

She's Dead

by Sam McCrea

Act I, Scene 1 — Hank Baldwin and Bill Ferguson (2 homicide detectives) are investigating a murder.

Hank: Man, I'll never get used to that smell. Nothing stinks worse than a rotting corpse.

Bill: I don't know, I remember when I was a kid and my folks took us to Yellowstone National Park. Those pools of water with that sulphur smell would about knock you out. But, Yellowstone had a lot of cool stuff, too. I loved those geysers and those neat little things that looked like mud boiling. You wouldn't believe the animals they had there. Grizzlies, buffalo, moose, elk...

Hank: Bill!

Bill: Huh? Oh yeah. I've checked all the rooms and everything seems to be in its right place. It didn't look like any of her stuff had been disturbed. There's a box on her dresser that looks like it might be a jewelry box and it's still locked. All the stuff in her dresser and closets looks neat. All the windows were locked, so I don't think it was a robbery.

Hank: Yeah, the way her head was bashed in, it looks like someone really had it in for her. Did you call the coroner?

Bill: Yeah. Boy, you couldn't pay me enough to do the stuff those coroner and medical examiner guys do. It seems like every time I have to go down to the morgue to see if some stiff fits a description of a missing person, those coroners are walking around eating! How can they eat with all those dead bodies all over the place? I thought I could stand to watch them do an autopsy one

time, but when that guy fired up that drill and started drilling into the stiff's skull I was outta there! I was talking to one of the guys at the morgue about how the stiffs will sit up sometimes when their muscles contract...

Hank: Bill!

Bill: Huh? Oh, yeah. I called the photographer, too. He said he'd be here in about 20 minutes.

Hank: Good. As soon as the coroner and photographer get here whaddy say we go down to Sadie's Diner for a bite to eat?

Bill: You can eat after seeing that poor dead woman? You didn't use to be a coroner did you?

Act I, Scene 2 — Hank and Bill at Sadie's Diner

Hank: Give me a cheeseburger with onions, tomato, and mayonnaise and some French Fries.

Waitress: Anything to drink with that, Hon?

Hank: A large Coke.

Waitress: (Turning to face Bill) And what'll you have?

Bill: You got any tofu burgers?

Waitress: Huh?

Bill: Tofu burgers.

Waitress: I don't know what that is. The only kind of burgers we have are regular and cheeseburger.

Bill: I guess a cheeseburger then, but no onions.

Waitress: Do you want anything on that? Lettuce, tomato...

Bill: Yeah. And a glass of water.

Waitress: All rightey. Be right back with your drinks.

Bill: That poor Mrs. Williams. What a terrible thing for her to find her daughter like that.

Hank: Yeah.

Bill: Was her mother able to tell you much?

Hank: A little. She was hysterical most of the time, so it was hard to get much out of her. She did say her daughter had a boyfriend. Let's see... (pulls notebook out of pocket) his name is Ralph Hoyt and he's a CPA who has his own business. She said her daughter had an argument with him about two weeks ago but she wouldn't tell her mother what it was about.

Waitress: Here you go (places drinks on table). Food's coming right up.

Bill: Should we drop by the boyfriend's place?

Hank: It's as good a place as any to start. Most of the time it's the husband, ex-husband, or boyfriend who does the killing in female homicides. Her mother said her daughter had never married, so that makes the boyfriend our "usual suspect" so to speak. I asked

Mrs. Williams not to tell him that her daughter was dead, because I want to see his reaction when he first hears about it. We can't keep news about the murder out of the papers, so let's hope we can quiz him before he hears about it.

Bill: After we grill him I can call the phone numbers listed in that little note pad she had in her purse. There are five of them.

Hank: Okay. But, keep in mind that some of those people may not know she's dead yet, so break it to them gently. For those who do know she's dead ask them how they heard about it. Then ask them how they knew the deceased, if they worked with her, were friends with her, that kind of stuff. For the guys, ask them what their relationship was with her. For those who seemed to know her pretty well we'll ask them when we can stop by and get more detailed information.

Waitress: (places food on table) A cheeseburger for you and a cheeseburger for you. Enjoy your food.

Act I, Scene 3 — The Detectives At Ralph Hoyt's apartment

Ralph: May I help you?

Hank: I'm Detective Hank Baldwin and this is Detective Bill Ferguson. Are you Ralph Hoyt?

Ralph: Yes.

