

# A DRIVING KILLER

## Plot Summary - Chapter by Chapter Breakdown

Notes: We have left several details of this story vague, so you can give them a personal touch. You can tailor this outline in several of the following ways to make it unique, without changing the main plot. 1) Gilbert Travis could be the one discovering the body. 2) Inspector Hatfield could bring Angie (Doris's sister) to the island to explain the reason why Doris had to escape her ex-husband. 3) Bill Gabereau could be the killer – he wanted the winning ticket to recuperate the money he lost during the divorce. 4) The whole story could take place anywhere in North America. 5) Change the ending – Eleanor Travis finds the “driver” club in the back of the pantry. She knows her husband committed the crime. She gives the club to Hatfield and tells him why Gilbert might have done the deed.

### Part One - Rising Tension

#### Chapter One

CH 1/Scene 1 – One would have a hard time describing Sooke. Perhaps an English village would be an apt comparison for this little community nestled at the edge of the Pacific Ocean on Vancouver Island. The Tudor style house belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Travis is the jewel of the village. Cuddling the flank of a rocky hill, *The Honeysuckle Bed and Breakfast* residence welcomed its visitors with an immense frontage of exquisitely tended gardens and patios. Mrs. Eleanor Travis simply loves the place. She has inherited it from her childless uncle and she and her husband, Gilbert make it home to dozens of visitors every year.

CH 1/Scene 2 – Eleanor has been tending to the garden for a couple of hours on that particular morning already when she hears a shrilled scream emanating from one of the upstairs bedrooms. Doris Gabereau is the occupant of the bedroom whose window faces the garden. Eleanor drops her gardening tools to the ground, pulls her gloves off as she runs into the house. When she reaches Doris's bedroom door, she raps her knuckles against the heavy wooden panels and demands to know if Doris is alright.

CH 1/Scene 3 – Doris opens the door and smiles. She does not seem to have been disturbed in any way. When Eleanor asks her if she was the one who screamed a few minutes ago, Doris says that she couldn't possibly understand what Eleanor is talking about. After managing a B&B for ten years, not much surprises Eleanor anymore, but she was sure to have heard Doris's scream. In any case, she does not press the woman for answers and let the matter drop.

CH 1/Scene 4 – As soon as Gilbert returns from buying “half of the farmers' market”, Eleanor is sure, she asks him if he ever heard Doris scream while he was alone in the house. Gilbert is intrigued by the query and asks Eleanor to explain what happened. Upon reaching the end of her little recital, Gilbert has to smile at his wife. Eleanor does not see anything funny in hearing someone scream. That night, the two of them have dinner quietly and the subject of Doris screaming does not come back into the conversation.

CH 1/Scene 5 – The next morning, when the maid is ready to knock on Doris's door to clean the room, she finds the door ajar. Lillian Davis is a no-nonsense woman. She has seen the best and worst of tourists. Nothing much could affect her demeanor. She looks like a sergeant major – a buxom lady with an attitude to match. Still knocking on the door, she pushes it wide open while announcing her presence. There doesn't seem to be anyone in the room and the bed hasn't been slept in. Yet, when Lillian rounds the bed to get to the bathroom, she almost trips over the body. Doris is dead at her feet. Her head is covered in blood.

#### Chapter Two

CH 2/Scene 1 – Shocked and incapable of uttering a syllable, Lillian walks backward round the bed, her hand to her mouth. It's only when she gets to the hallway that she takes in a deep breath. She then runs down the stairs, tears through the living room and ends up in the kitchen, panting. Gilbert is filleting some salmon for lunch. When he sees Lillian's ashen face, he stops what he is doing and asks her for an explanation. Lillian tells him to call the police because Mrs. Doris Gabereau is dead.

CH 2/Scene 2 – Before the police arrive, Clifton Gilford, another guest, rushes into the kitchen. He has seen the body. He looks shocked but not overly so. He even tells Gilbert that he wants to help. He says that he has known Doris in passing. They worked in the same building in Vancouver and have gone to have a coffee on a couple of occasions.

CH 2/Scene 3 – When asked why Clifton would want to help in what will be essentially a police matter, he replies that he knew the reason why Doris was here. She was hiding from a vengeful husband. She had divorced him and he was apparently stalking her – or so Doris had told Clifton. Besides which, Clifton is an investigating journalist for one of the large newspapers and is used to ferret answers out of reluctant witnesses.

