

"Robert Rotenberg  
does for Toronto  
what Ian Rankin  
does for Edinburgh."  
—Jeffery Deaver

CHEAT SHEET  
CHAPTER ONE, WEEK TWO

ROBERT ROTENBERG

Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020



## 1. LORD DENNING'S PASSAGE

Read by His Honour Justice Marvin Kurtz:

*“Broadchalke is one of the most pleasing villages in England. Old Bundy, the defendant, was a farmer there. It was his only asset. His family has been there for generations. But he did a very foolish thing. He mortgaged it to the bank.”*

NOTE: How Denning uses simple, clear language to tell the story. S for setting. The first line. C for character. The next three lines. Then A for action. The last lines. And do we care about “Old Bundy?” Of course, we do.

## 2. “MAGGIE MAY” BY ROD STEWART

Watch the first 20 seconds of [this video](#), the same one played during the reading. The lyrics you heard were:

*“Wake up Maggie,  
I think I’ve got something to say to you.”*

NOTE: How in just two lines Stewart establishes so much. Setting - he’s in bed with a woman and it’s the morning. Characters. The two of them. The back story is: Stewart was 16 and went to a rock concert in France and was seduced by an older woman. Her name was not really Maggie, but Maggie was a slang word for prostitute. And the action: he really should be back at school.

## 3. SOME HOMEWORK: OPTIONAL OF COURSE

Find your favourite song lyrics and send them to me. NOTE: How quickly good songwriters establish setting, character, action and voice. And, of course, songs are all about emotion.

My example, lyrics that we all know:

*“I got my first real six string/bought it at the five and dime/  
played it till my fingers bled/was the summer of ’69.”*

## **4. C -A-V-E-S**

This is a repeat from the first session. Get used to it. I'm going to keep pounding this drum.

Keep these five letters in your head, and by your computer. They are the five KEY elements you need to write an email, a memo, pen a letter, tell a story, any and everything.

**C** is for Character

**A** is for Action

**V** is for Voice

**E** is for Emotion

**S** is for Setting

\*Remember, put the S on top, so it is really SCAVE. (Setting often comes first!)

## **5. WHAT DOES MR. SINGH LOOK LIKE?**

Many of you have already sent in your descriptions. Keep those cards and letter coming in. Send them to my email address, or any other comments: [robert@rsjlaw.ca](mailto:robert@rsjlaw.ca). Lots of fun. NOTE: I eventually write back to everyone, sometimes it takes a few days.

## **6. WEEK THREE: CHAPTER ONE OF "STRAY BULLETS." MONDAY JUNE 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.**

WARNING. It is a longer chapter than the others. Probably the most difficult and perhaps most satisfying opening chapter that I've written. I'll explain why. Focus will be on Suspense and Conflict.

## **7. SESSION ONE AND TWO ARE ON YOUTUBE.**

Here's the links: [Session one](#), [Session two](#).

**Thanks for everyone who tuned in the first two weeks. Please invite your friends to join you this Monday June 1, 2020 at 7:30 pm.**

Have a safe week,  
Robert