

excerpt from Searchable Whereabouts

“Sharon, do you think Franklin would have something to do with Uncle Leon’s murder?”
I finally got it out there, to see what Sharon would have to say about that.

“What! Franklin? How could you say that? He’s a part of our family.” Sharon stood up paced the living room floor with her hands on her head. She let out a few sighs. Maybe it was a long shot, but I’m sure she thought there could have been a possibility.

Sharon came to the couch and stood in front of me. I could see tears forming in her eyes again.

I leaned toward her.

“Do you remember when we were little girls?”

I put my cigarette out. “What do you mean?”

“So you don’t remember?” Sharon reached for her unfinished cigarette in the ashtray and lit it.

“Never mind, it’s in the past anyway.”

I stared up at her. I was confused. Her brown eyes looked darker than usual. I decided to go back to what we were talking about before. “Look, I’m not blaming Franklin. But, what we do know for a fact is that someone murdered Uncle Leon. And I want to find out who.” I was very adamant about it.

“Let the police do their jobs, and then we’ll have an answer.” Sharon stood in front of the mirror hanging on the wall, next to the front door. She combed her fingers through her hair. Sharon walked back over to me. “Let’s just drop the subject about Daddy. He’s gone and there’s nothing you or me can do about it.”

I was shocked at her sudden attitude.

Sharon looked at me and shook her head slowly. She walked into the kitchen, aimed straight for the freezer and pulled out the half-filled bottle of Tequila.

I followed behind her, trying to figure out what she was doing. I snatched the bottle from her.

“What the hell are you doing? Have you forgotten that you’re pregnant?”

She snatched the bottle from me and drank the little bit of liquor that was left and slammed it on the kitchen counter. She wiped her mouth with the back of her hand and laughed, wickedly. I was completely baffled by her behavior. I stood, with one eyebrow raised, staring at her. Then she looked at me. It was almost like she was a different person.

“I ain’t never gonna see my daddy again,” she cried, as she pounded on the wall a couple of times with bald fists.

Standing a foot away from her, I watched tears stream down her face and fall to the floor. I went over to comfort her, patting her on the back, while thinking in my own mind what was going to come of all this. I looked out the window with a vague and confused look pasted on my face. Terry’s car was still out front.

I watched as Mrs. Jenkins across the street was watering her grass with the sprinkler in her hand. She looked up at me in the window for a brief moment, with her gray hair, pink housecoat and pink slippers on. Her pale face reminded me of my grandma’s face many years ago when she was in that coffin. It finally occurred to me that it’s October, and Mrs. Jenkins was watering her grass. She looked away and continued watering the grass.

I spent a few brief moments, and thought about what Uncle Leon was going through and what he thought of during his last few moments of life. I put my head against Sharon’s shoulder, while I kept my eyes locked on Mrs. Jenkins watering her front yard across the street. I didn’t blink, as fearful tears formed in my eyes. I have to get to the bottom of this. I just have to. I have to know what happened and I don’t care what it takes to find out.