

*Previously on Black Badge: Token struggled to deal with the death of his grandmother but he wasn't the only one grieving. Lance felt responsible for her death and went several days without sleeping as he redoubled his efforts to stop the Sandpoint Slasher. Meanwhile, Leo began the investigation into Lance and the Black Badge organization by breaking into the police Captain's home where he found an email sent to the Chief of Police about the Black Badges. While following Slasher suspect Jordan Shanley, Lance made a mistake and found himself ambushed by Shanley and his partner.*

Lance knew that he only had a few seconds before his situation went from bad to worse. Officer Shanley was slowly moving forward from the end of the hall, his gun still aimed straight ahead. Officer Gomez was right behind Lance and had just pulled out his handcuffs. The young officer reached around to disarm his suspect. Lance sprang into action. He jerked his head back as hard as he could, headbutting Gomez directly in the nose.

Lance expected that to be enough to incapacitate Gomez, clearing the way for him to rush back down the stairs and out of the building, but the young officer was tougher than he had anticipated. Gomez stumbled backwards, blood gushing from his nose, but he stayed on his feet. Shanley was running towards them now. Lance could've shot him but he still wasn't sure if the man was the Sandpoint Slasher and he refused to shoot an innocent cop.

On the other hand, Officer Shanley had no reason not to fire on an armed man who had assaulted his partner. Lance jerked to the left just as Shanley fired. The bullet caught him in his right shoulder. Knowing that there was nowhere to take cover in the hallway Lance did the only thing he could think of to save himself. He dove out of the window. His fall from the second story window to the alleyway below was anything but graceful. He landed hard on his left side on the wet concrete.

"Ahhh!" Lance cried out.

Pain shot through his side as lay there, gasping to regain the air that had been knocked from his lungs. He looked up at the window just in time to see Shanley leaning out and lining up another shot. Lance rolled towards the building just as the officer fired. The bullets struck right where he had been lying just seconds before.

There was a small overhang on the building that was now hiding him from view but Lance knew he had to act fast if he was going to get out of this situation. He used the building to steady himself as he got to his feet. He took a step with his left leg to test its strength. He had to limp to use it but nothing appeared broken. He quickly scanned the area to see if he could locate his gun but gave up after just a second.

Lance began running as fast as his injured leg would allow him down the alleyway. The alley led to a busy street and he tried to block out the pain as he moved towards it. He was certain that Shanley had called for backup by now and the sound of distant sirens confirmed this. Being this close to the station Lance figured he had less than five minutes before they arrived. He cursed under his breath as he tried to move faster.

As he emerged from the alley he slammed hard into a woman who was walking her dog. Lance tried to right himself but the leash caught around his leg and almost tripped him. He stumbled out into the street as he tried to regain his balance. A horn blared out and he looked up just as a sedan came bearing down on him. They had slammed on their brakes but as they skidded towards him he knew they wouldn't stop in time. He jumped at the last second, avoiding taking a direct impact. His hip landed on the hood of the car and the side of his head smashed hard into the windshield, cracking it.

When the car came to a complete stop Lance went rolling off the hood and into the street. He was on his back and felt a wave of blackness washing over him. He blinked slowly and then closed his eyes, unconsciousness closing in quickly.

“Holy crap! Dude, are you okay?”

The driver of the car had gotten out and was standing over him. His voice had pulled Lance back from the brink of passing out.

“Help me up,” Lance said weakly.

“No way man, just stay there until the ambulance comes.”

“HELP ME UP!” Lance screamed.

The startled man reached down and pulled him up.

“Geez, alright, you're up.”

Everything hurt. Blood was running down his face, his shoulder was on fire from the gunshot and the rest of his body was weak and screaming out in agony. Lance leaned on the hood of the car, trying to work through another wave of unconsciousness that was threatening to engulf him. He glanced down the alley and saw Shanley and Gomez running towards him. He also saw that a police cruiser was approaching from down the street. It was just a few blocks away.

Lance slammed his fist down on the hood of the car as hard as he could, willing his mind to focus. He looked around, trying to figure out exactly where he was. He recognized a few buildings and then remembered that Devin had said that she and Leo were at Kelly's Bistro on 57<sup>th</sup> street. It was less than a block away.

