

Previously on Black Badge: Leo learned that the information he got from the Chief regarding the Black Badge organization was some sort of Act of Congress and sought help from Devin's brother to figure out what it meant. Lance and Devin had a heated argument over Lance's recent actions at the mall and Devin's late discovery of the disturbing information about her Slasher suspect. When Devin left and met with Leo she confessed to him that she hated Lance and they both agreed that he had lied about the Black Badge organization. But when she learned that Leo had involved her brother she angrily stalked away. Lance followed Officer Harriet Jeter and observed her take a strange interest in several missing persons flyers before she ditched her partner and then set off into the night, possibly to commit a Slasher murder. Back at the police station Devin finally received the DNA

report on Lance's blood and learned that it matched up with a presumed dead teenager named Edison Ellis who had killed a cop and then committed suicide while in custody. However, one look at the photo and Devin was convinced that Edison Ellis and Lance Parker were the same person.

Devin sat in her car, staring down at the file. Thirty minutes had gone by and all she had done was look at the picture. She had been on the receiving end of Lance's withering stare enough times to recognize it anywhere. As improbable as it seemed she still had no doubt that this youth, this Edison Ellis, was Lance Parker. He was a cop killing teenager who had somehow faked his own death only to surface later in life as a cop killing adult. She wanted to throw up as she thought about

how much she had helped him over the past weeks.

She pulled out her cell phone and started to call Leo. She wanted to hear his voice, to have him tell her that it was all going to be okay. Just before she pushed the button to dial she remembered how she had treated him earlier in the day at the park. He had just been trying to help and she bit his head off in return. Devin sighed and dropped the phone into the passenger seat. She returned her gaze to the picture. Edison Ellis, age 13, cop killer.

Her phone rang and she picked it up, hoping it was Leo calling. When she saw it was Lance her heart sank. She stared at the phone, unsure if she could make herself answer it. She wondered who he really was

and why he did the things he did. Was he just some lunatic with a vendetta against the police?

The phone continued to ring and she had to admit one thing to herself. No matter how wrongly he had gone about it he had gotten them within one step of catching the Sandpoint Slasher. She remembered the lead they had discovered on her suspect Harriet Jeter. He was out following her right now and she realized that he may've had a breakthrough. As much as she hated to continue working with him she knew she couldn't ignore a chance to bring down the serial killer.

“Hello,” Devin said meekly as she answered.

“Devin! Where the hell have you been?”

She sat there in silence. Her voice had caught in her throat and she found herself unable to respond to this man that she now realized she knew absolutely nothing about.

“Devin? Are you there?”

“I’m here,” she answered, her voice just above a whisper.

“Jeter ditched her partner about forty minutes ago. I’ve tailed her to an apartment building. You need to get over here now.”

She wrote down the address that he gave her and then hung up the phone. Devin started her car. First she was going to deal with the Sandpoint Slasher. Then she was going to deal with Lance Parker.

BLACK BADGE

Created and Written by A.C. Hall
Episode 11 – The Unraveling of a Tragedy

Devin arrived at the downtown address and saw Lance parked nearby. He got out of his car and approached hers. He pulled on the passenger door handle but she hadn't unlocked it yet. She stared forward, frozen for a moment, unwilling to let him in. He knocked hard on the window and finally she unlocked the door. He got in and pointed up at a nearby apartment building.

“She made some weird stops, ditched her partner and then drove straight here. She's been inside for a few minutes.”

Devin just stared straight ahead. She was incredibly tense and completely unsure of how to respond to him now.

“Hey, you hearing me?”

She nodded.

“Yeah.”

“Okay, let's cruise by and see if we can find out what she's up to in there.”

She drove slowly past the apartment building. They craned their necks and tried to look into the windows but it was impossible to see much.

“Wait a minute, she's on duty right now,” Devin said. “The dispatcher might know what she's doing.”

“Worth a shot,” Lance responded.

Devin pulled over to the side of the road. She picked up the transmitter to her police radio and spoke into it.

“Dispatch this is unit 615, badge number 1208.”

“Detective Lamont? I thought you were in the hospital.”

“No, I’m following up on a supervisor complaint on Officer Harriet Jeter. I know she’s on duty tonight, can you tell me what she’s up to currently?”

After a moment of silence the dispatcher spoke.

“It shows here that she's logged into the system so I'm assuming she's at the station.”

“It must be a remote log in,” Lance said.

“Thank you dispatch,” Devin said.

Lance pulled out his cell phone and called Token. He was still at the house that they were using as their new headquarters.

“Token, get on my computer and use the administrator remote login to get into the police stations computer.”

He typed for a minute before responding.

“Okay, I’m in.”

“I need you to scroll through the active users until you find Harriet Jeter. We need to know what she’s up to.”

More typing followed.

