

56. Murder Not (Part 3)

To this day, I still do not know whether I should have viewed the corpse of my beloved—unconsummated I might add and maybe that complicates things even more—or stayed away. Colmes and Masterson walked quickly down the hallway of the hospital—all hospitals have long hallways in their basements—then entered the morgue, Masterson showing his badge as they passed through the heavy swinging door. I held back, uncertain and shaking. It was not until several minutes, maybe longer, maybe shorter, that Colmes came back through the doors. I reflexively withdrew from his approach, my arms crossed over my chest. Colmes looked at me with what I hope was pity. And I was in a pitiful state. I admit it. And I see no reason to be embarrassed by it.

“Are you sure you will not join us?” asked Colmes. “It is the only way that you will get any closure. If you do not, her death will live with you forever, and pop up at inconvenient times.”

This angered me. Ruth lies there dead and Colmes is telling me that I need to avoid the inconvenience of her memory. I was about to blurt out something like “you cold-hearted asshole, how would you know?” when I realized that my anger had shaken me into an acute consciousness. And of course, Colmes had no doubt seen much more of the awful side of peoples’ lives compared to me. But I said nothing. Just allowed myself to be ushered through the swinging doors, Colmes gently touching my elbow as we approached the body together.

When I saw Ruth, naked, laid out on the gurney, I had to turn away. I had never seen her naked and had many times dreamed of doing so. I loved her, after all. And then, unwanted, a thought, like a bolt of lightning striking me behind the eyes, “was she raped?”

Colmes observed the swift movement of my eyes. He well knew what I was thinking. I wanted to strike him, for putting me through this. All surely unnecessary. His hand was still gently at my elbow. I brushed it away. And he responded, “look closely at her neck. You can see where the skin has been broken at regular intervals, most likely caused by the knots of the *chotki*. She was

strangled with it I have no doubt.”

I forced myself to lean forward to examine the contusions. “The poor sweet little thing,” I whispered to myself. I nodded in agreement with Colmes. And Masterson came up beside us. “So it was murder by strangulation, then,” he said in his official policeman’s voice.

“Indeed. Indeed,” answered Colmes, “we need not look any further,” by which I guessed Colmes meant that they need not examine the body any further, making me much relieved. Though now opening the wide door of revenge.

“The killer must be identified and punishment!” I cried as I led the way out of the morgue.

“Hold on!” cried Colmes. “Get a hold of yourself!” he ordered. But I was already in the front seat of Masterson’s police car. As Colmes climbed into the back seat I turned and cried, “So where’s the killer?” in an admittedly accusatory way, as if I were blaming Colmes for having let the killer get away with murder. Which of course was ridiculous. In point of fact, it was Colmes who was methodically leading the way to a just outcome.

“Well now,” replied Colmes calmly, “of the three of us, you are the one who saw the killer last.”

“Oh! You mean the church?” I asked apologetically.

“Indeed, Hobson. Indeed. Father Sokolov will be waiting for us. Let us hope he has managed to keep our quarry safe and secure.”

Chief Masterson pulled into the church drive and dropped us off at the Universal Church door. I got out quickly and opened the door for Colmes. He nodded his thanks and seemed a little slow and stiff getting out. I reached out and he took my hand.

“Thank you, Hobson,” he said, the corner of his mouth doing its little twitch, “age is catching up to me.”

“You’re not coming?” I called to Masterson as I leaned into the police car.

“You don’t need me. The three of you should be enough to extract a confession,” he answered. His usual slight look of amusement had faded. I looked to Colmes. I would have thought that having an official police presence, even if only a campus cop, would be essential to make the confession official. Or something like that. I clearly did not quite understand what was going on.

But I was eager to get on with it, slammed the car door, the Chief took off, and in big strides I caught up to Colmes as he was entering the church. He also was eager, walking in big strides down the side aisle and into the adjoining small apartment adjoining the church. We entered the kitchen, and I was surprised to see Father Sokolov sitting at the large kitchen table, a large teapot in its cozy, standard issue prison-like mugs.

“Cup of tea?” he asked. “I just boiled the kettle.” I quickly declined. Colmes felt under the cozy.

“Indeed, it is very hot,” he observed, “but I will not partake for the moment. He had slipped into his Victorian mode, and leaned across the table to the suspect, stretched out his hand and said, “Colmes, Professor Colmes, and you are?”