He turned away from the approaching officers and tried to run. His left leg was barely cooperating now and he could barely put any weight on it. He gritted his teeth as he was now forced into what amounted to little more than hopping.

"Dude, you really should wait for the ambulance!" the driver called out after him.

Once he was across the street Lance went into another alleyway. He tried to ignore the pain and keep his mind focused on his destination. He could hear the shouts of Officer Shanley behind him. They were in the street now and gaining on him fast. Lance emerged from the alley onto 57<sup>th</sup> street. He turned left and moved down the sidewalk as fast as he could. He reached into his pocket for his phone but could feel that it was broken into pieces. He had hoped to be able to call Devin and give her a warning that he was coming.

"There he is!" Shanley yelled out from behind him.

The two officers had emerged from the alley and were rushing down the sidewalk after him. Lance could see the sign for Kelly's Bistro up ahead. He pushed himself as hard as he could, using every bit of his training and experience to block the excruciating pain from his mind. When he finally got to the restaurant he went crashing through the doors. They swung open wildly and slammed into the wall, drawing everyone's attention.

Lance collapsed face first onto the floor, all of his energy exhausted. Devin and Leo were seated in a small booth near the door and jumped to their feet.

“Lance?” Devin cried out in surprise.

The rest of the patrons in the restaurant were anxiously watching what was taking place. The manager was rushing forward from the back.

“Cops,” Lance gasped. “They’re after me.”

Devin and Leo exchanged a panicked look.

“I’ll get him out of here. You stall whoever it is that’s coming after him,” Leo said.

“What? I can’t impede the pursuit of other officers!” Devin hissed, trying to stay quiet enough not to be overheard by anyone.

“You’ll think of something,” Leo told her.

“What’s going on here?” the manager said loudly as he arrived at the front of the restaurant.

Leo reached down and pulled Lance to his feet. The manager and some of the patrons gasped as they saw how bloody Lance was.

“It’s okay ladies and gentlemen, I’m a doctor!” Leo yelled out.

He started moving towards the back of the restaurant. Lance was barely helping at all and Leo was practically dragging him.

“Why are you going that way?” the manager asked.

“Because I left my medicine bag out back!” Leo answered as he pulled Lance through the doors that lead into the kitchen.

As soon as they disappeared Devin started looking around the restaurant, trying desperately to figure out what she was going to do. She saw a giant margarita sitting on the bar and scooped it up just as the doors flung open again and two officers came rushing inside. Devin turned towards them and raised the glass.

“It’s all under control!” she yelled out loudly.

She recognized the first officer from their suspect list. It was Shanley and he was rushing towards the back of the restaurant. Devin stepped in front of him at the last second, causing him to crash into her. She fell backwards and grabbed onto him, pulling him to the ground. The drink spilled all over her.

“Watch where you’re going!” she cried out as Shanley tried to get back to his feet.

“You’re holding up a police pursuit ma’am!” Shanley growled.

Devin got to her feet just in time to grab him by the shoulders and stop him.

“Don’t you know who I am?” she asked, pausing to sway on her feet. “I’m Detective Devin Lamonte and this is my crime scene now buster!”

Shanley stopped struggling to pull away for a moment as he looked at her.

“Detective, right now I need you to take your hands off of me and let me do my job.”

Devin pointed a finger in his face.

“That’s no way to talk to a su-su-superior officer! You’re out of line!”

“And you’re drunk!” Shanley shouted as he shoved her back.

The push wasn’t enough to knock her down normally but Devin needed to complete the charade of appearing drunk so she threw herself onto a nearby table, taking care to sweep all of the glasses and plates off into the floor as she did.

“Let’s go Gomez,” Shanley said as he rushed through the doors into the kitchen.

Devin got to her feet and brushed herself off. She felt sick to her stomach over what she had just done. Helping Lance had taken her in some questionable directions already but this felt more direct, more wrong. If Shanley wasn’t the Slasher then he was just a good cop trying to do his job and she had gone out of her way to hinder him.

She felt like crying as she thought about the words “good cop” and her growing feeling that they didn’t apply to her anymore.



