

T.R. LETON

A COLD BLOODED RAIN:

**ONE
WEEK
LATER**

A Maxwell Floyd
Short Story

A COLD BLOODED RAIN:

ONE
WEEK
LATER

A Maxwell Floyd
Short Story

The Maxwell Floyd Detective Series

Book 1 - A Cold Blooded Rain

One Week Later: A Maxwell Floyd Short Story

Perspectives: A Companion Novella (*Coming Fall 2020*)

Corver & Mazzetti: A Companion Novella (*Coming Fall 2020*)

Book 2 - When Wolves Come Calling

Book 3 - Title TBA (*Coming 2021*)

A Cold Blooded Rain:
One Week Later

A Maxwell Floyd Short Story

By T. R. Leton

A Cold Blooded Rain: One Week Later

A Maxwell Floyd Short Story

Copyright © 2020 T. R. Leton
All rights reserved.

Cover Illustration, Map, & Supplemental Illustrations

Copyright © 2020 T. R. Leton

Cover, Map, & Illustration design by T.R. Leton

Edited by
Tracy Husmann

Co-Edited by
Molly VDM

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

CONTENTS

One Week Later	1
Supplemental	13
Preview of Book 2, When Wolves Come Calling	18
About the Author	25

AUTHOR'S WARNING

The following story takes place one week after the events of *A Cold Blooded Rain, Book 1 From the Files of Maxwell Floyd, Private Eye*, and contains spoilers. It is highly recommended that you read *A Cold Blooded Rain* prior to reading this short story.

For more information, visit:
www.maxwellfloyd.com

One Week Later

The elegant, newly-hewn headstone glistened in the morning sun. Her name, etched into the polished granite, would remain for all time. From my vantage point, I couldn't see what it read, but I could imagine.

CLAIRE DANIELLE HELMSLEY
BELOVED DAUGHTER
JUNE 25, 2044 – DECEMBER 7, 2066
“ARISE, FAIR SUN”

A variety of freshly-cut flowers, arranged into spectacular bouquets, surrounded the gravesite. But their beauty paled in comparison to that of the lovely young woman whose final resting place they adorned.

It was a private ceremony, unlike the previous day's service, which had been broadcast across the net. There were no cameras, no lights, no pomp or dreadful circumstance. That particular ceremony had already taken place—the one for the strangers. The outsiders.

People like me.

No one asked me to come, but I did anyway. It was the right thing to do.

The winter sun hung midway over the eastern horizon. A frigid breeze blew in from the north. The petals of the white rose in my hand shivered in the cold air.

Dead leaves swirled around my feet, and my old fedora fluttered atop my head. The hat matched the gray three-piece suit I wore. I remembered I was wearing it the night I heard of her murder.

As an ex-cop, the news hit me hard. I didn't plan on getting involved, but somehow, I did anyway. I stumbled through my own investigation, and the path it led me down nearly killed me. I could have blamed the whole thing on someone else, but I knew it would always be my own damn fault. Not that it mattered. I got sucked in anyway.

The graveside service began.

I removed my hat and leaned against the trunk of a bare tree, too far off to hear the preacher's words clearly. Among the gathered mourners in the distance, the buried faces and downcast eyes, I saw her mother, her father, her best friend. Even the family butler. They were all broken. *For now*. I knew identifying the man who robbed them of their loved one would bring them one tiny step closer to healing, and I was glad to have helped.

Claire.

She was a beautiful twenty-two-year-old woman with long dark hair and big brown eyes. She had barely become her own person when her life was snuffed out in a violent flash. It was a goddamn shame. And it still hurt, still angered me to think about. At least the monster who devastated so many lives was dead, for whatever consolation that brought.

I could only imagine the preacher's words as he spoke, standing with an air of reverence beside the grave.

A beautiful girl.

A wonderful gift from God.

Taken too soon.

Her presence, a grace to shine in heaven.

Hell, it's what I would have said.

I didn't necessarily believe in all that—in heaven. In God. But the idea of some form of her living on brought me comfort, not that I needed it as much as those standing closest to the grave. Closest to her.

I was never close to her. I never even knew her. But during my investigation, I learned she was a good, kind-hearted and caring soul. She often traveled to distant lands, volunteering her time and energy to help people who otherwise couldn't help themselves. The more I learned about Claire Hemsley, the more I started to feel like I *did* know her.

