"...This loud detective was able to get to him, from the first minute they met. Then, when he was completely lost, it was his voice that pulled Steve back. Catherine was right in front of him, touching him, and yet he heard the detective, who stood twenty feet away."

AU - Sentinel Steve meets HPD detective Danny

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Notes

This is Yul's and myself take at Steve with real superpowers. It has been incredibly fun writing this, and I hope you would enjoy this as much.
Something is seriously wrong with you

Lieutenant Commander Steve McGarrett spots him. It’s just a quick flash, about 1,000 feet away, but Steve thinks he can catch up to him easily. He sees the sweat beading on Hesse’s forehead, and even as his adversary is disappearing between the containers and into the warehouse, he can still hear his heavy breathing, his elevated heart rate. Hesse is exhausted.

Steve would have jumped up right after him, if it weren’t for Lieutenant Rollins’ hand on his left leg, squeezing lightly to remind him of the here and now. They are still taking cover behind the crates, they are still being shot at.

“Rollins, I saw Hesse. I need to get out there.”

“How far?” She asks, and Steve suddenly notes the strain in her voice and looks at her.

“Shit, Cath!” She is leaning with her back against the crate, blood oozing from a wound in her left leg. Steve dives down as another burst of automatic weapon erupts around them.

“It’s fine, I’m fine” Catherine assures him, “Just a scratch.”

He doesn’t believe her, and he’s had enough of this. She must detect something in his face, because her hand is squeezing again, and she’s saying “Be careful.”

Steve is nodding once. He releases a few bursts from his own weapon at the general direction of the shooters, so they don't get cocky, then he lowers his head, takes a deep breath, and concentrates.

It takes him five seconds to locate the sounds he is looking for amongst the noises of the docks and the approaching sirens. Two sets of heartbeats behind the crates a hundred feet to the left, another one almost straight ahead, slightly to the right. He takes out a grenade, then letting his senses guide him, pulls out the safety, counts to one and throws it towards the crates on the left. In sync with the blast, he rolls out of their cover to the right, and closes the short distance to a bunch of barrels, running low. Coming around the third shooter, with Rollins still providing cover fire, he takes him down with three precise shots. Steve doesn’t bother to check his handy work. Through the dying echoes of the blast he can pick up only one, fast thrumming heartbeat of a dying men.

Three enemies down.

He runs back to Lieutenant Rollins.

“You got them?” She inquires, and he doesn’t like the way she breathes out the question.

“Yes,” but Hesse is still out there, getting away. She already has a field bandage package in her hands, and he takes it from her, tearing it open and quickly wraps it tightly around her leg.

The sirens are close now.

He zones out again, searching the far off warehouse. It is too noisy; muffled sounds of human beings all around. Damn.

“Cath,” he can’t keep the strain from his voice “He is getting away.”

“Help me up.” she answers immediately, reaching for his grip
“No, you need to stay still. First responders are almost here, Stay put.” He doesn’t wait for her answer and dashes forward, ignoring her protest.

He is so close, He can’t let Hesse get away.

A few seconds later, the Commander is at the warehouse’s entrance, stepping inside, slowly, carefully, well aware of the Lieutenant’s absence from his side. He allows himself just a quick, brief exploration with his heightened senses, searching the huge space for potential danger, and for a clue as to the whereabouts of his prey. But the air is filled with a smell of fear and those muffled noises he heard before. He really needs to concentrate. He knows he is taking a risk, doing this without his guide next to him, but he can’t help it. He fears he will never have such an opportunity again. He never came this close before. Satisfying himself that there is no immediate danger, he hides in a dark corner and lets his senses loose, reaching out further and further without moving a muscle.

The commander doesn’t know how long it takes him to pick Hesse’s scent. But at that very moment everything else is shoved aside, everything but that too familiar trail. So he goes out on the hunt, delving deeper into the dark warehouse.

Detective Danny Williams brings his Camaro to a screeching halt just outside the loading zone of the eastern Docks. Stepping out of the car, he exchanges a quick glance with Meka. His partner nods in affirmation, he too sees the legs sprawling behind a bunch of crates. A distinct smell of gunpowder is hanging in the air. Both of them are taking out their weapons, eyes scanning the perimeter, as they slowly approach the crates.

“HPD, drop your weapons!” Meka shouts, and Danny looks up from the two battered bodies next to him, raising his gun automatically in the direction his partner is pointing his weapon.

A woman stands with her back to them, or more like leans heavily against some large boxes. A gun is held loosely in her right hand and a blood soaked bandage is wrapped around her left thigh. She slowly drops her gun, without turning.

“I am Navy Lieutenant Catherine Rollins,” She yells, turning her head so they can see her profile “Please, You have to help him”.

Danny approaches carefully, his gun trained on her, his eyes still searching around. Other officers are already behind them, he motions for them to spread out.

“Turn around slowly and show me your ID” Meka orders.

She complies, but keeps talking “Please, we need to hurry, we need to help him”.

Danny nods to Meka when he looks at him, and Meka lowers his gun and steps up to her, taking the ID she is presenting, While Danny is keeping his aim.

“Help who, Ma’am?” Danny asks

“My Teammate, Commander McGarrett, he went alone chasing our target, I think he is in that warehouse there.” She points behind her.

Meka nods “Seem legit” he hands her the ID back, and Danny lowers his gun.
“Detective,” One of the officers now swarming the area reports to him “There is one more body over there except for these two.”

“Your friends?” Danny asks the Lieutenant, but she already picked up her gun and now braving an attempt to run towards the warehouse, Danny jumps after her “Hey, wait, you are injured, Meka, get the paramedics” He tries to grab her hand but she pulls back, and hisses in pain.

A loud crackle then a low whoosh of air attacks his ears. Danny’s eyes follow the sound. Fire erupts a few hundred feet away, engulfing the building the Lieutenant pointed at before.

“NO! STEVE!”

Danny usually considers himself a calm and rational person when facing stressful situations. At least this kind of stressful situations- emergencies that fall comfortably into his job description. So he isn’t sure what causes the sudden panic in his very bones. True, these two simple words were shouted in terrible fear, the navy officer was clearly distressed, and he did believe she felt her teammate was in grave danger. But none of these should bring him to the decision to run carelessly towards the burning building, alone, with overwhelming sense of urgency clouding his judgment.

He manages to utter “Stay here!” before he is halfway there without his backup. When he finds himself still pushing forward, into the burning building, he calms his frantic mind with the knowledge that there are all kinds of emergency forces just outside, and they will get there in no time. It is not that he is completely alone, searching for an elusive Commander Steve that might or might not be there.

Then he sees him. A tall silhouette against the surrounding orange flames, just standing there, frozen, in the middle of the mayhem.

“Hey!” Danny calls “Over here, there’s a way out from here!”

The man doesn’t seem to hear him. Instead he turns around, like in slow motion , facing away from Danny, taking a few steps closer to the raging fire.

“Damn,” Danny leaves his fairly safe position, from which he can still see the door, to step closer to the obviously shocked man. “What the hell are you doing, man! This way!”

There is no way that dimwit didn’t hear that, but he still seems fixed on setting himself on fire, walking away from Danny, taking two steps and then freezing again looking to his left.

“Commander! Come on! Do not make me go in there!” Danny calls desperately, but the man turns to his left and walks slowly in between two highly flammable wooden crates.

By now Danny leaves all reasonable thought behind and runs after him. He knows that brains was not always a prerequisite to military service, but if this guy was indeed a navy Commander … Danny was just glad no massive invasion by sea was imminent.

“Hey! Commander! STEVE!”

That finally seem to get his attention. The man turns around and shoots a look at Danny. The gaze is so intense, that it stops Danny in his tracks, almost throwing him back, and every single thought drains from his brain. A gun comes out of nowhere and it is pointing at him. Instinct kicks in and his own gun returns the favor.

“Who are you? How do you know my name?” The man demands
“Detective Danny Williams, HPD,” He hears himself shout back “Lieutenant Rollins said I might find you here!” Some wit returns to his brain “Look, I could have taken you minutes ago when you were busy trying to find the correct way to set yourself on fire, so this is really not necessary.” Danny motions to the gun “Let’s save the introductions for later, we need to get out!”

A strange relief flows over him a split second later when that gaze leaves him in favor of inspecting their surrounding. And Danny can swear that it looks like the man was just becoming aware of the situation.

“Shit!” Steve lowers his gun “There are people in here, help me move this crate!”

It takes Danny half a second to join him, against his better judgment yet again. It is clear that the commander is not firing in all cylinders. Yet Danny was helping him push aside what felt like a concrete filled crate in the middle of a burning structure rapidly filling with smoke.

But there is a trap door underneath the crate, and behind it a young woman holding a baby, both dirty and frightened. Just as Danny is ready to acknowledge that maybe the man knows what he is doing, the Commander orders “Get them out!” and runs off in another direction, the wrong one again.

“What the hell?!” Danny yells after him, helping the woman out and guiding her towards the exit. Thankfully, the way is still clear.

“Danny!” he hears Meka’s call. The Commander is trying to wrench open a crate thirty feet away.

“Meka, send in fire fighters, there is a woman heading your way, get her out!” He makes his way over to the death defying Commander “Buddy, whatever it is, it’s too danger…” The crate’s lid is thrown aside, then some wrapping materials. Two girls, teenagers, are being pulled out by the tall man. He spares but a glance at Danny, then rushes off in another direction.

By now, Danny is completely on board. So is Meka, who’s entered the building. His eyes start to burn, he places his tie over his mouth and nose, and follows the erratic movements of the Commander around the huge, hot, smoke filled space. They pull out another young woman buried under a pile of barrels, then an old man with two boys held inside a small container. He can barely see through the heavy smoke, guided mostly by the Commander’s heavy coughs. He needs to get him out, he needs to get all of them out. But the man doesn’t heed his repeated calls, weak and breathy, and Meka pulls Danny back.

“Come on Danny, we can’t stay here, the man is crazy. Let the fire fighters do this!”

“We need to get him out!” His eyes, blurred and watery, fixed on the tall shadow engulfed in smoke three feet away. There is a roaring clang from above, and Danny can see that the white hot metal of the catwalk hanging above the man is just about to give way.

“Commander!” the man is still oblivious, Danny tries what helped the first time “STEVE!” the Commander finally turns around, but it’s too late. Danny shakes his partner’s grip and dashes forward into the tall man with all his momentum, throwing them both out of the path of the falling metal. The deafening bang from behind him asserts his decision.

“Danny! Danny!” Meka’s voice is frantic

“I’m OK…” He can barely hear his own voice. Without daring to take a deep breath he tries again “Meka, I’m fine. Get out, we’ll find another way.”

“OK, be careful”
The crazy commander is already struggling back to his feet, coughing and grunting. Danny takes a hold on his uniform sleeve, “Come on man. Let’s get out of here”

“There are still people in there!” he points to a general direction, and Danny realizes he himself has no idea which way is out. Equally heavy smoke all around and the seemingly random movements of the commander around the space disoriented him.

“You can’t help them, man” Danny coughs, pulling the stubborn commander back down where the smoke is thinner.

“We need to get them out!” the man insists. “I can hear them! I...” Danny is frustrated. He is just about ready to leave him to his suicidal tendencies, but the man is looking straight into his eyes now, and that gaze again, still very intense yet now mirroring his own desperation, takes whatever little breath he has left. He leaves the Commander’s sleeve and grabs his forearm instead, squeezing hard, fingers digging into the flesh, while he keeps eye contact.

“There is nothing more you can do here, Steve.” Danny says calmly. “Please. Can you tell which way is out?”

The Commander looks at him for a few seconds, then his focus seems to wander again. Danny strangles a frustrated groan, but the guy is back, nodding slightly. “Yeah,” Steve says softly “follow me.”
Danny thought that fresh air will be enough. He still thinks he might be right, the problem is that he doesn’t seem to be able to get some in his lungs. His eyes are still watering and he’s managing to inhale only slightly between coughs, so when Meka drags him to one of the waiting ambulances he doesn’t argue. Arguing requires air, and that seem to be at a shortage for the moment.

The paramedics are busy, a small lineup of the people they just pulled out of the warehouse is set near the back of the open buses, and Danny is surprised to see Lieutenant Rollins still on site, seated on a gurney next to one of them.

She sees him and tries to get up, but the medic next to her pushes her gently back.

“Detective!” she calls him “Where’s Commander McGarrett? Is he OK? Where is he?”

Danny tries to answer, he really does, but all that comes out is more coughing. So he just nods, lets himself be pushed to a sitting position at the back of the ambulance next to her and accepts gratefully the cold, dry flow of oxygen from the mask fitted over his nose and mouth.

“He is fine, Lieutenant,” Meka answers for him “He is with the Firefighters over there,” He points behind him, “sharing whatever information you have on the location of the immigrants in there.”

Danny looks at her, expecting relief, maybe some gratitude. He definitely does not expect her to lose all color from her already pale face. She is looking at the people being treated around her, like she sees them for the first time “oh...no, no… there are still people in there…? I need to get to him,” her voice is soft, like she is talking to herself, but then she’s making another attempt at getting up, and this time the gentle shove of the medic is not enough, and she’s yelling now “I need to get to him!”

“Lieutenant, please,” The medic pleads “we agreed that you stay here until we have news of your teammate, the detective here says he is safe…”

“No, you don’t understand, he is not safe.” She pushes the medic off her, and attempts to stand “I need to get to him. Now.”

*Crazy army people.* Danny really has no idea why he decides to step in, yet again. He inhales deeply, once, savouring the oxygen dose and the lack of coughing, and pulls off the mask.

“Lieutenant Rollins,” Danny uses his most soothing cop-talking-to-family-of-a-vic voice “We got out just fine, really, on our own two legs, no injuries.” at least he hopes so. Maybe there was some kind of brain injury involved with this guy. “I’m sure he will be here soon,” it seems to work. she gives up trying to stand and sits back on the gurney “he is just helping them to fin…”

“Get me there.” She orders a perplexed Meka, but then she adds a desperate “Please.” Meka trades looks with the paramedic, and then with Danny.

“I’ll go get him,” Meka exasperates, “He probably needs oxygen anyway.”

“He will not come.” She states.

Meka just shrugs and runs off, And Danny feels the Lieutenant’s eyes on him. He ignores her.

“Detective.” He still ignores her. About three seconds of silence go by before she continues,
“Thank you for getting him out of that building.”

Ah. Finally. He thinks about it for a bit, before he nods and answers through the mask “You are welcome.”

“But he… is still in danger.” Damnit. He knew he should have kept ignoring. “Please, help me get to him.”

Danny takes off the mask, “My partner will get him, and don’t worry, there is no way the firefighters will let him get back in there…” but he can now see Meka, running back. Alone. He risks a quick glance at the Lieutenant, she sees it too.

“Please, Detective….”

Meka has an embarrassed look on his face “He... emm… won’t come” Meka looks back for a second, “but he is fine, I think… coughing a bit…."

“What do you mean he will not come?” Danny demands

“He just...I don’t know...ignores me.” Meka looks apologetically at the Lieutenant. Danny, however, finds it unsurprising in light of his short encounter with the man.

“What the hell is wrong with him?!” He now shouts, which causes a newly invigorated onslaught of coughs. It doesn’t matter. The detective is more than ready to go there and give that guy a piece of his mind. Then the nice, grateful Lieutenant can have him if she likes.

He puts the mask back on his mouth, throws the small oxygen tank hooked to it on the gurney, and starts shoving the Injured woman towards the warehouse, and it is the medic turn to be ignored.

But all the preaching speech he’s gathered along the short way there disappears into thin air the second they pass the two huge containers and he sees the man.

The firefighters are still working, running around, orders are being shot to the air, the roar of fire and water deafening. And in the midst of all that, on the ground, his back against a fire truck wheel, sits the oversized Commander.

Danny is amazed at how the freakishly tall man is wound up so tightly. His long legs are pulled to his chest, his arms wrapped around them. His chin rests on the knees, face completely slack, except for the eyes, which seem unfocused but run around, darting rapidly in every direction. There are two trails, one on each cheek, leading down from his eyes through the dirty, charred skin.

“What the hell is wrong with him?” he asks again, but this time in a soft, concerned voice.

As he stands transfixed, the lieutenant is already off the gurney, and Meka is supporting her hobbling towards the guy. She kneels before him, laying her hand gently on his arm, her face now inches from his. Danny can’t help but thinking how weird it looks, nothing at all like teammates’ relationship. More like a mother approaching a distressed child, or in this case, maybe a psychiatrist approaches a volatile patient.

She is saying something to him, but the man still seem to be oblivious to her presence. She puts her other hand on his face, a move that forces her to lean on her bad leg, and for a second Danny is mad at the man whose behaviour is forcing her to do that.

“Steve!” he hears her shout, “Stop this!” the hand moves to his shoulder and shakes him, Danny thinks she’s being too gentle still. “Shut it down!” she commands. A strange command. But
whatever might help. It’s like the Commander’s distress is getting to Danny now, he really wants to look away, but he can’t.

“Come on, man. Snap out of it” he whispers into his mask.

The Commander’s eyes focus on him.

It’s the same intense gaze from before, and it causes Danny to flinch. The woman seems to notice that too, and she turns her head, maybe following her teammate’s suddenly focused gaze, to find Danny at the end of it. But it’s just for a second, and then the man finally looks at the Lieutenant, his face, his whole body comes back to life and it captures her attention, pulling it back and away from Danny. The man rubs his face, smearing the dirt and erasing the evidence of his emotional transgression in the process. They speak softly now, the commander focused on her, returns her touch, and now it just looks inappropriate considering they are supposed to be professional teammates.

But Danny still can’t look away.

When the guy starts to cough, Danny springs into activity, again responding before his mind has time to question his actions. He picks up the oxygen tank and rushes over to them, offering his own mask to the man.

When the Commander gets his breath back, his gaze moves to Danny, and the Detective braces himself. But the gaze feels...normal now. The Commander hands him back the mask.

“Thanks.” He says simply.

“Uhmm...yeah, you better get checked over there…”

The man nods, then gets up, pulling the lieutenant after him. She leans on him, but after two steps he just picks her up like she was a child, and closes the distance to the gurney in a few long strides, Danny on their heels.

It takes about two minutes before both Naval officers are on the ambulance, the doors are about to close, and Danny feels like he is forgetting something.

Thank god for Meka.

His partner holds the doors and shoves his head inside

“We need to get a statement from both of you, as soon as possible. How can we contact you?”

“Looks like we’ll be at Tripler in the next few hours at least.” The Commander’s answer comes, and he almost sounds normal “You can come by later on.”

The ambulance drives off, and both detectives stand there for a while in silence.

“That was weird.” Meka declares suddenly, jolting them both out of their stupor.

“That doesn’t even begin to describe it.” Danny replies and coughs. “I’d better get checked out myself. You think you can handle wrapping up here?”

“Duke can do that. Come on, I’ll take you to the hospital, then we can pay a visit to The Odd Couple again.”
Lieutenant Rollins is resting, and it gives Steve a chance to contemplate his options. That requires a full account of the morning’s events, which is no problem for him, theoretically. He just feels so drained, so tired, that going over the details seems like torture right now. But it is essential to register every detail while it is still fresh in his mind. He had his laptop dropped at the hospital earlier, so he steps out of the room to get some coffee and start working.

Everything is set now. Rollins is still asleep. Chair. Laptop. Cup of stale, hospital vending machine coffee. All is ready for him to figure out what went wrong. He just needs to focus. Now.

The door opens, and the sergeant appointed to their security detail peeks inside.

“Sir, there is a Detective Williams and Detective Hanamoa here to see you.”

Great timing. But he has only himself to blame, he told them to drop by the hospital. And anyway, giving his statement is kind of like giving full account of today’s events. Or partial account. Only the things they need to know.

“I’ll come out in a minute” he whispers and gets up. He stashes the laptop under the mattress of the empty bed in the room, no one else will be admitted while they are there, picks up his coffee and steps outside again.

“Stay sharp” he mutters to the sergeant and walks over to the two detectives waiting by the nurses’ station.

Unlike himself, Steve notices, the detectives are still wearing the same charred clothes they had on this morning, ridiculous tie on the blond one included. He motions for them to follow him and takes a seat next to a table in the patients’ common dining area, positioning himself so he can watch the entrance to Lieutenant Rollins’ room.

The blond detective offers his hand, and Steve takes it. The touch feels strangely familiar.

“We were never formally introduced, I’m Detective Danny Williams, this is my partner Detective Meka Hanamoa.”

“Lieutenant Commander Steve McGarrett,” He replies with a slight smile, shaking Detective Hanamoa hand as well.

“I trust Lieutenant Rollins is well?” Williams asks politely.

“Yes, she is resting after her surgery, so you will have to settle with my statement for now.”

“OK,” the blonde looks at his partner, gesturing with his hands “That’s OK. So Commander…”

“Steve,” Steve corrects “You already used my name, you may as well go with it.”

The embarrassed look on the Detective’s face gives Steve a strange delight, he doesn’t even know why. He feels himself smile. But the detective seems to get a hold of himself, he frowns at him for a sec the continues, “OK, so” both hands are gesturing to him now “Steve, please tell me what were you doing on the docks today.”

