

Previously on Black Badge: Due to the actions of Vanderbilt, the Internal Affairs agent, Lance came up with a new plan as he, Token, Devin and Leo each took responsibility for one of the remaining Sandpoint Slasher suspects with Vanderbilt himself being given the fifth and final suspect. Leo continued his attempts to discover the truth about the Black Badges and broke into the Chief of Police's home. While he didn't find any evidence in the home he made the decision to leave an anonymous message for the Chief. Back at the station Devin convinced a lab tech to start the analysis on Lance's blood but her bad mood caused her to mouth off in a big meeting and support Leo's theory that the Slasher was a cop. This didn't sit well with some of her colleagues who ambushed her outside the station and delivered a savage beatdown. Meanwhile Lance conned his way into the home of his Slasher suspect and attempted to find evidence that would connect the man with the serial killer.

Lance hurriedly dug through the drawers in the bathroom. He had been gone for some time, having first looked through the Hawthorne's bedroom before coming to the restroom and he knew that Emily would be growing suspicious. A moment later she knocked loudly on the door.

"Mr. Saracen? You've been in there for some time."

He knew that her patience was all but gone. Several times she had strongly hinted that it was time for him to go but he still hadn't been able to find anything that tied her husband to being the Sandpoint Slasher. Lance washed his hands and then opened the door. Emily was standing there with her arms crossed.

"I hate to be direct but you've had four cups of coffee and I do think you should be going now."

Lance hadn't been able to figure out a way to go down into their basement to search but knew that he had gotten as much mileage out of this ruse as he was going to. He smiled and nodded.

"Yes, of course. I'm sorry if I overstayed my welcome."

She gestured for him to follow her as she walked downstairs and then towards the front door. As they neared the bottom of the stairs the door opened and Sandpoint Police Officer Alex Hawthorne came inside.

"Emily?" he called out.

Lance recognized him from the picture in his personnel file. He was a muscular man with a military style buzz cut. Lance watched him intently as

Emily rushed towards him and hugged him. She held onto him tightly for several moments. Lance's cell phone buzzed in his pocket but he reached in and silenced it quickly.

"It's okay baby, I'm here now," Alex said.

She released him and stepped aside. Alex saw Lance standing at the base of the stairs and walked towards him. Lance noticed that there was blood on the man's shirt and on his hand.

"You must be the man that helped my wife. I'm indebted to you."

Alex held out his hand and Lance took it. He shook it but didn't let it go.

"Looks like you got yourself injured tonight," Lance said.

"Excuse me?" Alex responded.

Lance pointed to the blood on Alex's hand.

"You're bleeding there and there's some blood on your shirt too."

Alex pulled his hand away.

"Honey?" Emily asked worriedly. "Are you hurt?"

"No, it's... not my blood."

The man looked uncomfortable as he glanced down at his shirt and then back at Lance.

"Well whose is it?" Emily asked.

Alex turned towards her and shook his head.

"Somebody got out of line and we had to take care of it, that's all. It's nothing, really."

Lance wasn't sure what was going on but he instantly knew that there was something off about the way Alex had just answered. He stepped closer to the man.

"Someone? We?" Lance asked. "Do you mean 'suspect' and 'fellow officers'?"

Alex was glaring at him now. He looked hard at Lance, sizing him up. After a moment he offered a strained smile.

"You watch too many cop shows my friend," he said.

Emily nodded her head knowingly.

"Kyle here is a real police buff."

Lance let out a laugh.

“She’s got me there. I watch very closely to see what the cops are doing at all times,” he stopped smiling as he continued. “I’m especially interested when cops abuse their power or do things that are illegal and wrong.”

His words hung in the air for a moment, a veiled threat. Alex instinctively put his arm around his wife before responding.

“I think it’s time for you to leave Mr. Saracen,” he said sternly.

The smile returned to Lance’s face. He took one last look at the blood on Alex before nodding.

“Yes, of course.”

