

UNDOMESTICATED

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GARY SMITH



Columbus, Ohio

“Love is the root of all that’s good and all that’s evil and is the root cause of all human behavior.”

Dante Alighieri *The Divine Comedy* 1308

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Dedicated to:

Mauro Zucca Pol, my cousin, and an inspirational force.

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Chapter 1

SHE FINISHED HER second cup of coffee and walked towards the television to turn it off on her way out the door to work. As she did, the news reporter announced that another murder victim had been found. She stopped and turned up the volume. This was the third girl discovered in three months. Someone was hunting in her territory. She had been so careful with her hunting, careful never to have more than two a year in the county. The rest of her victims were taken while on vacation far away from home. These new killings concerned her because the department was coming under increased pressure with frequent press coverage. She would have to curtail her activity until this new serial killer was caught. She put her gun into her waist holster, grabbed her keys, and badge, and headed to work.

She locked the front door. On her way to the car, she thought about what a beautiful day it was in Dayton, Nebraska. The sky was so blue with few clouds. Dayton was not a large city. It had a population of 250,000 and was quite modern. The new light rail would be finished soon, and the downtown modernization would be finished before

Christmas. It was September and the weather was great, not as hot as summer and not as cold as it would be in a few months. Dayton had a very low crime rate and was the kind of city where people slept with their windows open in the summer. It was a great place to live.

Just before she got to the car, Mrs. Archer called out to her, “Kimberly, got a minute?”

Mrs. Archer lived across the street from Kimberly and her husband had died suddenly the previous year from a heart attack. Since his death, Mrs. Archer had been lonely and scared to be alone. She was always telling Kimberly how lucky she felt to live across from a police officer, and a detective at that.

“Yes, Mrs. Archer. What’s on your mind?”

“I wanted to ask you if the police are close to catching this serial killer. Everyone I talk to is so frightened.”

Kimberly replied, “I’ve told you before, Mrs. Archer, that I can’t comment on an open investigation. Trust me, we will get him.” With that said, she got into the car and drove off to work.

Kimberly Johnson was born in Dayton, Nebraska, twenty-eight years before as the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Johnson. Kimberly’s father, Sam, had been a salesman at Dayton Farm Equipment downtown, and her mother, Mary, managed the woman’s department at Macy’s, at the Springdale Mall near the edge of town.

Kimberly’s father had been killed in a car accident on the interstate by a drunk driver. He was coming back from the Simpson’s farm after selling a tractor to Mr. Simpson. Kimberly was ten years old at the time of the accident and she was devastated. The drunk driver survived without an

injury. It seemed so unjust. She and her father were very close. Kimberly was just eighteen years old and in college when her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and died. It was in collage that someone poisoned her small dog April. She knew who did it. It was the neighbor across the street. Sometimes April would sneak out and shit on her lawn. Still too poison a small dog? It was then she decided to be a police officer. She entered the police academy right out of college and rapidly rose through the ranks to detective. An intelligent woman, at 5' 8" and 125 pounds, her green eyes were a little wider set then most and always full of emotion and strength. Her athletic body with great curves and long auburn hair caused heads to turn wherever she went.



Kimberly still lived in her childhood home which had been sort of a comfort for her. All her pets who died through the years were buried in the back yard. Her mom died at home, and this was the last place she saw her father alive. The small two-bedroom house had been built in the 1950s. It was located in a nice neighborhood with tree-lined streets.

She grew up there and knew all the neighbors. Kimberley had kept the house exactly as it was the day her mother died except for making her parent's bedroom her own. This was her sanctuary from the outside. It was a place to be alone and nurture her soul.

She parked her car in the Police Station parking lot, got out and headed to the front door. Just as she reached to open the door, patrolman Bob Shepard stepped out. He said, "Good morning, Kim. Say, are we still going out Saturday night?"

"As far as I know," she replied.

"Good. I'll pick you up at 7:00. I made us dinner reservations at that new French restaurant you said you wanted to try."

