

Solve the mystery: Death in the Office

Written by Tom Fowler (abridged), source: www.5minutemystery.com

It was 8:35 A.M. and Cynthia Peck was **in a bad mood**¹ but also late for work. At 7:13 it started to rain really hard. She knew it was 7:13 because she looked at the digital clock in her car when the first thick raindrops fell on her car. When she came in the Ames building, she was a bit angry because her big umbrella didn't keep her dry.

Cynthia Peck was 37 years old and a vice president of the Ames Marketing Company. She knew something was wrong when she **exited**² the elevator on the sixth floor and met uniformed police officers. Before the officers had a chance to say anything to her, she asked, "**What is going on?**"³

Detective Sergeant Kyle Whitmore answered, "Are you Cynthia Peck?"

"Yes," she answered and asked again, "**What's going on?**"³

"There is a dead man in your office. Your assistant, Ms. Brewer, found him this morning. Identification in his wallet shows he is Mr. Trent Willis. Do you know him?"

Cynthia showed no emotion when she answered, "Yes, we had a meeting in my office this morning. What happened?"

"He was **murdered**⁴," the detective answered, watching Cynthia carefully, and then said, "he has a letter opener in his chest. He only had his mobile phone and briefcase." The detective did not tell her that it was clear that the strong and muscular Trent Willis **had a fight**⁵ with his attacker.

Cynthia now felt weak and started to **sweat**⁶ on her high forehead when she asked: "Who did it?"

"We don't know yet," Sergeant Whitmore answered. Then he saw Cynthia's wet clothes. "Please come to the conference room **when you dry off a little**⁷."

"Thank you," she answered. When she entered the conference room, Cynthia saw that her assistant, Megan Brewer, was already there. Megan sat between Cynthia's boss, company president Steve Ledbetter and a member of the marketing team, Josh Kesler. Cynthia quickly **took a seat**⁸.

Sergeant Whitmore could see that all the people in the conference room were between 35-40 years old and in good physical condition. Only President Ledbetter was about 58 years old and quite fat.

He began to speak, "Ms. Megan Brewer found the **victim**⁹ at 7:51 this morning. Mr. Willis, as you know, Ms. Peck, had a meeting with you at 8:15. Ms. Brewer says that she doesn't know how he got to the sixth floor and into the office. You know that the stairways are locked and **you need a passcode to exit the elevator**¹⁰ on the sixth floor. Now, Ms. Peck and Ms. Brewer are the only persons with a key into Ms. Peck's office, but Ms. Brewer told us that her key was on her office desk for a few moments when she made a cup of coffee in the kitchen. Security tells us that four persons came to the sixth floor before 7:51." Whitmore stopped for a moment to catch his breath and then added, "And those persons are all of you. We know that Ms. Peck exited the elevator at 6:45, **a little over an hour**¹¹ before Mr. Trent was found."

"It's true, Sergeant. It was stupid but **I left some documents**¹² for Mr. Willis at home. I went back home for them."

The sergeant looked at Cynthia and said, "OK, for now. What security shows is that Ms. Peck arrived at 6:45, and Ms. Brewer arrived at 6:59. At 7:25, Mr. Kesler arrived. Mr. Ledbetter was last to arrive at 7:40." Sgt. Whitmore paused and looked at each of them and then added, "**It seems**¹³

that one of you murdered Trent Willis.”

Megan began to cry. Softly, Sgt. Whitmore said to her, “I’m sorry, Ms. Brewer, this is unpleasant but necessary.

Steve Ledbetter asked, “Why don’t you check the cameras to see when Mr. Willis came here?”

“Because **lightning knocked them out**¹⁴ early this morning, before the rain started,” was the sergeant’s answer. Then he turned to Cynthia and said, “Let’s begin with you, Ms. Peck. You first arrived at 6:45. Did you go into your office?”

“Yes. There I discovered that I left the documents at home.”

“Security shows you exited the sixth floor at 6:49,” Whitmore said.

“That’s right,” Cynthia answered.

