

From the personal field notes of Miami Police homicide detective Àngel Andreu, which served as the basis for a formal report concerning the death of Oscar Garcia Raimundi that was filed on September 14, 1981, (which was, incidentally, only twenty-four days after Wilfredo Gómez lost the junior featherweight title to Salvador Sanchez):

“August 23, 1981. Sunday, 9 AM. I am at my desk. Why the hell I came in on a Sunday morning to tackle that mound of paperwork I can’t really say. I mean I know why well enough. Let’s just say the wife wanted to go to church and I didn’t. Fair enough. Let me just add to that: fuck paperwork! Better delete that last part. So a fucking call comes in. 9 AM on a Sunday morning for Christ’s sake! Why couldn’t this call have come in say five hours earlier before the Saturday night homicide boys went over to Julian’s for a bite to eat. Christ! So a call comes in. There’s a dead body in Coral Gables, somewhere along US 1. So what I say, there’s probably lots of dead bodies in Coral Gables along US 1. The guy on the other end just blows past my little joke like I didn’t say a word. Some kids found it at a playground in Washington Park, he says, and I’m thinking Washington Park isn’t anywhere close to our jurisdiction, but the guy on the other end keeps blabbing. The officers who first arrived on the scene said from what they could tell the dead guy was from Allapattah. Allapattah is in our jurisdiction, which is why they called it in. The guy on the other end says the officers on the scene will wait till I get there, assuming I don’t take too long, it is Sunday morning, after all, they probably have wives waiting for them. Then he hangs up. Yeah, it’s fucking Sunday morning, all right, wives or no wives. So I have to go down to Coral Gables. Which actually doesn’t bother me, to tell you the truth. Me and Ramirez. He is walking in as I am heading out the door and I say you’re coming with me pinhead, and he gives me a blank look like he always does, but he knows I’m just messing with him. How the fuck they got the number to my fucking desk in the first place I’ll never know. Fucking fate, I guess.”

“August 23, 1981. Sunday, 11:30 AM. It took us a while to get down to Washington Park. It’s a pretty nice little park for the kiddies I have to admit. A little bit of green space, a place to toss a ball around. Not the kind of place you’d expect to find a dead body. But what the fuck. Dead bodies are everywhere. That’s a simple fact of life. So we got there late. There wasn’t anybody in the park when we pulled up, but there was a Coral Gables squad car parked six inches from the curb near the Northwest side of the park. It was a very precise parking job. A very Coral Gables kind of parking job. Two officers got out as we pulled up. I pulled in right behind the squad car. My car is a 1965 dark blue Pontiac Bonneville two-door hard top coup. I mean it really stands out. But it’s also a state-of-the-art cruiser with a Motorola two-way and an engine that really kicks. Needless to say, the Coral Gables guys knew who it was right away. They were pissed. Wives or no wives, they were pissed, but what the fuck. Me and Ramirez stopped for a bite to eat on the way down. I mean who said we had to starve. Screw that. So the two officers got out and we chatted a while and one of them gave me a clipboard with the log of everyone who had visited the crime scene: the two officers who greeted us, two more who stopped by at 10:15 just to have a quick look, an inspector named H. Miller, and right there I’m thinking are you kidding me, ‘H. Miller?’ why not Henry Miller or

