

## Story Writing Competition

### Entry-VI

# Mystery of the Phantom

by Farzeen Saleh

"You live alone?" I cried out in bewilderment as I walked towards the front door with Mrs Ali, my client.

"Yes, quite alone," she said, yanking the teak door upon and gesturing me to follow her.

Mrs Ali, a phantom arrives at your house every week and you live alone in a big house like this? "I asked again stopping. Turning to face me she said, "Why I'm not afraid of him. After all he is my husband."

"Your husband is dead," I said promptly.

"I thought so too but he looks so like him; same height built — she retorted staring at the ceiling.

— And face right?!! On sure and your husband was a victim from the 'Pet Cemetery' and the evil spirit drove him off right! Look I work on these things I know what happens to people in this sort of situations! "I said impatiently "what happens to them?" she asked folding her arms.

They go to — to — u'm well you see — I don't think, well — I mumbled thinking of the statement's unpleasantness.

"Rehabilitation centres," is he said? They go to rehabs right? "Right" I mumbled softly "Well," she said and started to walk through a dim lighted hall, "I'm not mad or crazy and I'm not a victim of the

making dinner while I searched for another weapon. After finding a chopping board I sat down at a corner of the table and smoothed the cloth. Feeling something uneven I pushed the cloth away and discovered or should I say found my knife. "Oh, what?!! I couldn't help crying out.

"What is it now?" asked Mrs Ali obviously arranged.

The knife I lost is under the table cloth," I answered amazed by her acting. She seemed to know what I was going to say before I said it.

"The phantom" she said sighing. "We've got to find it."

"Right" I managed to say "Where can we do that?" I mean — where did you see him last?"

"In the basement come on," she said and walked out of the room.

It was about 8:30 pm then and the sky had a few single stars. In the basement the only visible thing was the rusty silver coloured dining set.

"Look," suddenly Mrs Ali cried out. I turned and saw a white figure in a flowing white robe standing under the trees.

The phantom "I gasped and quickly ran towards it. It saw me because it slowly began to move the other way.

Before I reached him he had disappeared into the night. As I turned to walk back Mrs Ali caught up with me and asked if I had been able to



rehab centre so so you better either believe in me or get lost!" she said forcibly.

"Ok — I was interrupted by an eerie sound just the birds. "We have lots of those she mumbled indistinctly.

"So are you going to send me to a rehab?" she asked. No — of course not! I mean why should I. It could just be an illusion," I said, not sure how to respond. "My sentiments exactly," she said and led me up a flight of steps and into a terrace and pushed a door open.

"This was my husband's room," she said nonchalantly. "Wow, I managed to escape. What a mess!" The entire room was torn to pieces. Broken furniture, china pots, glass plastic torn sheets were strewn all over the place. "Was anything taken?" I asked recovering.

"Yes, an old trunk containing all my husbands papers, documents, and things like that," she said as if it didn't matter.

"Aren't they — valuable?" I asked. "I have copies" was the reply. She twisted her greying hair and asked me if I wanted to see the rest.

At my agreement we went down again and this time straight to a long room with sofa and writing tables. As we reached the table she said it was her husband's and all the papers it had contained were taken out.

"We reached the white washed hall I noticed something reddish written on it not noticing it before. I learned over and found the words scribbled 'Intruders not allowed!'"

"Oh no!" cried Mrs Ali. "You — She stopped as if it would hurt to talk.

Yes, I'm the intruder "I said angrily "It's not going to stop me from finding out."

I walked angrily to the kitchen and searched for a weapon. In the end I found a butcher knife; I pushed it inside by belt and fished out a torch and went to the long room to start my investigation. When I reached the end of the room I noticed a small cupboard with papers sticking out of it. As I knelt down to open it the lights dimmed. I turned and "BAMP" something hard hit me on the head and I felt faint. —

When I woke up I saw Mrs Ali with a glass of water in her hand. She looked nervous could she be the one who hit me? If so why? These questions fumbled in my mind. A lump had probably formed where I was hit.

I stood up and noticed my knife was gone from the belt. I looked at Mrs Ali but she looked away. Frankly I didn't know what to think. As I went down stairs I watched her closely. One thing was for sure. She was a suspect now the best one!

In the kitchen was Mrs Ali

catch it. "It was too late!" I replied panting.

She suggested we look for clues and as she stooped around I stared at the house thinking. Suddenly I thought I saw a shadow in the one of the second floor rooms! "Mrs Ali look there's someone inside!" I rushed towards the house so saying.

But she was too quick for me. She took hold of my arm and yanked me away. "What the heck!" I cried out.

