

*Previously on Black Badge: Lance's suspicions were confirmed when he and Token discovered that Vanderbilt had executed his Slasher suspect. Meanwhile, after sharing a brief kiss with Devin, Leo went and forced Chief of Police Randy Brown to tell him everything he knew about the Black Badge organization. All he learned was that they had blackmailed Brown and left him with a cryptic message. Devin made a discovery of her own as she learned that her Slasher suspect Harriet Jeter had been ditching her partners and had done so on a night that one of the Slasher murders were committed. Lance and Token tracked down Vanderbilt and Lance killed him in the middle of a crowded mall in front of hundreds of witnesses.*

The shoppers in the Sandpoint Galleria Mall were in an all out panic. People were screaming and running, desperate to get to an exit. Lance made his way to the wall around the ice rink and hopped over it. A panicked shopper slammed into him, almost knocking him over. Lance used the wall to steady himself. He spotted three mall security guards fighting through the crowd of people as they came towards him.

Lance kept his back against the skating rink wall as he waited for them to reach him. Each of them had a taser in their hand and he watched them closely, waiting to see which one made the first move. The one in the lead, a bigger man with a beer belly, reached him first and lunged forward with his taser. Lance ducked under the outthrust taser and grabbed the man's legs. He stood up quickly, using the man's momentum to throw him up and over the wall, onto the ice.

The second security guard was on him now and Lance grabbed his wrist and twisted it, causing him to drop the taser. He held onto the man's arm as he focused his attention on the third security guard. This one had come from the other side and Lance kicked him in the chest, knocking him back into some of the fleeing shoppers. They knocked him off his feet and the man curled into a ball to avoid being trampled.

Lance returned his attention to the guard who he still held by the arm. The man tried to punch him with his free hand but Lance easily dodged it. Out of the corner of his eye he saw that the first security guard was back on his feet and about to climb back over the ice rink wall. Lance swung around the second guard and then flung him up and over the wall right into the first. The two of them crashed down to the ice.

“Sandpoint PD! Freeze!” a voice yelled out.

Four cops were approaching now. Their guns were drawn and Lance knew that he needed to do something fast or they’d fire as soon as they had a clear shot. He hated to do it but he reached out and grabbed a man who was running past. Lance twisted the man’s arm around to keep him under control. He then pulled out his gun and put it up against the man’s head.

“Stay calm and you won’t get hurt,” Lance said just loudly enough to be heard by his hostage.

He then waved his gun threateningly at the cops.

“Back off!” he yelled.

One of the cops stepped closer. They were only about ten feet away now.

“Calm down, sir. Lower your weapon and we can talk about this.”

Lance started to back away towards the nearest exits. They were about a hundred feet away but he knew that if he stayed pinned against the ice skating rink the cops would be able to easily take him down. The four cops followed him, their guns still drawn.

“Stop following me!”

They didn’t listen to him.

“I said back off!” Lance screamed, waving his gun for effect.

“We’ve got multiple witnesses who saw you execute a cop. The only way out of this for you is to drop your weapon!” the nearest cop yelled.

They were about fifty feet from the exits now but when Lance glanced over his shoulder at them he saw two cops standing right outside. He stopped moving. His eyes darted around the mall, searching for another way out. There were a few store fronts, a few kiosks and a restroom. He started backing towards one of the stores, desperately hoping that it had some sort of a back exit.

Two more Sandpoint police officers appeared around the other side of the ice rink and moved into position to cut him off.

“Shit,” Lance muttered under his breath.

He was dangerously close to being surrounded. He kept rotating, trying to keep the hostage between him and the groups of police. The loud roar of an engine got his attention and he looked at the exit doors just as Token came

crashing through one of them on a jet black street motorcycle. He swerved to avoid hitting a woman and then skidded to a stop right beside Lance.

Lance shoved his hostage forward, sending him crashing into nearest cop. He then jumped on the back of the motorcycle. Token accelerated hard and Lance almost fell off as the bike roared to life. The cops opened fire and Toke jerked the bike behind a kiosk to give them some cover. The two cops outside the exit doors were just now getting back to their feet after narrowly avoiding Token when he came past the first time. They again had to dive out of the way as Toke crashed through the second door, sending glass flying all over them.

While he had hoped they'd have a clear window to get away from the mall Lance saw that it wasn't the case. There were several police cruisers already in the parking lot and several more coming down the street towards the mall. Token angled the motorcycle around a family and out onto the road running around the mall. A nearby police officer shot at them but missed as Toke turned sharply onto a separate street that ran around the massive parking garage.

