

KIM'S FIRST CASE

A short story by
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Kim left the Lake county Jail. She was a little anxious and a little nervous. She was at the jail visiting an old friend. Richard Long had been arrested for murdering his ex-boss, Bob Wilson.

Kim promised Richard she would hire a lawyer and look into the case. She knew finding the truth wouldn't be easy, considering everything pointed to Richard.

They have known each other for twenty two years. Knowing Richard as long as she has, Kim believed him when he said he was innocent. They met when she was fifteen and he was six. Kim was his babysitter. As they grew up, they stayed close friends.

Kim Weber graduated from high school and went on to become an Orlando Police officer. After sixteen years with the department, five as a detective; she took an early retirement to open her own private detective agency.

After graduating high school, Richard Long worked as an automotive mechanic. He worked hard and saved his money to open his own shop. After working for a dealership for eight years and another two for Bob Wilson, he finally saw his dream and opened his own shop.

Kim explained the evidence and how bad it looked. She left him thinking it was pretty grim. Richard hoped Kim would come up with the truth. Richard thought about the day he was arrested, and what he was doing when Bob was stabbed. His thoughts were interrupted when a guard came towards his cell.

“Your lawyer is here.”

Richard looked surprised. He looked at the young man behind the guard and started to wonder. His long blond hair, young looking face and ill fitting suit made him look like a high school student. Going into the cell the young man held out his hand. With a firm handshake, he said,

“Hi I’m Greg Wilkins. Kim Weber hired me to defend you.”

Richard said a quiet hello and watched him take a seat. Greg laid out a folder. With each page, he started to explain,

“I’ll be honest with you it doesn’t look good. The murder weapon is your knife. A broken bracelet of yours was found at the scene with your blood and his on it. An eye witness saw your car leaving his shop just before he was found. Also your green Orlando O-rays baseball cap was found on his parking lot.

Richard sighed. He didn’t know where to start. With a dry mouth he answered,

“I cut myself in the morning with that knife while scraping some dirt off some brake parts.” He paused, to move his hand over to show the young lawyer a cut on his index finger.

His lawyer said, “Detectives thinks that cut was from the struggle.”

Looking for something convincing to say, Richard added,

“That knife is always in my shop. Anyone could have grabbed it while I was test driving a car or something, same thing for the hat and bracelet.”

Richard stopped to think. “I can’t explain how my car was seen leaving his place. I know mine was at my shop all afternoon.”

The young lawyer started to collect his papers. Getting up he said, "I just left the District Attorneys office. He knows that your fiancé called off your engagement because she was having an affair with Mr. Wilson. He also said he has so much evidence that he is not going to offer any deals."

Richard got up. Feeling anxious, Richard said, "You have to believe me. I didn't do it. Don't you think all this evidence is just too tightly wrapped?"

Greg Wilkins reassured him that he would try to do everything he can, then left. Richard spent the rest of the evening in his cell worrying about his future. The worry and anxiety over took him so much he couldn't sleep at all. Kim arrived the next morning at a little after eight. Taking a long look at him, Kim said "Try to relax. We will figure this out."

Looking worried he replied, "I don't know it looks bad." He stopped to think, "I don't think that lawyer you hired believes me."

Kim thought a minute then answered, "Oh Greg stopped by. He looks young and inexperienced, but he is smart."

Kim looked at Richard, and continued, "I can see why he might have his doubts. There is a lot of evidence against you. Maybe we can figure this out before it goes to trial."

Pulling a piece of paper out of her pocket, Kim said, "You said you had a receipt that shows you were delivering a car at the time of the murder." Handing the paper to Richard she continued, "As you can see the difference in time doesn't help you."

Getting agitated, Richard asked,

"Don't you believe me?"

“Yes, but I need something to go on. Every time I turn around I run into another road block.”

Getting more upset, Richard raised his voice,

“I’m being framed!”

“By who?” Kim asked almost raising her voice.

Calming down some, Richard answered

“I don’t know. My only enemy is dead and I’m accused of his murder.”