"You won't go, there's no one there! just you and me," she said slowly.

"But I saw a someone I swear!" I protested.

"You will not go inside she said again and this time took a pistol out of her pocket and whistled softly as if to intensify her point.

"Why Mrs Ali — I don't understand! I stammered staring at the pistol.

"You will," she smiled dangerously. "Move to the basement. Don't look back or I'll shoot."

"Goodbye world! Thanks for everything you've done for me!" I mumbled tearfully.

"Aloud!" I said "Is this a mistake?"

"No," she answered and then I heard another voice.

"So you got her good work!" I heard a man's voice kill it? he asked.

"Yup" Mrs Ali answered.

The man took hold of my arms from behind and pushed me towards the basement.

Thinking quickly, I grabbed my glasses and flung them at him. "Off! Off!" the man groaned and fell back. I saw Mrs Ali quickly come forward.

I ran towards her and kicked her as hard as I could on the stomach. She fell back and I caught hold of the pistol and went inside and called the police.

The next day dozen reporters came over to my little house and told me that Mrs Ali was mentally imbalanced. She had killed her husband and family. She hated agents because she feared they would take her away to Pabna. So she had called me in a false alarm and had tried to kill me. The other man was a little boy she had provided when he was young. He did anything she told him to do. The phantom was just an illusion as I had suspected. The man had used a sort of machine used in making movies and shows. Where a small object could be enlarged. I thanked him for the information and when he left I realised I still had the knife with me.

I felt sorry for her. She just wanted to be normal. But then I thought about my life which had been hanging on a thread. I realised it was too precious for me to give my actions a second thought!

ONE

Absolute pin-drop silence prevailed in the courtroom. Rachel Almhurst sat motionless, not really paying attention to the monotonous speech the district attorney had launched into. Her mind was racing — there was no rationale at all, based on which she could defend the accused. Jack Russell. It was the much publicized Winston Abraham murder case and Rachel, who was reputed as the best criminal lawyer in the town had been specifically requested to personally handle the case.

Rachel considered the whole evidence. There was one eye-witness, an old lady; That was the killer one. Other than that, no murder weapon was found, no motive was clearly established. And as even after the murder, nothing of the numerous valuable things were missing from Abraham's house, there was virtually nothing to connect Jack Russell to the murder scene. Except, of course, for the eye witness. The old lady had picked Russell up from a line-up.

The police super was presently on the stand. Mr Simon — the DA was questioning him. "What exactly did the defendant say when you put her under arrest?"

Super: He said that he was innocent and knew nothing about any murder.

Simon: Did he not in fact try to exculpate himself even before you told him what the charges were?"

Super: Yes, he did.

Simon: And did he not say he was not guilty of murder, before you told him the charge was murder?"

"Objection!" Rachel ejaculated. "Leading the witness."

"Sustained," the judge announced. "counsel will refrain from leading the witness."

Simon: Okay, your honour, I will rephrase the question. Did the defendant tell you he was not guilty of murder before or after you told him what the charges were?"

Super: He said it before I told him the charge.

Simon thanked him and turned to Rachel and said, "your witness." "No questions for this witness."

Next in quick succession the efficient DA produced several witnesses who certified that

Jack Russel was a violent man with a fiery temper. Rachel was getting worried. Everything was going against her client. Lastly when the DA produced papers showing Russell had two more previous records of imprisonment for aggravated assault, Rachel was literally biting her nails, with anxiety. Next came Mrs Denver



— the eyewitness. As the DA cross-examined her, it was revealed that she lived just above the deceased man's flat. That night, just before the incident, the power supply had been cut off. So as Mrs Denver looked down from her apartment she saw a man running away with a bloody knife in his hand. He had run a little way and fled in a car that had apparently been waiting for him.

As Rachel rose to cross examine Mrs Denver she looked directly into her eyes. "What colour shirt was the man wearing — Ma'am?" She en-

quired politely. "Oh — er... a white plain shirt." "Just like yours little miss," she added meekly. And that was it Rachel froze. She could not believe her good fortune. The old woman had just made the mistake of her life.

A little while later, Rachel retreated from the bench and giving a smug smile towards

the DA she handed Mrs Denver two pens from her purse, one red and one white. She said to Mrs Denver, "Now, would the witness please raise the red pen for us to see." As his previous objections had been overruled, the DA did not dare object to such unorthodox practices again. And at this juncture the old woman on the stand suddenly broke down. She started to sob and covered her face with her two hands. "I'm sorry" whispered Rachel softly. "Your Honor, I would like to inform this courthouse

# Justice

By: Adnan R Amin

that Mrs Denver is blind to the colour red and she could've, in no way known that the knife in the alleged killer's hand was bloodstained." Moreover it is doubtfully considered by us that she could've recognized the man in the line-up when the only time she saw him was while running away in the dark. Even the lights were out — your honour! For God's sake —

The jury was out in about two hours. They found Jack Russell not guilty of murder. The evidence, which actually did seem overwhelming initially, turned out to be insufficient. It was not beyond reasonable doubt. The DA walked up to Rachel and congratulated her with a dry smile.

