

HE DIDN'T NOTICE THAT THE LIGHTS HAD CHANGED

RAVENSGATE: THE FOUNDRY, ISSUE #45 INTRO

NEAR RAVENSGATE UNION STATION
TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2003, 9:51 P.M.

The blue tarp covering the front of the wrecked black Lexus SUV is a garish centerpiece to the clogged [intersection of Miller and Moore](#) on a crisp, clear November night. Yellow crime-scene tape connects all four corners of the intersection, the traffic flares on Moore Street West pointing toward Union Station and delineating the skid marks leading to the intersection.



Checkerheads form a human cordon near Union Station, keeping passersby, gawkers and the media at bay. Two detectives play their penlights over every inch of the glossy black frame of the SUV, tuning out the crowd in order to focus on details.

As you peer around, you notice members of the brass arriving. Captain Wilton "Frank" Franklin, head of Homicide and Special Intelligence. Captains Joey and Jimmy Mealoa, identical twins. One commands Central Precinct, the other RAID. Their boss, Inspector Matt Shinmen of Special Operations.

Only cops absent right now are from the crime lab. They have to fight crosstown traffic from Sunrise Ridge, on the wrong side of two canals.

In Checkerhead parlance this must be a "red ball," a case with a high-profile victim. Means a lot of snitches will get beaten up tonight.

Suddenly, a young blonde woman violently breaks away from a plainclothes cop, nearly stumbling over her luggage in a blind anguished rage. The cop steps back awkwardly. The woman wraps her arms and her coat more tightly around herself as she lets out wracking sobs audible for half a block.

Inspector Shinmen glares over at the tableau. He looks around, sees you, and disengages from his confab with Franklin and the two detectives. He strides purposefully toward you.

"Rube's a good kid," he says, shaking his head, "but he needs to learn certain elements of witness procedure. You *never*, **ever** tell a victim's relative it's God's will. Goddammit, we're not theologians."

Shinmen maintains his pained expression as he breathes into his diminutive hands and then rubs them together.

"It's a red ball. Bud Kimball, veep for community relations at Nehalem Amalgamated Plastics. Phil's all over us on this one; Kimball was a donor to his campaign last year. Brim and Wiseguy tell me he got capped, but they're stumped."

Oh? How?

"Small entry wound, right temple, big exit wound above the left and matching the hole in the roof of the Lexus. Exit wound's usually larger on ballistics, but they can't find a hole in the passenger side anywhere. Or powder burns on the right temple to explain the lack of a busted passenger-side window."

Oh.

"Yeah. Daughter—she's home on break from Willamette—saw him get capped as he approached. Says Daddy was alone in the Lexus."

Brim and Wiseguy approach the daughter. Off. Mike Snow guides his partner, Off. Daniel "Rube" Cody, away from the corner.

"I've seen a lot of dead bodies in 17 years, even [one of my own officers](#). Met a lot of grieving victims," Shinmen says. "Old partner of mine once told me we're not here to grieve--that's for personal time--but we're here to catch the perps. Brim and Wiseguy over there, they were quoting Lennon and McCartney"—Shinmen points to the SUV and the traffic signals—"and trying not to laugh. Ever since I met the ghost of one of my officers, I think of a verse from an [old Jackson Browne song](#), 'For A Dancer.' Whatever keeps us sane, I guess."

Back to the case....

"Yeah, it's a doozy. I'm calling COMETPRO for advice, because I think a meta' did this. Just a hunch, based on initial evidence. BPS'll be under the microscope on this one, so we'll be a little hampered. Possibly even distracted. I'd appreciate it if you could see what you can find out, just because (a.) I'd like multiple perspectives on the issue at hand and (b.) COMETPRO hasn't been the same since Rodriguez took over Region Nine."

Inspector Shinmen furtively adds, "Check the blotters at Mid-North and Northeast Precincts. Really bizarre occurrences," as he notes the approach of a camera crew. "I hate these bozos. No, I hate *all* these bozos. Except [Tod Allen and the Morning Team](#). At least they're not owned by J.P. d'Aubaine. Yet."

Shinmen darts back from the yellow tape as the FoxFive News reporter and cameraman approach: "Sorry, Mia!! No info yet!!"

The score so far:

1. Prominent industrialist murdered in his SUV just as he approaches Union Station, where his daughter is waiting to be picked up.
2. Although the lab has yet to arrive, it looks like he was shot from *inside* his vehicle—while alone!
3. No powder burns on the entry wound, which rules out both suicide and carjacking. (Lab won't find any powder residue in the vehicle.)
4. No broken window on passenger side, no holes in SUV—except that created by the exit wound.
5. Cooperative police official suspects metahuman involvement and asks you to look into strange police blotter items.
6. The odd items, when you check, include:
 - (a.) Bullet holes appearing in building and interior walls—out of thin air—at 21 different locations in two precincts.
 - (b.) Recovered slugs indicate a .308 Winchester rifle.

(c.) Trajectory from slugs recovered indicate the shooter was firing in mid-air, which is possible only if he/she is aboard an aircraft. None were in the areas at the appropriate altitudes (25 to 320 feet) at the times of the incidents.

Any guesses?