

## **Christmas 2021**

### **The Spectre, The Spook, The Scientist and The Storyteller**

By Robert Ford

**December 21, 2021**

I am dead. It's a literal condition and I accept it. What I don't accept is that I'm done here.

My favourite place to hang out is the Vancouver Police Department headquarters on Cambie Street. There's always intensity there. And so much to learn. Interrogations are the most interesting. Those suspected of crimes try to lie, deflect, minimize or – with difficulty – stay silent.

And one day there was a doctoral student. Renata. She was working on her PhD in Forensic Psychology, which most plain folks like me would call Criminal Psychology. She was tall, had jet black hair tightly tied back and her eyebrows looked a little long, but they were somehow perfect for her face. She wore a dark suit that was hiding a lovely figure. In an attempt to increase her Serious Scientist Look, she had black framed eye glasses. In my mind, this only served to increase her cuteness.

Renata was sitting in the observers' area of the main interrogation room. She was taking notes by hand as the rules about recording technology were strict. From what I could understand, she was looking for best practices in interviewing to obtain accurate information and to reduce bias. Renata was seeking ways for police to stop missing information due to either conscious or unconscious bias due to gender, race or religion. Her thinking was that bias in individual officers would vary, but the interview procedures could be bias free. She also had amassed data that showed bias in interviewing led to errors.

I tended to move between the interview room and the observation room. I found myself drawn to her; she was a scientist first and foremost and would dismiss my existence unless provided with hard evidence. However, being in the interview room was powerful. The nerves of both the officer and suspect were always heightened, providing intense secondhand emotions.

A new suspect was brought into the interview room by Constable Don Douglas. The charges were break-and-enter, but the police wanted to know if the suspect was responsible for other crimes.

Inspector Hamel of Major Crimes entered the observers' room.

"Oh," said Renata, "Good afternoon, Inspector."

"Don't mind me," he said, "I'm curious as to what you make of Constable Douglas."

They sat and watched as Douglas conducted the interview. Renata took notes furiously and she immediately noticed Douglas was almost bland in his manner. There was no edge, no discernible assumptions, just an even voice.

I thought a couple of times I had thrown him off. He kept checking over his shoulder, looking where I was standing. Even when I moved, he kept looking my way. Some people are sensitive; some are not.

In 30 minutes, he had elicited not so much a confession, but rather a story of the suspect's own criminal activity as well as information about others that would later fill in the gaps in other investigations.

"So, what do you think?" asked the Inspector.

"He's First Nations, right?" asked Renata.

"Yes, he's a member of the Stó:lō Nation; his band is in the Cultus Lake area."

"He's probably the most natural interviewer I've ever seen."

"It's about the story, both telling it and *finding* it," said Inspector Hamel. "I wish I could teach more of my people his method. I've asked him to come talk to you afterward."

Constable Douglas and Renata spoke for about an hour. At the end, she gave him her contact info so that if he was going to do what he would consider a challenging interview or interrogation he could call her to observe.

She left the police station, lost in thought, and walked east toward the SkyTrain station at Main Street. Being the longest night of the year, it was dark by the time she left, and I followed her, which is not normal for me. You see, ghosts frequently tether themselves to a place, but *sometimes* a person. I've not known of anyone switching before. Maybe this will be a first. I'm not supposed to be near women. But this one ... she's not like others.

Instead of taking the bus, she decided to walk to the station. I followed, feeling a freedom like never before. I imagined it was how people felt after a long COVID lockdown.

However, it wasn't long before a guy started following her. He was clearly, mentally, a mess. He gradually accelerated and gained on her. There were a few other people around, but many were not paying attention. I moved close to him and could see he had a knife hidden under his coat sleeve. Renata was in imminent danger. My choices were limited. As far as I knew ghosts could take the poltergeist route, possess a body, or manifest corporeally.

I was out of time. I walked straight into the man and imagined I was inside a human puppet. I had access to a whirlwind of hateful thoughts. But, despite my influence, he was still intent on harming Renata. She remained unaware of her impending assailant. At the point he'd pulled the knife, I focused on his locomotion, and directed his head into a light post. He was fighting me now. The \*bung\* noise alerted Renata and she turned around, saw the knife, and said, "What the fuck?"

With the last of my effort, I slammed his head against the light post and down he/we went. He now had a concussion.