Outside, cutting a swath through swarms of reporters, Rachel and Russell advanced together. "How did you know about the colour blindness? That was a pretty good stunt." Rachel laughed. "When asked about the colour of your shirt, she said it was white, just like mine!" Russell roared with laughter looking at her red and white striped shirt. "But you were wearing a white shirt that day Russell, weren't you?" Jack Russell's smug smile faded from his face. His soft features hardened. And a dangerously cold attitude twinkled in his eyes as he spoke. "We better not discuss that now, miss-OK? And keep your big blabbering mouth shut for your own good — get it?" saying those words he walked away.

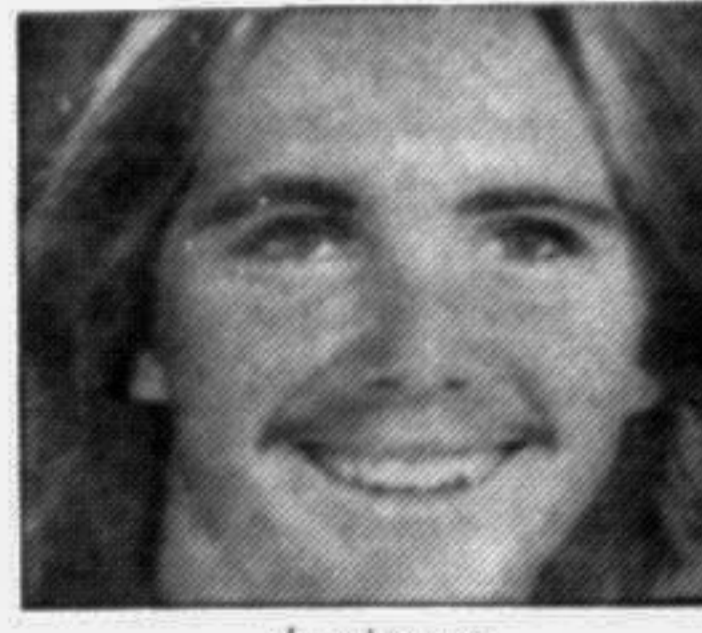
TWO

It was almost a week later that Rachel turned up at Russells place with a flower bouquet. "Surprise" she yelled as Russell opened the door. She handed him the flowers and fumbled in her pocket looking for something. What came out in her delicately shaped hands was a Walther PPK. "Another surprise" said Rachel as she shot three bullets — right into Russell's chest. And immediately blood began gushing out. "Another bastard down" — Rachel thought happily, as she stared at the motionless body lying on the floor. Yet she knew it would take much more such incidents to accomplish her mission. There was a long way to go.

## A Forgotten Chapter From the Ongoing Connotations Between METAL MUSIC AND SUICIDES

by Shazaad Ahmed

JAY Vance had lost part of his jaw, tongue, nose, gums and all but one tooth as a result of the self-inflicted gun wound. Surgeons at Stanford University had managed to mould a portion of his scalp into a nose. His mangled jaw was substituted by part of his shoulder, and during certain intervals, he had to dig out with his hands what was left of his mutilated tongue from within his throat. The bullet from the sawed off, twelve gauge shot gun with which his friend Raymond Belknap had blown his brains on the deadly suicide pact performed that a forgettable night on the 23rd of December, 1985, had blasted through Vance's chin and ripped out of his nose, barely missing the brain.



Jay Vance lived three years after his friend Ray Belknap died.