He walked to the door and opened it. He paused before stepping out.

“Thank you for the coffee.”

He closed the door behind him and heard it lock a second later. He walked towards the street and pulled his cell phone out. He had missed a call from Leo. He pressed the button to listen to the voicemail that Leo had left.

“Lance, something’s happened to Devin. She’s in the hospital. We don’t know any details yet but apparently she’s in pretty rough shape. Call me as soon as you can.”



Created and Written by A.C. Hall
Episode 7 – We Dreamt in Heist

Lance and Token sat silently in a booth at the 24 hour diner across the street from the hospital. Leo still had a few friends in the department and had gone into the hospital to see if they would give him information on what

happened to Devin. The sun was out now and Lance was onto his fifth cigarette by the time Leo came walking back up to the diner.

After putting out the cigarette Lance sat up, watching anxiously as Leo came inside and approached them. He slid into the booth, a grave look on his face.

“I couldn’t find out much but what I do know is that she got jumped outside of the police station early this morning. She’s in serious condition and hasn’t woken up yet.”

Lance slammed his fist down on the table hard.

“That’s it? That’s all you found out?”

“They’re not letting anyone near her so that information is the best we’re going to get for now,” Leo said.

“Any idea who did it?” Toke asked.

Leo shook his head. Lance took a deep breath to calm himself down and then ran his hand through his hair.

“Okay, here’s what we’re going to do. Shift change happens in less than an hour at the hospital. I’m going to sneak in and find Devin. You two need to go home and get some rest,” he said.

“Like hell I’m going home!” Leo protested

“We want to find out what happened too,” Token said, speaking at the same time as Leo.

Lance held up his hand to quiet them down.

“I know we all care about Devin but the only one who has a chance of getting in there is me. Any cops in the place will recognize Leo. And Token, well, you’re a known criminal.”

“Alleged,” Toke said.

They all smiled weakly at his comment but the humorous moment passed quickly.

“Devin wouldn’t want all of us shuffling our feet fretting over her, she’d want us out there watching our suspects and trying to catch the Slasher. It was a long night for all of us. Go grab a few hours of sleep and then get after your suspects,” Lance said. “As soon as I know anything I’ll let you both know.”

They reluctantly agreed to his plan and left the diner. Lance pulled some money from his pocket and left it on the table before walking out into the street. He crossed over to the hospital and went around to the side where the employee entrance was. There were some benches there where employees who smoked hung out and he took a seat on one and lit up another cigarette. As the hour passed more and more employees showed up and went through the door. As the time for the shift change neared there was a crowd of them shuffling through the door. Lance got to his feet and nonchalantly followed along.

The door had a security pad that required an employee badge be swiped over it to open. However, with so many people going in at once the door was just being held open. He passed through it and moved along with the group as they walked down a hallway to a locker room. Lance strode confidently towards the far corner of the room, looking at the names on the lockers as he passed. Most of them belonged to nurses but eventually he found one locker with doctor's name on it.

There was a cheap combination lock keeping it secure but he made short work of it, ripping it off as quietly as he could when no one was looking. There was a white coat inside and he put it on but noticed that it didn't have an employee badge with it. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a heavy set Latino man about to pass behind him. He wore a white doctor's coat and at the last second Lance stepped back. The man crashed into him and as Lance stumbled back he reached up and swiped the mans badge off of his coat.

"Oh, sorry," the doctor said before moving on.

The picture on the badge was in the top corner and Lance gripped it and snapped the corner off, leaving just a sliver of photo. He clipped it onto his own white coat and then set out to find Devin's room. He made his way out into the hospital and followed the signs to the trauma wing. His badge got him through any locked doors and all the employees he passed were too busy with their work to give him a second look.

Upon arriving at the correct area he approached the nurse's station. There was a stack of patient charts there and he picked them up and began looking for Devin's.

