

## Of Evident Interest

© 2012, 2018 James Beach

*(March 2015)*

Detective Ian Silly removed from a cold case box: documents brimming with erratic scribbles by retired cops who'd done their best to find out if Marvin Kennelly was alive or dead or kidnapped or a runaway. Kennelly's parents were listed in the police files as "reserved and kind" and "unknowing". The work overall was slim, flimsy, considering that Kennelly was at the time enrolled at a prestigious university.

Silly next pulled out a large folded paper sheet with this typed evidence tag:

*April 16, 1995, 2:14 p.m.  
Missing Person – Marvin Kennelly  
Case #0046872  
Search Warrant – residence of Jack Catch  
Item# 001  
One "oversize" page of handwritten journal  
Seized from suspect's bureau, top drawer*

The journal page was written in miniscule cursive; it required a magnifier to read. After nearly an hour Silly sighed and set the page aside.

Kennelly's parents, whom Silly declined to phone, would be in their 70s by now. Only the mysterious Mr Catch and Kennelly's friend Baybee Chicopee were also affiliated, the latter with a flyer she'd created with color-photocopied snapshots: a close-up of the student holding a beer to his mouth; at a hayride with his arms around the shoulder of a cropped-out friend; and a long shot of him poring over books at the library. She'd posted it on campus and around Chicago train stations—the last place he'd been seen by the Chicopees—in April of that year. The flyer's font had individually-found and meticulously-clipped media letters, as in a ransom note:

*MISSING  
Marvin Kennelly  
Age: 20  
Height: 5'10"  
Weight: 165  
May have facial hair  
Last seen: March 23, 1995  
His family and friends are concerned for his safety and whereabouts.  
Marvin was frequently seen on the Belling University campus.  
Marvin was last seen in Chicago during Spring Break.*

*CAN YOU HELP?**If you have any info, please contact Capitol City police.*

Peer Baybee Chicopee proved to be a dead end, as Silly discovered after a phone call to the Chicopee residence; she'd recently died of breast cancer, according to her father, who'd met the missing person "on his merry way" to the train station for a date. According to him, his daughter said goodbye to Kennelly at the train station on March 23 with much trepidation, hearing nothing from him after that evening.

Jack Ketch still lived in Chicago, according to the web. Some sort of bigshot designer now, according to art media. Detective Ian Silly wanted to meet with him, ostensibly to go over some finer points of the case but in reality as a kink. In a moment of decision, he dialed the number in the cold case file, hoping to get a conversation with someone who knew him and knew his whereabouts. Surprisingly, after 30 years, the number still worked, it was Catch himself who answered.

"I was into him, Silly," was Catch's reply to the question of context. He sounded quite gay on the phone. "Why would I want to kill poor little Marvin?"

That homosexual bend to the case brought Silly into a state of restlessness. He had his suspicions. After a pause he told Catch that a routine investigation was mandatory, that he would be taking a plane to Chicago A.S.A.P. (Thinking that he might've turned bisexual at age 31, recently divorced, Silly pressed for confirmation of their meeting—either at Catch's place or a local venue frequented, such as a restaurant or a (hint, hint) gay bar.) With convincing sincerity Catch insisted early next week could work, and Silly gave him that leeway; being a top-notch artist had its trappings, as the detective saw things. He agreed to meet Catch next Tuesday at 4pm at his home in Chicago's upscale art district.

In person, Jack Catch was as gay as a three-dollar bill—or was it a two-dollar bill? Something new or at least unusual in Silly's straight world. He'd taken the stairs instead of the elevator, and after flashing his badge he breathed heavily awhile. Meanwhile Catch was trying to decide on a facial expression and batting his eyelashes.

"I was expecting you to be in uniform. Please come in," Catch eventually said. "Can I take your coat?"

