

The stolen case of Corona



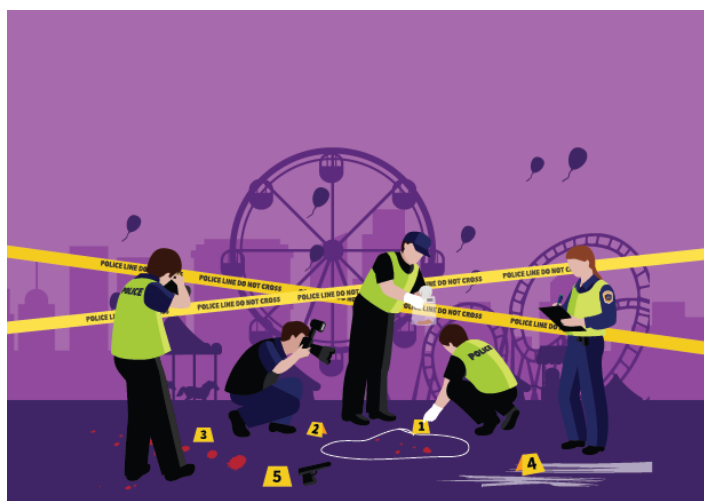
Setting and characters



Hawthorne Hills has always been considered one of the more quiet and refined housing estates in the town. It became known as home to many of the notable people of Elmwood Village, with luxurious houses residing within its tall walls and gates. It offers the opportunity for anyone with enough wealth to live a more private life from the prying eyes of the townspeople. Sitting on the outside of the town it was encircled by a lush forest, which meant that the only way in or out of

the estate was by the gated driveway that carved a path through the trees. Entry was not permitted to anyone other than its residents except for very particular circumstances, one of which would be for Lady Margaret Livingston's Halloween party, which invited certain guests from the public. Lady Livingston often opened her home to the public during specific holidays, throwing exclusive parties for a select few of the townspeople. Usually these were socialites, the up-and-coming, or the local sycophants hoping for a chance to climb the social ladder. Lady Livingston's parties were a highlight of the townspeople's year, with everyone wishing to make it onto the guest-list. The parties were a showboating of luxury, with elegant meals and drinks, all free to the guests, so that they could indulge and be gluttonous.

Crime scene



There was only one other occasion when Hawthorne Hills was open to the public, and this was in the case of emergencies. Somehow, both of the rare occasions had managed to come at the same time, as now Lady Livingston's house was lit up by the blue and red flashing lights, from the police cars surrounding it. The door of her house now stood agape with her guests pushed beyond the gates of her home, held behind a yellow tape barrier with "CRIME SCENE" declared across it. While

the tape may have held back the crowds now amassing around the scene, it was not however holding back the gossiping and speculation that was abuzz from the side-lines. On the other side of the tape stood a number of local police, some obtaining information from witnesses, others speculating on what they believed to have happened. One young police officer stood at the gate of the residence, keeping guard and ensuring that no-one crossed the yellow tape perimeter. From the corner of his eye however he saw a Montecarlo Blue Alfa Romeo pull up just outside the gates of Lady Livingston's house.

The detective



As both the driver and passenger-side doors swung open, the young police officer felt a jolt of excitement through his body. He knew instantly from the colour of the car that it could only be the region's most renowned detective duo. Before he could even murmur their names, an outstretched elbow appeared in his view, standing in for the commonplace handshake that it replaced. "Detective Jack Couff, my partner here is Detective Vera Koved, we are here for the case?"

Said the male detective They were both similarly dressed, adorning black overcoats with heavy scarfs laid atop to protect them from the blistering winds that curse Elmwood this time of the year. Their dress code continued with both of them wearing black trousers and finished with black shoes. The young officer noted each detail of their clothing before becoming stuck looking at their footwear after over-examining their outfits. "Hello!? Look buddy, the shoes are from Benny's, you can go see if they have them in your size after you show us to the crime scene" Jack said. "Oh of course, sorry sir, right away!" The young officer managed to mumble out.

The suspects



The officer lifted aside the tape, letting the two detectives through, he continued on his sheepish ramblings by detailing what he knew about the crime scene. "Nobody has been hurt; however Lady Livingston is known for her mysterious and luxurious drinks on Halloween. There was a rumour about the town that she had a case of something called Corona? The witnesses supposedly saw four teenagers in black hoodies sneak into her party however they didn't leave with anything? We presumed

that they were after the beers, but Lady Livingston however denied the rumours and said she had no such thing as a case of Corona beers. Some of the other officers have found four culprits matching the description, but they're denying that they had anything to do with it." Described the young officer. "I see... Let us see the crime scene and let Livingston know we'd like to have a word with her, we'll have a word with the suspects back at the station later" Jack instructed. They all walked together into the house, with the young officer splitting off to try and find Lady Livingston in what could only be described as a maze disguised as a house.

