

# Homicide: The Game

Presents

## Painseeker

**“At Day’s End”**  
by Laura Douglass

When Lance asked me to contribute to this site, I knew this day would come. It had to. Still I waited eight months to say this: I lied to the police about my actions on the night of Raychel’s murder. Why? If I come clean, you’ll understand.

Most of the day passed by uneventfully. I woke up. I ate. I painted. I went to Safehaven. It was nothing special (or at least nothing worth writing about) until around 7:30 PM or so when Sharon Wolfe and Geoffrey MacIntyre arrived. I know both of them well. Geoffrey and I go way back and Sharon . . . well, Sharon and I go back only as far as the last year of Raychel’s life. During that time, however, we learned a great deal about each other. We rarely see each other anymore. At least when she’s not stalking me.

They told me about the blow-up at Terror Trax. Of course it was from Geoffrey’s perspective, so it was all about how Kyle and Ken had manipulated Raychel into agreeing to recording in secret sessions. I did my best to conceal my lack of surprise. I had known since the beginning and supported it. I had originally thought about telling him about the sessions just to defuse the situation; however, practicality took over. Raychel would not record without Kyle, Kyle would not record with Geoffrey MacIntyre, and Ken Kincaid was a good friend of mine. It was actually a return to the agreement that Kyle and Ken had originally agreed to before he sold Terror Trax; however, the disaster of Halloween kept that from being carried out. Regardless, I personally felt just as comfortable with Ken overseeing the production as Geoffrey, but saying it at that time would have started another argument. One which I did not want happening in my bar.

As much as I love him, Geoffrey has a tendency to whine when he doesn’t get his way, and this one was no exception. I had sat through maybe a good two minutes (felt like hours) of Geoffrey’s whining assault when I caught a serious hint from Sharon to begin serving him. I couldn’t believe it had taken me that long to get the hint. That was

the reason Sharon had brought him to Safehaven. She wanted him six feet under the table and soon. I obliged, suggesting that the two of them take the corner booth I always reserved for myself and anyone I was personally entertaining. I pulled aside my waitress, Stacy, and told her to check on them regularly to make sure Geoffrey was safe and sedated. I told her they were VIPs and should be treated as best as we knew how.

After they had retreated to the corner, I immediately began wondering about what Raychel was thinking. I had guessed that Raychel was using Sharon to keep Geoffrey and Kyle from continuing or escalating their conflict. I had also guessed that because of Kyle's taunting of Geoffrey, she would blame Kyle for the fight. Geoffrey had too much power over the talent list at Terror Trax for her not to take him seriously, whether Kyle understood it or not. I didn't know it at the time, but I had analyzed the situation perfectly. It didn't make me feel good. I was guessing a major fight between Kyle and Raychel was in the not-too-distant future. I made a mental note to clean Raychel's bedroom in my house. She'd probably need it again. Soon.

Everything seemed to be going along smoothly until around 10:15 PM when Sharon came up to the bar without Geoffrey. I asked her how Geoffrey was getting along.

"He's still talking. He keeps talking about the same three points, but he doesn't remember that he's covered each of them about twenty times before already. I don't think he'll go on much longer, though."

"You all right?" I asked.

"Me? Hell, I'm fine. I've been letting him do most of the drinking. Someone's got to drive the car."

"Was it really that bad, Sharon?"

"No, it was much worse. You know Geoffrey. We crossed him, Laura, and I think we have a new problem. I think if he doesn't like the recordings when he hears them, he's going to release Raychel from her contract just to spite Kyle and Ken."

“He wouldn’t do that. He’s not that blinded, is he?”

“He’s still pissed about the way she ended it with him. Not just the recording, the affair. I think he’s been looking for an excuse. Now he has it.”

“Someone needs to help make the peace, “ I hinted.

“Thanks, Laura, but don’t. At least not now. It won’t help now.” She got up from her stool and smiled briefly, “You’ve helped enough today. Thanks.”

But I hadn’t helped. I had maintained. Provided a designer holding cell. Sold drinks to tranquilize. Everything but help. I stewed about it for almost an hour before I finally acted on my original impulse. I left my bartender in charge of Safehaven for a while and left for Raychel’s apartment.