Silly stepped through the doorway into a foyer and handed over his jacket. Yeah, it appeared the guy was rich—rich enough to live in a gentrified penthouse. Of average height and trim, Catch was likely in his late 40s, early 50s... The file was after all incomplete, devoid of even his age at the time of the disappearance. His face was youthful, as if botoxed; his arty business attire was expensive. He spirited away with the jacket then returned with an expansive smile.

"What's that you've brought with you?" flirted Catch, indicating the folder under the detective's arm.

Straightaway Silly returned the journal page. "I see no reason why this was seized in 1995. I thought you might like it back."

The suspect blushed, and began to read: “Goodness...:

*—art remains a subjective community a people objects interchangeable a living olio at times easy to mistake dead art object as living; hazy days seeking artistic sustenance did invite a motely [sic, per marvin] crew of student bohemians into high art how now the one fragment i focus on is named Marvin; my grad school portfolio “shelved” sits impeccable i’m optimistic social high-profile yes, a total mess: my aesthetics; first thing is, how marvin met me: a hippy-dippy capitol city house party crawling with coeds and older queers, drinking low lights mellow music pot brownies on stove nobody ate; i chose him, “i want that one”; me and he a match first kiss required for admittance to bathroom then expertly fucked him behind shower curtain (only bathroom) with hard peeks from others coming to pee; from there visits his first orgy with me my roadtrip buddy dates; from there we parted wrote usual letters back forth til he visited for his spring break from belling u; so i cleaned apartment top-to-bottom cooked hippy pie (with honey) so he’d feel welcome; from what i knew he liked phish music and things had hippyish friends so did i, heaven match; a gluttonous fare of ‘shrooms pot a few lines blow a bump of crystal; that last night at crobar i realized he was maybe living dead with a heart in his brain instead of chest, by then could barely lift a brush to my czar caesar-style hair let alone craft some semblance of him on canvas; it was surely me him recoiling shock love; his cruel guile the youthful possess, inexperienced hot and cold; he sure heard my friends talk shit about him sure he imagined me with a shit-eating grin, i could see it in him, a part of him like a painting (he did then delve into visual art since he wrote as an essayist or a crazy man knowing it stank) which only the brightest do, signal like that; when blue ‘shrooms so pervaded his body at roxy’s discotheque he could barely stand, falling girly in giggly fits numb his legs forcing me i drag him home; oh that next night marvin on coke he up and picked up a female at trendy bi bar (forget the name) and yes in view of me kissed chunky woman on dance floor; cute in a way the way he entered me after i begin to see deadness in him, the maybe grateful deadliness of soul as he became drugs not himself on drugs if there’s a distinction subtle; when i mistook him for aesthetically smart at the hippy-dippy coed party i mistook him for being alive, never guessed at circularity of everything how fine a line between the truly alive /the basely dead; this recounting maybe sophomoric over arty but who needs more art confusion transcendence vitriol, an education in alive and dead in the wonderful world of art, real art (marvin was breathing) and real life (my silkscreen prints breathed too), meaning marvin even killed the weed what with his asking if purple pot was a drug or a person visiting; eh the details make us perverts; but we were in love needed each other to feel; fed him everything i could over his break wanted him to breathe life not air alone; too much we fed to him, in retrospect, my appetite at the time already enormous and we could hardly eat different-size portions; and i prepared for him massive organic burrito once too and he ate it fell asleep to sounds of me and friends dissing his acne his “short and squat but not short” body his ear a ditz in next room; ah and bet he remembers all, only differently as a fink does: art for art’s sake leaves patrons raggedy, contours not shapes per se (oh he sure mixed up some things; when i kidded him re spelling myself with a small “i” he grimaced simpered perplexed); him reading the novel queer by burroughs later plus reciting a poem he wrote after it about masturbating, so a public life crowded his leisure time: but look at me, i never mix up the grotesque /the grotesques with cartoons,*

