

THE DEAD CASE FILES

Profitville, as a city, often has very different community issues than the small farming town of Cedar Crossing. St. John's sister church in Profitville, St. Peter's, has a large, well-equipped fellowship hall. As part of its outreach to the people of Jack Valley/Profitville, the church often offers its facilities as a venue for certain civic events. The following meeting proved to be very much in the community interest. Thanks to my friend, Pastor Fred Anderson, for providing the account.

The crowd of community leaders gathered in the fellowship hall at St. Peter's numbered about two hundred. The mix of people ranged from governmental officials to clergy to business executives, with central figures from a dozen other groups. They awaited the FBI agent who had called for the meeting. Some of those in attendance grew a little restless as the 9:00 AM meeting already lagged twenty minutes behind. Finally, a well-dressed young man walked to the podium.

“Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I apologize for the delay, but our flight hit a few

snags out of Atlanta. I'd like to thank you for coming to this meeting today. My name is Timothy McCabe, and I'm a special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The gentleman standing over at the board is Agent John Phillips. We work in the Dead Case Files Division, which investigates unsolved cases where all leads have gone cold. We also work on cases that have been solved, suspects convicted and sentenced, and where something arises later that casts doubts on the verdict as they rendered it. We are here today at the request of your Chief Barnes. Chief, did you have anything you want to say at this point?"

"Yes, thank you, Agent McCabe. I, too, would like to thank everyone for coming out today. We, at the local level, will do everything we can to assist Agents McCabe and Phillips in the matter they will bring to you."

"Thank you, Chief Barnes. To get straight to the point, there have been several unsolved crimes in your fair town that appear to fit the M.O. of someone involved in a case several years ago. Agent Phillips and I have studied that case closely and we believe the man who they convicted was, in fact, innocent. We think the guilty party in that case is still out there today. We believe he is the

ringleader of a large gang of criminals that blend very well in the general population. Because these are dead case files, we are releasing considerably more information to the public than we normally would ... yes, Agent Phillips.”

“Tim, I just wanted to add that we don’t think he is headquartered here in Jack Valley. We definitely believe that his organization is worldwide, and it’s our job to find new leads from local cases that may have slipped under the radar of federal agencies.”

“Thank you, John. We don’t want to cause undue alarm, but those of you gathered here today are the eyes and ears of your community. It is our experience that, even in the most mysterious of cases, there are usually witnesses. Those witnesses, who may have heard or seen something seemingly inconsequential, may not be coming forward out of fear or any of a dozen other reasons. And it is even possible that those witnesses may not be aware that they witnessed anything. So, in the hope that someone out there did see or hear something, we are going to give you what we have on the crimes in your town and how they relate to a reasonable profile of the criminals involved on larger scale. Agent Phillips will take over for that part of things ... John.”

“Thanks, Tim. We’re looking at six crimes in your community that have a common denominator with similar crimes in other locations across our nation. Chief Barnes called us in when he ran out of leads. We were able to show what we think is a link between these local cases and the other crimes because we had a larger picture to examine. We believe that those committing the crimes deliberately left these clues behind. Here is what we have on a case-by-case basis:

Case 1—At 0600, the local dispatcher received a call saying someone had painted thirty-two lightning bolts on the side of the city’s water tower. She actually received three calls on the matter, but the other callers said there were thirty-four and thirty-five lightning bolts, respectively. This was on January 1st. Pumps and valves at various locations within the city’s water system were vandalized.

Case 2—At 0700, an officer reported eleven squares with dollar signs painted on the road at the corner of 27th Street and 28th Avenue. At 0800, the dispatcher received another call describing the same scene. This was on March 30th. Eleven citizens lost everything they had in connection with a large scamming operation.

Case 3—At 1900, a man walking his dog used his cell phone to call the police and report that there were fourteen stars on metal placards hanging from a traffic light on 16th Street. A few minutes later, the same man called to say there were fifteen stars on metal placards hanging from a traffic light on 23rd Street. This was on April 24th. They found a famous movie star hanged to death in a local hotel that day.

Case 4—At 1800, a motorist called to say someone had put twenty dead pigs across the road between 22nd and 21st Streets. Dispatch received by the time an officer arrived on the scene, a total of seventeen calls on the same incident. This was on May 13th. The Food and Drug Administration and The Department of Agriculture could not find the source of an experimental drug that was illegally injected into meat products. The drug caused the people who ate the meat to develop an addiction of sorts that produced exceedingly strong cravings for more of the meat.

Case 5—At 2500, patrol car number 29 went on break for dinner at Maggie's Café. When the officer got back to his car, he found ten beer bottles carefully laid out on the car's hood in the shape of the number nine. In the center of the loop forming

the number, he found twenty-six OxyContin pills. This was on July 12th. Agents from the State Drug Enforcement Agency arrested nine people in connection with a bootlegging and smuggling ring that ran illegal alcohol and drugs from overseas. They later discovered all nine had been innocent victims of identity theft.

Case 6—Thirty-six calls were received within a few minutes of 0500 at the county sheriff's office. Thirty-three of those calls came from a phone on the outskirts of Profitville. When officers investigated the site, they found four severely beaten prostitutes tied to two telephone poles and left for dead. This was on August 31st.

“Thanks, John,” said Agent McCabe. “I’m sure most of you have some familiarity with these crimes because of the media coverage, but if you could help spread the word to the community to offer anything that might be relevant, it might help us reopen the cases that are currently at a dead end.”