Hank Miller or Harry or Hamilton or Harlan or Henley or Hermes or Hal or Harpo or Harris or Hamlet or Hannibal or Hadrian or Hagrid or Hiram or Haji or Hieronymous or Hawk or Hervé or Howard or Horatio or Hitch, or even Heinrich, for Christ's sake, all randomly assigned monikers to be sure, providing no clue to the essential character of the named, but not the pitiful, purposely vague and therefore morally bankrupt signature of 'H. Miller,' who probably didn't even get out of his car because then the eyes of the world would have been upon him (that blustery, fat Aryan fuck) and he would have felt unavoidably (inevitably?) duty-bound to investigate (though it probably would have been a sham of an investigation, you can bet your ass), in which case they never would have called me, so he sent a lieutenant to do a quick walk-thru to see if there was any way to pawn off the dead body, some pasty-faced, snot-nosed lieutenant most likely, and so the last guy listed in the log (until me and Ramirez showed up) was that very same pasty-faced lieutenant picked by the invisible H. Miller. There were a few preliminary comments by the lieutenant. His name was Lieutenant Beckert (another German name). I read over the comments but it was like reading a fifth grader's seven sentence summary of the Movie of the Week. Fucking fifth grade handwriting too. Pretty much illegible. I wrote my name in the log and asked him if he wanted the clipboard back. He said no. I signed a receipt. More fucking paperwork, every step of the way. He seemed satisfied. He seemed like he couldn't wait to hand off this mess to someone else and get back to his regular Coral Gables police-type duties. I asked him if he was Beckert and he said he wasn't. He said it was Beckert who had figured out the dead guy was from Allapattah. 'How'd he manage that?' I asked him. 'It was easy. He looked in the guy's wallet and there was a card that said La Campana, some nightclub up there, and the guy's name.' 'And that was enough for Beckert.' 'Sure.' 'And the guy's driver's license?' 'There wasn't any. Just the card with the guy's name on it.' 'But that was enough for Beckert.' 'Sure.' 'Right, and the crime scene?' 'Over there.' The one guy was pointing past a clump of crepe myrtles. You could see some playground equipment through the branches. You could see they had tried to surround the playground equipment with yellow tape to keep the neighborhood away. They had tied one end to the crepe myrtles and then looped it around the playground and then back to the beginning. They were trying to close the loop, as they say. But it was a pretty sloppy job. There was a bit of a breeze blowing through the crepe myrtles and it was starting to drizzle, just like it's been doing on and off for what has it been, two weeks now, two weeks of fucking rain and no end in sight. Anyway, the yellow tape was flapping like mad. I mean you knew it wasn't going to keep anybody out for too much longer. Then the one guy started up again, but he wasn't looking at me. He was looking vaguely at the crepe myrtles. 'Beckert didn't call the coroner,' he said, 'you know how those guys are,' and he gave me one of those polite, mealy-mouthed German beerhouse smiles like I knew the same exact guys he knew. 'He figured you'd want to have a look around first.' 'Sure, thanks.' The one guy nodded but the other didn't even look at me (still pissed, I guess). Then they got in their squad car and drove away."

"August 23, 1981. Sunday, 11:45 AM. Fuck this rain. I love Miami and I love thunderstorms and I love walking on the beach in the rain and all that shit. But two fucking weeks is more than enough."

“August 23, 1981. Sunday, 11:46 AM. We did a walk-thru of the crime scene. The playground equipment is a sort of jungle gym rocket ship with a rocket tower for climbing at one end and a slide at the other. The dead body was hanging head down from the rocket ship tower. The feet were tied to the jungle gym bars. The arms were pulled out to either side and tied to a fucking two-by-four laid across the guy’s back. Like a gleaming white inverted crucifix. From a distance it looked like the dead guy was smiling, an inverted smile to be sure. The two-by-four was tied to the lower posts of the rocket tower, I guess so the guy wouldn’t flap around or dangle. The guy’s hands were nailed to the wood. I mean the killers had actually hammered a nail through the middle of each of the guy’s palms. Maybe not a hammer. Maybe they used a nail gun. Something with a little kick to it. They had it in for this guy whatever they used. Cause of death uncertain. Once we got a little closer we could see quite clearly that the guy’s throat had been cut, I mean ear to ear, a very clean, precise cut, very methodical, a very professional job. Still, no matter how clean a cut like that, it’s a hell of a painful way to go. But no idea if this was the cause of death or not. Could be all for show. Like hanging the body upside down. Have to wait for the coroner to be sure. I said to Ramirez the guy looked like a dead shark or something pulled out of the sea. He laughed and said the killers were obviously playing around with Catholic symbolism. ‘You mean like Christ on the cross,’ I asked him. ‘No,’ he said. I mean like Peter the Apostle. He was crucified upside down by the Romans. Just like this guy here.’ ‘What the fuck does that mean,’ I asked him. ‘I have no idea,’ Ramirez said. ‘It just looks pretty symbolic the way he’s laid out. But it’s pretty fucked up symbolism all the same.’ I didn’t know what to say about that. Ramirez can get pretty hyped up by all that Catholic mumbo-jumbo. But the dead guy did look like a shining example of everything that’s wrong with religion. He was wearing a white linen jacket but no shirt. The jacket looked like it was about to fall off but it had got stuck around the guy’s armpits and then the corners had folded themselves around the back of the guy’s neck. It sort of looked like wings that had been partially sliced away. The dead guy was also wearing white slacks tucked into his socks, but no shoes. At least the killers weren’t perverted, I mean they were clearly sick fucks with a sick sense of humor, but at least they left the guy the dignity of his pants. He was also wearing a white Panama hat, which we couldn’t figure out why gravity didn’t do its thing at first, but then we saw that the hat was nailed to the top of the guy’s head, right through the cranium. It seems obvious now they were using a nail gun. The white slacks were stained with blood and the rain, but strangely there were no blood stains on the jacket. No visible signs of blood on the playground or the rocket tower. Which means maybe they killed the guy somewhere else. Then again the whole crime scene had been scrubbed pretty clean by the rain. And there was no telling how long the body had been there. That was another item for the coroner. I checked the inside pocket of the guy’s jacket for his wallet and there it was. No driver’s license, just like that pasty-faced Lieutenant Beckert had said. And there was the card with his name, Oscar Garcia Raimundi, the poor dumb fuck, and underneath the name was the name of the nightclub, La Campana in glittery letters, and then a raised line in italics that said from ‘*dusk till dawn,*’ and beneath that the address: 25½ La

Campana Avenue, Allapattah, Miami, Florida. It was a very fancy card. I mean they don't get much fancier."