*my mind solid that way I suppose); and too he fell for me my godly essence because i saved him from erotic asphyxiation at that orgy, what with the deviants involved our ugly dates needing oh much help bound to go that direction, he so passive we loved him that virgin innocence; also i loved him for assuring i could wear to roxy's, this sounding trite, a pair leather-tipped maroon "elephant pants" i'd found thrifting, him smoking pot watching me model dreadful slacks with serenest baby face; that i his first boyfriend (if anyone could call us that) and i older well on way to gaining edgy rep equated with art so could rise like cream; meanwhile he on his path to maybe insanity isolation a la salinger or nietzsche, another of his favorites; that's his "a la" never mine, his french to plague me, huh; his fear of the "gay plague" the most timid profusion yet even so he let me fuck him raw, him passive new as boy while i showed him baby oil the kind of romance of the movies; but did i look sick aids-y, lightweight frame sunken living eyes; no; he looked the sicker that acne a paunch from drinking plus lack of previous sex; neither of us were any sicker then were we (yes); my silk skin maybe put him at unease, though our cocks kept up whole, mine larger while he the thicker; if i'd gotten hands on him sooner maybe his mold could be shifted sculpted recast, rather than stuck deadzone of unactualized plasticity, trapped mind; my art then as stuck as marvin i suppose buried in books; even now i feel dirty, dirtier than when i trapped him in my apartment for a week with nothing familiar but me and his old chintzy suitcase full of everything stolen from college; him the animated corpse on whatever, so what high art without bohemian risk but a pile of safety netting of ersatz contours—'*

This needs more sex. Orgy, orgy, orgy! That was my hazy-dazy era. I had way so much sex back then; almost every weekend someone was hosting an orgy."

Silly got the message anyway, between the lines. He was blessed with a "bubble butt" and he guessed allowing teammates and coaches and friends or brothers of friends plus others to play around and in his anus during those Friday night orgies during junior high had somehow put his body's pubescent energy into his backside. (Or had he been born that way?) Sure, the other parts of him looked all right (alright?), especially his abdomen, which had been sucked into an 8-pack as if vacu-formed, probably via the ass-play as well; his bottom drew many compliments.

"We had some with women, most were men-only," Catch continued. "Maybe not every weekend...Is a foursome an orgy, detective? Can I call you 'Ian' or how about 'dick'?"

It was hilarious and Silly grinned. He'd become a cop due to females infiltrating the Spartan football team in Grade 8—enforcing the law of the land was his gut reaction to coping with emotional strife—yet the bold girl's presence merely got the first orgy started. It was male bonding anyway after that. As this encounter could become.

"I prefer 'Detective Silly'."

Something was amiss... the writer of the journal had avoided why Marvin Kennelly had become his guest. Obviously Catch could play innocent. Kennelly would be exactly 40 now and was likely dead. One officer had labeled both as "likely occultists" in the file.

“The heydays (hey-daze?)!” laughed Catch, tossing the journal entry on a shelf sprinkled with a few “sexpionage” novels and third-world trinkets.

The detective stepped toward the shelves and pointed at a row of subtle buttons installed in the unit.

“You might be interested in this,” revealed Catch, “my triad of defense. The first button dials you people at 9-1-1.”

“What do the others do.”

“The second and third buttons call... other people.”

“Other people.”

“Friends of mine, who I pay.”

Immediately Silly visualized male prostitutes, drug dealers. “These friends, they do you favors?”

Catch blushed again. “They know judo and are licensed to carry concealed weapons.”

Silly realized Catch was not only rich but also connected.

Next Catch sat Silly in the parlor to detail an objet d’art titled “Weewee”. The piece was a rubber cast of a little boy’s aroused penis with a small hairless scrotum as base. He demonstrated how testes would drop into the sac if you gripped the shaft.

Having separated from his wife D. three years ago, the detective had lately gotten “gay fever”. Not that he had acted upon it. In fact, he’d not sucked cock (or been sucked off by a man) since about age 14, when the male bonding with his teammates became sparring rather than fucking. He and his peers became primarily interested in girls and women at that juncture. Anyway, he felt feverish with Catch.

