps rather antiquated, sense of humour.

Joseph had given the prime interface the nickname “Primo”, saying it was after an old time boxer named Primo Carnera who was a big guy. This guy was big and probably a lot more tactful than Carnera . “Carnera, is that something to do with carnage?” Joseph had wondered at the time.

“This is your prime interface”, he had been told as the introductions were made. “Your “handler” if you prefer!”

“Incontinence pads, I know a bit about them, my wife, you know”, said Joseph.

They discussed the links and how each organisation, the convent order and the charity may benefit may benefit from it.

Exchanges of money were a key focal point and illegal drugs was another.

Chapter 31 : Breaking Habits

In due course it was established that nuns had been carrying drugs concealed within the special pants they wore. Underneath their habit the bulge didn't show and, because the cargo was in sealed liquid-proof packaging, any natural bladder leakage wouldn't be a show stopper.

Sordid as it may seem, it was a pretty clever ruse, and quite sanitary!

The young female detective had been right, who ever searched nuns in the street? Even the Roman Catholic nuns may be candidates she thought after she had heard about the breakthrough.

She amused herself with an imagined “probable cause” scenario.

“Buongiorno Sorella, are you carrying any papal messages in your drawers today? “Half a kilo of cocaine perhaps, won't Il Papa be pleased?”

“Over a billion catholics in the world, quite a market, eh!”

Then she got on with her work.

“One of the nuns confessed”, said the boss, and the briefing room was filled with loud laughter which took a few minutes to subside.

Surprisingly, there were no follow-up comments from the assembled individuals and they paid attention, although still grinning.

“The convent and the Kangaroo Project worked together to secure funding and fractured a few laws on the way. That has been handed to Fraud and the angel dust part had been handed to the Drug Squad on orders from above.”

A few more grins as thoughts of nuns, angels, above, popped up in the detectives' minds. Kangaroo? What else have you got in your pouch for us before us today before we hop it , boss?”

“Unfortunately, the murder bit is still ours.” he said as pretended groans ensued.

“The sister confessor admitted drugs had been passed to the Kangaroo people. One of their trainers, a little weasely guy, an ex brickie they nicknamed “Baby Joey” used to hide the substances inside a brick at the training centre site.

Every evening, after training ended, he would lower the hollow brick into the river and leave it there overnight so any prints, DNA or chemicals would be washed off. He put a few other bricks with it so if anyone asked there was a cover story about soaking bricks normal industry practice. Coco suggested that to us.”

“Thanks, Coco, you're a real brick”, said one of the guys.

“You can say that again!”, said a female voice.

“Get you ears waxed, girl”, said a male voice”, “That was brick with a 'b', not what your adolescent nympho mind thought it heard!”

“Can we have one meeting please!” said the boss and tapped the table loudly with his knuckles.

“We think one of the drug-wise trainees twigged what was going on, lifted a drop before it was collected, and started a chain of events.”

“Do we know who he was, sir?” asked one of the men, who had put his hand in the air to see if questions were allowed at that point.

“Not for sure”, said the boss, but there is a pile of evidence we are checking out. I know this will delight some of you aspiring comedians.

After the training building was locked up there was no access to the chemical toilet inside and someone, as the Americans might say, took a dump behind the trees recently.

The theory is that 'ex-offender guy' waited or returned after dispersal to see who came to pick the brick, so to speak, then nicked the next shipment. They had more than one hollow brick in circulation, so if someone got caught with one in their hand it wouldn't be as suspicious as a packet of powder.

We are checking DNA . If it was from one of the trainees and that person was a parolee they will go straight back to where there are bars in the brickwork.

“And cell phones in the cells”, the boss heard whispered.

Another hand rose.

”Yes?” said the boss.

“Do we know who made the hollow bricks, Sir?”

“One of theirs, we think. It wasn't so much making hollow bricks as as making bricks hollow. Someone machined a hollow inside the brick, probably using something like a rotating masonry drill type of cutter, then strengthened what was left with a hard-setting compound, epoxy resin, that kind of thing.

A lid was put onto cover the hollow and fitted about half an inch in from the brick's edge. It looked quite authentic.