Rudolph had worked all night and seemed to be doing some standard chores now that he was off. First had been some food, then the post office, a stop for coffee and now the bank. Once Rudolph disappeared into the bank Toke moved across the street after him. He looked through the window, trying to see if there was a metal detector at the entrance. He had a Glock 9mm pistol in a concealed shoulder holster and didn't want to draw any attention to himself by setting off any alarms when he went inside. Once he was sure there were no metal detectors he stepped through the doors.

The bank was a holdover from a different architectural age. The lobby was massive and wide open. Marble floors shined brightly underfoot and a row of tellers waited at the far side of the room with the vault behind them. Also in the main area were a series of small cubicles, some restrooms and a hallway that led back further into the bank. There were several customers inside as well as many employees. Toke spotted Rudolph filling out a deposit form at a large marble island in the middle of the lobby. He approached him.

All morning he had wondered how to go about deciding if his suspect was or wasn't the Sandpoint Slasher. While earlier his plans had been full of subterfuge and investigation Token was too exhausted to think about it much anymore. Instead he decided to take a more direct approach. He smiled to himself as he realized how much Lance would like what he was about to do.

Token pulled on the man's shoulder.

"Excuse me," Toke said.

Officer Rudolph turned towards him. His file said he was born and raised in California but Token didn't need a file to tell him that. Wearing his street clothes Danny Rudolph looked more like a pro surfer than a cop. He wore baggy pants, sneakers with no socks and a loose fitting plain gray t-shirt with an unbuttoned long sleeve flannel shirt over it. He had a bright blonde swathe of hair that drooped down across his forehead. But his face showed more seriousness than that of a surfer, his features hardened and sharp.

"Can I help you?" Rudolph asked.

Toke was about to speak when a commotion from the entrance caught his attention. He turned to see nine masked gunmen rushing through the doors.

Each of them wore a Halloween mask and carried a gun and some carried large bags. They quickly knocked out the security officer before one of them, a man wearing a devil mask, fired his gun into the ceiling. Cries and screams echoed out as people began to panic.

Turning back towards Rudolph, Token saw that he had his hand in his flannel. At first he thought he was about to pull a gun but after a moment he realized that the man was sending a text message on his phone. Five of the robbers swarmed the tellers while two went after the employees in the offices and the remaining two came towards the customers in the lobby. Toke watched Rudolph carefully, wondering if he was going to make a move. The two robbers that were coming towards the customers were getting closer now.

“Everyone move up against the far wall and take out your cell phones,” one of them commanded.

Rudolph stayed tense but he did as he was told. Token followed him to the wall. They joined ten other customers that were being herded across the lobby. As they neared the wall Rudolph veered away slightly so that he ended up near the hallway that led deeper into the building. Token wondered what he was up to as he took his place a little further down the wall and pulled out his cell phone.

One of the robbers started at the end of the line and began collecting phones as the other kept his assault rifle aimed at everyone up against the wall. Toke let the man take his cell phone and then looked down the line to see what Rudolph was going to do. He was up against the wall right next to the hallway and didn't have his cell phone out. When the robber got to him he nudged him in the chest with his pistol.

“Where's your cell phone?”

Rudolph was shaking. He had his hands on his head.

“My... my... pocket,” he stammered.

While he was acting frightened Token could see in his eyes that he was in complete control of what he was doing.

“Well pull it out!” the man yelled, again jabbing him with his pistol.

“I'm too scared. I... can't move,” Rudolph whined.

The robber sighed heavily as he reached into Rudolph's pocket. With the man's attention elsewhere Rudolph struck. He brought his elbow down hard into the man's neck, sending him stumbling back. He followed that up with a kick to the stomach before sprinting for the hallway. The robber with the assault rifle opened fire on him but Rudolph was gone around the corner quickly. The robber stopped shooting and ran for the hallway. The man who Rudolph had attacked reached out and grabbed the other robber before he ran past.

"No! He's mine!"

The man with the assault rifle nodded and returned his attention to the hostages as his associate went after Rudolph.

