The Discovery

Just twenty feet after breaking into a dead sprint I face planted on a soft area of Earth. I scrambled to my feet and continued my hurried flight through the underbrush until I realized the bear and I had run in opposite directions. Off in the distance I could still hear the hairy four-legged bulldozer crashing through the brush on his descent to the bottom of the hill. It had appeared that the both of us had seen the devil.

When the adrenaline left my body I tried to get myself oriented. Looking where I had tripped, I found a light impression of myself on the soft ground. A short moss-covered object seemed to be the cause, yet it was located about ten feet from where I had landed. "I must have been moving pretty fast," I thought to myself.

Investigating the object, I found it to be a bumper of some ancient car. Where was the car? Looking in every direction, I didn't see it at first, but about ten yards west of me I found a large concentration of dense undergrowth hiding or protecting something. Taking a stick from the ground, I began hacking away at the vegetation.

The arching blows of the stick fell steadily upon its target until a loud echoing interrupted the rhythm; "Ting!" I had struck metal. By now there was a hole large enough for me to view whatever it was I found. It was a car. Gazing at the front of it down to the emblem I rubbed away the moss that covered it. Had it not been for the stick to keep my balance, I would have fainted from shock.

It was not metal that I struck, but gold. Before me lay a 1933 Tabolt Largo Coupe. Over the years its once perfect blue finished coat had begun to chip and degrade. The bolts that held one of its suicide doors to the hinges had fallen out, and a branch that thought it would be better off in the car than the tree broke the windshield.
With impressive mobility I glided around the artifact trying the best I could not to disturb it. I made my way to the side of the vehicle where the Gull wing hood was clearly visible by one side of it partially open. Peering into the treasure chest I witnessed first hand the first car that had been fitted with a V-12 internal combustion engine.

Forcing myself out of the trance, I moved over to the cab. Some of the instruments had been worn over time, but others like the speedometer were in fairly good condition. Taking a closer look at it, I saw that it read 0-160 miles per hour. Resting below it was a four-speed manual transmission that allowed the car to achieve high speeds from short distances.

I had to report my find. Who knew, I might even have been rewarded for this amazing discovery. To be sure to remember the location, I would have to back track my route. Taking a couple steps back to get a better view of my surroundings I soon regretted. I fell about twenty feet to a small creek below, yet somehow a cluster of bushes managed to break my fall.

Breaking myself free I shook the wilderness out of my hair and studied the large cliff that I had blundered down. It seemed to be nothing short of a steep ravine. Luckily, I didn't land on the impressive boulder that rested a mere three feet away. Something behind the boulder caught my eye though, a case of some kind.

Maneuvering around the monstrous object, I was astonished beyond a reasonable doubt to see a human skeleton with a steamer trunk in its hand. Just the human skeleton alone. The back of the skull had been smashed to bits. Could it have possibly been the owner of the coupe? If it was, he or she must have fallen the same way I did except landed on the rock instead.
Where my sister (a budding archeologist) would have been fascinated for the next year, I quickly lost interest in the skeleton as my eyes drifted to the steamer trunk. A slight cat of rust was present on the case, for whatever purpose this box had; it was armored to protect its contents. Worn down and rusted, a lock assisted in protecting the valuables inside.

Locks easily intimidated me; they made me feel that their valuables weren't my business, but they were. Anything with value was my business. Thus I plucked a rock from the creek to break the lock. While pulling the streamer trunk away, the skeleton's arm joined the departure. Becoming this attached to your belongings is a bad habit, so I was kind enough to toss the skeleton its arm back. After all, it was one of its more personal possessions.

It didn't require too many hits on the lock before it broke and was crushed to oblivion. Greedily, I opened the case. It might not have been possible until this moment but my jaw must have dropped four inches.

In complete awe I gazed at mint-condition banded 100 dollar gold certificates. My hand trembled as I touched the currency, for each bill was identical to the other; they were genuine. Moving the bills aside, underneath were more certificates, but these were stock certificates. Boeing and Ford—both of these were major stocks and still are. Both had stacks of 10,000 share certificates.

I gasped for air, realizing I hadn't breathed in the last thirty seconds. I needed oxygen. "No," I thought. "I need money." Where did all of this come from? Who was this person? Removing a folder from the back of the trunk, I began skimming the pages until I came to a document that caught my eye. It was a bank withdrawal sheet, or series
of them at that. The company owners of eight different lumber industries had withdrawn all of their money from the Alsea bank, and the withdrawal had been signed by the bank manager, "Charles M. Benedict."

Then and there it struck me like a slap up along the side of my head. This was the banker who had robbed the bank of Alsea. It was the only major excitement Alsea had seen, but to add further suspense to the crime, the get away vehicle, the man and the money had never been recovered. Until now, that is.

Everything had made sense. The gold certificates came from the bank; since the man was a banker, he must have had an inside contact to the stocks. As for the car, the coupe had enough horsepower to climb Mount Everest, so it made the perfect getaway vehicle. He had taken this road because it connects with Hayden, and once he made it past Hayden to get to the main road, he was on his way to the coast without being delayed by loggers. As for the wreck, he must have taken one to many swigs of moonshine.

"Ingenious plan," I said to the rather late banker. "A penny for your thoughts." I flicked a small penny from my pocket to the skeleton where it landed on his hand. "And a fortune for my find."

Packing up my new willed belongings, I climbed the ravine and started my trek home. "All I can say is, sorry, Charlie," I said to myself.

Over the next few days I spent my time selling the money on eBay bill by bill. Actually, I was doing quite well by making 4,000 dollars for each bill sold. Taking a closer look at the stocks showed me that they were bearer. With 100,000 shares in Ford
Motors and 50,000 shares in Boeing, I could have two and a half million dollars just from that, not to mention what I was making from the certificates. I was set for life.

Nearly a week after I became the richest man on the coast of Oregon, I had the press wanting to swarm me. Another knock at the door brought me to believe that the press wouldn't leave me alone. Frustrated, I got up and answered it, but to my surprise, there were two men dressed in black suits.

"Mr. Leavitt? I'm John Harrison with the FBI and this is my partner James Morgan. We recently learned you were selling large quantities of gold certificates on eBay; do you suppose we could ask you a few questions?"