But then again, all of New York City felt the same. People adored her. She was royalty to them, a darling of the town, beloved by millions.

Her celebrity status came by way of her father. A smart and handsome man, he had found himself standing on the precipice of luck and good timing and took the leap. It paid off. Over time and with much effort, he became a very powerful and very wealthy man. A multi-trillionaire. A highly esteemed philanthropist.

Good for him.

If only everyone could be so lucky.

I met him once, shortly after the tragedy that befell him and his wife. After a turn of circumstances allowed me to interview him, I saw Mr. Hemsley for who he was, what he thought about life and his love for his wife and daughter. He was a good man. And for reasons I would never really fathom, he decided to trust me.

Me.

It meant a lot.

He believed in me, trusted me to solve his daughter's

case. And I did.

Did he owe me anything?

Absolutely not.

The bitter breeze whipped around me, and I pulled the flaps of my jacket close. As the preacher's eulogy continued, I spent my time reasoning with myself, trying to justify why I came despite not being invited. All I could come up with was that I had to be there. I needed to see her one last time, in her final resting place. It meant healing and resolution to so many, including me. It felt right to be there.

Then it was over.

The procession of friends and family passed by the casket, placing their hands on the cold, glossy cherry-wood, and whispering their final words.

The box was lowered into the ground. The grave was filled with earth—the final sleep.

I glanced down at the rose in my hand.

Sleep well, dear Claire.

I had no desire to intrude on their grief. I didn't need to share their pain, though I did anyway. I didn't need recognition or thanks for the part I played, so I made sure no one saw me.

Or so I thought.

Two men with comm-devices in their ears approached me from behind. Each wore black suits and sunglasses. They were big, muscular, square-jawed, and scary as hell. Both towered over me. I recognized them at once as her father's security detail.

Was I unwelcome?

Should I not have come?

Do I not deserve to be here?

One of the men placed a hand on my shoulder, and

I shuddered under his grip. “Mr. Floyd?” he asked, his voice deep and menacing.

I looked up at him, half-paralyzed by his sheer bulk and the glare that bore into me from behind his dark glasses.

“Y-Yeah?” was all that came out.

The man nodded. “Come with us, please.”

I didn’t say a word and followed obediently, my thoughts running rampant, my nerves in a knot. I wasn’t supposed to be there. *Dammit. Why did I come?*

I trailed the bodyguards as they led me toward a long line of parked cars. A hearse sat at the front of the motorcade, followed by a long black limousine.

The lead guard approached the limo’s rear door, opened it, and stood aside. “Have a seat,” he told me and reached out a hand. “I can hold on to these for you.”

After a moment’s hesitation, I handed him the rose and my fedora and nervously slid into the vehicle.

“Please wait. Mr. Hemsley will be with you shortly,” the guard said.

He shut the door.

I felt numb.

Looking around the lavish interior of the limousine, the feeling only got worse. The rich leather felt soft under my fingertips. The carpet lining beneath my ratty old shoes was thick and plush. Computer screens flickered brightly, displaying a flurry of economic news and stock data. A limo bar contained bottles of the finest booze. The air in the confined space smelled of wealth—something I wasn’t used to.

I had never known money. When I was a homicide detective, I made enough for a comfortable living. Hell, my wife made even better dough as a budding lawyer,

but it wasn't enough to move us up from ground level. Only the rich, famous, and powerful, like Claire's parents, lived on the thirtieth level and above in the tallest towers throughout Manhattan. For anyone living below, it would have taken many years of hard work, a massive inheritance, or the winning picks to make it to the upper-level echelon with the so-called cream of the crop.

If that was one's aspirations.

It had never been mine.

When I was seventeen, my father's death unexpectedly thrust me onto a new path. I wanted to help victims left hurt by evil acts and set the goal of becoming a cop, despite my mother's objections. I began to live for the pursuit of justice — *the chase* — hunting bad people down and putting them away.

When I graduated from the academy, I longed for a certain level of action. I always felt I belonged on the ground, in the lower levels, where the real shit happened — where I could turn a corner on any given day and come face-to-face with the lowest of criminal scum. That was my aspiration. That was why I became a cop. It turned out I was good at it, too. *Was*, being the key word.

But things didn't work out the way I had expected them to, and one thing led to another.

The senseless death of a child.