The killer, as I preferred to call him, sat crumpled over the table, his head in his hands, looking down, a full cup of tea in front of him. Incredibly, the long gray beard was still roughly attached to his face. He appeared old, but I knew from our first meeting when he played the part of a Zen monk, that he was much younger than me, probably a freshman.

“I know I did it,” mumbled the killer. I know, I know, I know.”

“Your name, young man, your name?” persisted Colmes, unmoved.

“Come on, out with it!” I snarled, and sat down on the chair right next to him. Colmes gave me a very critical look. So much so that I stood up and walked away and stood with my arms folded, as a spectator looking on. It was how Colmes wanted it.

Then Father Sokolov spoke. “His name is John Rivers, he says,”

“But you called him Nicholas,” I spoke in an accusing manner.

“Yes, that was to calm him,” answered Sokolov.

“A student?” asked Colmes.

“Apparently not, according to the student records people, and by his own admission,” said Sokolov.

“Hmm. That changes things a lot,” mused Colmes.

I could not see why. The bastard was a killer, so what if he was not a student? I ran over to the killer and ripped off his beard. “Let’s see who you really are!” I cried in a quivering, threatening voice. The priest placed a gentle hand on the killer who was now

sobbing. I brushed his hand away. “Let him die!” I screamed, “let him die!”

Colmes looked at me in consternation. The disapproving look was enough for me to stop my foolish outburst, and I retreated to the kitchen refrigerator.

“Now Mr. Rivers,” said Colmes as he took a chair and placed it right next to the killer. “Suppose you tell as exactly what happened, starting with the car and how Ruth came to be in it, and how it ended half way up the steps of the cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. By the way, my colleague has your *chotki*. The lab found traces of your DNA and that of Ruth all over it. That is what you used to strangle her, was it not?”

The killer looked up briefly and sniffed. Father Sokolov offered him a couple of tissues which he took to wipe his eyes and sniveling nose. I looked the other way. I found everything about him disgusting.

“Mr. Rivers?” pressed Colmes. He now tightened his grip on the killer’s lower arm, but the killer did not respond, just sniffed some more. Colmes slowly but forcefully, pulled the killer’s hand away from his face and in doing so forced the killer to sit back, his elbows no longer on the table. Except for the killer’s intermittent sobs, the room fell silent. Colmes seemed satisfied with this. And there we all remained for several minutes, maybe longer. It was to me an unbearable silence. I wanted to beat the truth out of the bastard. That’s what I wanted.

And then he spoke. “There was this black kid in my class....”

We all shuffled uncomfortably.

“...our grades were about the same, maybe his were a little better. We both came from poor families. We played basketball together. He was a lot taller than me, not quite six feet. I admit, though that he was a better player. He got accepted at some fancy school with a full scholarship. I got accepted here but no money.”

“But if you were accepted, how come you are not listed as a student here?” asked Father Sokolov.

“I got accepted but I didn’t enroll. I mean, how could I? I couldn’t pay for it.” The killer looked down, more sobs.

“And?” probed Colmes.

“I dunno. I just sort of came here and went to some classes and pretended I was a student and no one seemed to notice. Only

thing was I didn't have a place to stay, so I started using a car each night. There's hundreds of cars parked here, so it's not hard to find one that is left open."

"Go on," said Colmes, most satisfied.

"Well, I accumulated a few things, like that yellow robe the Father has, and some other stuff and kept it all in a locker at the gym that came to be my kind of home. "

Tears again formed in his eyes, and dribbled down his pale cheeks. A tall, thin young man, frail looking, so thin, skin and bones.

"And the Zen monk act?" asked Colmes.

"It just kind of happened. I found I liked the chanting, I heard it when I was scouting around looking for a car for the night, so I went in and then started going regularly to their meetings, and learned all their chants. I really like their chants." The killer's eyes wandered beyond the room, trance-like.

"The yellow robe was found in Mr. Hobson's car, as you probably guessed. How did it get there?" asked Colmes, now beginning to sound a little more like an interrogator.

"I, I'm not sure. I was in the car, I had no idea whose it was. It was open so that was all that mattered, though admittedly it was a bit small for my lanky body. But when you're destitute, you know. Beggars can't..."

"...be choosers. Yes we know that," interrupted Colmes, "continue..."

"Well I was wrapped up in my robe and trying to move the seats around so I had more room to stretch out my legs, those Mini-minors, you know, too small, and this gorgeous girl with such a happy face peeped in and asked me what was I doing?" The killer sobbed some more.