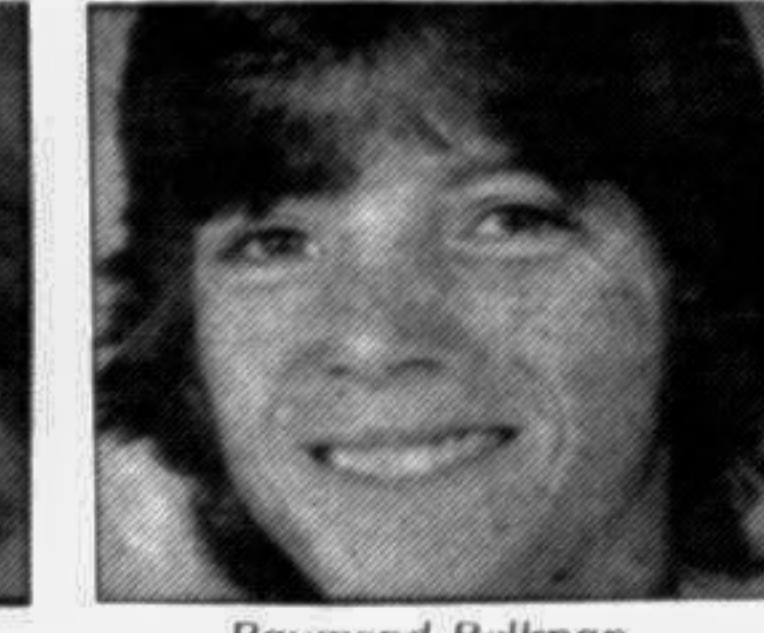
Jay Vance was then 20 years old. His mother Phyllis describes him as a violent young man who in his teens would storm through the house, breaking things and smashing holes through the doors if he didn't get what he wanted. Given the fact that both his parents were alcoholics during his childhood, Jay was raised in a violent home and was diagnosed as being hyperkinetic at the age of four. He was subjected to therapy as a result of his violent actions, and during one such incident at the age of 14, he tried to choke his mother while she was driving on the free way. He eventually dropped out of high-school during his sophomore year, and started working in the bindery of a printing press.

Raymond Belknap, Jay's best friend (and the second member of the suicide pact) was two years younger than his friend owing to the fact that Vance was made to repeat his first and second grade at school. Although his childhood was far less dramatic than Jay's, he too became a high school drop-out who lived at home and had just started working for a local contractor. But while Vance possessed a violent streak, Raymond was described by his mother, Aunetta Roberson, as being shy and gentle and a loving son who was led on by Jay Vance.

But personality differences aside, the two boys shared a great deal in common resulting in an unbreakable bond. The two had met six years earlier at Dilworth Middle School at the Reno suburb of Sparks. Both abused alcohol and drugs with Jay drinking a twelve-pack each day. Their intake of drugs included pot, cocaine, methamphetamine, angel dust and hallucinogens. In July of 1985, a friend of the friend got the money back. His friend asked Jay what his favourite leisure-time activity was, the answer came in two

simple words: "Doing drugs." Jay Vance and Raymond Belknap's most cherished possessions consisted of their guns, their stereo, and their collection of heavy metal music. They both had police records on several offenses, and both subjected to an abusive childhood and a hard life, found an escape through substance abuse and violent fantasies — their most frequent had them acting out as mercenaries. They played cops and criminals in their parents' homes with real guns and practiced shooting on cans and small animals.

But what strengthened their bond even further was their fanatic devotion to the



Raymond Belknap

we started getting this feeling of power, and it was something we got often. And we started rocking out, and we started getting really involved in the music."

Later that afternoon, several decisions were made. Ray was going to quit his job as a result of the incident with his boss the night before. Jay who hated his job at the bindery, and described it as spending 12 hours at the press, and another 3 hours trying to wash of the ink that never wore off, making a guy look like he had leprosy, was going to do the same.

But as the afternoon proceeded, the mood in the room darkened. Overcome by the effects of drugs and alcohol, Jay Vance later recalled in an interview conducted by the police, that the music they loved was starting to give them directions. "All of a sudden we got this suicide message and we got tired of life." He was referring to specific lines from the song "Beyond the Realms of Death."

"Keep the world with all it's sins  
It's not worth living in"  
— Judas Priest, Beyond the Realms of Death.

On December 23rd, 1985, in Ray's bedroom, the two men talked while they drank beer and smoked marijuana. They had gotten worked up over an incident that took place the night before. Ray had lost his day's wage of fifty dollars to his boss while playing pool at Doc and Eddy's tavern, and Jay, displaying his usual violent streak offered to help his friend get the money back. His solution was simple, he would render the man helpless by stomping on the back of his

work. But Jay's revelation concerning his plans to quit the job at the bindery led to a fight that spilled out over the living room, spilled out over one that was no different from all the other fights Jay had with the same old talk about his future and his responsibilities.

Raymond Belknap and Jay Vance returned to the room for what was going to be their last entrance into the den of drugs and alcohol. They finished drinking their last pack of beer. It was then that Jay brought himself to make the ultimate decision. Leave this life for all its sins, it's not worth living in. These lines made more sense to him than ever before. He said to his friend, "Let's see what is next, let's leave this world, let's go."