Ever the scientist and criminologist, she took a photo of the prone figure with the knife in the place where it landed. Once documented, she moved the knife with her booted foot to a safe spot. The police arrived shortly – we were about a 3-minute walk from headquarters – and the officers identified the man as a person of interest in other assaults. They were perplexed that he'd knocked himself senseless before he could assault Renata.



Kevin was a spy. One advantage of being a ghost is access to information. Once I meet people, I can learn things. But, at this point, I had not met him yet.

At the time Renata was making her statement to police, Kevin was crossing the Canadian border from Washington State. His passport, driver's license and credit card identified him as Dennis Jones of Everett, Washington. His COVID-19 vaccine information all checked out.

Kevin's pickup truck, clothes, accent and paperwork were all a lie, but of high quality as all of it was paid for by the US and UK governments. Everett was the location of one of several safe houses he maintained in the continental USA.

Canadian Border Services let him through.

He headed toward Highway 1 and drove west. His goal was the Vancouver International Airport. However, he realized that he was being followed. He suspected there would be

watchers at the borders, but this was fast. To be sure he wasn't paranoid, he left the highway at the Fraser Highway exit and headed west. He turned right on Bradner Road. Two vehicles that had exited with him followed his path. They were not professionals, he realized.

He opened the glove box and made an intricate set of pressure points inside. Awkward to do while driving, but soon a Sig Sauer 229 emerged from the secret compartment. Kevin rolled down both windows.

Headlights behind him grew very close as they headed into a distinctly rural area. The nearest vehicle accelerated and moved into the opposing lane. There were two young men in the car, and they fit the appearance of drug gang members. Kevin suspected they were alerted to him and either he had a really good price on his head, or he was identified as unwanted competition. The passenger raised a firearm and Kevin shot him once and then shot the front tire. The car veered off the road, knocked over a post box and crashed into a tree.

The second car accelerated as if to ram Kevin's pickup truck. He however pulled into the other lane, hit the brakes and shot the driver of the second car as it coasted by. That car landed in a ditch full of brambles.

Kevin executed a brake turn and headed back in the direction of the highway. He followed 58<sup>th</sup> Ave, which turned into 56<sup>th</sup> Ave, which eventually intersected with Highway 1.

He assumed that every drug gang in Metro Vancouver was going to be looking for him. The people really trying to stop him were going through criminal proxies while they assembled an extraction squad on Canadian soil. According to the GPS, it was about an hour to YVR. He took the 232 Street exit in Langley and headed north. It wasn't long until he was on country roads again. He parked where he didn't think there would be any security cameras. The F150 was a 2011 and blue. It was only a few days past a full moon, so there was some natural light. It took him a few minutes to find the hidden controls. The truck's special paint job allowed him to flip the colour to red. Another difficult-to-access compartment provided a selection of license plates. He chose a BC plate with a valid insurance sticker.

He drove north as far as Fort Langley, then headed west on 88 Ave and connected with Highway 1. He had no intention of taking back routes through Surrey. Once in Coquitlam, he had a routing decision to make. He could take the faster route through New Westminster to Highway 91 to reach the airport, or he could continue on Highway 1, exiting in Burnaby and follow Boundary Road. He chose Highway 1 as there were more escape routes if trouble arose.

Luck wasn't with him. His GPS soon indicated that there had been a crash on Boundary and he made his way onto Grandview Highway, which turned into East 12 Ave. Shortly after he suspected that a Land Rover with tinted windows was following him. He turned right on Nanaimo Street and started driving on side streets to test his theory. He was right. The Land Rover followed. Kevin increased speed, cut through laneways but was still being followed. His assumption was that a second vehicle was on the way. Kevin reached an odd intersection where a small garden and a couple of bollards blocked his access to a street. The Land Rover approached. Once it got closer, Kevin put the F150 into reverse and accelerated rapidly into the Land Rover. Its air bags deployed; Kevin's luckily did not, and he then drove over a sidewalk and part of a garden to reach the next street.

He covered two blocks before his tire was shot out. He wasn't sure where his assailants were hiding. He detached the fob from the ignition key, grabbed his bag and gun and he rolled out of his moving, skidding, vehicle. More shots were fired at his truck, which gave him a location for the attackers, specifically across the street hiding behind Christmas decorations. He pushed the three buttons on the fob in an elaborate pattern and suddenly the truck burst into

flames. He sprinted between houses and ran toward Nanaimo Street. In a couple of minutes, he was on Nanaimo St. He saw a bus heading to a bus stop and he sprinted down the sidewalk. A Vancouver police officer stepped out of a Tim Horton's. Kevin slammed into him, knocking them both to the ground. Coffee everywhere. Kevin's gun fell to the sidewalk. The officer's partner, who was two steps behind him, saw the gun, yelled, "Gun!" She drew her sidearm and screamed at Kevin not to move.