"I'll be ready," she replied as she entered the doorway being held open by Bob. Kimberly had been dating Bob for about six months and it seemed they were starting to get serious. He was a year younger than she, 6'3", 210 pounds, lean and muscular, good-looking, and charming. The chemistry between them was great from the first meeting. The sex was great, too. They both enjoyed many of the same interests, including a lot of free time alone. He had just asked her to move in with him, but she said no. She didn't tell him, but she could never leave her family home.

Kimberly was walking through the police station when Captain Samuel McDonald stepped out of his office and called to her. "Kimberly, may I have a word with you?"

She walked over and the two of them went into his office. "Kimberly, I want to introduce you to Special Agent Jack Stone of the FBI. Jack is here from the FBI profile section at

Quantico. He's been assigned to help with our newly formed task force investigating the recent serial killings."

Mr. Stone walked over and shook Kimberly's hand.

"Pleasure," he said.

Captain McDonald continued. "Kimberly is one of our brightest detectives. She's becoming a kind of legend around here. She has a very sensitive intuition. Jack, you'll be working with Kimberly and her partner, Tony Silva. The three of you make up the task force but be assured you have the complete support of the whole department. We'll assign staff as needed and as many resources as you request. This case is the department's number one priority."

"Thanks, Captain." Then turning to Jack Stone, she said, "It's good to have you on board, Jack. Shall we go find Tony and catch you up about the details we have so far?" They both left and headed to the office she shared with Tony.

Chapter 2

TONY AND KIMBERLY'S office was large compared to most standard offices at the precinct. It was approximately twelve feet wide by twenty feet long. The front of their desks were pushed up to the same wall about five feet apart. Behind them in the center of the room was an old conference table Tony had found. It was very useful to spread out all kinds of things when working on a case. At one end of the room, Kimberly had covered the whole wall with corkboard, so she could pin up photos, names, documents, etc. She would arrange them by association or connection to each other. She said it helped her to see the whole case at once. The wall behind the desks had large windows giving the room a lot of natural light. They closed cases faster than any other detectives in the department. Tony once teased it was because Kimberly could think like a criminal.

When Kimberly and Jack entered the office, Tony was sitting at the conference table, with his elbows on the table and his head resting on his hands. He was staring intently at something on the table.

“Tony, I want to introduce you to the newest member of

our team. This is Jack Stone from the FBI behavioral science division. His specialty is profiling serial killers.”

Tony looked up and then stood, extending a hand. “Good to meet you. God knows we sure can use the help.”

Jack stepped forward, shook Tony’s hand, and said, “Glad to be of service. What are you looking at?”

“This was just delivered,” Tony replied, “It’s a photo taken from a security camera near where the last girl was taken. The film shows her getting into a light-colored truck, but that side of the street was too dark to see what make or model the truck was, or its plates. When the truck drove off, light from a store window lit up the passenger side of the back bumper. I had them blow up a frame to see if it revealed anything.”

“And does it?” asked Kimberly

“It does. It has a ‘Jesus Loves You’ sticker on the bumper and a dent from backing into something,” replied Tony. With that, they all sat down to discuss the case. After going over what they had in the case file, Jack began to describe the kind of person who would do this type of killing. He described the killer’s age range and social habits. Kimberly was only half listening. She knew the drill; her thoughts were about the sticker on the bumper. How could she find this truck? There can only be one with this sticker. She wondered aloud, “How many companies do you think are local that print bumper stickers?”

Jack paused in what he was saying. Tony got up and started for the door, saying, “I’m on it. That’s not much of a lead, but it’s a start.”

Kimberly said, “Sorry Jack. The thought just kind of came out.”

“I understand,” he said. “Tell you what. I’ll type up a

complete composite and have it for you and Tony this afternoon. I'll spend more time on the file and see if locations and time of the abductions and profile of the victims lead to patterns we can use as leads."

"Good," Kimberly replied. "I'll check out the last abduction location and interview the last victim's parents and known associates. How about if I meet you and Tony here around 3:00?"

