

Six after Seven Cliff's Notes

Det. MacDonald interviews a witness who discovered the body of a priest after he had been shot in the chest. The witness, a parish housekeeper, claims that she found the priest after returning from an errand to the local Safeway and promptly passed out upon the discovery - not calling the police until an hour later. She is not certain how long she was at the Safeway because she got caught up talking to a young clerk, but she guesses it was about 10 to 15 minutes. She's also not certain when she left for the errand but knows that it was before dinner was supposed to be served, at 6:00 pm sharp, because when she left the food still had a good 30 minutes in the oven. From this, Det. MacDonald deduces that the priest would have been shot between 5:30 and 5:45 pm but he also notices that the priest's broken wrist watch was set to 7:06.

Det. Barker investigates a crime scene in a Skid Row boarding house where a man is found dead of a gunshot wound. The man in the room next door claims that he heard the gunshot, looked in the other room to find the victim dead and then immediately ran to the nearest beat cop to report what he saw. Det. Barker arrests the man next door for the murder because there was no gun found in the victim's room; because anyone else would have to pass the room next door in the hall; and because the man next door knows the exact time that the gun went off. The man next door proclaims his innocence and says that he only knew the exact time because he fixes watches for a local pawn shop and, when he heard the gun go off, he was setting the watch he was working on to 7:06.

Det. Finch interviews the secretary of a judge who was found dead of a gunshot wound in his study. After establishing that the judge had no family and any amount that his will left to staff would be "nominal", the secretary claims that the judge often spent the hours of 6 to 8 alone in the study and that he found the judge's body there when he went to fetch his boss for dinner. The secretary says that he had spent most of those two hours in the adjoining library; but when he presumes that he could have mistaken the gunshot for a backfire, Det. Finch points out that the judge's study is in total disarray and the secretary would have heard the sounds of a brawl. To this, the secretary suggests that the attack must have taken place either before he arrived at 6:20 or after he went to dress for dinner at 7:30. When Det. Finch goes to investigate the study, however, he notices that an electric (non-digital) clock had been pulled from the wall and the time on the face read 7:06.

Later, Detectives MacDonald and Finch are discussing their respective cases and realize that they both involve time pieces that were stopped at 7:06 pm. Barker joins the conversation and reveals, not only that the murder he is investigating occurred at 7:06 pm, but he heard a police call about the body of a dentist being pulled out of a burning office. The dentist was wearing a smashed wrist watch that was also stuck at 7:06 pm. Finch and MacDonald agree that there is a pattern and that they need to figure out how everything connects. Barker, on the other hand, wants no involvement; saying that he learned from gambling that there's no patterns, that he already got his murderer and that he had better things to do.

Finch calls the local precinct and requests that they hand over all the information they can gather on the four cases. He then requests that MacDonald come with him to the Chula Negra Cafe. There, they meet with Nick Noble: a disgraced former lieutenant who took the rap for a political shakeup twelve years ago, around the same time his wife died. Finch explains to MacDonald that Nick Noble had once broken more big cases than any other man in the department, but was now a wino whose only interests included cheap sherry and his old profession.

The two detectives sit down with Nick at The Chula Negra and Finch fills him in on all they know about the four cases. Afterward, Nick asks about the occupation of the man found dead in Skid Row (Lige Marsden) and is told that Marsden had no job other than handing out pamphlets for an anarchic religious organization called People of the Kingdom. Nick then asks for the name of the dentist and whether he was on the Draft Board (certification agency). Then Nick tells the detectives that the murders are tied together and that there is only one possible murderer but he can't provide proof until tomorrow. Finch calls into the precinct and learns that the ballistics reports shows that all four victims were, in fact, shot with the same gun. He also learns that the dentist (Dr. Lyle Varney) was the chairman of the local Draft Board. After he relays all of this to Nick and MacDonald, Nick says: "Good. Go home. Tomorrow, boys, I'll show you your murderer."

Later that night, Nick sneaks into the Skid Row boarding house where Lige Marsden was killed. He first goes to Marsden's room where he finds a stack of the People of the Kingdom pamphlets. He reads over a section of the pamphlet titled "The Number of the Beast Again" and says the number "six" three times. Nick hears someone coming and hides under the bed. The second person briefly looks over Marsden's room with a flashlight and leaves. Nick crawls out from under the bed as he hears the second person entering in the room next door. He then leaves Marsden's room and silently stands back against the wall next to the hinge side of the neighboring room's door. Through the crack as the second person opens the door, Nick watches the other man come out of the neighboring room carrying a flashlight and another heavy object. As the other man goes to close the door (using the same tool Nick used to break into Marsden's room) he notices Nick and knocks the drunk man out cold. Later, Nick comes to in the hallway with a heel mark on his face.

The next morning Finch tells MacDonald how a fifth victim, an owner of a local underground casino named Padrino, had been found that morning shot with the same gun and wearing a broken watch set to 7:06.

Nick later visits the precinct to speak with Barker because the other two detectives are out and he wanted to let someone know that all the cases at six after seven were solved.