

“Honest Captain, It Wasn’t Us!”

One very hot summer day, during one of my two tours as the F/3 Zone Commander, Conrail called SP Kingston advising that an engineer had sighted a body floating in the Hudson River alongside the tracks in SP Highland’s Patrol Area.

We and Troop K had been looking for a jumper for several weeks and it seemed likely this was our guy. A hasty detail was formed consisting of me, Senior Investigator Roger Gardiner and a few non-enthusiastic draftees. There were no roads remotely close to the scene and we had to hike some distance along the train tracks to get there. When we got within fifty yards of the scene it became apparent that this was going to be a very difficult and very unpleasant recovery.

There was some question as to whether the floater would even fit in a body bag, although no one volunteered to find out. Then there would be a long trek back, walking between the rails. There was quite a bit of rail traffic and the tracks were built high above the swampy shore, so it was entirely possible that we might suddenly have to abandon the body bag on the tracks and bail down the embankment. That would have made for a very interesting File 3. I can't even begin to imagine what the title would be.

Just then the coroner, a grizzled old undertaker, came churning up the river in a commandeered motor boat which looked very much like the Hardy Boys' *Sleuth*. He concurred that trying to bag the body might be impossible and instead tossed a line over the corpse' foot and headed off toward the Marlboro Yacht Club.

Fortunately we were still hiking back and not at the yacht club beach when the coroner arrived with Moby Dick in tow. Apparently the beach was filled with kids and young moms playing in the sand and the coroner's arrival caused pandemonium and, subsequently, considerable unfavorable publicity.

We could - and did - plead "Weren't there. Wasn't us."