“Now that you’ve seen what appears to be a pattern and a link with these six local cases, does anyone have any thoughts?” asked Agent Phillips.

Initial response to Agent Phillips’s question brought murmuring among the crowd, but no one voiced anything constructive towards opening a

path around the dead end. Then a lone man approached the board where Agent Phillips stood.

“May I?” asked the man, as he held out his hand for the chalk that Agent Phillips held.

The man drew a large square on the board. Then he added internal horizontal and vertical lines, so he ended up with thirty-six smaller squares within the large square. Periodically looking back at the list of clues that Agent Phillips had written on the board, the man began filling in the smaller squares with numbers. Then he stood back to look at what he had done.

“I’m sorry, uh,” said Agent McCabe.

“Fred Anderson,” said the man.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Anderson. What is this?”

“Magic square,” said Reverend Frederick Anderson of St. Peter’s.

“What is the relevance of this magic square?”

“I was a bit of a mathematician before I entered the seminary. One of the fun things we did with numbers was the magic square. I won’t go into all the technical details of how they work, but I will explain this one on the board.

Most magic squares use a formula that produces a pattern. The pattern in this case is such that if you plug in the numbers from the clues given, you will get a square that produces an equal sum whether you add the numbers across, down, or diagonally. So, adding across row 1, we get 111.

The same on row 2 and rows 3 through 6. Then add the numbers down and you always get 111. The sum diagonally either way is 111. If you add all horizontal lines together, you get 666. The answer is the same if you add all vertical lines or if you add all the numbers in all the squares. You always get 666. Labeling the horizontal lines Cases 1 through 6, Agent Phillips wrote on the board.”

Case 1	6	32	3	34	35	1
	111					
Case 2	7	11	27	28	8	30
	111					
Case 3	19	14	16	15	23	24
	111					
Case 4	18	20	22	21	17	13
	111					
Case 5	25	29	10	9	26	12
	111					

Case 6 36 5 33 4 2 31
111

111 111 111 111 111 111 666

“Are you saying that the number 666, which as I understand is a reference to the Devil, applies to this case?” asked Agent McCabe.

“You are correct in that modern culture usually assigns its meaning to the Devil or Satan. In the Book of Revelation, they thought the number 666 to represent the number of the beast—a man or the Anti-Christ or the Devil, depending on your interpretation. Scholars differ in their opinions on whether it was a reference to Nero or some other apocalyptic being. In all probability, though, it is a signature reference to Satan.”

“Are you saying the one who left us these clues, the one we are after is Satan? Because if you are, we are going to have a hard time taking that to the judicial system.”

“While I leave the adjudication of Satan to a higher level of justice, it has a possible relevance here. It tells me that the ringleader behind these crimes against man and ultimately against God is an erudite persona, given the depth of his mathematical knowledge, and that he or she is most likely

under some influence from Satan, whether that be a satanic cult or something like a student of satanic lore. If you consider that Satan is the father of all lies and the breeder of all sin, then you merely have to look at the clues in each case to understand the link. In Case 1, we have the lightning bolt which could be a symbol for power. In Case 2, we have the dollar signs which represent money. In Case 3, we have fame. In Case 4, we have the pigs, which could be a reference to gluttony. In Case 5, we have alcohol and drugs. In Case 6, we have sex. If you examine all the motivations for crime across our land, I would venture to say most would fall into one of those six areas.”

“Very interesting, Pastor Anderson,” remarked Agent McCabe. “John, will you get a picture of the board? We will certainly take that back with us, and if it fits, then it adds significantly to the profile. May we contact you again if we have any further questions?”

“Certainly,” said Pastor Anderson. “You know where I’ll be, particularly on Sundays from 8:00 AM to 12:30PM.”

“Does anyone else have an observation they’d like to share?” asked Agent McCabe. “No ... okay, that about wraps it up for today. Thank

you again for coming. Thanks, Chief Barnes, for your cooperation. Thanks to St. Peter's for the use of your facilities today. And, especially thanks to you, Pastor Anderson, for your insight."

Five weeks later, Pastor Anderson opened the doors to the fellowship hall for the first meeting of a new member's class. Thirty-six people entered the hall; a number that stretched the imagination of the good reverend. He had only expected the usual crowd of about ten, so he made apologies and fervently found more chairs and ran off more copies of the class material. Later that evening, as he read the short information sheet that each new prospect had filled out, he noticed a pattern in the answers. Fourteen families composed the thirty-six people present. Those fourteen families all had representatives at the meeting with the FBI agents five weeks prior. The answer to the question on the form asking, "How did you come to learn about St. Peter's" was the same from all fourteen families, "From the town hall meeting five weeks ago". And the number thirty-six added incentive to jump start his mathematical mind. Thirty-six people; thirty-six squares in the magic square; the odds of thirty-six new prospects all coming from the same source; that the town hall meeting wasn't exactly five

weeks ago, but thirty-six days. At two o'clock in the morning, he succumbed to a final thought of irony. If Satan's intent was to always drive a wedge between God and man, it had backfired in Jack Valley/Profitville, for the wedge turned out to be a bridge instead.

When Pastor Anderson woke up at 7:00 AM, he rehashed his thoughts of the night before. Over Cheerios and a bowl of peaches, he wondered if his contribution to the community's crime solving effort offered any possibility as a new tool in the evangelism arena. Perhaps only time would tell.