

Previously on Black Badge: Detective Devin Lamonte struggled with her decision to help Lance Parker in his investigation of the serial killer known as the Sandpoint Slasher. As they continued to pursue the idea that the Slasher was a cop Lance set into motion a series of events that lead to a corrupt cop getting murdered inside the police station by the Slasher himself. Then, at the request of Lance, a well respected officer named Leo Banks informed the media that he was certain the Slasher was a cop.

Lance stopped typing when he heard a knock on the front door. He was at his computer inside Token's house, tracking the media coverage of the Slasher murder at the

police station. He glanced at the clock. It was 4:35 in the morning. He picked his pistol up off the table as he approached the door. Lance slowly pulled it open and saw Devin standing there. She looked terrible. He opened the door fully and motioned for her to come inside.

“Nice of you to knock this time.”

Devin was too exhausted to see the humor in his comment. She had barely slept over the past two days and had just now left the police station after being there all night dealing with the fallout from the Slasher murder.

“You’ve got some explaining to do,” she said.

Lance returned to his computer and she followed him. She sat down on the couch and watched him.

“Do you ever sleep?” she asked.

“Do you?”

She rubbed her temples and leaned back. She wanted nothing more than to sleep but knew unless she got some answers from Lance she'd be unable to.

“Lance, do you realize the severity of everything you did yesterday? You manufactured a gang war. Then you planted evidence at the station and used it to dangle Officer James out like bait so he'd be murdered by the Sandpoint Slasher. Then you had a cop, a good cop, commit career suicide by telling the media that the Slasher

is definitely a police officer. Did I just about cover it all?”

Lance turned around in his chair to face her. He offered a slight smile as he replied.

“Just about.”

“I just, I can barely comprehend it. I have so many questions I need answered,” Devin said.

After rolling the computer chair closer Lance reached down and grabbed Devin’s foot.

“What are you doing?” she asked, trying to pull away from him.

He pulled her shoe off and then grabbed the other one and pulled it off. He then stood up and left the room. He returned after just a moment with a blanket and walked back to the couch.

“Lie down,” he commanded.

“Excuse me?”

“Lie down.”

Devin had no idea what he was doing. She had never seen him appear so calm before and yet his pleasant demeanor had her more unnerved than she usually was around him. She slowly lay down on the couch, watching him closely as she did. Lance carefully laid the blanket over her and then returned to his computer chair.

“What are your questions?” he asked.

“You already knew that James was the dirtiest cop in the city, didn't you?”

“I wouldn't be very good at my job if I didn't.”

“Then why'd you need me to point him out to you? Why not just leave me out of it?”

Lance thought for a while before answering.

“This isn't going to be easy to hear,” he said.

“Things you say rarely are.”

“I needed you to have a hand in it, Devin. I don't know how this whole thing is going to play out but I do know that for us to have a chance of succeeding we're going to need you on our side. And to get you there you had to not only see that what I was saying was true, you had to be a part of it.”

“We're responsible for his murder,” she said.

“That's one way to look at it.”

Devin scoffed.

“What's another way?”

“That the serial killer who stalked him and cut him up is responsible.”

“But...”

“James was a cancer in that station, Devin, and you know it,” he interrupted. “He's serving a much greater purpose in death than he ever did in life.”

“How?”

Even though she didn't mean to she closed her eyes as she grew more comfortable.

“The most direct thing that we did was save lives. The public is going to be very skeptical of cops for a while. That means the chances of someone being stupid enough to follow the Slasher into a dark alley is lessened. Just having a uniform and a badge isn't going to be enough to lure people into easy killing spots now. The next thing we

did is make life difficult for the Slasher. Am I right in assuming that the Captain has already made it mandatory for all cops to ride with at least one partner?”

“Mmmhmm,” Devin said.

“So now the Slasher has a partner with him at all times. His routines, his comfort zones, his easy opportunities, we’ve taken them all away from him. We know he can’t stop killing so now we’ve greatly increased the chances that he’ll make a mistake the next time he does. The final thing we’ve done, and maybe the most important is that now we’ve got a way to narrow our list of suspects. We know the Slasher is a night shift cop and since he couldn’t resist the easy target at the station we know that he wasn’t at the gang war since he was

committing the murder at the time. Our list of suspects just went from hundreds to maybe twenty in the matter of one night. So yes, my actions were severe, but we're now closer than ever to knowing who the Slasher is.”