**Created and Written by A.C. Hall**  
**Episode 5 – The Suite of Consequence**

“I’m not even sure what to say to you anymore,” Captain Forsythe said. Devin was standing in his office at the station. The Captain was furious over Devin’s actions earlier in the evening that had caused Shanley and Gomez to lose track of their suspect. She was at least glad he had tired of screaming at her. Now he was seated at his desk, speaking quietly.

“You were the jewel of this department, do you realize that? Just a week or so ago you were the one that people talked about when they talked about the future of the Sandpoint Police Department. You, and Leo Banks. You two were the ones that helped me sleep better at night. Knowing that two capable, smart, ambitious cops were on the job and were going to continue to grow and get better and rise through the ranks, this is what used to make me happy.”

He paused for a long time. He sat and stared at his desk for over a minute before finally continuing.

“What changes in a week? You’re behind on your paperwork, you’re not logging all of the hours you’re supposed to at the station, your cases are going unsolved and now this drunken incident. And what about Leo? The guy turns his back on the department, making life hell for those of us left behind by telling the media that the Slasher is a cop, then he just disappears,” he said. “Honestly Devin, I want to know. What changes in a

week? What happened to you two that made you go from good cops to... this?"

Devin stared at the floor. She wanted to tell the Captain that Lance Parker happens. He had come into her life like a tornado and while his ultimate goal may've been important Devin couldn't help but wonder if it was worth all of the collateral damage that was starting to pile up.

"I was just trying to help out my fellow officers. I had no idea I was that drunk," she said.

The Captain leaned back in his chair. He stared at her as he spoke.

"Officer Shanley is in interview room three getting debriefed. As you can imagine he's a little upset that a drunk detective allowed the man who assaulted his partner to get away. But it might go a long way if that detective went over there and gave him a sincere apology," he said. "Do I make myself clear?"

Devin nodded.

"Yes sir, I'll go do it now."

She turned to leave the office. Forsythe got up and followed her.

"I think I'll accompany you."

She felt more like she was being escorted than accompanied. The two of them walked in silence to the interview room. Once there Devin went in first and saw Shanley sitting at a table. Sitting across from him was a detective who was in the process of debriefing him on the evening's events. As Devin walked towards the table she realized that there was someone else in the room. She turned around to see a man in a dark black suit standing in the corner of the room. He wore dark sunglasses and his hair was slicked back. She stared at him for a moment before taking a seat at the table across from Shanley.

He stared at her angrily, waiting for her to say something. Devin looked up at the Captain who was standing in the doorway watching her.

"Officer Shanley, there are a few things I wanted to say to you if you don't mind," Devin said.

Shanley took a long drink from his coffee cup before responding.

"I'm listening."

She was about to begin her apology when she noticed the file that was open in front of the detective. It contained details on the events of the night. She reached over and slid it in front of her and started reading. A strained silence hung over the room as they all waited for her to speak. Devin flipped through a few of the pages and then looked up at Shanley.

“That maneuver you used to lure the suspect into the building isn’t exactly a standard procedure, is it?” she asked.

“Um, excuse me?” Shanley responded.

Shanley looked at the other detective but received nothing but a blank stare from the man.

“It says there that you left your partner, drove erratically, doubled back, exited your car, ran into a building that your partner was now hiding in and then ambushed the man who was following you,” Devin stated.

“Right,” Shanley responded, still unsure of what was happening.

“What I’m asking you is, that’s not exactly a standard procedure is it?”

Out of the corner of her eye she thought she saw the man in the dark suit smile but when she looked at him his face was back to being completely stoic.

“Well, no, it isn’t. But with everything that’s going on out there you can’t be too careful. I notice someone following us and I’m going to assume that it’s trouble. Thanks to Leo Banks us cops aren’t exactly beloved on the streets right now, in case you hadn’t noticed,” Shanley said defensively.

Devin stared at him. She studied his face, thinking that there was a one in six chance she was staring at the face of the Sandpoint Slasher. After a moment she made a decision. She leaned forward as she asked her next question.

“Where were you on the night of the gang rumble?”

