

# Macro View

by Daniel Arthur

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I was warm now as I was sunning myself in the fairly low late morning sun. My perch was on the top of a low ledge or cliff cut out by the river below. I hadn't looked directly over the edge as I was afraid of heights, but I was here despite my fear as I was afraid of being shot at more accurately, if I was surprised again. I needed to get to Seattle, but I had no prospects for a ride about ten miles or so into the forest due east of Granite Falls. I couldn't see much except straight ahead across the river to the Mountain Loop Highway as the maturing forest blocked my view up and down river. My sense of hearing was pretty useful as I could hear if cars were approaching.

Only an hour ago I had been running on the trail with my friend, Kateyana, early in the morning when some shots rang out. She had been nicked by a shot, but kept

running with me as we backtracked at a good rate. We stopped to inspect her wound – a slow drip of crimson on her beautiful ebony upper arm. After a quick cleansing and bandaging from my smallish first aid kit we had continued back down the slope of Mount Pilchuck on the well maintained trail.

“I'm doing fine,” Kateyana reassured me as we approached the road.

“Good, good,” I said rather calmly. I was concerned that something was in store for us at the parking lot. “Let's stop for a moment,” I said as I gently tugged on her arm as we slowed, “I don't think anyone is chasing us. But, there could be a trap just ahead in the parking lot.”

“Why would anyone want to harm us?” Kateyana asked genuinely naive of any potential enemy. “I don't know of anyone that would do this.”

“I know it doesn't make sense, Kateyana. I don't even know who would know we are here, but it could be more random

than a known threat. However, I am nervous about approaching the Tucson without being careful.”

“Yeah, you're probably right Michael,” she mused as we both looked up and down the trail for any sign of pursuers.

“At least one of us needs to make it back to the ranger station,” I said with steely determination, “and the other might need to find a way to hold out until help arrives.”

“I don't know, Michael. This is too unreal. What the heck is going on?”

“I'm afraid we'll soon find out, Kat.” I then motioned for quiet with a finger to my lips, and then had us kneel down and move a little further down the trail. That's when I saw a small bright reflection from ahead and slightly uphill, near or in the parking lot. I hoped beyond reason that it wasn't a rifle scope. I pointed in the direction of the reflection to Kat, and she acknowledged seeing something, too, with a quick nod.

“One of us needs to get out of here to get help,” I whispered to Kateyana, “we need to create a diversion so that they chase us away or think they have chased us into the woods.”

“I'll run up the trail and then scramble through the forest,” Kateyana volunteered, “you can get the Tucson and head out of here. I'll wait down near the next campground.”

“Okay, Kat, except I think you should head to the cars since you were shot.” In that moment she knew I was right. She put her head down in quick consideration of the circumstance. We met with eyes locked.

“You better make it, Michael, I don't want to try to start all over,” she whispered sincerely as she gave me a quick hug.

“Here, give me your bandage,” I said quickly as I took out a few items from my pack including the first aid kit. I wrapped

her arm with another bandage in no time. We took each others hand and I said, “let me go first,” as I put her hat on a stick, “then head to the road to the left of the parking lot and make your way to the Tucson. I don't know what the shooter is doing, but the guy in the parking lot should chase me thinking it's both of us.”

I took off after a little squeeze of hands creeping down the trail. When I got to a point where a huge log lay to the south side of the trail with a small, shallow stream on its other side I bolted. I ran quickly behind the log and put the hat in the air near the top of the log and slightly behind me. I moved slowly and deliberately here making sure to have the hat visible from time-to-time with brush moving behind me. I could only hope that Kat would make it. We really didn't know what was happening, only that we needed to survive. After a few seconds of bobbing the hat a bit, and kind of making it look like I've stopped, I suddenly burst forward again through the stream keeping an eye out for barbed or prickly plants like Devil's Club.

I followed the stream for a short while dropping the hat purposefully on the way, maybe a hundred yards, and followed a less prickly path up a hill. There were still plenty of trees and brush to keep me out of sight of anyone more than a stone's through away. I decided to slow my pace, and spent more time listening for the sounds of pursuers. It wasn't long before I encountered a road of some kind that both headed up the hill further away from the highway or right back to the highway, which probably wasn't far. I paused a moment glad not to have heard any shots or noises. I thought of Kateyana, and thought good thoughts of her. I too did not want to lose my love.

I decided to go up the hill making fairly plain footsteps at the beginning, kind of like I might be frantically running. Then, at a rockier point in the lane I switched across to the other side and carefully scurried down the mountain. I heard a few cars go by on the highway ahead. They gave no indication of pausing or stopping. I approached the gated

driveway that connected to the highway with caution. I knew the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River was not far on the other side, and it was running fairly low even for this time of year. I decided to go for it, moved quickly to the edge of the highway, heard nothing and charged across to the thicket of woods on the other side.

I scrambled through careful to avoid the thorniest places, but occasionally something would grab or tug as I continued toward the river bank. I looked for a place to cross. I couldn't hear much but the river rushing lightly through the boulders. A car was approaching. That I could hear as the sound seemed trapped by the steep riverbank walls and forest. Again, it continued downriver without pause or stopping, and I was blanketed by the maturing forest between me and the road.

I found my way to a fairly easy slope down into the river proper. I was going to get wet, but the river was very passable here. I took my time finding good

footholds and skimming across a few deeper channels. I ended up pretty wet from the near ice cold water, but I wasn't too concerned as I hit dry ground on the far side and scrambled into the brush out of site of any prying eyes. I made my way up an embankment, found a fairly clear flat spot and sat down facing back across to where I had just traveled to seek out any potential prying eyes – my vantage point.