“Are you ready to talk about Marvin Kennelly,” said Silly. He wiped his brow with a palm.

“Shoot.”

“When did you last see the guy?”

Marvin Kennelly had apparently gone to detox that first night visiting, wearing only a trenchcoat—he’d run out of the apartment in a state of psychosis, according to Catch. As host he’d invited his Spring Break date back for the remainder of the week, but things were different despite plenty of drug use and parties. Kennelly had “withdrawn,” Catch said. None of this was in the cold case file and Silly was intrigued, to the point of becoming erect.

“How did you two guys meet?”

Catch explained how he'd first seen Kennelly at a "Kissing Party," wherein a straight-seeming guy-gal couple would block hallways and doorways and demand a kiss for each from any cute passersby. With a female friend, Catch had seduced Kennelly when he'd wanted to use the toilet. Silly imagined kissing a woman, and being passed to a man...

"In your journal you use the term 'autoerotic asphyxiation'. Did you intend that, or did you intend 'erotic asphyxiation'?"

"I... I have no clue. Sorry, honestly. Those were my—"

"Your hazy days, yes,"

With misty eyes Catch asked what the detective thought happened to Marvin.

"We believe Kennelly to be deceased," the detective said gruffly.

The chin and lips of the designer began to quiver. "He may be alive." With a deep breath Catch continued, forcing a smile: "He may be trying to outrun the Landmark Forum (formerly 'est') and he's probably very good at hiding." Catch spied an object on the endtable and ran over to lift it. "He may be in this ziggurat paperweight! When I bought it the artist assured me that it contains a miniature sarcophagus used for healing, and Marv did need some sexual healing... Did you know he was a virgin until I got to him? Never been kissed! At his age. Sad." Slowly, Catch returned the weight to the table. "He might be homeless..." And with this the man broke into a few restrained sobs.

Somewhat convinced, Silly moved along with the interrogation. Other than the journal entry, the only piece of info that had been included under "Jack Catch" was a scribbling about trash bags.

"Trash bags?" inquired Catch.

"Sixteen of them, piled in your porch/sunroom, containing cut-up bodies. Kennelly was babbling about them at the detox unit—it was the only thing noted, that he mentioned. By the time police searched your apartment the bags had been removed."

"My sunroom," gushed Catch, becoming cheerful at the memory. "Sixteen bags, you say? Oh... that must've been my X-mas tree and wreath and other disposable holiday items. I'd just cleaned the whole pad for Spring, and for my guest."

With crinkly mewing a fat cat with extremely long fur entered the parlor, slowly and sloppily, as if its paws were numb. Immediately both men gave it attention.

"Sasha! Where have you been all morning?" said Catch in a falsetto, stopping just short of petting the animal. He turned to the detective and lowered his voice. "Every day it's Shrodinger's cat around here—I never know if the beast is gonna be alive or dead! He could expire at any moment. He's pre-diabetic." His voice rose again: "And we're coping with that fact, aren't we?"

Silly cringed inwardly at the falsetto. Before he could resume the questioning Catch fiddled with its collar and got the cat to growl.

“Now, now, Sasha. Be a good cat. Is it your birthday today? Are you 21 today?” Catch again turned to the detective. “I took Sasha home after a K-party, too. No kissing of the kitty though! Kisses are for people. Yesterday I hired a lovey to look after him, you know, the feeding and the brushing and the litter. Her name is Wilma Gersch—maybe you’ve heard of her? She’s a local celebrity, to Capitol City. She made the news by trying to sue her college after bringing criminal charges against a professor who seduced her and a friend into a threeway.” Again Catch put his attention on the cat, speaking to it in falsetto: “And we will appreciate Wilma, won’t we?” The cat began to purr in its crinkled way, falling over onto its side. “I have no clue why this animal is such a happy camper. I had all four sets of claws removed and then had him fixed right after he started spraying.” In falsetto: “And we feel okay with the decision, don’t we Sasha?”

