

November 5, 2007, Day Four

Police officer Rita Ficarra slapped her palm against the back of my head, but the shock of the blow, even more than the force, left me dazed. I hadn't expected to be slapped. I was turning around to yell, "Stop!"—my mouth halfway open—but before I even realized what had happened, I felt another whack, this one above my ear. She was right next to me, leaning over me, her voice as hard as her hand had been. "Stop lying, stop lying," she insisted.

Stunned, I cried out, "Why are you hitting me?"

"To get your attention," she said.

I have no idea how many cops were stuffed into the cramped, narrow room. Sometimes there were two, sometimes eight—police coming in and going out, always closing the door behind them. They loomed over me, each yelling the same thing: "You need to remember. You're lying. Stop lying!"

"I'm telling the truth," I insisted. "I'm not lying." I felt like I was suffocating. There was no way out. And still they kept yelling, insinuating.

The authorities I trusted thought I was a liar. But I wasn't lying. I was using the little energy I still had to show them I was telling the truth. Yet I couldn't get them to believe me.

We weren't even close to being on equal planes. I was twenty, and I barely spoke their language. Not only did they know the law, but it was their job to manipulate people, to get "criminals" to admit they'd done something wrong by bullying, by intimidation, by humiliation. They try to scare people, to coerce them, to make them frantic. That's what they do. I was in their interrogation room. I was surrounded by police officers. I was alone.

No one read me my rights. I had no idea that I could remain silent. I was sure you had to prove your innocence by talking. If you didn't, it must mean you were hiding something.

I began to trust them even more than I trusted myself. So much pressure was being exerted on me that I couldn't think through what was happening. I was losing my sense of reality. I would have believed, and said, anything to end the torment I was in.

That Monday morning, Meredith's autopsy report was splashed across the British tabloids depicting a merciless, hellish end to her life. The fatal stabbing, the coroner said, had been done with a pocketknife, and skin and hair found beneath Meredith's fingernails showed she was locked in a vicious to-the-death struggle with her killer. Mysteriously, news accounts reported that something in the same report had made the police bring Filomena, Laura, and me back to the villa. To this day I don't know what it was.

There was evidence that Meredith had been penetrated, but none that proved there had been an

actual rape. But other clues that would lead the police to the murderer had been left behind. There was a bloody handprint smeared on the wall and a bloody shoeprint on the floor. A blood-soaked handkerchief was lying in the street nearby. As the stories mounted, I was the only one of Meredith's three housemates being mentioned consistently by name: "Amanda Knox, an American," "Amanda Knox, fellow exchange student," "Amanda Knox, Meredith's American flatmate." It was all going horribly wrong.

But by that time I wasn't paying attention to the news.

I was desperate to get back to my regular routine, an almost impossible quest given that any minute I expected the police to call again. I didn't have a place of my own to live or clean clothes to wear. But trying to be adult in an unmanageable situation, I borrowed Raffaele's sweatpants and walked nervously to my 9 A.M. grammar class. It was the first time since Meredith's body was found that I'd been out alone.

Class wasn't as normal as I would have liked. Just before we began the day's lesson, a classmate raised her hand and asked, "Can we talk about the murder that happened over the weekend?"

I knew I hadn't been singled out, but that's the way it felt. I said, "Can we not? She was my housemate, and the police have asked me not to say anything." The other students murmured vague sympathies, but the attention put me even more on edge.

When my phone rang I drew in my breath, exhaling only after I realized it was Dolly. "Have you reached the American embassy?" she asked.

"No," I said, stepping into the hall. "I haven't had time, but I'll try to figure it out. I'm back in class."

In truth, I hadn't even thought about calling the embassy.

As with everyone who'd phoned, I wanted Dolly to believe that I had my life under control. I was still trying to believe it myself.

In retrospect I understand that Dolly had a hunch I was headed for a train wreck—that in keeping me awake, calling me back in, the police were interested in me as more than just a "person informed of the facts." I didn't see these things as I should have, as foreshadowing, or that Dolly's advice was now my last chance to alter the course of coming events. I just viewed her suggestions as moral support, like other calls I was getting from my family and friends.

She said, "You're a strong girl. I love you. Your mom's going to be there tomorrow, so stay tough."

When class ended I headed back toward Raffaele's apartment. As I walked through Piazza Grimana, I saw Patrick standing in a crowd of students and journalists in front of the University for Foreigners administration building. He kissed me hello on both cheeks. "Do you want to talk

to some BBC reporters?” he asked. “They’re looking for English-speaking students to interview.”

