…Gary was pushed down in the chair opposite and waited for the man to finish reading the papers in front of him. He felt edgy, as if he was being deliberately kept in the dark about something. He rubbed the troublesome knee, which had been throbbing constantly ever since the fight. The officer looked up. “You OK?”

“I’ve got a busted knee. It can be a bit painful.”

“Perhaps you shouldn’t be running around the streets of east London fighting Welshmen, then,” suggested his interrogator. Gary ignored the jibe. “My name’s Detective Inspector Ashley Wilburn. This initial interview is beginning at 8.30pm. Your name is?”

“Gary… uh, Gary Marshall. Do I need a solicitor?”

“We’ll get to that. This is just a preliminary chat. You’re one of the Boxer Boys?”

“Um, no. Not really.”

“You don’t seem sure. You live on the Boxers Estate though?”

“Well… yeah, but…”

“I think you qualify as a Boxer Boy then, don’t you? Care to tell me what happened after the match today, Gary?”

“Hammers won 2-0.”

“It was three actually, but I wouldn’t expect you to know that. Too busy looking for trouble…”

“That’s unfair,” said Gary. “I was heading home with my mates when we were attacked and chased by Cardiff fans. I can’t run because of the leg and they caught me and gave me a good kickin’. End of story.”

“Hmmm,” said Inspector Wilburn. He leafed again through the papers. “Wasn’t quite the end of the story though, was it?” he said, removing a picture and placing it in front of Gary. “Recognise him?”

The face was battered and bruised and splattered with blood, a nasty gash spreading across the forehead. The eyes were closed. Their owner could have been asleep, resting peacefully, though the pillow was tarmac and the blanket made of black plastic.

“No,” said Gary. “One of those Cardiff yobs I guess…”

“He’s dead, Mr Marshall,” interrupted the Inspector. From beneath the desk he lifted Gary’s walking stick, still enshrined in the plastic evidence bag. Gary’s heartbeat quickened, but he said nothing. “Your ‘crutch’, I do believe and, look here,” his finger pointed at the bottom where a dark smear was clearly visible. “That, Mr

Marshall, is blood; this man's blood," he tapped the picture. "Now I'm no Cluedo expert but I believe I've found the body and the murder weapon. All I need to do now is find out who our Professor Scum is. That shouldn't be a problem either because we've some pretty good CCTV footage from one of the local shops. They show a man in a West Ham shirt… come to think of it a shirt exactly like that one you're wearing – a No 10 on the back – bashing this poor bloke over the head with this stick. Refresh your memory, Mr Marshall?"