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FAMILY *a n d*
NEIGHBOURS

RUTH VIVIAN

Ruth was out hanging clothes and Donna come down and started hanging up clothes. They talked for a minute and Ruth said to her your clothes is awful wet and Donna said the spinner is broke.

I'll take it in the house and spin it out, Ruth said.

No, Donna said, that's okay.

It's only a couple of minutes and it's done.

It would dry quicker on the line because it was kind of late in the afternoon and they just started talking.

That was probably a year and a half before she died. Donna would tell Ruth about Sheldon Troke. A scattered time Ruth saw him around Donna's apartment. He said hello, good day, very casual like, no sitting down and having a big conversation or anything.

That Friday Donna Whalen came out of the house and Ruth Vivian said hello. Donna was a bit excited, she was going to Ontario for a wedding. I bought a new dress and a pair of black shoes, she said. She was to get the purse and the slip the next day. She said, Ruth come up and I'll show it to you. Donna went ahead and Ruth Vivian came up behind her. She seen the dress.

Later on her son, Tom, was out in the back fooling around with a car and Ruth had the door open. She was at the kitchen table. It was hot and she opened two side windows and went over to the sink then

she heard the swearing. She came out the door and sung out Tom, come in out of it, because the language if you heard it. She sung out to him and he didnt come in so Ruth stood up in their landing and looked over and Sheldon Troke was on the end of the house and his hand was going—he was hitting the side of the house and he was really mad and Ruth thought he was coming towards the house. You slut, he said, you will never get to the mainland. She called Tom up again and closed the back door. She said Tom, did you hear that? Bastard and cocksuckers and stuff like this. He said Mom, what are talking about. And Ruth said come on we go out to the store. They come out the front door and walked down Empire. Mabel Edicott was on her doorstep and Ruth talked to her about going to bingo that night. Ruth never mentioned what she heard out of Sheldon Troke because she figured it was no one else's business, like you learn to stay out of it. And that is all she thought of it. When you hear rackets in around there, you close your door and hope and pray it will go away. You dont get involved. If anybody shouts, Ruth gets nervous like she got to get away from anybody shouting. When theyre mad they dont even know, theyre just rhyming it out of them. Ruth does it when she's mad.

She went out later to country bingo with Mabel Edicott, on the corner of Rickett's Road and there behind Buckmaster Circle. All you got to do is go straight up over the hill and cut down Aldershot by the Salvation Army and go to the Circle.

She won the letter X. It was a hundred and fifty dollars. They came home right away because Ruth is a real gambler, if she stayed she'd be buying Nevada tickets all night so the minute they sung out the last game, she didnt even wait for them to call back, they were out through the door.

They got a taxi home. If there's anybody going in their way they chip in on a taxi and they get home a lot quicker. It was pretty warm

outside and when she opened the door, the heat was on ninety. Ruth said to her husband, Pat, the night like this and the damn heat on ninety and he made a sarcastic remark he said it won't hurt you—this kind of way. You're home early tonight, he said, you didn't win. Ruth said I won fifty dollars and she said to Mabel Edicott don't tell him the difference. Pat put the silly grin on his face so Ruth went down the store and bought him a few beers. She wasn't gone no more than five minutes, just across the street, pick up a half-dozen beer, but he never had the heat turned off. So they got in a few words. Ruth was just about gone with the heat. She went in the kitchen with Mabel Edicott and they sat down and had a game of queens. The clock is in the kitchen, it didn't dawn on Ruth to look at it and then she said to Mabel, it's one o'clock already—I got to get up the morning. Mabel said I want to get out and get some air. Ruth said oh, Jesus, he got the heat on again. I'm going to kill him in the morning. She was on the pissy side. Most married couples fight over money, Ruth and Pat fight over heat like the devil.

Mabel got ready and she went off and Ruth locked the front door, she went back to her bedroom, got her nightdress out from underneath the pillow and got a wash. Pat was after being up and putting the heat on again, and she let the roar out of her. She opened the front door. She never had on her glasses. The glasses were on top of the entertainment centre in the living room. She could walk right in front of a car because to her everything is far away until she puts her glasses on and then it brings it up to normal.

She was stood up by the door and all of a sudden this voice said you must find it awful hot. It was Donna Whalen.

Ruth said, The son of a bitch got the heat on ninety again tonight. I'm froze to death, Donna said.

I'm dead with the heat, Ruth said, but I'm starting to get the cold

shivers now. And Donna said, I can't wait to go up and put on my jammies and curl up in a blanket on the chesterfield.