Trying to appear confident, Kim said, “Let’s take a minute and think about this”

There was a long silence in the cell, then Richard shouted,

“David Green! I fired him two months ago. He promised he would get even with me. I hired him away from Bob’s a couple of weeks after I opened my shop. He said he didn’t like the way Bob cheated customers, then he started doing the same things to my customers.”

Kim asked, “Do you know where he is?”

“No. I got a couple of calls from people looking for references, but I don’t remember where they were from.”

Kim got up. Looking back as Richard got up, she asked, “Do you have an application on him? Maybe I can find him from that.”

With a disappointed look, Richard answered “No. I knew him and thought I didn’t need one.”

Getting ready to leave, Kim asked, “Does he have a key to your car? I mean how was your car seen leaving Bob’s shop?”

Looking for something that made sense, Richard answered, “He definitely does not have a key to my car” After a short pause to think, he continued, “He’s a mechanic maybe he found an old 86’ or 87 Chevy Nova, or even a Toyota they are similar.”

The guard opened the cell door. Going out, she answered,

“I have a friend at the D.M.V. I’ll call him. Keep your chin up, we’ll figure this out.”

After calling her friend at the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles, Kim went through the yellow pages. She called every dealership and private shop in Orange, Seminole, Volusia and Lake Counties. Kim spent the next two weeks checking old addresses, previous employers and old girlfriends. Kim was beginning to think that David Green just vanished.

Late one afternoon, after a difficult visit with Richard, Kim’s cell phone rang. It was an ex-girlfriend of David Green. During a short conversation, they agreed to meet at Dennys across from the dealership where she works.

Kim had twenty minutes to get there. The Orlando traffic was a mess. Pulling into the parking lot, Kim squinted from the setting sun. Walking in, she recognized Kathy Lewis from her description. Holding out her hand she said,

“Hi I hope I’m not too late.”

Kathy Lewis is a petite girl in her mid twenties. She has a light complexion with red hair. Kim looked her over and wondered what she was like.

Sliding into a booth, Kathy said

“No I just got here myself. My roommate gave me a message that you called. When she told me what you wanted, I just had to call you.”

A waitress came by. Kathy ordered some fries and a soft drink, and Kim ordered an iced tea. When the waitress left, Kim asked, "Do you know where David Green is?"

"I haven't seen David in about four or five weeks. He said he would paint my car for me for free. The day he delivered it is the last time I saw him.

Kim sipped her tea, then asked, "Is your car an 86', 87' or 88 Chevy Nova or Toyota Corolla."

Kathy looked surprised, "Yeah an 86' Nova, How'd you know?"

"I think it was used as transportation to a murder in Ocoee."

Looking even more shocked, Kathy blurted out,

"That explains the shirt."

Kim sipped her tea and asked, "What shirt?"

Kathy took a sip of her drink and slid the glass to the edge of the table like she wanted a refill. Taking a second to think, she said, "Last week I spilled a coke all over the front mat on my way home. When I got home, I went to clean up the mess. I found this bloody shirt under the seat."

Almost before she finished, Kim asked, "Do you still have the shirt?"

"Yeah it's at home. I only saved it because David disappeared so suddenly."

Going out to her car, Kim called the Orange County sheriff's. They collected the shirt and went over every inch of Kathy's car. After the Orange County Sheriff reopened the case, there was an arrest warrant issued for David Green. A week later, he was brought in for questioning in Tampa. During that first meeting of questions, he confessed. In that confession, he told how he waited outside of Richard's shop until he left. When Richard drove away David stole his hat, knife and bracelet. With the items that he stole, David

went to Wilson's automotive and stabbed Mr. Wilson. On the way back to dropping off Kathy's car he changed his shirt and forgot to retrieve the bloody shirt. After writing his confession David Green was arrested. Richard Long was released and the murder charge was dropped. He explained that his reason for killing Bob Wilson was that he would not hire him back and would make sure he would never work in the area again because of the way he treats people.