After several minutes of searching I satisfied myself that no one was hot on my trail, and started to enjoy some hard earned rest. My pulse rate calmed down, but my mind started working in overdrive especially calculating the likelihood that Kat had been able to get out without further injury. It was a matter of whether the guns had chased me or not. I would have been happier to see two people with guns coming across the river when I had looked down. That was not to be. Where were they? Had Kat been able to leave? It was still pretty early in the day, and the sun was warming me.

A small car was heading east up the valley. I could hear its light roar before I could see it. I couldn't make out the model of compact vehicle it was, but it was red. I would remember it. I didn't think that was the shooter's vehicle. I was looking for something that would hold a gun rack, and it would probably be moving faster than the car. There comes another. Again, it is going from west to east as it is still early in the day. There could be someone going over the low pass from Darrington, but there wouldn't be many this early. Now I see a light green bug – not the guys.

If Kat got through it wouldn't be too long before I would see some light green U.S. Forest Service trucks and at least one sheriff's squad car. Two sniper's on a trail would be taken seriously. “Lord, help her get through,” I prayed. I don't pray a lot, but my Christian upbringing did have me go their automatically at times. I can't imagine why I or Kat are being targeted at this time. They did shoot her and not me. Could it be an ex-boyfriend that is behind this? I suppose, but why out here? I

guess a real psychopath might want to take away her or our sense of security, especially doing something we love together – hiking.

I met Kat playing soccer on a co-ed team last fall. She and I hit it off right away on the field with each of us benefiting with many goals from a good number of scoring opportunities. A good deal of the players and mostly men did exhibit a lot of jealousy. Kat and I don't play co-ed any more mainly due to the poor team chemistry that abounds in a sport that works much better when a team works together, and in small part due to the growing number of hard fouls I was suffering on the pitch. We both play on our own gender specific teams that have decent team chemistry. We do a lot of things together including playing badminton at the club, working out and hiking or cross-country skiing. We enjoy being active together, and don't seem to mind that our careers are very different. She is a top nurse in the cardiac recovery unit at the Everett hospital, and I work as a math instructor for one of the local

community colleges. She usually works three twelves, and I work a more regular nine to five.

A few more cars are in the area. One is a little louder and seems to be going a bit faster in my direction. It must be a good sign that I haven't heard any more shots, but how can I know for sure? Here comes a potential customer: a late model blue four door pick-up, and it is moving fast to the east. A few other SUVs went by after that followed by a few newer sedans. They were all moving a little fast, but not as fast as the pick-up. I just may have my vehicle, but I couldn't quite make out the make. Was it a Chevy, Dodge, Ford, GMC or Toyota? I really couldn't tell.

Kat works in a pretty secure environment. The staff at the hospital has a secure parking garage, and with all the cameras and security guards at the hospital I can imagine why that wouldn't be the place to attack someone. I on the other hand do not, and my schedule is posted online including the buildings and classrooms I teach in. I would need to think this

through. Kat had many suitors in her youth, but she hadn't really gone steady or had any long-term relationship, until ours. This guy must know her, but she may not have even noticed him. How much protection would the police provide? Not much. Not because they wouldn't want to, but because there just isn't enough resource to go around. They would provide a little extra security and advise her, but she was going to be on her own.

Another vehicle is approaching, and I think I hear a siren. A U.S. Forest Service four wheeler pulls into view and slows to a stop. The siren nears, and must be headed into the Lake 22 parking lot. Another light green truck comes into site, slows by the stopped four wheeler and heads upriver. I started to stretch to ready myself for another crossing. Kat made it. There is no other explanation for this quick turn of events. I stood up, still mostly concealed in my nest, and slowly started down to the river bank. I felt so much better, but I knew this wasn't over. I noticed a woman in a uniform looking

over the riverbank on the other side. I waved with both arms as I started to cross. Everything seemed a little more difficult, but I picked my way across getting pretty wet in the deeper channels and occasional pool. The forest service worker was on her radio. I kept making my way toward her.

A few minutes later I heard, “Mr. Evans, is that you?”

I made my way through the last of the steep bank and brush and answered, “It is. Is Kateyana okay?” I stopped and looked at rather excited Jennifer Street as her badge read.

“Yes, yes she is, Mr. Evans. We sent her down to Everett to get checked out. The SUV is at the ranger station, and she is very anxious to know you are all right,” Ranger Street informed me.

“Can you radio to her that I'm fine, and very relieved and pleased to know she's okay?” I asked with a bit of pleading in my voice.

“Yes, let's get in and head down river,” she said as she waved me into her SUV.

We jumped in her spartan SUV and turned back down river with Jennifer on the radio. She quickly exchanged the critical information about my safety, and did a u-turn to head back down river. I was relieved, so relieved to know Kat was fine and my body started trembling and tears came to me eyes. I turned away from Jennifer as if I was looking out into the river, until I could regain composure. I was so relieved, and I couldn't believe how lucky we were.

“Did you recognize the shooter Mr. Evans?” Jennifer asked as we continued toward her colleagues at the trail head.

“No, call me Michael,” I answered truthfully, “I didn't see the one on the trail, and the one in the parking lot was too far away. He was male, and pretty big. He was probably of European descent.”

“Okay, Michael, I probably shouldn't ask you any more questions. My boss will take you back to the office and debrief you with a deputy,” she finished as we pulled nose-to-nose with a much fancier rig. “Go ahead and get in the other truck, Michael. Let my boss know if you need anything.”

We both jumped out of her bare bones SUV, and she waved me over to the passenger door of the other SUV, and I got in. I was alone for a bit and could hear the radio traffic was still quite heavy as enforcement and emergency personnel were still sorting out their roles and responsibilities. There also seemed to be a few other emergencies in the area. Coincidence? A couple of campfires seemed to be out of control.