"Jesus Christ," thought Kevin, "I'm going to be arrested for running for the bus."



I followed Renata into her apartment. She clearly enjoyed Christmas. There was no corner that wasn't decorated. With a butane lighter, which was in the shape of Santa Claus, Renata lit Swedish Christmas Angel Chime Candles. I'd never seen either of these things before.

I crouched in a corner of Renta's apartment. I knew she couldn't see me. Disbelief is a powerful blindfold, but I felt a bit dirty.

After the incident on the street with the attacker, she was exhausted. She typed some of her notes into a computer, had a light dinner, put out the candles, and went to bed.



## **December 22, 2021**

Renata did not have a morning appointment, so she let herself sleep in a little. As she was making toast, her phone pinged and she looked at the message. It was Constable Douglas. "We have a very interesting interview coming up this morning."

She quickly ate her toast and jam and made herself presentable. On the Skytrain ride down to Olympic Station, an older lady was staring at me. She said nothing. I suspect she wasn't sure I was there. I didn't look at her more than the one time. I was happy to be going back to the police station.

"Ah, good, you're here," said Constable Douglas. He gave her the summary of where they were with Kevin. Car fire. Gun. Multiple passports and travel documents in different names. No sign of him in any databases. And he had not said a word.

"I hope you have a lot of time," said Constable Douglas. "This could take a while." He grabbed a folder with only a few sheets of paper in it and walked into the interrogation room. I followed. The Constable kept peering over his shoulder at me. It was unsettling.

Kevin was handcuffed to the table. He seemed relaxed, almost bored, and capable of waiting.

"Hi, I'm Constable Douglas, but call me Don if you want. I know ... Don Douglas. What parents give a kid two first names as a name? Long story." He tossed Kevin a piece of chewing gum. "In case you're getting stale feeling in the mouth. Anyway, it's really 'Don' on my passport, not Donald. Crazy, hey?"

Constable Douglas sat across from Kevin and looked at him. But occasionally the Constable kept looking over his shoulder at me. It was worrying. I moved to the other side of the room. Douglas noticed that Kevin was very fit, but not bulky muscle. Wound up like a spring and ready for movement. Anglo, of course, but Douglas wasn't sure if he was Canadian or American. Douglas looked at me again, even though I'd moved.

"I know you're doing the strong silent type thing, but I was wondering, do you feel a presence in the room? You know ... kind of paranormal? This building has lots of spooks due to the trauma left behind by people, but I'm really getting a strong sense of someone. What do you think?"

Kevin squinted. This was not an interrogation question, he'd ever expected.

On the other side of the one-way glass, Renata muttered, "What the hell? That's new."

"You know," said Constable Douglas, "I've decided I'm going to call you Kyle." He paused. "Kyle, this ghost presence is really distracting me. Stay put; I'll be right back."

I followed Constable Douglas out of the interrogation room back into the viewing room.

"Wow. Ghosts?" said Renata. "Is that a normal technique for you?"

"Oh, yeah. Every time," replied Douglas. "Of course not. But this is really intense."

"So, you are actually feeling a ghostly presence."

"I know what you think. Not scientific. I'm hallucinating or I'm just some freak Indigenous guy."

"No," Renata said forcefully. "If you feel it, the feelings are real. And to be respected. I'm not keen to jump to conclusions, however."

"Well, this spook is intense. And he's pretty intense about *you*."

"Does this happen to you a lot?" asked Renata.

"Yes, but not like this."

Constable Douglas took a piece of paper and pencil from Renata and sat for ten minutes and sketched. He handed her a portrait. And it was of me. Really close. She looked at it and looked at him. "This looks like a sketch artist's drawing."

"It is," he said. "I used to be a sketch artist. This is of the guy I keep seeing out of the corner of my eye. OK. I feel better now. I'm going to use this on this Kyle guy."

"Wait a second, can I take a picture of that with my phone?" He was OK with it, and she took a photo.

I was worried about where this was going.