“It says here that she's looking into some case. It’s a kidnapping investigation of some kind.”

“What about this address? Is this of any significance?” Lance asked.

He gave Toke the address and waited. After a moment Token responded.

“That's where she lives, man. Apartment 6b.”

Lance hung up the phone. Devin had circled the block and was going back in front of the apartment building. He told her everything that Token had just informed him of.

“Why would she be looking into a kidnapping case?” Devin asked.

“She seemed overly interested in missing persons notices and things like that earlier. Were any of the Slasher victims involved in kidnappings or runaways or anything like that?” Lance asked.

“Not to my remembrance, no.”

Lance was about to say something else when Devin tensed up and pushed down on his shoulder.

“Get down!” she yelled.

A Sandpoint Police cruiser was rolling past but they had seen it too late. It slowed and Lance looked away quickly, hoping not to be recognized by the cops inside. He and Devin held their breath as the cruiser kept driving down the road. It was about half a block away and just as they were ready to breathe easy it spun around and turned on its lights.

“Go!” Lance yelled. “Get away from Jeter’s house. If she hears sirens she might get spooked.”

Devin sped away from the curb.

“Turn here!” Lance commanded as they came to an intersection.

They drove for a few blocks. The police cruiser was right behind them now with its siren blaring.

“Stop right here,” Lance said.

Devin slammed on the brakes and the car slid to a stop.

“What’s the play?” she asked.

Lance pulled his gun out and then gave her a serious stare.

“Just shut up and be a co-operative hostage.”

She opened her door and allowed him to push her out. The two police officers were out of their car with their guns drawn. Lance stayed completely behind Devin with his gun pressed into the back of her head.

“Detective Lamont?” one of the cops yelled, recognizing her. “Has he hurt you?”

“Not yet, but he was spouting off about killing cops. You should stay back.”

“Sir! Drop the gun, there's no way out of this!”

“Stay back!” Lance yelled. “I’ve already killed one cop today and I’m not afraid to kill more!”

The officer was saying something else but Lance wasn’t paying attention. He was watching a city bus come down a large hill two streets over. He tracked its movements, trying to gauge its rate of speed.

“Drop your weapon and let the lady go. Nobody has to die here,” the officer said.

Lance leaned forward and spoke so that only Devin could hear him.

“Wait one minute and then slowly drive by the bus stop two streets over. Make sure your back door is unlocked.”

He pushed her forward and opened fire on the cops. He shot at their feet, trying to get them to take cover instead of come after him. He ran for a nearby alleyway and had entered it by the time they returned fire. Lance put his gun back in his holster and concentrated on running as fast as he could. He was going to need to time this perfectly for his plan to work.

The cops were running after him, yelling for him to stop. He exited the alley and sprinted across the street and into the alley on the other side. He kept his eyes focused forward, waiting to see the bus. After another second it pulled into view and stopped. He came out

of the alley and turned towards it. At the last second he dove into a set of bushes right behind the bus stop. The bus pulled away from curb right as the two cops came running out of the alley.

“Hey! Stop the bus!” one of the officers yelled.

The tired city driver either didn't hear or didn't care as he kept accelerating away from the officers. Lance watched closely as they chased after the bus, convinced that he was on it. He then looked the other direction and saw Devin driving slowly down the road. He waited until the last moment when she was right in front of the bus stop and then sprinted from the bushes towards her car. He pulled open the back door and dove in.

Devin turned the car onto the next road and drove several streets away before looking into the back seat and speaking.

“So when is it that all of this heat disappears off of your back?”

Her voice was full of venom but he ignored it.

“We need to move on Jeter right now, before this area gets swarmed with cops looking for me.”

“But we’re not positive that she’s the Sandpoint Slasher,” Devin protested.

“Something is going on with her. Slasher or not we need to get up there and find out what she’s up to.”

She hesitated at a stop sign.

“We’ve got maybe twenty minutes before this area is overrun with cops,” Lance said.

Devin sat at the stop sign for another long moment, contemplating his words. She hated to admit that he was right but a thought occurred to her that settled her nerves. If Jeter was the Slasher, they could get her and then maybe the cops would arrive in time to get Lance as well. She could rid her city of two monsters at once.

She turned back onto the road that Jeter lived on and parked outside of her apartment building. They got out and went into the lobby.

“You take the elevator, I’m going to take the stairs,” Lance said.

Devin’s knee was killing her and she nodded, knowing that she wouldn’t have been able to climb the stairs even if she wanted to. Lance disappeared up the stairs as she got

onto the elevator and pushed the button for the sixth floor. The enormity of what was about to happen settled upon her and by the time the elevator doors opened she was more nervous than she had ever been before.

