

## Too Much 'Lippy'

Mark carter, a widowed lawyer age 38, found in Sacramento in an ally way, pants around his ankle and a stab wound to the neck. Pale pink matte lipstick found on a napkin in his right pocket of his pants. No leads.

Greg Fern, a heart surgeon age 41 killed in the back of his own car in a car park near Muir beach, no pants, had been suffocated and a laceration to the left wrist. Pale pink matte lipstick smeared across the back window. No leads.

Richard Montgomery, 39 a pharmacist drowned in a public toilet sink half naked and had a slight cut on the head. Pale pick matte lipstick print found on toilet paper. No leads.

Henry Arnold, 38 a software architect, gunshot to the head found in a rental beach cabin. Pale pink matte lipstick found smudged into the sheets. No leads.

Detective Jamie Gonzales sits in her one bedroom apartment and obsesses over the cold cases from the past 8 months. The air conditioning blows around the room and the lamp on the side coffee table slightly flickers, only to the point where you'd only notice it looking directly at it. The soft sound of the TV plays in the back ground and half empty cheap beer on the table sits and waits to be guzzled. The cigarette in the ashtray still alight slowly burns and the air conditioning pushes the smell of tobacco around the room.

Her cell phone rings and she hesitates to answer.

"Detective Gonzales? Its officer Patrick Lindsey, from the local Police Department. We have another murder, body found at The Ramanda Sacramento we think it's linked to the other murders. It was said to have happened last night the maid Louise Lee found the body when doing her rounds and reported it straight away."

"Found the same as the others?" Asked Gonzales

"Yes. His name was Jeremy Finnick age 36 a professional gambler."

"I'll be there as soon as I can."

Detective Gonzales quickly grabs her navy blue coat placing her pack of cigarettes on the top left pocket along with a red lighter. She grabs her handbag, places her black high heel boots on and takes the elevator to the ground car park where her silver Nissan pulsar awaits. The smell of pineapple air freshener infuses the car until she lights a cigarette and overpowers the sweet smell.

She arrived at The Ramada Sacramento, police were scattered around the hotel reception and lobby.

"Ding" the elevator door slides open. Gonzales travels to floor 7 room 13.

The room was in motion. Clicking from the cameras, forensic scientists in lab coats swabbing certain areas, police filing reports left right and centre. The body was face down two shots to the back, the first one missed the heart. He seemed to be half naked as if he was seduced before he was murdered. Glasses of wine one the coffee table and the bed sheets were undisturbed.

"Get it to forensics" says Gonzales "looks like we have another case connected to the past four".

Gonzales scans the room with an eagle eye, on the hunt for clues. The pale blue curtains flow with the breeze blowing through the window. Her eye catches one of the wine

glasses on the coffee table. A faint pale pink matte lipstick mark was left on the rim on the half full glass of red wine. Detective Gonzales carefully places the glass in a bag and sends it on it's way to forensics. She dawdles into the bathroom in search for more clues. The bathroom was tidy, but not clean. The smell of damp towels lingers and the smell of aftershave mixes with the towels for an unpleasant fragrance. Gonzales carefully opens the vanity draws and cupboards. Empty. Completely empty. Not even a spare roll of toilet paper. She walks back into the bedroom. Nothing out of the ordinary. Gonzales continues to observe the room. Nothing else was found.

On her way to get her daily coffee her phone rings.

"hello? Its Lisben. Just wanted to let you know that I'm handing the entire investigation for these serial killer cases over to you. You've been showing real initiative and I believe you deserve a chance to show us what you've got."

"Oh wow what an opportunity, thanks boss. I'll head into the forensics lab and get all the information."

"Okay I'll be expecting a report by the end of the week on what you've got. Don't make me regret this Gonzales."

Ben Lisben was always a bit sexist, Didn't believe that female detective could be as efficient as male ones. He was always harder on Gonzales than her other workmates. Lisben was what you would call self absorbed. He wasn't the most attractive man either, he was short and stubby and had a strange odour of donuts and musk. His face was round and his pores are the size of Jupiter. Lisben is old fashioned. He didn't like Gonzales and her fancy technology. He liked to follow the board of photographs and clues, he was "old school".

Gonzales makes a few calls, to the forensic lab, the local police and crime scene photographers, telling each to forward her all of the leads and links to this investigation and the past ones connected. When she returned home she opened up her laptop screen and and 5 notifications were on the screen. She opened the first one. The Mark carter case. She skipped to the Jeremy Finnick case. She begins to observe the photographs from the scene today. She begins comparing all of the murders related to the others. Pale pink lipstick found at each of the rime sites. This is the connection to the killer she thought. As she flicks through the photos she begins to crave the taste of bitter beer. She gets up to grab one when she returns her phone rings.

"Detective Gonzales? Its Ben Harding from forensics, just calling to inform you that we have more evidence. A pink fake nail was found entangles in the victim's hair. We haven't been able to trace any DNA from it but just thought I'd inform you."

"I'm glad you called to let me know. I'll look into it and see what I can find." Gonzales replied.

Gonzales becomes frazzled, flustered, and frantic. She races to the bathroom, opens the second draw and pulls out a bottle of pink acetone. She rips a strip of toilet paper and begins removing her pink nail polish. The smell of harsh fumes intoxicates the small room. Her middle finger on her left hand appears to be missing a nail. Her real uncared for nail shows and speckles of glue stick to her nail surface. She reaches on top of the

vanity and grabs a baby blue nail polish and begins repainting her perfect fake nails. In the bottom draw she keeps her spare fake nails. She grabs one and glues it on her left middle finger and also paints it a baby blue shade. She burns the toilet paper along with evidence pointing towards her.

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*My rush of glory ended in seconds. This moment had been playing in my head since it all happened. He was a fool but weren't most men? Selfish, their only thoughts containing their own desires and needs. He was easy, foolish, I had him keen for a good time and he believed me. If only he knew it would be his last night alive.*

*As I pulled the rope tighter I began to feel a sense of joy as his expression becomes distressed. He tries to plead for his life but it only makes me want to pull tighter. I saw a glimpse in his eye, the look of fear, fear of being trapped with no escape. I slowly raise him higher and higher off the floor and his dance of death warms my insides. The sound of his gasping for air satisfied my needs, more than any man ever had. I exit the room and close the door behind me.*

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Detective Jamie Gonzales sits in her one bedroom apartment and reads over the cold cases from the past 8 months. Pale pink matte lipstick. Pink fake nail replays through her mind. The air conditioning blows around the room and the lamp on the side coffee table is as dark as night. The soft sound of the TV plays in the back ground and slightly lights up the room around her. A half empty glass of wine sits on the table that occasionally gets sipped out of. The cigarette in the ashtray still alight slowly burns to the butt and the air conditioning pushes the smell of tobacco around the room. While the clues were coming together, it would still take to time to capture this masterful serial killer. She looks up and smiles with a grin full of pale pink matte lipstick.