I said, “I can’t. The police have told me not to talk to anyone about the case.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to put you in a difficult position,” he said.

“That’s okay. But Patrick . . .” I hesitated. “I’ve needed to call you. I don’t think I can work at Le Chic anymore. I’m too afraid to go out by myself at night now. I keep looking behind me to see if I’m being followed. And I feel like someone is lurking behind every building, watching me.”

“No problem. I completely understand. Don’t worry about it.”

“Thank you.”

We kissed again on each cheek. “Ciao,” I said.

That afternoon at Raffaele’s, I got a text from one of Meredith’s friends—a student from Poland—telling me about a candlelight memorial service for Meredith that night. Everyone was supposed to meet downtown, on Corso Vannucci, at 8 P.M. and walk in a procession to the Duomo. I kept wondering about what I should do. I wanted to be there but couldn’t decide if it was a good idea for me to go to such a public event. I was sure the people I ran into would ask me what I knew about the murder. In the end my decision was made for me—Raffaele had somewhere else to be, and I wouldn’t have considered going alone. It didn’t occur to me that people would later read my absence as another indication of guilt.

At around 9 P.M. Raffaele and I went to a neighbor’s apartment for a late dinner. Miserable and unable to sit still, I plucked absentmindedly at his friend’s ukulele, propped on a shelf in the living room. At about ten o’clock, while we were eating, Raffaele’s phone rang. “Pronto,” Raffaele said, picking up.

It was the police saying they needed him to come to the questura immediately. Raffaele and I had the same thought: This late? Not again.

Raffaele said, “We’re just eating dinner. Would you mind if I finished first?”

That was a bad idea, too.

While we cleared the table, Raffaele and I chatted quickly about what I should do while he was at the police station. I was terrified to be alone, even at his place, and uneasy about hanging out with someone I didn’t know. I could quickly organize myself to stay overnight with Laura or Filomena, but that seemed so complicated—and unnecessary. Tomorrow, when my mom arrived, this wouldn’t be a question we’d have to discuss.

“I’m sure it’s going to be quick,” Raffaele said.

I said, "I'll just come with you."

Did the police know I'd show up, or were they purposefully separating Raffaele and me? When we got there they said I couldn't come inside, that I'd have to wait for Raffaele in the car. I begged them to change their minds. I said, "I'm afraid to be by myself in the dark."

They gave me a chair outside the waiting room, by the elevator. I'd been doing drills in my grammar workbook for a few minutes when a silver-haired police officer—I never learned his name—came and sat next to me. He said, "As long as you're here, do you mind if I ask you some questions?"

I was still clueless, still thinking I was helping the police, still unable or unwilling to recognize that I was a suspect. But as the next hours unfolded, I slowly came to understand that the police were trying to get something out of me, that they wouldn't stop until they had it.

To the unnamed police officer, I said, "Okay, but I've told you everything I know. I don't know what else to say."

"Why don't you keep talking about the people who've been in your house—especially men?" he suggested.

I'd done this so many times in the questura I felt as if I could dial it in. And finally someone there seemed nice. "Okay," I said, starting in. "There are the guys who live downstairs."

As I was running through the list of male callers at No. 7, Via della Pergola, I suddenly remembered Rudy Guede for the first time. I'd met him only briefly. I said, "Oh, and there's this guy—I don't know his name or his number—all I know is that he plays basketball with the guys downstairs. They introduced Meredith and me to him in Piazza IV Novembre. We all walked to the villa together, and then Meredith and I went to their apartment for a few minutes."

While we talked, I got up to stretch. I'd been sitting hunched over a long time. I touched my toes, flexed my quads, extended my arms overhead.

He said, "You seem really flexible."

I replied, "I used to do a lot of yoga."

He said, "Can you show me? What else can you do?"

I took a few steps toward the elevator and did a split. It felt good to know I still could.

While I was on the floor, legs splayed, the elevator doors opened. Rita Ficarra, the cop who had reprimanded Raffaele and me about kissing the day before, stepped out.

"What are you doing?" she demanded, her voice full of contempt.

I stood up and returned to my chair. “Waiting,” I said.

The silver-haired officer said, “I was just asking Amanda some questions.”

Ficarra said, “If that’s the case, we need to put it on the record.”

She led me through the waiting room and into the same office with the two desks where I’d spent so much time. As we were walking, she looked at me, narrowing her eyes. “You said you guys don’t smoke marijuana. Are you sure you’re being honest?”