To identify the brick among all the the others we think a mortar splash was applied in a certain pattern. Some bricks have the maker's name moulded in, London Brick Company, for example, but that is harder to copy so these perps used their own marking method. The mortar mix the trainees used was very weak and designed to be easy to wash off, so the a stronger mix was used for the identifying mark. Sometimes acid is used to clean mortar splashes off brickwork and we found some acid there.

It was probably used for part of the training but could have been used to quickly clean the mortar mark off the hollow brick if someone got the wind up.

You boys and girls know how much fun it is looking through hundreds of something to find one that's different. Sixty bricks per square metre, fifty bricks per square yard in old money. Not quite haystack territory but that's a pretty good cover.”

“Yes?” as another hand rose.

“Brickies cut bricks in half with a trowel sometimes, don't they Sir, how did they avoid the hollow one being chopped by a trainee and discovered by accident?”

“Probably Baby Joey. He made sure it was never among the pile during training hours.”

Chapter 32 : Go West Young Man

The interviews at Sally's employer's premises helped uncover another helpful link.

The firm has a sister company in Ruislip and there were inter-site football matches and other events organised by the sports and social club sections of firms.

Sally Granger had been to the Ruislip site, on the arranged hired coach, more than once, to support her own "side" and she was thus able to put faces to names. Her work had often involved telephone liaison but she only had voices before.

When she met some of the voices in person friendships developed and she had been invited to private events, not just the few-times-a year company things.

So that took Sally into Hillingdon, not a million miles from Kilburn and Kensal Road.

Alan Atkins used drugs to entice girls. He sold some drugs for cash to fund other fun exploits and had taken some drugs himself. He was not a big user and wasn't in any big league.

William Van Der Tuijn had sold drugs to Alan Atkins after they first met in Soho but then stopped.

During the daytime meeting at Camden Town he refused to supply any more to Atkins, saying there was a supply problem, after which the conversation turned nasty, to the point of threats being exchanged.

Whilst they were there, Van Der Tuijn had let something slip about someone who had been killed in a hit and run incident a few weeks before. He worked out that Van Der Tuijn had been the driver, but didn't show his hand at the time.

Chapter 33 : Gun Law

"Guns come into the country from many places. Some are dropped off transatlantic liners in Southampton, some from ferries arriving at Harwich, some on private yachts going between the Continent and southern England, etc, etc.

Smith and Wesson is a famous American make and there are scores of models. We should not be surprised at the number or variety of models in this country.

Serial numbers can help trace lineage, but we know what happens to serial numbers, and it's common for guns to disappear entirely. Don't expect to find your murder weapon and you won't be disappointed."

The weapons officer had been asked to speak to those dealing with the Camden Town shooting.

They didn't know that earlier on Alan Atkins had a friend named Harold Rebello who had a deep interest in guns.

Harold had purchased a Smith & Wesson revolver, hoping to join a local gun club and do some shooting.

He wasn't a violent person and had no evil intent, it was an honest interest in shooting at targets and Harold wanted it all to be legal, mostly because of his Spanish wife, Josefina and their two children.

Unfortunate things happened. Harold died suddenly on his way home from work one evening. It was a brain haemorrhage.

Alan heard about it quite soon afterwards and, as a friend of the family, called at the Rebello house to see if he could help.

Josefina was distraught and frightened. Her parents lived with her and they spoke next to no English. She was the fallback breadwinner, language interpreter, mother, and everything else.

Being a domestic at a teaching hospital wasn't the nicest job in the world. It didn't pay much, Harold's job hadn't paid much, she didn't have much money, her head ached and her back ached from all that cleaning.

On top of that there was a gun and ammunition in the house. She wanted to get rid of it, not least because if anything else bad happened she might be tempted to use it on herself. No, she couldn't do that to Dean and Cheryl, or Manuel, or her mother who had already suffered so much in her life.

The law on firearms had been tightened. It was an offence to have one. Harold shouldn't have kept it. She didn't want police at the door, it would terrify her parents.

“Perder el arma”, she thought, “Get rid of the weapon, get the bloody gun out of the house!”

Alan came by and asked if he could do anything. Perfect timing. Gracias a Dios!

She explained, Alan said OK and told her not to worry. After he left she would never see the gun again. Not too many days later Alan ensured the world would never see the gun again. Alan Atkins was not especially highly educated but he was a skilled tradesman and good at his job. Sometimes he had to think logically and be calm whilst he reasoned his way through an electrical circuit to find a fault, that kind of thing.

