

Pedestrian 6

Officer Joe Ralston knocked on Diana Hopkins' door after negotiating the slippery sidewalk in front of the apartment complex.

'Good morning, Ms. Hopkins.'

She returned the greeting.

'By the way, your superintendent should do something about that ice in front of the building entrance. There's going to be another snowstorm tonight into tomorrow.'

Diana nodded. The super was a man who never read weather forecasts. He was also a COVID-skeptic.

'Would you like some coffee, Officer Ralston?'

He accepted and sat down.

"So, Ms. Hopkins, you knew Raymond Townshend well?'

Diana nodded. She knew Ray even before they had become teaching colleagues. Ray had helped her get her job.

'You had a dinner event for your birthday the other night? I hope there weren't too many guests?'

Diana chose to ignore that question.

"Raymond Townshend had been invited but he didn't attend. Did he send you an email or anything explaining why not?'

'No, he didn't', she sipped her coffee. "Ray either turns up or he doesn't".

Officer Ralston frowned. "That was typical of him?'

"Ray Townshend had become less and less social over the past few years. But I really don't know why."

Officer Ralston sipped his coffee.

"He would have known your other guests? Was there anybody at your party who either disliked him or who he disliked?'

Diana wished that she hadn't quit smoking.

"Well, officer, do you mean disliked or do you mean something stronger?'

"Loathed? Hated?'

Diana shook her head. "Nobody who Ray ever told me about. And I can't imagine why anybody would loathe or hate him. Ray was a very private person...more and more over the years he kept to himself."

Officer Ralston persisted. "When he was younger was he more social? Was that an ageing thing or were there other factors involved?'

"Probably ageing" Diana responded. "People often narrow down their social circles when they're ageing". She was feeling that perhaps it was time for her to follow suit.

Officer Ralston now requested a list of all those attending the dinner party and brief descriptions. He also asked the names of others who had been invited and who had declined. Diana provided the names of Alex Madison and Lewis Taylor.

Officer Ralston noted these names without commenting further. Then he stood and thanked Diana for the coffee.

“I’ll contact you again if anything else comes up. Thank you for your time, Ms.Hopkins.”

“Thank you, Officer Ralston. Nice meeting you”.

She saw him to the door.