

# Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 16

## Introduction

The first rule of Flanagan's Running Club is everyone should talk about Flanagan's Running Club!  
Feel free to forward on to anyone you want, tell people about it the works, and just get them to sign up.

Can I ask you all a favour, please can you review my book on Inkitt, and the link is below. Even if you don't take time to read it properly, please flick through a few chapters, give it ratings and a review and vote for it please. It may help me get it published.

<https://www.inkitt.com/stories/thriller/201530>

## On This Day – 16<sup>th</sup> November

1871 – The National Rifle Association receives its charter from New York State.

1920 – Qantas, Australia's national airline is founded as Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Limited.

1938 – LSD is first synthesized by Albert Hofmann from ergotamine at the Sandoz Laboratories in Basel

1990 – Pop group Milli Vanilli are stripped of their Grammy Award because the duo did not sing at all on the Girl You Know It's True album. Session musicians had provided all the vocals.

Icelandic Language Day or Dagur íslenskrar tungu  
And it's International Day for Tolerance

### Mapping The London Year

**1477 – William Caxton, the first person to introduce printing to England, publishes Dictes Or Sayengis Of The Philosophres (Sayings Of The Philosophers).**

Caxton lived for a time in Bruges, where he set up a press and printed Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye, the first book in the English language. He returned to London and established a press in Westminster in 1476. The first book Caxton produced was Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, but the date of this is uncertain. Other notable works were Sir Thomas Mallory's Le Morte d'Arthur and the first English translation of Aesop's Fables. English was changing rapidly during his lifetime, and Caxton is credited with standardising the English language through printing.

### Chuck D Presents This Day In Rap And Hip-Hop History

**1993 - Queen Latifah releases her third album “Black Reign” on Motown records.**

Produced by Kay Gee of Naughty By Nature, Tony Dofat, Sidney “S.I.D.” Reynolds, and Queen Latifah, the gold-selling set marked her move to Motown and reached #60 on the Billboard 200 and #15 on the R&B chart.

“Black Reign” contained the singles “Black Hand Side”, “Weekend Love”, featuring Tony Rebel, “Just Another Day”, “Rough...”, featuring Heavy-D & the Boyz, Treach of Naughty By Nature, and KRS-One, and the anti-misogyny anthem “U.N.I.T.Y.,” which hit the top ten on the R&B chart and won the Grammy for best rap solo performance.

### 365 – Great Stories From History For Every Day Of The Year

**1272** Henry III, son of the iniquitous King John and fourth Plantagenet king of England, breathed his last on this day in the Tower of London. He was 65 years old and had been king for 56 years, a record reign among European monarchs that would survive 450 years until France's Louis XIV surpassed it with the all-time record of 72 years.

Sadly, length of reign was Henry's sole achievement. It is calculated that this ambitious but cowardly and incompetent monarch actually ruled during only 24 of the years that he was King. First he was dominated by his courtiers, then he was overthrown by the redoubtable Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and when Leicester was finally defeated and killed, Henry's son Edward I took over the reins of government from the now faltering and senile old King.

Although Henry's 56-year reign is impressive, two non-European monarchs before him had reigned longer, the Byzantine Emperor Basil II for 62 years in the late 10<sup>th</sup>-early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II for 66 years in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Today Henry ranks ninth in length of reign, surpassed not only by Louis XIV, Basil II and Ramses II but also by: Louis XV, George III, Hirohito, Victoria, Franz Joseph and Elizabeth II. Papal reigns of course cannot compete, as popes are invariably at least middle-aged when elected. But Pius IX lived until he was 88, Pope for a record 32 years.

In terms of longevity of title (if not of reign), queen consorts put the kings to shame. Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, the Queen Mother of England, died at almost 102, a queen for 66 years (the last 50 of them a widow), and the remarkable Eleanor of Aquitaine managed 67 queenly years, 15 as Queen of France, 52 as Queen or Queen Mother of England, before dying at 82 in 1204. Napoleon III's consort Eugenie of France also managed 67 royal years, dying only in 1920, but the all-time champion was Zita von Bourbon-Parma, wife of Charles, the last Kaiser of Austria and King of Hungary. She was titular a queen for a magnificent 75 years, although she was widowed for 67 of them, dying in exile in Switzerland at 96.

## **Births**

1961 – Frank Bruno  
1967 – Lisa Bonet  
1977 – Maggie Gyllenhaal

## **Deaths**

1960 – Clark Gable  
2006 – Milton Friedman  
2009 – Edward Woodward

## **Number 1's**

Number 1 single in 1965 - Rolling Stones - Get Off Of My Cloud  
Number 1 album in 1970 - Led Zeppelin - Led Zeppelin III  
Number 1 compilation album in 1992 - The Ultimate Country Collection

## **Random Results**

1996 - Tottenham Hotspur 2 - Sunderland 0  
2014 - Leicester Tigers 21 - Saracens 21  
1947 - Cleveland Browns 37 - San Francisco 49ers 14  
2017 - New York Knicks 106 - Utah Jazz 101  
1926 - Montreal Maroons 0 - New York Rangers 1

## **Drabble**

A drabble is a complete story that is exactly one hundred words long.