“We were tracking down an international weapons dealer and terrorist, Victor Hesse.” Steve answers immediately. The detective keeps looking at him, like he is expecting more. Steve waits.
“OK…” Williams finally says “Was he one of the three dead guys on scene?”

“No.”

Silence. Williams looks at the notebook he is holding in his hand.

“So who were the other guys?”

“I don’t know.”

“But you shot at them?”

“Yes.”

“Ok.” The notebook is slammed shut. Williams’ eyes are drilling holes in him now. “Do you think Hesse was connected to them?” He asks impatiently

“No.”

“Was Hesse connected to trafficking?”

“No.”

More silence. Williams started tapping nervously on the table. Tilting his head, licking his lips. Steve keeps a serious, attentive expression. It feels like an explosion is imminent. Steve is curious. He is not disappointed.

The Detective hits the table with his open palm and stands up, sending the chair he’s been sitting on dragging across the floor few inches.

“Let me explain something to you about the concept of ‘statement’, Steve” he almost spits the name, his hands started flying through the air, fingers twitching “I do not know how they do it in the army, but in…”

“Navy.” Steve’s interruption just grants him a pinning gaze, it has no effect on the detective’s speech

“…the police it means you give a detailed report of the events that led up to the incident, the incident itself and sometimes even what follows it, allowing us to give initial judgment as to the possibility of a crime having transpired and your part in it.” his fingers now are pointing at Steve, and the commander risks a quick glance to the other detective sitting there. The somewhat hollow expression on his face confirms his suspicion that this speech is just starting, and Steve thinks he might have made a mistake. “Any intentional….”

“Hey, OK I…” He tries to interrupt, and gets that angry glare again

“I am not finished,” the detective states “and it is important you understand. Any intentional withholding of information might be considered obstruction of justice and may lead to prosecution, and nothing short of complete cooperation will be satisfying…”

“Yeah, I unde…” Steve is not amused anymore, but this time the disruption just caused Williams to raise his voice even further

“And, on a personal note, might I add, I would expect a military officer, whose life I saved only a few hours ago, to be more than willing to share whatever information he might have that would exonerate him of a murder…”
Steve is getting really annoyed, but before he can say something, the interruption now comes from Detective Hanamoa direction “Alleged murder, in fact no murder, you are not suspected of murder Commander. Steve.”

That finally seems to put a stop to Detective Williams’ speech. Steve jumps at the chance.

“I will tell you what I can, Detective.” He interjected sharply.

“What?” William’s glare moves from his partner back to Steve

“I said I will tell you what I can.” Steve repeated.

“OK. Good.” Theatrical Detective Williams seems to calm down as he sits back on his chair.

Steve describes their encounter with the three shooters, shares his speculation that they were not working necessarily with Hesse, but protecting their own human trafficking endeavour, and then his chase after Hesse to the warehouse, where he got distracted and lost the terrorist’s tracks.

“Why is Hesse in Hawaii?” the Detective inquires.

“I cannot answer that.” Steve replies. He knows perfectly well why, but it is not information he wishes to share, and its relevance was no longer valid.

“You cannot, or will not?” Williams insists

Steve uses his militant voice when he explains “This information is no longer significant, Hesse has nothing more to do here, and he is no doubt working on getting off this island as we speak.”

“Why don’t you let us judge that” the persistent detective retorts, and Steve is taken aback abit. He is not used to this kind of challenge. He just used his militant voice.

“It is classified, Detective.” he answers coldly.

“Classified?”

“Yes.” Steve really hopes this will not evoke another speech. “You will need to apply a formal request to the Navy to get this information.” he adds just in case.

“I see. Is Hesse involved in human trafficking?” the strain in the detective’s voice is noticeable again.

“Not likely. His involvement is most likely part of his attempts to leave Hawaii.”

“So you just stumbled on the traffickers, it is not part of your investigation?”

It is really beginning to sound like an interrogation, and Steve automatically wears his blank expression. Where is Williams going with this?

“Correct.” Steve answers curtly.

“Then where did you get your information about the hideouts of the immigrants inside the warehouse?”

Steve doesn’t answer immediately. He is well aware of his behaviour in the warehouse, in the presence of the Detective, and he knows what it might have looked like. The Detective is certainly not stupid. A lie will not suffice. So there is the truth. He heard them. Smelled their fear. Followed
their frantic heartbeats.

“It’s Classified.” He mirrors the detective’s glare. Watches his eyes lit aflame again, his nose flares, and Steve holds his breath. From the corner of his eye he thinks he sees Detective Hanamoa do the same. He really doesn’t think he can peacefully sit through another tirade, so he decides that two silent seconds are more than enough chance to respond. Steve stands up, “If we are done here...”

Detective Williams shoots right up, Hanamoa immediately after him, his hand blurs in quick motion to grab Williams’ left arm. The hot headed Detective sticks the hand his partner is holding into his pocket, the right gesturing towards Steve. “Yeah. Don’t leave town just yet.”

Steve can’t help the short laugh escaping from his lips. “You might have to take that up with the Navy too.”
Steve is awakened by the soft moans of his guide, laying in the hospital bed. He wasn’t really sleeping, he tells himself. He couldn’t sleep since he got to the island. Even before, actually. It was more like a hunted oblivion, inspired by his constant need to follow her steady heartbeat, the thrum of blood in her veins. She would smite him if she knew he was doing it, but it was the only way he could calm himself these days, especially now that she was injured.

She is the single closest person left that knows about him, and the steady signs of life emanating from her became essential.

“Hey McGarrett” She smiles at him sleepily but the tranquil look last only few seconds. “What time is it?”

“A little past midnight”

“I missed the funeral, Steve, I’m sorry”

“Don’t be silly, Rollins. They wouldn't have let you out of here anyway. Bullet to the leg, remember?”

“How are you doing?”

“I’m fine.”

“Right.”

“You know we weren’t that close.”

“I also know you regret it.”

He doesn’t answer. The fact is that it got to him more than he would like to admit. He wants to get Hesse, wants him dead, and he hates that feeling. Like it is out of his control.

Catherine was busy adjusting the bed rest to a sitting position. “Steve, we will get him. This is just a minor setback.”

Sometimes he believes she is reading his mind. Maybe it’s part of her talent.

“Cath, I need to move now, I can’t….” he trails off.

“Wait for me.” She finishes for him

He looks at her, surprised at the calm way she said that. “Yes.” he admits.

“You know you can’t do it alone.”

“I’ll be careful. I have no choice, there is no way you can come with me.”

“You have a choice”

“I don’t! I can’t let him get away! We might have slowed him down, but he will bounce back quickly.”
“I Know, Steve, listen. Detective Williams.” She looks him in the eyes, but he can’t figure out that look, and it is strange.

“What?”

“He got to you. I saw it, outside the warehouse. You were lost, I wasn’t able to reach you, I think he did.”

Steve leans back in his chair. He knows what she means. He knows, but he doesn’t understand. He felt it and decided to ignore it. At least for now. File it in the back of his head to be inspected at a later date, when his overwhelmed mind might have a chance to digest it.

Catherine and himself, they worked together for years, trained together, chose each other after many trials and tests. They know each other, trust each other. She’s kept him safe, he knows he is at his best with her.

And somehow, this loud detective was able to get to him, from the first minute they met. Then, when he was completely lost, it was his voice that pulled him back. Catherine was right in front of him, touching him, and yet he heard the detective, who stood twenty feet away.

He suddenly recognizes what he sees in Catherine eyes. She is excited, worried, and….sad.

“Cath…”

“Steve, I know I can’t stop you.” She lays her hand on top of his, “So I need to know someone has your back. Get him to help you.”

“I don’t know him, Cath, I can’t just tell him…” he starts to protest.

“Just do a little research. Check him out.” She smiles again, his lips returning the gesture, without his consent “You have the resources.”

He takes a deep breath “Yeah.”

“OK?” He nods, but it’s not enough for her “Promise me you’ll try that, before you decide to take off alone.”

“OK, Rollins. I promise. Now go back to sleep. You still look tired.” He presses the button to lower back the bed without asking her, but she doesn’t protest. Just looks at him with that sad smile.

He waits until she falls asleep, then pulls out his phone and steps outside the room.

“I know, I’m sorry, Ben” He apologizes to the annoyed voice on the other side of the phone “It’s urgent. I’m OK, Cath...will be fine. Listen, I need information about a Detective Danny Williams, Honolulu PD.”

As if yesterday’s events were not enough, Danny’s morning starts with a heated argument courtesy of his lovely ex-wife. He was yelling, she was yelling, the usual, it was getting nowhere, so he uses the fact that Meka was not coming out of his house even after the third nervous honk, and instead Amy was approaching it, as an excuse to hang up on Rachel without an apology.
What’s up, Amy? Did Meka trip over his own pants again?” He regrets the lame joke as soon as he caught the worry in her eyes. “What’s wrong?”

“Danny, Meka’s inside, he got a call earlier and locked himself in the den. He won’t talk to me, I don’t know what’s up.”

Danny steps out of the car immediately, closing the short distance to his partner’s front door with hurried strides. He doesn’t need any invitation and just strides into the house and through to the den. Sure enough the door is locked, so he knocks with his fist shouting “Hey, Meka, open up!”

It takes about two seconds before he hears a key and the door is pulled open, revealing a very upset and dishevelled Meka. “Danny? What are you doing here?”

“What am I doing...it is eight thirty Meka, the time most people are at work or getting there. What is up with you? Why does it seem like Billy was in charge of your look this morning?” Danny’s hand gesture sweeps Meka up and down

Meka pulls him into the den, and closes the door behind him. “Didn’t you get a call from the captain this morning?” Meka inquires, and Danny takes out the phone from his pocket and checks the call log.

“Damn, yes, I did. I was busy ignoring Rachel most morning, I missed it. What is going on?”

“Danny, they suspended me pending IA investigation…”

“What the hell?”

“I am sorry, Danny, I really didn’t want you involved in this. It’s most likely you’ll be suspended too…”

Danny waves his hands “Woah, wait, what are you talking about, buddy?”

“I’ve been working on something for while now, I think there’s a dirty cop in our department, you know how every case related to the Ochoa cartel falls at the last minute? I think I’m getting close, I traced some funds to Singapore, and I got these threats…”

“Meka, what are you talking about? You ran an investigation without me?”

“Well, it started before you arrived on the island, and you know, I didn’t know if I could trust you at first, and then…” He swallows “I just didn’t want you involved…”

“We are partners! Should I explain to you the meaning of that?!” Danny’s phone starts to chime in his hand. He looks at the screen. It’s the captain. He looks back at Meka.

“I know, Danny, Just...listen. They know I’m close…”

“Wait. Wait, I need to take this, it’s the captain.” Meka nods and Danny connects the call, doing his best to sound casual, “Detective Williams.”

“Williams!” his phone yells at him “Where the hell are you, get your ass down here right now!” That was not what Danny expected to hear. He looks at Meka, and from the expression his partner is wearing, he heard the Captain’s command over the phone. He shrugs.

“Captain, I’m at Meka’s, I underst…”

“Meka is suspended, Williams. And thus I am one detective short, and you need to get down here
“Go.” Meka tells him and shrugs again. “We’ll talk later.”

“All right.” Danny says but stays put. “OK. I’m going, but please, please don’t do anything stupid, at least until we talk and you explain to me what the hell you were thinking.” He doesn’t move, waiting for Meka’s answer. “Meka?”

“OK, OK, I planned to gather all the work I’ve done here and stash it anyway. That’s it, I promise.”

Danny puts his hand on Meka’s shoulder “I’ll see what the Captain wants and get here as soon as I can. Take care.”

Just as he thought there is no way his day is going to get any worse, he steps into Captain Tanaka’s office to find that wack job Commander Steve sitting there, an open folder in his hands. Both he and the Captain looks at him, and the assertive yet respectful sentence regarding Meka’s state that he rehearsed on his way in, dies on his lips.

The Commander looks relaxed, just as he did yesterday noon at the hospital. He stands up, laying the folder carefully on the Captain’s desk and offers his hand to Danny, a smile on his face.

Danny can’t decide who he dislikes more, the crazy-spaced-out-in-the-middle-of-mayhem-Steve or put-together-smug-it’s-classified-Commander. He shakes his hand while debating with himself.

“Detective Williams,” Captain Tanaka says “You’ve already met Lieutenant Commander McGarrett I understand”

“Yes…” Danny answers suspiciously, maintaining eye contact with the Commander, “He is a... person of interest in our human trafficking ring investigation…”

The smug commander raises his eyebrows at him “A suspect you mean?” he asks, but there’s a tinge of amusement in his voice, and Danny really wants to wipe that smug smile off his lips.

“No, not a suspect” the Captain says seriously, to Danny’s disappointment. What is it about this Commander that seems to cause everybody an uncontrollable urge to soothe him?

“What’s going on, Captain?” Danny asks. It seem that this question insists on parking in his head since yesterday, making an appearance once in awhile. It is annoying.

“As you’ve probably guessed, detective” The Commander starts to explain “our investigation concerning a high profile terrorist has crossed paths with your investigation. I have asked the Captain for your help in this.”

“Oh, Really? You asked for my help?” Danny can’t keep the indignation from his voice “well, it only makes sense after you helped us so much.”

“Play nice, Detective” Captain Tanaka warns

“Of course, of course,” Danny shakes his head and raises his hands in a calming gesture “How may I help you Commander?”

“Commander McGarrett requested that you two work together on this as his partner is injured, and you have the knowledge he needs” The Captain interjects before the Commander can answer.
Danny’s eyes finally leave the Commander’s and he turns sharply toward his Captain. “Work together? What do you mean work together?”

“Work, Detective,” Captain Tanaka says impatiently “you know, follow leads, interview suspects, study information, eat malasadas, the Serve and Protect you Detectives do to earn your cut of the taxpayer’s money.”

“Captain, with all due respect,” Danny makes every effort to sound respectful “I will be happy to assist in supplying any information this guy needs, but I currently have other things that require…”

“Detective Williams” The Captain cuts him off “You are not to intervene to any degree in Detective Hanamoa’s case.”

“You really expect me to run around with this…” crazy, weird , “guy,” Danny now looks at the Commander again, “Who seem to think he knows better than anyone what we need to know, to put my safety in…”

“You have no choice, Detective.” The Captain’s harsh, decisive statement brings his protest to an abrupt halt. Danny releases an angry breath through his nose, still looking at the Commander that none of this exchange seems to faze him.

“Don’t worry, Detective” Commander McGarrett says to him “We’re gonna get along great.”
“So this guy, Sang Min, he was the one that tipped you off about the docks?” The Commander asks as they walk through the halls of HPD headquarters, towards the holding cells.

“Not so much,” Danny answers impatiently. “We got the location of the possible drop from his car navigation system. And the reports of shootings from the same location, thanks to you I’m guessing, sealed the deal. He doesn’t talk, this is why I’m telling you we are wasting our time.”

“Maybe he’ll talk to me.” McGarrett says, and Danny can’t help but roll his eyes.

“Yeah, I’m sure he would fall immediately to that soldier death stare.” Danny nods to the officer standing at the entrance of the interrogation room. He opens the door to let them in.

“Sailor.” Commander McGarrett corrects him, pushing past him to enter first.

The man sitting on the chair, with his hands chained to the table, looks up at them defiantly.

“Aha, Detective Haole.” Sang min greets him, “I see you brought some muscle this time. What happened? Did your hupo partner finally ditch you?”

The Commander stands in front of him, arms crossed on his chest, capturing the perp’s view as well as his attention “Sang min, I am Lieutenant Commander Steve McGarrett. I know for a fact that you were hired to help a man named Victor Hesse to get on this island, and I need to know where he is now.”

“I already told your friend here, I know nothing and I ain’t gonna talk to you.” Sang min leans back in his chair, his eyes returning McGarrett’s stare.

The commander is still standing almost frozen. “I don’t care about you, Sang min, I want Hesse, and I suggest you take this chance to make sure you are not intentionally associating yourself with a known international high profile terrorist. Human trafficking is bad enough in itself.”

“I don’t know what you are talking about.”

And silence. Danny sighs audibly, pushing himself off the wall where he leans. He is just about to knock on the door, signal the guard they are finished, when a blur of movement captures his eye. The Commander sweeps around the table, punches Sang min hard enough to throw him back with the chair, and then grabs his shirt with his left fist to keep him tilted back as far as his handcuffed wrists allow. There is a gun in the commander’s right hand and its barrel is pressed against the perp’s cheek.

“Hey! Hey!” Danny moves forward “What the hell are you doing!”

“Stand back Detective Williams, I am just making a point here.” The Commander says in a calm voice, his gaze never leaving Sang min.

“If you kill me you get nothing!” Sang min’s now panicked voice shoots out.

The gun slowly moves to point at his knee “I am not gonna kill you, you son of a bitch. Just making sure you visit the hospital on your way to prison.”

“You can’t do this!” Danny and Sang min yell together, then Sang min adds “What kind of a cop
are you?!”

“You see this uniform, you piece of shit?” McGarrett hisses “I am not a cop. And I really don’t care about what I can or cannot do, I want Hesse.”

Danny is holding his own gun, but points in downwards and looks anxiously at the camera filming the interrogation room.

“I’ll sue your ass for this!” Sang min shouts “Everything I say is under coerce!”

“You can sue me, but I’ll probably be halfway around the world by the time this happens, and you know what? It’s worth it. I’ve been chasing Hesse for five years now, and he just murdered my father to get to me.” Danny holds his breath “So you see?” the Commander continues “I really, really don’t care if anything you say now is acceptable evidence. I just want Hesse. I’m gonna count to three. One…”

“OK! OK!” Sang min exclaims “Look, he is probably off the island by now, the ship was scheduled to leave yesterday morning…”

“It did not,” Danny chimes in “The Emma Carl was apprehended, its cargo confiscated, the human cargo saved.”

Sang Min’s eyes dart between both men, McGarrett presses his gun deeper into the perp’s leg “Two…”

“I hooked him up with a guy!” Sang min hurries “he provides a safe house and transportation for Hesse while on the island!”

“Name?”

“Kishimoto. Chihira Kishimoto. He hangs out in Outrigger Canoe club.”

The Commander keeps his hold on the prisoner a few more seconds. Danny wonders if he zoned out again. But then he releases his grip on the man, steps back and holsters his gun. While Danny still wonders if he should put away his own gun, the Commander is already knocking at the door and stepping outside when it opens.

“Come on, let’s go”

“Wait, Wait!” Danny runs after him, grabs his hand and turns the man around forcefully “What the hell was that?”

“What?”

“What! ‘What?’ he asks! You just hit a prisoner and then held a gun at him in the middle of the precinct! I do not know nor care what you do to bad guys you chase around the world, but here, in a civilized society, we do not put bullets in restrained criminals, no matter how big a scumbag they are!”

“I wasn’t going to put a bullet in him.”

“Really, well, you could have fooled me! These interrogation methods are unacceptable, if the guy walks out because of this stunt you pulled, This is...There are proper procedures to…”

“I’m sure there are,” The commander’s stance changes as he turns to fully face Danny, hands on
his hips “They got you nowhere, and now we have a name…”

“Oh, we have a name! You scared the guy half to death, how do you know he didn’t blurt out something just to get you off his back!”

“I know.” They are both yelling at this point, Danny can see curious looks thrown their way, an audience building.

“You know! He knows!” His hands are now flying, “Listen to me you son of a bitch, if you think I’m going to watch you torture prisoners or run after your crazy ass into burning buildings while you freeze out on me,” he steps even closer to the taller man, insisting not to be intimidated by his size advantage, his finger digging into his chest

“Get that finger out of my face…”

“Or endanger my life in any way for your own personal vendetta…”

Danny isn’t sure what happened. One moment he is in the commander’s face, the next second he is hunched over with his back to him, his arm twisted behind him and every tiny movement sends spikes of pain through its muscles. “Let me go! What are you, a freaking ninja?!”

“I told you to get that finger out of my face.” The commander says. Danny can see officer Nainoa making a move towards them but holds back for some reason.

“Let go!” Danny commands again.

“This is not a personal vendetta.” The Commander’s voice is still heated “We are hunting down a very dangerous terrorist. You don’t have to like me, but right now we need to work together”

“OK, let go.” The pressure on his arm is released, and Danny stands up and turns to face the Commander, rubbing his hurting left arm with his right.

“Good, now let’s go see…” the Commander starts to turn, but Danny, furious and humiliated, throws his right fist into the man’s jaw before McGarrett has any time to respond.

“You’re right, I don’t like you.” Danny says and walks past him down the hall.

“I’m sorry about your father.” The detective breaks the silence in the car, glancing at Steve sideways from the driver’s seat.

Steve returns the look and nods “Thanks.”

There is silence again, Steve thinks it makes the detective uncomfortable, Williams shuffles in his seat and clears his throat too many times. But he can’t bother to care right now. He is building up the courage to do what needs to be done, preferably before they find themselves in another sticky situation.

It would have been easier, Steve tells himself, if the detective were not up for suspension because of his partner. Steve’s sources had nothing bad or even remotely suspicious to say about detective Danny Williams. His career in Jersey was impeccable, the reason he moved to Hawaii was a good character indication, and his short time in HPD was spotless. Until this morning, when Meka
Hanamoa was being openly investigated by the police IA.

