

## Chapter 52

### Over the Telephone

#### Israel and Washington, DC

Omer and Kelley had been on the telephone for over an hour. Both were shaken to the core of their beings. Both were frightened for their friends. Both were stretching their minds for solutions as they argued over what-ifs.

Their concerns were: What if the killer bombed the house? What if the killer went in and shot everybody? What if the killer believes every one of them knows the same information? What if there is torture?

Torturing themselves was what they were doing.

Finally, Kelley said, "Let's list what we are afraid to do and why. Then we can reevaluate and see if we can come up with something viable we can do."

"We can't call them because we don't know if the house has been bugged. Aimed microphones are powerful and reliable these days. The killers may already be in the house."

"We can't go to the house because the house is probably being watched."

"We can't call the local police because we might send them into an ambush."

"We can't call someone like the FBI because we don't know whom to trust."

"The Selvista home is not in a neighborhood we could drive around and look inconspicuous. It's a farm in the middle of nowhere."

"Can we text them or send an e-mail"? Omer asked.

"We don't have that capability on our safe telephones," Kelley answered. "I don't know if someone's cell is tapped if that includes texts and e-mail."

"I'll call my tech friend and ask."

Kelley used her cell phone while Omer was on hold on the safe telephone.

Her friend told her that having a phone tap would not allow texts or e-mails to be read, but hacking a cell phone would be different. He suggested that she not take the risk.

“Mac, I will pack a bag with some gear and come to your office. We may be able to make some changes to get some form of communication.” Kelley’s friend was eager to help.

Kelley passed on the information to Omer.

Omer said, “This is the first time I have had such a long list of things that cannot be done and not even one item that can be done.”

Then he added. “Kelley, I know something.”

“What do you know?” She asked.

“That is the problem,” Omer said discouragingly. “I do not know what I know. Something is nagging at me from somewhere in my memory that keeps telling me I know what to do. I keep trying to make it come to the forefront.”

“How can I help you?” Kelley asked.

Omer continued. “I keep feeling like it has something to do with Liza.”

Kelley was puzzled. “How could Liza know anything? She only knows what she sees and what people sign to her.”

“That’s it, Kelley.” Omer was almost shouting. It has something to do with signing.

“I am sure it is something Dan told us. I am sure it came from a conversation. You know, not common chit-chat, but an interesting conversation as we learned to know one another.”

“Do you think it may be from one of our early conversations on the telephone?” Kelley suggested.

“Maybe so,” Omer contemplated.

Kelley’s nerves were tingling. “I ask because I recorded every telephone conversation. You hold on a second, and I will retrieve them and play them on the phone. Make sure your phone is well charged.”

“These recordings are digital, so they are easy to cue up,” Kelley explained. “I’ll start with the very first one.”

They listened quietly until Omer yelled. “That’s it. Hit rewind and start with the part where I ask Dan about Liza’s religious training.”

*“Speaking of faith,” continued Omer. “Dan, I have a brother who has a non-hearing son, and he constantly worries about Josuah’s religious training. Do you have any advice?”*

*“I don’t know about advice, but I can tell you how it works for Liza,” Dan offered. “Most fortunately for Liza, she is an excellent reader. We go to*

*the Anglian Church early service, and Liza reads the scripture for herself, stands and reads the hymns as we sing, and then entertains herself with a novel.”*

*“What Liza has done for her religious training surprised Alice and me. She found Zion United Methodist Church in Richmond on television. The minister has a signer for his entire message, and they have an American Sign Language choir. There are usually four or five singers, and I must tell you that their signing is beautiful. All three of us love to watch them. Liza will not miss worshipping with the television every Sunday. She has the sermon automatically recorded in case something happens to cause her to miss it.”*

“Did you hear it?” Omer’s voice was up a couple of octaves.

“I heard it and am on my way to the car. I will find that church, minister, priest, or whatever you call Methodist. I’ll call you after I talk to him. Omer, you are an incredible man and an incredible friend. God bless you.”

Kelley called her friend from the car and told him what she and Omer had learned by listening to taped phone conversations. She suggested he lag his trip to her office because she was going to Richmond. “I need an hour or so to get there, some time to spend, and the return trip. Honestly, I feel a bit untethered in the car. All I can do is fret.”

You have to wonder: Who are these friends being threatened by? Why would someone want to hurt them? How can a Methodist minister help them, and will he be willing to help? Will assistance be timely?