“I’m really sorry I said that.” I grimaced. “I was afraid to tell you that all of us smoked marijuana occasionally, including Meredith. We’d sometimes pass a joint around when we were chilling out with the guys or with Filomena and Laura. But Meredith and I never bought any pot; we didn’t know any drug dealers.”

She shut the door and signaled for me to sit down on a metal folding chair, taking the seat across the desk from me. The silver-haired officer pulled up a chair next to me, effectively cutting the room in half. The light was bright. The walls were blank. I had nowhere to look but at the police. They said, “We’re going to call in an interpreter.”

While we waited for the interpreter to arrive, they said, “Tell us more about the last time you saw Meredith.”

I did.

Then they said, “Okay, minute by minute, we want you to tell us what happened.”

I still thought they were using me to find out more information about Meredith—her habits, whom she knew, who could possibly have had a motive to kill her. I started trying to describe the exact time I saw Meredith leave the house. I said, “I think it was around two P.M.—one or two. I’m not sure which. I don’t wear a watch, and the time didn’t matter—it was a holiday. But I know it was after lunch.”

Then the questions shifted. They asked, “When did you leave your house?”

At first, when they started questioning me about what I did, I thought they were just trying to test whether I was telling the truth—maybe because I’d lied about our marijuana use.

I said, “Before dinner—four-ish maybe.”

They said, “Are you sure it was four-ish? Was it four o’clock or five o’clock? You didn’t see the time?”

“No. Then we went to Raffaele’s place.”

“How long it did it take you to get there?”

“I don’t know—a couple of minutes. He doesn’t live far away.”

“What happened then?”

“Nothing happened. We had dinner; we watched a movie; we smoked a joint; we had sex; we went to bed.”

“Are you positive? Nothing else?”

“Well, I got a text message from my boss telling me I didn’t have to work that night.”

“What time did that happen?”

“I think around eight P.M.—maybe. Maybe it was before then.” I was thinking, It had to be before I’d normally go to work. “Maybe seven or eight?”

That wasn’t good enough for them.

They kept asking me for exact times, and because I couldn’t remember what had happened from 7 P.M. to 8 P.M. and 8 P.M. to 9 P.M. they made it seem as if my memory were wrong. I started second-guessing myself. Raffaele and I had done some variation of watching a movie, cooking dinner, reading Harry Potter, smoking a joint, and having sex every night for the past week. Suddenly it all ran together so that I couldn’t remember what time we’d done what on Thursday, November 1. I kept saying, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry.”

I was afraid to say that I didn’t know the difference between 7 P.M. or 8 P.M., and I was beginning to feel panicky because they were demanding that I know. My heart was hammering, my thoughts were scrambled, and the pressure on the sides of my head made it feel as if my skull were going to split apart. I couldn’t think. Suddenly, in trying to distinguish between this time or that time, this sequence of events or that one, I started forgetting everything. My mind was spinning. I felt as if I were going totally blank.

“Which was it?”

I took a deep breath. “I don’t remember.”

Ficarra thrust her hand out aggressively and insisted, “Let me see your cell phone.”

I handed it to her. As they looked through it, they kept pounding me with questions. “What movie did you watch?”

“Amélie.”

“How long is that movie?”

“I don’t know.”

“Did you watch it all the way through?”

“Well, we paused it at some point, because we noticed that the sink was leaking.”

“But you said you’d had dinner before that.”

“I guess you’re right. I think the sink leaked before we watched the movie, but then I remember pausing it.”

“Why did you pause it?”

“I don’t remember.”

“Why? Why? What time?”

“I don’t remember!” I said it forcefully, trying to shake them off, but it didn’t work. They were peppering me relentlessly. The questions seemed simple, but I didn’t have the answers. And the more they asked, the more I lost my bearings. I was getting hot, looking around for air. I was having my period, and I could feel myself bleeding into my underwear. “I need to use the bathroom,” I said. “I have a feminine issue.”

“Not right now,” they said. “Did you pause the movie before dinner or after?”

“I think it was after we had dinner, but now that I think about it, it seemed pretty late when we had dinner.”

“Why can’t you remember? Did you have dinner before or after the movie?”

“You’re freaking me out,” I yelled. “I can’t think when I’m freaked out. It just seemed late when we ate.”

By now their tone was shrill. “Why can’t you just tell us? Why can’t you remember?”

I could tell they thought I was lying. I said, “I’m sorry, it’s hard to remember, and I’m really tired. There are some nights we had dinner earlier and some nights later. It seemed late to me, but I don’t remember what time it was.”