A botched case.

I started drinking.

I lost my shield.

My wife of fifteen years divorced me after I dragged her too far down into my misery.

I wallowed in remorse and self-pity for two years before Claire Hemsley's case fell in my lap. I had become nothing more than a lonely, drunk. I was a pathetic pri-

vate eye without a credit to my name, lying in an alleyway at rock bottom, bloodied and beaten.

Then a man came and challenged me to solve the Hemsley case. He urged me to pick myself up and get back to doing what I once did best—solving crimes.

I knew it wasn't going to be easy. I had more problems and distractions than I knew what to do with. Only after I succeeded did I learn who that man really was. The revelation was a horror beyond my worst nightmares, and I was no stranger to those. I didn't know if I would ever recover from learning the terrible truth about him. About myself. Rock bottom suddenly became something I found myself desperately reaching for.

But none of that changed the fact that during my investigation, when I hit a wall without a lead and thought all hope was lost, Albert Hemsley put his complete faith in me. He pleaded with me, damn-near ordered me to solve his daughter's murder.

I couldn't bear to turn him down. Mr. Hemsley garnered far too much respect from people of all walks of life, including me. I had to do it. For him, for his wife, for all who loved Claire. And if I was honest, it was a chance to redeem myself. I risked life, limb, and my very sanity. It was anything but easy, though managed to solve it, much to the dismay of the NYPD and the detectives assigned to the case.

But what did I have to show for it?

The limousine door swung open.

The man who entered the vehicle was about my size—six-foot-two, average build—but his presence still seemed to dwarf mine.

Albert Hemsley sat in the seat beside me, looking straight ahead.

I wasn't invited, the thought repeated in my head.

"Mr. Floyd," Hemsley said, his voice just as gravelly as I remembered.

Shit.

It suddenly felt like the temperature inside the limo had jumped fifty degrees. "S-Sir?" I asked as a sickening twinge of panic fluttered down my spine.

I shouldn't have come.

Though I had only talked with Mr. Hemsley once before, there were very few men I had ever met that I respected more. The last thing I wanted was to find myself on his bad side.

"Sir, I know I wasn't invit—"

He raised a hand, and I went silent. After a moment, he calmly continued. "Do you know what you've done?"

I could feel the sweat seep out of my pores.

Goddammit, Max! What the hell have you done?

I suddenly felt nauseous. "M-Mr. Hemsley," I stammered. "If ... If I've done anything wrong—"

"Mr. Floyd," Hemsley said, raising his voice to cut me off. After a long pause, a hiss slipped through Hemsley's mouth. "You ... You accomplished what no one else could," he told me. "You found him. The animal who killed my baby girl."

I stared back at the man, stunned, trying to summon a response but unable to find my voice.

"I—" Mr. Hemsley began, then stopped.

I clenched my hands to keep them from shaking and glanced out the windows of the limousine. People walked by in solemn silence. I didn't know who they were, just that they were there for Claire. Like me.

"Max." He seemed short of breath when he placed his hand on my arm. I shifted uncomfortably in my seat, and

our gazes met.

"Thank you," Hemsley said. "Thank you for coming."

I nodded dumbly before asking in a feeble voice, "Sir?"

"You know, Claire never really knew her grandparents. She was only a baby when I purchased this burial plot after my father died." Hemsley told me, his tone mournful. "We buried my mother here a few years later. I always expected I would be next. It never crossed my mind that my child would be buried before me." He turned and gazed out the window. "I wish she could have known them." After a long moment, he turned back to me and said, "I can't possibly tell you how you have impacted our lives."

"Sir, believe me, all I wanted was justice for—"

Hemsley held up his hand again. "I trust in my security. I trust in the law, the NYPD."

I began to wonder if Mr. Hemsley already had a few drinks in his system. Not that I was one to judge. But it was becoming more and more apparent that I wasn't in as much trouble as I feared. My nerves began to settle.

"I trust in ... " He sat back and rubbed his eyes.

Several long seconds passed by without a word.

"You'll have to forgive me," he said before letting out half a chuckle. "Claire would've been the first to tell you I often struggle with speaking from the heart."

I wanted to respond with something meaningful, but much like the man beside me, it was difficult to find the words. "The heart, sir?"