"August 23, 1981. Sunday, 12:15 PM. Took pictures of everything noted above. I hate taking photographs almost as much as I hate fucking paperwork. They give me a state-of-the-art unmarked police cruiser for cruising the streets, but they give me a piece of shit Minolta for taking pictures. Rain started to come down harder."

"August 23, 1981. Sunday, 1:30 PM. The guys from the evidence collection unit pull up. Crime Scene Investigators Randy Graeff, just out of college (The University of Miami, what else), Martin Lorenz, who's been doing this for more years than he cares to count, and sweet little Natalie Henderson, who takes an awful lot of shit from everybody, but you should see her strut around in a skirt. And she's always wearing skirts. Man, she knows what she's doing, you better believe that. Better delete that last part. Anyway, right behind Natalie and her two bookends comes the coroner, Leon Vallejo, along with Bob Nordyke, the Chief Death Investigator, and Andrew Havlik, whose area is forensics, or maybe pathology, or maybe both. We've been waiting in my car for over an hour. We give everyone a quick briefing and then they go to work. They don't say what kept them and we don't ask. Not even Leon comes clean, but then it was probably his fault to begin with. Every Sunday Leon takes his family to the brunch at Denny's. Everybody had probably been waiting on Leon to get back from brunch. So anyway, the rain has sort of halted by now. It's still pretty cloudy so you know it's going to start up again. But we're good for a while. Ramirez says it's God's doing, meaning the break in the weather, so Leon can get the body into his van before any more of the dead man's dignity is washed away. I say what the fuck are you talking about Ramirez, but he just laughs. Ramirez sweats religion. I mean you can smell it pouring out of his pores. Like gardenias or something. I don't know. Maybe the way he smells has something to do with what he eats. Or maybe he's always running late so instead of showering he douses himself with his wife's perfume. Maybe that's why he's always running out to the mall to pick up a bottle of Chanel or Yves Saint Laurent. I don't know. But it smells like religion to me. Anyway, we talk with Graeff and Lorenz for a while over by the playground equipment, but we're really trying to catch a glimpse of Natalie. She's climbing up into the rocket tower but you can't really see her because of the dead guy. She's looking for clues. But every once in a while you catch the curve of her hip and your jaw just drops. Graeff is saying the way the killers laid out the body clearly indicates they are at the very least sociopaths with little regard for social mores or human dignity. Lorenz says you mean psychopaths like in Psycho? Graeff shakes his head and says he doesn't think so, though there is certainly an elemental psychopathology in the explicit symbolic messaging of the crime scene. It is very theatrical. It is almost as if they were presenting a short play in which the brutality of murderous violence is not shown, only its aftermath, much like the great German movie director Fritz Lang did in his 1931 thriller, *M*, but without the sexual overtones. Yes, yes, says Lorenz, but what does that mean? Graeff laughs and says it means that an argument could be made that the killers are borderline psychopaths because on one level this murder seems to be a textbook example of their need to