Lance came running up the stairs right as she stepped out into the hallway. They both walked to apartment 6b and then paused. She put her ear to the door but couldn't hear anything. She stood back up and was about to knock when Lance kicked the door hard, busting it open. He swept in with his gun drawn and she followed.

The apartment was completely bare. Devin pulled her gun quickly, becoming immediately disturbed by what she was seeing. There was no furniture in the living room but the walls were covered in missing

persons reports, kidnapping notices and the occasional newspaper clipping. It looked like something out of a horror movie. Lance had moved through the living room and came around the corner into the kitchen. There sitting at a small table was Officer Harriet Jeter. Her back was to them and a laptop computer sat in front of her.

“Put your hands on your head and stand up slowly,” Lance commanded.

She remained completely still and Lance approached carefully, keeping his gun pointed directly at the back of her head. When he was right next to her he could see one of her hands resting on the laptop. He reached forward to grab it when she lashed out with her other hand. She was holding a knife and was thrusting it towards his chest. Lance barely

got his hand up in time to protect himself from the blow. She sunk the knife into his hand, causing him to drop his gun.

Lance cried out in pain and stumbled back. Jeter leapt up like a woman possessed and ran towards him. He sidestepped and hooked his arm under hers then used the momentum to throw her hard into the wall. The old dry wall crumpled beneath her as she flew into it, crushing it beneath her. She hit the floor hard but was quickly on her knees and crawling towards Lance with the knife in hand.

“Freeze!” Devin yelled.

Harriet stopped and looked over at her, noticing her presence for the first time.

“Don’t make me kill you, Harriet,” Devin said. “Drop the knife.”

The woman stared at Devin for a long moment. Her eyes looked vacant and for an instant it looked like she was going to resume her attack on Lance. Finally she let the knife fall to the floor. Lance stepped forward and kicked it away.

“Throw me your handcuffs,” Lance said.

Devin pulled them out and tossed them to him. He caught them and then pulled Jeter up by her hair and slammed her down into her kitchen chair. He handcuffed her to it. She started rocking back and forth and screaming nonsense. Spit was flying from her mouth and she looked completely crazed. Lance leaned down into her face.

“Settle down!” he screamed.

His yell caused Devin to jump and also seemed to have the desired effect of pulling

Jeter out of her lunatic fit. The woman now sat there, eerily calm, staring out into the living room at all of the papers that were plastered on the walls. Lance retrieved his gun from the floor and put it back into his holster. He then pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and wrapped it around his hand to try and slow the bleeding from the knife wound. Then he returned his attention to Harriet Jeter.

“We've got some questions for you and you damn well better have some good answers for us,” Lance said.

“Go to hell,” Jeter responded with a smile.

Lance bit back the urge to punch her in the face. He instead turned towards Devin.

“You wanna give me a hand over here?” he asked.

Devin was lost in her own little world and didn't hear him. She had wandered back out into the living room and was closely studying all of the papers on the walls. She could feel tears forming in her eyes as she started to piece it all together. Missing persons flyers and kidnapping victims flyers, they filled the room but some of them had a red X drawn over the face of the child. The first tear rolled from the corner of her eye and down her cheek.

“No, no, no, no, no, no, no,” she muttered.

Anytime one of them had a red X it was accompanied by a newspaper clipping. One of them spoke about how a kidnapper went free on a legal technicality thanks to a mistake by a Sandpoint officer. The next spoke about how a mysterious computer glitch erased

evidence and derailed a missing persons investigation that was close to finding the child. Another cited a key item going missing from the Sandpoint Police Station evidence room as the reason a kidnapped child had never been recovered.

She was crying hard now as she read more of the newspaper articles. All of them detailed a way in which someone or something inside the Sandpoint Police Department had caused a missing or kidnapped child to remain unrecovered. All of them happened during the time that Harriet Jeter had been employed at the station.

Lance had returned to the living room and was reading them all as well. It wasn't long before he too had pieced it together.

“My God,” he said.

Devin was bawling now.

“Why?” she muttered.

She turned and limped towards Harriet Jeter.

“Why?” she asked again, a little louder this time.

Jeter just stared at her, a strange smile on her face.

“WHY?” Devin screamed it this time with all the force she had in her entire body.

Harriet Jeter started laughing.

“Because she lost her son,” Lance said.

Devin turned around and saw Lance knelt in the corner of the living room looking at a newspaper clipping taped to the bottom of the wall. She walked over to him and looked down at the article. There was a picture of a younger Harriet Jeter and her son and a story about how she had fallen asleep and he had

wandered outside and been kidnapped and later killed.

“It was in a different city and she had a different name,” Lance said. “That’s why it wasn’t in her file.”

“If a parent can't keep track of their child then they deserve to know the same pain I know!” Jeter screamed from the kitchen.

“God grants them to you, they're your responsibility, and if you can't keep up with them then you deserve to lose them.”