## **Lunchtime**

Lunchtime, a break in the monotony of the day, a chance to get out of the office in fresh air, get something to eat, read a bit of a book, and recharge ready for the afternoon.

36 minutes isn't enough, by the time you've got to the shop, found where they've moved the ready to go food to today, picked a drink, and queued for a self-service machine that needs an assistant override again, the time is gone.

You run back to the office and slide into your desk just on time.

Meanwhile, your lunch is still at the checkout.

## **Joke**

A retired four-star general ran into his former orderly, also retired, in a Manhattan bar and spent the rest of the evening persuading him to come work for him as his valet. "Your duties will be exactly the same as they were in the army," the general said. "Nothing to it-you'll catch on again fast." Next morning promptly at eight o'clock, the ex-orderly entered the ex-general's bedroom, pulled open the drapes, gave the general a gentle shake, strode around the other side of the bed, spanked his employer's wife on her bottom and said, "OK, sweetheart, it's back to the village for you."

## **Random Items**

### **Fact**

$111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$ .

### **Firsts**

1824 – First Gas Grill Developed  
1889 – First Electric oven produced  
1945 – First Microwave Oven introduces

### **Thought**

Why is it that when you are driving and looking for an address, you turn down the volume on the radio?

## Forgotten English

### **Arithmometer**

An instrument for working out arithmetical problems in the nineteenth century.

### Ambrose Bierce's Demon's Dictionary

#### **COWARD**

One who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs.

### Buttress's World Guide To Abbreviations Of Organisations

#### **ICIA**

International Centre of Information on Antibiotics

International Communications Industries Association

International Credit Insurance Association

### Words You Should Know

#### **Byzantine**

Relating to Byzantium, the ancient city on the site of modern Istanbul; hence a highly stylized form of art and architecture; and hence again, in a figurative sense, complicated and inflexible in attitude. A byzantine legal system is badly in need of reform; the byzantine plot of a thriller needs to be much simplified if the average reader is to understand it.

### Popular Expressions – What They Mean And Where We Got Them

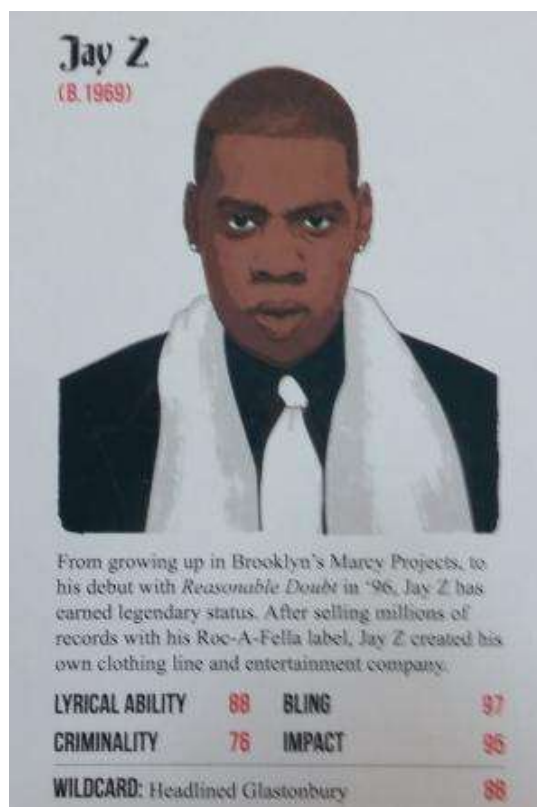
#### **At full tilt**

At full speed or with full force.

The expression probably originated in the fourteenth century, when 'tilting at the quintain' was a popular sport among medieval knights. A dummy head, often representing a Turk or Saracen, was fastened to rotate around an upright stake fixed in the ground. At full speed, the knight on horseback tilted towards the head with his lance. If he failed to strike it in the right place, it would spin round and strike him in the back before he could get clear.

Tilting at the quintain remained a rustic sport, especially popular at wedding celebrations, until the mid-seventeenth century.

## Rappers of the Nineties Trumps



**Jay Z**  
(B. 1969)

From growing up in Brooklyn's Marcy Projects, to his debut with *Reasonable Doubt* in '96, Jay Z has earned legendary status. After selling millions of records with his Roc-A-Fella label, Jay Z created his own clothing line and entertainment company.

LYRICAL ABILITY	88	BLING	97
CRIMINALITY	76	IMPACT	95
WILDCARD: Headlined Glastonbury			88

## Quote(s)

Mike

I had a battle with it in the disabled toilet.

