

THE GREAT STONE BURGLARY

My partner and I pulled the weekend shift after a rough Friday that included an earthquake and a freaky three hours of darkness in the middle of the day. We didn't have anything of significance on Saturday, so we recouped some of our energy. On Sunday morning, at about 0600, we got the call.

We arrived on the scene and immediately found several security guards who appeared to be dead. We checked for pulses and confirmed they were not dead, but rather in a catatonic state. Two women stood near an entrance to a tomb. We approached them to see if they had witnessed anything.

“Excuse me, ma’am. I’m Sergeant March and this is my partner, Detective Jones. We’re from the burglary division, and we’re responding to a call of a break-in of a tomb. Do you know anything about that or about what happened to these guards?”

“He’s not there,” said one woman.

“Who’s not there, ma’am?”

“Our Lord.”

“Does your Lord have a name, ma’am?”

“Yes, it is Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth.”

“And what is your name, ma’am?” asked Det. Jones.

“Mary. Mary Magdalene.”

“And yours?” asked Det. Jones of the other woman.

“Mary.”

“Mary, uh?”

“The other Mary.”

“Did you ladies see anything?” asked Sgt. March.

“There was an earthquake and then an angel came and rolled back the stone.”

“I see. So, you say one man rolled that enormous stone away all by himself?”

“Yes.”

“Can you describe this man, ma’am?” asked Det. Jones.

“His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.”

“Did the man say anything, ma’am?” asked Sgt. March.

“Yes. He said to not be afraid, because he knew that we were looking for Jesus. He said he wasn’t there because he had risen from the dead. Then he showed us where Jesus had been laying. He also told us to go tell His disciples he had risen from the dead.”

“So, let me get this straight. Your friend Angel came and rolled away that great stone all by himself. Then he told you that the dead body of your friend Jesus wasn’t there because he had risen from the dead. He also told you to go tell the rest of Jesus’s friends. Is that your statement?”

“Yes.”

“And you’re sticking by that?”

“Yes.”

“What about the security guards?”

“They must have been afraid of what they had seen.”

“Okay, Mary and ... Mary. Give Detective Jones the rest of your information and then you can go.”

Sgt. March walked over to the security guards, who now appeared to be awake. “You guys okay?”

“Yeah, sure,” said one guard.

“What happened here?”

“What do you mean?” asked another guard.

“Well, I assume you guys were supposed to be guarding this tomb. You aren’t aware that someone rolled away the great stone over there and the body that was in that tomb taken?”

“No, we don’t know anything about that. We must have fallen asleep or something.”

Leading them over to the tomb, Sgt. March continued to interrogate the guards, “You guys didn’t see anything? You didn’t see a man whose appearance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow?”

“No. No, we didn’t see anybody. One guy couldn’t have moved that stone. His gang must have come while we were asleep and stole him.”

“Who was this guy that he needed to have someone guarding his tomb?”

“We don’t know anything. We just followed our orders.”

“Well, gentlemen, I’d say you have some explaining to do to someone.”

Det. Jones finished up with the women and then went over to his partner. “The guards have anything to say?”

“Not really. Claimed they were asleep. They said this man Jesus must have had a gang that came and stole the body while they were out.”

“What do you think, Sarge? Was there some kind of scam here? Do you want me to call bunco?”

“No, no. There is definitely something going on here, but for now, I think we have to continue working this as a burglary. Let’s have a look in the tomb.”

“There’s a pile of linen cloth,” said Det. Jones.

“And a napkin or something all rolled up over there,” added Sgt. March.

“Look, Sarge. There appears to be something all over this cloth. An image, maybe?”

“I don’t know. We’ll let forensics figure that out. With a body involved here, we should call in CSI.”

When they finished up at the scene, the detectives headed for Galilee to see if they could get a line on this supposed gang of Jesus’s. While they

were on the road, they ran into the Marys' from the crime scene.

“Well, ladies, anything you want to add to your previous statements?” asked Sgt. March. “Maybe something along the way jogged your memories?”

“We saw him.”

“You saw Jesus up and walking around?”

“Yes.”

“Did he say anything?”

“He said not to touch him, because he had not yet ascended to the Father. He told us to go tell the others.”

“Okay, ladies, we'll add that to your statements. Be careful on the road.”

“What do you think, Sarge? A hallucination, maybe?”

“Could be, but they didn't look like they were on anything.”

The following day, the detectives ran across two men from Emmaus who also claimed to have seen and spoken with this Jesus of Nazareth. They continued asking questions, and they followed every lead given them. A background check on a

man by the name of Peter revealed that he was one of Jesus's lieutenants and the one in charge since Jesus's purported death.

“This guy, Peter, has a previous, Sarge. Seems he cut off some guy's ear, but his boss apparently patched the guy up and there were no charges filed. Background on this Jesus says he was a carpenter, but I don't know too many carpenters who know how to reattach an ear without surgery. Supposedly, one member of the gang, a guy called Judas, ratted out the leader, Jesus.”

“Yeah, this case gets more mysterious every day.”

“And check out these gang members. Quite a motley crew. Mostly fishermen, but there is a tax collector, a fitting addition to any gang, I suppose.”

“Indeed,” replied Sgt. March.

About eight days into the investigation, they got a tip that this gang of Jesus's was holed up in a house. With a backup squad standing by, the two men approached the house in question. Knocking on the door, they wondered who or what might be in the modest looking house.

A man answered the door, and the detectives identified themselves, “Good afternoon, sir. I'm

Sergeant March and this is Detective Jones. We need to have a word with you. May we come in?"

"Yes, of course," the man answered.

When they entered the room, they saw twelve men present. Normally, they would have called for backup to enter the building with them when presented with such a situation, but the room had a certain aura of peace about it.

"We're looking for a man called Jesus of Nazareth. Have you seen or heard from him?"

"Yes, he is our Lord, and we have seen him," answered the one called Peter.

"And what is your name, sir?" asked Sgt. March.

"Peter, sir."

"Okay, here's what we need to do, guys. We need to get a statement from each of you, so if you'll just be patient and cooperate, we can be on our way in a little bit. Detective Jones will start with the man on the end, and I'll take you first, Peter."

Just as Sgt. March started to talk to Peter, Det. Jones said, "Sarge, you better come over here."

"What's up?" Sgt. March asked.

“Okay, tell the sergeant here who you say you are.”

“Jesus of Nazareth.”

“Do you have any ID?” asked Sgt. March.

Jesus held out his hands to show where the nails had been.

“Well, my friend, we have a lot of questions for you.”

After an extensive interrogation, Sgt. March and Det. Jones stepped outside the house to confer.

“What do you think, Sarge?”

“Well, Joe, this has been a very interesting case, but I don’t see any criminal activity here. How can there be a burglary when the supposedly stolen body is, in fact, freely walking around?”

“True, but there’s probably some law that we could hang them with.”

“No, I think we just need to fill out our reports and turn them in.”

“The powers that be are probably not going to like this.”

“Probably not, but we’ve got the facts on our side.”

“Do you believe what this man Jesus said, Sarge?”

“Yes, Joe. We’ve seen him with our own eyes. He’s not a ghost. He is alive. And, as far as I’m concerned, The Great Stone Burglary case is closed.”

“Yeah, Sarge, I believe him, too. But the question is, if after we file this account, will anyone who has not actually seen him believe this story?”

“Only time will tell, partner. Only time will tell.”