Meanwhile Constable Douglas went back into the interrogation room with the sketch in his folder. "Hey Kyle," this is a picture I drew of the guy I keep seeing out of the corner of my eye. Do you recognize him?" Constable Douglas noticed that Kevin/Kyle was chewing the gum he offered. Kevin made a slight face – a kind of how-the-fuck-should-I-know face.

"OK," said Douglas, "I see you're wanting to proceed with not answering my questions. What I was wondering is if you can give me an indication if you were involved in a shooting in Langley last night. The RCMP sent me these photos."

Douglas showed Kevin pictures of the cars and gangsters he'd shot up. Kevin did not respond. Douglas took a few moments to look at Kevin's eyes, which were taking in the detail of the photos.

"I'm going to take that as a yes. The reason is that there was security footage of an F150 truck the same as yours in the area. And the CBSA reports you crossing the border near there. So, these gangsters were out to get you. Those guys are fairly easy to piss off, so I assume you annoyed them somehow. Because later, another group tried to get you. Although somehow you changed the colour of your truck."

Behind the glass, Renata had pulled out her laptop and started searching. She had recognized my face and was going through files. There was a chance she wouldn't find anything. But, she stopped cold and stared at her screen. She was getting angry.

"Are these guys fucking with me?" she muttered. She wasn't going to be mocked. If she'd heard Douglas correctly a moment ago, this guy had a truck that could change colour. How stupid did they think she was? Was she supposed to think this guy was James fucking Bond? She decided to tap on the glass.

"Just a moment, Kyle. I'm needed."

Once in the observation area, Constable Douglas said, "What's up?"

"What are you trying to pull?"

"What do you mean?"

She grabbed his file folder, pulled out the sketch and turned her laptop around. There I was. Brian Walker. Serial rapist. Serial killer. With my damn Tom Selleck moustache. One of the first people convicted based on DNA evidence in 1990. Died in 1995, rather painfully I might add, of spinal cancer while serving a life sentence.

Apart from the fact I'm dead, I'm not like that anymore.

Constable Douglas realized the problem. "Oh, Renata, no. This is a coincidence. Seriously. Oh shit."

"So, who's your buddy in there really? This is Christmastime, not April Fool's."

"No, no, no. Look." Douglas pulled out the files and arrest record and other documentation. "This is too much for a prank. And I never heard of this Walker case before. Long before my time."

"So, explain the sketch."

"That's what's in my head. If you forget about the ghost thing, maybe it's in my subconscious from having seen this in the past. Who knows? I'm nervous about this guy in there because his freaking passports are the most perfect ones I've ever seen. As if they were issued by the actual governments. He's also relaxed, but *wired up*. I've never seen someone so worried and so chill at the same time. 'Ice in the veins' is the cliché to apply."

One of Renata's talents was lie detecting. Having watched Constable Douglas's body language and having looked at the file, she assessed the likelihood of his lying as low. If this was a prank, it was off the scale elaborate.

Then the lights went out. The emergency lights came on.

"This is getting a bit much," said Renata.

"Shit," said Constable Douglas.

"I'm ready to talk now," said Kevin from the interview room.



I was so angry. I didn't want her to find out who I was. I didn't want her to know I existed at all. Now it's all ruined by this damn Indian. Worse, there were people coming to kill them. No. No. No.



Renata was fighting panic. Constable Douglas was in the interview room, talking with Kevin.

"OK," said Kevin, "My name is Kevin; you were close on that Kyle guess. Anyway, the power cut means that an extraction team is coming to fetch me. And it won't be good for anyone getting in the way."

"Who the hell are you?" At that point a great crash was heard from outside the interview and observation room.

"I'm a spy. I stole intel from the COP26 climate change conference that a lot of people don't want me to have."

"Who do you spy for?"

"Um, er, I'm kind of freelance right now, but I used to work for MI6." There was a booming noise, likely a shotgun. "We have to get out of here," Kevin continued.

"I have a civilian in the observation room."

"Oh shit," said Kevin. "You *have* to unlock me. I figure there's about 2 minutes before they come through the door. These guys are normally a team of four. Lots of body armour and guns. Do you have a side arm?"

"Not with me." Constable Douglas stood a safe distance from Kevin and tossed him the key to the cuffs. He came into the observation room.

I had been listening, obviously, and becoming more upset. Renata was trying to decide if this was for real. Her sweat glands were saying real. What could I do? I invisibly slammed my hands down on the table and some of Renata's papers moved.