“What? What does that have to do with anything?” Shanley asked.

The detective sitting next to her gently tapped her on the shoulder.

“Perhaps we should just stick to tonight’s events, Detective Lamonte.”

“Perhaps Mr. Shanley should just answer my question.”

This time Shanley looked over his shoulder at the Captain. Forsythe simply shrugged. Shanley turned back around and took another drink of his coffee.

“Okay, well, I was right there where you were. I was in the park breaking up the rumble.”

“Officer Shanley, I’ve read through all of the reports from that evening and there isn’t one on file from you,” she responded.

“That’s because I haven’t turned it in yet.”

“But that incident happened almost a week ago,” Devin said.

“I like to put as much detail as possible into my reports. I’m actually almost finished with it.”

Devin sat back and thought for a moment.

“I’d like to see that report.”

“Now?” Shanley asked.

“Yes, officer. Now,” Devin responded.

Shanley got to his feet and left the room.

“You’ve sure got a funny way of apologizing,” Captain Forsythe said.

She ignored him. If Shanley was telling the truth that meant he wasn’t the Sandpoint Slasher and they’d be able to remove his name from their list of suspects. After a minute he returned with a thick folder and tossed it onto the table. She flipped through it, reading bits and pieces. It was deeply detailed. There was no way he could know so many details unless he really had been there. She read a few more pages and then closed it and slid it back towards him.

“That’s a very impressive report you’re putting together. I look forward to reading the completed version.”

Devin got to her feet and walked towards the door. The Captain gave her a sharp look and she stopped.

“Oh, and I’d like to apologize for impeding your chase earlier tonight. Please forward my apology on to your partner. Hopefully you two can catch up to the guy one of these days,” she said, half meaning her final sentence.

With that she left the room and started walking towards her office. The man in the suit had also exited the room. At first she thought nothing of this

but it quickly became clear that he was following her. She went to her office and he came in as well, closing the door behind them. Devin sat down at her desk and he took a seat across from her.

She watched him, trying to get a glance of his eyes behind his dark sunglasses. He sat motionless, staring right back at her. Devin kept waiting, expecting the man to announce what he wanted but finally her patience wore thin.

“Either tell me who you are or get the hell out of my office,” she snapped.

“Vanderbilt. I’m with Internal Affairs.”

Devin’s heart started pounding in her chest. Before she had met Lance she had thought Internal Affairs was the worst thing that could happen to a cop. They had a horrible reputation among other cops but chances were that if they showed up in your life it was for a good reason. She ran through the list of the many rules she had broken and questionable things she had done in the short time since Lance had returned to town, wondering which of them Vanderbilt was here to investigate.

Again he was just sitting there, staring at her. She had expected him to continue speaking, to tell her what he wanted, but he seemed content to just unnerve her.

“And what is it that I can help you with tonight Mr. Vanderbilt?” she asked.

“I just have one question. It’s something that I’m asking of everyone who worked the Slasher killing in the alley last week. You remember it? The one with the woman who had the tattoo on her arm?”

Devin nodded.

“I remember.”

“Good. What I need to know is, did you see, pick up or see anyone else pick up an item at the crime scene? It would’ve appeared to be a police badge that was solid black.”

Her heart was beating even faster now. She wondered if it was possible that he somehow knew she had taken the black badge from the scene. She fought to keep herself under control and took a deep breath before responding.

“No. I didn’t see anything like that.”

Vanderbilt quickly got to his feet. He slid his card across the table to her.

“Okay,” he said.

Devin watched as he left her office. He went up to another detective and began talking to him. She sat and clenched and unclenched her hands as she wondered just how much the man knew and how much trouble he was going to cause for her.

**XX**

It was just past two in the morning when Devin arrived at Token’s house. As she came inside she saw an older African American woman wearing nurse scrubs tending to Lance’s wounds on the couch. Toke was standing nearby, watching her work and Leo was dozing off in a chair in the corner.

“Hey Devin, this is Doris. She was a friend of my grandma’s,” Toke said.

Devin smiled as she approached.

“Nice to meet you Doris.”