Whilst getting e-mail mail merge training, someone put a title of F@#\* Off on their mail merge document. Then instead of deleting the title, they managed to start the mail merge process. Fortunately for them, they were saved due to an error in converting to plain text, so the 60+ recipients didn't get the message headed F#@\* Off.

## Going Underground

### **Ravenscourt Park**

Was the manor granted to Alice Perrers, the notorious favourite of Edward III (reigned 1327-77). It was known as Palyngewyk in 1270 (later Padingwick) and in 1819 a *Raven's Court House* was recorded in the area, but the history of this modern name is unknown. The Park lies opposite the station along Paddenswick Road.

The Station was opened as SHAFTESBURY ROAD by the London & South Western Railway on 1 April 1873. It was renamed RAVENSCOURT PARK on 1 March 1888. First used by Underground trains on 1 June 1877.

## Top Ten

First ten books published by Stephen King		
No	Book	Year
1	Carrie	1974
2	Salem's Lot	1975
3	The Shining	1977
4	Rage (As Richard Bachman)	1977
5	The Stand	1978
6	Night Shift	1978
7	The Long Walk (As Richard Bachman)	1979
8	The Dead Zone	1979
9	Firestarter	1980
10	Roadwork (As Richard Bachman)	1981

## Cathedral Fact Files

Cathedral	St Paul's Cathedral		
Dedicated To	St Paul		
Type	Post Reformation Medieval	Architecture	Renaissance
Religion	COE	Tower / Spire	Dome
Site Founded	604	Height (External)	366ft
Church Founded	1675	Height (Internal)	89ft
Bishopric Founded	314	Length	510ft
Current Bishopric Founded	604	Width	280ft

## Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

### The Style Council – Café Bleu

*Café Bleu* is the official debut album released by the English band The Style Council. It was released on 16 March 1984, on Polydor Records, produced by Paul Weller with Peter Wilson. It followed the compilation *Introducing The Style Council*, which was released only in the Netherlands, Canada and Japan. The album was mainly recorded at Solid Bond Studios (owned by Weller) except for the strings which were recorded at CBS.

*Café Bleu* was renamed *My Ever Changing Moods* in the United States to capitalise on the success of that single. *Café Bleu* included a large number of extra musicians, known as Honorary Councillors, including Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt from Everything but the Girl. The album represented a huge shift away from Weller's previous group The Jam and towards incorporating his favoured elements of classic soul, jazz and rap.

In a retrospective review, Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic felt that *Café Bleu*, while being indicative of "the group's fatal flaw – a tendency to be too eclectic and overambitious", was nonetheless "one of their better efforts", praising Weller's "solid soul-tinged pop songs, including 'My Ever Changing Moods,' 'Headstart for Happiness,' 'You're the Best Thing,' and 'Here's One That Got Away.'"

All songs written by Paul Weller, except where noted.

## Track listing

### Side one

Track 1 - "*Mick's Blessings*" (Mick Talbot) – 1:15 - The album starts off with a jazzy Hammond Organ number that was indicative of The Style Council's releases over the years, with enough tracks from albums and single B-sides released to make up an album by themselves.

Track 2 - "*The Whole Point of No Return*" – 2:40 - Side one is very much a mellow collection of songs, with a melancholy feel to it. This softly sung track epitomises this to a tee.

Track 3 - "*Me Ship Came In!*" – 3:06 - The second of four instrumentals on this side of the album. Dropped for the US version of the album.

Track 4 - "*Blue Café*" – 2:15 - The third of four instrumentals on this side of the album.

Track 5 - "*The Paris Match*" – 4:25 - The B Side from 1983's single "*Long Hot Summer*", released as an EP called "*A Paris*" which got to number three in the UK Singles Chart.

Track 6 - "*My Ever Changing Moods*" – 3:37. First single from the album, it reached number 5 on the UK singles chart and number 29 on the US Billboard Hot 100, the groups biggest hit in the US.

Track 7 - "*Dropping Bombs on the Whitehouse*" (Weller, Talbot) – 3:15 - Finishes off the first side of the album with the fourth instrumental track on it.

### Side two

Track 1 - "*A Gospel*" – 4:44 - A Dizzy Hites led Rap number, showing Weller's willingness to take on new musical trends and sounds. Overlooked on the whole, but a very good track. It was this willingness to experiment that led to the Style Council being dropped by their record label Polydor when they attempted to release *Modernism*, a house music album in 1988.

Track 2 - "*Strength of Your Nature*" – 4:20 - An upbeat pop number, part of the livelier side two of the album.

Track 3 - "*You're the Best Thing*" – 5:40 Second single off the album, release on the EP "*Groovin*" with "The Big Boss Groove", it hit number 5 on the UK singles chart and number 76 on the US Billboard Hot 100.

Track 4 - "*Here's One That Got Away*" – 2:35 - The title was tweaked and used for the album of rarities and demos that was released after the break-up of the group, which was called "Here's Some That Got Away."