After thinking for a while Devin spoke.

“Any chance the cameras at the station picked up the killer?”

“No. They knew every blind spot.”

“But...” Devin said.

“No. No more tonight. Close your eyes and get some rest,” Lance said.

Devin wanted to protest but she was too exhausted. Within seconds she had fallen asleep.

BLACK & WHITE BADGE

Created and Written by A.C. Hall
Episode 3 – We Got to Meet Death One Day

Devin’s eyes shot open as the front door to Token’s house was closed. It was bright in the room and she couldn’t believe she had slept until morning, especially in this place. She was about to sit up when she heard voices talking.

“You did great Leo. That was exactly what I needed,” Lance said.

Leo Banks was the officer that had gone on television the night before to tell the public that he was certain the Sandpoint Slasher

was a cop. Even though Lance had said he was involved in getting him to do it Devin hadn't expected for Leo to come here.

“Did you hold up your end of the bargain?” Leo asked.

“I did. I've been aggressively investigating it and it turns out that you were right. The cop that arrested your brother was definitely dirty. I've already submitted evidence to the authorities in Omaha and word is that your brother is going to get a retrial.”

“Thank God,” Leo said.

“With the arresting officer no longer able to testify your brother will almost certainly be free to go.”

“I can't tell you how much I appreciate this, Lance. My brother's always been a bit of a hothead but I knew he wasn't guilty.”

Having heard enough Devin sat up and spoke.

“So to get me to help out you put a gun to my head and threaten me with bombs under cop cars but with him you get his brother out of prison?”

“Oh, Detective Lamonte, I didn’t see you there,” Leo said. “What are you doing here?”

“She’s a part of my team,” Lance said.

Devin shot him a dirty look and then returned her gaze to Leo. Officer Leo Banks had risen to great heights in the station in just a matter of months. His career path mirrored her own and rumors were that he was less than six months away from making Detective. While some had thought she would be jealous to see another officer

getting quick recognition, Devin had long admired the man.

“How could you be so stupid to get mixed up in all of this, Banks? They were about to make you Detective, did you know that? You’re one of maybe five cops at that station that have a real shot of making this city a better place to live and now you’ll be lucky if they don’t take your whole career away from you!” she scolded.

Leo let out a sarcastic laugh.

“I’m afraid they’re way ahead of you on that one, Detective.”

“Already?” Lance asked.

Leo nodded.

“Yeah, early this morning. I’ve been fired and they’re looking into the possibility of bringing me up on charges,” he paused and a

smile came across his face. “But knowing that my brother is going to be okay, that makes it all worthwhile.”

After a moment of silence Lance spoke.

“Now that you’ve got some free time on your hands maybe you’d like to help us bring down the Sandpoint Slasher.”

“I don’t know if that’s such a good idea,” Devin said.

“No, I’ll do it. The police department isn’t going to seriously investigate the possibility of a cop doing the killings. That means you guys are the only ones who have any chance of cracking the case,” Leo said.

“We may have to go a little outside the box to bring him down. You sure about this?” Lance asked.

Leo smiled as he answered.

“Hell yeah I’m sure.”

Lance walked over to him and shook his hand.

“Good to hear. I’ll be in touch soon to let you know what I need you doing.”

Leo turned and walked towards the front door.

“Hold on a second, I’ll walk out with you,” Devin said as she hurriedly pulled on her shoes.

“There are things we need to discuss,” Lance told her.

Devin waved her hand dismissively as she walked past him.

“We can talk later.”

Once they were outside Devin and Leo walked to where her car was parked on the street. She stared at him for a moment,

realizing that she had never seen him out of his uniform. His frame was slighter than she had realized but even under his long sleeve shirt she could see that he was well toned. His medium length hair was uncombed and framed his thin face. Leo scratched at his goatee and she realized that she was staring at him. She looked away quickly as she spoke.

“You have no idea who you’re getting involved with here, Leo. Did you know that he’s the one that set off the bomb at the station the other day? Or that he orchestrated that entire gang rumble last night just so he could set the stage for the Slasher to make a kill inside the police station? The guy’s certifiable.”

“And yet you were sleeping on his couch?”
Leo asked.

“No, that’s not... it’s not even his house. And anyways you’re missing the point. You did something for him, your brother is free, why not just walk away without getting further involved?”

