

Who is Teddy Villanova? –A Serial Mystery: Chapter 4

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by [Paul Illidge](#) (November 2023)



The Arrest, Jack Levine, 1983

Saved by his call, Gary picked me up out front of the publisher's building ten-minutes later. He'd heard about Richie Havenhurst. He was sorry. Gary had been a big help to Richie, who couldn't believe I actually had a police officer

as a friend. They had got along well from the start, shared a surprising mutual respect. And understanding. Gary had had almost as dysfunctional a life growing up as Richie had. He could relate. Gary was one of Richie's biggest supporters for what he was trying to do with young teenagers.

He wanted to run down to the Keating Channel. Check out the Lincoln Town Car, which hadn't been released to go to the Evidence Center yet. Gary had noticed some things in the crime scene report that didn't add up.

On our way to the harbour we swung by Delavant Logistics.

The chain-link gate still hanging off its hinges from when I crashed through making my getaway, the vast lakeside trucking compound was mostly empty. When we reached the Delavant building, its lot was empty as well.

Gary drove up to the front door. No one home at **DELAVANT LOGISTICS** from the look of it, he tried the door, locked of course. He cupped his hands around his eyes and peered inside. Stepping back, he spotted the remote pad on the wall to the right of the door.

I walked up beside him. "Try 4-7-2-8."

A look of amused surprise. "Where did that come from?"

"I heard them use it last night."

Gary punched the code. The door lock buzzed. Gary pulled it open and in we went, Gary first, reaching behind to undo the thumb snap on the holster of his service pistol.

It was eerie and unsettling walking and talking him through what had taken place. I led him to the right of the reception desk, hit the wall switch as I went by. Fluorescents on the high ceiling flickered to life along the corridor as we made our way to the door of the observation room where I explained to Gary Mr. Big and Mr. Suitcase had sent me to retrieve some

information from my supposed brother.

Locked as expected, I walked him further along to the door of the room where the man playing my brother had been sitting. I tried the handle—it opened.

The ceiling lights were all on, the table and the chair where they'd had the man sitting were both gone.

We went over. There were splashes of blood on the floor.

The large two-way mirror that had been hit by one of Lisi's errant bullets had been replaced with two eight-by-four foot sheets of plywood.

"You say he got two shots off before he tripped?"

"I crouched and tripped him, picked up his gun and fired at the floor to get his attention when he stood up and started toward me."

Gary looked around. "Should be shell casings around then."

We went searching. Gary quickly found one on the floor across from the door. He bent down and was picking it up when two men in painter's white overalls, the taller of the two with a tape measure in hand, entered the room. They stopped on the spot when they saw the badge that Gary was holding up.

He asked what they were doing there.

"Measuring for the mirror," the man with the tape measure said, pointing to the plywood.

"Who hired you?"

"Mr. Bruno," the other man said.

"Who's he?"

"He owns the building."

“Victor Bruno?”

“That’s right. He called us last night and told us to come over first thing in the morning to do some repair work.”

“What kind of repair work?”

The man with the tape measure held it up, pointing to the plywood where the mirror had been.

“You do much repair work for Mr. Bruno?”

Thrown off by the question, the two of them looked at each other.

“He’s very good to us, let’s put it that way.”

“I’m afraid Mr. Bruno will have to wait for his repairs. This is a crime scene now.”

As if they were used to things like this happening when they involved Mr. Bruno, they shrugged amiably. We walked the two of them out to the parking lot. Gary asked for their business card, with Mr. Bruno’s number on the back so he could call him and let him know what was going on.

We parked on Villiers at the east end of the Keating Channel, walked over to a lot beside the drawbridge where we had a look at what was left of the Town Car: the roof caved in, windshield gone, three doors hanging open, the fourth missing, the crumpled trunk lid popped open.

This was what Gary wanted to look at.

We peered in.

“The report said Richie was found bound and gagged in the trunk.” Gary lifted a leg, hopped inside and reached for something he’d noticed wedged in at the back of the trunk.

Climbing out, he held up a pair of worn, brown winkle-picker

loafers, the toes with long, up-curving needle tips.

“You ever see Richie wearing these?”