Hank: We'd like to talk to you, if we could, about Jennifer Williams. May we come in?

Ralph: Certainly, come on in. Have a seat.

Hank: I'm afraid we have some bad news Mr. Hoyt.

Ralph: About Jennifer?

Hank: Yes. I'm afraid so. Her mother found her dead in her apartment this morning.

Ralph: Oh, no! She can't be, she just can't be, she was..., I..., I..., oh, man this just can't be!

Bill: Would you like a glass of water or something, Mr. Hoyt?
...Mr. Hoyt?

Ralph: No. No, thank you. Give me a minute will you?

Bill: Sure.

Ralph: Man, oh, man! She can't be dead!

Hank: Mr. Hoyt, can you think of anyone who might have wanted to kill Ms. Williams?

Ralph: Kill? She was killed?

Hank: It appears as though she died from multiple wounds to the head.

Ralph: Oh, no! Poor Jenny.

Hank: Did Ms. Williams have any enemies that you knew of? Anyone, who might have a motive for killing her?

Ralph: None that I knew of. We had only been dating about 6 months and she didn't talk much about her past. I'd try to get her to

tell me about her old boyfriends, but she just wouldn't talk about things like that.

Hank: Ms. Williams' mother tells us that you had an argument with Ms. Williams a couple of weeks before she was killed.

Ralph: Well, yeah, but I mean that's just one of those things in a relationship.

Hank: Do you mind if we ask what the argument was about?

Ralph: I wanted the two of us to move in together, but she said that was too confining for her. She wanted to be able to come and go as she pleased. I've suspected for some time that she's been seeing another guy and I told her I thought that was the real reason she didn't want to move in together. She hit the ceiling and told me to get out.

Hank: Was that the last time you saw her?

Ralph: Yes. I called her 3 or 4 times after that, but she said she was busy and couldn't see me for a while.

Hank: You say you suspected that she was seeing someone else, do you have any idea who that might have been?

Ralph: No. Do you mind if I go lie down for a while, this has been quite a shock.

Hank: I think that'll be all for now, but we might want to talk to you later. Bill, do you have any questions for Mr. Hoyt?

Bill: No, not right now. We're sorry about this, Mr. Hoyt, but you understand we have to do everything we can to find her killer.

Ralph: Yes, I understand.

Hank: Thank you, Mr. Hoyt.

Ralph: Sure.

Act I, Scene 4 — Hank and Bill at the Police Station

Hank: Do you think he was telling the truth?

Bill: Yeah. He seemed like he was really surprised that she was murdered. I was on this case once where we were questioning this murdered woman's husband and the guy passes out right in the middle of a sentence. He was out for a couple minutes, then when he comes to he hollers "If she's dead, I want to die, too!" and he runs to the kitchen and grabs a butcher knife and tries to slash his wrist, but we grabbed him in time. After we get the knife away from him he runs over to the window like he's going to jump out, so we had to wrestle him to the floor. Then he bawls like a baby for about 10 minutes. Then he asked us if we would shoot him and...

Hank: Is there an end to this story?

Bill: It turns out the guy was guilty as hell!

Hank: Did you read the Coroner's report?

Bill: Yeah.

Hank: She'd been dead for a couple days before her mother found her. She'd been hit twelve to fifteen times with something like a pipe or tire iron. No indication of sexual assault. No skin underneath her fingernails. No marks or bruises on her arms.

There were no signs of a struggle in her apartment. This wasn't just an emotional thing where someone went into a rage, fought with her, then killed her. It's my guess that whoever did it was someone she knew very well, because she apparently let him into the apartment or he had his own key. He brought his own weapon, waited patiently for her to turn her back, then hit her over the head. Then when she fell, hit her on the head again and again to make sure she was dead. Then he washed the blood off the weapon in the kitchen sink and took the weapon with him.

Bill: Pretty cold-blooded rascal.

Hank: How are you doing with those phone numbers that were in her notepad? Anybody interesting turn up?

Bill: Not yet. After leaving a bunch of voicemails, four of them finally called me back. One number was a car dealership where she had her car serviced, one was her hairdresser's, two were female co-workers, and I haven't heard back from the fifth one yet. But, it was a man's voice on the answering machine.

Hank: Call the 2 co-workers back and ask them if they'd mind coming down to the station tomorrow to talk.

Bill: Okey-dokey.