Yet, it is his partner, not Detective Williams, and if there was something to be said about their argument earlier, except for the fact the man had a vicious right hook, is that playing by the book was important to him. Not the making of a dirty cop.

“Your face OK?” the Detective makes another attempt at talking, and Steve notices he’s been rubbing his jaw.

“Yeah, it’s OK. Your arm?”

“Fine, it’s fine” comes the immediate answer.

“I didn’t freeze in the warehouse.” Steve says, keeping his eyes forward.

“Huh.” Williams acknowledges he heard him, but nothing more.

Steve takes a deep breath and looks at him. “Detective, do you know what a Sentinel is?”

“A Sentinel?”

“Yes.”

“Umm...yes...you mean like a person that’s stands watch, guarding…”

“Yes, no, I mean like people who have certain abilities…”

“Oh, yeah, Sentinels. Yeah, there is a rumor that HPD once had one, I personally think it is a spook story to scare the bad guys…” he suddenly looks at Steve, short quick glances, one eye on the road, one on him. “Why?”

“My father.”

“Your father?”

“The Sentinel that worked for HPD.”

“Your father?” Williams repeats.

“He is not...was not actually a Sentinel, not a full one, his sight and smell were enhanced. Eyes on the road!”

“Are you serious?” The detective manages to keep his eyes on the road for no more than two seconds “you are not messing with me?” his glance now is longer, “This whole Sentinel thing is real?”

“Yes, You know, maybe you should let me drive” Steve suggests.

“Wow, That...that’s...something. I really thought it’s just some...urban legend.”

“I am a Sentinel.” Steve blurs, and the Detective hits the brakes

“Hold on! Just, hold on for a minute!” Williams orders, pulls the car over to the side of the road, shuts the engine and turns his whole body towards Steve. “Now, what did you say?”

“I am a Sentinel.” Steve repeats. “High functionality.”
“What...what does that mean?”

“It means I have enhanced senses.” Steve explains. He thought that once he said it, it would be easier but he still had that ominous feeling at the pit of his stomach. Catherine would have said it's just his general mistrust in the world. “All five. And I am trained in using them at will.”

“You mean you can just turn them on and off?”

“Yes. It is more like keeping them off mostly, tuning them down.”

“How enhanced are we talking? When I talked to my ex earlier, were you able to hear her side of the phone?”

Steve can’t help the smile, “Frankly, Williams, anyone with average hearing could have heard that. I’m sorry.” Williams chuckles, the small breezy gesture encourages him to continue. “You asked where I got the information about the people hidden in the warehouse. I didn’t have that information. I heard them.”

“Heard them? They weren’t…”

“Heard their heartbeats. I could locate them by hearing. By their smell.”

“The smell?” The detective looks slightly appalled “You mean like...a dog?”

It is Steve’s turn to chuckle “I am not a dog, but yes. I can smell things like fear. Anything that involves hormones.”

The detective just looks at him for several seconds, and Steve holds his gaze, hoping to convey his seriousness through his eyes.

“Why are you telling me this?” he finally asks. Steve allows himself to relax a bit. It seems the guy takes this seriously.

“Well, When I...let my senses loose, it’s sometimes difficult to maintain awareness of the immediate environment. The further I go with my reception, the deeper I’m engaged in something out of reach for...normal perception, the less I perceive my close surroundings.”

The Detective takes on a pensive expression “So when I thought you froze...in the warehouse…”

“I was listening in. I was looking for Hesse, but I found these people instead. I wasn’t aware of the fire until you...called to me.”

“Holy shit.” the detective’s eyes turns to the front window, then back to him. Steve waits in silence. “And afterwards, outside?” Williams asks.

Steve has to swallow a lump. That was a memory he does not want to bring up. He answers curtly “I was searching for survivors.”

There is something in Williams’ face, he either realizes what Steve went through, or just having a hard time handling the information he’s received. He looks pale, his brows frown, eyes hardly blinking, just staring at Steve.

“Jesus,” he says after a few long seconds “I’m..I’m sorry buddy.”

Steve’s breath hitches and he has to clear his throat before he can speak again. “Anyway, this is why it is dangerous for me to hunt alone. Especially going after someone who knows my abilities
and how to use them against me. You see, Hesse hid the immigrants there, and lit up the warehouse
to get me off his tracks. He knew what he was doing. He used these people...they were killed...just
to…”

“It was his doing, not yours” Williams declares adamantly.

“Yeah…” is all Steve manages to say.

The inside of the car is quiet again. The eye contact feels awkward, but neither men breaks it.

“So what you are saying” Danny finally says “is that your partner is out for the count and you need
a new babysitter?” The detective’s look is sharp, and Steve can’t tell if he is amused or annoyed,
“And you picked me. I’m touched.”

“A guide.” Steve corrects

“What?”

“Not a babysitter, a guide.”

“Call it what you want. You expect me to be your connection to reality while you are busy
exploring with your superpowers.”

Steve still can’t tell what Williams’ mood is. He seemed sympathetic a minute ago, but now his
words project annoyance, or maybe he is insulted, but his tone is unreadable.

“It’s not that simple” Steve decides to play it safe, answering with all seriousness “When I’m in
deep….as much as I was outside the warehouse, after we got out, I can get completely lost. It takes
a certain kind of person to pull a Sentinel out, and even if one has this natural ability to become a
guide, it takes endless trial and error sessions to match a guide to a Sentinel. Cath...Lieutenant
Rollins has picked me, and I her, after many tests. We trained together for years to become in sync.
We learned each other, found the best techniques for us to connect.”

“So…” Danny looks puzzled

“Detective. Outside the warehouse. Lieutenant Rollins was as close to me as possible. She used
every trick she knows to get to me. But what I heard was you telling me to snap out of it.”
The Outrigger club is packed even though it’s mid morning. It was not the usual tourist trap and Steve has to wonder if civilians ever work.

“So, McGarrett,” Danny says cautiously “how do you want to play this? I’m guessing this guy would not be willing to see us…or even identify himself, for that matter.”

Steve looks around, “Just, let him know that we are looking for him, someone will warn him.”

“And he’ll be gone before we…” Steve looks at him with a small grin, “…and you will be listening in. got it.” Danny turns to walk towards the bar, then stops abruptly and looks at Steve again “are you going to…ummm…zone out on me now? Just that I’d know what to expect.”

Steve shakes his head and makes an effort to leave the exasperation out of his voice “not so much, no, don’t worry. He should be close by.”

Danny nods once and closes the remaining distance to the bar “Hey, Detective Williams, HPD” he says out loud to the barman, flashing his badge “I am looking for Mr. Kishimoto, I know he is here…”

Steve takes a deep breath, letting the conversation between the detective and the barman fade into the background. Instead he listens to everything else, skillfully skipping over random conversations and lingering on potentially interesting ones. The loud detective doing his job well, insisting that someone must know something on the whereabouts of the man.

Steve focuses on two different employees slipping through the door to the private lounges at the back. And there it is.

...Tell Mr. Kishimoto that the police is here, looking for him...

“Williams, There,” Steve taps on the Detective’s shoulder and points in the direction of the lounges.

...out the back...

“He’s gonna try to slip out the back” Steve informs him.

“You do not need super hearing to know that.” Danny states “I’ll go cover the back.”

Steve nods once “it’s the second door from the north front.” Danny disappears behind the bar and into the back, ignoring the barman’s protests, while Steve runs forward and through the wooden doors of the lounges.

He scans the large hall while walking hastily towards his destination, almost intuitively assessing threats. The waiter he heard warning Kishimoto’s men passes him by on the way out. Two men in their mid fifties are sitting together at the large armchairs to the right, but they barely give him a second glance. A woman exiting one of the rooms frowns at him. Otherwise the hall is empty. Except for the big goon standing in front of the door to which he is headed. He is larger than Steve, wearing a dark expensive suit, a distinct bulge indicating a weapon holstered under the jacket to the left. Great.

“Sir,” the man lifted his left hand in a halt gesture, his right hand slides noticeably under his jacket,
“This is a private lounge, please don’t come in any clos…”

Steve has to remind himself he was in Hawaii. Civilized society, as Detective Williams put it. He feels it’s a waste of time, but he must give talking a chance.

“I am Lieutenant Commander McGarrett with HPD, I need to get in there to talk to Mr. Kishimoto.”

“Mr. Kishimoto isn’t here”. The goon answers

“I happen to know that he is, please step aside and let me in.”

The big guy shakes his head slightly, eyes very alert and focused on Steve. “I can’t do that. Please come back at a…”

Waste of time.

Steve steps forward fast, his right arm pushes across the man’s neck, the left grabbing his right hand’s wrist, preventing him from reaching the gun. Then he steps to the right side of the man, turning and twisting his right arm in the process. Steve’s right hand, swift as lightning, pulls the man’s gun out of his holster to throw it aside, then moves back to fasten his hold on the right arm. The Man cries out in pain, as each movement causes Steve to twist his arm a bit more, and shortly after, he unwillingly follows the Commander’s every movement in hopes to ease the pain shooting through his wrist.

“Open the door with your free hand” Steve orders. Then, keeping his hold, shoves him through it.

The small room is occupied by four more people. Three of them- one other goon in a dark suit, one woman in a business outfit and one bearded japanese man in a bright suit, are standing with their backs to him, but turn around at the commotion. The fourth man is Detective Danny Williams. He is standing by the back door on the other side, holding his badge up, in front of the trio, facing Steve.

“What the hell are you doing?” the Detective demands, staring at Steve

“Looking for the bathroom, What does it look like I’m doing?” Steve answers incredulously.

“Who’s your friend? Why are you holding him like this? We just want to talk to the man!”

“I asked him nicely to let me in, he kept talking instead of just doing it.” Steve explains. The three suited people are looking back and forth between them.

“You are unbelievable!” Danny exclaims “First you kidnap me from my day job, then you scare a person half to death, and now you can’t spare a minute to explain to the man what we’re doing here? You, my friend, have no ability to communicate like a human being. Zero communication skills. There are procedures to be followed. First you say hello, then you ask nicely, attempt to persuade, use your badge, and only, only as a last resort, turn to ninja skills!”.

“What are you talking about! I scared the person half to death after you said he wouldn’t talk! And these are communication skills” Steve pushes the man he his holding forward, “much more efficient ones, they get the job done.”

“The job was done, I somehow managed to meet these people without twisting anyone’s arm, and I was in the process of talking to them before you unceremoniously interrupted.”
“Well, you obviously didn’t meet this guy,” Steve forces the goon to a seat, finally releasing his arm. The man groans, rubbing his wrist, blinking tears out of his eyes. “but please, go ahead, enlighten me with your superior communication skills.”

“Very well”. Danny returns his attention back to the three people facing them. “As I was saying, I’m detective Danny Williams, and this is the very apologetic Commander Steve McGarrett of HPD, and we’re looking for Mr. Kishimoto”.

“I am Kishimoto.” Says the Japanese man in the bright suit. “And it is highly unacceptable that HPD barge in on a private meeting, in a private property. If you wish you can set a meeting with my lawyer, I am sure he will explain to you the irregularities in this behaviour”

Steve looks at Williams with an expectant expression, urging him to continue with a head gesture at Kishimoto.

“I appreciate your cooperation in the matter and I deeply apologize for interrupting your meeting,” Steve rolls his eyes as Danny continues “but this is a matter of extreme importance, and we cannot wait until your lawyer schedules a meeting, knowing you’re a very…” There is a weak sound from outside, and Steve tenses, stretching his senses “…busy man…what is it?”

A clear click of a rifle’s charging handle.

“Gun! Down!” Steve shouts as he jumps to the side, taking cover behind a drinks bar. Gunfire from an automatic weapon erupts around them, he pulls out his own gun with one hand, the other covering his head against the shattered glass that once was shelves and bottles, raining from above.

The fire stops after five long seconds, he can hear the echoes of heartbeats in the room. More than one.

“Williams!” he shouts out and dares peeking from the side of the counter, pointing his gun. He makes a quick scan, blocking the smell of blood filling the room.

“I’m OK!” The detective shouts back.

Steve zeros on the sound of footfalls moving away followed by the scent of hot metal and gunpowder. He registers the masculine body odor that comes with it, and he is on the hunt.

“Wait! Where are you…”

“Going after the shooter!” he spares the detective a short explanation and charges out of the room with the gun in his hands. He hears the detective’s footsteps falling behind him, and can’t help the slight smile creeping to his face.

“This is detective Danny Williams, shooting at the Outrigger Canoe club, send an ambulance and cruisers, we are in pursuit of a suspect…”

Steve jumps through the broken window his suspect just used. “Male, mid twenties, jeans and dark t-shirt, running north on colony beach” Steve offers the information, spares another second to hear Williams repeating it and moving his concentration back to the chase.

His boots kicking sand, Steve is pushing forward, the target is now in his line of sight. There is a rocky breakwater stretching from the beach into the sea, and the shooter jumps onto it and runs along it, heading, no doubt to the jet ski bike floating at the end of it.

Steve halts, drops to his knees, holding his gun with both hands, elbows slightly bent. He gives
himself a second to feel the movement of the air around him, study the gentle rocking of the jet ski on the slight swellings.

“Woah!” he hears Danny from behind him “What are you doing!?” Steve shoots. “There are Civilians here!” Danny exclaims. Steve sees the bullet ripping through the hall and wedge itself in the engine.

He doesn’t waste any time, pulling one of the many paddle surfboards lying on the beach into the water.

“How are you not going to catch a ski jet with this!” Danny protests.

Steve paddles towards the shooter, strong swift motions. The guy is now hopping on the Jet ski and trying, unsuccessfully, to start the compromised engine. His gestures becoming more and more frantic with each failed attempt. Steve can feel his prey’s growing alarm. He doesn’t slow his approach, but tenses his muscles, ready for any desperate act he might execute.

A few feet away from the target, Steve drops the paddle and aims his gun again “Stop right there!”

The shooter turns around, his eyes meeting with Steve’s, panic written all over his face, then he jumps into the water away from him. Steve follows.

It doesn’t take long to catch up with the hyperventilating prey, Steve is pretty sure that if he didn’t grab him when he did, the guy would have drowned. When they make it back to the beach, Steve is practically dragging the limp, exhausted man.

“What the hell was that!” Danny shouts at him

“You are very distracting, you know?” Steve breathes irritably

“Distracting? Not enough apparently! You just fired at a suspect on a beach full of civilians!”

“I fired at the jet ski engine”

“Oh, you shot the engine! What if you missed? And the guy had an automatic assault rifle, which he mercilessly used to murder three people, what if he decided he was desperate enough to fire at the crazy man paddling towards him all exposed like target practice, with a beach. full. of. civilians behind him?!”

Steve pushes his downed prey to the sand at William's’ feet, watching as the hot headed detective sits above him, cuffing his hands behind his back.

“He dumped his rifle just outside the club,” Steve says, then gives himself few seconds to get his own breath back. “You will find it in the bushes to the left of the broken window. And I don’t miss.”

Lieutenant Catherine Rollins is sitting in her bed, scrolling through her cellular phone. She looks a bit pale, but lively, and it seems she is welcoming the distraction, as the sergeant entrusted with her safety opens the door and Danny peeks from the entrance, her smile too exaggerated for the occasion.
Danny enters the room, one hand in his pocket, the other gesturing slightly towards her. “Hey, Lieutenant, how’s the leg?”

“Please, call me Catherine. The leg is fine, thank you… Are you OK?” She points at the fresh bandage on his arm.

Danny takes out his hand from the pocket and examine it “Yes, yes, it nothing. We ran into some trouble, I found myself chasing your pal out a broken window. Needed some stitches.”

she looks behind him towards the door “where’s Steve? Is he OK?”

“The captain has him filling some official forms. It seems that liasoning with an HPD detective requires some paperwork even I didn’t hear about”.

The relief is clear. Her smile turns into a chuckle “paperwork, ha? He loves that.”

Danny smirks. “With some luck he’ll get a leaky pen...that will really make his day”.

The Lieutenant laughs. “A leaky pen! What did he do to you to earn him that?”

“You mean beside a ruined shirt and six stitches? Well...” Danny shrugs. “He got the captain to reassign me as his partner for the time being, when I’d rather be doing something else. But I understand...it’s a...unique situation...”.

She lowers her eyes for a second, "Yes...I'm sorry about that. I'm afraid it was me who got this idea into his head." she looks back at Danny “What...what did he tell you, Detective?”

“You can call me Danny. We share a partner now...” He smiles briefly and continues. “He told me that you’ve been partners for a long time, and trained together, and you know each other well. He told me...” deep breath “...why he reacted the way he has at the warehouse, and about Victor Hesse...” his eyes don’t leave her face, looking for a confirmation or denial before continuing.

She nods, her expression becomes serious. “He told you what he can do.” it’s not a question.

“Yes.” He also nods. He’s quiet for a second. Then “How is he ok? With all he can hear? And...feel? Is he ok?, ‘cause if it were me, and I’d be hearing people’s heart beat and then not hear it, and I could smell every little thing on the wind, and I could...I dunno, see them through the flames...I’d not be ok, ok? You know?” the hand not accompanying his speech is wedged in his hair, and he’s shaking his head.

The question seems to confuse her. She looks at him in...wonder. “Steve...shared that with you?”

“She told you what he can do,” it's not a question.

“Yes.” He also nods. He’s quiet for a second. Then “How is he ok? With all he can hear? And...feel? Is he ok?, ‘cause if it were me, and I’d be hearing people’s heart beat and then not hear it, and I could smell every little thing on the wind, and I could...I dunno, see them through the flames...I’d not be ok, ok? You know?” the hand not accompanying his speech is wedged in his hair, and he’s shaking his head.

The question seems to confuse her. She looks at him in...wonder. “Steve...shared that with you?”

“Some of it. Some I figured. I’m an intuitive guy. Am I on point?”.

"Yes...pretty much.” She stays silent for few seconds, breathing deeply. “ He would tell you that he is OK." She still looks at him, examining his face "But...you saw what I saw."

“I saw it. I saw him”. Danny says. He sighs, grabs a chair and sits down closer to Catherine. “So the guide’s job is to snap him out of near death situations, and make sure he doesn’t kill himself, and see that he’s...stable?” He’s trying to wrap his head around the unfamiliar terms. “How can someone miss a fire?”

“The guide’s job, officially, is to keep the Sentinel safe. What ‘safe’ means...it is really up to both of you...them. You do not usually need to ‘snap him out’, just make sure he is ok until he is done doing what needs to be done. With Steve...sometimes you need to remind him that there are things
“Even Superman has limits”. Danny says softly. He stays quiet for a few seconds. “You said you gave him the idea, to take me on as his guide”. He states. “What gave you that idea? Don’t you have more guides in the army? Not that I’m not flattered, I am, I just don’t know if I’m the right guy for the job, because yesterday everything was ‘classified’” he adds the appropriate hand gestures. “And now I’m kind of in the middle of a mad hunt for a terrorist, with a crazy ass soldier who scares the shit out of people for a living!”. Danny’s voice raises with his words.

“Danny…” Catherine keeps her voice quiet “I’m really sorry, I know it is...overwhelming. I can tell you that the Navy doesn’t keep guides ‘on call’, this job is not something you can learn, just like Sentinels. There are professionals that may help as needed, they are not guides. But all this, it is not relevant because...you need to understand something.” She grabs his unbandaged hand, capturing his eyes. Danny can see that hers are brimming with tears. “He heard you. He heard your voice even though I was in his face, touching him. We spent years training together. He is tuned to the feel of my skin, to the sound of my voice, but he heard you.” her voice breaks, she blinks and looks away from him, wiping her face with a quick motion.

“Hey, hey, it’s ok. I’m sorry...I didn’t...I’m sure he didn’t mean to.” Danny stammers. Catherine releases a cackle, or a sob, he can’t tell. “I don’t know why that happened, but it did, maybe it’s something in the air, or too many pineapples. In any case, he’s got someone to watch his back while you’re in here, getting better. I’ll talk to him. I’ll...take care of him, watch his back. I might need a crash course, like Steve McGarrett 101”.

She turns her head to him, sighs, tucks her hair behind her ears as she seems to contemplate the issue. “McGarrett 101. Don’t be intimidated. Don’t be fooled by the tough exterior. And don’t be afraid to remind him he is not bulletproof.”

“Got ya”. He smirks.

“Thanks, Danny” A hint of a smile touches her face.
Control Issues

Danny stops just outside the interrogation room and turns around, facing the eager naval officer, blocking his way in.

“This time, Rambo, you let me do the talking.” He blinks at the hard face looking down at him, lips pursed together, eyes seem to try and drill a hole in Danny, but not a single word is uttered. “Exactly, good, just stand there and look...ummm, like that.” he starts to turn back but stops midway “and keep your gun holstered.”

The young perp sits slack in the uncomfortable chair, legs spread underneath the table, hands dangling from the chain fastened to the table, and he raises his chin in defiance at the two men entering the room. Danny steps forward to take a seat at the chair opposite him, but the damn ninja moves quicker, pulls the chair and drags it to the back of the room, putting one leg on it and leaning his elbow on his knee.