They hugged each other goodbye, and taking the shotgun, they went out through the window.

They ran behind the house, skipped the fence and entered the deserted playground of the Community First Church of God preschool, not far from the house.

"I sure screwed up my life" was the last thing Raymond Belknap said. He sat down on the merry-go-round, wedged the stock of the gun on the ground and steadied the muzzle right under his chin. He pulled the trigger and blew his head off.

Jay stared at the body for a few moments. It lay before him, motionless and drenched in blood. And now it was his turn to finish what he had initiated. He picked up the shotgun, and as he later recalled, there was so much blood on it, he had some difficulty handling the weapon. He reloaded the gun and propped it against the merry-go-round. At that moment his centre life flashed before his eyes. He thought of his mother, his father and his best friend, whose bloody corpse lay only a few inches away from where he stood. He held that position for a few minutes, with the barrel of the shotgun pressing against his chin.

But as he fired, something went wrong. The muzzle shifted, and as a result of the "accident", the bullet, instead of penetrating his brains, tore through his chin and blasted out of his nose.

"Wine is fine, but whiskey's quicker  
Suicide is slow with liquor  
Take a bottle down your sorrows  
Then it floods away tomorrow."  
— OZZY OSBOURNE — "Suicide Solution"

To be continued

## BILL HOWLADAR

almost the last part of a very boring western story refused by all publishers of the world... excepting the RS editor who agreed to publish it at gun point

STORY: HAMID-UR-RASHID  
CARTOON: SHARIER

sounds like someone's playing my tape recorder in full volume... who can it be?

CHOLI K! PICHHEY KIYAL! MAEI

CHOLI K! PICHHEY

DANCE SUNDARI, DANCE... I WILL GIVE YOU MY 2-IN-1 IF YOU MARRY ME... I LOVE YOU... HU HU HA HA SUNDARI, COME TO MY ARMS... DON'T SAY 'CHHERE DE

SHOOT GO AWAY, WHY YOU SHOOT? I AM ABOUT TO TURN MARY IN TO 'SHORIFA' & YOU DISTURB ME... & HOW DARE YOU ASSAULT MY ABBATAN SAMSON & LOOK AT MY TAPE RECORDER!

WHY YOU SHOOT? I AM FURIOUS & I WILL TEACH YOU TWO A LESSON

YOU WANT TO TEACH US A LESSON? LISTEN FOR THEFT, ASSAULT AND SIBL TEASING!

NOTE: SIBL, while on assignment to kill Samson (killing Shorifa's cow, actually killed it during hi-speed drive

ME A COW THEFT? I MAY HAVE HAD STOLEN THE 2-IN-1 FROM A BUILT SHOP... BUT NEVER A COW... SINCE IT DOES NOT FIT IN MY POCKET! I THEREFORE, DEDUCT THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO FRAME ME WITH YOUR FALSE ALLEGATIONS!

I'LL FRAME YOU WITH BULLETS NOW, OK?

HUM YOU DOUBLE CROSSERS, TRIPLE CROSSERS QUARTET, CROSSERS, RIVER CROSSERS!!

CRASH TAKE THAT!

MY FRENCH WIG! BILL HAS BLOWN MY WIG!!!

LOOK MARY I AM NOT ALWAYS BAULD WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I REALLY HAD

LOOK CHANDU I AM NOT GOING TO MARRY AN OLD MAN LIKE YOU. I WILL MARRY BILL WHO AT LEAST HAS GENUINE HAIR

I FEEL SMALL

UGH! UGLY HAIR

OH YEAH? YOU WILL MARRY SAMSON, COZ YOU HAVE FALSE HAIR, EYE LASH AND WHAT NOTS!

SHOOT MARY! BUT... THE READERS SURVIVE... SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

### Quiz Club

Answers (July 5, 1996)

- Computer-Aided Design.
- Instrument for measuring Potential difference.
- Using a contractile Vacuole
- Largest class of arthropods.
- 1923
- Vikram Seth
- 19th
- USS 1.7 b
- 1997
- Barrister Moudud Ahmed

Just answer the following 10 quizzes and send your answer to our Daily Star Office as soon as possible.

- Who is the writer of the book, 'The Firm'?
- What does iLo represent?
- What is the capital of Zambia?
- What is the approximate height of Mount Everest?
- Hiroshima was devastated by 1st atomic bomb on
- When did Hitler establish the National Socialist (Nazi) Party?
- Due to political unrest in the last two years the local garment sector incurred a loss of — taka.
- What does the term 'ingestion' mean?
- Kyphosis is .....
- What does UNESCO stand for?