"Go on!" I demanded, and in return got a snappy look from Colmes. The killer continued.

"I climbed out of the car and looked down at her beautiful face that radiated love and kindness. Such a meek little thing, I wanted to take her in my arms and let her warm me and tell me everything was going to be all right. And then I remembered that I had seen her once before, when I was leading the Buddhists at the church in my favorite chant. And she remembered me, which made me so, don't know how to say it, joyful. 'You're the Zen monk,' she said with a big smile, her eyes so full of life."

I looked to Colmes, annoyed that he was not pressing the killer harder. But Colmes pursed his lips and stared back at me. I had to shut up. And the killer continued his story:

“Well, I’m not really,” I answered, so embarrassed, and then all of a sudden I heard myself saying, “it’s a lovely evening. Like a walk around the pond?” Her face lit up as if it were possible for it to become even happier. “Sure, why not? She says, “as you say, it’s a lovely evening.”

I gave Colmes a knowing look, as I did some quick calculations. I usually parked my car in the parking lot that was up a slight hill some five minutes’ walk from the woods that surrounded the pond. As I have mentioned in my other cases, it is a marvel that his piece of land was left by the architects and designers of the university untouched and roughly in its original state of nature.

“Go on, Mr. Rivers.” ordered Colmes.

“Well, I er.. We entered the main path that circled the pond, but I was well acquainted with all the woods as I had spent some time there camping out, until I got sick of it and decided to spend the nights in the car of my choice. So I led her off the regular path, trying to impress her, I suppose, with my knowledge of the woods that nobody else on campus would know about. She had allowed me, much to my amazement, allowed me to hold her hand and lead her into the woods. She was so loving. So trusting.”

“Get on with it!” I snapped, and received yet another dreadfully glaring look from Colmes.

The killer covered his head in his hands and continued, though his voice was naturally smothered. Colmes gave me another glaring look as if to say that it was my fault.

“Please sit up, Mr. Rivers and speak so we can hear you,” requested Colmes in a much too friendly voice.

“There’s not much more I can tell you, because it’s not clear. Everything goes blank when I try to remember it. I know I was overtaken by her love, took her in my arms, and she let me kiss her, and I was shocked by that. And then all the confusion, dizziness, I am so dizzy even now trying to think about it. The next thing I knew I looked down and she was lying on the ground, a soft grassy patch, and gasping for air. I lifted her up, she was so light, and she remained unconscious. I placed her down again on the soft grass. I had to get her to a hospital. The car. I would get

that car. And I knew that the keys had been left on the sun visor. So I ran to the car and drove it into the woods as far as I could, and then found that I could actually drive it along the regular walking path, the car was so small. And I grabbed her up in my arms, and put her into the car. She groaned a bit, then went unconscious again. I drove out of the campus to the hospital, or so I thought. But I got confused. Wasn't used to driving in Albany. Took a wrong turn and found myself driving down the street to the great cathedral. At this point Ruth woke up and blinked her eyes and I was so elated, but then she slumped back into unconsciousness and I turned to her to see if she was breathing, but then felt a huge thump and found the car bounding up the steps of the cathedral. The two of us were thrown all over the front, especially Ruth whose limp body just went smashing wherever the force of gravity sent her. I felt her pulse, and she still had one, but panic took over and I tumbled out of the car and ran straight into the cathedral that was empty, then found my way out of a back entrance, then walked back to campus."

The killer raised his head and took a deep breath as though he were replenishing a body that was spent. He sat up, his arms hanging over the back of the chair pulling his shoulders back, his neck exposed, his Adam's apple reverberating as he swallowed excessive saliva. It was all I could do to resist grabbing his bare neck and doing to him what he had done to my love...

"You raped her then strangled her with your *chotki*, you know that, don't you?" I yelled, placing my angry mouth right up to his ear. I expected a disapproving mental slap from Colmes. But he remained passive. So I kept on it. "Come on. Stop the bullshit. You raped her, strangled her then crashed my car to make it all look like an accident."

The killer turned his head and now our faces were just some few inches apart. "I would gladly admit it if I could remember it, but I can't! It's all a blank, confused dizzy mess!" he cried, a spray of spittle hitting my face.

I stepped back. "Father Sokolov," I said quietly, "do you have the *chotki*?"

