

Prologue

"Killing is killing whether done for duty, profit or fun."

Richard Ramirez

It was close to midnight as the SUV made its way down the deserted beachfront highway. The driver proceeded slowly, squinting through the fog and drizzle to focus on the dreary road in front of him. He glanced nervously into the rear view mirror to make sure no one was following. Just in case, he purposely passed his intended location and watched for signs of life behind him. Nothing. Now assured that the coast was clear, he pulled into one of the empty beach parking lots that dotted the byway to turn around. After taking a quick glance at the heavy black garbage bags in the backseat, he retraced his way down the road he had just traveled.

A hurried look at the wrinkled map in his lap confirmed his location. He slowly guided the SUV to the side of the road, careful to insure the truck's tires remained on the pavement and did not leave telltale tracks in the sand. He left the SUV running, but dimmed the headlights, then took several deep calming breaths and exited into the light rain.

A surge of adrenaline flooded his body as he ran around the front of the truck to the passenger side door. Grabbing the first bag, he grunted as he flung it into the roadside vegetation. The second bag was lighter, so hurling it caused it to land further away than the first. He reached far into the car for the last bag and cursed as he realized that it was the heaviest. After a hard few pulls, he was horrified to see that the bag started ripping.

Rushing around to the driver's side, he jerked open the back door to better grip the bulky sack, but froze upon seeing headlights in the distance. Momentarily rattled, he recovered and quickly seized the torn bag. His legs started to tremble, not from the weight, but from fear of being caught. He dragged it to the side of the road and after a herculean heave, the bag disappeared into the thick brush. The oncoming car was too close to hide from, so he hurriedly yanked open his pants' zipper and pretended to be relieving his bladder. As he looked down to insure his face couldn't be seen by the passing car, his eyes widened in panic at what he saw lying on the wet pavement. He waited until he was once again concealed by darkness then hastily picked up the object and thrust it into his pocket.

The hard work now done, he drove the SUV away from the beach and proceeded to make his way north. As he passed over the desolate causeway bridge, he slowed the truck and paused briefly mid-span to toss his muddy boots out the window into the murky waters raging in the channel. Retrieving the bloody finger from his pocket, he smiled at her bright red nail polish; his eyes glazed briefly as he thought about last night. Sighing, he gave it one last sadistic kiss and then flung it into the depths of the storm-tossed water below.