Leo thought for a moment before speaking.

“Let me ask you a question. Do you believe that Lance Parker has a legitimate chance of bringing down the Sandpoint Slasher?”

After thinking about it Devin had to admit to herself that Leo had a point.

“Yes. He does,” she answered.

“Well then that’s that, I’m in. We’re the best chance this city has of ridding itself of this monster.”

Devin stood for a moment, trying to think of a new way to proceed. Obviously Leo was sold on helping Lance and wasn't going to be talked out of it. Suddenly an idea occurred to her.

“I agree with you that the best chance we have of catching the Slasher is with Lance so let's keep helping him for now. But we need to find out just who he is. We need to know what a Black Badge is and if he really has the authorization to do the things he does.”

“You could ask the Captain about it,” Leo suggested.

Devin shook her head.

“No way.”

She filled him in on her past run-ins with the Captain and how he had acted regarding

the Black Badge. The seriousness of the situation hit Leo hard and he leaned against the car.

“Damn. I just assumed that the guy worked for a government agency or something.”

“Maybe he does,” Devin responded. “But until we do some digging we’re not going to know for sure. For all we know we could be aiding some complete lunatic who gets off on killing cops.”

“So what do we do?” Leo asked.

“I may not be able to dig too deep into the Black Badge but you can. You’re not a cop anymore and you’re going to have to stop thinking like one if we’re going to have a chance of getting to the bottom of this.”

Leo nodded. He was about to respond when they both heard the front door close. Lance was coming toward them. He tossed a pistol to Leo who caught it.

“You need to come with me, Leo. Devin, you need to leave.”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, why did you just give him a gun and why do I need to leave?”

Lance kept moving towards his car and Devin followed him. When he opened the door she stood in front of it, blocking him from pulling it all the way open.

“We don’t have time for this,” he said.

“Tell me what’s happening,” Devin said.

After letting out a long sigh Lance closed the car door.

“You two know a cop named Grayson Kilmer?”

“Yeah, he’s a SWAT meathead,” Devin answered.

“The guys at the station call him ‘Kill More’ Kilmer,” Leo added.

“Token told me about the guy. He hires himself out as muscle to the 505’s any time they want to make war with the other gangs,” Lance said.

Leo shook his head.

“I always knew that guy was an asshole.”

“Apparently the 505’s just hired him to take out a Reaper drug warehouse. Most days I wouldn’t care much but as part of the Captain’s new policy that no cop rides alone Kilmer has two rookies with him today,” Lance said.

“He wouldn’t take them along would he?” Devin asked, already suspecting what the answer was going to be.

“One of Token’s guys saw them rolling towards the warehouse. He said the rookies were in the car and it looked like they were packing some serious heat.”

Leo opened the passenger door on Lance’s car and started to get in.

“We need to get over there and stop this guy,” he said.

“I’m going with you,” Devin said.

Lance sighed. He could tell that she wasn’t going to take no for an answer so he gestured towards the car and she hurriedly got into the back seat.

Even though the warehouse was on the far side of the projects they made great time

driving there. Lance constantly picked Devin and Leo's brains for the areas where he was likely to run into the police and the areas in which he could freely speed.

They pulled up across the street from the warehouse and saw that the place was already a war zone. Kilmer was like a one man army, standing out in the open while the two rookie cops hung back and fired at the warehouse from behind the patrol car. Kilmer looked like a tank. He wore what appeared to be a bomb squad blast resistant suit over his already hefty SWAT armor. The result was that he was nearly unstoppable. Members of the 505's were hanging out of windows unloading entire clips into Kilmer and it was barely even

noticeable. He was firing cans of tear gas into the building.

“This guy’s out of his damn mind,” Leo said.

“Devin, what sort of response time are we looking at from the police department?” Lance asked.

She thought for a moment before answering.

“With everything that’s going on in the city right now I’d say about fifteen minutes or so.”

Lance pulled out his gun and checked the clip.

“Okay, Devin, you’re going to have to stay here,” Lance said.

“Like hell!”

“If any one of those three cops in there sees you they’ll identify you and report your presence to the department. You’ll come under investigation and you won’t be able to help go after the Slasher,” Lance said.

“He’s right. If you get id’d by any of these guys it’ll be tough to explain your way out of why you were here helping a mystery man and an ex-cop go after a SWAT team member,” Leo said.