Track 5 - "*Headstart for Happiness*" – 3:20 - Released as a single in the early noughties, as part of a collection on non-single album tracks released on single on a variety of different coloured 7" vinyl limited editions. One of the non-single tracks by the group that appeared on all of the multitude of Best of and Collection albums released over the years, and a track that was a live favourite.

Track 6 - "*Council Meetin*" (Weller, Talbot) – 2:29 - Finishing off where they began, with another instrumental track. Very much in the style of a driving Northern Soul stomper. Dropped from the US version of the album.

The US version had "*A Solid Bond In Your Heart*" as an added track, a UK single release that reached number 11 on the UK singles Chart.

## Personnel

Paul Weller – vocals, guitar

Mick Talbot – keyboards, piano, Hammond organ

Steve White – drums, percussion

Billy Chapman – saxophone

Barbara Snow – trumpet on "*A Gospel*" and "*Headstart For Happiness*"

Randy Anderson – guitar

Tracey Thorn – vocals on "*The Paris Match*"

Chris Bostock – double bass on "*The Paris Match*", bass on "*Here's One That Got Away*"

Ben Watt – guitar on "*The Paris Match*"

Dizzy Hites – rap on "*A Gospel*"

Hillary Seabrook – saxophone on "*A Gospel*" and "*Headstart For Happiness*"

Dee C. Lee – vocals "*Strength Of Your Nature*" and "*Headstart For Happiness*"

Bobby Valentino – violin on "*Here's One That Got Away*"

Pete Wilson – drum programming on "*A Gospel*" and "*Strength Of Your Nature*"

## Charts

UK Album Charts – 2

US Billboard – 56

Australia – 27

Netherlands – 16

New Zealand – 6

**Certifications**

UK - Gold

**Club Fact File**

<b>Everton</b>	
Founded	1878
Turned Professional	1885
Admitted to the League	1888
Ground	Goodison Park
Capacity	39,572
Previous Ground(s)	Stanley Park, Priory Road, Anfield
Previous Names	St Domingo FC
Nickname(s)	The Toffees
<b>Trophies</b>	
League Champions	1890-91, 1914-15, 1927-28, 1931-32, 1938-39, 1962-63, 1969-70, 1984-85, 1986-87
Division 2 Winners	1930-31
FA Cup Winners	1906, 1933, 1966, 1984, 1995
Charity Shield	1928, 1932, 1963, 1970, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1995 and Shared in 1986
European Cup Winners Cup	1985
<b>League Seasons</b>	
Seasons in Premier League (Top Flight)	116
Seasons in Championship (Tier 2)	4
Seasons in League 1 (Tier 3)	0
Seasons in League 2 (Tier 4)	0

**Story Time****The Lie Becomes The Truth**

Francis was a pathological liar. He couldn't help himself. Whenever he was asked a question, or given a chance to speak or make an explanation, the words that came out of his mouth were usually a fabrication. There wasn't any need for it. It wasn't as if he was doing for sport anymore. As he had gotten into his fifties he felt the obsessive need to lie about absolutely everything. He was at the stage where Harry S. Truman's quote about Richard Nixon applied to him.

*"He can lie out of both sides of his mouth at the same time. If he ever caught himself telling the truth, he'd lie just to keep his hand in."*

Those who had known Francis for a long time took anything he said with a large pinch of salt. A lot of the stories he told were entertaining, he never seemed to tell the same lie twice. Those he had worked with over the years were less enamoured about him and his habit. Francis had been fired from more jobs than he could remember now. Every time he spoke about that, it was a different number of jobs, and there was always a fanciful tale behind each of the sackings. It was never his fault of course. Those that met him only once found that they never knew they had been lied to; did know but just let it go, or they would only find out it had been all a lie some time later. Five minutes was always a good length of time for those unfortunate enough to have asked Francis for directions.

However as the lying had taken hold over the years, so did Francis's belief that everyone he came into contact with were lying to him as well. By the law of averages, this would be the case from time to time; there were a surprising amount of pathological liars out there. But the assumption everyone was lying to him also caused him problems.

This had been the case with his health. He had been having abdominal pain for months. At first he had ignored it. When it continued he went to the pharmacist. The pharmacist had insisted that Francis should go and see a doctor. Francis had ignored that and bought some indigestion tablets after the pharmacist had told him they wouldn't help with

the symptoms he had been describing. The tablets hadn't helped in the slightest, but Francis put that down to the instructions on the packet. The advised doses were all wrong.

Francis did get to see a doctor eventually, more by luck than judgement. He had been rushed to hospital after collapsing on the London Road. When he had come around in the hospital bed and started shouting at the poor nurse who was taking his temperature, a doctor came to see him. The doctor gave Francis the news that he had advanced stage cancer. Francis hadn't believed the doctor even with the x-ray and biopsy results in front of him. He had told the doctor he was a charlatan who only wanted Francis's money to pay for unnecessary treatment.