The woman just nodded as she continued to work on Lance. Devin came around the couch to get a look at Lance’s injuries. She stopped suddenly as she got a full view of him. He was stripped down to only his boxer shorts and covering his muscular body were all sorts of scars. Devin covered her mouth as she looked. She could see bullet wound scars, long cut scars and more. His current injuries also looked pretty bad. His head was heavily bandaged and Doris was just completing the bandage on his shoulder. His whole left side was a deep purple color.

“It looks worse than it feels,” Lance said.

She felt badly for him but wasn’t in the mood to give him much sympathy so she just nodded. Doris finished the bandage and stepped back to survey her handiwork and then looked at Token.

“You’ve got some strange friends Marion,” she said.

Token laughed.

“You can say that again.”

Doris walked over to Toke and took his hand.

“We’re all going to miss your grandma very much. If there’s anything you need please call me.”

The two of them hugged.

“Alright honey, I got to get to work,” Doris said as she pulled away, moving quickly to wipe the tears from her eyes.

She looked down at Lance before she left.

“Keep the wounds cleaned up and stay in bed for a week. If you have any complications have Marion call me.”

“Thank you, ma’am,” Lance said.

“Uh-huh,” Doris said disapprovingly as she walked towards the front door. When she closed the door it woke up Leo and he saw Devin standing nearby. He waved at her sleepily.

“How did things go at the station?” he asked through a yawn.

She shook her head.

“Not good.”

“I’m sorry,” Leo said, offering a weak smile.

Devin nodded and then turned back towards Lance.

“We can pull Shanley off the suspect list. Turns out that he was at the gang rumble. He’s just been taking forever to complete and turn in his report,” she said.

“How sure are you about this?” Lance asked.

“Very. I saw the report. It’s too detailed to be a fraud. He was there.”

Lance nodded.

“Okay then.”

Devin reached into her pocket and pulled out Vanderbilt’s card. She handed it to Lance.

“His name is Vanderbilt.”

“Shit,” Lance said.

“What is it?” Toke asked.

Lance held up the card and Toke took it from him.

“Internal Affairs,” Lance answered before returning his gaze to Devin.

“What did he want?”

“The black badge from the Slasher murder in the alleyway.”

Leo had walked over to join them all around the couch. Devin saw that he was still wearing the same clothes from earlier. She could see several bloodstains on his shirt from where he had been supporting Lance on the way out of the restaurant.

“How much trouble is he gonna be?” Leo asked.

A moan escaped from Lance as he shifted his position on the couch.

“It depends. Internal Affairs hate Black Badges. They resent us coming in and doing their jobs for them,” Lance said. “Plus, if he starts shaking things up at the station then he could spook the Slasher. The last thing we need is for this guy to come in and screw up our investigation.”

Lance shifted again and then motioned to Token.

“Toss me a pre paid cell phone.”

Reaching into a nearby drawer Toke pulled out a cell phone and threw it to Lance. He caught it and started dialing a number.

“You need the number off the card?” Token asked.

“No. Sometimes they’ll put a different number on every card so that they know who it was that gave out their number. So if he did that and I called it then he’d know Devin gave me his information.”

He waited for a moment until someone answered the phone.

“Yes, I need to be transferred to Vanderbilt, Internal Affairs please.”

After sitting on hold for a minute someone picked up the phone.

“Vanderbilt,” Lance said. “We need to meet.”

He sat for a moment, listening.

“Who do you think this is?”

Another pause.

“That’s right.”

Lance nodded as he listened.

“Okay, I got it. Tomorrow night, seven pm, Vienna restaurant.”

He hung up the phone.

“Token, help me to my bedroom. I need to get some rest,” Lance said.

Toke pulled him off the couch. He looked down and saw that Lance had bled all over it.

“You’re buying me a new couch. I hope you know that.”



looked exactly like Devin had described him. As Lance approached he couldn't help but think that the man looked more like a character from a movie than a real person.

Vanderbilt watched closely from behind his dark sunglasses as Lance sat down. The two stared at one another for some time before Vanderbilt finally took off the glasses.

