

Inspector Lance Gets The Call

“Poppy! Come back! Right now!” The exasperated elderly lady in the baggy bright pink sweatpants huffed and puffed as she jogged to catch up with her runaway little white dog. Poppy was having none of it.

Fifty or so yards down the path, Poppy dove off the sidewalk and scrambled into a deep former sink hole full of ugly tangled brush and trees. She barked frantically. Her befuddled owner finally caught up. When she did, she wished she hadn’t.

About fifteen feet down the steep slope of the sink hole, lay beautiful, beloved local socialite and celebrity, Emery Landon. Landon’s expensively coiffed dyed blonde hair was matted with blood. Her body was twisted into an impossible position. Her face was motionless. She could almost have been asleep except her wide-open eyes were expressionless, dead.

Poppy’s mommy tried to climb down to Emery’s body. The descent was too steep for her bad knees and tired old legs. In a panic, she called 911.

“911,” the dispatcher answered. “What is your emergency?”

“It’s her,” Poppy’s mommy screamed into her phone. “It’s her, Emery Landon. I think she’s dead.”

The Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT’s) arrived minutes after the call came in. As they looked down into the sink hole where Emery’s broken body lay, they knew that this was likely a recovery not a lifesaving operation. They were right.

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“It rained last night,” the onsite Crime Scene Investigation tech said to Inspector Lance. “The ground is still very damp, which means, it really shows footprints. There’s about ten feet from the edge of the sidewalk to the edge of the hole. The area has some grass but is mostly dirt. The deceased was wearing walking shoes with a very distinct sole pattern.”

“We can see from her tracks that she stepped off of the sidewalk onto the grass. She moved around side to side some, then moved backwards onto the

area with the dirt. There are a second set of tracks in the same area. The two people seem to have been facing each other. The tracks start at the sidewalk and then move progressively closer to the hole.”

“We can see from the direction of the footprints and the sole patterns on the deceased’s shoes that after the two people leave the sidewalk, there is some side to side stepping back and forth by both individuals. Besides just regular footprints, there are areas where the ground is scraped as if the two people are struggling with each other and trying to get leverage over each other. Here’s where it gets interesting.”

“When the deceased went over the edge and into the hole, her back was facing the hole. In other words, she went over backwards. The second person was standing in front of her facing toward the hole. They would have absolutely seen the first person fall backwards into the hole.” The tech finished and then smiled. He loved trying to puzzle out the facts of a situation based on just a few physical clues.

“Is there any indication that the second person went down into the hole to check on the deceased,” Lance asked.

“No. There are none of the second person’s footprints anywhere down there.” the tech said.

“So, what you’re saying is this second person saw the deceased fall back into the gorge, didn’t try to help them, didn’t call for help, and didn’t report the incident at all. Is that your conclusion?” Lance said.

“That’s the story the evidence tells,” said the tech.

“Was death instantaneous?” Lance asked.

“There’s no way to tell until the Coroner does an autopsy. My guess is she couldn’t have lived very long given the rate at which she was losing blood.”

“So,” Lance said, “at the very least we are looking at negligence for not trying to summon medical aid. Going further, if she was pushed into the hole instead of falling in, we may be looking instead at a murder. Ok, keep me informed and copy me on your report,” Lance said.