Ruth started to shake. I'd better go in, she said, I'm freezing now. And Ruth closed the door and went back to the kitchen and sat down with a puzzle book and then went on to bed. She's terrible with times, especially when she gets into a puzzle. The house could burn down when she gets into them, she dont pay no mind to time.

MABEL EDICOTT

Mabel works up to Holy Heart. She's in the cafeteria. Back then she wasnt working at all. That night she was to her sister's on Rankin Street and she got home around suppertime. Then she went to bingo with Ruth Vivian and played cards with her over at the Vivians'. When she got home her son Keith was there with her two nephews and they were down in the room listening to music and carrying on.

The nephews left a little after one. Mabel straightened up a bit because they had coffee and then she turned on channel 10 and the movie was on and herself and Keith sat down to watch it.

There was this knock on the back door, a soft knock. She went out to the kitchen and answered the door and it was a young fellow asked for Donna. He had blond hair, very nice looking, he was about as tall as Keith, and his hair was cut short to the sides and he was clean shaven except he had a moustache. He had on a jacket.

A soft knock. She had to move the portable dryer out of the way to open the door. That's the only place you could put it in the kitchen. They have no laundry rooms in the apartments theyre in. He asked for Donna and she said she lives next door and she pointed to next door and then she closed the door and locked it and put the dryer back again.

She thought he knocked on the door next door, but she didn't hear any door open or close. Ten or fifteen minutes later, it sounded like if you're changing around the front room and you're moving and you're dragging a table or a heavy chair.

KIM PARROTT

Kim and Donna grew up together, they went to school together, they kind of got married together. Kim's known Donna to take medication but only once that you could tell it had an effect, and that was on the telephone—Donna was home going to bed. She did take pills every day. At first she was telling Kim that it was for back pain and then she told her that if Sheldon was gone the pills would be gone.

That Friday Kim had to take her son, Nicholas, to the doctor. Donna came in, they were talking, and she played a tape recorder. It had one of those small tapes in it. They listened to a few parts of it. The voices on the tape were Donna and Sheldon and they were from the night before. They listened to the tape for about an hour. They weren't constantly listening, it was rewinding, fast-forwarding, listening. Donna was trying to find one in particular part, where Sheldon was accusing her of going with Kim every Friday night, calling them sluts. Donna was doing her fingernails. Kim felt Donna used to go home and start something with Sheldon. Kim told her not to be so foolish and Donna said, When you gets a phone call telling you I'm dead, then you'll believe me.

They went down to Donna's in her car. Kim had Nicholas with her. Donna had to pick up a letter for Housing. She went in to her house and Kim stayed out in the car with Nicholas. Kim, where the sun was shining through the kitchen window, she could see Donna's shape stood up and she was gesturing with her hands, talking to someone.

When Donna came out she was yelling and screaming that Kim had told Sheldon she was at Jacob Parrott's going-away party. Jacob is Kim's ex-husband. Donna threatened to haul Kim's head off. Kim said what's wrong with you—she didnt talk to Sheldon, and then Donna couldnt figure out how he found out about it. Sheldon had said he'd figured it out for himself.

They went to Dr Galgay's office on Water Street. Kim brought Nicholas in to get his eyes checked. Donna went in and got some valium. Kim saw the doctor too and got Atasol 30, for Donna. Kim went to doctors with Donna two times a month. Kim didnt use them herself. Some months she didnt go at all. She was supposed to get a special type of pills for back pain and nerves. Kim stopped doing it because she thought she was making a fool of herself going in and asking for things that she didnt need. If Kim did have to explain it, she only had to explain it once and then if you went back to the same doctor, all you got to do is ask for a refill on your pills.

Donna was getting gigantic quantities of pills. She shared them with her neighbours, Ruth and Pat and their son, Tom Vivian. She gave some to Sheldon. If someone asked her for some, she'd give it to them.

Donna dropped the letter off at Housing and then they were on their way to the supermarket. They stopped into a store and Donna got something for her father, Aubrey Whalen, and dropped it off at the graveyard on Blackmarsh Road. An apple flip and a can of Pepsi.

They went to the supermarket on Ropewalk Lane. Donna was shoplifting in there. Kim dont remember what she stole. Food. Then Delta Drugstore. They were there long enough to get the prescription filled. Then to Kim's house. Then Donna had to go home and cook supper.

That night she came over again to do some laundry. Donna had gotten a bed that she bought off Kim's father-in-law and Donna

wanted Kim to get in touch with him. Two bureaus and the frame of the bed had been delivered. It was only the boxspring and mattress that wasn't there. Donna wanted it before she left to go to a wedding on the mainland so Sheldon could sleep in a bed instead of on the chesterfield.