Hemsley brushed a speck of dust off his knee. "Yes," he murmured. After many more quiet moments, he finally turned to me. "Lucinda and I ... our lives have been shattered. And you," he paused to clear his throat. "You

have brought us closure.”

“Sir, I—”

A stern look from Hemsley shut me up quickly. He reached forward, toward the bar along one side of the limo’s interior. “I do not forget actions such as yours, nor do I let them go unrewarded.”

Hemsley selected a stylish, crystal decanter and filled a matching glass with two fingers of a golden-brown liquid. He handed it to me, and the smokey, earthy scent of scotch hit my nose. Hemsley poured one for himself and sat back.

“I am forever indebted to you.” He spoke with a hint of a slur. “You *have* to know that.”

I could only imagine the pain and anguish he and his wife had been through. I wouldn’t have blamed him if he was already drunk. Hell, I wished *I* was. But I didn’t like seeing the man I’d come to respect so deeply in that condition. Despite whatever help I’d provided to bring closure to him and his wife, I did nothing more than what I had sworn my life to—the pursuit of justice.

“You don’t owe me anything,” I said.

“Oh, but I do,” Hemsley replied before taking a healthy sip of scotch.

I shook my head, but Hemsley didn’t seem to notice. “I want to give you something.”

“Sir?”

He held out his hand. “Your jack.”

I hesitated, not sure if I’d heard him correctly.

“Give me your goddamned jack.”

I held my breath as I slipped the device from my coat pocket and handed it over to him.

He gave me a sad smile and as he took it. Without a word, he set his drink down and pulled out his own jack,

tapped at the screen, and waved it across mine. After a chiming jingle, he tossed my jack into my lap. "There."

I picked it up and looked at the screen. My heart leaped in my chest, and the air caught in my throat when I saw what Mr. Hemsley had done, the transaction he made, and the resulting balance of my bank account. I almost dropped my glass in shock. "S-Sir, no. Please, n-no. I-I can't accept this!"

"You can," Hemsley sighed. "And you will. I am not one to take no for an answer."

"My God, Mr. Hemsley," I croaked. "No, this is far too—"

"Goodbye, Mr. Floyd," Hemsley interrupted. "And thank you."

The limo door swung open. The bodyguard, who had been standing outside, placed a firm hand on my shoulder.

I could barely speak. "Oh, no. No, no, no," I pleaded, but my brain stumbled past any words of dispute as I set my drink down, nearly spilling the contents of the glass.

"I am *not* one to take no for an answer," Hemsley repeated in an unwavering tone. But then, as the guard was pulling me halfway out the door, Hemsley's expression softened. "Please, Mr. Floyd. Consider it an investment in the future of your detective work. Please accept it. On behalf of my family. On behalf of Claire. She would want you to have it."

What more could I have said?

I stood outside the vehicle peering in, stunned, my jaw hung wide open.

Mr. Hemsley didn't look back at me again.

The guard returned my belongings and urged me aside as another man escorted Claire's mother, Lucinda,

toward us. She gazed vacantly at the ground in front of her. Sadness radiated from her entire being, and though her steps faltered, she maintained her grace. After helping Mrs. Hemsley into the seat beside her husband, the guard shut the door and slapped his hand twice against the vehicle's roof.

The bodyguards disappeared into the next car as the limousine pulled away. I watched the entire procession depart the cemetery in a cloud of dust and leaves.

I turned back to the headstone in the distance. It seemed so far away.

Still reeling in shock over the encounter with Mr. Hemsley, I trudged across the lawn, barely able to shoulder the weight of sorrow suddenly pressing down on me. I stepped up to the block of granite with a growing lump in my throat. Seeing her name, actually seeing it set in stone, brought tears to my eyes. With a shuddering breath, I laid the white rose across the top of the headstone. My hands shook, my grip tightened around my fedora, turning my knuckles white.