Devin started to protest but then crossed her arms and leaned back. She sighed angrily but didn’t say anything.

“You ready?” Lance asked, looking at Leo. Leo smiled.

“Let’s get this guy,” he answered.

The two of them got out of the car and began moving across the street. Kilmer and

the two rookies had put on gas masks and were just now entering the building. Tear gas was pouring out of the structure and Leo was struggling to keep moving forward into it. He was coughing heavily and tears were pouring from his eyes. While Lance's eyes were watering as well he seemed much less bothered by the effects of the gas.

A constant stream of gunfire could be heard inside the warehouse but as they stepped into the building it was hard to see exactly where it was coming from. Kilmer had pumped the place with enough tear gas to bring an entire city block to its knees. They could only see a few feet in front of them and it sounded like the gunfire and yelling was coming from all directions. They were crouched just inside the door and

Lance could tell that Leo wasn't going to be able to stand the gas much longer.

A gang member went running past them and was followed soon after by another. Then, barely visible a few feet away, one of the rookie officers appeared. She was firing wildly up into the air, trying to hit the gang members who were on the second level. Lance remained crouched as he approached her. She saw him just as he was upon her. He quickly disarmed her and then put her into a choke hold. As he kept her locked into the hold he dragged her back towards the door. After a few moments she stopped fighting back, having fell unconscious. Lance released the hold and gestured for Leo to come get her.

“Get her clear and then get out of the area,”
Lance told him.

Leo nodded and took the woman in his arms. He watched as Lance took a deep breath and then charged into the middle of the gas filled warehouse. It only took a second before he disappeared from view.

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Devin kicked the seat in front of her in frustration. It sounded like a war was going on inside the warehouse and yet she was stuck sitting in the car. She briefly considered going in anyways and just explaining to the cops who showed up that she had just happened to be passing by and had heard the gun shots. It was enough of a

story that she would save her job but she knew she would still come under more scrutiny than they needed right now if she did it. Why had she been in the neighborhood without her car? Why hadn't she called it in? Why hadn't she waited for backup? And those were in addition to the things Lance and Leo had mentioned earlier.

She let out a long sigh, realizing that it really was in their best interest for her to remain outside. She sat up when she saw a car approaching on the street. It only took a moment for her to realize that it belonged to members of the Reapers. They had heard their warehouse was under fire and were coming to help repel the attack. There were six of them in the car and as they parked on the other side of the street and started getting

out she saw that all of them had Mac 10 Uzi's.

Devin looked at the entrance to the warehouse. She couldn't see anything through the thick tear gas but it hadn't been long since Lance and Leo had gone inside. If they were still near the entrance then these new gang members would come in right on top of them. Lance and Leo wouldn't stand a chance.

Without giving it any more thought Devin pulled her gun and got out of the car.

“Freeze!” she yelled.

The men turned around and opened fire when they saw her. She dove behind Lance's car just in time as their automatic weapons began tearing through it. She covered her head as the windows shattered

and glass fell down on her. Devin reached her gun up over the side of the car and fired a few shots, wanting to keep them focused on her instead of going inside and getting the drop on Lance and Leo. It seemed to be working as they continued to pour bullets into the car in an attempt to get her. She kept herself pulled tightly up against the wheel as they continued to fire.

Some of the men had paused to reload and she poked her head up to observe the situation. It seemed that her plan had worked a little too well as all six of the gang members were advancing on her now. She crouched back down and began firing blindly over the car in their direction. She focused on the area around her, looking for the best way to escape. It was a residential

neighborhood in front of her and the house closest didn't have a fence. As soon as her gun ran out of bullets she sprang forward. She kept herself as low as she could as she ran across the back yard.

The Reapers were unloading their clips trying to hit her before she got around the house. Bullets whizzed past her on all sides. She could see them hitting the ground near her feet, the tree she just ran past and the side of the house. Finally she was around the corner of the house and out of their direct sight.

Devin hoped that the men would forget about her now and go into the warehouse. Surely she had bought Lance and Leo enough time to get clear from the entrance area. As she sprinted across the street she

heard the men yelling behind her. Apparently she had pissed them off. They opened up on her again as she crossed the front yard of another house. This backyard was fenced off by a tall wooden privacy fence. Devin leapt towards it. She planted her foot halfway up and used it to springboard herself over the top. Bullets impacted the wood fence just as she disappeared behind it.

