

Chapter 4

Just after noon, the man wakes and heads directly to the garage. The hit man drains the beach soaked water from the laundry sink and hand rings out the garments before throwing them into his dryer.

He heads to the kitchen and grabs a beer from his never cleaned refrigerator, and plops down at the eating table to wait.

A half-hour later, he returns to the garage and takes a shovel and a small tree in a steel five gallon can to his backyard. He digs a large hole in the center of the yard, removes the tree, laying it next to his small crater, and inserts the empty container well below surface level. He solidifies in by packing dirt between the sidewalls and shear edges of the hole.

Retrieving his dry clothes, he throws them into the can on top of the charcoal briquettes already placed. Just for good measure, he adds dead limbs and weeds from the unkempt yard. Lastly, he pours on charcoal lighter fluid, and tosses in a huge raw steak before igniting. The gas burns off quickly leaving the heap smoldering. He is thinking, “The cooking meat will mask any foreign smells, and if the nosey old neighbor peeks over the fence, he can only conclude, “I’m a lousy barbecuer, with no idea what I’m doing.”

The man is walking back into the house and sees a shoe came untied. As he is retying his sneaker, he notices a hard to distinguish small smear of dried blood. They’re the one item he had not planned to dispose of.

The man makes a decision. Removing the all-black sneakers, he pads to his bedroom and slips his work boots on without bothering to lace them up.

He checks on the smoldering clothing and adds more gas. The flames shoot high but quickly burn down. Smoke and burning meat smells permeate the air. He worries about the heavy smoke hanging like a thick fog. Not knowing how to stop it, the man picks up the shovel and scoops out the burned steak tossing it on the piled dirt. He sticks the shovel back into the pit and stirs the lump of clothes and charcoal. A small flame jumps to life momentarily; the rising smoke almost tolerable.

The man picks up the sneakers and heads for his dented old pickup truck. He drives to a Salvation Army donation drop-off site, in the corner of small shopping center lot, a few blocks

from his home. He throws his shoes at the collection bin without even exiting his truck and returns home.

The killer checks his barbecue, the coals glowing, and clothes smoldering nicely; the smoke all but disappeared. After throwing the steak back in, he walks to his living room. Exhaustion consumes his body. The man lays on the couch and snores for hours.

It's dark outside when he wakes. Under the glowing back porch light, he fills the hole from the pile of previously dug dirt, and grabs the small tree, planting it over the fire pit.

He returns to the couch and watches TV before falling back asleep.

Daylight eventually fills the room, waking him. The groggy man takes a leak and stumbles to his bed to finish sleeping the day away.