exercise their creative imagination in a vain attempt to control their environment without any concern for who gets in their way, but one could argue just as persuasively that they are mere sociopaths (which is to say they are not yet robots without any compassion for the human condition), whose murderous impulses are in reality unconscious, conditioned responses to certain as yet undetermined social stimuli, what in the vernacular we would call triggers, which made this particular murder necessary, even inevitable. Lorenz says what kind of triggers? Graeff says it could be anything, an unwillingness to go along to get along, a crooked smile, a disagreement over religion, this would certainly make sense given the obvious anti-Catholic symbolism, it could be anything. Then Graeff's eyes light up. Hey Ramirez, what was the dead man's name, he says? Ramirez blinks stupidly for a moment, like he is trying to wake up, like his eyes are tiny mouths gasping for breath. He was probably lost in that fantastic labyrinth of intellectual gobbledygook that Graeff has been leading us through. Then Ramirez shakes free of the cobwebs and says Raimundi, Oscar Garcia Raimundi. Graeff says, there you have it, Raimundi, a name which could mean the Light of the World, although it could mean many other things as well. But suppose this Raimundi was an associate of our killers, a man who held some position of authority over them, a man who was seen by others as a light in the darkness, so to speak, and then suppose his death was the result of some power struggle, as is the case with many of the deaths in gangsterland, and suppose our killers are slightly psychotic, or even robustly psychotic, so they slit his throat and nail him to a cross and hang him upside down to make some explicit comment about their role in assuming the mantle of the dead man's power, they have extinguished the old Light of the World and in the process have become the New Light, a new order for a new day. Everyone who knew the dead man and who knew the killers would realize that a new order had been created. Yes, yes, it could very well be something like that. Lorenz doesn't know what to say. Neither do I for that matter. Graeff is smiling like the fucking cat that ate the canary. He's into all that psychological crap. Lorenz says okay, sure, but that really only tells me why they hung him upside down. It doesn't come close to revealing their motives for killing him in the first place, other than some vague insinuations about this mythical power struggle. What exactly was the trigger? Just tell me why they killed him. Graeff doesn't say anything for a moment. The moment becomes a little longer. Graeff's face begins to contort in odd ways, as if he is experiencing a sudden change in air pressure. Then he says he doesn't know for sure and bites his lower lip. It's kind of like a forced confession. Like Lorenz is some kind of priest from the days of the Inquisition flaying the skin off Graeff to get at the truth. Graeff's face has taken on a sour look. Apparently he doesn't like confessing. I get it. No one likes to appear weak, especially in front of their peers. Maybe that's the reason why the killers killed Oscar Garcia Raimundi. They didn't want to appear weak in front of their peers. Maybe it was as simple as that. I keep this thought to myself. Then sweet Natalie flashes her hips and the conversation is over."

"August 23, 1981. Sunday, 4:30 PM. Everybody's pretty much finished. Leon left with the body at 3:45. Nordyke and Havlik followed in their car. Natalie and Graeff and Lorenz left at 4:00. Me and Ramirez are sitting in my car. It's rained on and off the whole afternoon, but after a while rain is easy to forget. Leon won't be finished with the coroner's

report until maybe tomorrow evening. The others probably won't be finished with their reports until Wednesday. But me and Ramirez already have three leads to track down. The first is the nightclub or whatever it is up in Allapattah. La Campana. The second is a newspaper article from *The Miami News* that was folded up and stuffed in a slot in the dead guy's wallet. The article was about an offshore speedboat race that was going to be held up at Sunny Isles over Labor Day weekend. The article said the race was not sanctioned by the American Powerboat Association, so the racers wouldn't get any points like they could with sanctioned races. But the event organizers were expecting over a hundred racers and over a thousand spectators. The article went on to say that the primary purpose of the race was to showcase the speed and versatility of the new cigarette boats that were taking the speedboat world by storm. Miami resident Pepe Nuñez, a self-proclaimed speed freak, won the Pelican Harbor Trophy Race in 1980 with one of these cigarette boats, a boat that had been manufactured by Pantera, a company which Nunez had founded with his wife Linda in 1974. Another South Florida resident, Joey Ippolito, won the Bacardi Race this past May with a cigarette boat manufactured by Wellcraft Boats of Sarasota, Florida. The writer of the article could not praise these boats enough. The third clue is a receipt from The Miami Skyways Motel out on Le Jeune Road. The receipt was for Friday night, a one night stay. It's a great place right across from the airport. Nice restaurant. Swimming pool. Striped yellow and white umbrellas to keep the sun off your back. A comfortable lounge with anything you'd want to drink. I met the owner four years ago, Manny Melamed, an eccentric sonofabitch, but a nice guy. Always smiling. Really dark hair, and a wild looking Fu Manchu moustache. I don't know about his taste in clothes, though. I mean when we first met he was wearing a crazy, artsy silk shirt with these weird geometric patterns, dark blue rectangles, aquamarine circles or triangles or something, and a light blue paisley jacket and bright sky-blue slacks. I mean the whole outfit hurt your eyes. I met him at a downtown luncheon for something or other and he invited me to come out to the lounge to hear Sonny Rollins play his saxophone. He must have seen the blank look on my face because he started to laugh. I'm not really into the music scene. I had no idea who Sonny Rollins even was. But he wasn't half bad. So anyway, me and Ramirez are heading up to the Miami Skyways Motel to see if anybody remembers our dead guy. It's only twenty minutes away. Head straight north. I mean it's an absolutely straight shot, no turns or deviations of any kind. Now all we gotta do is figure out what connects these two dots on the map other than SW 42nd Avenue."