He had heard phrases such as “Never let the sun set on your wrath”, “In the cold light of day” and so on. He knew some tasks needed careful thought and planning. He thought carefully and planned.

After phoning Willam Van Der Tuijn and saying he had some information about a road traffic matter he thought he should hear about, Alan met William at the building in Camden Town and shot him.

He didn't waste time or opportunity with a valedictory or tell him why he was to die that day. He simply shot him, in cold blood, using the late Harold's gun. Another old phrase, “Revenge is a dish best served cold!”

“That'll teach you what happens if you run over someone's sister” he mouthed quietly. Then he left quietly by a side exit door and sneaked away in the dark.

Terry Goucher didn't hear the report from the gun. He arrived some minutes later, not knowing about the blood silently pooling on the floor upstairs. If he had and if he had been a news photographer that would have been a nice little scoop.

But he didn't know and there was nobody else in the building. Just William.

Chapter 34 : I'd Do Anything For Him

Sally had heard about Alan's frustration over his failed drug supply from a mutual friend, someone who knew his sister before she died.

Sally felt sorry for Alan and wanted to hold him to her bosom and make it better. Maybe if she could get some drugs for him there could be a reunion!

She asked the guy at work who had taken the cannabis to the park. "Where did you get your stuff? Can you get some more? How about stronger stuff?"

He didn't want to get involved, especially since a friend at a different firm had recently been fired when drugs were found in his locker at work. But he did tell Sally something to help her.

"Derek the van driver's got a contact at Ruislip. I don't know who it is but a bit of gear has been taken here and there in the past. Go chat up Derek but be careful and leave me out of it, OK!"

Derek was helpful, without giving too much away, and Sally was soon able to have a very quick meeting with Franco at Ruislip.

Sally had never learned to drive and often used public transport. The underground system was to become her friend that day. Up to Ruislip, Ruislip to Perivale, Perivale to Kilburn. All change.

She didn't mind walking from tube stations to wherever: good for keeping trim. Quite a few heads turned as she made the journey.

Franco was a Eurasian who worked as a factory machine operator. He told her about a place where drugs were made available at Perivale and promised to make a discreet phone call for her, but that was all.

The nun, Myrtle, had been told of a ripple in the supply system and went to the Kangaroo bricklaying place to investigate. There was nothing unusual about a nun visiting a charity set up to help members of society.

Sally found her there and asked about buying some drugs. Needed urgently for a friend who was desperate, she said.

Myrtle denied any knowledge of any such thing and said Sally should leave, but Sally was on a mission, a mission to help her Alan, and this old bag wasn't going to stop her.

To shut her up Myrtle produced some heroin, a tiny packet, from under her clothing and said "This is all I've got, you can buy some of it, a donation to the church, my child, you know!"

Sally wasn't going to settle for that and they got into a tussle. Then something unusual happened. Myrtle fainted, just fainted. Her muscles lost tone, her blood pressure dropped and she fainted.

Sally searched Myrtle and found some more drugs. There were no incontinence pants today, just thick knickers under the robes. But the robes had many layers and plenty of pockets.

“I can't leave her like this, she'll blab”, thought Sally. A quick glance outside, nobody there. She looked around the place. In a corner was a plastic bottle containing gearbox oil and it had a spout, a length of clear plastic tube.

She had seen the guys at work with such things, used to put oil in the gearbox of their car or something. This bottle hadn't been opened and the tube was clean.

She looked in her handbag, searching for ideas.

There was the compact bicycle pump she'd bought for inflating her Mum's sunbed after the last pump broke. “Forgot I'd put it there, she thought!”

Without being aware of how inventive she was being, Sally removed the tube, which only needed a quick pull, fitted the tube over the end of the pump, opened the small bag of heroin with her nail file and drew heroin into the tube. Pull - Push just like a hypodermic syringe.

Except this wasn't going under someone's skin, this joy pop was going down Myrtle's throat. “Don't screw with the busty blonde, you ugly candlefucker”, Sally whispered.

Sally, still being methodical and efficient, cleaned up, checked outside, then left.

As she got to the main road some more heads turned. She knew why, but didn't care. She now had Alan's medicine and all she had to do was find him and present it to him: the heroin and herself. She phoned Alan's boss, Martin, said she needed to get in touch with Alan urgently and asked where he had been working today.