“Excuse me a minute,” Danny throws at the suspect and closes the short distance between Steve and himself. “Want to explain to me what that was about?” he whispers loudly.

“What?”

“Why did you take my chair?” Danny asks impatiently

“You don’t need it.” The annoying answer comes.

“I don’t need it?”

“Nope.” the Commander gestures with his chin towards the man who now looks at them with an unsure smirk on his lips. “Go ahead.” Steve urges Danny “Talk.”

Danny blinks at him for a few seconds, but decides not to push the issue, for now. He turns back to the suspect, leans forward against the table and gives himself two more seconds to gather back his thoughts.

“Wade Holokai, you are facing severe charges here.” Danny flips open a folder on the table, and reads from it “attacking police officers, mass shooting, aggravated assault, the list goes on… you could be looking at some serious time there”. He sends a hand back with a half twist before remembering his chair is not there, and simply changes his position.

“You have nothing.” Holokai says, he’s looking at Danny, the Detective can see that he is fighting not to look at the commander behind him.

“Oh, I’ve got plenty. First hand as you say. The HPD has a sufficient evidence on you to put you away for a long time”.

“I don’t know what you are talking about. I was just hanging out on the beach, when this crazy dude jumped me.” He allows himself a quick glance at Steve.

“This crazy dude who jumped you also found the rifle you were using, when you shot into the club. Before you started that lazy stroll down the beach. What do you think we found when we dusted it for prints? Huh?”

“I don’t know, not my prints” he answers smugly and then adds as afterthought “What rifle?”
“The one you dumped by the window, you know, the one you so meticulously inserted the bullets into... one by one”. Danny waits to see if any bells or alarms are ringing in the perp’s head, but the smug dumb look remains. Steve yawns loudly. “Without gloves…” Danny waits some more, and can see the light bulb turn on in the perp’s head and his eyes widen in alarm.

“Ask him who sent him.” the Commander interjects from behind. Danny pointedly ignores him. “You could help yourself a little, if you tell us where that order came from”. Still not looking at Steve.

Holokai’s stance changes almost immediately. He puts his arms on the table, leans forward, his legs are now pulled together. “It wasn’t... I don’t know anything...I didn’t...I was framed…”

“Detective,” Comes Steve’s voice from behind, “May I talk to you for a sec?”

"Uh, what?”  Danny turns to Steve, clearly annoyed. “Now?” he accompanies his word with a down pointing finger.

“Yeah. Now.” Steve gestures with his head for him to come closer.

“Excuse me for a minute, while you think about your options.” sighs Danny, and approaches Steve. “What are you doing? I’m in the middle here.”

“Look, it is obvious this guy is too stupid to help himself” Steve says not bothering to lower his voice “and it’s taking too long. If you let me pull my gun…”

“You are not pulling out your gun. We had an agreement. Let me handle this and you can glare at him as much as you want, or growl in your Rambo way, but do.not.pull.out.your.gun!” He looks at Steve expectantly. “understood? He’s still a civilian, he still has rights, ok?”

The Commander straightens, his hands on his hips. He throws a look at the perp, then releases a long exasperated breath “Fine, I’m gonna give you one minute, and then my gun might accidently misfire.”

“Ok, ok, relax. We won’t need to revert to such means” Danny says, starting to turn towards the perp, trying to placate him, or Steve. “As you can see”, he tells him, “I’m the voice of reason in this room, so I really think you should start telling us whatever you can, before my partner here…” he gestures towards Steve “Starts using his methods”.

Holokai’s eyes dart between Danny and Steve, whatever defiance that was left in him is gone.

“I don’t know anything, I swear!” he exclaims

“He’s lying.” Steve states.

Danny shoots him a dirty look. “What do you know?”

“I’ve never met this guy,” His speech is near panic “He just left me money and instructions!”

“More lies” Steve says and steps forward, next to Danny, glaring at the guy

“I swear!” Holokai looks at Danny pleading.

“Ok, ok..” Danny raises his palms in a calming gesture. “Say we... I believe you.” Danny can feel Steve’s glare shift to him “Got any proof? Anything that can lead us to him?”
“I don’t know...” Holokai is now looking at the Commander.

“Wade,” Danny says gently “You just took out an automatic rifle and shot into a room with six people, two of whom were armed law enforcements, what gets a tough guy like you so scared?”

Holokai doesn’t answer and Danny continues. He gets the distinct feeling that his speech is the only thing that holds McGarrett from launching at the man “Look, we know you were hired, and as a low life scumbag that doesn’t deserve to walk the streets that you are, we are currently more interested in who ever ordered that hit, so we are willing to cut you some slack. Maybe not even mention that it was your girlfriend that got you into the club with a weapon in the first place.”

“She didn’t know!” Holokai shouts immediately

“And we are willing to believe that, if you’ll co-operate.”

The young man licks his lips, looking at the commander again “I don’t know the guy’s name.”

“OK.” Danny nods “What were your instructions?”

“He told me to wait until you” His eyes are still on the Commander, he accompanies the last word with a small gesture of his chin towards him, “go in to meet with the japanese guy and then kill you both.”

Danny looks at Steve, then at the perp again. “ He ?” He says, pointing with his thumb at the man beside him “ He was the target?”

“How were you supposed to contact him after the job was done?” Steve asks calmly

“He said he’d know when it’s done and he would find me.”

“You are lying again.”

“He would kill my girlfriend...”

“We will protect her,” Danny interjects “he might kill her anyway when he learns that you failed.”

Holokai licks his lips nervously “He gave me an address in Ala Moana, told me to come there after I’m done.”

Steve walks out, closing the door after him. Danny frowns at the closed door for a moment. He spares a second to get the address from the shooter and steps outside.

The guard at the door points at the direction of the viewing room, anticipating Danny’s query, and indeed he finds the navy officer there, looking through the glass window to the interrogation room they just left.

“Did you get the address?” Steve asks as the door closes after him.

“I did.” Danny answers. “You believe he told the truth? About the address?” Danny tries to sound sarcastic, skeptical, but with not much success.

“Yes.” Steve answers shortly.

“So...as a part of your...skill set...you are like a human lie detector?”

“Yes.”
Danny signs. It looks like the Commander is back in his one-syllable-classified-mood. He suppresses the urge to let him know what working together means, and decides to let it be for now.

“Are you sure it’s Hesse?” He tries instead.

“I could smell Hesse all over him before he took a dive. Besides, I don’t know of anyone else that might target me.”

“Then how do you know that address is not a trap? If Hesse indeed targeted you?”

“Oh,” Steve says and finally looks at Danny “It’s definitely a trap. Hesse had to know that this kid would not be able to jump me.”

“So what now?” Danny asks, although he really does not want to hear the answer.

“It doesn’t change anything. I need to be there. Hopefully, Hesse will be there too. He...needs to see me defeated as much as I need to see him defeated.” Steve looks at Danny again, with a serious, contemplating look.

“Alright, then, let’s plan our approach.” Danny says, but doesn’t make a move. He feels trapped under that gaze again, and wonders what Steve sees in him that other people can’t.

“Det...Danny. I can’t ask you to come with me, it’s…”

“Oh, now you’re thinking about asking?” Danny interjects “May I remind you that you did not have any intention to ask when you forced me to be your partner just this morning?” He doesn’t mean to sound annoyed, but he is.

Steve frowns “It’s different...”

“How is it different?” Danny’s hands fly out to emphasize him words, and the gesture seems to break the spell of the Commander's gaze. He starts stepping back and forth in the small room. “You already got me trapped in a burning building, then shot at with an automatic weapon. What could be worse?”

Steve ignores his bites “It’s probably head-on with Hesse this time. It’s...Too many people already got hurt because of this, and you’ve got a kid...”

“How do you know about my kid?” Danny snaps, freezing in place again “Do you also read minds?”

Steve doesn’t even have the decency to look embarrassed. He just smirks for a second “No, I dug up some information about you. Nothing too personal, just the basics, career...”

Danny really wanted to be angry at this, but it made sense. And Steve did trust him with personal information about himself.

“OK, yes I do have a kid. And this is why I need to see this Hesse bastard behind bars, at the very least. These kind of people do not deserve to breathe the same air as my daughter. So you do not need to ask, I’m in this as much as you are” Steve is looking at him again with that intense gaze, and Danny frowns “...are you checking if I’m telling the truth right now?”

“What? No! No, I don’t do that to the people I work with.” Steve looks genuinely appalled, but then he adds “not without permission anyway.”
“Well, Commander, again you surprise me. It's the second time in less than five minutes that you admit you are able to actually ask for permission before you hijack people into your crazy world.”

Steve rolls his eyes as they both approach the door and says “I don’t understand why are you so angry about this.”

“Of course you don’t.”

“No, really, if it wasn’t for me you’d be suspended along with your partner.”

“Did you think, maybe, just maybe, it was exactly where I wanted to be?” Danny retorts, but he is thankful that Steve does not use his lie detecting skills on him. He half heartedly listens to the man’s answer, as he realizes that where he is now, is actually where he wants to be.

Steve is not used to working with others. Most of the time it’s just Lieutenant Rollins and himself, sporadically he is alone, on special occasions it is a team of four. It is never a full squad of police officers and a SWAT team to back them up.

There is a reason for the solitude, he tried to explain it to Williams repeatedly. Every additional person in the vicinity is a distraction, a background noise that needs to be shoved aside, and the more noise he has to ignore, the bigger the chances are that he would miss something important.

At some point the Detective seemed to understand it, he nodded sympathetically, acknowledging the presented difficulty, but nevertheless called for the entire precinct for backup.

His reasoning included a surprise element, Hesse expects Steve to be alone. Instead he would get Steve with an army. Steve, of course, dismissed this reasoning, which had the exact same effect on the detective- Williams dismissed him right back.

So now Steve is sitting behind a police cruiser across the street from the building that might or might not hide Hesse, trying his very best to determine just that, while fighting both his anger and the background noise of innocent tenants and cops.

“You really need to shut up” he snaps at Danny.

“I didn’t say anything!” Danny defends himself

“You’re breathing hard. And just relax, will you? Your heart is racing.”

“I will relax when this is all over. I thought you were supposed to be able to screen everything out, you know, zone out like you did in the warehouse.”

Steve huffs. “OK, I’m gonna do a sweep, stay alert.” He informs him

“Yeah, I got that the last time you said that.” Williams frowns

“Shut up” Steve orders again.

Danny huffs.

Steve takes a deep breath. It takes him longer than usual to block out the nonessential input. He
knows that he can’t blame it all on the crowded surrounding, a big part of it is the absence of Catherine next to him and the presence of Williams in her stead. He shoves this thought away too, focusing on how hard he worked to get here, and what he had lost to Hesse. He wants that heartless bastard, and he will stop at nothing to get him.

Careful at first, then with increasing amplitude, he allows his senses to detach from his immediate surrounding in favor of the building across the street.

He knows what he is looking for. But he can’t find it.

So he move on to looking for traces or hints that would suggest that Hesse might be hiding, maybe even the same trick he used in the warehouse. But he can’t perceive any evidence of distress from inside the building. Then he picks up a scent. He fights the immediate urge to raise an alarm, and gives himself few seconds to pinpoint the origin.

“Williams.” He is whispering, ready to comeback, to verify his message is received and acted upon. But he can hear the Detective’s voice immediately, as if the detective is next to the door Steve’s senses are exploring, and next to his body at the same time. “I’m here, Steve.” It is a new feeling, and it takes Steve several minutes to adjust. He decides to continue exploring.

“We need to clear the building immediately. I don’t think Hesse is in there, but the apartment is rigged. C4, at least ten pounds.”

“On it.”

“Try to do it quietly. Let’s assume he is watching somehow. Start with the fourth floor, the north wing, several people there, close to the apartment.”

“Got it.”

*Hesse wants me to concentrate on the evacuation.* The thought comes to him, and Steve thinks he might be able to admit the extra cops presence is useful. Williams stays beside him, and Steve is amazed at how easy it is for him to focus on the building while being aware of the Detective’s voice.

Williams gives short efficient orders through his comm, following Steve’s orders without question as he reports the status in the building. When people are starting to emerge, Steve stands to look, carefully exploring every face. But there is no sign of Hesse.

“Building is clear” Steve finally informs Williams.

“OK, but let them do a full sweep anyway. Less questions afterwards.”

It is a waste of time, but Steve doesn’t argue. Maybe Williams doesn’t trust him, maybe he’s just trying to protect him. Hesse isn’t here. So as eager as he is to see if he can find anything in that apartment, a few more minutes won’t matter.

The bomb squad is now entering the building. Steve remains focused, while standing next to Danny in the end of the hall, behind the wall at the entrance to the stairway.

Still nothing. Nothing but a faint remnants of his adversary. Hesse was here, now he is not.

The charge is easily diffused, and finally Steve and Danny are in the apartment.

“I don’t understand this.” Steve finally admits. “I was sure he would be here. Somewhere.”
“Are you sure he isn’t?” Danny takes out a pair of gloves

“If he is, he is doing an amazing job hiding. You don’t want to clear the apartment first?”

Danny shrugs “If you say there’s no one here…”

Steve offers him a quick smile before he takes a deep breath, positioning himself in the middle of the large living room and looks around. His eyes are quickly scanning the room, every inch of it. He finds the camera in the vent in no time.

The attack comes before he can point it out to Danny. While his eyes are exploring the darkness of the vent shaft to look for wires or anything else hidden in there, a blinding flash sends needles through his sensitive retinas, and a high pitched sound pierces his ears. He shuts his eyes tightly, hands shooting up to cover his ears. He thinks he shouts out in pain as he falls down to his knees, but he can hear nothing but that excruciating sound. He feels someone’s hands on his arm, holding him in place, but he gradually loses control over his senses. It feels like the soft fabric of his shirt beneath the touch is chafing his skin, The straps of the tactical vest are digging painfully into his shoulders, the combined smell of everything that this room, this apartment, this building has ever absorbed, sums up to racking jolts of nausea, his eyes are burning behind the closed eyelids and that ear splitting pitch is cutting its way into his brain.
Watch your six

The bright light piercing the shadows of the darkened apartment forces Danny to shut his eyes. The agonized cry coming from the other man in the room, forces him to open them back. He fights off the red and orange spots dancing in his vision by blinking rapidly, then spots the commander on his knees, hunched, eyes shut tightly, hands over his ears, as if blocking a terrible sound. Danny can’t hear a thing.

He closes the distance between them quickly, dropping to his knees, reaching to grab the man’s arm before he slumps forward. Steve’s painful cry tears through him again.

“How is it?” Danny calls “What is it?”

The man starts to shake, cough and gag. Danny looks around. He is not sure what he is looking for, but he is desperate to find some hint as to what’s going on. They are still washed in that painful light, like someone planted the sun inside the room, and it hits him that this might be too much for the Sentinel. This is something that Danny can take care of. He doesn’t bother to move, just pulls his gun out, and shoots at the direction from which he thinks the light is emanating.

It takes three shots, something is shattered, and the room falls back into shadows.

As his eyes gradually adjust to the relative darkness, the howls of pain next to him becomes soft groans, then dissipate into hard breathing. Danny reaches out again, placing his hand on Steve’s arm, but the man flinches at the touch.

“You OK, buddy?” His concerned question results with the Sentinel hands shooting back towards his ear, and another groan escapes his lips. He has yet to open his eyes.


“I’ll call for help…” Danny whispers, stopping his rogue hand mid way to Steve again. The commander doesn’t respond. He is leaning forward now, his right palm flat against the floor, his left shadowing the eyes, breathing.

Danny Stands up, his gaze fixed on Steve. He reaches for his radio, but then decides to put some distance between Steve and himself before he shouts into it.

Reluctantly he pulls his eyes from the Sentinel, turning towards the front door.

The door bursts open.

Two men step inside, sunglasses are covering their eyes, both holding a gun in each hand.

“GUNS!” Danny reacts instinctively. He turns to Steve, putting his vest protected back between him and the bullets, ignoring the blossoming pain indicating at least several hits. He grabs the back of Steve’s vest, forcing him down, his other hand taking his weapon out.

The detective releases several blind shots while pulling the heavy man behind the nearest piece of furniture, a large sofa.

He fires two more shots above the backrest, without looking, before he dares peeking from the side.
It seems he managed to convince the shooters to take cover.

He throws a quick glance at the man beside him. Steve is still breathing hard, face pale and scrunched in pain. The commander is holding his gun as well, clutched firmly in both hands, but it doesn’t look like he is going to use it anytime soon, eyes moving rapidly beneath half closed lids.

Fire erupts again, a choked moan slips through Steve’s lips. Again Danny fires blindly, then, with a quick simultaneous motion, he flicks the radio switch, straightens up and fires. “This is Detective Williams…” The second and third rounds from his gun hit their mark. He hears a dull, heavy thud as he ducks back behind the sofa. “...we are under fire at the suspect’s apartment…” there are a few more shots ricocheting from the sofa “…at least two shooters”

“Copy that Detective,” the radio crackles back “reinforcements are on the way.”

Silence.

Danny himself is breathing hard now, and it seems that his and Steve’s joined breathing is the only sound in the room.

He chances a quick glance again.

One of the men is down on the floor. No sign of the other. Carefully, the detective moves around the sofa, gun held at ready. He reaches the body, kicking both guns away from his slumped hands, then continue towards the door, peering out to the floor corridor, gun pointing.

Empty.

“This is Williams,” He reports again while shutting the door “Be alert of an armed suspect last seen in the target’s apartment, native, five foot eight, short dark hair, black pants, black T-shirt.”

“Copy that, Detective.” comes the immediate answer.

“And get a bus here” Danny adds as an aftermath, running back to Steve’s side.

He hovers above the other man, gun aimed at the door.

Few seconds passes by before Steve breaths “Williams?” with gruff voice, just barely audible. The commander pulls himself up to a sitting position, slowly, his eyes still half closed “Did you...get them?”

“I got one of them.” Steve presses his hand to his right ear, the one on Danny’s side, as the detective reports, lowering his voice to barely a whisper. “The other one managed to get away... for now… How are you doing buddy?” If it’s safe enough to talk, may be safe enough to ask.

“I’m…” Steve starts to answer, but then “You need to get him.”

“I alerted the officers surrounding the building.” Danny explains gently “We’ll catch him. Hopefully alive so you could do your ‘scare the detainee’ routine again”.

Steve’s response comes after a short delay. “No, no, not hopefully, Williams, you need to make sure he is captured and alive!”

Stepping a few paces away, Danny barks into his comm. “Anyone has eyes on the suspect? We need him alive, top priority!”

“What?...” Steve blinks and rubs his eyes.
“Don’t worry, buddy, We’ll get him”. Danny tries to reassure the man while willing the comm to report back.

“I can’t…” Steve trails off.

can’t what? What can I do?” Danny asks anxiously. He wonders if touching is safe again, Steve is half leaning with his back against the sofa, but it looks like he is going to slid to the side.

The commander raises his face in the general direction of Danny “I can’t go with you. You need to go...make sure…”

“There’s no way I’m leaving you here alone, with no backup.” Danny cuts off a little too vigorously, causing Steve to scrunch his eyes again and frown, “Suppose these were not the only people Hesse sent? There are lots of men around, they’ll get him”. Turning away from Steve he talks to his comm again “anything on the perp yet?!"

Steve shaking his head, groans at the movement then says “No, no, Danny, this was it, that was the attack. They probably didn’t expect you, you have to go, you can’t trust anyone else!”

"I trust my colleagues, they are not…”

It’s Steve’s turn to interject “Danny, someone let these shooters in.” he swallows, his voice is lowered again “The building was empty when we got in. It was surrounded with your colleagues, and they got in.”

Danny quiets for a second. “Someone is in cahoots with Hesse. I think my partner became a scapegoat. Damn!” He swears, opens the front door looks out. The hallway is still empty.

“Right,” Steve urges “Now, go get the other guy!”

“This is officer Kalakaua,” a female voice bursts through the radio “Eyes on the suspect, roof, north west wing, in pursuit!”

“Don’t lose him! Get him alive!” Danny commands into the comm. He turns to Steve “Look buddy, you’re not a 100%, and can’t defend yourself yet, and if there are other corrupt cops here, I can’t leave you with any of them, to do Hess’s work for him. You’re stuck with me until you’re at least able to move”.

Steve growls, in pain, or frustration, or maybe it’s an attempt to intimidate Danny, he is not sure. “Alright,” The commander concedes. He grabs the edge of the sofa and pulls himself up. His movements are far from his usually assured, purposeful gait , as he ventures a small step forward, dragging his foot rather than raising it from the floor, one hand still holds the gun, the other stretched downwards and forward.

“What are you doing...?”

“Showing you I can move,” Steve answers angrily “now get going!”

“This...you call this moving? Are you…” Danny’s breath catches as for a moment Steve’s eyes open wide. Dark pools surrounded by a thin, almost invisible line of blue. For a second the detective thinks it might be some Sentinel trick, but the way the man moves them, small jerky motions, and the hand half held in front of him... “Shit...Steve, can you even...see?”

The commander purses his lips, straightening his back, his hand settle back on his hip, gaining him somewhat of his regular composure, “I’ll lock the…”
Two distinct gunshots are echoing through the building walls, jolting Danny from his transfixion. “What is happening!” he demands from the comm. “Report!”