Examine the Crime Scene



Jack and Vera found the scene of the crime that took place in the main kitchen of the house. It was an open-plan design, where the hall, kitchen and lounge all ran from one into the other forming one large common area. With all the disruption and shock the rooms were a mess with broken glass and spilled drinks, the ground crunched beneath their feet as they searched for clues. The table and counters were littered with bottles of exotic drinks, however the detectives noticed that

Corona was not one of these. Detective Vera noticed however that there was more broken glass in a separate hallway off to the right on the kitchen. She nodded to Jack towards the potential clue, and together they went to inspect it, discovering that it was glass from a window out of view from the main party area. "This must have been how our perps got into the house, but how come no-one noticed or heard it smash" Vera posed the question to Jack. "I would have presumed that the music would have covered the break-in, seems like Livingston knows how to throw a party" replied Jack. With that thought in their minds, they heard someone approach from behind. They coughed to gain their attention, however this quickly turned into a fit of dry coughing. The cough was distinctive, and it sounded painful - like if the person's lungs had not been firmly attached to their insides, that they may have shot out of their body with force of it. Jack and Vera turned around to discover that it was Lady Livingston behind them, and that she had this terrible dry cough. "Name's Koved, this here is Detective Couff, we heard you had a few party-crashers." said Vera. "Right you are De-..." Began Lady Livingston before erupting into a coughing fit, "...-tective Vera, you'll have to forgive me, seems I'm coming down with something!" Lady Livingston continued by detailing the events as they took place, explaining that her exclusive party was going well up until the point that the youngsters broke in. She further described that one of her guests noticed hooded teenagers trying to blend in amongst the party-goers. As soon as she was notified by one of her guests, next she found herself being attacked by one of the teenagers, demanding that she tell them where she was keeping the Corona. Jack and Vera listened intently to the story that Lady Livingston was explaining. Vera attentively taking notes for her to recall from at a later date, holding her notebook with a similar pizzazz to how Columbo would hold a cigar. After obtaining the information they needed, they thanked Lady Livingston for her time. As they were about to leave, mid-step into their car, the young police officer came over to them. "Detectives! A call from the station has just come through, apparently, they have received an anonymous tip-off about a couple of more teenagers that have been spotted in the local area. We've picked them up and they're down at the station" The young officer proudly announced. Jack and Vera nodded in approval to the officer, leaning into the car and setting off for the police station.

Mystery Resolution



The police station was only a short drive away, especially with Jack speeding in his Alfa. Stepping out of the car they walked into the station, wondering what awaited them. How on earth were they going to figure out who was at the scene of the crime? Not a single witness in the house saw or recognised who they were, they had no facial features to go by only that they donned black hoodies. Vera interrupted both their thought processes, saying what they both were thinking. “I

mean, is there any teenager who doesn't wear a black hoodie?” Vera managed to comment in between her laughing at the sorry state that was teenage fashion in Elmwood. Jack returned a quick chuckle, however his mind quickly wandered back to how they were ever going to catch the suspects with such little information. They continued through the lobby, while they weren't familiar with this station, their years of experience meant they knew exactly where to find their perps regardless of the building. A uniformed officer stood outside of the holding cells, he explained to the detectives that each culprit was separated into a different cell. While they had tried questioning them, none of the suspects were claiming to know each other nor could they seem to shed any light on the case. The two detectives were going to have their work cut out for them. They had six different suspects held, however none of them could be placed for definite at the scene of the crime. Worse still, only two of them were caught wearing black hoodies. Jack personally found it hilarious; Elmwood Village was seeing a decline in black hoodie wearing teenagers, so there were at least some positives to be had. “I guess we'll have to begin with our 'hoodies' first, seems to be these are the only perps that we can try to link to the scene of the crime.” Vera said. “Right you are, let's take one each and see if we can't get to the bottom of this” Jack replied. They separated off into their integration rooms, each taking one of the suspects. There was no time for good cop, bad cop however; they were short on time and would have to find out all the information as quickly as they could. Lady Livingston was not the kind of Lady that did much waiting. Vera began with the first suspect, discovering that his name was Eric Davidson. “This is how it's going to go”, began Vera. “I'm going to ask you some very simple questions about where you were tonight and what you were doing and you are going to give me the truth”. “Look, like I already told your buddy, I was just in the town getting a burger to eat” Eric replied “And this burger wouldn't have come from Lady Livingstons house would it” “Look, you can check with the staff in Burger Shack, I was there when the crime happened, go check with them.” Vera was all out of luck with this suspect, she would have to check up his alibi, but often when a suspect was as confident as Eric, it normally meant the detectives were chasing their own tail. Vera barely got to turn around before Jack's door opened behind her and slammed shut. “No luck?” Vera guessed. “Absolutely nothing, perp seemed to have it all sown up, apparently at a friend's house all night. I got one of the officers to call and check and it all seems to line up, either that or his

buddy really wants to cover for his friend. Worst part of it all was that it took him so long to tell me the damn story as he was coughing every second!" declared Jack. All of sudden, the gears in Vera's head turned at once, her mind racing with the possibilities and links. Had she suddenly cracked it? If she was right, this meant there was no long night of questioning ahead that was going to ruin her previous plans of seeing how far down a tub of Jen and Berry's ice-cream she could get while watching the Barry and Gary omnibus she had recorded. She ran to the nearest officer, demanding information that could sew up the case in one nice tidy package. "You! Sergeant Mustache, how many of these perps came in with one of those call-your-mother-to-get-you-some-chicken-soup-kind-of coughs?" She shouted "Uh, four ma'am!?" The Sergeant quickly proclaimed. "We've got it all wrong Jack, the case of Corona never existed, Lady Livingston had a damn case of Coronavirus all along! It was right in-front of us when she nearly coughed up both of her lungs at us!" Turning to Jack to quickly proclaimed Vera rushed into the holding cell, releasing the two youths without the cough, announcing to the remaining four that they better get comfortable because they were going to be here for a long time. She boldly declared "It is a shame you never found those beers guys, cause the only cases you found was a case of coronavirus and this case I just closed!" Vera held one of the biggest and proudest grins across her face as she lowered her aviators over her eyes. "Really? Its 2am in the morning! What the hell do you need those glasses for" Jack shouted while chasing Vera to the car.

The story trailer



When trouble strikes the town of Elmwood village, Lady Livingston looks to the renowned detective duo to solve the mystery of the stolen case of Corona. With little luck on their side, they must work against the odds to find their culprits.