He handed it to me. I waved it in front of the killer's face, even made it hit his nose and mouth. "You remember this, right?" I asked, full of sarcasm.

"Yes, I do. It's mine. I can tell by the way the knots are tied."

This seemed to me to indicate a confession of guilt. “So you admit it? You raped her, strangled her, carried her to my car, then smashed it into the cathedral steps to make it all look like an accident. Is that correct?”

The killer looked down, then up, then to Colmes in a kind of pleading way, then back to me. I responded with a glaring look that could kill, literally.

He leaned back over his chair again and took a deep breath, his head dropped well over the back of the chair, his arms and shoulders forced to follow. He then sat up straight, squinted as though the light was too bright, and said, “I did everything as you say. Do with me what you will.”

I did not say it out loud, but to myself. “Be assured, you will get what you deserve.” Then I pushed a sheet of paper to him and presented him with a pen. “Please write the following as I dictate it, then sign it with your full name.”

The killer picked up the pen. But instantly, Colmes intervened.

“I think that will not be necessary,” he announced in a most officious tone.

“But,” I complained, “we need a confession.”

“Indeed, we do, or should I say, we did,” answered Colmes calmly. “He has confessed in the most colorful and detailed way one could ask for.” Colmes looked at me and then to Father Sokolov. “The three of us are agreed and find the confession of Mr. John Rivers acceptable and authentic?”

I nodded as did the father, though not as enthusiastically as did I. Colmes then continued. “Excellent. Then I think we can reasonably move on to the final stage of our inquiry and close out our case. What is to be done? What sentence must we deliver and administer for such a heinous crime?”

I looked at Colmes in a most puzzled way. I had assumed that the next step would be to hand the killer over to law enforcement to be arraigned, tried and convicted. I looked at father Sokolov and he looked back at me, an expression that I could not fathom. I suppose he was used to people around him doing the strangest things, and, coming from Russia after all, he was well used to peoples’ lives being upended and punished for complex reasons, but almost always based on an open confession. And when I looked at him more closely, he averted his gaze from mine, so I

concluded that his look was one of complicity.

“Father Sokolov,” said Colmes, “if you would be so kind as to take Mr. Rivers’ sin in your charge, make him comfortable, and pray with him should he request it. Perhaps you could join him in some of his chanting.”

He then turned to the killer and asked, “young man, have you been baptized in the Russian Orthodox Church? Perhaps Father Sokolov you may want to discuss this with him? In the meantime, I must work on closing out this case with my esteemed colleague here. Our eyes met. He was referring to me!

Perhaps I have not been as direct as I could have been in informing you of the actual principles that lay behind the sense of justice that drove Colmes in this case, and in fact all his cases. Justice had to be done, every serious offence matched to its deserved outcome. A careful, impartial collection and examination of the facts of the case were necessary before justice could be served. Actually, it was the procedure that was, in effect, according to Colmes, justice itself. The final verdict, that is the punishment that followed logically from the careful weighing of the evidence was the clear indication to all involved that justice had been done. However, unlike a prison, where only the inmates, that is those inside, had to be satisfied that justice had been done, there were many outside a university who had to be considered. These were of two kinds: the parents of the offender, if a student, and the parents of the victim, if a student. [BTW: Progressives often argue that the parents and relatives of inmates should also be considered, but that is another matter for another case.]

The status of the killer in this case was somewhat ambiguous, since he was not a student, so technically an outsider. However, he masqueraded as a student, and as far as outsiders were concerned, since the victim was a student, it was important that the “accident” be imported into the university’s realm. Besides, the actual murder was perpetrated on campus grounds, according to the killer. If I seem to be going around in circles, I apologize and acknowledge that it depicts my true state of mind in this matter. Having studied criminal justice I am well aware of the acclaimed morality and equity offered by “due process” that backbone of American criminal justice. But I am also well aware of its many faults, especially the lopsided power that lies with

both the police, who, having “caught” the criminal, are eager to see that he is found guilty (of anything) that justifies their unavoidable bullying of citizens involved in the case, and prosecutors who look upon the prosecution and trial as a kind of football game in which winning far outweighs the discovery of what actually happened. But here again, I digress.