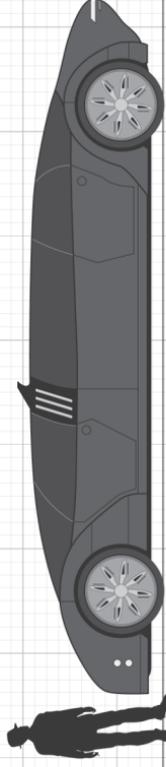
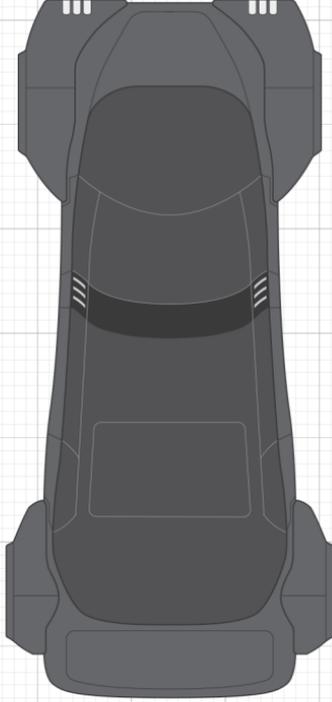
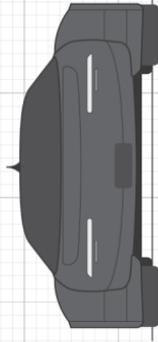
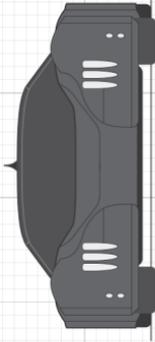
I never knew her, but she changed my life forever. Alone with Claire, it was finally my chance to talk to her. I had so much to tell her. I took a deep breath, the void in the pit of my stomach feeling as cold and as deep as the young woman's grave.

Maxwell Floyd will return in
When Wolves Come Calling

SUPPLEMENTAL

TURIN J6 BROUGHAM

LUXURY LIMOUSINE



PASSENGERS: 2 + 8

TRUNK SPACE: 64 FT3

LENGTH: 27 FT

WHEELBASE: 19 FT

EXTERIOR WIDTH: 12.5 FT

EXTERIOR HEIGHT: 5.75 FT

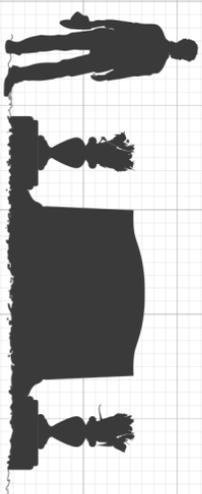
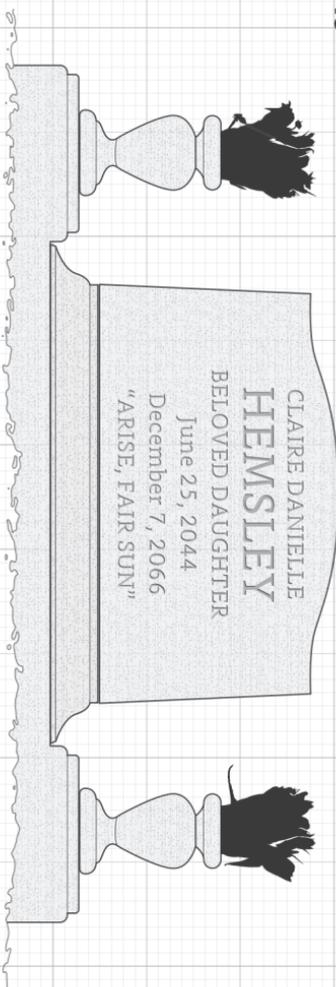
MAXIMUM SPEED: 165 MPH

RANGE: 742 MILES

DRIVE: TURIN KP39 T-MOTOR

POWER: 2x QUADCELL 440MV HyP BATTERIES

CLAIRE HEMSLEY'S HEADSTONE
FAIRVIEW-CROSS CEMETERY, PLOT 101C
FAIRVIEW, NJ



For much more
supplemental information, visit:
www.maxwellfloyd.com

A preview from Book 2,
When Wolves Come Calling

Chapter 1 – Nightmares

The little girl stared back at me with an expression of horror. Her long hair, dark and dripping wet, clung to her head like oily black cellophane. Her pale white skin radiated the sickly bluish chill of death. She stood, trembling, water rushing down her body to mingle with the foul black fluids seeping out of the mound of corpses at her feet.

She examined me curiously for a long moment before her gaze transformed into a glare filled with nothing but savage accusation. She reached out her hand, dripping water in the ghostly green light. A tiny index finger shot forward, pointing at me, and my gut wrenched with nausea that swiftly curdled into sheer fright.

I already knew what she blamed me for. I already knew what was yet to come, what she would say. Still, it terrified me.