"Sounds like a plan," Jack replied. She got up and left.

Kimberly drove straight to the area of the last abduction. It was towards the outskirts of town. Not a bad area, but it didn't have many businesses. There was a 7/11 convenience store in the middle of the block next to the video rental store where the victim worked. There was a Texaco gas station at one end of the street, a dress shop, and an antique shop across the street from the video store, and three vacant shops from the gas station to the 7/11. The light from the 7/11 store had lit up the bumper as the truck made a U-turn to head out of town. The video from the security camera at the gas station captured it all. The truck's headlights and the streetlight behind it kept the truck in silhouette until he made the turn. Watching the video, it looked like the victim had closed the video store where she worked and was on her way to her car when she was stopped. Why did she get into the truck? Was it someone she knew?

This wasn't how she would have done it. This person got lucky with the video. The car was in silhouette. If a car had pulled out of the gas station, its headlights would have taken it out of silhouette and they would have been able to identify the truck and license. When serial killers are caught, it is most often because their consciences start to bother them,

and they get sloppy, making it easier to catch them. Everyone who studied the Ted Bundy case thought he went to Florida because they had the death penalty and it was swift. The last of his killings were so sloppy, he even left bite marks and such. The last killings were nothing close to his first ones. “Yep, this guy is ready to be caught,” she mused.

Next, she went to talk to the parents, Mr. and Mrs. McVee.

Kimberly pulled up to the McVee residence. It was in an upper middle-class neighborhood. The yard was neat, and the house well kept. She walked up to the front door and knocked. Mrs. McVee answered.

“Good morning. I am Detective Kimberly Johnson from the Dayton police department.”

“I’m Ann McVee. Do you have information on my daughter’s killer?”

“No. I’d like to talk to you about your daughter. Is Mr. McVee home?”

“No, Jeff is at work. Please come in. Would you like a cup of coffee? I just made a fresh pot.”

“Thank you. I would,” Kimberly said.

She walked inside the house and was offered a seat on the couch. The living room was of moderate size; very neat and tactfully decorated. Mrs. McVee went to the kitchen and returned with two cups of coffee on a tray with creamer and sugar. They sat in the living room and talked for about an hour. Kimberly was empathetic to the mother’s grief and asked her questions indirectly as part of a conversation about Sally. Taking her time, Kimberly got all the information she sought. Sally was nineteen, attractive, was attending junior college and working nights at the video store. She liked the job because it gave her time to study during the slow times.

College and work kept her busy and she had little time to date, but she did have three close friends. Kimberly thanked Mrs. McVee for her time and left.

As Kimberly was walking to the car, she looked at her watch. It was getting close to lunch. She called Bob on her cell.

“Hello?”

“Bob, it’s Kimberly. Are you busy?”

“Not really. What’s up?”

“I thought, if you haven’t had lunch, we could meet.”

“So, how about Sam’s Diner in fifteen minutes?”

“I’ll be there.”

Chapter 3

SHE LIKED MEETING Bob during the day for lunch or coffee. It broke up the day and he was a good listener. They agreed not to talk about work unless one of them was having a problem; it was helpful to bounce ideas off each other, and she trusted his judgment.

When she got to the diner, Bob's car was parked in the parking lot. She pulled into the space next to his car and parked. She walked in and saw him in a booth with his back to her. She walked over and slid in across from him.

"What's up?" he asked. Before she could answer, a waitress appeared with menus and coffee. "Good morning. I mean, good afternoon. Shit, Kimberly. It's so close to both, how about good day? Would you like coffee?"

"Of course, Jane," Kimberly replied with a chuckle. Kimberly and Bob had been coming to Sam's almost twice a week for about a year. Meeting here for lunch was how the relationship began to develop into more than work friends. Kimberly had known Jane since high school and she would stop by from time to time for coffee and lunch. One day, she ran into Bob there during lunch. She had seen him

around work but just in passing, since Bob was a patrolman he seldom interacted with detectives. That day, she stopped by for lunch and to say hi to Jane. Bob came in and asked if she'd like to have some company for lunch. That lunch was the beginning of a friendship that became close. They became lovers, and now he wanted them to take the next step and live together.