What would we have without the formal procedures and worship of American (“civilized”) criminal justice? We would have a system that my mentor Colmes has constructed inside the university. Criminal justice scholars call it “informal criminal justice” and in those parts of the world where it is practiced it is called “customary” justice, where an honored tribal leader hears each side of a case then pronounces guilt or innocence, and if guilty pronounces the punishment. Obviously, the “tribal” leader in this case (the judge) has a tremendous amount of power, and it is that power that the “civilized” concept of due process—arrest, charge, finding of guilt, punishment— supposedly mitigates that power. It does not of course. It simply distributes the power over several criminal justice actors, and in that sense, increases its likely abuse, simply because there are more than one person exerting it. And the responsibility for any shocking outcome, indeed in cases where obvious miscarriages have occurred, can be laid on the jury or the major contestants, the prosecutor or defense counsel. The judge simply shrugs and blames it all on the participants, as though the judge were not a participant at all.

Which finally brings me to the question of why Summers washed his hands of the case, and you may have noticed that the campus chief Masterson essentially stayed on the sidelines. Detective Summers, responsible to his own chief of police, was well aware of the importance of the university with its 12,000 students, the size of a small town, to the city he worked for. Thus, he worked closely with Masterson and indirectly with Colmes, whose role had always puzzled him, but whose authority he knew was unquestioned in the university. Because they wield so much power every day, police, the higher up the ladder they climb, the more sensitive they are to the power and authority of others. So over the years he, Masterson and Colmes had worked out a way to live with each other, rarely having direct disagreements over who had what authority. This is why there was no jurisdictional bickering. Each knew his part and allowed events to unfold. Thus,

the official announcement by Summers was that Ruth's death was an accident. In their unofficial role of Colmes as the tribal leader, the Shaman, and Masterson as his parallel assistant one might say, they planned and guided the case to the end solution that would be approved and accepted by all those inside the university.

Then, there was me. Colmes had deftly used my anger to his advantage. He had allowed me to cajole the killer, impute to him the evil that was necessary to justify the punishment that would follow. Except that there was yet another layer of complexity that Colmes was quietly engineering. After all, if we were wielding customary justice, a severe punishment would follow and be inflicted on the killer. If we were, say, to hang him, or otherwise punish him it would cause outrage once the outside got wind of it, and they certainly would. And obviously the university did not have an appropriate prison into which Colmes could sentence him for the rest of his life. (Of course, all of us were already in a prison, in the mind of President O'Brien).

So what was Colmes's solution? It was staring me in the face, as was often the case with Colmes. It lay with Father Sokolov.

Father Sokolov was a worldly man, when it came to faith. He enjoyed and truly loved all the sacred trappings of the Russian Orthodox Church, its prayer knots, gowns, hats, altars of piety, gaudy (some would say) decorations of the church, gold leaf or its equivalent applied everywhere, the rich sky blues. But his worship of such faith did not stop there. He reveled in the faith of others in the world, those of different faiths, Islam, Buddhism, Roman Catholicism and even Protestantism (though a little less so since they had shaken off much of their accoutrements of worship).

So it was that he had managed to sneak into the university and after some years eventually take over the Universal Church. It used to be called the "Interfaith Meeting House," but he thought that it sounded too much like the Quakers and besides Interfaith sounded as though the faiths were separate from each other. And of course appeared to exclude those without faith. His view was that all faiths were one, and as well people who said they were without faith were welcome to join the Universal

Church where, since it was attended by people of all faiths, the faithless might perhaps find a faith that suited them. Thus, he changed the name to Universal Church. One of the unintended consequences of this view of Church was that it attracted people who were lost. That is, people who were in fact faithless. Such was the case with the killer, John Rivers. And from now on I will refer to him by name. It will please Colmes who several times has lectured me that I should “get over it,” and let it go. Rivers would be punished for his crime, he assured me. If I had any faith at all, I should trust him, my mentor. That’s what Colmes said. Imagine that! He thought of himself as a kind of God. What else could it be when he asks me to have faith in him?

But I went along with him. Did what I was told, grudgingly. He had returned to his office to attend to another emergency, so he said, something to do with the University’s pond, that wonderful sanctuary of forest and water right in the middle of the university. I was to remain with Rivers and Father Sokolov.

I tried very hard to think of the killer (there I go again) as a person just like anyone else. He wasn’t like anyone else, he was a murderer. It was not an accident, any of it. Yet he had claimed that he did not intend to hurt Ruth in any way. He seemed not even to remember doing any of it. He was as tortured as I was over her death. On whose side was faith? I asked myself. And as I watched Father Sokolov begin his chant, place his hand on Rivers’ bowed head, I stupidly felt left out, why wasn’t the Father putting his hand on my head? Well, I hadn’t kneeled down before him, I suppose that was a good reason why. Then why not do it? Kneel before him?