Time was ticking along. The name Gersch was new to Silly. He was getting impatient. Wondering about the possibility of sex with Catch left him less feverish, all of a sudden, after the gaudy display of affection for his pet. Getting his mind back on the job, Silly asked his final question because, again, the cold case file was incomplete. “Did you live alone in 1995?”

He thought a moment. “I had a roommate named Izzy, in 1995. I don’t recall if Izzy was living with me that month, you know, those being my hazy days.”

The doorbell chimed, a salient noise that echoed in the parlor. Catch theatrically bowed then let in two scrawny men and two scrawnier boys who were from a service that kenneled pets. They all kept their mouths shut and intentions on the job only, the one exception being when the pre-teen eyed Silly with adoration; he was bursting out of his tennis shoes so hard that Silly could almost see the boy’s toes. With much clamor the team gathered up toys and blankies and finally the cat, which had to be coerced into a portable kennel. In the morning, Jack explained, he would be flying overseas for a conference on furniture design. Silly, nodding, watched the progression, wanting to wink at the pre-teen with the fuzzy upper lip as he was exiting; the four left with downturned, humble gazes.

On the heels of the pet kennelers the doorbell chimed again.

“Who can this be?” muttered Catch.

Silly got up from the couch and inspected the adjacent rooms. Everything in the place was posh, albeit a bit used-looking. On one table sat a collage of framed photos, presumably of Catch’s family and close friends. His presumed parents looked like physicians, uptight and conservative and monied, in their several poses. Silly grew up fatherless with an “absent mom,” basically raising himself and looking after his kid sister, who also basically raised herself with help from their mother, who neither of them spoke with anymore. Yet even into adulthood he’d checked up on his sister. It was habit. She lived in Chicago too. Yet his flight back to Capitol City was at midnight, and tonight she was busy attending a TransForm meeting—as a tranzie, female-to-male, her body had morphed to somewhere in the middle. His faded image

of her as the “Quarterback Princess” (that early 1980s MOW starring Helen Hunt) was inaccurate, according to his sister. Anyway the idea of transgender was crazy, to him. A binary structure held the world together and anyone who broke it (bending was okay) would be suspect in the world’s moral and aesthetic decline.

From the foyer, Catch squealed. “Goodness, the Banksy! is here!”

Silly returned to the door, where a trio of burly men from the SO Fast imported courier company struggled to position a heavy crate specific to the recipient’s location. The men smiled congenially then filed out.

“Dick, would you assist me, please?”

“What have you got,” asked Silly despite himself.

“SO Fast is really, really fast,” mused Catch. “They hire only Sexual Offenders and they structure their deliveries so that employees spent less than 24 hours in any state. I can’t believe it’s here already.”

Silly took a mental note, wondering about S.O.s and Catch’s apparent affinity for them, before crouching to help open the crate. From somewhere Catch had gathered a handful of tools: a hammer, a crowbar, a screwdriver, an x-acto knife. Once the crate was open they slid a bubble-wrapped package onto the foyer floor. It weighed more than the two of them put together. After slicing open the bubble-wrap Catch asked Silly to “do the honors” of cutting the thickly-taped cardboard casing beneath. The detective obliged, his senses tuned and inquisitive. Unwrapped, the object made Silly puzzle. Alongside Catch let out a whistle.

“I’m revamping the entire house in lavender and beige,” the designer said. “A Banksy! In my house. Can you stand it?”

Silly inspected the Banksy piece with more puzzling. It was a crude spray-painting of a hobo, about three feet tall and done in “lavender and beige” on a chunk of cement. He’d been schooled in the criminal artist at his academy’s continuing education classes; he’d once had a discussion about Banksy with an old teammate named Richie, Jr. That a vandal graffiti artist could become famous had astounded them both; they’d gone to the documentary “Exit through the Gift Shop” together on a double-date shortly after D. had left him. “I know of Banksy,” Silly confided.