She landed on her side in the backyard and within seconds an angry Rottweiler was upon her. Devin barely got her arm up in time as it lunged at her face. Its teeth sunk deep into her arm and she cried out in pain. She got to her feet and flung the dog into the side of the house. It let out a yelp and dropped from her arm. She started running

for the back fence but before long the dog was nipping at her heels. She leapt and grabbed the top of the fence but the dog caught one of her legs, holding her in place there.

Devin tried to kick at it as she tried not to lose her grip. On the far side of the yard the gang members kicked the fence down. They saw her hanging there and opened fire. She used all of her remaining strength to jerk herself upwards. The dog dropped off her leg and she went head first over the fence. She tucked in midair, trying to get her legs to come over and hit first on the ground instead of her head. What resulted was a horribly awkward landing. She had barely succeeded in flipping herself and all of her

weight came crashing down on top of one leg.

She cried out as she got to her feet. The leg she had landed on was hurting bad and it was hard for her to put weight on it. Devin could hear the gang members in the back yard and willed herself to move. She half limped, half ran towards the next street. She turned back to look at the fence to see if they were coming over yet. With her eyes focused elsewhere she missed the curb and fell hard into the road, twisting the ankle on her already hurt leg.

She could hear the gang members at the back fence now and she tried to stand up. Her leg collapsed beneath her and she fell back to the street. She futilely pulled her gun out as she focused her attention on the

fence. With no bullets it wouldn't do her any good but for some reason holding it in her hand made her feel better. The dog had slowed the gang members down a bit but she could see their hands on top of the fence as they were now climbing.

The roar of a car engine caught her attention and she looked down the road to see a vehicle approaching. It was coming fast and while at first she figured it was another Reapers gang car it soon got close enough for her to identify it. It was Token's 1969 Cadillac Deville. He slammed on the brakes, bringing it skidding to a stop right beside her. He flung the passenger door open.

“Get in!”

She pulled herself up into the car just as the gang members were dropping over the fence. Token slammed the pedal to the floor and he and Devin disappeared around the corner just as the Reapers opened fire.

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Lance pulled the clip out of his gun and checked it. He was inside a small closet, taking a moment to regroup after almost ten minutes spent in the madness of the warehouse. Kilmer was certainly deadly, standing in the middle of the warehouse firing endlessly with his armor protecting him, but it was the gang members that had almost killed Lance on several occasions. They were in a panic and suffering badly

from the effects of the gas, firing blindly at anything that moved. He had already seen four of them get killed by their own friends.

While he knew that he could bring Kilmer down he also knew that he couldn't do it if the gang continued to be a threat. He listened to the gunfire on the other side of the door, waiting to be sure no one was too near his hiding place. After a moment he rushed back out.

Lance had seen one of the Reaper generals up on the second floor and he moved towards the stairs that led up there. A gang member emerged from the smoke and Lance ducked down just in time to avoid being shot by him. He rose back up in a flash, hitting the man with a devastating uppercut. He got to the stairs and starting moving up them.

He came face to face with another gang member. Lance grabbed his arm and yanked downwards, sending the man tumbling down the steps.

As he reached the second level there were several Reapers leaning over the rail, firing down on Kilmer. Lance slipped past them, not wanting to engage anyone he didn't have to. The gas wasn't as thick on the second floor and in the distance he could see the general. He was the only gang member wearing a gas mask and he was barking orders at his men as they tried to find a way to bring Kilmer down.

Lance ran towards the general. He knew that if they saw him they'd shoot him on sight but if he could get close enough to speak first then he'd have a chance of

getting them to back off. Two Reapers near the general saw him coming and turned towards him. The first was quick and already had his gun pointed right at him. Lance aimed for his shoulder and fired. The impact spun the man around and he fell to the floor. The second man wasn't as fast and Lance was close enough to kick the gun from his hand now. It went flying over the rail and Lance followed that up with a punch to the throat to disable him.

The general had knelt down to pick up one of the men's guns but just as he got his hand around it Lance put his pistol to his head. Now that he was close he recognized the man. His name was Darnell. Lance slowly moved his pistol away.

“Darnell, my name is Lance Parker. Token sent me here to help out.”

The man stood up slowly, a skeptical look on his face.

“You’ve got a funny way of helping out.”