The answer comes a few seconds later “Suspect is down.” it’s Kalakaua’s voice again, breathing hard.

“What the hell?” Danny yells into the radio.

Steve drops slowly, hand first, on the sofa, leaning forward, elbows on his knees, head rests against closed palms.

“This is detective Kaleo” Comes another voice through the comm “He pulled a gun, I had no choice.”

For half an hour Danny fought to stay out of the commotion around them, adamant to remain focused and vigilant, to keep away any possible threat to the compromised Sentinel.

Steve immediately dismissed any offer for treatment by the EMTs that arrived on scene, claiming that they wouldn’t know what to do with him anyway. Danny admitted to himself that the Sentinel was probably right, and when Steve called in the navy, he relaxed, just for a second, and then took upon himself to keep guard until they come.

It is not an easy job. In the short time he spent with this guy he came to the conclusion that ‘easy’ and that arrogant, stubborn Mccarrett are contradictions. The commander insists on ordering him around. The fact that he is practically blind and half deaf hardly slowing him down.

He demands that Danny personally verify that the other shooter is indeed dead, orders him to investigate the camera he spotted in the vent, then after finding out it was executed by the detective’s gun, along with the harsh spotlight that attacked his eyes, he doesn’t even take the opportunity to thank Danny for saving his life before huffing in exasperation and insisting they should look for a speaker of some sort, undoubtedly hidden in the living room, in hopes that “HPD will not screw this up also.”

Danny has no idea how someone can look so miserably helpless and be incredibly annoying at the same time.

But then, as Steve is led into the back of a military SUV, the man suddenly stops dead in his tracks and calls out Danny’s name with such distress, that it takes the detective only a millisecond to respond.

“I’m here, buddy.” He says and steps next to him.

“Listen, you need to be careful.” The commander says, turning his face to him, eyes hidden behind large sunglasses despite the dim, evening light “Watch your six. You probably attracted Hesse’s attention, and if you are right and it’s somehow connected to what your partner is going through…”

Danny nods, then realizes that Steve can’t see it and mutters “Yes…” swallowing hard. His ‘six’ has been literally hurting. When he took off the vest earlier, there were three slugs lodged into it, and he felt each and every one of them. He really needed to get checked.
“You should lay low for a while.” Steve decides for him.

Danny chuckles mirthlessly “Are you going to lay low?”

Steve’s answer is a quick smirk, then he allows the soldier accompanying him to steer him toward the vehicle. Seconds later he is gone, leaving a confused detective feeling a loss instead of the anticipated relief.

He breathes deep, forcing his eyes away from the empty road and reminds himself what he wanted to do once his babysitting duties are done.

Danny spots Detective Kaleo talking to a young female officer next to the medical examiner van and jogs towards them. Kaleo sees him, raises his hand towards the officer and their conversation dies.

“What the hell happened there, Kaleo?” Danny makes an effort to keep his tone neutral. He spares a glance at the woman, whose name tag reads “Kalakaua”. Kaleo probably caught the look, he motions to the young officer with his head. She gives Danny a quick glance then walks away.

“As I said, Williams” Kaleo doesn’t bother to sound tamed, “The guy pulled a gun. I shot him. Just like you did back at apartment.”

“Just like I did?” Danny can’t help but wonder about the defensive tone Kaleo uses. “I was not chasing anyone down, they were shooting at me.” or at Steve. Doesn’t really matter.

“Well, I was not about to give him a chance to do that. What is your problem?”

That was actually a good question. But Kaleo comes on aggressive, and defensive, and annoying as hell and Danny does not have time to think about it “My problem is that I do not think you even tried to avoid that, and now we have no lead, and It makes me wonder why you were so trigger happy!”

“Might I remind you, Williams,” Kaleo was now in his face “that you are the last person with any right to question my integrity?”

“What the hell does that mean, Kaleo?”

“You know perfectly well what I mean, Haole. You better get off my back and check your own partner. Or did you two were in this together?” there is a half smile on Kaleo’s face, and Danny is more than ready to wipe it forcefully.

“Get out of my face, you son of a bitch!” Danny pushes him back, and for a minute he is sure Kaleo is about to attack. But he just looks at him, snorts and steps backwards, leaving his eyes on Danny for a bit before turning and walking away.

Danny allows himself a few seconds to relax before thinking about his next step. He looks around, looking for officer Kalakaua, but she is nowhere in sight. A few steps away from him, the medical examiner has just finished loading up the two bodies to the back of the van and is entering the driver’s seat.

“Hey, Doc,” Danny knocks on the window, and the doctor lowers it “I know you still have some work to do, but can you tell me anything about your passenger back there?”

“Hello Detective…” The doctor squints his eyes at Danny. “How are you today? I would love to stay and chat, but I have important work to do, in my office with these patients”.
“I know you do, and I’m not trying to keep you from your work, but I need something, anything, even preliminary on these guys. Anything strange? In their wallets? Tattoos? Scars? The sign of the devil on their foreheads?” The doctor hums for what seems like a full minute, while Danny waits impatiently. And just when Danny opens his mouth to ask if the doctor would kindly divulge some information, he says “I did not undress the bodies to discover any tattoos yet, and there is nothing on their foreheads that I could see, although maybe with an ultraviolet lamp I will be able to shed a different light on the matter”. He seems disappointed the detective is not amused.

“Yeah, yeah, what can you tell me now?”

“I can tell you that the COD for the person on the roof is a gunshot wound to the abdomen at an intermediate to close range. The COD for the person in the apartment…”

“Wait, what do you mean close range? How close?”

“I would estimate about three feet, judging by the punctate abrasions and the…”

“Three feet? Are you sure?” it made no sense. They should have been in pursuit.

“Detective, you asked me what information I can give you NOW. I can have a full report in a few hours after I have examined the bodies more thoroughly.”

“Ok, ok, thanks.” Danny taps on the vehicle door, biting his lip “Hey, listen, do me a favour, can you start with the roof guy, and give me a call the minute you have all the information. Not even all the information, just the information about the proximity of the shooting? Before you tell anyone else? please?”

“This is highly irregular detective but since you are the leading detective in this investigation, I estimate that there will be no harm in doing so…”

“Thank you, Thanks, Doctor” Danny waves his hand and steps back from the van, allowing the ME to drive off.

He stretches a bit, his back reminding him again of the hard day it had. It is not finished just yet though, he really needs to get a hold on officer Kalakaua.

He sees Duke Lukela just outside the building, and decides that he needs to trust someone, and the veteran sergeant is a good choice.

“Hey, Sergeant, May I speak with you for a minute?”

“Sure, What’s up Detective Williams?”

Danny waits a few seconds for them to be relatively alone. “Do you know Officer Kalakaua?” he asks.

“Yes, sure, fresh out of the academy, very enthusiastic.”

“I need to get in touch with her...umm..do you know if she is still on site?”

“I can radio her in if you’d like…”

“No, no, I need to talk with her in private.”

Lukela studies his face for few seconds. “OK. I can get you her number if you’d like…” he says
with a sceptical smile over his face.

Danny rolls his eyes “Nothing like that, sergeant…”

“Oh, so you don’t want her number?”

“I do! It’s…” the sergeant laughs “just, just text me her number. please.” Danny gives up.

“Sure Detective.” Danny turns to leave, but Lukela grabs his arm “Hey, I heard you were teamed up with Steve McGarrett.”

“Yeah, you...know him?”

“I knew him as a kid. I worked with his father when he was still in the force. He was a good man, his murder was a shock to a lot of us old guys in the force. How...is his son?”

Danny wondered for a second what Lukela was asking about. How is he with his father’s death? How bad are his recent injuries? Maybe he is asking if Steve was a good man like his father?

It suddenly bothers him that he doesn’t actually know the answer to any of these questions. But maybe the fact that he really wants to know the answer to the first two, was an indication about the third. So he chooses to reply to it.

“I do not know him that well,” He says carefully “He seems like a decent guy.”

The old sergeant seems to be satisfied with the answer, and Danny walks away.

By the time he gets to his car, his phone chimes, and he takes it out of his pocket, along with his keys, to see that Lukela sent him Kalakaua’s number.

But it seems he does not need it. He spots the young officer sitting on the sidewalk next to the Camaro, hidden between the parking cars. She raises her face to him as he looks up from his phone.

“Detective Williams, I’m Officer Kalakaua. I need to talk to you about what happened today on the roof.”
Proper procedure

It has been a long while since the last time Steve had to use a room like this.

For the first two weeks after the navy gave him the concoction that helped awaken his naturally enhanced senses, he practically lived in the room they build for him. Then, during initial training, for several months, it was the only way he was able to get some sleep. Real sleep. He used to lay naked on the meticulously stretched expensive silk linens, marveling on how they successfully kept the room air fresh and at 73F without the feel of moving air and revealing at sensing almost nothing until he quickly sank into exhausted sleep.

Catherine called it “The Incubator”. The name seem to fit, especially when he got used to concentrating on the monotonous sound of his own body, heart beating, air filling his lungs then being squeezed out, blood pumping through his arteries.

Gradually, he didn’t need his environment to be so deprived of stimulations. It was enough for him to relax by listening to his body. Close his eyes, and he was able to shut everything else down. Sometimes, it was Catherine’s body he listened to.

A stab of guilt runs through him when he realizes that she wasn’t on his mind since this morning. She is wounded, recovering in a hospital bed, all alone. She understands, of course, but he didn’t even think about her and it feels like he abandoned her.

He blinks into the darkness. This complete darkness is what he needs, but it is still disturbing, because he can’t tell if his eyesight is indeed getting better as the doctor promised. At least his ears stopped ringing. Almost completely.

He reaches out blindly to grab the headphones he knows are next to the bed, puts them on and presses the button.

“Joe, you’re still out there?” His voice falls strangely flat, the special walls in the quiet room absorbing all sound.

“I’m here son,” comes Commander White’s voice, barely a whisper through the headphones, “How are you holding up?”

“I’m fine, sir. Do you know how Lieutenant Rollins is doing?”

“She’s doing fine, Steve.” Joe reassures him. “Worries about you. Which makes her insufferably stubborn, almost as much as you. It took a direct order to keep her in that hospital bed.”

Steve smiles “She isn’t very good at being sidelined.”

“**You** should talk.” comes Joe’s immediate retort.

“That’s not fair, sir!” Steve protests “I didn’t say anything since you put me in this room!”

“And I’m sure it’s because you are trying to get a reduced sentence for good behaviour”.

Steve manages to stay quiet only for a few more seconds. Joe is right of course. “What are my prospects?”
Joe chuckles, but Steve can hear the seriousness in his voice when he speaks “I don’t know, son. The doctor should be here sometime in the morning. Why don’t you try and get some sleep.”

“In the morning! Sir, I feel fine, the headache is almost gone, my hearing is fine. More than fine, in fact, I can hear you rolling your eyes this very minute.”

“Well, I did that out loud on purpose.” Joe answers

“Sir, every second I’m in here, Hesse is one step closer to vanishing.”

Joe remains silent. The Sentinel can hear his slow breathing, the soft rustle of his uniform as he shifts, and Steve can imagine how the older commander changes his stance, probably planting his legs apart and crossing hands over his chest.

“You will get him, Steven.” He finally says “If not now, next time.”

“No, no, Joe,” Steve protested “There can’t be a next time. Next time means more casualties. I lost Freddie, I lost my father, I almost lost Cath…”

“And we almost lost you. You need to heal, Sailor. And I don’t mean just physically. How long has it been since you had a proper sleep?”

“Cut the bullshit,” Steve spits, then adds “Sir” in an attempt to somehow soften the words being thrown toward his commanding officer. “You know that doing nothing is not the way for me.”

Joe sighs. “OK, Fine, just try to lay back for a bit more. I’ll see if I can get the doctor here sooner.”

“Joe…” Steve suspects it’s just an attempt to shut him up

“I am not letting you out of here without the proper approval of the doctor. Rest, Sailor.” Joe’s voice doesn’t leave any room for arguing and Steve complies reluctantly.

“Yes, sir.” He says, losing the headphones and leaning back in his bed.

He doesn’t bother to close his eyes, he will not be able to sleep anyway. Instead he thinks about his next steps.

He hopes Detective Danny Williams is able to make some progress. He dares assume that the Detective keeps his focus on their job. One thing Steve learned in the past two days, especially in the last few hours before coming here, is that Williams takes his duties seriously. The detective kept complaining about being forced to work with him, but his actions were loud and clear as much as his words, and conveyed the contrary. Once he decided to take on the job, and Steve had no illusions that despite the appearances of being forced, it was indeed a decision Danny made himself, he jumped right into it. And besides being good at his job, he was a good partner. Steve doesn’t know the details of what happened in the apartment after he was neutralized. However, he does know that he is still alive, with no bullet holes in him, despite the obviously carefully planned attack. And Danny was there at his side, insisting, annoyingly, to stay there, between the attackers and their target.

The exhausted Sentinel doesn’t even realize he falls asleep until he is woken by tiny bits of noise slipping into the room through the slightly ajar door.

“Keep your eyes closed for now, Commander”, Dr Ellison orders softly, “I’m going to adjust the light.”
Eager as he was to test if he is able to see more than just blurry stains, he follows the order, shutting his eyes and covering them with his hand. “What time is it?” he asks, voice hoarse.

“Six-o-nine” She reports. Steve swallows a curse. “OK, We’re ready,” Comes her voice again. “Go slow.”

Steve removes his hand and blinks a few times. It is still very dark, so he gingerly allows himself to look more deeply.

“What do you see?” Asks the doctor after several seconds

“I see You, doctor.” Steve answers and can’t help the smile from spreading on his lips “Looking very fashionable in night vision goggles.”

It is pouring rain when Steve gets out of the taxi, so he runs the short distance to the door of the old small house and pounds on the door with his fist.

There is shuffling of feet from within, a door creaking open then shut and then Danny appears in the front door.

“Steve!” Danny opens the door and steps aside, letting him in immediately. Steve steps in, looking around at the tiny apartment. “Are you OK?” Danny inquires “I tried to get a hold on someone to check how you were doing, it looks like you navy guys think everything is restricted information. Catherine said you were fine and being treated, but…”

So many words. “I’m fine.” Steve cuts him off with a smile. “What about you, buddy? Your captain told me you took…” he suddenly frowns, looks in the direction of the a door leading out of the room “Who else is here?”

“Ah,” Danny half smiles, “Yes, you do seem to be fine.” he turns towards the door Steve is looking at “Kono, it’s fine, you can come out.”

A young, beautiful, Hawaiian woman steps out of the door. She looks embarrassed, but her eyes hold Steve’s gaze without a flinch. Steve stammers “Oh, I’m sorry,” He holds his hand out, her shake is firm “Steve McGarrett, I didn’t realize I’m…” His gaze moves to Danny, “disturbing…”

Danny rolls his eyes “You’re not. In fact you came just in time. Steve,” the detective gestures towards him, then to the woman “This is officer Kono Kalakaua”

“Kalakaua?” it takes the sentinel half a second to recognize the name “From the roof.”

She smiles hesitantly “Just how every woman likes to be remembered.” He returns her smile, one eyebrow raised “You are John McGarrett’s son, right?” she asks

“Yes, do you know...did you know him?”

“Just by hearsay. My cousin was his partner for a while at HPD, he always spoke very highly of him. I am sorry about your loss.”

“Thank you. Who is your cousin?”
“Chin Ho Kelly.”

Steve thinks for a second, “Yeah, I remember him. Kukui High School, great quarterback, held all the records for a long time.”

“Yeah, that’s him”

“How is he?”

“He’s…” she look hesitantly at Danny “OK.”

Danny seem to take the cue “OK, so a nice reunion, but we have work to do”

Steve nods, dropping for now what obviously became undesirable subject “So, what’s up?”

“Officer Kalakaua...Kono, came to me last night, after you...you know, and she had a very interesting thing to tell me. Go ahead Kono, tell him”

She nods, “I was, as you remembered, on the roof. Detective Kaleo was about 20 feet ahead of me, and there were sun panels on the roof, so I didn’t see all that happened, but when I got there, the perp was with his gun pointing to the ground, facing Kaleo, and Kaleo just shot him. He was about five or six feet away from him, and he just shot him.”

Danny sits back on the only couch in the small room “This is consistent with what the M.E. told me.” He adds “I don’t have the official report just yet, but unofficially he confirmed that the shooting was close range.”

Officer Kalakaua looks at Danny, and he nods, then she says “I confronted him regarding this. He said it was getting dark and he didn’t see very well, and…” She trails off

“And what?” Steve encourages her

“Nothing, that is it.”

It was clear that It wasn’t it, but Steve decided to let it go for now. again. He turns to Danny “So, what are you thinking?”

“I’m thinking that this is our dirty cop. I’m thinking he let these guys in, then, when there was no way for the perp to escape and no way for Kaleo to let him go without raising suspicion, he decided to off him before he gets caught and rats on him.”

Steve frowns, his gaze switching between Danny and the young officer. “OK… so, we need to talk to him.” Danny is still sitting on the couch, stretching his legs, clearly with no intention of moving.

“We can’t just talk to him.” the detective says “He would simply deny it, repeat the excuses he gave Kono…”

“I can make him talk.”

Danny jumps to his feet, waving his hands “No, no, Steve, you can’t, I mean, I’m sure you can but...listen. There is more to this than just forcing him to spill what he knows about Hesse. Actually, I’m pretty sure he doesn’t know anything about Hesse.” Steve frowns again, then he catches yet another quick glance between the two police officers. He decides to remain quiet.

Danny explains “Look, we spend most of the night talking to my partner, Meka is accused of dealing with the Ochoa cartel, very high profile here on the island and they have some dealings in
the main land. He collected a fair amount of materials and came long ago to the conclusion that HPD has someone tipping them off. Then he got too close, and they started planting evidence to frame him. He still couldn’t tell who the guy was, but last night, with Kaleo in mind, we went over his investigation and it all fits. Mostly circumstantial, but it fits.”

“So you think Hesse asked for the cartel’s assistance in this.” Steve determines

“Yes.” Danny’s hands express his consent “And we have to do this carefully, by the book, if we want to get Kaleo and clear my partner as well as getting Hesse.”

Danny is looking at him intently now.

We don’t have time to be careful, the Commander wants to tell him. No time for going by the book. He wants to grab this Kaleo, shake as much information from him as possible, then move on. Hesse was not successful in killing him, but he did manage to delay him considerably. Maybe even enough for him to find another way to get off the island, especially if he made a deal with a strong cartel.

It is hard for Steve to accept that maybe Hesse got away. It means that this was all for nothing.

But then again, as he rushed through leads and suspects in the last few days, Hesse has been one step ahead of him, leading him by the nose, setting traps and distractions.

“Fine.” He finally says “So why don't we leverage him with Kono’s testimony and the M.E. report?”

Again that look between them. They hold it a bit longer this time, and just as Steve finally decides to address these looks, Danny suddenly grabs Steve’s elbow, dragging him through the front door while calling over his shoulder “Excuse us one second, Kono, OK?”

“What are you doing?” Steve protests. It is still pouring buckets, and the narrow awning above the door gives very little protection.

Danny closes the door behind them. “Listen, there is something you should know about her cousin, your old friend apparently, and, shit, your father's old partner…”

Steve says nothing, his eyes boring holes into Danny. Keeping silent is a very effective means of interrogation sometimes.

“He went rogue.” Danny continued “After he was accused of stealing some evidence money… well...more like suspected of stealing, he left HPD and after a while... teamed up with the bad guys. Everyone knows he is now one of Ochoa’s boys.”

Steve works hard to keep his face expressionless. He knew Kelly, or used to know him, he’d never thought...and to think of his father being partners with that kind of a guy, it is … he couldn’t tell what it is. If Kelly was a guide, which is more than probable, it is even worse….Steve forced himself to focus back on Danny, who is still talking. “What?”

“I said,” Danny repeats slowly “that this is why Kalakaua’s statement won’t hold. They would question it, like they would question everything she ever does in the force. Guilt by association. And I feel like an asshole, but although I really want to believe her myself, I don’t really know her. You think you can do your thing with her?”

“My thing?”
“Yes, your thing.” Danny waves his hands in circles “See if she’s truthful.”

“You know this thing doesn’t hold in court, right?”

“I don’t need it for court. I need it for me. We will figure out how to bring Kaleo down, and Hesse” Danny adds immediately “But I know I’m not completely objective here, I really want it to be Kaleo, I just need to know…”

“Alright.” Steve cuts him off

“Alright?” Danny’s hand movements stops abruptly, hands in mid air, as he looks at him for final confirmation.

“Yes.” The Sentinel says “Can we get back in? My socks are getting wet by now.”

Danny snorts as he opens the door again “Aren’t you tough navy guys supposed to like getting wet?”

Steve rolls his eyes, then his gaze focuses on the young officer. The uncertainty is evident in her eyes, but again, she does not look away and holds his gaze.

“Officer Kalakaua,” Steve doesn’t waste time. He looks in her eyes, monitoring closely the tiniest movement of her pupils, his ears find the slightly elevated beating of her heart, distinguishing it from other, similar noises in the room, the rhythm of the contracting blood vessels, his nose picks up the slight scent of sweat. “Detective Williams told me about Kelly’s current employer.” he keeps his voice harsh, but even “And I need to know if you are connected to it in any way, or aspire to be connected to any illegal activities.”