CH 2/Scene 4 – It does not take long for Inspector Lloyd Hatfield to arrive on the scene. He is a Sooke's resident himself. His precinct looks after the entire southern coast of Vancouver Island. He knows Gilbert and Eleanor Travis quite well. Lloyd Hatfield and his wife Gwyneth have remained friends with the Travis's family although their lives have taken them on different paths since their high school days. Hatfield goes upstairs to Doris's bedroom where he finds Clifton kneeling beside the body.

CH 2/Scene 5 – When asked what the young man is doing there, Clifton explains that he was a friend of the deceased and that he has assisted the police on the mainland in a few cases while investigating a couple of murders on behalf of his newspaper. Hatfield is far from happy to have someone trample over the scene of the crime. He sends Clifton back to his room, scolding the young man as if he was a wayward child. Lloyd then calls his sergeant, John Nettle, to start interviewing every one in the premises while they wait for the medical examiner to arrive.

### Chapter Three

CH 3/Scene 1 – The medical examiner, an older fellow by the name of Wilbert Daniels, examines Doris's body thoroughly and answers the inspector's questions. The lady died some ten to twelve hours ago; between 10:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. the previous night. She succumbed from a blow to the back of the head. The weapon is probably a golf club, judging from the grid-like imprint on the skin of the skull. Daniels says that he will confirm his findings during the autopsy.

CH 3/Scene 2 – Once the body is taken out of the guesthouse, Sergeant Nettle begins his interviews. He starts with Lillian Davis, the maid who found Doris's body. She could not have seen Doris the previous night since she only works in the morning. Next, Nettle interviews Clifton Gilford. He learns that Clifton knew the deceased "quite well" while they both worked in Vancouver – in the same building. Eleanor is then interviewed. She tells Nettle about hearing the scream. She is adamant about the scream emanating from Doris's room. Gilbert cannot add much to the story except that he is sure to have heard someone move about Doris's room when he, himself, went to bed that night.

CH 3/Scene 3 – Hatfield is still uneasy about the relationship that existed between Clifton and Doris. Clifton said that Doris was trying to get away from a disgruntled husband – a violent man apparently. Hatfield wonders if Clifton is not the reason for which Doris left her husband. Maybe those two had a relationship and the husband found out. Exacting vengeance on an adulterous wife is usually leading to very messy situations. When asked if Clifton plays golf, the latter answers that yes, he does. But he leaves his clubs at the clubhouse, in his locker.

CH 3/Scene 4 – Hatfield needs to go to Vancouver to find out what happened between Doris and her ex-husband. Was he on this island when the murder occurred? Before going, he asks his colleague at the Vancouver Precinct, George Devon, to check on the husband – William Gabereau – and get back to him. When George calls back, the news is perhaps as expected, William (Bill) Gabereau has previously been charged for being drunk and disorderly and for domestic abuse.

### Part Two - Main Action

### Chapter Four

CH 4/Scene 1 – When Hatfield gets to Vancouver, his first call is to Doris’s sister, Angie. She receives the news of Doris’s demise with mixed feelings. She loved Doris, of course, but she could never understand why she married that good-for-nothing husband of hers. There were frictions between the two since day one. Nevertheless, Angie seems to rue her sister’s passing. Hatfield would like to talk to her a little longer but the interview is cut short when Angie tells the inspector she has to leave for the hospital for her shift. When Hatfield asks her if she plays golf, she says that yes, she does.

CH 4/Scene 2 – As soon as Hatfield arrives at the Gabereau’s home, he looks annoyed. The front yard is unkempt, there are dog bones and “other things” strewn all over the front lawn and the house looks as if it has been ignored for far too long. It needs a coat of paint, at least. Bill Gabereau meets the inspector on the front porch while he ties his Doberman to a post at the corner of the stairs. Bill is a big fellow, rugged face and a rough attitude. He heard of his ex-wife’s death from Angie and tells the inspector; “Good riddance! The woman was no end of trouble.”

CH 4/ Scene 3 – Hatfield asks Bill if he plays golf. The man burst out laughing and sneers. No, he’s never played golf in his life and would never stoop as low as to play anything like that. When asked if he was on the island at the time of his ex-wife’s murder, he says that no, he was not in Victoria. Hatfield asks him where he was. He replies that he was visiting friends on Bowen Island and came back on the last ferry – eleven o’clock.

CH 4/ Scene 4 – All of these pieces of information would have to be verified, of course, but for now, Hatfield is quite certain that Bill Gabereau didn’t murder his wife. Although one could argue that you don’t have to play golf to bash someone’s head in with a golf club. That reminds him to call the medical examiner. Wilbert Daniels tells Hatfield that he can now confirm that the lady has been killed with a “driver” club – one of the heaviest clubs – used to “drive” your ball out of first tee.

