

# An Analysis of The Intriguing Murder Mystery in Stephen King's The Outsider

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## Abstract

There is no such thing as a perfect crime. In every case, sooner or later the culprit will be found and he or she shall face the law. Even in a case that can be seen as a perfect crime there will be some piece of information left by the criminal. The solving of the case depends upon the ability of the investigator to find out that hint and put it into investigation. But what happens when the crime is not done by an ordinary human and the police officials have arrested an innocent man? Stephen King's The Outsider is all about such an inhuman being who has done several crimes especially the Raping and Murdering of innocent children. We can't even think about a situation when we are blamed or even arrested for another man's crime. But what happens when one experiences a scenario where the innocent is also guilty?

This contradiction is portrayed in *The Outsider* as it follows the story of a detective whose search for the absolute truth leads him to discover evil in its pure form.

Detective Ralph Anderson is all set for arresting Terry Maitland who is an esteemed sports trainer and high school educator for the killing and confrontation of an eleven year old boy, Frank Peterson. All the clues are against Terry Maitland. Ralph Anderson commands to arrest him at a local baseball game in front of his household and the whole horde. But Maitland had a mighty justification, he was in the company of some educators hundreds of miles away and there is video authentication to confirm it. His fingerprints are also there on a book where he claimed to be. How can he be at two places at the same time? However the intriguing murder mystery is solved at last by the brave efforts of Ralph Anderson and his teammates.

Keywords: Arrest, Crime, Innocent, Evidence, Murder

#### Introduction

The story takes place when the residues of a ferociously slaughtered, sexually assaulted and disfigured boy named Frankie Peterson was discovered by a person called Jonathan Ritz while he was walking his dog in Flint City, Oklahoma. Police officer named Ralph Anderson is the leading investigator of the case. He interrogates many eyewitnesses and every single one of them has seen Terry Maitland, a local little league coach prior to, in the time of and later Frankie Peterson's murder. One of them has seen Terry picking up Peterson in a van and another one has seen him walking out of the forest blood stained and one more spectator, a night club security guard by the name of Claude Bolton have seen Terry afterwards the execution. Furthermore Bolton tells that during shaking hands with Terry he was lightly cut with Terry's lengthy finger nails. The forensic evidence from the crime scene, Fingerprints and DNA detected at the scene and in the small truck used to

kidnap Peterson was enough for detective Ralph Anderson to command a very general arrest of Terry Maitland.

### The Arrest

Terry Maitland is a retired English teacher who coaches the Golden Dragons Little League team. He has coached several boys including the son of detective Ralph Anderson. On a fine morning of July Anderson commands a very popular arrest of Terry Maitland amidst a progressing match before the very eyes of his wife, Marcy, and kids, Sarah and Grace. Terry tries to explain that he was in Cap City on the day of Frankie Peterson's murder, but the police officials were very sure about him as they had all the evidence they need to prove he's guilty. He was arrested and sent to the station.

At the time of interrogation also, Maitland claims that he was attending a meeting with his fellow colleagues during the time of Frankie Peterson's murder. Whatever he said doesn't matter, as Ralph and the District Attorney Bill Samuel's don't believe him. Terry's wife, Marcy calls their advocate and friend Howie Gold to help Terry. As soon as he arrived at the police station Terry once more stated that he was addressing a teacher's convention in Cap City, together with many other teachers, and every one of them supported Terry's justification and gives a complete account of that day's incidents at the meeting. To make Terry's justification more strong, Howie Gold asked a private investigator named Alec Pelley to go to the hotel where the meeting was held and to collect any evidences to prove Terry's alibi. Pelley finds out the TV videotape of Maitland at the convention, validating his alibi. Detective Anderson and Samuels are utterly surprised and Anderson set about to interrogate arresting Maitland so unjustly, but they yet suspect him culpable. To make himself believe what Alec Pelley found Ralph goes to the hotel where the meeting was held and finds out a book that was handled by Maitland in the hotel's gift shop. Ralph takes the book back with

him and finds out Maitland's fingerprints on it. Ralph shows the prints to Samuels and he was of the opinion that they should destroy it as soon as possible, but Ralph refuses to do so.

An unexpected turn of events

After Frankie's death the Peterson family's condition became worsened. Arlene Peterson was going through a breakdown after her son's cremation. She endures a lethal heart attack leaving her husband and oldest son Ollie to deal with the impact of her demise. Meantime Ralph talks to Maitland in person and disclosed how perplexed he is by the clashing proofs.

On the day of his denunciation Maitland refuses to wear a bulletproof vest. The courthouse was overcrowded with people shouting for Maitland's judgement and decease. Before he could enter the courthouse Ollie Peterson emerged out of the crowd and fires a gun killing Maitland instantly. Ollie Peterson is also dead by the shooting of police. Ralph attempts to get a dying declaration from Maitland expressing his culpability, but Maitland once more proclaimed his clean hands before yielding to his injuries. Ralph notices how he saw a burned man among the crowd before all the shooting took place. Following Terry's death, Ralph is put down on departmental leave. Maitland's and Marcy's youngest daughter Grace says she keeps seeing a man with a play-doh face and straws for eyes. After Ollie's demise, Fred Peterson tried to enact suicide by hanging. Fred was saved by his neighbour, but he is left with brain damage. At that time also the man with straws for eyes was watching close by. In spite of being on departmental leave, Ralph was constantly looking in to the case. He finds out that the van used to kidnap Frankie Peterson was initially taken off by an abscond teen who deserted it in Dayton, Ohio, about the same time the Maitland's were on a household sabbatical there. Ralph manages to question Marcy about the outing to Dayton, and he understood the fact that Terry came to see his father, who has Alzheimer's disease.

