

SHERIFF'S PHONE

Deputy texts

DEPUTY REED
Sheriff, there's been another one.
Max Alden, a Property Acquisition
Agent for the facility, was found
dead in his room, the Penthouse at
the hotel. Cleaning staff found him
this morning.

SHERIFF
Cause of death?

DEPUTY REED
Autopsy is yet to confirm, but
there appears to be blunt trauma to
the head.

SHERIFF
Just what we need. People have been
getting nervous enough already. The
facility might even think they need
to get involved now.

DEPUTY REED
I think they're right to be
nervous. There's been too many now
to call it all a coincidence.

SHERIFF
A string of bad luck doesn't make
accidents into murders. Let's
follow procedure and hope no one
starts interfering in our work.

DEPUTY REED
Yes, Sheriff.

SHERIFF'S PHONE

Deputy texts - date unknown

SHERIFF
We got an outside investigator
coming in. Despite my best
assurances to the Mayor that we've
got things handled, the recent
volume of unsolved cases spooked
him.

(MORE)

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
He went over my head to the
Attorney General, who pulled some
strings and now we've got a big-
city detective coming in next week.

 DEPUTY REED
I think we could use the help.

 SHERIFF
The only thing we need help with is
showing the Mayor his fears are
baseless and this whole situation
is just a collection of run-of-the-
mill coincidences. But keep up the
crime scenes for now, we'll need
the detective to have a look at
them before they're cleaned up.

 DEPUTY REED
Yes, Sheriff.

SHERIFF'S PHONE

Deputy texts

 DEPUTY REED
Just letting you know the autopsy
reports are ready for review at the
hospital morgue for the last two
cases.

 SHERIFF
Thanks, I'll review them with the
detective when he arrives.

 DEPUTY REED
I wrote up a report on the missing
persons investigations in case you
wanted to bring those up to the
detective too, put it on your desk.

 SHERIFF
You're still on about that? I'm not
wasting the detective's time. It's
just more people wandering into the
woods without enough water, happens
every year.

DEPUTY REED

Not this many! And all these suspicious deaths which frankly look like homicides to me happening at the same time? What if we have a serial killer on our hands?

SHERIFF

There's nothing suspicious about a few accidents. You'll learn when you've had a bit more experience under your belt. All this detective will do is prove that you and the Mayor are panicking over nothing.

DEPUTY REED

Yes, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

And don't think I don't know about all this investigation you're doing behind my back. I ought to have you fired for insubordination.

DEPUTY REED

I really believe something's not right here, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Sometimes your gut is wrong, son. Believe me, I know. You can't go chasing every flight of fancy, you've got to be rational. You'll learn soon.

SHERIFF'S PHONE

Deputy texts - date unknown

DEPUTY REED

Sheriff, I think I've got a major lead. I'm near a drainage pipe to the south of the facility, can you meet me here?

SHERIFF

I told you to wait at the office! If you never obey my orders, at least obey them when this outsider is in town! The last thing we need is him writing up our department for insubordination.

(MORE)

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
 I've let you stay on against my
 better judgement because I saw a
 good cop in you, and now you go and
 pull something like this?

SHERIFF'S PHONE

Text from Unknown, recent.

UNKNOWN
 I saw someone - maybe a young
 woman? - bury something in the
 wheat field the night Max Alden
 died. Starting from the front door
 of the diner in the direction of
 the streetlight, about 22 steps
 forward, 17 steps left. I thought
 it might just be some farm work at
 first, but it hasn't sat right with
 me. Just occurred to me I should
 let you know.

SHERIFF'S PHONE

Notes:

SHERIFF
 Sandra seems off tonight. Usually
 she bright and cheery, but tonight
 she seems unnerved, especially
 around me. I hope that poor girl
 didn't get herself into trouble.

SHERIFF'S PHONE

Notes:

Ms. Acres, I assure you, I will do everything in my power to
 find your son. ~~Sometimes children do uncharacteristic things~~

~~We can't neglect the possibility that he made a simple-~~
~~mistake and wandered into the woods just enough to get lost~~

~~I will even question the facility staff that might have been-~~
~~working nearby that day~~

~~I promise you, I will find him~~

We have no reason to suspect foul play, I know its unusual
 for him but he is probably only lost. The park ranger is
 scouring the woods and I will personally