“What?” She pales. Her eyes moves to Danny, and the commander can tell that the surprise at the question is replaced quickly by a disappointed indignance.

“Look at me.” He commands, and she complies immediately “Answer my question honestly and we will never speak of it again.”

“No!” she says adamantly “I... have no dealings with my cousin...”

“Do not lie to me.” He warns, cutting her off harshly. His voice is still low and even, devoid of any emotion.

She swallows, losing what little color she still had behind her tanned complexion. “He is my cousin,” she finally answers softly “and I love him despite his... and I did try to help him, I will try to help him if he’d let me, but I will never, ever, collaborate with people like the Ochoa cartel. And I will do anything to bring them down, even...even if it means putting my cousin away. Because I’d rather see him in jail than dealing with them or...dying for them.”

Steve holds her unwavering gaze for few more seconds. Then he visibly loosens his stance, putting his hands on his hips and releasing her from his gaze.

“Very well.” He looks at Danny, slightly nodding, “I assume you have something that might be considered a plan?”
“Are you sure she is up to it?” Steve is folded into one of the tiny chairs stuffed into the van’s rear cabin, his long legs tucked beneath it, looking mighty uncomfortable in the small space left by the complicated surveillance equipment and Danny himself.

“Oh, Now you are asking?” Danny says incredulously “A bit too late, don’t you think?” Danny himself is very uncomfortable in that cramped, miniature, claustrophobic space, but somehow, seeing that hulk of a man making an effort to use as little of this space as possible, and succeeding gracefully, makes him feel a bit better. This and the fact that the door is an arm’s reach away.

Steve just shrugs in response, doesn’t even bother to look at him. Danny knows that the Sentinel is listening in on officer Kalakaua. He himself, however, needs to use the equipment in the van. The Thermal imaging confirms that there is only one person inside the apartment with Kono. they are currently in separate rooms, Kaleo being surprisingly civil and offered her a beverage, and is now busy in the kitchen making her one. Danny notes that the suspected-to-be-dirty detective didn’t seem to mind leaving her alone in a room. Which either means he has nothing to hide, or he is arrogant enough to not fear her.

A thought crosses his mind as he watches the red and yellow stains of the thermal signature moving around the screen.

“So, Superman, are you able to see through walls?” He asks keeping his eyes on screen.

Steve chuckles “You mean like your thermal imaging there? No, Danny, I can’t.”

“Hmmm.” Danny manages to lace his disappointment into that one sound, and it seems that Steve caught it, because he continues to explain.

“I have the ability to sense body heat from quite a distance, but it is less efficient than listening in, the thing I am currently trying to do, so be quiet.”

“Ha! Zero to superman, one for standard tech equipment!” Danny announces gleefully.

“What?”

“I can see what’s going on inside the house, talk and listen at the same time, thanks to this piece of technology.” He explains as he waves his hands at the screens surrounding them “You need quiet.”

“No.” Steve shakes his head “I need you to be quiet. As I mentioned before, for some unknown reason, it is nearly impossible for me to tune you out, and it seems that it is nearly impossible for you to shut up. Not a good combination.”

For a second there Danny wonders if he just received a compliment or an insult. Probably both. Anyway he really needs a distraction, and nothing seems to be happening inside the apartment for now, counting out the exciting mission of boiling water.

“So…” Danny breaks the silence, which lasted about one second, again, and Steve releases an exasperated sigh “What happened back there? At the apartment? I know the light must have hurt
your eyes more than it hurt mine, but it looked like…” he Shifted his eyes from the screen to the tall man next to him, who now looked back straight at him, those prying eyes staring down at him unblinkingly.

“Keep you eyes on the screen, Williams,” Steve commands “since I’m currently unable to keep track due to annoying background noise.”

Danny sighs and looks back, ignoring the snark in his counterpart’s voice. He doesn’t expect an answer, and his mind starts searching for another way to be distracted, but then the Sentinel speaks.

“He set up a camera in the vent, as you already know. He waited for me to be at my most vulnerable state, focused on searching the darkness in there, then he switched that light and a very loud, high pitched noise.” Danny risks a quick glance, catching Steve’s harsh expression “I wasn’t expecting that.”

“How come I didn’t hear anything?”

“It was outside of human normal hearing frequency. To keep his hired guns functional, I’m guessing. And not to attract any unnecessary attention.”

“You mean like a dog whistle?” Danny queries.

“Again with the dog?” The annoyance in Steve’s voice now is much more to Danny’s liking. Less self reproach, more exasperation at him.

“Well what else am I gonna compare you to?” Danny doesn’t bother hiding his grin “Your abilities are beyond human, like straight out of the animal kingdom. Maybe if our Neanderthal ancestors, whose behaviour and decorum you embody, had your abilities, they wouldn’t go extinct.”

“Decorum?”

Danny stares for a second longer at the screen, before the next sentence leaves his lips. “Yes, decorum, as in a certain way to behave in a civilized society.”

“I know what decorum means.” Steve interrupts, annoyed, “you just compared me to a dog and a neanderthal, and you are criticizing my people skills?”

“I’m very good with normal people. I can’t criticize you on your attention span, or any physical or sense abilities. What's left?”

“How about not criticizing?”

Danny opens his eyes wide and barks a laugh. “If I don’t show you the error of your ways, you’ll just keep making the same mistakes”.

“Oh, well then, thank you, Daniel, for taking the guide’s job to a whole new level of chaperoning a high school dance”

“Thanks, I actually have a daughter who will one day go to a prom, and I hope someone with my degree of alert...Oh, the guy is back with Kono.”

“Thank god.”

Danny turns up the volume in his headphones.
“Thanks,” he hears Officer Kalakaua say

“I am glad you understood there is no reason to make noise over this, officer.” Kaleo says “I made a mistake, but it just cost a perp his life…”

“Oh, I know it was not a mistake.” the young officer intejects.

A few seconds of silence follow, and when Kaleo speaks again his voice is cold and poisonous “If this is what you think, then I’m glad you understand that this kind of accusation would only hurt you.”

“Don’t be so sure about that, Kaleo” Kono spits at him, and Danny can see the red-orange figure that is Kaleo step closer to her- the red-yellow figure sitting on a chair.

“Officer Kalakaua,” He hisses in what sounds like barely contained anger, “Why did you come here?”

“I wanted to tell you that I know you killed this guy intentionally,” Danny is very impressed with how she keeps her voice calm “I know he was Ochoa, and I know you are in with them.”

Kaleo is now leaning over her, close, the two heat signatures marking them merge to one “Well, maybe you know too much then.” Kaleo whispers menacingly, the threat is obvious in his voice as well as in his words.

“He’s gonna attack her!” Danny calls out in alarm, jumping out of the chair. Steve grabs his arm.

“No, he is acting. He is very calm, complacent. Too sure of himself.”

Danny looks at him, Steve’s eyes are focused on some unknown spot, expression blank. Danny sits back, taking a deep breath that does nothing to calm his nerves.

“Look, Kaleo,” Kono’s voice is shaking a bit, Danny can’t tell if it’s an act or if she’s about to break. He shoots a look at Steve again, the guy doesn’t budge. “I know that no one in HPD will take me seriously. Ever. I know I have no real future in HPD, except as a metermade, and frankly, I’m tired of trying to prove myself to a bunch of stickups that would never believe me. So…whatever it is you’re involved in, I want in.”

Danny holds his breath looking at the big stain on screen, now barely distinguishable as two separate human beings.

Then Kaleo laughs and moves back. One for Superman, Danny thinks. This technology has no ability to monitor complete human physiology. Even if it did, he would not be able to interpret it to moods.

“You want in?” Kaleo snorted a bit more “If you want in, you should go to your cousin, your freakin’ dirty family.”

“I did. Chin Ho wouldn’t let me near them.” The strain in her voice is evident. But it seems to serve her.

“Is that it?” Kaleo still sound amused “Interesting. He doesn’t want to share his good fortune with his family? Or is it something else?” There is something weird in his voice that Danny can’t quit place, but it makes him feel uneasy. Kono remains quiet. “Assuming you are correct,” Kaleo continues after a moment “and I am involved with these guys...what can you do to help? They have
no use for a metermade.”

“Well, for starts I can keep quiet about what I saw. Back you up if you need me to. Secondly, when some interesting information comes my way, you know, like when they use me as an errand girl to get reports from the M.E...I can give you heads up on coming trouble.” Danny can hear papers shuffle. “The report shows shooting at close range. You need to get your story straight. And if you take me on as... let’s say a trainee, I can back you up.”

There is silence for a long while. Then Kaleo orders “Stay here”

Danny can see the heat signature that he assumes is Kaleo, move away.

“He is making a call” Steve says

Danny busies himself with another piece of equipment, that doesn’t seem to cooperate. “I can’t trace it. It is probably not from his phone, but I am not ruling out the possibility that I have no idea what I’m doing here”

“OK.” Steve says impatiently, “be quiet and watch my six.”

Danny’s protest dies on his lips when the Sentinel stays put and just take a deep breath. With some relief he realizes that in contrary to his initial thought that the damn ninja is about to storm in, he was just planning to...dive deeper. Zone out. So watch my six means pull me out if the world is on fire. He can do that. He did that before. And that's two for Superman. Better at dealing with surveillance surprises.

He looks at the sentinel for a few seconds, as his eyes, that already seems out of focus, start darting around. It reminds him of the disturbing behaviour he witnessed outside the burning warehouse, although this time, aside from the eyes, the commander seems calm, collected...stable. It still looks disturbing. Danny keeps his gaze for a few more seconds, the logic being that he needs to get use to this. Then he wonders about that very thought. Why would he need to get used to this? Hesse would either get caught, or disappear within the next few days. Then the Sentinel would be out of his life too. He looks away, forcing himself to concentrate on the screen and audio feed, even though he can hear just one side of the conversation, rather than the odd feeling coming over him.

“...as you asked,” Kaleo barks into the phone “it was your men who screwed-up, so I had no choice. Now I need help clean up your mess!” Danny can see his heat signature pacing back and forth in a separate room, away from Kono.

“I can deal with the cop and the report, but you will have to send someone to clean up. And you might need to deal with the M.E.”

“Shit!” Danny exclaims, then switches his comm on “Kono, get out of there NOW!”

The commander is already moving past him and out of the van, Danny holds back only the necessary seconds to throw the headphones and switch to his ear piece. Now he can only hear Kono’s side of the conversation as he runs up the stairs leading to the second floor, trying to keep up with the Navy ninja

“I...thought we were done here...” She explains, it’s obvious she didn’t have time to split.

“Now? Yeah, sure, of course, I told you I want this.” Kono’s voice says in reassurance

“Hold on, Kono, two seconds” Danny says into the comm.
“Here? Why? Can’t I leave it in the car or....”

The Commander bursts through the door without a second of hesitation, the detective, two seconds after him, gun in his hand pointing forward.

But by the time it took them to bust the door, Kaleo has Kono held against him, one arm around her shoulders, the other holding a gun to her temple, and he is backing away from the door.

“Let her go,” the Commander’s voice is cold and commanding, Gun pointing at the dirty cop “It’s over for you.”

Kaleo shifts his gaze to Danny “Damn it, you nosy son of a bitch! I knew…” he trails off.

Danny, unlike the commander, can’t keep the anger out of his voice. “Knew what, Kaleo? That you should have incriminated me as well as Hanamoa, you little piece of shit?”

“Back off!” Kaleo shouts back “You are right, it’s over, and you know I have nothing to lose!”

“You do.” Steve answers, and it seems to Danny his tone causes the temperature in the room to drop a few degrees, serving to cool even his own anger “you are still a tiny pawn in this, and your fate depends greatly on your cooperation.”

Kaleo laughs, short maniacal burst “Can you keep me out of jail?”

“I can keep you out of the grave. Drop the gun. I will not ask again.”

“You drop it!” Kaleo yells, gesturing with his gun towards them “Drop it or I’ll shoo…” the dirty cop relinquishes the end of his sentence in favor of a pained cry as Kono takes advantage of his momentary distraction smashing her boot into his leg, and the back of her head into his nose. Before Danny, or Steve, have a chance to do anything, the young officer is out of Kaleo’s grip, kicking the gun out of his hand and slamming her stunned assailant onto the wall behind him. A second later he is laying on his stomach, Kono sits on top of him, holding his hand twisted painfully behind his back. “Thanks for the distraction, guys.” She says “Throw me those cuffs, will you?”

Steve smirks.

Danny hands her his cuffs.

Chapter End Notes

Ass kicking Kono is the best!
Kaleo Talks. Alot. Steve recognizes this tactic, though it was never part of his own repertoire. The scumbag realized quickly that he won’t be able to get away with a lie, so he masks the half truths in massive amounts of information and words, and the Sentinel becomes frustrated with each word coming out of his mouth. Steve finds himself looking at Danny, searching for some kind of salvation, either the man would be willing to take charge, as words seem to be his area of expertise, or maybe he would give a permission to hold the fucker by the throat and hurt him till he produces something useful.

But the Detective looks as frustrated as he is.

They are still in Kaleo’s apartment, the owner cuffed to one of his own chairs under the watchful eye of officer Kalakaua, so Steve grabs Danny’s arm and pulls him into the kitchen to talk in private.

“What’s with the face?” Danny asks him as soon as they are out of an earshot

“What face?”

“You look like you are going to have an aneurysm”.

“I’m not goi…” Steve lets out a frustrated breath “Look, this guy, he’s...I’ve met fanatic terrorists that were more dependable than him.”

“I can imagine.” Danny agrees “He somehow manages to be completely unuseful.”

Steve releases a short noisy breath, shifting his weight from one leg to the other. “He can be, but not like this.” he says “The guy he was talking to on the phone, he told him to call Makona when he is done with Kalakaua. The name ring any bells?”

Danny seem to consider for a few moments “Nope. sorry.”

“It sounded like he is a Fixer for them.” Steve observes “Maybe he knows something about Hesse.”

“OK, so...what? Have Sir-babble-alot there set up a meeting? Then what?”

“Then he shows up, grab him and get him to talk.”

“McGarrett,” Danny speaks slowly. “Again. We need something incriminating in order to get an arrest. Get leverage that is not directly related to one's sense of self preservation in face of a deranged ninja with a gun. If you just pick him up, you have nothing on him. It is not like chasing down a terrorist in god knows where and then making him disappear until he decides to talk. We have rules. Regulations. Laws.”

Steve huffs through his nose in indignance. “Kono can play dead then, Kaleo would hand the body to him. Would that be enough incrimination?”

“Are you serious?” Danny’s eyes focus on him sharply “What if this cleaner decides to verify it is a body and puts some bullets through her head, just to make sure? What if Kaleo decides it is a good opportunity to get away? I am not letting this guy out of his handcuffs, or out of my sight for that matter.”
Steve thinks for a moment, recalling the phone conversation he listened to, between Kaleo and his
criminal counterpart, ignoring Danny’s gaze. “OK, as far as I recall from the conversation, Kaleo
didn’t mention who that cop witness was, or even that it was a woman. I’ll play dead.”

“What?” Danny’s voice rises, and Steve gestures him to lower the volume “No, no, how is that
any better?! Correct me if I’m wrong, but deflecting bullets is not one of your abilities!”

“Yeah, but I’ll know if anyone is about to harm me…”

“Of course someone is about to harm you! they are there to dispose of your body!”

“It’s different, Danny, It will be fine”

“...And what about Kaleo?” the detective continues uninterrupted

“If I’m there, I can make sure he does his part, respond quickly if he doesn’t. And you will be
close by. Trust me, it will work, I’ve done this before.” Steve is already planning the details in his
mind, only half listening as the detective keeps his angry rejection

“Trust you! So, assuming you recall correctly and this Makona guy does not know to expect a
female officer, you will be able to somehow sense if he decides to confirm the kill and stop him in
time, and make sure Kaleo plays nice and doesn’t rabbit all in the same time.”

“Exactly.” Steve confirms with a slight delay, the sudden silence alerting him it’s time to respond.

“There is no way I am letting you do this!” Danny shouts again, hand waving through the air, then
remains frozen in place halfway between them.

“I can help.” Kono chimes in from behind Danny, and the detective spins sharply towards her.
Steve wonders if he didn’t notice her before. “Maybe sit in the car with him,” She continues “as if
he agreed to take me as his partner?”

“No!” Danny’s finger punctuates the air “Do not encourage him, this is crazy!”

“You have a better Idea?” Steve asks him.

“I don’t know! Maybe! If you just let me think about it for a while…”

“We don’t have time for this, Williams, we have no idea when they are going to make a move on
the M.E., and the minute they notice the protection detail on him, they will know something is
wrong. We need to move fast.”

Danny opens his mouth but no words come out.

Steve counts to five in his head, and when the silence persists he says “Good,” and nods
approvingly “then it’s settled.”

An hour and a closely monitored phone call between Kaleo and the Fixer later, Steve is cramped
into the tiny space of Kaleo’s car trunk, parked on the side of a remote road, waiting.

Williams insisted on two things, and Steve agreed readily. Kono comes as backup, but she will not
be in the car with Steve and Kaleo, and Kaleo will wear a tracking bracelet on his ankle.

“We have a pickup truck pulling in” Danny’s whisper comes through his ear piece.

It was yet another reason Steve prefered working alone, or just with his guide. Sometimes it required way too much talking, just to hide the fact that talking was not really needed. With both Officer Kalakaua and Kaleo on the comm, it was really necessary. Not to mention the fact that right now, he really needed to inform Williams that there were three people in the approaching vehicle without sounding psychic.

“Stay alert, Williams.” He whispers back into the com “There might be more than one or two persons in that car.”

“Copy that.” is the Detective’s answer, Steve hopes he understood. “They are stopping. Kaleo, do your thing, and I swear, if I suspect anything fishy... Kono here tells me she is an excellent sniper.”

Steve hears Kaleo step out of the car. The man is too calm to his liking, heart rate only slightly elevated considering what’s at stake. Even if the scumbag planned something, which Steve highly doubts he had time to do, he should be more nervous. This type of calm usually meant a sociopath, hardly caring about the outcome of a potentially lethal situation.

The Sentinel moves his focus to the other car. The engine is left running while the man in the passenger seat gets out. The third man in the car is...not well. Steve can smell the blood, the fear, hear the broken, half breaths.

“I spot three men.” Danny reports. “One remains in the driver’s seat, the other just pulled someone from the backseat. He looks injured. Beaten. Hands bound behind his back.”

Maybe this fixer has decided to kill two birds with one stone. They are close to the car now, A deep rough voice, belonging no doubt to the guy in charge, barks “Get in the Car.”

Kaleo hesitates, Steve notices a tinge of uncertainty from the dirty cop for the first time. “Do as he says” Steve commands quietly.

The rear door of Kaleo’s car is opened, and the injured man is shoved in. Danny confirms in words what Steve can sense. Then the guy who spoke, probably the Fixer, gets into the passenger sit and Danny swears into the comm.

“Shit, Steve…”

“Your package is in the back?” The man asks

“Yes...want to see it?” Kaleo suggests

“No need, Drive.”

“Where?”

“I’ll tell you as we go.”

“Steve!” Danny’s voice through the comm penetrates the Sentinel’s focus as easily as ever, “I’m pulling the plug, this is…”

“No, Danny!” Steve answers in barely a whisper, “We have nothing yet, Keep tracking.” He senses the injured man in the back hold his breath and his heart rate slightly quickens. Steve has little
doubt that he heard his whisper. He holds his own breath as well.

The car is quiet for few seconds, sliding back to the main road, and Steve can only wait in silence as Danny releases a stream of words into his ear “This is crazy, we can’t follow close enough, and god knows where he is taking you, it might be somewhere we can’t follow at all, you will be left with no backup, with these... Steve, I’m stopping that car!”

The Commander has no choice. Nothing to lose at this point. He risks a short, hushed “NO!”

The injured man in the back coughs and curses.

“Be quiet back there or I’ll gag you!” comes the Fixer’s deep voice.

He continues to cough and moan, and it takes Steve two seconds to note that the coughs aren’t real. The Man is covering for him.

“Steve, can you hear me?” This time Danny’s voice comes directly from the man, talking from a distance, not through the comm.

“Danny…” Steve affirms quietly, hesitantly, to the comm. Sure enough the injured man coughs grows louder

“Listen to me, Steve,” Danny speaks softly, Steve marvels again at how easy it is to hear him like this “Kaleo may take this opportunity to rat on us. On you. Score some points and get away.”

“Follow and keep your distance.” Steve responds, making an effort to acknowledge what he heard without tipping of the unofficial conversation. The injured man moans loudly. Steve thanks him silently. “I’ll make sure you'd know if...I need help.”

“Who is this guy?” Kaleo’s voice comes through the car and the comm at the same time

“Not your concern.” Comes the sharp answer “Get off the main road here, to the right.”

They drive on an empty road for long minutes, Steve hears the truck that the Fixer came with following closely, and allows himself short ventures to check the distant roar of the Detective’s Camaro from far off. Steve’s own position is far from comfortable, and he slowly and discretely stretches each muscle separately to prevent, or rather delay, the threatening stiffness. It is hot, sweat gathers on his face, making him worry about the carefully applied makeup he had on, to make his complexion seem deathly pale.