Lance and Devin turned around and were staring at her.

“And so I make sure it happens every chance I get, that these entitled whores who can’t hold onto their kids lose them like I lost mine.”

She smiled but a tear ran down her face.

“Why should I be the only one to feel this pain?”

Devin was sobbing harder now as she watched the woman.

“She’s crazy. She needs help,” she said between sobs. “Maybe there’s somewhere that can help her.”

Lance pulled out his gun and strode purposefully across the living room. There was no hesitation to his movements as he entered the kitchen and raised his gun and placed it against Harriet Jeter’s head. Devin’s eyes were filled with tears but she realized what Lance was about to do.

“NO!” Devin screamed.

Lance pulled the trigger, executing Harriet Jeter. The chair pitched over backwards as a red spray of blood shot out.

“NO!” Devin screamed again.

She pulled out her gun and squeezed the trigger. She was crying even harder now but she could see his shape. He had reacted quickly and was running for the door. Her hand was shaking wildly as she fired again and again, doing her best to aim for him as he sprinted out of the apartment.

Devin slid down the wall slowly, sobbing harder than she ever had before in her life. She sat against it and cried.

“Get a grip, Devin!” Lance yelled from right outside the door. “We’re down to one suspect now, we know the identity of the Sandpoint Slasher. So let’s go get him!”

“No!” she yelled. “You just executed a cop.”

“She was evil, Devin. She was a monster.”

Devin continued to bawl and it took her a moment before she could respond.

“She wasn’t evil. She was sick. We could’ve gotten her help.”

“Just let me come inside. We’ll regroup and get out of here and go get the Slasher,” Lance said, trying to calm her down.

She shook her head defiantly.

“If you step back through that door I will kill you,” she said. “You’ve gone too far Lance. You’ve gone so far and you’ve taken me with you. I used to be a good person. I used to be a good cop. And now look at me. What am I, even?”

“Devin, we don’t have much time, the cops will be here any minute. Let me help you up and we’ll get out of here.”

“The next time I see you I will kill you. And if you think I'm bluffing then please, step back through that door. Do you hear me Lance?”

She paused for a second to wipe her eyes and then spoke again.

“Or should I call you Edison?”

She waited for a response but after a long silent moment she realized that he had left. She sat alone against the wall, left to wonder if he had heard her call him Edison.

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Devin wiped the tears from her eyes as she drove away from the apartment building. She could hear sirens approaching as she turned

the corner and accelerated out of the neighborhood. She had mostly stopped crying and once she had put some distance between her and Harriet Jeter's apartment she pulled over to the side of the road. She could feel the tears coming again and she tried to fight them off. She pulled her cell phone out and called Leo.

After several rings it went to his voicemail. She tried her best to sound calm as she spoke.

“Leo, it's me. I'm sorry about how I acted towards you earlier and I know you may be upset with me but if you could please...” she had to pause and take a deep breath to keep herself from crying. “If you could please call me back I'd appreciate it. I really need to hear your voice.”

She hung up the phone and sat there for another moment. All she could think about were the newspaper articles that adorned the walls of Jeter's apartment. A shiver ran through her and she again had to fight off the tears.

Devin put the car back into gear and started to drive. She knew that the only thing that was going to begin to make her feel better would be to see Leo so she went in that direction. He lived in a small house in a suburban neighborhood right outside of downtown. She felt herself calming as she drove towards him. Just knowing that she would soon be with him made her feel better and by the time she was on his street she didn't even feel like crying anymore.

His car was in the driveway but there were no lights on in the house. Part of her felt bad for surprising him after he hadn't answered her phone call but she needed to see him and she knew that he wouldn't stay mad at her once she explained everything that had gone on that night. She got out of her car and walked up to the porch, noting in the back of her mind just how quiet and dark the neighborhood was. She knocked on the front door and it swung open.

“Leo?” she called out.

She waited a moment for an answer and then pushed the door all the way open. It was dark inside. Her heart started pounding in her chest as she stepped into the house. A smell hit her that she had grown all too familiar with during her time as a cop. It was the

smell of blood. Devin pulled her gun and held it at her side as she took another step into the entryway.

“Leo? Are you home?” she asked, her voice shaking.

She rounded the corner and stood in the entrance to the living room. It was pitch black there but somehow she knew what she was going to see when she turned on the light. She started to cry again as she reached out and felt for the light switch. Her hand hesitated there. She couldn't make herself do it and for a long time she stayed that way, crying with her hand on the switch. Finally she flipped it and a scream escaped from her as the room became illuminated.

Lying there on his back on the coffee table was Leo. Blood was pooled beneath him and

was spilling over off the edge of the table onto the floor. Her eyes were drawn to the giant X cut into his lifeless chest.

It was the signature cut of the Sandpoint Slasher.

END OF EPISODE 11

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