I was exhausted. I hadn’t slept but a few hours in the past four days, and the back-and-forth to the police station—on top of the shock I felt over Meredith—had left me empty. I didn’t know I could say, “We need to stop, because I’m too tired.” I was ashamed that I couldn’t answer their questions, that I was failing. I didn’t know what to do to make it better. I wanted so badly to

appease them so they would go away.

The interpreter, a woman in her forties, arrived at about 12:30 A.M. It's inconceivable to me now that all the questioning up to that point had been in Italian. For a couple of hours I'd done my best to hang in there, to grasp what they were saying. I kept saying, "Okay, I understand." I was always mortified when I had to admit that my Italian wasn't up to speed.

The truth is that although I could guess what they meant, this was another case of my false bravado. By that time, my Italian was fine for exchanging pleasantries over a cup of tea. But in no credible way was it strong enough, after only six weeks in Italy, for me to be defending myself against accusations of murder.

The interpreter sat down behind me. She was irritated and impatient, as if I were the one who had roused her from bed in the middle of the night.

The silver-haired cop and Ficarra were in the tiny room almost nonstop. When they left, it wasn't for long, and other cops came in to take their place. Sometimes a crowd of people closed in on me. The room was becoming uninhabitable for me. I really had to use the bathroom, to take care of my period, but now I was too afraid to ask.

Just then a cop—Monica Napoleoni, who had been so abrupt with me about the poop and the mop at the villa—opened the door. "Raffaele says you left his apartment on Thursday night," she said almost gleefully. "He says that you asked him to lie for you. He's taken away your alibi."

My jaw dropped. I was dumbfounded, devastated. What? I couldn't believe that Raffaele, the one person in Italy whom I'd trusted completely, had turned against me. How could he say that when it wasn't true? We'd been together all night. Now it was just me against the police, my word against theirs. I had nothing left.

"Where did you go? Who did you text?" Ficarra asked, sneering at me.

"I don't remember texting anyone."

They grabbed my cell phone up off the desk and scrolled quickly through its history.

"You need to stop lying. You texted Patrick. Who's Patrick?"

"My boss at Le Chic."

"What about his text message? What time did you receive that?"

"I don't know. You have my phone," I said defiantly, trying to combat hostility with hostility. I didn't remember that I'd deleted Patrick's message.

They said, "Why did you delete Patrick's message? The text you have says you were going to



meet Patrick.”

“What message?” I asked, bewildered. I didn’t remember texting Patrick a return message.

“This one!” said an officer, thrusting the phone in my face and withdrawing it before I could even look. “Stop lying! Who’s Patrick? What’s he like?”

“He’s about this tall,” I said, gesturing, “with braids.”

“Did he know Meredith?”

“Yes, she came to the bar.”

“Did he like her?”

“Yes, he liked Meredith. He was nice to her, and they got along.”

“Did he think Meredith was pretty?”

“Well, Meredith was pretty. I’m sure he thought she was pretty.”

“When did you leave to meet Patrick?”

“I didn’t meet Patrick. I stayed in.”

“No, you didn’t. This message says you were going to meet him.”

“No. No, it doesn’t.”

They read the message aloud: “Certo ci vediamo più tardi buona serata!”—“Okay, see you later, have a good evening!”

“That means ‘we’re going to see each other,’ ” they said, translating the Ci vediamo for me.

“You said, ‘See you later.’ Why did you go see him? ”

“I didn’t see him!” I shouted. “In English, ‘see you later’ means good-bye. It doesn’t mean we’re going to see each other now. It means see you eventually.”

In my beginner’s Italian, I had had no idea that I’d used the wrong phrase in my text to Patrick—the one that means you’re going to see someone. I’d merely translated it literally from the English.

The interpreter balked: “You’re a liar.”

“No, I’m not! I never left Raffaele’s apartment.”

The detectives said, "You did leave. Raffaele said you left. You said you were meeting Patrick."

How could I make them believe that I'd been at Raffaele's all night? My protests seemed so flimsy, especially when they ganged up on me. I couldn't make them believe anything.

I said, "I didn't leave."

"Who did you meet up with? Who are you protecting? Why are you lying? Who's this person? Who's Patrick?"

The questions wouldn't stop. I couldn't think. And even when it didn't seem possible, the pressure kept building.

I said, "Patrick is my boss."