“Your guys are out of control. Call them off and let me deal with your cop problem,” Lance told him.

Darnell stared at him for a moment.

“You for real?”

“Pull back and let me handle this.”

Darnell laughed.

“A’ight, it’s your funeral man.”

Lance stayed on the second level while Darnell spread the word for his guys to back off. Soon the only gunfire was coming from Kilmer. The tear gas was clearing more now and his hulking armored shape could be

seen down on the warehouse floor. He had a gun in each hand and was firing them almost constantly. Lance collected a shotgun off of the floor, checked to make sure it had ammo and then made his way back down the stairs. He placed the shotgun there on the bottom step and then moved out into the open.

Kilmer hadn't seen him yet and Lance opened fire on him with his pistol. He knew his bullets didn't have a chance of penetrating the armor so he instead aimed at Kilmer's left knee. The armor on the leg wasn't nearly as thick and he could tell right away that the man known as "Kill More" took notice of the bullets hitting him there.

In order to stay ahead of his enemy Lance was running in a wide circle around the main area of the warehouse. Kilmer was

tracking him but his armor made him slow and he couldn't turn in a circle fast enough to get a good shot off. Lance continued to shoot at the same knee, trying to weaken it.

“Slow down you bastard!” Kilmer bellowed.

At first there had been enough tear gas left to keep him obscured but now it had lessened greatly and Kilmer was having an easier time of seeing Lance. His shots were getting closer and closer now. Lance ejected the clip from his pistol and slammed in his final one. He continued his circular running but Kilmer had adapted and was almost hitting him with each shot. Lance tried to steady his hand as he fired again and again at the leg. As he squeezed off his final bullet he heard Kilmer yell out. A splash of

blood escaped from the knee. The armor had finally weakened enough to become vulnerable.

Lance sprinted as fast as he could towards the stairs. Kilmer was firing both guns simultaneously, enraged over having been shot. Having exhausted all of his other ammo he now held a massive Desert Eagle pistol in each hand. Lance reached down and scooped up the shotgun from the bottom stair as he went past. Kilmer had him in his sights now and was aiming just ahead of him, a kill shot lined up. But instead of continuing his circular run around the room Lance dove towards Kilmer. He landed on his stomach and slid forward. Kilmer adjusted his aim but was too slow. As Lance came sliding to a stop just a few feet

away from Kilmer he aimed the shotgun at the injured knee and fired.

A grotesque red clump of armor, skin, blood and bone flew off the knee. Kilmer screamed. He fell like a massive tree in the forest, landing helplessly on his side. Lance got to his feet quickly and pulled the guns from the man's hands. He then pulled off his gas mask. Kilmer had a bushy red mustache and a crazed look in his eyes.

“You don't know what you've done here! I'm an officer of the law! You're going to rot in jail for this!” Kilmer shouted.

Lance knelt down and picked up one of the Desert Eagle pistols. He then pulled out his black badge and held it up in front of Kilmer's face.

“I just wanted you to see that I was working under the official authority of and enacting my duty as a Black Badge.”

Lance placed the Desert Eagle against Kilmer’s head and started to squeeze the trigger.

“Hold up,” Darnell said.

Turning around Lance saw that Darnell and other members of the Reapers were gathered behind him.

“This fool took out thirteen of my boys. I appreciate your help and all but I think it should be me who finishes him off.”

Lance stood up and nodded.

“Be my guest,” he said, offering the pistol to Darnell.

Darnell took it from his hand and Lance walked away. Up against the wall he saw

the second rookie cop that had come in with Kilmer. The man had been shot in the leg and there were several bullet impacts in the bullet proof vest around his torso. Lance checked his pulse and was pleased to feel it going strong. He picked the man up and carried him outside.

Sirens were growing ever closer now and Lance moved away from the warehouse. His looked across the street and saw his car. It looked like it had been driven through the middle of a war. Lance laid the officer down in the grass and the man's eyes opened.

“You’re going to be okay, officer. Help’s on the way.”

“Who are you?” the officer asked.

Lance offered a smile as he stood up.

“A concerned citizen.”

Certain that his car wouldn't start if he tried it Lance instead jogged down the sidewalk away from the warehouse.