After a few minutes had passed the man in the devil mask re-emerged from behind the teller area. He signaled towards the robber guarding the customers.

"Go see what's taking him so long."

The robber gestured towards the customers along the wall with his assault rifle.

"What about them?"

"They're not going anywhere."

After taking one last look at the hostages the man took off down the hallway. Token cursed under his breath. He was sure that Rudolph could handle one of them but if the other came up from behind him he'd have no chance. The man in the devil mask was watching them from across the lobby but when a loud clang sounded from the vault he turned around to see what it was. Toke seized the opening and ran for the hallway. He reached it and moved down it, trying to find where the three men had gone.

There were offices and rooms every few steps and Toke slowed down, trying to hear anything that would lead him in the right direction. As he passed a door that was partially open he heard a voice that he recognized as belonging to one of the robbers.

"That's quite enough of that."

Token moved into the room quickly. The robber with the assault rifle was there directly in front of him. The man had his gun aimed at Rudolph, who

had been in the middle of choking out the first robber. Toke wanted to give this man a chance to surrender but saw his arm tensing as he prepared to fire. Toke pulled out his own gun and fired twice into the man's back.

The man fell forward and landed on his face. Token was breathing hard as he looked down at him and watched the blood begin to soak into the carpet.

“Who are you?”

Toke looked up to see Rudolph staring at him from across the room. He had choked the other robber unconscious and taken his gun. A hundred answers ran through Token's mind but he finally settled on the only one that seemed to make sense at the time.

“My name's Token Washington. I'm working with an outside agency to investigate the possibility that the Sandpoint Slasher is a member of your police department.”

Officer Rudolph stared at him for a long moment, blinking several times as he processed the information.

“Token Washington the gang criminal?”

“Alleged,” Toke shot back.

The officer was sizing him up, still not sure what to make of his sudden appearance and the things he was saying. After a moment he shook his head.

“Wait a minute, are you saying that someone really believes the Slasher is a cop?”

Toke nodded as he slowly bent down to collect the assault rifle from the robber he had shot.

“And am I a suspect in this investigation?”

Again Token nodded.

“Why?” Rudolph asked.

“Because your whereabouts during the murder at the police station are currently unknown,” Toke said. “We know you weren't at the gang rumble in the park.”

Rudolph hesitated for a moment. He looked like he was going to say something then shook his head, trying to refocus on the situation.

“They’re going to send more guys to find out what’s going on back here. We need to draw them into some sort of an ambush,” Rudolph said.

The two of them worked quickly to drag the dead robber into the doorway. They then positioned themselves in the room directly across the hall, leaving the door cracked just enough so they could see out. They waited in tense silence for a few moments before Rudolph spoke.

“So you think I might be the Sandpoint Slasher?”

“Are you?” Token asked.

Officer Rudolph laughed quietly, unsure of how to answer the question. They heard voices in the hallway and fell silent. Rudolph was crouched on his knees and Token stood over him, also staring out into the hallway. They stayed there, waiting to see how many men were coming.

“Over here!” one of the men yelled as he saw the body of his accomplice.

After another moment two robbers came into view, their backs to Token and Rudolph as they stood over the dead body. Rudolph pulled the door fully open and he and Toke began shooting. The two robbers didn’t even have a chance to turn around before they were cut down.

Rudolph moved back across the hall and searched the bodies. He pulled a walkie talkie off one of them just as it crackled to life.

“What’s going on in there? Did you get them?”

It was the voice of the man in the devil mask.

“Answer me damnit!” he barked.

After a long pause the man spoke again.

“To hell with this. Anyone not working on the vault get to the lobby. I think we may need to make an example out of some of the hostages!”

Token and Rudolph exchanged a knowing glance. Neither of them was the type of man to let an innocent person get gunned down and they took off back towards the lobby. They paused as they neared it. Sirens could be heard now and Rudolph smiled.

“They got my text.”

The man in the devil mask was going ballistic, screaming and cussing as his carefully planned robbery crumbled around him.