"Your ghostly admirer is pretty upset," said Constable Douglas.

There were sounds of small arms fire from outside.

Renata looked at Douglas. "Are you kidding?"

Kevin entered the room. "Hi. I'm Kevin." Douglas stood between him and Renata. She stared at him intently as if he were a poisonous snake. "Right, OK, here we go. A pair of them will shoot through the lock and breach the door. I'll grab the first gun and you disable him."

"How about I grab the gun and you disable him?"

"Yeah, OK. Then whoever has the gun has to shoot the second one."

"No problem," said Constable Douglas.

"I'll be over here out of line of sight, shall I?" asked Renata.

I could sense the attackers on the other side of the door. They were planning to shoot anything that moved. This was not an extraction.

The spy and the cop stood on either side of the door. The lock was shot off, the door was kicked open and a heavily armoured man with an assault rifle pushed through. My invisible hands pushed his gun so that it aimed down. Me. The ghost. It was so exhilarating to be doing something real.

Kevin hesitated for only a second at the unexpected movement. He pulled at the attacker and spun him into a wall. The gun fell. Constable Douglas grabbed the other attacker's rifle and pulled him into the room. They fell to the ground. Kevin pulled the knife from the attacker's sheath and killed him with it. Constable Douglas was struggling; Kevin used the dead assailant's sidearm to dispatch the second attacker.

"Shit, you could have shot me," said Douglas.

Renata watched. Horrified. Kevin's efficiency was disturbing.

Bullets pounded the doorway. Kevin may have dealt with two, but he was wrong about the size of the team. There were 6 attackers left. Angry ones. Kevin and Constable Douglas returned fire, but they were firing blind.

I looked at the two dead bodies. The one Kevin shot was too daunting a prospect, but the other one was possible. I leaned into Constable Douglas's face and said, "I am going to help you." I'm not sure if the message reached him, but I next moved over to the first dead body and merged with it.

Renata saw the body twitch. There was no mental resistance to me possessing the body. I took inventory of what limbs I could move. And I managed to make the body stand. Kevin was about to shoot the reanimated body, but Douglas waved him off. I shambled to the door and pulled out another handgun from the attacker's second holster. I stepped into the breach and started shooting. The rest of the assault team were perplexed. Especially when they returned fire. The bullets' worst effect was putting me off balance. I took down two of them, but my presence let Kevin and Constable Douglas take firing positions outside the room. Kevin killed two of them. Constable Douglas shot another, and Inspector Hamel took down the last one.

I departed the body, which was bullet ridden. It landed like a sack of ground beef.

I was exhausted. Had people been able to see me, they would have watched me crawl on my hands and knees back into the interview room, where Renata sat. She was wondering if the relative silence was a good thing or not.

I was barely holding myself together. All I knew is I had saved Renata and I had to rest.

Constable Douglas, came in, called her name. He sat on the floor beside her and handed her a cell phone. It had the game Tetris loaded.

"Start playing this," said Douglas.

"Tetris? Why?"

"I'll send you the study later, but this is PTSD intervention. It's shown to alleviate involuntarily recurring visual memories of traumatic experiences. Plus, you're going to be stuck here a long time."

"Where's Kevin?"

"Huh. No idea. He fucked off somehow. Anyway, don't think; do this," he said, pointing at the game.

An hour later, she downloaded Candy Crush and played that instead.



## **December 23, 2021**

Renata was recovering at home, reclining on her couch, underneath a large blanket featuring a print of Frosty the Snowman, watching Christmas movies. From what I could gather, she started a complex procedure of rolling out Christmas decorations on November 12, right after Remembrance Day.

I did muster enough energy to rearrange her Charlie Brown Mini Nativity Scene, which was a set of 10 figurines on a knick-knack shelf. I moved the figurines to a more logical pattern. It was good to be getting some of my energy back.

When Renata walked by the nativity set on the way to the kitchen, she stopped and looked closely. She frowned. Her mind went into that technical analysis zone where it was hard for me to interpret what she was thinking or feeling. She proceeded to the kitchen and put on the kettle. She made herself tea. Then Renata went to her desk and switched her laptop on. She fiddled with a whole bunch of settings. I really don't understand this stuff, I must admit. But eventually she finished and returned to the Charlie Brown Nativity display. She put the figurines back the way they had been before I fixed them. She went back to the couch and kept watching her Christmas movies.