Martin had seen Sally, knew she was voluptuous, envied Alan, after all, who wouldn't?

“I'd love to have you in my debt”, he thought.

There was an old joke among electricians that getting an electric shock gave a guy an erection. He's had plenty of shocks in his time as a wireman. Married, three kids. But that Sally was something. He didn't need a portable generator for her, his own built-in power supply would do!

“Quid pro quo”, he thought, “You scratch my back and...now there's a thought! Be nice to her and maybe one day she'll repay you in kind.”

So Martin gave Sally details of where Alan was working. This old building in Kensal Road.

On to the trusty tube station once more.

Chapter 35 : End Of The Line

She found him on the roof.

His van was outside parked by the kerb and locked. Otherwise she may have waited in it and surprised him

Sally had looked all round the ground and first floors, then found the way to the flat roof.

Alan was standing by the brick chimney near the canal side of the building. He looked enraged, worried and almost grotesque.

“What are you doing up here?” she asked.

What do you want? Why are you here, Why don't you ever stop following me around?”

“Because I care about you. You know that, don't you! I got you some stuff. Jackie Grant said you needed some. I brought you some to show you that I care.”

He sat down on the roof and she sat down next to him.

They talked. He said he'd found a new supplier but couldn't find the stuff where they'd said. He didn't seem to want to take drugs at the moment and she didn't suggest it.

“They said there was stuff here”, he murmured.

They said there was stuff here in a brick with a hole in the middle. They said it was here and you could climb up from the canal. They said it was near the bottom where it was harder to spot and all you had to do was kneel down, find it and lever the top off.

I can't find it. I've been here for hours and I can't find it. It's driving me nuts. Where is the bloody stuff?”

He started to get angry

He didn't tell her he'd done a murder.

She didn't tell him she'd just come fresh from one.

He went to the first floor and Sally followed him.

“Where is it, where is it?” he said repeatedly.

Sally reckoned he must have got into some new situation with drugs and didn't have a way out.

She suggested some things but her presence riled him.

“Take this”, she said and held out the packs he had taken from Myrtle.

“I don't want your bloody junk, who don't you go play in the traffic and leave me alone!”

Hanging from one of the large round columns was some plastic sheeting which had been held in place with adhesive tape whilst some painting was done.

Sally kept trying to get Alan to tell her what was going on and offering to help, but every effort made him more enraged.

She turned her back on him for a moment but still kept on muttering about “I really want to help you Alan...”

He lost it. He'd had enough.

He pulled at the lightweight green plastic sheet. Threw it over her head and pulled, and pulled, and pulled.

“Shut up you stupid, interfering bitch, shut up!”

She wriggled and fought but he was stronger than her and she died, Asphyxiation, lack of oxygen in the blood and vital organs.

The noise stopped. She had shut up. He had shut her up. He had also shut her down. Her buxom young body was shut down forever.

His wasn't.

Chapter 36 : The Truth Will Lock You Up

Alan Atkins took the drugs with him and left the site.

Nobody was in the road and nobody saw him leave that day. They wouldn't have taken much notice if they had seen him leave. White vans were everywhere and his was just one of them. It wasn't even signwritten, just another white van.

He carried on much the same as usual, going to sites, doing electrical work, cost estimating.

Until the police wanted to speak to him.

Under interrogation, intensive but within the legal guidelines, he cracked and confessed it all.

Alan Atkins was unlikely to fit another circuit breaker before he died, but he had, in a way, helped the police to break a drug distribution circuit.

Coco was on duty when the CPS advised there was enough for a successful prosecution.

He had visited Kensal Road and the investigation team reasoned that Dave Prescott's pointing job was what defeated Alan's attempts to find the drugs. The brick was firmly cemented in place, somewhere. They used technology to help locate the right brick and, yes, the drugs were inside.

Arthur Coe got to say the words.

“Alan Atkins I am arresting you on suspicion of murder.

You do not have to say anything. But, it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.”

Marilyn Carter said she was proud of him because he had done something to find justice for blondes. “Do me a favour”, she said, “When the autopsy's done, find out if they were real.”

“No”, he said,grinning, and that started that evening's frolic.

The End

Copyright © Philip W Baker 2015

Headers and Stretchers

a MIURA genre story by Philip W Baker

Philip W Baker asserts his moral right to be identified as the author of this book