

19. Something Going On

On the eighth day since Chase Andrews's body was found in the swamp, Deputy Purdue and Sheriff Ed indulged in a morning treat of coffee and donuts from Parker's, a ritual that set the tone for their day. Amidst the familiar comfort of their routine, both men revealed they had stumbled upon potential leads in Chase's case. Deputy Purdue relayed information from sources around town and the Dog-Gone bar indicating that Chase had been secretly visiting the marshlands alone for the past four years. This behavior marked a departure from his usual outings with friends, sparking speculation that he might have been involved in illicit activities, possibly with dangerous individuals in drug circles or an undisclosed relationship. Despite Chase's reputation as an athlete and a member of the Barkley elite, this new angle suggested a hidden aspect of his life that defied his public persona.

Sheriff Ed expressed skepticism about Chase's involvement with drugs, given his athletic background, but acknowledged the possibility that Chase was seeking excitement beyond his glory days. The notion of an affair with a woman from the marshlands, though initially dismissed due to Chase's social circles, gained some credibility as they considered his secretive behavior might have been motivated by a desire to maintain appearances while engaging in affairs deemed slumming.

The conversation about Chase's clandestine activities in the marsh opened up a new investigative path for the deputies, prompting them to consider exploring this angle further. Adding to the intrigue, Chase's mother contacted the sheriff's office, hinting at a vital piece of evidence related to a shell necklace Chase wore consistently. She believed it was crucial to the case and planned to discuss it with them that afternoon. This information presented a new lead, suggesting that personal items and relationships might hold the key to unraveling the mystery surrounding Chase Andrews's life and death. The chapter closes with anticipation of Chase's mother's revelations, setting the stage for potential breakthroughs in the investigation.