It was about 11:20 PM when I arrived. I walked through the courtyard and up the back stairs to the second floor. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary at the time. I knocked on their door and waited for a response.

None came.

But I could hear something. It sounded like shuffling feet.

“Raychel?” I hoped.

The sound stopped.

I tried again, “Kyle? Raychel? Are you in there?”

The silence continued. It was too silent. I had to break it. I had to break in.

My mind scrambled for a solution. It didn’t take long. I had been at this same door almost a year and a half before with Lance Wagner. At the time we had been looking for Raychel after Kyle’s abduction of her from a meeting of The Bleeders. I

remembered Lance picking the lock so that we could look inside. He got into the apartment in a minute. Of course, I didn't have a customized tool to get past the lock. But I did have a credit card.

I heard how people are able to open locked doors using a credit card. I am sure you have seen people break in by taking a credit card and shoving it in a downward motion through the lock, thereby opening the door. I have seen it happen dozens of times. On TV. But I was trying it in real time. Standing in an exposed walkway, visible for anyone to see, I was trying to break through that lock. And I couldn't do it. I tried for a few minutes, and I couldn't figure it out.

In retrospect, it may have been the dumbest thing I have ever done. Scratch that. It would have been the dumbest thing if I had actually made it through the door. After reading Nick Graves' report on the crime scene, I know now exactly what that shuffling noise was. It was Raychel's body being dragged across the apartment floor by Kyle. It makes my blood run cold just thinking about it. He was waiting. And what if I actually managed to get through that door? Twenty-seven times he stabbed her with a broken bottle and do you think I would be shown mercy? I wonder if he feels he missed his opportunity now.

Well, he did miss his chance. When I gave up trying to get through the door, I drove back to Safehaven. I think it was about 11:40 PM. At least five minutes after 11:30 PM. I came in through the back door because I can park closer to the bar that way. I also remember that the door to the ladies room was unlocked, because I had almost gone there until I thought to check on Sharon and Geoffrey. I went down the hallway and back out into the main room.

Geoffrey was slouched in the corner booth. Actually he was practically laying in the corner booth. He must have met his match somewhere down the line of downed shots in front of him. Eyes closed and mouth agape, he was out cold. I thought about checking to see if he was still alive when I noticed something out of place.

He was alone.

“Quite a sight, huh?” I heard behind me. I spun around to see Sharon.

I had been backed up to the hallway. There were only three doors there: The ladies room, the men’s room, and the back exit. My back had been facing only that hallway. She couldn’t have approached me from that direction any other way. I know she wasn’t in the bathroom when I checked. She may be butch, but I know she wasn’t in the men’s room. . . had she been following me the whole time?

“Yeah, “ I struggled, “Has he been that way the whole time?”

“Yep. Anyway, I think we’ve got to go now. He’s had it.”

“Sure.”

They were out the door once Sharon could gather up what was left of Geoffrey and headed out the door. Stacy smiled and waved them out. Then something else hit me. I went straight to Stacy, “Did they pay the bill?”

Stacy smirked, “Yeah, right after you left. The woman gave me a hundred bucks and told me to give the guy anything he needed while she was out. She said what the tab didn’t cover was my tip as long as I didn’t tell you about it.”

That’s the benefit of having selectively unscrupulous employees, Sharon. They may water down the drinks and not report their tips to the IRS, but they’re amazingly faithful to me.

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Ken told me that Raychel was murdered after he received his call from Geoffrey MacIntyre. At the time I wondered how he had learned about it, but that was answered when Geoffrey gave his own whereabouts on the day Raychel was murdered. Sharon had told him. That stuck with me. In turn, I called David Vanderhoff, Lance Wagner, and Anna Fantiani (when she called me the next morning).

When I was interviewed by the police, I lied about my leaving Safehaven because I couldn't prove a thing. How would they have responded had I told them that I was at the door just after Raychel had been murdered? I would have been raked over the coals. And I'm not the one who needs to be.

I still don't buy that Kyle McAllister just went out for a drive. He even admits that he beat Raychel. Two words: O. J.

But I want to know about Sharon. All this time she has claimed Geoffrey as her alibi, and I have let her carry on about it and even given her the opportunity to contradict herself voluntarily. Now the trap springs shut.

Sharon, where were you?