So I did. And I started muttering in time and tune with the chant, though I had no idea what it was saying. It didn’t seem to matter. I closed my eyes. I then discovered faith. That is, I think my mind went blank, maybe I fell asleep. Eventually, the chanting stopped. I opened my eyes and there I was, kneeling in front of the altar, alone. I heard a distant voice saying, “Mister Hobson, you will be the witness. According to church rules, there must be a witness to the baptism.”

I shook my head and struggled to my feet. Father Sokolov was attending to Rivers. He had kept the yellow robe and was draping it around Rivers’ body. Rivers seemed to be in some kind of trance. Then Father Sokolov placed both his hands on Rivers’

head and pronounced, "In the name of One God, I ask that you repent of your sins and ask forgiveness."

Rivers looked up. I was already feeling anger and resentment. How does one forgive the murder of the only woman I ever loved? What kind of god forgives murder?

Father Sokolov sensed my thirst for vengeance. He took his hands off Rivers and turned to me. "Young man," he said, "please allow God time to do his justice. It will be done."

He turned back to Rivers. "And now, my son. It is time for your Triple Immersion Baptism."

Rivers meekly looked up to Sokolov, as a compliant dog looks up at its master. The priest continued.

"Do you wish to seek forgiveness by triple immersion, each immersion to wash away your sins?"

"I do," mumbled Rivers.

"You must look to the sky of Heaven and shout your answer clearly so that it can be heard throughout the universe of faith," commanded Sokolov, "stand and cry out!"

Rivers struggled to stand, then shouted, "I do!" he shouted "I do!"

"Let us proceed to the pond where we will baptize you, and you will begin a new and sinless life," said Father Sokolov.

The killer, I will not call him by his name if he is going to get out of this murder with just a dunking, followed Father Sokolov and I followed on, mumbling to myself, disgusted, feeling let down and quite frankly double-crossed by Colmes. This was no solution. It was abrogation.

It was late in the afternoon, the sun was setting. The animals were quiet, and I heard a few squeaks from chipmunks getting ready for bed. No birds chirping. I imagined them sitting in the trees looking down, also disgusted.

We reached the edge of the pond. The water was still and dark. Father Sokolov stood at the edge, pulling up his robe so it would not get wet. He gesticulated to the killer to wade in until the water came to his chest. "The church rules say that I am not to touch you as you have sinned so badly. You must immerse yourself totally, three times. After that, I will approach you and pronounce you free of sin, and ready to begin life's journey all over again."

Father Sokolov then turned to me and warned, "stay back

from the water, my son. You do not want any of his sin to soil you.”

The killer entered the water, pulling his yellow robe around his body as though to protect it from the chill of the water. As I watched, my mind was overcome with competing words, phrases, images, scenes from the past. And I remembered one that came into focus. It was a sign board of all things. A sign that I could not read, it jumped around in my head. Then I heard Sokolov call out, “My son! Cleanse thyself!”

And the killer dropped down beneath the water. Then pushed himself up again, his hands now tangled in his robe.

“Once more!” cried the Priest.

The killer obeyed, and dropped below the water, then he must have pushed himself up with his legs, as he burst out of the water like a dolphin. And he cried, “third and last!” and dropped well below the surface, I reckoned. It was not all that deep in this area of the pond.

And now, all was silent. The killer remained under. Had he escaped or something? Was he playing games? I looked at Father Sokolov. He stood, expressionless.

“You think there’s something wrong?” I asked. Should I go in and see if he’s OK?”

Sokolov quickly answered. “Do not enter! It’s dangerous! Sin all around us!”

And then there was a great churning of the water, I am sure I saw a flash of lightning, and the killer’s body appeared on the surface, quivering and shaking, steam coming off his body, his yellow robe twisted and charred.

It was then that I remembered the sign I had seen. It was in this pond just twenty feet away. I had given it no mind. It said :

WARNING!

SUBMERGED CABLES!

NO SWIMMING!

And above the writing was a lightning sign, warning of electricity.

Justice had been done. An accidental death was repaid by an accidental death. Colmes had fulfilled his promise. My mentor had once again given me a lesson on justice, that no case can be solved without.