Desperate, I wanted to look away but couldn't. A body on the floor beside her twitched. I tried to look at it – at anything – to escape the girl's dark stare.

It took everything I had to finally pry my eyes away from the girl to look at my hands. They shook uncontrollably. Wetness slicked my skin and dampened my

clothes. A cold, clammy sensation weighed me down, making it almost impossible to breathe.

I looked back at the girl, unable to endure the horrid silence anymore. "What do you want?" I asked, my voice muffled in the thick, dank air.

The girl tilted her head, like a dog hearing a strange noise, but said nothing. Instead, the sound of a beating heart rose in my ears. I couldn't tell if it originated in my own chest or resonated somewhere else outside my body.

"Can you understand me?" I shouted at the girl over the increasing volume of heartbeats.

She tilted her head the other way before narrowing her eyes and baring sharp, needle-like teeth. "You!" she said, her voice a guttural hiss. Water gushed from her mouth as she spoke, bubbling down her chest, slapping the floor. Her hand lowered and pointed to the bodies around her.

The corpses began to rot. Shriveled flesh peeled away before my eyes, exposing bones and putrefied, oozing organs. A terrible, sour stench wafted through the air. Flies began to swarm, crawling over the human remains. Maggots writhed within bloodied orifices and decaying meat.

"*You did this!*" the little girl added, even more water spilling from her mouth.

Several thudding heartbeats passed as I stood in horror of her wicked accusation, my breath seizing in my throat. I gasped. "No! I didn't do this!"

More movement within the pile of corpses drew my attention back down. Rats swarmed out of nowhere to gnaw on decomposing flesh. Their tiny, chisel-like teeth scraped and chewed through bones, ligaments, and fatty tissue. Their squeaks and shrieks only added to the roar of the beating heart and buzzing flies.

But the girl only looked at me, the same damning expression on her little face as she raised her hand and pointed at herself. "You did this!" Her wheezing voice gurgled, spewing water out along with the words.

My blood ran ice-cold as bile rose from my gut. With every heartbeat, fright tightened its grip on me. I shook my head at the girl. "No!" I cried. "I didn't!"

She angrily pointed her finger at her own face. "*You did this!*"

Seeing it all play out again, no matter how many times I had in the past, was a terror beyond what I knew I could bear. "*NO!*" I screamed back.

I had to get out. I had to get away from her.

But there was only one way to escape – straight ahead. There was never any going back. The little girl knew that and stood aside as I charged past. I tried avoiding the grisly mess of sprawling bodies, but there were too many. Bones snapped. Bloated organs burst under my clambering feet. A rat screeched as my foot came smashing down on it, and the number of corpses only seemed to have increased, littering the hallway as far as I could see.

I rushed forward in an awkward stumble while moving as quickly as I could. The beating heart drummed louder and faster against my eardrums. My foot hit the slick floor and slipped out from under me. I pitched forward, landing face down in the reeking carnage. Dark, slimy gore clung to my hands. I scrambled back up, horrified, trying to brush the repulsive filth off of me.

I sensed a nearby presence and turned with a start. The little girl stood behind me, watching, head tilted again as water poured down her face. I cringed away from her, holding up a hand. The heartbeat grew louder, faster. I longed to shut it all out but couldn't fight the

panic bearing down on me. I had no choice but to push onward, dodging, leaping, and staggering down the hall.

Then the lights flickered out.

I came to a stop in the complete blackness, my chest heaving with each burning breath. The beating heart slowed. A shiver trickled down my spine when a cold, wet hand took hold of mine. I forced down the lump in my throat as I held the small hand tightly. It came as a strange comfort in the darkness.

An icy calm came over me. My breathing steadied. The thudding heartbeat began to fade, replaced by an oddly soothing electronic chirp. The gently repeating tone came from somewhere in the blackness ahead. My thoughts cleared as I breathed deeply, in and out, matching pace with the beeping rhythm.

The lights flickered back on.

I found myself at the end of the hallway, the piles of corpses gone. A single door stood ajar before me, a slender, bright yellow shaft of light shining through to cast a radiant glow on the floor. I looked down at the little girl by my side. Her hair, skin, and nightgown were dry. She raised her head toward me, and I saw no more of the burning accusation – only sadness, maybe even pity. She gave my hand a weak, but reassuring squeeze.