CH 4/ Scene 5 – Hatfield decides it’s time to return to the island. He asks the Vancouver CSI guys to accompany him. He wants all of the golf clubs stored at *The Honeysuckle B&B* examined for traces of blood or bleach. He needs to find the murder weapon and the culprit will show his hand soon afterward (he hopes)

## Chapter 5

CH 5/ Scene 1 – The only thing lacking in the case file now is a motive. Why would anyone want to kill Doris Gabereau? If one excludes the ex-husband, then there’s only two people who could have had a reason for killing Doris: Clifton Gilford or Angie Dawson, Doris’s sister. Yet, Angie told Hatfield that Doris had nothing to leave to anyone. She was living from paycheck to paycheck since the divorce and had yet to see the first alimony payment from Bill.

CH 5/ Scene 2 – While Hatfield was away to the mainland, Sergeant Nettle managed to find out that Clifton had more than a casual connection with the deceased lady. The reason they were on the island that week was to spend a romantic holiday together before Clifton would have to leave for the Cayman Islands on a newspaper assignment. To Hatfield there is more to that story than meets the eye. He is now sure that Clifton is hiding something from him. There has to be a reason for Doris’s death.

CH 5/ Scene 3 – As the CSI team goes through Doris’s room and belongings, they find an unclaimed lottery ticket in the lining of her suitcase. When they check the numbers with the lottery office on the internet, they discover the ticket is a winning one – one million dollars. Hatfield is now convinced that Clifton knew about the ticket or even wanted to share the prize money with Doris. When she wouldn’t share the winnings, he killed her.

CH 5/ Scene 4 – Although a plausible explanation, why would Clifton stick around after the murder? Of course, one could say that he needed to find the ticket before leaving. But that implies he knew about Doris being the latest winner of a million bucks. When you have a choice between escaping justice and finding a million dollar lottery ticket, which option would you take?

CH 5/Scene 5 – After CSI has finished examining Clifton’s belongings and golf clubs, which they had fetched from the clubhouse locker, the officers report to Hatfield that none of Clifton’s clubs have any blood residue on them, that all his belongings are clean and that they are fairly certain the “driver” club in Clifton’s bag is not the one that killed Doris.

CH 5/Scene 6 – Trying to find a particular golf club among the hundreds stored at the clubhouse is not an easy task, but one that has to be done. If the winning ticket is the motive for killing Doris, then Hatfield has to find the weapon to close the file on this case – and arrest the suspect.

CH 5/Scene 7 – The CSI team goes through every golf bag available in the clubhouse’s locker room and is almost ready to pack up and go home when a gentleman comes in and hands them a club that he’s found buried in one of the bunkers populating the course. It’s a “driver” and probably the one that killed Doris.

### Part Three - Resolution

#### Chapter Six

CH 6/ Scene 1 – A quick but thorough analysis of the club in question reveals that yes, it is the murder weapon. “Two out of three,” Hatfield tells his sergeant when he comes back from the golf course. He needs to find who the club belongs to – it’s the only remaining unanswered question to the case: “Who killed Doris Gabereau?”

CH 6/Scene 2 – Hatfield reviews Nettle’s reports of the interviews his sergeant conducted at the beginning of this investigation and comes across a detail that he had ignored previously – Gilbert Travis heard some noise coming from Doris’s room when he, himself, went to bed. Hatfield goes and asks Gilbert what he heard. Gilbert hesitates and says that it sounded like “two people making love.” Hatfield deduces from that answer that Clifton must have been in Doris’s room that night.

CH 6/Scene 3 – But what about the scream Eleanor heard the morning before Doris’s death – why did Doris cry out? Hatfield, once again, is getting lost in his own tergiversations. He’s having a coffee downstairs in the dining room when Eleanor joins him and begins telling him about the financial troubles she and Gilbert are having – they’re on the verge of bankruptcy. Gilbert overhears the conversation and comes to sit by his wife.

CH 6/Scene 4 – In his confession, Gilbert Travis tells Inspector Hatfield that he had been back from the market much earlier than expected and had gone upstairs to check on the maid – without Eleanor’s knowledge. He found Doris in her room with an opened suitcase on her bed. She was so startled when Gilbert opened the door that she screamed. Gilbert had seen what Doris held in her hand – a lottery ticket. He went back to her room that afternoon, armed of a “driver” club. He only wanted to scare her, but when he swung the club, he didn’t recognize his own strength. “I only wanted a share of her winnings to save our business, but she refused,” Gilbert said as they took him out to the police cruiser.

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