"You know, you look just like a guy who assaulted a police officer last night and then led cops on a chase across the city," Vanderbilt said with a smile. "Come to think of it, that guy jumped out of a second story window, so he'd have a limp like you. And he got hit by a car and slammed his head into the windshield, so he'd have his head bandaged like you. Huh, what are the odds that you'd have the exact same injuries as this petty, cop assaulting criminal?"

Vanderbilt spoke with a tone that was both playful and threatening at the same time. Lance didn't want to make him angry but he didn't feel like going round and round with the man.

"Can we just get down to business please?" Lance asked.

"Down to business, huh?" Vanderbilt said, raising his arms in mock fear. "Okay, your call pal."

He put his sunglasses back on and leaned back in his chair.

"Why are you in this city?"

"I'm vacationing," Lance said.

"Oh. I thought it might have something to do with your dead associate. Tattoo on her arm, got murdered by the Slasher in an alley about a week ago? She was a Black Badge, right?"

"I'm afraid that doesn't ring any bells. If she had been an associate of mine then surely you would've found a black badge on her."

Vanderbilt laughed.

"You know, amazingly enough there was no such item at the scene of the crime. It's like it just, poof, disappeared."

A waiter stopped at the table and both men looked up at him.

"Would you like to hear our specials for the evening?"

“I don’t know, sounds tempting,” Vanderbilt answered mockingly. “What do you say friend? Are we going to be here long enough to have a meal?”

“We’re fine for now, thank you sir,” Lance told the waiter.

The man walked away. Vanderbilt leaned forward and put his arms on the table.

“I want you to listen close,” he said, his tone serious. “A lot of crap has started happening in this town and it started right around the time you showed up. If I find one single shred of evidence that can link you to anything then I will bring down hell on you. Do you understand me?”

Lance knew it wasn’t smart to provoke Internal Affairs but he leaned forward and pointed a finger in the man’s face.

“If pushovers like you could do their jobs in a halfway competent manner then there would be no need for a guy like me to show up at all.”

“I advise you to remove your finger from my face,” Vanderbilt stated.

“And if I don’t?”

Vanderbilt pulled his gun from under the table but before he could raise it Token pushed a gun up against the back of his head. Lance had sent him to the restaurant hours ago and Toke had been intently watching the conversation just in case something like this happened. The sound of several more guns being cocked was heard and Vanderbilt looked around the restaurant to see seven gang members who had now stood up and were pointing their guns directly at him.

“Why don’t you holster your weapon there big man?” Token said.

Vanderbilt smiled as he slowly put his gun back in the holster on his waist. He looked around the restaurant again and laughed. The few regular patrons who were in there were panicking. Some of them had dropped to the floor and others were running for the door.

“What’s wrong Mr. Black Badge, you don’t trust me?” Vanderbilt asked dramatically. “I can understand bringing one man for backup, but eight? Honestly I’m touched that you think I’m such a threat.”

Token still hadn’t removed the gun from the back of the man’s head. Finally Vanderbilt raised his arms into the air.



They watched as Vanderbilt walked to his car. As he got inside they could hear his movements through the speaker on their transmitter.

“See? I told you it would work,” Leo said triumphantly.

They could hear Vanderbilt dialing a number on his cell phone.

“Hello Chief Brown, this is Vanderbilt from Internal Affairs. Sir, I thought you’d like to know that there is a Black Badge currently operating in our city. Please sir, if you’d be willing to share with me more about who these people are then maybe I’d have a better idea of how I’m supposed to proceed. You’ve got my number.”

Vanderbilt hung up his phone and then pulled away. Once he was a short distance away the transmitter turned to static, unable to pick up the signal from the listening device any longer. Devin turned it off and then looked over at Leo.

“It sounds like no one but the Chief of Police knows much about the Black Badges,” she said.

“Yeah. So what do we do about it?”

Devin started the car but sat there for a long moment.

“I can’t believe I’m going to say this but you need to figure out a way to get to the chief and find out what he knows,” she said.

She pulled into the street and did a U turn. She glanced in her rear-view mirror and saw Lance in the distance, standing on the sidewalk outside of the restaurant. Devin knew that it had to be her imagination but it seemed to her that even though he was almost a full block behind them that Lance was staring directly at her.

END OF EPISODE FIVE

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