“All the time.”

“He was doing a hundred up Cherry Street before he went off the bridge according to a witness at the scene.” He looked at me. “You see the problem?”

Both of us with a sick sad feeling about what had gone down with Richie, we agreed without saying so that between his anti-drug talks to schools, in which he shared his compelling true life experiences, and his efforts to create new habits for himself that didn't involve drugs of one kind or another, Richie had been making impressive progress living the *BE REAL* program himself.

Gary asked if I minded him keeping the alligator loafers, maybe as evidence at some point, maybe just to hang on to.

He dropped me off at Molly's just-built condo in the Distillery District. Having been at my place overnight, I'd promised to go over and feed Sawyer, her eight year-old tomcat.

Gary said he would fill me in tonight at *Respighi's* on anything he found out during the day. He was going to point out to his captain that Richie Havenhurst, bound, gagged and dead in the trunk, couldn't possibly have been at the wheel of the Town Car when it flew off the bridge.

“So the Missing Man's still out there . . .”

Gary turned, smiling. “So he is . . .”

Sawyer responded to my arrival with his usual reprimanding meow saying: “*You're late!*”

The routine a familiar one by now, I put his food in the bowl,

refilled the water dish then went out to the balcony, a ninth floor view looking south over Lake Ontario. I closed my eyes, turned my face up to the noonday sun for a couple of minutes, relaxing for the first time now that the state of shock I'd been in for the last twelve hours or so was wearing off.

I watched a small plane land at the Island Airport, the ferry heading across the harbour to Ward's Island. There were a dozen things that didn't add up about what had happened last night. Like how Richie came to be dead in the trunk of the Town Car I was driving. What were the odds? Where did Johnny Hutton, Jr. come in? Was he somehow connected to my brother, and if so, how? Who was it that paid Marti to let him into my apartment? Why did he want a bankers box of what he thought were my brother's business records? What would he do when he found out it was merely scrap paper from old manuscripts, a decoy box which I'd had to resort to when my brother was living with me and my kids for the six months before he disappeared.

I went inside to the kitchen, sat down at the table and watched Sawyer eating quietly. In a moment he came over, rubbed himself against my leg. I leaned down and gave his head a good pat, receiving an appreciative purr for my trouble.

I closed up, headed along the hall to the elevator and rode down to mezzanine level where I got off. This was an old habit from my investigative journalism days when I was writing controversial and occasionally sensitive pieces. You never knew when someone might be tailing you. At times like this I could get paranoid. I was the Missing Man after all, wasn't I?

I went to the railing, checked below in the lobby and had a look through the glass entrance doors, which gave a view out front of the building.

The coast was clear. Downstairs I went, slipping on the straps of my backpack as I stepped outside—

I turned fast. Detective Marks had sprung out from behind the cedar tree beside the door and clamped a heavy hand down on my right shoulder, his fingers in a submission move pinching the tendons so hard I sank to my knees. Slipping his other hand under the strap of my backpack, he yanked it off and, still pinching, shoved me toward the sidewalk.

“You have nothing better to do than tail me?”

No answer.

“You’re barking up the wrong tree, Marks.”

He squeezed harder. “We’ll see.”

Just as we arrived at the curb, an unmarked blue police car pulled in, brakes squealing, Detective Engels at the wheel.

Marks had the back door open and his hand on my head about to push me inside, when there was Gary standing behind him.

“I’ll take things from here, Marks,” he said in his official ranking officer voice.

He grabbed my backpack with one hand, pulled me away from Marks, turned me around and led me across the street to his car, honking his horn at the flabbergasted pair standing helpless at the curb while we roared off to a chorus of seething *FUCK YOU’S!!*

To be continued...

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Paul Illidge’s most recent book is the true crime financial thriller *RSKY BZNS* (New English Review Press, 2022), a

“fascinating story” (Frank Abagnale, Jr., author of *Catch Me if You Can*), a “gripping and intricate read” (Conrad Black). His book *THE BLEAKS* (ECW Press), was a *Globe & Mail* Best Book of 2014. Books in his *Shakespeare Novels* series *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, are all available internationally at www.kobobooks.com

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