

Figment

Episode 6

Eugene Harris leaned against the wooden door frame outside the single-story white-trimmed house. It was a rural neighborhood. Most the houses on the street looked identical, evidence of urban planning; create similar housing units to develop friendly mannerisms amongst the tenets. This house was different from the rest though. The beige carpet inside the living room and the antique white walls were splattered sporadically with red. The ceiling even held a few dots and slashes or crimson. It appeared that someone had gone mad with a paint brush, exploding with rage towards the conformity of his or her surroundings. No. It was more than that. It was a murder, a double, to be matter-of-fact.

Eugene did not mind his job so much. He had it made compared to some of the other saps inside the house. His job was to make sure that only authorized personnel crossed through the yellow X that crossed through the doorway behind him. Most of the time he would not have to see the chaos that typically ensue a violent murder such as this. He had seen it tonight, however, and some fresh air was what he needed to get the site of the couple out of his head. He doubled over quickly, vomiting into one of the bushes. The thought of getting the thoughts out of his head made him sick, especially since the head of the husband was still yet to be found.

Two detectives, both rather young looking to be in the positions they currently hold, casually walked up to Eugene. The one on Eugene's left was looking around, judging the area. The one on the right didn't bother flashing his badge to the officer at the door. He was sure that Eugene knew who he was. He slipped on a pair of latex gloves and lifted the yellow tape so his partner could cross under easily.

As they entered into the main room of the house, another police officer, dressed in the state trooper blue uniform, approached them, looking around waywardly. There was a flash of light to the right of the officer, who jerked suddenly in surprise. The high-pitched hum of a camera flash charging followed the silence in the room.

"Detective Krum," said the officer, "both victims were here in this room."

"Thank you Willard," Detective Dean Krum said looking around the room at the blood patterns on the wall, "now excuse me." He walked past Willard, carefully stepping over the evidence markers on the floor. He stepped around the couch and looked down at the bodies. The wife was on her stomach, a red circle on her back marked where she had been stabbed, just below the left shoulder and a little to the left of the sternum; not good enough to pierce the heart, but enough to fill the lungs with blood from the severed arteries, quickly suffocating the victim. The husband lay headless on his back just a few inches away. Vertical lines of red ran up his chest, his shirt torn open and darkened from blood. The positions of their bodies were different. Dean knelt down next to the wife and looked at her arms and hands. He was facing the way she fell, first to her knees, then onto her face. The simple fact that her head was not turned to lessen the impact of the

floor to her nose suggested that she was dead before she hit the floor. Her hands were at her sides; no attempt to slow or catch her fall was present.

The husband, however, looked like his body was placed next to the wife's on purpose. It was not in the usual pile of limp muscles that was common to others who had their head cut off. Dean looked up at the ceiling and noticed no large splatters above the husband's body.

"Looks like the same guy," said Dean's partner. "But he never sawed off body parts before."

"He didn't saw it off," Dean said putting on a rubber glove. He reached out to the neck of the husband and ran his finger along the cut skin. "Sawing motions leave tears in the skin. This is smooth and clean. It was one solid motion; probably a machete or butcher cleaver."

He stood up and took the glove off and handed it to the nearest officer. He again looked up at the ceiling. He studied all of the splatter patterns for a moment until he found the one he was looking for: a small circular pattern a few feet away behind the body. He pointed up to the circle.

"His head was removed here," Dean said walking over until he was underneath the splatter. He looked down at the body and then positioned his arms and legs similar, still trying to stand. "He was running to her, but his body kept going from muscle spasms, then collapsed."

Willard came back into the main room, his face white like he had seen a ghost, or something similarly disturbing.

"Detective," he said, "you need to come see this."

Dean and his partner followed Willard out into the back yard. As they walked through the rest of the house, it seemed untouched. The murderer did not touch anything else in this house, just like the others. He was only after the thrill of killing, not money or drugs or electronics. Such killers were hard to track. Pawn shops and banks were easy to stake out, but when nothing was missing, it was hard to pin down a true motive behind their actions. The simple act of murder was not enough to most killers. They always craved something else. The sickest one Dean had ever encountered in his career had been the bastard who would murder little girls violently before having sex with their mutilated bodies. Eight girls in all had been lost to Greg Bornne, all between the ages of 6 and 12, before he was gunned down by police in a small town in Oklahoma. Dean had tracked the case for several months. Bornne had started his sexual appetite here in Indiana before getting the bright idea to move around between states. However, by the time he had figured out it would be smart to leave, Dean had already profiled him, and four girls were buried in their family's cemetery lots long before they were supposed to be. Dean helped track Bornne through six states before finding him at a motel, trying to choose another victim for his disgusting act. Bornne was immediately shot, but not before he used the little girl at his side as a human shield. It was the worst day in Dean's career. However, a new mass murder was on the loose in his home state and he was determined to catch the bastard.

They walked out the patio door onto the back porch. Resting casually on top of one of the tiki bug torches, used in the area to keep bugs away from cookouts, was the head of the husband, eyes still wide open with surprise.

"Why would he put the head out here?" asked Dean's partner.

“He’s toying with us now.” said Dean walking up to the head and looking at it. He gazed into the dead eyes, then turned around and looked at what the eyes were looking at. There was nothing there except a line of fir trees planted as a natural sound and light barrier.

“Toying with us how?”

“He’s telling us where he is going.”

“How do you know that?”

Dean pointed at the eyes, then to the bushes. “He’s facing east.”