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Devin opened the pill bottle and dumped three more aspirin into her hand. She swallowed them and then tried to return her attention to the mountain of paperwork on her desk. Her leg was still aching from her escape from the gang members earlier in the day but she knew there was no way she could miss work. Once there she found even more paperwork waiting for her. She stared at it for a moment before reluctantly pulling the first file off the stack and

opening it. Just then her phone rang and deep down she was glad for the distraction.

“This is Lamonte.”

“How’s the leg?”

It was Lance. As much as she liked the idea of a distraction from her paperwork she had been looking forward to having the afternoon away from him.

“It’ll be fine. I just tweaked it a little,” she replied. “But listen, I’ve got a lot of work to do here and I really need to get back to it.”

“We’ve got a killer to catch. Paperwork can wait.”

Devin sighed.

“What is it that you want, Lance?”

“We need to start setting up our suspect list. Pull up the roster of officers currently working overnight shifts.”

She did as he asked.

“Now we need to verify which of these people were at the gang war. If they were there then their alibi is good,” Lance said.

It took them the better part of three hours but by crosschecking reports filed on the night of the gang war they were able to take the list down from hundreds of names to just forty five. Devin was looking at the revised list and noticed a name that she recognized.

“This guy here, Jackson, he’s had several disciplinary issues involving excessive force. Maybe we should look into him.”

“No, pull him off the list entirely,” Lance said.

“Why?”

“Think about it. The Sandpoint Slasher is methodical and careful. His position as a

police officer is very important to him as it enables him to kill with ease. The Slasher is going to be the perfect cop. Go through the list and eliminate anyone who's had disciplinary issues.”

After Devin did this the list was down to just nineteen names.

“Good. Pull every shred of paperwork you can find on them and bring it to Token's tonight after you get off. For the next few days you're either at work or you're here helping us trim down this list,” Lance said.

The next three days passed in a slow, exhausting grind as Devin, Lance, Toke and Leo worked tirelessly on the list. They broke down all aspects of the suspects lives, digging as deeply as possible to find reasons

to either keep them on the list or pull them off. They barely slept but at the end of the third day they had their final list of suspects. It contained six names. Jordan Shanley, Danny Rudolph, Jack Tripp, Dylan Kenwright, Alex Hawthorne and one woman, Harriett Jeter.

As soon as the list was finished Token retired to his room to “sleep for a week” while Leo suggested that they open a bottle of wine to celebrate. Without a word to anyone Lance stood up and left the house. He had been on edge during the whole process. Leo returned from the kitchen with some wine and he and Devin sat on the couch, watching mindless late night television. They were too exhausted to

sleep. After an hour passed and Lance didn't return Devin called his cell phone.

“What?” he answered.

“Where are you at?” Devin asked him.

“I'm trying to track down Jordan Shanley so I can tail him.”

“You're already investigating the suspects?”

“Yes damnit!” he yelled.

After a long silent moment he spoke again.

“I'm sorry.”

“You haven't slept in days Lance. You need to get some rest.”

“The Slasher almost never waits this long before killing. I know it's a long shot, but if Shanley is the killer then he may be looking for a victim right now. With a little luck I could end this whole thing tonight.”

“Why go after Shanley first?” Devin asked.

“He was the first name on the list.”

Lance was talking some more but Devin stopped paying attention. The news had broken into the late night talk show that they were watching with a breaking report.

“Lance?” Devin said, interrupting him in mid sentence. “They just found another Slasher victim.”

He didn’t respond but Devin could hear him hitting the dashboard of the car. After several moments he spoke.

“I’ll be back in a few minutes.”

When Lance got back to the house Devin and Leo were still watching the news coverage of the latest murder. More details were being revealed and the reporter said

that the victim had been found in the projects.

“Why would he do that? Why change where he’s killing all of a sudden?” Leo asked.

“Because we forced him to,” Lance answered. “Downtown is crawling with cops and suspicious citizens right now. The projects were an easy target. Fewer cops on patrol and since none of the murders have taken place here the people weren’t really worried about it. Plus...”

Lance’s sentence trailed off as he stared at the television.

“Plus?” Leo asked, trying to help him along.

After another moment of silence Devin spoke.

“What is it, Lance?”

He pointed at the television. Devin and Leo had been turned towards him but they looked back at the TV now. The news had just revealed the identity of the victim. A seventy two year old woman named Marsha Washington.

“That’s Token’s grandmother,” Lance said gravely.

END OF EPISODE THREE

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