“Stop here.” Comes the command finally “Stay in the car, Keep an eye on him.”

“Sure” Kaleo affirms.

The Sentinel can hear the rustle of leaves around them, the short bursts of wind howling. The smell of the ocean not far off. He hears the pickup truck that followed them come to a halt, not far off to their left, engine still running. He readies himself to play dead, letting his muscles go completely slack, eyes closed. As soon as he hears the door slams behind the Fixer, he whispers “Show time, get here fast.”

“Copy” Danny replies, and the Camaro engine roars as they pickup speed.

The Sentinel dives into sensing the Fixer. Heavy footsteps. Steady heartbeat. Sweat. The faint smell of metal, grease and gunpowder to indicate the weapon he carries, that is still holstered as he steps towards the back of the car. Steve’s hand tightens around his own weapon beneath the cover
wrapped around him. But instead of approaching the trunk hood, Makona moves away, and then there’s this slight jolt of his heartbeat as the first tell tale sign that something is about to happen.

The steady hum of the pickup truck engine from their side turns into a roar as it jumps forward towards them. Steve has merely a second to shout “Get out of the car!” as he kicks the trunk lock mechanism trying to pop it. The larger vehicle slams into them from the side, smashing into the car and pushing it forcefully to the side.

Steve ignores the sharp pain in his head as he is thrown into the wall of his confinement. He keeps kicking at the now twisted hood. The cacophony of metal hitting metal, straining engines, stone and dirt bouncing off screeching wheels fills the small space around him, along with the distinct stench of charred rubber. The pickup backs away, and there’s a moment of relative silence. Steve manages to get hood open to a crack when there’s another roar-screech-slam, and then nothing.
Going Sideways

Even before he hits the brakes of the Camaro, the Detective’s brain is analysing the scene in front of him. The first thing he sees is the dark pickup, wheels straining against the ground, kicking stones and dirt into the air. And It is pushing against the battered Toyota, pressed to its left side, forcing it slowly towards the edge of a cliff.

The curse hanging from his lips is swallowed by the “Holy shit fuck!” coming from the young officer in the passenger seat beside him. For a fraction of a second he considers his options, the next fracture is dedicated to sheer panic, as he understands he doesn’t even have a fracture of a second to consider his options. Then he reminds himself that he is an experienced professional, so he has the privilege of trusting his instincts. Though he is not completely sure if his instincts are equipped to deal with it, as he never encountered any situation even remotely similar to this. It seem to happen a lot lately, since... Time’s up!

The Camaro is kicking its own share of dirt as it comes to a screeching halt barely a foot away from the pickup. Kono is actually out of the car before it’s even completely stopped, her gun in hand and she is already pointing it at the driver yelling “HPD, stop the car now!”

It takes Danny merely a second to slid over the hood of his car and be at her side. Only the driver is in the truck, raising his hands, looking at them in obvious alarm. The Fixer is nowhere in sight, Danny registers worriedly, but the truck’s forward motion is stopped. He shoots a quick glance towards the wrecked metal death trap that was once Kaleo’s car. It is tilted sideways, hanging between the pickup’s front- two left wheels slightly raised in the air- and the cliff’s edge, right wheels are already over it, and it's resting on its undercarriage. He can see the trunk hood is open to a sliver.

“Get out...” he starts yelling at the driver turning his eyes back to him. His eyes catch a movement from the back side of the pickup. “Gun!”

The detective ducks behind the camaro, pulling Kono after him. The air is echoing with gun fire, but even before Danny picks himself from the ground to a more reasonable shootout position, he strains his ears listening in dread for the sound of the pickup jumping forward again. It doesn’t come, Instead there’s a door slamming, suggesting that maybe the driver decided to abandon his murder weapon. He joins Kono, peeking over his car’s hood, ducking back after releasing few shots. He is pretty sure it’s the Fixer, now taking cover behind the back of the truck.

“Cover me!” Kono orders quietly, and before he has any idea what she is up to, she jumps back towards the front doors of the pickup. So he covers her, firing few more rounds to keep the Cartel guy at bay. He hears the door open and then slam shut, engine coming to life again and the truck starts to back away.

There’s a crack of metal as the two cars seperate, and pained grunts comes from both side of the large vehicle, one from Makona who is being thrown to the ground as the pickup slams into him, the other from the occupants of the clobbered car as its left side drops heavily back to the ground in jarring violence.

Danny fights the urge to look back at the car holding Steve. Keeping his eyes and gun on the downed perp, he half slides over the Camaro hood again, approaching him carefully.

“Kono! The other guy!” he shouts.
“Ran off into the woods! Should I chase him?”

Danny answers without thinking “No, no, get over here, take care of this guy here.” the said guy seems to recover, his hand tightens around his weapon, “stay down! Drop the weapon!”. Insistent, or deaf, Makona stretches the arm holding the gun towards the Detective, so Danny shoots. Another pained cry follows, and the stretched arm jerks backwards, gun dropping, as the slugs hit their mark.

Kono is now there, kicking the gun further away, rolling the man unceremoniously to his stomach, ignoring the curses as she pulls both his hands backwards, with no special attention to the one with the bullet holes, and cuffs him.

Danny finally allows himself to lower the gun. He rushes to the car, already holstering the weapon, in order to use both his hands to crank open the trunk. “Steve? Steve!” He raises his voice at first before trying to lower it again. Damn that sensitive hearing.

The trunk’s hood opens a few inches then remains stuck. There is no sound or movement coming from inside. Kono is back again at his side “Is he OK?”

”He’s not responding. Help me get that open!”.

Kono is examining the drop right at their feet, her gaze automatically draws Danny’s after it. It is a sixty feet drop at least, into sharp rocks and ocean at the bottom of it. The detective tears his eyes from it, Kono’s shoulder now touching his, slim fingers shoved through the crack. Together they start pulling. A few futile attempts and several seconds later Danny calls “hang on, I’ve got a crowbar in the trunk”. He starts to move back to his car, but Kono, just as before, dashes away “I’ll get it!” she calls after her.

“Help me out!” Kaleo’s desperate call comes from to front, then a loud bang as he starts kicking the door. The car jolts and then starts sliding towards the chasm.

“Stop that! Are you trying to get you all killed?” Danny yells at him, glad to be able to vent at someone.

Kaleo stills, but shouts again “I can’t open the door, get me out of here!”

“Don’t move” Comes a calm voice, Danny guesses it belongs to the third occupant of the car, still in the back seat “You’ll cause the car to topple off. Just stay put and be patient, they’ll get us out.”

”Right, listen to the man and let us do our jobs!” Danny waves a hand towards the man, and looks back to see Kono return.

She hands him the crowbar, and with a little effort the hood is open.

Steve is slump on his side, head and shoulders curled against the far side of the trunk. His eyes are closed, face slack, pale and covered with blood. After the initial pang of panic the Detective remembers that that just might be part of the disguise they prepared. Yet the man remained unmoving.”Steve, can you hear me?” Danny’s voice is surprisingly soft, even to himself. He reaches inside, and hesitates for a second before touching Steve’s shoulder.

Strong fingers grab his wrist painfully, “Arrgghh!” Steve blurs an angry moan, his muscles tense, he stretches his legs in a jerky motion rocking the car dangerously again. His eyes still shut. Danny tries to withdraws his hand quickly, and the vice grip relents.
“Don’t...touch…” Steve mutters between clenched teeth.

“Sorry,” Danny keeps his voice hushed “had to revive you somehow. Can you get out?”

Steve takes two deep breaths through his nose “Yeah...Yeah, just...give me a minute.”

“Hey,” Comes Kaleo’s voice again “Maybe while we wait for miss contortionist there to gather his marbles, you can get me out?”

“Shut up!” Danny and Kono yell together, then Kono continues “or we will just leave you there, Okole puka”

“Kono?” The injured man from the backseat voices in amazement, then after a second “Watch your mouth, Keiki”

Danny looks at Kono as her eyes widen. “Chin?” She moves quickly to the back door, looking through the cracked window “What the hell?” she starts pulling at the door violently.

Kaleo chuckles, “Well, if it isn’t the famous Chin Ho fucking Kelly” he announces “What did you do to get invited to this party?”

By the time the Ambulance and HPD reach the scene, Steve is already walking around, after satisfying himself that Makona is not going to talk, even under the pressure of torture. He did that by actually torturing the man, pushing Makona’s own healthy hand into the gunshot wound on the other. Kono, who was reluctant at first to release the guy from the handcuffs, looked with serious interest at the horrific display. Danny feared she was taking notes. As for himself, he didn’t spare Steve his thoughts about the method, but his heart wasn’t really into it. It didn’t last long though, the guy passed out, the commander said something about trying an alternate route with this specific scumbag, and let Kono slip the cuffs back on, as he started roaming the scene.

Danny gave up any further attempt to talk to the man after the Commander asked him assertively to keep quiet because he needs to examine the scene without distractions. So he just looked at him, studying this new version of zoning out, as the Sentinel walked around, sniffing, frowning, gliding his fingers over this and that and appearing completely oblivious to everything around him except what he chose to focus on. Including complete disregard to the fact that he had a bump the size of a tennis ball to the back of his head, and his right shoulder and arm seemed to be out of order and out of place. So much so that at one point he steps determinedly much too close to the steep drop, causing Danny to yell a warning and earn a death stare in return, accompanied with an angry shush.

Kono is sitting on a big stone not far off with her cousin. It is apparent that the exchange of words between them is heated even though they are keeping their voices hushed.

Kaleo, tied up and seated on the ground close to the Fixer, is also watching Steve. Although the dirty cop’s expression is neutral, Danny doesn’t like how his gaze is fixed on the man.

When he sees the approaching emergency vehicles, Danny stepped closer to Steve who is now crouching again next to the Fixer, disturbingly still in his position, just staring and breathing.

He braces himself against the intense Sentinel-Mode stare that will no doubt be pointed at him shortly. “Steve?” He asks tentatively, and there’s that stare, “HPD is here. Should I keep them away for a bit longer?”
“No.” The stare softens “No, I’m done.” He stands up, walking away from the two perps. Danny follows. “There are traces of blood in the back of the pickup,” the Sentinel informs the detective, talking quietly “they should look beneath the tonneau cover clamps in the back, and also on the glove compartment handle on the passenger side, the inner part. It’s not recent. There is also a hair strand between the front seats, not belonging to this guy.” he motions towards to the fixer with a nod, “I am guessing it will help you in identifying the fleeing driver, make sure they find it.”

Danny raises his eyebrows, nodding approvingly “How efficient. A one man Crime Scene Unit. I’ll go talk to the police, you get yourself to that ambulance.”

Steve nods and walks off.

Ten minutes later, the area is swarmed with cops and Danny is finished with giving orders, he finds Steve standing next to Kono and Kelly, the latter sitting in the back of an ambulance, a very upset EMT trying to work on him around the other two. He wonders what should he do with the guy. He can’t arrest him, he seem to be a victim in this. But he might know something, as he is related to the cartel.

Danny approaches, catching Kelly in mid sentence.

“…sort through what I gathered till now, hopefully it’s enough. But it has to be done quickly.”

“OK, I’m sure the FBI can handle it.” the Commander answers impatiently “Kono said you heard something that might help me.”

“What’s going on?” Danny intejects, looking at the three of them. The EMT mutters an exasperated ‘great, another one’ Danny ignores him, now looking at Steve “When I sent you to the bus, I meant that you should get checked, maybe even treated…”

“I’m awaiting my turn.” the tall man barks at him and turns to Kelly again “you were saying?”

“I didn’t hear a name,” Kelly continues “but I’m pretty sure they were setting up to move someone high profile, or deep pocketed. Ochoa talked about releasing one of the shipments a few days ahead of schedule to accommodate this guy, that his payment will compensate for shipping out half empty.”

“Yeah” Steve smiles broadly, moving to place his good hand on the man’s shoulder just to have it shoved away by the medic “this is great, Chin Ho, thanks.” he starts moving away from the bus, Danny hurries after him.

“Hey, Steve, where do you think you’re going?”

“You heard the man, Hesse is about to board a ship out of here any time now, we need to…”

“We do not need to do anything right now. You need to wait here, near the bus for that man to fix your shoulder before you can go anywhere, or are you planning to simply ignore the fact that your arm is out of its socket and face Hesse when he has a clear advantage? As your newly appointed guide, I’m pulling rank here…”
Steve stops and turns to face him “Pulling rank?”

“Yes, pulling rank! Pulling rank and telling you to stay put!”

“Why are you yelling at me?”

“I am not yelling at you!” Danny yells, “I am just not ready to pull your ass out of another crazy situation, especially at your current condition!”

“Missions sometime go sideways, Danny, it happens, and as you can see we got what we wanted…”

“Sideways! Need I remind you that you were just about to go flying off a cliff wearing a car!?“

Steve’s annoyed expression suddenly change drastically as his lips spread into a huge grin “You were worried about me.”

“More like worried about the paperwork needed to justify recovering your body, and about the wrath of one lieutenant Rollings to whom I promised to keep an eye on you. Though I must say, I had no idea what I was agreeing to!” he sighs. “After you’ve been treated, and if the paramedic gives you a...even a vague ‘all clear’” he grimaces, “then, and only then, we will go after Hesse”.

“Don’t worry, buddy,” Steve says, still grinning “I’m gonna get fixed, but we need to at least start going through ships, schedules, have someone take the names from Chin Ho…”

“Chin Ho? Now we’re befriending a gang…”

“FBI agent.” Steve cuts him off and starts walking again.
It is a race against time. First they need to get the information from Chin Ho before his handlers got their hands on him. Once the FBI understands that their agent is compromised and out of the cartel, the chances of getting this information in time is slim. It would require paperwork, official requests and getting past ambitious supervisors suspecting someone wants to steal their case. So he had to get Chin’s laptop to him as soon as possible, so he can get the needed information from it. He had no doubt that Kelly’s house was already searched by the cartel, and is now being watched. Hopefully they did not find his stash.

A very worried Danny was determined to get him to a hospital first, since the medics on scene were not successful at fixing his dislocated shoulder, and insisted that his forearm might also be broken. Steve knows he is right, and he has to admit the pain is getting a bit too much. His head hurts, and his right arm and shoulder are throbbing, and it’s dulling his senses in his effort to push it aside.

So he reluctantly asks Joe to send some people to retrieve Chin’s stuff and contends himself with keeping a close eye on Chin Ho in the hospital while both of them are treated.

Chin, grateful for his rescue and probably relieved his cousin finally knows what he has been doing, is actually more than happy to help, postponing the call to his superiors. Officer Kalakaua proves herself efficient in back office work as well as kicking ass, and under Danny’s supervision is currently emerged in getting all the needed details from all the ports of Oahu. Danny is taking a shot at interrogating Makona, the Cartel Fixer, and pushes forward the efforts to identify and find the escaped driver.

It’s strange, just sitting there and watching the doctor putting a cast on his arm, while a team of competent people handles details of his mission. Although he aches to get back out there and do his job, it also feels right to just…let them do what needs to be done and get himself ready for the main event.

By the time the doctor is finished, Chin already gave the information to Kalakaua and she got busy cross checking the information. Steve decides he can spare a few minutes to visit Rollins.

She is happy to see him, and he updates her on his progress.

“I’m astonished, Commander,” her smile is broad and genuine, but her eyes seem sad. “I never thought you would play so well with others. Sounds like you are really...impressed with detective Williams.”

“Impressed?” Steve is returning her smile “yes, you could say that, I’ve never met someone who uses so many words and hand gestures. You can hook up this guy to a Carrier engine, save a lot of propeling energy.”

“He really had your back, Steve.” she says seriously

“He did. Saved my life a couple of times. You were right about… our connection. I don’t understand it, but it’s there, and it’s strong. I am able to focus and hear him at the same time so easily, it is almost… disturbing.”

“I’m just…” She swallows, Steve can hear the tremor in her voice “Happy he is there when I can’t be.”
"Yeah..." Steve frowns at this sadness in her voice "We were lucky... Cath, are you OK?"

She smiles again "Absolutely. You are going to get Hesse, and I just wish I could be there to see it, that’s all.” She slides her hand into his palm “Be careful, Sailor. He proved more than once that he can throw you off. Please, promise me you’ll be careful.”

“I’m always careful.” He answers, smiling at her reassuringly, squeezing her hand in his. “When we are finally done with this, you and I are going to get a long overdue vacation. No missions until your leg and my arm are completely healed.”

She chuckles “Yeah? I’d like to see that happen. I give you a weekend at most before you…”

The door opens, the Sergeant on current duty announce "Sir, Officer Kalakaua is here.”

“Let her in, Sergeant.” Steve turns to Catherine “You’re really going to like her, Rollins”

“McGarrett,” Kono declares even before walking completely through the door “We have a name. The Bi-Nan, Scheduled to depart from Honolulu bay in two hours.”

He turns to Catherine, still holding her hand

“Go get the bad guy.” She tells him with a nod, “Be careful.”

With a smile he nods back, releases her hand and turns away to follow Officer Kalakaua.

“You know this car is actually built for high speed?” Steve finds himself stepping down on an imaginary gas pedal while sitting in the passenger seat next to Danny “It has a great road grip.”

“Are you aware” Danny replies emphasizing each word “that we are in the middle of very busy road in a very lively city, filled with innocent civilians that want to get home safely to their families?”

“That’s what the lights and siren are for, buddy, they’ll move away.”

“They can’t move away if I don’t give them enough time to move away, and I do not appreciate that tone coming from someone who probably had his first license issued for a tank.” Steve huffs impatiently, but before he can respond Danny continues “Don’t worry, OK? We are going to get there on time. You need to think about what we going to do when we get there. What if Hesse is already aboard the ship?”

“What do you mean?”

“We can’t just storm the vessel, you know that, right?” Danny rolls his eyes, but doesn’t wait for an answer “Of course you don’t. It’s a civilian ship, sailing under China’s flag. We have no warrant and no jurisdiction there.”

“We do not have time to get a warrant, Danny”

“I know, I understand that, but it is not like a covert op in a foreign country, we can’t just sneak on, grab a prisoner of war and sneak off.”
Steve contemplates the issue for a while. If it were just him, he is more than ready to face the consequences, as always. Danny is wrong, it is just like any other covert op. Only this time it’s not just him and Rollins with a team of SEALs. This is why he flat out refused to take Kalakaua, or any other police backup with them. Williams saw it too, and this is why, uncharacteristically, he did not fight him on this.

“Look, if he is on board, the Chinese would be too embarrassed to be caught harboring an international terrorist, so I am not expecting any diplomatic crisis to develop over this. But there could be personal consequences, and this is something I signed up for, but you didn’t. This is why I’ll go in alone.”

It is Danny’s turn to huff loudly “Somehow I knew you would say that.”

They both fall silent after that. Steve rubs his injured shoulder and flexes his fingers around the cast. It is wrapped around the thumb and goes up to his elbow, limiting the movement of his wrist, but allowing him to hold a handgun. His head still hurts, but it is easy enough to ignore without compromising his senses. He will have time to heal afterwards.

As they approach the pier, Danny turns off the sirens and Steve stretches his senses, again searching for the familiar feel of his adversary.

“Here it is,” He hears Danny’s voice “the Bi Nan”

“He’s on board.” Steve’s caught the distinct scent. He forces his muscles to relax. It feels like his very last chance to get the man who caused so much grief to so many people, who is the center of his focus for the last five years. The man who murdered his father. “And I don’t think he knows I’m coming.” He allows his senses to scan Hesse’s surrounding, exploring the ship slowly, thoroughly. He can’t have any more surprises. Danny’s in the background, quiet now, but very much with him. “There are three armed men patrolling the deck.” Steve reports. “At least ten unarmed below deck, and...there are definitely drugs on board.” He focuses his senses back to the car, Danny is looking at him intently. “I need to move, they are just about ready to set sail.”

“Steve, I...I can’t let you go in alone.”

“I’ll be fine, Danny.” Steve puts as much conviction as possible behind his words “I’ve handled much worse odds, believe me, this is nothing.”

“How are you even going to get aboard without being detected?”

“Who said anything about not being detected? Now, get out of the car.”

“What?”

“Get out, you can take cover over there” Steve points to some crates along the dock and gets out of the car himself, moving around it. When Danny is out, he grabs the car keys from his hand, gets behind the wheel and slams the door behind him.

“What the hell are you doing!?” Danny exclaims. Steve offers only a small smile and a nod as a reply, before he changes his focus back to the task ahead.

With screeching tires and even more appreciation to the Camaro’s abilities now that he is driving it, he navigates the car toward the ramp leading up to the ship’s deck. The combined noise of the metal surface clanging beneath the Camaro’s weight and the car engine’s roar swallows the surprised call of the car’s owner, as well as the man standing watch on board. As it reaches the ramp’s top, the front of the vehicle shoots through the air with its momentum for a few heartbeats,
than lands with a heavy thud unto the deck. Steve hits the brakes and the car stops, small clouds of smoke rising from the wheels and the smell of charred rubber fills the air. The sudden silence, after the onslaught of violent commotion is deafening. A few barrels and one of the armed men were taken down in the process.