Francis had discharged himself and arranged an appointment at his own doctor's for a couple of weeks' time. He had refused to change the appointment to an earlier one, but when he finally got to the appointment, something inside his head clicked and he accepted what the doctor told him. He had cancer of the bowel, which had aggressively spread to his spleen, kidneys and liver. There was nothing they could do to treat it now, it was too far gone. All they could do was prescribe painkillers, or get him a bed in a cancer unit. They only gave him two weeks to live.

That was a week ago. Ever since he had accepted the outcome given to him by the doctor, he had been going back in time in his head. Replaying conversations he had had. Trying to see what there was in there that may have been true after all. Was there something else he had dismissed that may have been important or useful?

Francis had gone back several years when his train of thought was disrupted by a news item on the local TV news. It was ten years to the day since Martin Colgate had been found strangled to death in an alley behind what was then Woolworths on the High Street. Despite an extensive investigation, no one had ever been arrested or charged for the crime. The news report had an interview with the man's parents, begging for someone to come forward with new information. There must be at least one person out there who knew what had happened.

Francis thought he recognised the name of the man, but it was hard for him to know whether it was a name of someone he actually knew, or whether it was one he may have made up in one of his lies at some point over the years. He had missed seeing the part of the story where they showed the man's photograph, but he wanted to see if he recognised the murdered man.

Without internet access in his flat, he had to wait until the following morning to take himself off to the library. He was there when they opened their doors, and he went straight to a machine and started his search. Entering Martin Colgate and murder brought lots of links back. He looked at one of the pictures on the screen in front of him that the search had brought back. Now that he could see the man he knew he had known him. He was sure of it.

Francis spent the rest of the morning reading every write up of the case he could find, first online, and then asking for the microfiche copies of the newspapers of the time. He got as much information as he could. It looked as if this Martin had lived just around the corner from where Francis had used to live all those years ago. He went into the same local pub – The Falcon – as Francis had, and still did frequent. He knew he had spoken to Martin tens, possibly hundreds of times.

Yet he had forgotten all about him. Forgotten about the man's murder. Forgotten about all the commotion around the murder investigation. He had spoken to the police at the time. Francis remembered he was supposed to have been one of the last people to see Martin alive. He had been in the Falcon at the same time as Martin on the night he was murdered. Francis had gone to the funeral when they eventually released the body to Martin's poor parents some ten months down the line. He hadn't spoken to them or anyone else at the funeral. For once he had paid his respects and kept his mouth shut. He hadn't spouted a load of lies to various bystanders. He did it the only way he knew how by then, by keeping his mouth shut.

There was something about this that was jumping around in his brain. Something he had heard someone else say over the years since then. Something he felt would be important. He just needed to remember what it was. He needed to talk to the police.

Francis hauled himself up the steps and through the doors of the Nottingham Street police station. Before he had even got to the desk, the desk sergeant, Sergeant Coles, bellowed at him.

"Not today Francis, whatever load of babbling rubbish you want to give us this time, we're not interested. No one's interested in any of your lies anymore Francis. So please, do us and yourself a favour and turn around and go. Before I get someone to arrest you for wasting police time again."

Francis knew he deserved that welcome. He was lucky to have never done any prison time for some of the stories he had told the police over the years. But this time was different; he had some truth for them.

"Please Mr Coles; I'm not here to waste your time. It's about Martin Colgate."

Sergeant Coles sighed, "Not you as well, that's all I've had all day since that damn news report last night. I'm not interested."

"You might not be, but your colleagues were at the time. I was questioned. I knew him, I drank with him, and I went to his funeral. At some point since then I know someone has told me about who did it, but I can't remember who or where."

"You were never questioned you stupid old goat."

"I was, please, check the files, it will be there, and you have to believe me."

Sergeant Coles looked at Francis with a look of disgust on his face. "I don't have to do anything. I will have a look, but so help me God, if your name isn't in those files, I'll come round that side of the desk and escort you to the cells myself."

And with that he was gone. Francis paced slowly around the waiting area. No one wanted to make eye contact with him. If the people there didn't know him personally, it was likely they knew of him, and Sergeant Coles' welcome had made sure of that. Again, he had no one else to blame but himself. By the time the desk sergeant returned, Francis felt like he had worn a trench in the floor as he had paced around the room.

"Francis, you're in luck. I won't be taking you to a cell today. My colleague, Detective Salter will be taking you for a little chat though."

A young, thin, pale looking man, wearing a cheap grey suit and mismatched bright red patterned tie beckoned Francis to follow him through a side door. Francis followed the detective along a maze of corridors, not saying a word to him until they were both sat down in an interview room.

