

Thurs April 17, 2008

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Capt Smith,

I enjoyed visiting with you and DAN today. Some cops I like and feel a great affinity towards and some cops I find disgusting. I liked both of you. I was also impressed with your ability as a detective. A good detective has to have persistence and be able to associate with the most leathsome people and get along with them. You were persistent and you made me like you.

I couldn't quit thinking about our interview, for two reasons. Firstly, I like you and I was touched by the way that you were touched by that missing boy. Secondly, I couldn't stop wondering, what actually did happen to that boy.

I'm writing to tell you that I "know", as well as I can "know" anything that I didn't actually see, what happened to him. No, I'm sorry, but it wasn't me. Let me assure you again that all you would have to do is offer me a no death, penalty deal and I would be glad to clear everything up, but it wasn't me.

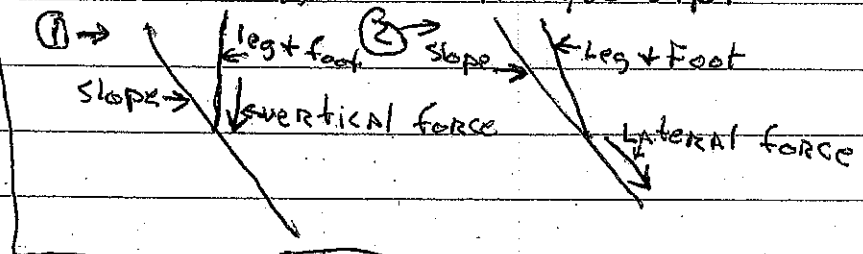
The key to my "solving" the puzzle was the picture that you showed me of Table Rock Mountain. As I said, it is a "pluton", a large mass of granite formed deep under the surface and then pushed to the surface and eroded bare or partially bare. Stone Mountain, Ga and Looking Glass Mountain, Pisgah Ranger District, N.C. are classic examples of plutons. A secondary key to my "solving" the puzzle is my unexcelled experience as a mountain hiker.

There is type of human behaviour on plutons that happens so often ~~and~~ as to be "normal". They get out onto these slopes that gradually increase in steepness. They gradually increase in steepness lures them on. Then "suddenly" they find that they can no longer continue and attempt to return. At that time, they realize how steep the slope is. This, and the "bigness" of the sky (a phenomenon well known to parachutists) makes fear set in and they become "frozen", and have to be rescued. Check with Stone Mtn., Ga. This has happened scores of times in the last 100 years on that one mountain. In the 1920's and 1930's, there was a man called "The Barefoot Boy of Stone Mountain". He was nationally famous for the dozens of rescues that he performed on people (and dogs) on that mountain.

Some people are not so lucky. There is no one to rescue them. They either slip and fall before they know what's happening, or they slip and fall as they try to return.

The reason they fall is because they violate rule number one of friction rock climbing. In friction rock climbing, you're using "footholds" rather than "handholds". You're depending on the friction of your boot soles to lock you on to the rock. Rule number one is to keep your center of gravity over your point of contact. This results in a vertical down force (see drawing #1). If you lean into the slope, this results in a force that has a lateral component (see drawing #2). The result of this lateral component is that the friction is broken and you slip.

The reason that even experienced climbers lean into the slope is simply fear. They get out onto a big rock face and see a long fall below them and the big sky around them and an ~~instinctual~~ instinctual, almost uncontrollable fear sets in.



I saw an experienced climber, on Yonah Mountain, Ga., fall because he leaned in. As he was being carried away, he stated that he leaned in because he was afraid.

So know that we "know" what happened, the question is, why no body was found. I assume that there was an extensive air and ground search using dogs. There are three ~~possibilities~~ possibilities.

The first, least likely, is that his body is at the base of the mountain and simply missed in the search. Not likely, but possible. We, both understand how rugged the Appalachians are and just a few square miles become really big when you go to search it.

The second possibility is that his body hit a ledge or other projection on the side of the mountain and that's where it is.

The third, most likely, possibility ~~is~~ involves the fact, as you said, that it happened in April. At this time, bears ~~are~~ have come out of hibernation. They are ravenously hungry. Also at this time the female bears will run off their one year old male cubs that they birthed the year before, and who have spent the last winter hibernating with their mothers. These young males have no established territory and they wander all over the place looking for one. The whole time these young males are getting their ass whipped by ~~the~~ elder males whose territory they have wandered into and they are desperately hungry. Some do not survive. The result of all these hungry bears is that boy was quickly and almost completely consumed by bears. If there were coyotes present in that area 10 years ago then they finished the job.

As Sherlock Holmes said being a detective is "simply a matter of deduction". Part of deduction is understanding probabilities. The probability of that boy vanishing into thin air for any other reason is infinitesimally small when compared to the ~~probability~~ probability of falling from a platen, which happens so often as to be considered normal. I believe the ~~probability~~ probability of a slip and fall scenario is about %99,999. Therefore, I "know" what happened.

Of course I understand that you will never let go of this case, because you're a good detective, but there is no real doubt in my mind that he slipped and fell, because it's a typical, commonplace occurrence.

At any rate, feel free to write me any time if you have questions.

I hope that as a result of this letter and our interview that you will have some good thoughts of me and understand that I'm not all bad.

I also hope that you will put your mind at rest about any involvement by me in this.

Remember ~~that~~ although a detective, by nature, does not believe in coincidences, that you must always leave room for coincidence, so let me assure you again. The fact that I have driven by Table Rock Mountain Park is a coincidence, and it's an understandable coincidence.

Good Luck,