Beside the door, a small sign hung on the wall. I took a step closer, trying to make out the words but couldn't. The fuzzy letters only formed a jumbled mess of shapes, but it didn't matter since I already knew what the sign said.

ICU 17

The little girl was silent, waiting patiently. I knew she

expected me to enter the room, and I knew it was the only way out. Taking a deep breath, I went to the door with the girl's small hand still grasped firmly in my own. I paused, leaning my forehead against the doorframe, dreading the sight of what was on the other side. I didn't want to face it. *Not again.*

I gathered my courage and pushed the door open. The bright light from beyond bathed my face, blinding me. I moved onward, blinking and wincing until my eyes adjusted to the sunlight coming through the window in the small hospital room. Beyond the glass, a brilliant sun shone in a clear sky as it sank toward the distant horizon.

In front of the window, a hospital bed cradled its occupant, surrounded by machines and equipment. The patient lay with wires and tubes poking into his body, making him look like an old marionette. An IV bag hung from a metal stand, a familiar amber-colored liquid dripping slowly as his heart sucked it into his veins.

I approached the bed with the little girl in tow. I forced myself to look down at the man's face — a face so terribly familiar. The nose and chin were a reflection of my own, only they had seen many more years.

"Dad," I whispered. "I'm here."

He didn't respond to my words.

I gazed out the window, my eyes welling with tears. The sun had begun to set, half of its sphere still above the horizon. I knew time was short.

The chirp continued at slow, regular intervals. The little girl was still beside me, still silent, still holding on. With my free hand, I reached down to take my father's hand. His skin felt cold, his bones fragile beneath the sagging skin. I held on as long as I could, as the very last of the setting sun slipped from view.

My father opened his eyes and looked at me. I saw the faint but familiar glimmer in his weak expression. He gave my hand a gentle squeeze – his assurance that everything was going to be all right. His chest fell one last time before his eyes glazed over and closed. The electronic chirp sounded once again in a steady, unending tone.

“No,” I murmured. I let go of the girl’s hand and began to sob as I laid my head on my father’s chest.

I had seen it so many times, but it never failed to torment me. Tears streamed from my eyes as I shut them tight. Groans of anguish slipped through my gritted teeth, and my body shook as I choked on every breath. For many long moments, I held my father’s hand, my head on his chest, waiting for the pain to pass.

I didn’t know how long I cried, but when I finally looked up again, I found others had gathered around me.

The little girl was gone. In her place, my mother stood in tears, dressed all in black while other faceless women surrounded her, weeping and howling in grief.

“Mom,” I said, standing up straight.

She looked at me, an expression of terrible sadness carved on her face.

I reached out to her.

Without warning, my mother’s gaze hardened. She glared at me as anger twisted her face into a scowl. She raised a long, skeletal finger at me and screamed, “*YOU DID THIS!*”

The cruel, scornful words out of Mother’s mouth sent a sickening spasm of horror careening through my body. The room began to spin around me as my stomach roiled. I could taste the bile in the back of my mouth. I felt one last violent and painful thud deep inside my chest before my heart stopped dead.

I jolted straight up in bed and cried out, clutching my sweat-soaked bed sheets as my heart pounded against my ribcage.

For several terror-fueled moments, I sat gasping for air, unable to remember where I was. But realization finally crept its way in from some sleepy crevice in my brain as I looked around my bedroom, dark and quiet, and blew out a long, wheezing sigh.

I'm home.

No longer lost in the gruesome realm of my nightmares, my nerves loosened knot by knot until I looked down beside me to find the bed empty. My heart skipped several beats ...

When Wolves Come Calling

Book 2 From the Files of Maxwell Floyd, Private Eye

by T. R. Leton

Now available!

About the Author

T. R. Leton was born and raised in Northern California, where he currently lives with his wife and two children. He has spent the last twenty years in marketing, music writing & production, and graphic design.

His lifelong love of writing finally caught up to him in 2011 when he began working on the Maxwell Floyd crime fiction novels. *A Cold Blooded Rain: One Week Later* is a short story that follows the first book in the series, the award-winning *A Cold Blooded Rain*, and precedes the second novel, *When Wolves Come Calling*.

Find him online at:

www.maxwellfloyd.com
www.twitter.com/toddleton
www.facebook.com/toddleton
www.instagram.com/toddleton