"Mr Parry, my colleague, Sergeant Coles, has advised of your previous form and lack of affinity with the truth. With fanciful tales as he put it. The only reason I have agreed to see you is because you were interviewed at the time of Mr Colgate's death, and therefore there is the possibility, however slight that you may have some useful information for us. Even after all these years. If however, I think for a moment you are leading me up the garden path, then I will terminate this conversation and Sergeant Coles can do with you as he will. Do I make myself clear?"

"Indeed you do detective." Francis swallowed, he was nervous; there were things that he was going to say that he hadn't spoken out loud before. He had been unwilling to admit them, even to himself.

"I know I have told a pack of lies in the past. I have never been able to help myself. But I need to be able to do so now. I haven't got long to live. I know that Martin Colgate's murderer is out there somewhere. I know I have spoken to them. There is something nagging away at what remains of my brain. I have heard a confession of sorts, but being a liar myself I have dismissed so many things people have said to me as lies as well. Judging them by my own standards. I know I gave a statement at the time. However I don't know what was in the statement, and how much if any of it was true. Could I please beg your indulgence so I can read what I said back then?"

"I can't let you read it, but I can give you an outline. You were in the pub the night Mr Colgate was murdered. Other witnesses have confirmed this. They also confirmed you spoke to him, but they couldn't say what about. You said you were looking at selling him a car, but the notes suggest that was unlikely as you had no car at the time. You mentioned seeing Mr Colgate leave before you, and that he left with a woman, and that not long before Mr Colgate left, supposedly with this woman, you had seen Big Dave, Stu and Tommy leave. No one else recognised any of those names. The landlord said Mr Colgate left before you, and that you were the last one left in The Falcon that night, as he remembered having difficulties getting you to leave as you refused to believe it was closing time. No one else remembered any woman in the pub at the time."

Francis shut his eyes and tried to think back. Could he remember the correct night? He was often the last one in The Falcon, he was sure he had the argument about closing time with the landlord nearly every time he was there. He thought about the names; Big Dave, Stu and Tommy. He never called anyone by their proper name, he often just made new names up on the spot for them, and he doubted he knew their proper names. He was sure about the woman though. She had been very striking, not the kind to be in The Falcon at all, and not the kind he would have expected to leave with Martin. She had had jet black hair, and had been wearing a sleeveless low cut dress, with a floral bright patterned silk scarf around her neck. He thought he knew her from somewhere else, but he couldn't place where.

Francis told the detective all this. Implored him to find the woman. She had left the pub with Martin that night. The detective wrote something on a piece of paper in the file and then stood up.

"Thank you Mr Parry for coming in. If you think of anything else, call 101 and leave a message with the details."



“Are you going to look for the woman?”

“It’s been added to the case notes. We’ll see if it looks relevant after the rush over the next couple of days has died down.”

Francis knew they weren’t going to do anything and he shuffled out of the station. They were only humouring him. What else could he expect?

Back at home Francis tried to think about the woman. It took him two days to remember where he’d seen her again. She had been at the funeral, he was sure of that. She had stood to one side at the back of the church, and then gone to the cemetery. She had been dressed all in black, a dress and a jacket, but she had carried that same floral scarf. She had been one of the mourners to go to the grave side and throw soil on the coffin. Was that all she had thrown? Francis seemed to think the scarf had gone in as well, but had she dropped it, or was it deliberate?

Francis rang 101 and when he eventually got through he left a message. The bored sounding operator on the other end of the line told him they would contact him if they had any further questions. He didn’t expect to hear back from them. Instead he went back to the library and found an address for the Colgates and made his way there.

They had been reluctant to speak to him, wanting him to go to the police. He understood that from their perspective. Yet he pleaded with them. He told them his truth, how the police were dubious about what he told them and why. How he had less than a week less to live, and how he needed to help to find the truth out for once in his sad little life.

Francis asked them if they remembered the woman he was talking about and if they knew who the woman was. Mrs Colgate shook her head, but Mr Colgate nodded.

“I remember the woman, very striking she was indeed. She stood at the back of the service and away from the grave slightly, all by herself. I never spoke to her, she disappeared after the cemetery and I never thought much on it since. I do remember thinking if it was a lady friend Martin had had that he hadn’t gotten round to telling us about. She went up to the grave. Threw something in with the handful of earth. I couldn’t tell you what it was, some kind of keepsake that was special to Martin possibly. I have no idea what her name might have been though. No one else mentioned her. All too polite to ask probably.”

Mrs Colgate stirred at this, “Albert, did you ever look at the names of the people who signed the book of remembrance?”

“Not properly Flo, and certainly not for a number of years.”

“Why don’t you see if you can find it in the loft? This mystery woman might have written in it at the church.”

Francis sat in uncomfortable silence with Mrs Colgate as her husband went to find the book of remembrance. The pair of them avoided eye contact, and the silence bore heavily on them. Francis breathed a great sigh of relief when Mr Colgate came back. He sat next to his wife and they slowly turned the pages of the book. They stopped a couple of times and whispered to each other, and then went back to a page.