The interpreter offered a solution, "Once, when I had an accident, I didn't remember it. I had a broken leg and it was traumatizing and I woke up afterward and didn't remember it. Maybe you just don't remember. Maybe that's why you can't remember times really well."

For a moment, she sounded almost kind.

But I said, "No, I'm not traumatized."

Another cop picked up the same language. He said, "Maybe you're traumatized by what you saw. Maybe you don't remember."

Everyone was yelling, and I was yelling back. I shouted, "I don't understand what the fuck is happening right now!"

A beefy cop with a crew cut thought I'd said, "Fuck you," and he yelled, "Fuck you!" back.

They pushed my cell phone, with the message to Patrick, in my face and screamed, "You're lying. You sent a message to Patrick. Who's Patrick?"

That's when Ficarra slapped me on my head.

"Why are you hitting me?" I cried.

"To get your attention," she said.

"I'm trying to help," I said. "I'm trying to help, I'm desperately trying to help."

The pressure was greater than just being closed in a room. It was about being yelled at relentlessly by people I trusted completely, by people I'd been taught to respect. Everything felt bigger, more overwhelming, more suffocating, than it was because these were people whom I

thought I was helping and they didn't believe me; they kept telling me I was wrong.

They told me I'd been to our house, that they had evidence to prove it. They told me I'd left Raffaele's. Raffaele himself had said so. They told me I'd been traumatized and had amnesia. I hadn't slept in days. They wouldn't let me leave the room or give me a moment to think. Nothing had substance. Nothing seemed real. I believed them. Their version of reality was taking over. I felt confused, frantic, and there was no escape.

People were shouting at me. "Maybe you just don't remember what happened. Try to think. Try to think. Who did you meet? Who did you meet? You need to help us. Tell us!"

A cop boomed, "You're going to go to prison for thirty years if you don't help us."

The threat hung in the air. I was feeling smaller and smaller, more and more helpless. It was the middle of the night. I was terrified, and I couldn't understand what was happening. I thought they had to be pressuring me for a reason. They had to be telling me the truth. Raffaele had to be telling the truth. I didn't trust my own mind anymore. I believed the police. I could no longer distinguish what was real from what wasn't. I had a moment when I thought I was remembering.

The silver-haired police officer took both of my hands in his. He said, "I really want to help you. I want to save you, but you need to tell me who the murderer is. You need to tell me. You know who the murderer is. You know who killed Meredith."

In that instant, I snapped.

I truly thought I remembered having met somebody. I didn't understand what was happening to me. I didn't understand that I was about to implicate the wrong person. I didn't understand what was at stake. I didn't think I was making it up. My mind put together incoherent images. The image that came to me was Patrick's face.

I gasped. I said his name. "Patrick—it's Patrick."

I started sobbing uncontrollably. They said, "Who's Patrick? Where is he? Where is he?"

I said, "He's my boss."

"Where did you meet him?"

"I don't remember."

"Yes, you do."

"I don't know—at the basketball court."

"Why did he kill her? Why did he kill her?"

I said, "I don't know."

"Did he have sex with Meredith? Did he go into the room with Meredith?"

"I don't know, I guess so. I'm confused."

They started treating me like someone who'd been taken advantage of. They told me they were helping me, that they were trying to get to the truth. "We're trying to do our best for you."

They were softer, but I was no longer sure of anything—of what was real, of what I feared, of what I imagined.

I wept for a long time.

At 1:45 A.M. they gave me a piece of paper written in Italian and told me to sign it.

On Thursday, November 1, on a day when I normally work, while I was at my boyfriend Raffaele's place, at about 20:30, I received a message on my cell phone from Patrik, who told me the club would remain closed that night because there weren't any customers and therefore I would not have to go to work.

I replied to the message telling him that we'd see each other right away. Then I left the house, saying to my boyfriend that I had to go to work. Given that during the afternoon with Raffaele I had smoked a joint, I felt confused because I do not make frequent use of drugs that strong.

I met Patrick immediately at the basketball court in Piazza Grimana and we went to the house together. I do not remember if Meredith was there or came shortly afterward. I have a hard time remembering those moments but Patrick had sex with Meredith, with whom he was infatuated, but I cannot remember clearly whether he threatened Meredith first. I remember confusedly that he killed her.

As soon as I signed it, they whooped and high-fived each other.

Then, a few minutes later, they demanded my sneakers. As soon as I took them off, someone left the room with them.