I stared at this for a while and was angry. She wasn't even born in 1965 when A Charlie Brown Christmas was first broadcast. I lashed out and all the figurines fell to the floor. If we were going to live together, she'd have to understand some things.

Renata paused the movie and looked at the mess. She frowned again. She left the couch, picked up the figures and placed them back the way she had originally arranged them. She returned to the couch and continued watching her movie.

Clearly this was a battle of wills. I carefully rearranged the figurines back to my way, which was more in keeping with the characters.

Renata finished her movie, stood up and took her teacup back to the kitchen. On the way back, she looked at the Charlie Brown figurines. She frowned. But this time, she didn't rearrange them. She went to her computer and flipped some screens around and replayed a video of the last couple of hours. Her laptop had been filming this whole time. She saw where I knocked the figurines over and when I had rearranged them the second time. She took a few minutes to edit the video and (I think) sent it to someone.

She picked up her cell phone and made a call. "Hi. Constable Douglas? It's Renata."

"After what we've been through, please call me Don."

"OK. Um, this is really hard for me to say, but I think I may be having a Brian Walker problem."

"How so? Don't tell me you are suddenly believing in ghosts."

"Something is rearranging my Christmas decorations in the apartment. Check your email for a link to a video."

"Let me do that right now and I'll call you back in a couple of minutes."

Five minutes later, Renata's phone rang. "Hi Renata," said. "Yeah, crap, that's bad. I'll be over tomorrow with a couple of people. Probably say around 11 AM. You'll be in?"

"It's pandemic Christmas number 2. You bet."



## **December 24, 2021**

A little before 11 AM, the priest, the elder and the cop showed up at Renata's door. Had I not been so nervous, I might have found a joke in this. Renata helped them with their coats before introductions.

"Renata, this is Angie. She's a Stó:lō Nation elder and was a good friend of my grandmother's."

"Donny! You didn't tell me she was so tall. Wonderful to meet you."

"This is Father Gerald; he's an Anglican priest from St. John's. And he's a hugger. Oh, there he goes."

"I'm glad to meet you," said Father Gerald giving Renata a big hug. "I want to see those figurines. In the video they look vintage."

"Yes, my mother gave them to me," said Renata.

"You could sell those on eBay for a fortune."

"Gerald," said Angie, "could you keep it down a minute? I need to concentrate."

Renata was definitely feeling the absurdity of a priest with robes, an elder with a cedar traditional hat and a police officer who was wearing an Indigenous patterned blanket. They had drums and a smudge kit. The word "eviction" crossed her mind.

Angie was silent. Eyes closed. It took only a couple of minutes before she looked at me. She could not see me, but she knew I was there.

"All right," she announced. "Gerald, if you can stop coveting Renata's Christmas decorations for a minute, I think you should go first since we're pretty sure this is a white guy."

"She's in a hurry," said Don, "because she wants me to take her to Lucky's Donuts after."

"So," said Gerald, "what we'll do here is I'll do a few prayers for the dead and try to see if our invisible friend can let go."

"Does it matter to you folks that I'm a scientist and not a believer?" asked Renata.

Angie piped up, "Not at all dear. You have video. You know how you feel. I can tell you didn't sleep well because you are afraid. What happens will be real, but may not have a good explanation. Isn't the search for answers about mysteries what science and life are all about?"

Father Gerald invited everyone to pray.

*O Sovereign Lord Christ, deliver your servant, Brian Walker, from all evil, and set him free from every bond; that he may rest with all your saints in the eternal habitations; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

But I didn't want to.

*For we brought nothing into the world,  
and it is certain we carry nothing out.  
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;  
blessed be the name of the Lord.*

*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;  
Even so, says the Spirit,  
for they rest from their labours.*

Rest. It was an idea for sure.

Angie opened a window in the apartment and started up her smudging kit and there was a smell of cedar and tobacco. They started drumming and chanting. The priest joined in. Even Renata timidly lent her voice. They carried on for about 20 minutes. The sound and the smell – I wasn't sure how I was smelling this – was hypnotic.

Then, out of the blue, Constable Douglas said, "Brian. If you can hear me. You saved Renata. You saved others (like me) too. But to stay here, holding onto Renata, is wrong. Your next place is with the spirits. Be a hero again and let go."

I can't believe I agreed with a cop. I was so scared, but I let go.