“You signed the book you know.”

Francis was surprised; he also blanched at what he may have written, with no idea what kind of rubbish he may have put down on the page.

“I suppose I would have done.”

“You just wrote *‘Hope you get the car you want in heaven’*”

Francis was shocked; perhaps he had been talking to Martin about cars in the pub the night of the murder as in the police statement after all. Perhaps there was more truth there than even he recognised.

“Yes, I was supposed to be helping Martin find a car. We had talked about it a few times in the pub.”

He wasn’t sure if that was the case or not. He hoped it was.

“There are a few names we don’t really recognise, probably some other friends of his from the pub, it was part of his life we didn’t really get involved with. Of those however there is only one female’s name we don’t recognise. Alice Warnock. Do you recognise the name?”

"Not really. It's a mess in my head where proper memories should be. It feels like it should do, but I don't know if that is because I want it to. Please tell the police though. They will take it so much better if you tell them instead of me. They might even look for her."

Mr Colgate said they would, and Francis got up to leave. Mrs Colgate called out from the living room as he got to the front door.

"Mr Parry, do you know how Martin died?"

"Only what I've read, he was strangled."

"Do you know what by?"

"No, I didn't read that anywhere."

"We do, we were told by the police that it was probably by a silk scarf."

Francis almost collapsed, "Tell the police now, tell them about the woman, I beg you."

And then he was outside again. He could hardly walk. The painkillers were wearing off quicker each time he took some now. It felt as if someone was drilling at his innards. He leant against a wall to rest, took another pill and called for a taxi. There was still time to get back to the library today.

Francis searched for Alice Warnock. There were several hits, and he clicked through them. None of them were of a black haired woman, but one did catch his eye. Facially she was still stunning, but the hair colour was different, not a difficult thing to do he supposed. One of the links was to a LinkedIn profile. Just a corporate style head shot of the woman. She was a sales manager for a company in Leeds now. He looked at her work history and his blood froze. There on the screen it showed her working here in town for three years. Working for Accuprint. The final year of the three had overlapped with when he had worked there. He had worked in the same building never realising it was the same woman he had seen with Martin, and at the funeral.

He thought back and he remembered being at lunch with her several times. She had had deep copper coloured wavy hair then. Not the straight black hair from when he'd seen her before, and not the short straight blonde hair on her LinkedIn profile now. It came flooding back to him, almost overwhelming him. She had told him what he had thought was a story, a lie. They had been chatting away in the canteen at lunchtime. He had been telling one of his tall tales. One of the others had come back with another fantastically unbelievable tale, and then this Alice had spoken. Come out with what they had all thought was another story.

*"Remember that bloke who was killed a couple of years ago? Strangled behind Woolworths and they never found out who killed him. I did that you know. I lured him into that alley with the promise of a bl0w j0b, and then I took my scarf and wrapped it round his throat and pulled it tight with everything I had. Took minutes for him to stop struggling and breathing. Then I walked away. No one saw a thing. And do you know what I did with the scarf? It's the best bit. I threw it in to his open grave on top of his coffin before they put all the tons of earth back in. Buried his murder weapon with him, never to be seen again, and then I disappeared."*

They had laughed around the table, not believing a word of it. Francis wasn't laughing now. He knew it all had to be true.

He staggered into the police station and demanded to see the detective. "Which one" he was asked by the ever grumpy Sergeant Coles.

"Detective Salter, the one I saw last time. I've worked it out; I know who killed Martin Colgate."

The sergeant rolled his eyes, but called through for the detective. Detective Salter wasn't available, but Detective Inspector Green was. Francis had only just sat down in the interview room when DI Green started shouting at him.

"What the hell do you think you're playing at Parry? Going to the Colgates and filling their heads with your nonsense about a woman seeing their son. It's taken me hours to calm them down."

"It's not nonsense."

"Don't give me that Parry, my wet behind the ears Detective Salter may have given you the benefit of the doubt, but you're taken us up the garden path far too many times over the years to believe you now."

"But you have to, I'm dying. Check with my doctor, I swear to God, I know who killed Martin Colgate and where the proof is."

"No you don't. You wouldn't know the truth if it came up and bit you. No one has time for your nonsense."

"Please, speak to my doctor, he'll tell you I'm dying. I've less than a week to go. You don't get these painkillers for nothing."

Francis slammed the packet down on the table. DI Green looked at the packet and paused.

"What's your doctor's name?"

"Dr Gohil at the Nursery Practice."

DI Green left the room. Francis put his head down on the table and closed his eyes.

He didn't know how long DI Green had been gone; all he heard was his return.

"Mr Parry, I'm sorry to hear about your condition. Haven't you got affairs to get in order before you die rather than doing this?"