Looking over the menu, Bob said, "I see the FBI is in the building today. Is it regarding the serial killings?"

"Yes, it is," she replied.

"How is it going? Any new leads?"

"Not really. Why all the interest in this case?" she asked.

"I was just asking to make conversation."

She paused a second and then replied, "We've never talked about work unless one of us was having a problem and needed some feedback. Ever since I was assigned this case, we play Twenty Questions whenever we are alone."

"Sorry, I'll drop it. I didn't think it would be such a sensitive topic with you."

She looked at him a moment and thought it best to de-escalate the conversation. "Sorry. I'm just being a detective and shouldn't treat you like a person of interest."

"Thank you," he replied. They ordered and talked about each other's future dreams and desires. When they finished lunch, Kimberly excused herself, saying she had to get back for a meeting with Special Agent Jack Stone.

On the way back to the station, she kept thinking about Bob and his interest in this serial killer case. She couldn't help it. He had raised her **suspicious**. He tried too hard in a coy way to find out details about what the task force knew, and especially any profiles they were looking at. She already

had checked the time of the abductions and where he might have been. Each time a girl was taken, Bob was not with her. She would have to ask him directly where he was those nights and check his alibis to completely clear him. She really had no reason to do that, just an uneasy feeling.

She got back to the precinct around 2:00. As she entered her office, she found Tony and Jack were sitting at the conference table discussing the case. Jack saw her come in and asked, “Kimberly, how did it go with the parents?”

“Only talked to the mother since the dad was at work. She gave me a list of Sally’s friends. She had only three who she saw regularly. It appears that, like the last two girls taken, she was a good kid. No trouble in school, good grades, going to junior college and working nights at the video store to pay for school. She was too busy with work and school to go out much and she had no boyfriend. Just the kind of girl every parent would want for a daughter.”

“There’s the first pattern,” Jack replied.

Tony looked at Kimberly with a puzzled look and said, “It is?”

“Yes, Kimberly said it. All three girls were hardworking good girls with a future. How would the killer know that?” Jack went on. “We do because we’ve spent time checking into their personal lives. The killer must have done the same thing. Each girl had been stalked for a time and had their backgrounds checked.”

“That does make sense,” Kimberly said looking at Tony.

“I’ll start looking through each of the girls’ backgrounds, interview friends, neighbors etc. to see who has been doing the same,” replied Tony.

Jack said, “I’ll contact the FBI and have them check to

see if anyone has been checking credit reports. They have a special division that monitors all social media and electronic background searches.”

Kimberly said she was going to run down a hunch and would see them in the morning. She left and headed back to the scene of the last abduction. She started at the gas station, showing a picture of Bob, she had in her wallet, and spent the rest of the afternoon canvassing the area. No one remembered seeing Bob hanging around or asking questions about Sally. Still, she could not shake a feeling that Bob was involved. She headed home.

Kimberly arrived home a little after 5:00. It was one of those late summer evenings before daylight savings time that was warm but with a coolness to the air. The light outside was beautiful, so she decided to put on a sweater and sit outside in the backyard to have a glass of wine and think. One glass of wine led to a second glass and she began to reminisce about her first killing.

Kimberly and her best friend, Kathy, had spent the day at Quarry Creek. Quarry Creek was an old quarry that naturally filled with water and was turned into a swimming park. In the summer, the county would open the concession stand and have a lifeguard, but this was at the end of summer. Since school had started the park had closed.

It was a warm day with no one around and Kimberly and Kathy decided to sneak in and swim. She was fourteen years old and still grieving over her dad. She just could not get over his death. It had been more than four years and still she missed him so much. She was angry with God.

About fifty yards off the shore was a floating platform that everyone would swim to and lay in the sun. They sat on the

shore talking and all Kathy would talk about was what a jerk her Dad was. He wouldn't let her go to a party with Jimmy, who was 16. He wouldn't let her use her cell phone after 7:00. She went on and on. At the same time, all Kimberly could think of was how lucky Kathy was to still have her father.