The shape shifting monster

The police officer named Jack Hoskins is told to go to a barn site outside Flint City where clothes were found that belonged to Maitland. While his examination he was approached by a mysterious person, but Hoskins managed to keep away from him. The clothes discovered from the barn had fingerprints of Maitland's and some prints of an old man. After reaching home Hoskins notices a sunburn on the back of his neck and he was once again approached by that unknown man in his bathroom. The spirit told him that he has cancer and it can only be undone if he does something for him. Meanwhile Grace was once more addressed by the presence of someone who looked like her father, but different. The presence provoked her to feel sad and gave a message for detective Anderson that if he doesn't stop the investigation there will be serious consequences.

Holly Gibney

Howie and Alec Pelley employed a secret agent named Holly Gibney to look in to the case. On her investigation she found out a similar occurrence in which two girls were murdered just like Frankie Peterson. Similar to the Maitland's case, all the proofs were against a man called Heath Holmes, who was an employee at the dementia hospital where Terry's father was a patient. Holmes also had the same justification that he was somewhere else when the thing happened. But he wasn't trusted and performed suicide after his arrest. Later his mother also committed suicide. After studying the case Holy came to the conclusion that Holmes and Maitland were both guiltless. Meanwhile at Ralph's home Jeannie discovers an unknown person one night giving her the message for Ralph to stop the case or else something terrible will happen. Jeannie is frightened from seeing the man and passes the information to her husband Ralph and tells him that the person behind Frankie's murder is not human, but he denies to accept that. Holly assembled a gathering at Howie Gold's office attended by Ralph, Jeannie, Howie, PelleySablo, Samuels and Marcy. There they discussed all the mystery that surrounded the case and made everyone believe that all these murders

were carried out by a supernatural shape shifting monster called The Outsider. He can take anyone's appearance by taking their blood. After asking Jeannie Ralph realised that the person that appeared before Jeannie was Claude Bolton, but Bolton was in another place with his mom during the time Jeannie says she saw him. Together they all decided to go to Marysville to meet Bolton otherwise he could be The Outsiders next casualty. Meantime The Outsider told Jack Hoskins to go to Marysville and wait for the crew's arrival and to stop them.

### The Marysville Hole

They all reached Bolton's home and told him about the danger possessed by The Outsider. Bolton's mother named Lovie was also present there. She asked Claude to buy dinner for all and send him away. While he is away Hollie says Lovie that The Outsider is allured to scenes of cessation and sadness, and asks if there's a graveyard nearby and Holly came to know that some of Claude's relatives are buried there. After hearing this Lovie tells the story about the tourist attraction called the Marysville Hole that a lot of tourists were killed in a cave-in. Two children vanished in one of the caves. The search party fired a gun inside the cave to draw the attention of the children, but it forced more of the cave to fall in confining numerous people inside it. On hearing this, the group decided to go to the Marysville Hole since The Outsider could be hiding there. Jack had already reached the place and was waiting for them to arrive to finish them off as told by The Outsider. When the group arrived he started shooting, but eventually gets bitten by a rattle snake and had to stop. At last Howie and Pelley are both killed and Sablo is injured.

Ralph and Holly managed to go in to the cave and when Jack tried to follow them he was killed by Ralph. As they advanced more inside the cave they were welcomed by The Outsider, who looked like a mix of Bolton and Maitland. Ralph tried to shoot The Outsider, but changed his mind as he realized that one more gunshot could make the entire cave to

crumble killing all of them. The Outsider tried to justify his reasons for killing people and Holly calls him a sadistic hunter, which made him angry and he tried to attack Holly. But he is promptly baffled when Holly strikes him again and again over the head with a sock full of ball bearings. The outsider started to deteriorate and worm like creatures started coming out of his body. After making sure that The Outsider is destroyed, they both exited the cave. Holly and Sablo went to the Bolten residence to narrate the things happened in The Marysville Hole, while Ralph waits with the bodies of Howie and Pelley. The story comes to an end when the district Attorney declares Terry Maitland's vindication claiming faulty DNA samples and authenticating the video proof supporting Maitland's alibi, and Ralph bids farewell to Holly appreciating her for her support.

### Conclusion

The story explicitly portrays the bewildered situation and experiences of a group of investigators when they starts to investigate a case that has never happened before the history of Flint City. The story shows us how slippery evil could be in a world ignorant to it and that how incorrect suppositions could contaminate a person. The excellent style of Stephen King as a master of horror can be elucidated from the story. The Outsider used disbelief as his biggest weapon because he knew that people will never think about the possibility of a supernatural entity that could change in to others and commit a horrifying crime. Ralph's belief in science was so evident that at first he was not ready to accept that the supernormal was real. We all live in a community based on certain guidelines. The beings of the dark doesn't work according to the laws made by us.

There is a variety of faith and morals upheld by each individual in the story. In the case of Holly, she was ready to accept the fact that the supernatural was real at least in this case and she believed there were unseen creatures lurking in the dark feeding on people's misery. Ralph also had to drop his firm atheistic belief to beat The Outsider. Holly's

receptive mindedness and the joined efforts of Ralph and the others helped the whole group to finally solve the intriguing murder mystery. The merging between the supernatural and the real is superbly depicted by Stephen King in the story. *The Outsider* is an excellent work of fiction worthy of being called a masterpiece. The novel makes us realize that there is always two sides for the same coin and the person who is charged as guilty will not always be the culprit.

### Works Cited

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