Eventually they told me the pubblico ministero would be coming in. I didn't know this translated as prosecutor, or that this was the magistrate that Rita Ficarra had been referring to a few days earlier when she said they'd have to wait to see what he said, to see if I could go to Germany. I thought the "public minister" was the mayor or someone in a similarly high "public" position in the town and that somehow he would help me.

They said, "You need to talk to the pubblico ministero about what you remember."

I told them, "I don't feel like this is remembering. I'm really confused right now." I even told

them, “I don’t remember this. I can imagine this happening, and I’m not sure if it’s a memory or if I’m making this up, but this is what’s coming to mind and I don’t know. I just don’t know.”

They said, “Your memories will come back. It’s the truth. Just wait and your memories will come back.”

The pubblico ministero came in.

Before he started questioning me, I said, “Look, I’m really confused, and I don’t know what I’m remembering, and it doesn’t seem right.”

One of the other police officers said, “We’ll work through it.”

Despite the emotional sieve I’d just been squeezed through, it occurred to me that I was a witness and this was official testimony, that maybe I should have a lawyer. “Do I need a lawyer?” I asked.

He said, “No, no, that will only make it worse. It will make it seem like you don’t want to help us.”

It was a much more solemn, official affair than my earlier questioning had been, though the pubblico ministero was asking me the same questions as before: “What happened? What did you see?”

I said, “I didn’t see anything.”

“What do you mean you didn’t see anything? When did you meet him?”

“I don’t know,” I said.

“Where did you meet him?”

“I think by the basketball court.” I had imagined the basketball court in Piazza Grimana, just across the street from the University for Foreigners.

“I have an image of the basketball court in Piazza Grimana near my house.”

“What was he wearing?”

“I don’t know.”

“Was he wearing a jacket?”

“I think so.”

“What color was it?”

“I think it was brown.”

“What did he do?”

“I don’t know.”

“What do you mean you don’t know?”

“I’m confused!”

“Are you scared of him?”

“I guess.”

I felt as if I were almost in a trance. The pubblico ministero led me through the scenario, and I meekly agreed to his suggestions.

“This is what happened, right? You met him?”

“I guess so.”

“Where did you meet?”

“I don’t know. I guess at the basketball court.”

“You went to the house?”

“I guess so.”

“Was Meredith in the house?”

“I don’t remember.”

“Did Patrick go in there?”

“I don’t know, I guess so.”

“Where were you?”

“I don’t know. I guess in the kitchen.”

“Did you hear Meredith screaming?”

“I don’t know.”

“How could you not hear Meredith screaming?”

“I don’t know. Maybe I covered my ears. I don’t know, I don’t know if I’m just imagining this. I’m trying to remember, and you’re telling me I need to remember, but I don’t know. This doesn’t feel right.”

He said, “No, remember. Remember what happened.”

“I don’t know.”

At that moment, with the pubblico ministero raining questions down on me, I covered my ears so I could drown him out.

He said, “Did you hear her scream?”

I said, “I think so.”

My account was written up in Italian and he said, “This is what we wrote down. Sign it.”

I want to voluntarily report what happened because I’m deeply disturbed and very frightened of Patrick, the African owner of the pub called “Le Chic” on Alessi Street where I work occasionally. I met him on November 1 at night after I sent a reply to his message with the words “see you later.” We soon met about 9 pm at the basketball court in Piazza Grimana. We went to my house on Via della Pergola No. 7. I cannot remember exactly if my friend Meredith was already in the house or if she came after, but I can say that she disappeared into her bedroom with Patrick while I think I stayed in the kitchen. I can’t remember how long they were in her bedroom but at one point I heard Meredith screaming and I was scared and covered my ears. I do not remember anything after that. I have a lot of confusion in my head. I do not remember if Meredith screamed or if I heard any thuds because I was in shock, but I could imagine what was going on.

After I signed it, everyone mercifully stopped questioning me, but my mind wouldn’t rest. Something didn’t feel right. It didn’t seem as though I had actually remembered what I said I had. It seemed made up.

In my dull state I thought everything would eventually be okay. I thought I could communicate with people on the outside. My mother was coming that day, and she’d help me figure things out.

I had no more than a shred of memory, but it seemed to hold the truth. I was so afraid of the police, so afraid of sending them in the wrong direction for the wrong person. What if I’ve told them wrong? What if I don’t have amnesia?

And what about the “spontaneous declarations,” as the police called what I’d signed? These

documents didn't take into account that I kept yelling, "I don't know." They didn't say that the police threatened me and yelled at me. None of that is there.

The declarations were in the detectives' words. But now their words were mine, and this shaped everything that followed.