"You may mock Inspector, but this is the only affairs I need to get in order. I have no family or close friends. No one will miss me. But someone misses Martin Colgate every day, and someone else out there killed him. I know who and I need to tell you before I die."

"I will take your statement, check it and investigate if it seems worth it. That is all I can promise. You aren't a trustworthy source."

"That will have to be enough, I can't do anything else."

Francis gave his taped statement. How he had heard about Martin again on the news. His original statement had fired his memories. The woman in the pub, her wearing the scarf. The woman at the funeral and the scarf being thrown into the grave. How he'd found her name, found that he used to work with her. Told the DI about 'the confession' she had made that no one had believed, but all made sense now. How he'd always thought it was a lie because he always lied. And then he stopped talking.

DI Green didn't interrupt Francis once whilst he spoke, and just asked if there was anything else he wanted to add. Francis just shook his head. DI Green took the tapes from the machine, and got Francis to sign the paperwork to say they were his true statement. Francis nearly laughed. They were probably his only true statement ever. DI Green walked Francis to the door of the station and watched him leave.

DI Green had been a DC back when the Colgate murder case was being investigated. They had written off Francis Parry's tale of a woman as one of his usual flights of fancy. But he now wondered to himself if they hadn't all made a mistake in doing so.

Francis went to The Falcon. He wanted a final drink in there before he died. A few people he knew were in the pub. When they asked him what was new he told them he was dying and only had days to live. They laughed and said that's a new one, you've not told us that tale before. They didn't believe him, and who could blame them.

At 8.32pm Francis slumped from his stool and fell on the floor. It was nearly twenty minutes after that before anyone checked on him. He was dead by then.

DI Green had taken both the tapes to his office and had listened to the recording a couple of times. He then placed both tapes on top of the powerful magnet in the speaker on his desk and left them there for five minutes as he completed some other paperwork. He then put one of the tapes in a sealed bag for the evidence room, and sent the other off to be transcribed.

There was nothing that could be typed up from the tape the admin section had got, a few odd fragments of words, but nothing that could be strung together. When they got the other tape out of the evidence room, they found it was the same. There must have been something wrong with the machine; they would finally get around to replacing it with a digital recorder.

DI Green looked at the pictures of Alice Warnock on Google. She looked really different with short blonde hair. She was hardly recognisable from the long black hair she had had back when he was sleeping with her during Martin Colgate's murder investigation. He thought about Francis Parry's statement and shuddered slightly. He was glad he had broken up with Alice on good terms. He might not have been here to keep her out of prison if they hadn't done. He might have ended up strangled as well.

## Puzzle Corner

### Quiz

Answers from Issue 15

"*Fight The Power*" by Public Enemy was released as a single on the Motown label. This was because it formed part of the soundtrack to the film *Do The Right Thing*. At the time all Spike Lee films' soundtracks were released on Motown records.

This Issue's quiz.

In which state of the USA are a large number of Stephen King's books set?

### Crossword

Roads

### Sudoku

Issue 15's Solution

8	9	2	4	1	6	5	7	3
5	4	6	9	7	3	1	2	8
1	3	7	5	2	8	9	6	4
7	1	9	3	4	2	8	5	6
6	8	5	1	9	7	3	4	2
4	2	3	8	6	5	7	1	9
2	7	1	6	8	9	4	3	5
9	5	4	2	3	1	6	8	7
3	6	8	7	5	4	2	9	1

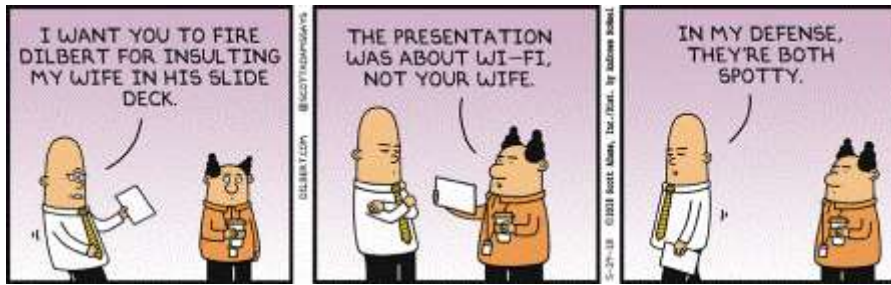
This issue's puzzle

4			2	5		1		
					3		5	
5		1	7					8
8						3	9	
7		3	8		9			5
	5	9		3				2
					8	4		9
	4		6					
3		2		4	5			6

### Wordsearch

Panicked for a moment, then I found it on the start menu just under Excel.

### Dilbert



## Epilogue

If you want to catch up on old issues, Drabbles I've had published, or the random scribbling from a bored mind on my blog then they are all available at <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/>  
Sign up to the mailing list on the home page there. E-mail any ideas or suggestions to [kev@onetruekev.co.uk](mailto:kev@onetruekev.co.uk)

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