Finally, Kimberly said, “Let’s swim out to the platform before it starts to cool off.”

Kimberly was a very strong swimmer and she knew Kathy was not. About halfway to the platform, Kimberly let Kathy get a little ahead of her and, as soon as Kathy exhaled and started to take a breath, Kimberly took in as much air as possible and grabbed Kathy by the ankles. She dove as hard as she could, pulling Kathy under. Kimberly was surprised by how little Kathy struggled. Kimberly must have timed it just right. Kathy took in a lot of water and no air with her last inhale.

Afterwards, Kimberly swam back to the bank and ran for help. Divers fished out the body after four hours and Kimberly

had no remorse. Kimberly felt she had done society a favor. Kathy was going to cause her loving parents a great deal of hurt in the future. All of Kimberly's killings were righteous. They were all ungrateful people, mean, narcissistic, suicidal, drug addicted or thieves. Whoever was killing these newest girls was sick. These girls were the top of society. The killer had to be stopped. Leaving them nude from the waist down along a country road to be found was the work of a mentally ill criminal.

Chapter 4

KIMBERLY WAS GETTING a little chilled and hungry. She got up and went inside to get a deli salad out of the refrigerator. She could not get her mind off the case and decided to take a drive around the outskirts of the city to see what was still open after 9:00 p.m. She remembered a small strip mall on the outskirts of town near where cars got on the interstate. She headed there first. Arriving at the strip mall, she drove through the parking lot, looking around. There was a Burger King on one end, then an auto parts store and several other small shops, including a coffee shop. She parked her car and went into Betty's Organic Coffee Shop. "May I help you?" the young blond woman behind the counter asked.

"Yes, I would like a large coffee to go," replied Kimberly. When she turned to get the coffee Kimberly asked, "What time do you close?"

"I will close at 9:00. After 8:00, it slows down."

"You work here long?"

"My whole life, it seems. Betty is my mom. I started working here when I was about nine. I told Mom she had

better start looking for my replacement. I'm starting my last semester in school. I graduate in December with a chemistry major and already have a job offer." She finished getting the coffee. Kimberly paid, said goodnight, and walked back to her car.

Kimberly sat in her car for a moment and thought about this girl, the perfect profile of the past victims. The shop was perfect, had easy access to the interstate, and was dimly lit. She didn't see one surveillance camera other than those at Burger King, which were for the area around their store. She decided to go park in the shadows out of sight, but where she could keep an eye on things and finish her coffee. She checked her watch. It was almost 9:00.

Kimberly sat in the dark thinking about Jack Stone and the FBI. They had profiling down to a science. The only problem was the profiling was based on caught killers. The smart killers like her would never leave a body to be found. There are 90,000 people missing and not accounted for at any one time in the U.S. Leaving half nude young girls along the roadside was sick.

Just then, something caught her attention. A truck was coming into the parking lot and, as luck would have it, it was coming down her side. She slid down in the seat. As the truck went by, there it was: a bumper sticker that read *Jesus Loves You*. She eased up and watched as the truck parked just past Betty's Organic Coffee Shop. The truck parked in a space with one parking place between his passenger's door and a lone-parked car. Of course, as the blond clerk unlocked her car, the killer could call her over to ask her something.

Kimberly turned off the dome light, so it would not come on as she opened the door and slid out. Then, she walked

straight out to the middle of the parking lot, so she could stay well out of the driver's peripheral vision and approached the car slowly from the back with her off-duty weapon drawn. She walked up to the passenger side of the truck. The window was down, of course, so he could say something to catch the girl's attention as she entered her car.

She pointed her weapon through the window and said, "Hello, Bob, shall we take a little ride somewhere?"

Next, with her left hand, she opened the door and slid in. As they passed Betty's Organic Coffee shop, she glanced over. The girl was just finishing the last of the clean-up before she left.