They followed the road but just before they reached the exit that would take them out onto the main city street a police cruiser sped in front of them. Toke swerved the bike away, back towards the parking garage. He jumped a curb and they flew into the lower level of the garage. There were several cops already on that level and Token went the opposite direction which took them up to the second level. Lance held on tight as they climbed the garage. He knew there wasn't much hope of an exit at the top but with more and more cop cars pouring into the garage behind them climbing was their only option.

They arrived at the top and Lance pointed towards an elevator in the corner of the structure. The doors were open and a woman was just now stepping onto it. Token sped towards it and at the last second braked and turned the bike, causing it to skid sideways onto the elevator. The woman screamed as they came sliding in. She pressed herself into the front corner of the elevator and kept screaming as she stared at them.

"First floor please," Token said with a smile.

She ran off the elevator just before the doors closed. Toke shook his head and pushed the button for the first level of the parking garage. Lance's cell phone rang and he pulled it from his pocket.

"Now's not a good time, Devin," he said.

"You need to hear this. I found something out about my suspect. She's been ditching partners late at night. One of these occurrences happened during a perfect window to have committed a Slasher murder."

"You're just discovering this now?" Lance asked angrily.

Devin sighed.

"Yes Lance, I just discovered this."

"Meet us at 447 Northpark as soon as you can. A few of Tokens guys are there, they'll let you in."

"Why there? Why not Toke's house?"

"Because his house may be compromised."

Lance hung up before she could respond. They were down to the fifth floor now.

"They're going to be waiting for us," Toke said.

After pulling up his shirt to cover his face Lance spoke.

"Peel out."

Token turned around to look at him but when he saw what Lance was doing he understood. He covered his own mouth and then pulled the accelerator down all the way. The back tire began spinning in place against the floor of the elevator. At first nothing happened but as he held down the accelerator the rubber of the tire heated up and smoke started pouring off of it. By the time they reached the bottom floor the elevator was filled with a thick white smoke.

Three cops stood at the ready in front of the elevator, their guns drawn and pointed forward. The doors opened and a wall of smoke drifted out towards them. They began to cough as they tried to see through it and into the elevator. The motorcycle engine roared to life and Token and Lance came flying out of the smoke. One of the cops tried to reach out and grab them but Lance kicked him back as they drove past.

Toke pulled them out onto the road running around the garage. Even more cops were here now. They had the exit blocked by two patrol cars. Lance pointed ahead at the curb and Token nodded and turned the bike towards it. They hit it hard and jumped up onto the grass. The bike wasn't designed to perform offroad but there was a well worn path leading from the bus stop at the street up to the mall. They followed along the path, heading for the street. Sirens filled the air and the police were shouting out to each other as they tried to adjust to this new path that the fleeing suspects were taking.

They jumped the curb out onto the city street. Lance let out a sigh of relief, glad to be away from the restrictive confines of the mall parking lot. Within a minute there were several cop cars hot on their tail. Several of the side streets were already blocked off by cop cars and Lance knew that if they kept to the main street they weren't going to last long.

"We need to do something quick," Lance shouted.

"Give me your phone," Toke responded.

Lance handed him the phone. Token operated it with one hand while keeping the bike relatively steady with the other. Lance could barely hear what he was saying over the whipping wind but a few moments later Toke handed the phone back to him. He then pulled hard on the accelerator and they started picking up more and more speed.

They continued to accelerate and were now putting some distance between them and the police cars behind them. Lance looked over Token's shoulder to see that they were up to 115 miles per hour now. The police cruisers were still behind them but were falling back more and more.

Movement up ahead caught Lance's eye. Two gang cars were slowly pulling out into the road, one from each side. He watched worriedly as they moved to create a roadblock, unsure if the bike was going to make it through safely. Token held the motorcycle perfectly steady along the center stripe in the road and they passed between the two cars right before they touched bumpers to close the roadblock.

Lance looked back over his shoulder just in time to see the first wave of police cruisers slam into the gang cars. One of the police cars flipped up into the air as a second group of pursuers rammed into the back of the first.

Token swerved off the main road onto a small side street and as soon as they were out of sight he stopped the bike. Another gang car was there waiting for them and Lance recognized Fumbles behind the wheel. Lance and Token got off the bike and then ran and dove into the waiting car.



**Created and Written by A.C. Hall**  
**Episode 10 – State of Love and Trust**

Leo slammed the giant book closed and then threw it down hard on the table in front of him. Some of the nearby people in the library shot him dirty looks but he didn't care. He had been trying to figure out what the message meant that he got from the Chief but was having no luck. He had been able to learn that it was some sort of act of congress but beyond that he had no idea what it signified.

One of the librarians approached his table.

“Sir, are you sure there isn't something I can help you with? Are you having trouble researching a topic?”

He considered telling her what he was doing but thought better of it. He didn't want to reveal the information he got from Chief Brown to just anyone and although having help sounded nice he didn't want it from some random librarian.