Catch looked even more pleased. “You coppers must all know him.” His face grew mysterious. “Are you undercover, yes yes? Checking up on this piece?”

“Black-market art is not my department,” assured Silly. “I’m more interested in why you chose to hire Sex Offenders for its delivery.”

Sitting back on his heels, Catch adjusted his art-thoughts. “SO Fast was recommended to me by a friend who’s been jailed and labeled a S.O. The feds thought he’d written subliminal porn into his kiddy books and a court proved them correct. Maybe you’ve been following the case in the news? He wrote *A Dunce Cap is*

*a Wizard Hat, and Have You Been to the Bottom of Your Navel? and Pussy Willow Vs. Fighter Cock. Oh, dick, you must think of me as a derelict!”*

“Obscenity is not my department either,” assured Silly. He thought about the dildo castle drawn into “The Little Mermaid” and other evidence of that type of smut. Then he recalled Weewee in the next room.

“You work missing persons,” agreed Catch.

Silly studied the suspect’s face. “Do you have any idea why Marvin Kennelly fell into a state of psychosis? Up until then he’d always been sound, according to a peer and his family. I wonder what happened to push him over the edge.”

“As I said, those were my hazy days. Everyone I knew would crack up occasionally. (Not literally smoking crack, but they were going to pieces and putting themselves together again.) Now I think Marvin was spooked about HIV and AIDS. During those days it was old news, the virus, and lots of people would fuck without condoms, dance with the roulette wheel, take their chances, you know.”

About ready to leave, Silly said: “Is there anything else you remember that might be of relevance to the case?”

Catch straightened his posture and took a place a few feet in front of the detective. “I’ve been dabbling in poetry lately. Would you care to hear a tidbit?”

Ian shrugged and again took a seat on the parlor couch.

“This piece is called ‘-control Response’:

*‘grossly subjective the page  
any people products ethics  
assaults personal second amendment reporting  
NRA, as though an entity  
NRA people “to keep and bear arms”  
(means Constitution interpretive  
(commas semicolons arbitrary  
(erudite, nonliterary)  
political illiteracy:  
semicolon after “state” and “arms” makes “militia” from “the people”))  
citizens distinct just  
who back the British Native American  
limit one’s attack...  
the answer anyhow portends to note that view’*

Well, Dick?”

“It’s about gun control, but... you never mention a gun.”

“Only ‘-control’.”

An extended silence brought Silly to his feet experiencing that gay fever. With a pale wrist Catch gave an elegant grab for his guest's belt and, receiving no stop, proceeded. With smooth precision he did a delectable maneuver with his lips and tongue and the detective popped right into his mouth, full-on wood.

With a flush, impressed by the gay's unctious, thinking now of the rubber objet d'art he'd been shown, Silly groaned: "I'd love to shove that Weewee up your rear end, make the boy's nuts drop..."

Catch spat the dick out of his mouth. "My ass is not a display case in a gallery."

Losing his erection, Silly stuffed himself back into his pants. He repaired his appearance, from the open zipper to his disheveled hair.

"I do have a friend..." admitted Catch, frowning, "who would be into that. Yes, yes, I could call him up, for a threeway."

Silly stifled a smirk; this could get interesting. "I'm expected back at the station, in fact I'm late for my flight," he lied. "Maybe some other time."

"Maybe some other time," echoed the suspect.

After a lull Silly asked: "My jacket."

"Oh, your coat. Of course."

On his way to the street Silly rode the elevator. His gay fever returned and, swooning, he fantasized about straight couples doing pedophilic role play in bed after reading subliminal smut to their children. What a world we live in, he thought, reaching for his semi-hard before restraining himself to act civilized in full view of the public. Catch was absurdly innocent, now. Whatever he'd done to Kennelly in 1995 remained obscured in light of today.