Steve doesn’t wait to examine the effect. A short probing towards Hesse reveals the man is already aware of something happening and has probably sprung into action. But Steve cannot afford going straight after him. He needs to carefully eliminate all other threats first. He rolls out of the car to take cover between the containers, fixed now on the man closest to him, coming from his eight o’clock. And he would rather do it without alerting anyone to his whereabouts. Moving quickly with his back to the container, he pauses at the end of it, letting the other man move the rest of the way. A quick elbow to his face, most of the strength behind the blow is provided by the running man’s momentum, and he is down. The Commander verifies his unconsciousness, taking his rifle and removing any other weapons away from him.

Hesse and the third armed man are on the other side of the ship, closer to the bow. The first stays in place, the other is advancing towards him. Steve moves back towards the Camaro, now fixed on the advancing foe. Crouching to move around the car unseen, he enters the cover again between several crates, then into the maze created by the large containers. His hasty footsteps are measured and silent, the gun in his hand is pointing to the ground. His foe tries to get a better visual by climbing on top of the containers in the next row.

If he goes up there, it might expose him. So he risks another probe to locate Hesse, just as his long time adversary rounds a corner throwing a punch to his face and kicking the gun out of his hand.

The physical attack on his body as well as the unexpected proximity of all the other markers— the scent, the sight, the sound of breathing through his clenched teeth, they all serve to focus the Military trained Sentinel on neutralizing the threat. He lets his body respond. Instinctive movements, deprived of emotion, accurate and adaptive. Kick, dodge, hook.

Hesse himself is well trained. And the cast on the Commander’s hand is like drawing a bullseye. But it also makes his attacks more predictable. Twist, Bend, jab.

His shoulder explodes in pain as he rolls to the side to take back control after a harsh blow to his thigh. He knows the bloodied face of Hesse only mirrors his own. He has the privilege of almost full control over his senses. Hesse has the privilege of knowing how to manipulate them.

So the slight change in his foe’s breathing pattern, that one irregular beat Steve notices, tells him that something in the balance has changed, there is a danger that he should be aware of, but Hesse’s focus doesn’t change even for that tell-tale heartbeat, his eyes don’t stray, the flow of his movements doesn’t favor a side. Retreat, faint, punch.

Hesse is successful in getting a blow in, but instead of pushing further, he just slams Steve against a container knocking the air out of his lungs then bolts. In the second it takes the Sentinel to recover, gunfire erupts from above him and his lungs are deprived of oxygen again as several slugs hit his vest. He ducks around a container for cover, reaching for the rifle still hanging on his back. Hesse is getting away.

More gunfire. He peeks around the container again to fire at the shooter and is immediately forced back as a rain of bullets ricochet from the metal containers around him. He is pinned, and Hesse is getting away.

The sentinel scans the area, someone else is shooting now. For the second time in a few minutes he is surprised, as he hears his appointed partner and guide, almost whisper, “I’m coming from
the...ummm..the side of the ramp, right to that...emm control room.”

“That’s port side, Danny” Steve mumbles to himself smiling

“I really hope you can hear me,” Danny continues “since you didn’t bother taking your comm, when you drove my car up that ramp!” there’s silence, then after a few seconds “OK, if you can hear me, now is the time to keep the shooter busy.”

Steve concentrates, then without looking, from behind his cover, fires several shots. A hail of bullets pelts back, but then the distinct sound of a gun firing joins the drumming and the automatic gun fire changes its direction.

“Go, I got this!” comes Danny’s voice again, not so quiet anymore, and Steve doesn’t wait a second before he springs forward, again, chasing his prey. He climbs up, running on top of the piled containers now rather than navigating the maze created by them. He’s short of breath, but so is his enemy. Hesse tries to jump over a large gap between two containers, but fails and is left hanging on his arms from the container roof. By the time he climbs it, Steve is already on his heels, using the momentum of his own jump to tackle the man. They hit the surface hard, Steve manages to steer the fall to his healthier left side, but the crash vibrates through his body finding each injured bone and muscle, igniting it with new pain. Hesse is not doing any better, his head connecting directly with the unforgiving steel. The time it takes him to recover is enough for Steve to get a hold of his arm, bend it backwards, lifting Hesse’s forearm with his hand and digging his elbow in his back to pin him down.

It’s over. Hesse cannot move, and is aware of that. His muscles relax almost instantly. They both remain still for a while, catching their breath.

Steve’s free hand fumbles in his pockets, searching for a zip tie.

“So,” Hesse breaths “You’re just going to take me in? Not going to kill me?” Steve doesn’t answer, and Hesse continues “You know it’s just a matter of time before I’m released?”

“Shut up” the Commander orders, voice gruff.

“The navy might have lost interest in my expertise, but there are a lot of other agencies that would love to use me instead.”

Steve hesitates. It’s obvious the guy is trying to get under his skin, but… Hesse really believes what he’s saying. “What are you talking about?”

Hesse doesn’t answer immediately. Then he cackles, it’s more like a croak under the pressure of the man on his back. “I must say, it’s not a surprise they never told you. Straight as an arrow McGarrett. They would not risk losing their favorite toy.”

Steve can’t help himself, the knowledge that he’s playing right to the hands of this hateful terrorist is not enough to prevent his anger from rising. He lifts Hesse’s hand a bit more, causing the man to groan painfully. “What the hell are you talking about, you son of a bitch?”

“The juices you got?” Hesse moans, at least the pain squeezed out the contentment from his voice, “to fire up those super senses of yours? I am the only one with the complete knowledge on how to make them. It really causes everyone to be very forgiving regarding my occasional transgressions...I provide the goods only to them, and they allow me to sell whatever I want to whomever I choose...the only reason the navy unleashed you on me, is because I got a better offer for the juices from other agencies.”
Steve rarely felt he hated having his abilities. Almost never since he got full control over them. Now...now he wishes he can just dismiss this lowlife’s words, call him a liar and ignore everything coming out of his mouth. But he knows it’s the truth. Hesse even provided a lie, conveniently, so the Sentinel would have a reference point. Hesse could have trained himself to remain neutral while telling a lie, to throw Steve off, he might be able to fake the truth, but he can not fake a lie as well. And Steve has to believe him, all of it is true, all but the one thing. The better offer did not come from another agency.

The single second of shock and hesitation in the Sentinel’s body is what Hesse was aiming for. He moves fast, pulling his hand out of the commander’s loosened grip and turns violently to the side, elbow and leg searching to connect with his body. Steve jumps to his feet to avoid the blow, and Hesse corrects his movement, trying to sweep Steve’s legs from under him. The Sentinel jumps to the side, but it’s too late, as he stagers backwards, then loses his balance and falls down from the container flat on his back with a crushing thud. Half dazed, his hand moves quickly to the gun stashed in his boot, as his enemy appears on the container’s roof above him, pointing a gun.

Steve fires. Two shots, center mass. His dazed mind doesn’t allow him to follow their path as he usually does, but Hesse’s body jerks backwards, confirming the hits, then he stagers out of the Sentinel view. A loud splash follows two seconds later.

Steve is up on his feet, pushing the pain away as he climbs back on the container and steps to its far edge.

The only sign of Hesse is the ripples and the foam in the greasy waters overboard, below him.

“Was that Hesse?” Comes Danny’s voice from behind him.

Steve keeps his stare at the slowly calming water. “Yeah...”

He feels Danny’s hesitant touch on his back. As the detective speaks softly “You OK, buddy?” Steve is concentrating on the noises below, and doesn’t answer. “I’ll call in the coast guard, they will retrieve his body in no time.”

But there is no body yet. The Sentinel locates the weak heartbeat in the otherwise lifeless body, and he listens.

“You did good, pal.” Danny continues to fill the silence, hesitantly. “Come on, let’s get you checked, you look like hell, and your arm is leaking like crazy.”

And suddenly Hesse is not lifeless anymore. Steve can hear the heartbeat quickens, the limbs kicking frantically as he fights to swim away and to the surface.

“What are you doing, Steve, Hey! Are you with me?”

Danny’s voice pulls him back, he didn’t even realize he took off his boots and now his vest “He is not dead, Danny. He is trying to get away.”

“But you hit him?” Danny argues “I thought you don’t miss, wait, no, don’t you dare...what...?”

The last of Danny’s sentence trails off as Steve jumps off the container and dives into the filthy water of the harbor, fixed on his target again. He has no idea how Hesse is holding up, but he does, and he managed to get far. The waters are murky, the light beginning to dim, and locating the direction of a sound underwater is nearly impossible, even for a Sentinel. So grabbing the ship’s anchor chain he stills, concentrating on the movement of the water against his skin, trying to distinguish the irregular ripples maring the steady currents. He allows the water to enter his mouth,
tasting the faint trail of Hesse’s blood. Like a shark, Danny’s voice in his head observes. Or maybe
not just in his head. He can still hear his tenacious guide in the background, he thinks he might be
shouting, the sound moving through the water is not completely coherent. Steve can pick out the
words *channeling* and *shark*.
It takes a while, but when he picks a direction he is sure he’s on the right track.

Hesse is badly wounded, and tired, and doesn’t give much of a fight when the Sentinel gets him.
Thankfully. Steve doesn’t think he himself has much left. They surface about two hundred feet
from the ship, Steve’s left arm wrapped around Hesse’s chest in a rescue swim fashion.

A floating device is thrown in his direction, as he gets close to the pier, he grabs it and allows
Danny to pull him the rest of the way. Sirens are now echoing from every direction, getting closer.
Danny must have finally called for backup.

The second both Hesse and himself are out of the water, Steve raises his eyes to meet Danny’s. It is
obvious the Detective is about to explode.

“Thanks.” Steve says, lowering himself to the ground, leaning against one of the anchoring polls.
He waits curiously to see if this one word is a fuse or a distinguisher.

“Do not thank me!” the mystery is solved almost immediately “do not thank me before I decide
whether to kill you myself, or let the pollution do it itself, you crazy bastard! You just jumped from
about sixty feet into disgusting water, and just vanished below surface for I don’t know how long,
and let’s not forget you’re only with a dislocated shoulder, broken arm, a few gunshot hits to your
vest, and a bleed that will draw in every shark in the vicinity,” Danny points to his upper arm,
Steve’s eyes follows the gesture, somewhat surprised to see that it is indeed bleeding. Danny
continues “Not to mention you used my car as a battering ram! Any other plans I should know
about? Why do you have such a self destruct mechanism?” he exasperates.

“Self destruct? A tad dramatic, don’t you think?” He looks over to the inert body of his foe. He
could still pick a faint heartbeat, but he can’t find any strength to address him.

“Exhibit A” Danny answers, gesturing at Steve again.

Steve smiles tiredly, “I’m fine. I went through SEAL training, we know our way around water,
even with a few bruises.”

”Super-SEAL. Should have known. You’re still human, you know? I’ll make sure you remember
that...” and then he smirks. “And you’ll probably feel it, deep down in your bones tomorrow.”

Steve releases a short chuckle that ends with a strangled moan, “I can tell you’ve been talking to
Catherine.” he looks up at Danny again “Anyway it’s... *not your job anymore* Steve wants to say
but for some reason the words get stuck in his throat. Instead he looks at Hesse again and whispers
“over.”
It’s been a couple of days since Hesse has been caught, and Steve had yet to come through with his promise to Catherine. It felt like he barely had a moment to rest.

Danny, without being asked, accompanied him to the hospital, and seemed more than ready to stay with him but Steve implored him to see that Hesse is properly secured until the Navy security detail arrives.

He is finally alone, injuries treated, pain managed, but instead of relaxing, the commander is tortured with thoughts about Hesse’s claims. No, not claims, it was clear accusations, and it is the truth. It made him sick. Steve is far from naive, some things he witnessed or had to do were borderline immoral, but the thought of the navy turning a blind eye as Hesse was arming terrorists, responsible for the killing of hundreds of innocents...this is more than he can bear. And what added to that pain was the jarring discovery that Joe White knew about it. His mentor was actually an active part in manipulating him. How can he continue to trust his commanding officer?

Very few times in his life Lieutenant Commander McGarrett was afraid of the truth. But as Catherine rolled in a wheelchair into his room, he felt his blood freeze in his veins. Apart for a short meeting when he came to the hospital, he avoided her, as the ordeal started to sink in. If she’d known, if she’s lied to him…Nevertheless, fear was something he can handle, and he had to know.

She notices something is amiss immediately, and her smile dies on her face. “Steve, what’s wrong?”

He looks at her, tempted to tap into her pulse, but that would be too much. The day he would need to do that...it is too much.

“Lieutenant,” his voice is as official as the use of the title, and she immediately tenses, straightening her back, her face going blank. “Did you know that Hesse had a deal with the Navy that allowed him to arm terrorists groups around the world?”

Her face remained expressionless, but she paled. And she didn’t answer. Both very bad signs.

He holds her gaze for a few seconds, until she falters and looks away.

“I see.” He states coldly.

“I… didn’t know about a deal.” She finally says, looking back at him. “I did know that for some reason the navy didn’t assign resources to get him for many years, sometimes actively averting efforts and missing opportunities to stop him. Until five years ago, when he suddenly became top priority.” She makes a tiny movement to get closer to him, but stops. “I...saw it when I gathered intel, when we started…” her voice catches suddenly, she shakes her head, “I’m sorry.”

“Why didn’t you share this information with me?”
She hesitates with her response again, swallowing. Then “I really have no excuse.”

“Did Commander White instruct you to keep this to yourself?”
“Does it matter?” a tinge of bitterness creeps its way to her voice.

“No. Not really.” He answers, and suddenly he can’t look at her.

They sit there in tense silence, He can feel her eyes never leaving him, hear her labored breath. But he keeps his eyes in front of him, staring at the picture hanging on the wall without seeing it.

Finally, when he can’t take it anymore, he says “I think you should go.”

He follows her without looking, hears how she’s taking short, almost uncontrolled breaths, as her fragrance gradually fading until it’s indistinguishable among the strong scents of the hospital.

When they release him from the hospital the next day he chooses to go to his father’s house rather than the base. But halfway there he gets a strange call, a meeting request from no less the governor of Hawaii. So he changes direction back to base, just to grab his dress blues, and for the first time in his life he doesn’t feel comfortable wearing them.

Governor Jameson’s offer comes as a surprise. He has no doubt that the fact that there’s an election year coming up has everything to do with it, and she doesn’t deny it, but claims it doesn’t change the validity of her offer. As an answer to the question of why him, she points out how in the few days he’s been on the island he helped take down a human trafficking ring, exonerated an innocent cop, flashed out a dirty one, saved an FBI agent, destroyed a drug Cartel and caught an international terrorist. Steve pointed out that it wasn’t just him doing all this, and she answered that she’s aware, and doesn’t expect him to work alone. He will get the means, immunity and the authority to recruit anyone he wants. Then she mentions his father, telling Steve that he was a friend, and she would very much like to see his legacy carry on.

She sounded genuine, but with a politician you can never tell. Well, the Sentinel probably could, but it would be a strict violation of her privacy. And anyway, she didn’t deny that there is an ulterior motive.

It is late afternoon when he finally gets to his father’s house, he is tired and confused, and the smell of blood and gunpowder still hanging in the air there keeps the peace he is seeking out of reach. So after a quick change of clothes, he steps outside and perches himself with a six pack on the old wooden chairs viewing the ocean.

Half an hour later he hears Danny at the front door. He frowns slightly but drags himself back into the house to let him in. Danny holds up a six pack of his own as an offering.

“Hey, come in.” Steve greets him, motioning with his head. Leading him back through the house and out to the beach.

“Ah, I see you started the party without me.” Danny places the beers next to the ones Steve brought out, then touches one of the bottles gingerly “Mine is still cold, though. Won’t stay that way for very long, in this damn unbearable heat that doesn’t even need an actual sun to cook you alive.”

Steve smiles suspiciously “You don’t like the heat?”

Danny snorts “I’m glad to see that the multiple hits to your head did not affect your acute perception.”
Steve shrugs and accepts the fresh bottle that Danny offers in favor of his half empty warm one.

“So how did you know I was here?” Steve asks

“Well, after you failed to answer your phone several times…” Steve checks his back pocket. The cellular was left on silent since the meeting with the governor. He has several missed calls, Catherine, Danny and one from Joe. “I talked to Catherine.” Danny explains “She said you were released from the hospital earlier, and that you’re probably upset. She said I might find you here. She knows you well.”

“She does.” Steve leans forward, elbows on his knees.

Danny takes a sip from his beer and looks at Steve for a few minutes while the silence lingers. “So, I gathered, that if she told me you’re upset, you might wanna tell me why you’re upset.”

Steve looks at him, surprised, examining his face. His first instinct is to deny the statement altogether. He doubts that Danny even cares. But the man risked his life and his career to have his back. He obviously cared. As to the why… this is what causes the surprised look.

“I don’t know why she shared that with you.” As he says these words he realizes exactly why. The only two people in his life that he trusts broke that trust. She felt he needed someone, and she noticed this strange connection he and the loud, rude detective have, even before Steve did. He adds immediately “I am not sure you and I” he gestures between them with his free hand “are there yet.”

"Fair point,” Danny concedes. “Just thought I’d ask, in case you have something to share before you jump to any new surprising adventures with my car. Just to be on the safe side”.

Steve has a tiny smile on his lips as he rolls his eyes visibly “Don’t worry, your car is safe. That is, if it won’t decide to kill itself in boredom, the way you drive it.”

"Boredom?” Danny scoffs. “It’s called The Law, and I try to uphold it as much as I can. I agree that not every day in Oahu is as...crazy and full of life endangering stunts like the ones you pulled, but we do have our share of chasing and we do just fine…”

Steve rubs his eyebrow “Yeah...someone pointed out to me that in the last few days we dealt with a drug cartel, human trafficking ring, a dirty cop and a framed cop. That was beside the international terrorist that came to visit. It seems you do get very busy here.” he takes a sip from his bottle. “how is your partner?”

“Relieved, mostly”. Danny answers. “He was fully acquitted, reinstated and allowed to take a long vacation with his family. Some of the guys feel pretty stupid after suspecting him, and everyone is busy clearing up Kaleo’s fuckups”.

“Good. That’s good.”

“So...when are you shipping back? Reuniting with Catherine and going back to save the world?”

“I… Don’t know.” He looks up, eyes scanning the ocean. He always loved the fact that no matter how far and wide he searched, there is always that point beyond which there is nothing but water and sky that lasts forever. The nothingness inside the endless serves to calm him, just the same as the quiet room. “I got an offer today.” He says after few moments, looking back at Danny. “A job offer. Governor Jameson wants me to head a special task force to deal with major crimes here in Hawaii.”
“Oh really?” Danny seems surprised. “She wants you to stay? Don’t have enough local crazies, that she has to recruit one?” to a frown from Steve he adds placately “Is it interesting enough for you to want to quit the Navy?”

“If you’d asked me this two days ago the answer would have been a definite no. Now…” He trails off, leans back, straightening, then turns towards Danny looking into his eyes. “What do you think detective? If I’m taking this job, If I stay here, I’m appointing you as my guide.”

A week later…

“Chin is with HPD, they are going to put some birds in the air,” Kono reports over the phone, “They’ll be ready in five”

“Great, Thanks Kono.” Steve spares a quick glance at the rear view mirror and turns the wheel sharply, cutting to the right lane. “We have eyes on the Tacoma, tell them to look for the van.”

“Please explain to me,” Danny demands, holding the seat belt strap that crosses his chest with both fists “why are you driving my car?!”

“I’m a better driver,” Steve answers with a shrug, “I’m faster, better instincts, you know, I can sense danger coming miles away. Besides, we agreed on this.”

“First of all we did not agree on this!” Danny protests loudly “You snatch the key out of my hands and jumped into the driver’s seat before I realized what you were doing…”

“As I said, I’m faster…”

“Secondly it is most definitely not the dangers that are miles away that I am worried about! It is the ones that are close enough for you to smash into! There is a reason one of the courses cops have to take is the pursuit driving course! Maybe you should register to that one!”

“Really?” Steve manage to sound incredulous while looking at him “They actually teach you how to drive really fast?”

“Eyes on the road!” Danny yells “And yes! It is the delicate art of not running over anyone or anything while driving really fast” his tone mocking Steve’s “that I am sure is way beyond your comprehension right now since no animal was ever required to use heavy machinery to get its prey!” Danny’s hands shoot to hold the dashboard as the car swings violently to avoid a truck “Do not roll your eyes at me! This is my car you are about to crash, and I am still in it! Why do you even need to go that fast, you can sniff the guy out anyway, you know, follow his smell?”

“Oh, you want me to track him, now? No problem, hold the wheel for me, will you? I’m gonna concentrate…”

“What?!” Danny somehow manages to sound even more alarmed, but Steve is grinning, so he sighs and adjusts his grip, clutching the seat with the left hand and the handle above the door with his right “Just...just make sure I live to drive that car again, please. You are never, ever getting behind that wheel again.”
Thanks for reading, really hope it was fun! I would very much like to hear what you think, and if you have any idea on where the sequel should go (or rather, what more five-0 story lines the sequel should steal...) Thanks again to Yul for looking over my shoulder and occasionally pointing to the next turn <3

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