“This guy’s losing it, we need to make our move before he hurts someone,” Rudolph said.

Token nodded his approval and after a moment of thought offered the assault rifle to the officer. Rudolph took it and nodded his thanks. Token pulled his pistol back out of its holster and took a deep breath, trying not to think about the fact that the two of them were about to rush five desperate and panicking robbers.

“I was with someone,” Rudolph blurted out.

“What?” Toke asked, unsure of what he meant.

“The night of the gang rumble and the murder at the station. I was with someone. Her name is Isabella. She used to be an informant for one of our detectives but when things got too dangerous she stopped feeding him information. He was pissed and wanted her brought in. I was on warrant duty, sent to arrest her but once I heard her story I helped her go into hiding.”

He paused for a moment to peer around the corner into the lobby. Once he was confident none of the hostages were in immediate danger he continued.

“We fell in love,” he said, pausing for some time and letting the words hang in the air. “The night of the murder I went to see her at Midtown, this little restaurant that she works at. I lost track of time and didn’t report in to the station for my shift.”

Rudolph had a serious look on his face but Token smiled.

“Sounds like a damn good reason to miss work to me,” he said, pausing to check the ammunition in his pistol. “Now what do you say we go be heroes?”

Rudolph smiled and the two of them rushed out into the lobby. The man in the devil mask and another robber were standing out in the open near the teller area and Rudolph opened fire on them with the assault rifle. Token turned the other way and saw that the customers were still up against the wall. The employees had been moved there as well and one of the robbers was guarding them. Toke fired twice, hitting the man in the head.

“Go! Get out of here!” Toke yelled at the hostages.

They started scattering as the gun battle in the lobby continued. Token turned around and saw that Rudolph was hiding behind the large island in the middle of the lobby. The second robber had been shot in the leg but was still shooting at Rudolph and the man in the devil mask seemed unscathed. He saw Token and adjusted his aim and opened fire on him. Toke dove forward and rolled to reach the safety behind the island.

They could hear yelling and more gunshots joined those of the two robbers. The two remaining men who had been in the vault had joined the gun battle and the four of them were firing on the island that Token and Rudolph were hiding behind. A loud scream cut through the gunfire and a panicked woman came running into the lobby from the hallway. The gunfire stopped as she came sprinting into the open.

“What a treat!” the man in the devil mask yelled.

The woman was close to the island but still far enough away that the robbers had a clear shot on her. Rudolph jumped to his feet and sprinted towards her. He leapt in front of her and wrapped his arms around her just as the man in the devil mask opened fire. Toke saw one, two, three bullets hit Officer Rudolph in the back as he fell to the ground, pulling the unharmed woman down with him.

Token sprung up and seized the momentary distraction. He fired, catching the man in the devil mask in the neck. The other robber who was out in the open returned fire but the bullet whizzed past Toke’s ear. Token aimed and squeezed the trigger, striking the man in the chest. The remaining robbers were behind the teller counter and they opened fire. Toke ducked back behind the island for cover. He looked over at Rudolph. The man wasn’t moving. He was lying face down on the marble floor, one arm draped over the panicked woman. Blood was pooling beneath him and the woman started to stand up.

“Stay down lady!” Toke screamed.

She dropped back to the floor. Token returned his attention to the final two robbers. There was nothing but open floor between him and the teller area where they were. Charging them was suicidal but he doubted he’d be able to land a lucky hit on them from this far away.

Just then the doors to the bank exploded inward. Sandpoint SWAT came pouring into the bank. The robbers shot at them and were quickly dispatched. Toke dropped his gun on the floor and then started yelling out.

“You’ve got an off duty officer down over here!”

He started to move towards Rudolph to check on him but one of the SWAT members tackled him to the ground.

“Get off of me man!” Token yelled.

The bank was swarming with activity now and in less than a minute Paramedics arrived. They rushed to Rudolph and knelt down next to him. Token relaxed, hoping the SWAT member holding him down would let him up. Another man walked past and paused as he looked at Token.