“No thanks. I'm fine,” he answered with a smile.



Next it cut to a slightly blurred picture of Lance's face that was caught by a different camera in the mall.

"You executed him in the middle of the mall and now your face is all over the news! Do you realize what kind of heat's going to come down on you now? On us? Do you even care?"

"Heat has a way of disappearing off of a Black Badge, you'll see. It'll get taken care of."

Devin stepped towards him.

"That's it? Give me a break, someone will take care of it?" she asked angrily. "You executed an internal affairs agent in the middle of a crowded shopping mall! Does it not register in that brain of yours just how far gone you are?"

Lance was far from the mood to be yelled at and he stepped towards her and pointed.

"Me? What about you, Devin? You're just now finding these reports on your suspect? How the hell does that happen?"

"Don't you dare turn this around on me."

"That's exactly what I'm going to do!"

"What reports? What's going on?" Token asked from behind them.

He had come in through the back door. Lance turned towards him and answered.

"Supercop over here just uncovered some reports this morning about her suspect ditching partners in the middle of the night. One of the complaints matches up with one of the Slasher killings."

"The system was backlogged!" Devin said. "There were thousands of partner complaints that all came in over the course of just a few days."

Lance sighed and rubbed his temples. He took several deep breaths to calm himself down before speaking.

"We need to get on your suspect immediately. We need to know every move Officer Harriet Jeter makes and when she makes it," he said.

Devin's cell phone rang and she pulled it out of her pocket.

"Hey Leo," she said as she answered.



herself not wanting to let go. She pulled him closer and rested her head on his shoulder.

“Everything okay?” Leo asked.

She held on for a moment longer and then released. She smiled and nodded as he looked at her.

“It’s better now,” she answered.

They sat down on the bench and Leo reached into a paper bag he had sitting next to him. He pulled out a sandwich and offered it to her.

“I didn’t know what you liked so I went as safe as possible, ham and cheese only.”

She laughed as she took it.

“Ham and cheese works,” she said.

Devin hadn’t realized how hungry she was but her stomach growled as she unwrapped the sandwich. She bit into it. After swallowing she looked at Leo.

“So you’re telling me that the Chief barely knew anything about the Black Badges?”

Leo nodded.

“A couple of goons blackmailed him into giving Black Badges free reign over the city police. Chief Brown probably manufactured the fear of the group and fed it to people like the Captain to insure that no one else would dig too deep into any Black Badges they had run-ins with.”

“So Lance has been lying all along.”

“It’s starting to look that way,” Leo responded.

Devin sighed heavily.

“I hate him,” she said.

Leo sat quietly, unsure of what to say to make her feel better.

“He’s made my life hell and I let him do it because deep down part of me believed in the things he was saying. And now we’ve got nothing but an almost confirmed hunch that he’s a complete and total liar.”

“Don’t forget the card that Brown gave me. That could be something,” Leo said.

“Did you have any luck researching it?”





Devin limped down the hallway of the police station. It was the first time she'd been back since the beating and she found herself feeling anxious and a little bit fearful. She was glad to be in the basement where the chances of running into any fellow cops at this hour were slim. She came around the corner and entered into the lab. Bradley was the only lab tech in the room.

"I got your text," Devin said.

He looked up at her. His hair was in his face and he whistled as he inspected her.

"Wow, they weren't kidding when they said you were beat to hell."

Her mood was beyond foul and she had no patience for someone like Bradley tonight.

"Where's my report?" she asked.

He pointed to a folder lying on a nearby table and she limped over to it and picked it up. She flipped it open.

"What's the verdict?" she asked as she started to read the first page.

"Inconclusive."

Devin hadn't been prepared for that answer. She looked up at Bradley.

"What? Why?"

He brushed the hair from his face before answering.

"Because the probable match has been dead for seventeen years."

She started reading through the report, hoping that somehow Bradley was wrong or had made a mistake. This was the one piece of solid evidence they had on Lance's true identity and the idea of it being a dead end made her feel ill.

"Did you see that craziness at the mall today? Just nuts man. But at least we're better off than California. Sounds like they've got a real nut on the loose out there," Bradley said.

Devin completely ignored him as she continued to read through the report. The probable DNA match was for a boy named Edison Ellis. He had beaten a cop to death in an alleyway and later killed himself while in juvenile detention. He was thirteen years old when he committed suicide.

She turned to the last page in the file and immediately her blood ran cold. It was a blurry picture of young Edison Ellis, the cop killing teen who had

supposedly committed suicide. But Devin knew this man and knew that he was alive and well and still killing cops. Despite the blurry qualities of the photo she had absolutely no doubt who she was looking at.

It was Lance Parker.

End of Episode 10

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