“**So it took you an hour and 46 minutes to get back here?**”¹⁵ Whitmore asked.

“Yes. The rain started at 7:13 and **there was a traffic jam**¹⁶. I was in my car all the time, and for a short time I was in my apartment looking for the documents.” Cynthia thought for a moment then said, “I phoned from my car, at about 7:10 I phoned the newspaper delivery service, at about 7:35 I contacted my husband’s office and just after 8:00 I called my doctor’s office. Telephone company records will show that my mobile phone was a long way from here.” As she said this, she gave Sgt. Whitmore her mobile phone.

Whitmore thanked her and turned to Cynthia’s assistant, Megan Brewer, who was calm now. He said, “You exited the elevator at 6:59. Did you see **anything strange**¹⁷ when you arrived?”

“Nothing.”

Thinking for a moment, he asked, “Did Ms. Peck call you after she went back home?”

“No, but that is not unusual. She only calls when she needs to. This morning, she sent an email before she left, she explained the situation and asked me to make Mr. Willis comfortable.”

Whitmore turned to Josh Kesler and asked, “What about you? You got here at 7:25. Did you see or hear anything strange?”

“No,” was his answer.

Did you make any calls on your mobile phone or from the office; **anything that can prove**¹⁸ you are not the killer?”

Nervously, Josh answered, “No, nothing.”

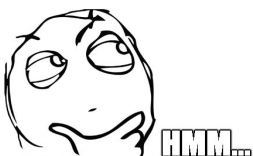
Whitmore thought for a long moment, and then asked Steve Ledbetter. “Do you have a raincoat?”

“Yes, but I do not have it with me. As president of the company, I have a car and driver. Maurice, the driver, always stops the car right at the front door so I never wear a coat.”

He **turned back**¹⁹ to Josh Kesler, “And you? Do you have a raincoat?”

Josh was **puzzled**²⁰ but answered, “No, but I have an umbrella. If you want to see it, **it’s drying**²¹ in my office.”

Sergeant Whitmore thought for a moment. Then he turned around, showed at the murderer and said to the officer guarding the door, “**Arrest**²² this person for second degree murder.”



**Now what do YOU think? Who did Sergeant Whitmore arrest?
Who killed Trent Willis?**

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- ¹**in a bad mood** - ve špatné náladě; I am in a good mood. - Mám dobrou náladu.
- ²**exit, min. č. exited**; vystoupit, odejít, vyjít
- ³**What is going on?** - Co se děje?
- ⁴**murdered** – zavražděný; **murderer** - vrah
- ⁵**have a fight** – zápasit, prát se, **min.č. had a fight**
- ⁶**sweat** – potit se
- ⁷**when you dry off a little** – až trochu oschnete
- ⁸**take a seat, min.č. took a seat** – posadit se; **Come in and take a seat.** - Pojd'te dál a posad'te se.
- ⁹**victim** - oběť
- ¹⁰**you need a passcode to exit the elevator** – potřebujete kód, abyste mohli vystoupit z výtahu
- ¹¹**a little over an hour** – něco málo přes hodinu
- ¹²**I left some documents at home** – Nechala jsem doma nějaké dokumenty
- ¹³**It seems...** - Zdá se, že..., Vypadá to, že...
- ¹⁴**lightning knocked them out** – blesk je vyřadil z provozu (knock out = vyřadit z provozu)
- ¹⁵**So it took you an hour and 46 minutes to get back here?;** Takže Vám to trvalo hodinu a 46 minut, než jste se vrátila zpět?
- ¹⁶**there was a traffic jam** – byla (dopravní) zácpa
- ¹⁷**anything strange** – něco divného (zvláštního)
- ¹⁸**anything that can prove** – něco, co může prokázat, (že)
- ¹⁹**turned back (to)** – otočil se (k)
- ²⁰**puzzled** – zmatený
- ²¹**it's drying** – schne
- ²²**arrest** – zatknout; **Arrest him.** - Zatkněte ho.