This was about eight o'clock. Kim had a headache so she asked Donna for an Atasol. She had nothing with her, just her purse. She had the tape recorder in her purse. On the tape Sheldon came out of the bathroom and spoke about a couple of people that Kim couldn't pick out. Then Sheldon asked who Rod's friends were. That's Kim's boyfriend, Rod Tessier. Sheldon said their graves are sunk.

Some parts of the tape were hard to pick out because Donna had the recorder covered over. One part of the tape you hear Donna say what are you doing Sheldon. This is where Sheldon is in the bedroom knocking items off the dresser. He was trying to fix the doily that was on her bureau and he ended up knocking stuff over. He was on something. There was a part about how Sheldon spoke about flowers. Sheldon was thinking about his brother Raymond, Donna said. Sheldon was going to Raymond's grave with flowers.

Sheldon had an extra set of keys to the house and Donna wanted to get away from him because she was afraid of him. She used the excuse to Housing that someone had died in her bathtub.

She told Kim last summer that Sheldon and herself and the kids went to Bowring Park and walked around the park holding hands. This is the only nice thing that Kim knows of that happened between them.

That Friday night they were talking about relationships, boyfriends, daily life. About violence they've been through, and it's nice to be able to talk about it every once and a while. Sheldon had gone into the kitchen and taken a knife and stabbed it into her coffee table saying

that he had done it before and he'd do it again. Donna was serious when she spoke about that. She didnt laugh. It was unusual for them to have a serious conversation. Donna was afraid that Sheldon was going to show up at Kim's house looking for her. Every time the cat walked by the window or a bag blew by she would jump up thinking it was Sheldon, and Kim kept telling her calm down Sheldon's gone home, he is gone to bed and sit down relax, have your cup of tea. That didnt help, she kept being jumpy.

Donna told Kim not to mention the tape to anybody. She didnt want nobody to know about it. She was afraid if Sheldon found out he'd think she was going to use it against him. One week Donna wanted to have babies, next week she wanted to get rid of him. Once you get involved with the Trokes you can't get rid of them, Donna said. No way out of the relationship, not just Sheldon, with the whole family, the way she put it.

On Saturday morning Donna's mother phoned and said, Donna's dead. Kim didnt know what she was talking about, if she was dead or if someone wanted to beat up on her. So Kim phoned Donna's house. She left Donna a message. It went along the lines of she was worried about her and asked her to pick up the phone.

Sheldon Troke phoned Kim that Saturday evening. Was Donna seeing anybody or did Kim know of anything that could help him find out what happened and Kim told him no. Sheldon told Kim that Donna's daughter, Sharon, thinks he done it.

Kim has seen Donna with a black eye and a mark over her eyelid and she felt lumps on her head a few times. Donna said Sheldon hit her. She had a black eye, mostly underneath her eye. You wouldnt be able to cover it up. If she put enough foundation on but it would have to be a lot. Donna just said it was a set of keys being flinged at her. Sheldon flung them.

When Donna was leaving that Friday night she said goodbye, take care of yourself. Donna gave Kim a hug and she left. That was unusual. Donna didnt show emotion very well. They used to be really close, past couple of years they havent been. For her to leave giving her a hug take care of yourself is really strange.

SHELDON TROKE

Before Sheldon moved in they used to argue. He was always gone and he used to tell Donna that he done a number of years in jail, and he'd like to get out with his friends and they argued because some mornings he'd leave and didnt come back until three oclock in the morning and some nights he didnt come back at all. He tried to change it and just go to Buckmaster Circle in the daytimes. Everybody comes in the Circle to buy drugs, especially acid. They go downtown to the clubs and to parties. Then Sheldon started going downtown again with his friends and they'd fight over that.

Sheldon drank like a fish. Donna she'd come to the Circle and hear his friends talking. She got along well with his friends. She laughed and she was curious. How much do hash and acid cost and how much do you sell it for and who do you get it off. They used to argue over that too. Sometimes it was just passing comments in a sarcastic way. Sometimes they'd get loud.

When he moved in he moved all his clothes in there. He moved the waterbed in. Everything he had.

One afternoon they were out driving and they hauled into Needs Convenience. They rented a movie for the kids and one for themselves. They got back to the apartment. Donna got a phone call and while she was on the phone she said, Sheldon, there's a girl in Mount Pearl is having a baby shower. You wouldnt mind if I went in? He found