“Get him up,” the man commanded.

The SWAT member pulled him to his feet. Toke recognized this second man. His name was Davis and he was one of the officers who routinely came into the projects and hassled people for no good reason.

“So, decided that running a gang wasn’t enough of a thrill? Decided to try your hand at bank robbing instead?” Davis asked mockingly.

“Yo man, I didn’t have anything to do with this!”

The SWAT officer holding Token leaned forward and looked at him.

“Don’t you recognize the mighty Token Washington?” Davis asked his colleague. “Looks like he’s not so untouchable after all.”

Davis walked forward and poked his finger into Token’s chest.

“Looks like you’re going to prison,” he said with a smile.

The paramedics had flipped Officer Rudolph over onto his back now and had an oxygen mask on his face. He weakly reached up and pulled it off.

“Leave him alone!” he yelled as loud as he could.

Davis looked over at him.

“I’m arresting one of the guys that did this to you.”

“Token Washington helped me. He saved my life,” he stopped as he fell into a wet coughing fit.

The paramedics tried to put the mask back on him as they prepared to get him onto a stretcher.

Davis shrugged and turned around.

The minutes dragged by and Lance felt like hours had passed before Shanley and the nurse reappeared from the room. They came down the hallway towards the nurse's station. Lance turned away so that Shanley wouldn't see his face.

"She's awake," Shanley announced to the nurses who were sitting at the station.

He picked up the phone and Lance figured he'd be calling to report the good news. With the room unguarded Lance finally moved down the hallway and stood by the door. The other doctor was still inside but after a few moments the door opened and he stepped out. Lance quickly slipped inside.

He slowly approached and looked down at Devin. Her head was heavily bandaged and one side of her face was swollen and bruised. He stood there for several minutes, not wanting to disturb her. After a while her eyes blinked open and then focused on him. He smiled down at her.

"You're a doctor now?" she asked weakly.

He glanced down at the coat before responding.

"They weren't exactly welcoming us in to see you."

Lance leaned down to get a closer look at the injuries to her head. He began to grow angry as he realized just how severely she had been beaten.

"I used to be so pretty," Devin said.

She smiled weakly but Lance was too angry now.

"Who did this to you?"

Devin turned her head away as she answered.

"We were having a big meeting at the station with all of the officers. I was upset and I ended up saying something stupid."

She paused for a moment before continuing.

"I interrupted the Captain and defended Leo. I said that maybe he was right, maybe the Slasher was a cop."

After another pause she turned her head back to look at him and smiled humorlessly.

"Apparently cops don't like it when you insult them and accuse them of being a serial killer."

Lance took a step back. His first instinct was to hit something, anything, but he instead tried to calm himself down enough to speak.

“You’re telling me cops did this?”

Devin nodded.

“The department would never admit it but yeah, it was cops. They know it and I know it.”

He was shaking with rage as he stepped back to her bedside.

“I want their names, Devin. I want you to tell me who they are.”

“They wore masks and it was dark. Of the five of them I didn’t get a chance to identify even one.”

Lance had to fight to keep his anger in check as he spent the next ten minutes interrogating Devin about the details of the assault. He felt badly for pushing her so hard but made her give him every single detail no matter how minute it may have seemed. She was just finishing speaking when the door to the room swung open.

“My patient’s not to be bothered right now!” Lance snapped as he turned to see who had arrived.

“Oh I think she won’t mind a quick visit,” a voice said.

Lance stared at the two men who had come through the door, unsure of what to do next. It was Captain Forsythe and Police Chief Randy Brown. Forsythe stepped closer to him and looked at him closely.

“Doctor Hughes has been taking care of Detective Lamonte here and I happen to know that you are not Doctor Hughes,” Forsythe said.

He stared hard at Lance for a moment before continuing.

“So then who the hell are you and what are you doing here?”

END OF EPISODE 7

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