A Deadly Partnership

by islashlove

Summary

Before Shawn ever walked into the Santa Barbara station, he'd already known McNab for years. Unfortunately for Chief Vick, their connection is a deadly one.
Death of a Leader

The dew-covered hill glistened in the morning sun giving a false sense of calm. Slowing his breathing, Shawn looked though the scope of his sniper rifle at the house below. He'd been lying there for a little over two hours now and as he waited, he thought back to the moment he received the target's name.

They'd been using this same pattern for years. McNab would get the name of the target and once half of the payment was received, he would pass the name to Shawn, most likely when they’d pass each other in the bullpen. Once he had a target, Shawn would 'borrow’ McNab's car, knowing the rifle was hidden in the trunk. He would then take out the target. When he returned the car and rifle, McNab knew that the deed was done, and it was back in his hands to collect the remaining payment. As simple as that and it always served their needs.

Only this time, things were different.

Shawn had trained himself to only ever see the target as just that, a target. Not a person, not a human being, but a target that needed to be taken out, but this time it was going to be hard to do. Not that being a hired assassin was an easy job in the first place. It wasn't. For it to be easy, he had to have no feelings, but he did and that is why working with McNab worked out so great.

McNab was the one who got to deal with the clients and their reasons for wanting someone … removed. Shawn only got a name and the job. But this time, it was someone they both knew and respected.

As if on cue, the target walked out of the house and towards their car. Tightening his grip on the rifle, Shawn brought the target into his sights. It will be an easy shot. Just one squeeze of the trigger and the target will fall, but the target had a child with them and the child was not part of the contract.

Using all the patience he had, Shawn waited for the target to put the child into the car and walk around to the driver's side. It was only then that he pulled the trigger and watched as the target's body slammed into the car when the bullet impacted. The target then slid down to the ground.

He was too far away to hear the child scream, but he did watch as the target's husband came rushing out. He grabbed the child before running run back in to the house. People had the gall to call him cold and unfeeling, yet this man didn't even bother to check on their partner, let alone look back Shawn drove down the little track from his resting point. Stopping, he disassembled and cleaned the rifle and put it away in its case, then into a duffel bag. Placing it into the trunk, he then drove back to the police station.

Walking through the bullpen, Shawn saw McNab. Their eyes caught each other’s for a second before Shawn turned away. The deed had been done and they couldn't take it back, not now. They both knew that it wouldn’t be long before the call came in and everyone would be heading off to catch the killer. But they won't catch them; no one ever has. After all, who would suspect that a fake psychic like Shawn would be an assassin, let alone, a naive cop like McNab.

Meeting near Detective Lassiter's desk, Shawn handed over the keys. With that, he handed the responsibility to hide the gun and collect the remaining payment to McNab.

As McNab put the keys into his pocket, Detective Lassiter came walking in. He took no noticed of them as he walked past and towards the Chief's door. But instead of entering, he stopped and turned
"Everyone," Lassiter called out getting everyone's attention. "I just got a call. Earlier this morning, one of our own was shot and killed at their home." Lassiter stopped to allow this information to sink in and for the room to go quiet again.

"Who was it?" McNab asked, fully well knowing the answer.

"It was …" Everyone stared at the detective who looked like he was about to break down. Taking a deep breath to help him stay in control, Lassiter continued. "It was Chief Vick. Now, we do this by the book! No exception," he said looking straight at Shawn. "Let's get out there and get this son of a ..." Lassiter swallowed hard, “Let's get whoever shot our Chief."

The station became a hive of an organised, but tangled mess, as officers rushed around to do whatever they could to find the gunman.

Shawn nodded at McNab. As soon as they'd receive Chief Vick's name, they agreed to lead the police to the killer. Not to the one who pulled the trigger, not to Shawn, that would be silly, but to the one that hired him to pull the trigger. The one who wanted her dead. But that would be after McNab confirmed that they had received the rest of the payment to their Swiss bank accounts.

Yes, the one that hired them to kill Chief Vick will pay for this. All traces leading back to them would be gone and the only things they would be left with would be a phone number and details of a bank account that no longer existed.
Shawn perched himself on the edge of Lassiter's desk as he watched the activity in the bullpen pass him by. Ever since the news had come in that morning about the Chief's murder, no one has sat still. Except for Shawn. He had no choice since Lassiter had told him, in no uncertain words, that he wasn't to have anything to do with this investigation.

Although Shawn was taking it all in, he was really keeping an eye on McNab, waiting for the sign to say that they had been paid, so they could go ahead and give this creep up to the police. With every call that came in, he waited and watched, and each time he got the 'no money' signal.

"Spencer, get off my desk," Lassiter snapped as he walked up, pulling out his chair.

Shawn jumped from the desk seeing that Lassiter wasn't in the mood, and he couldn't blame the Head Detective, considering what he had done that morning.

"Lassie...please let me help?" When Lassiter looked up, Shawn drew back a little after seeing the anger in the man's eyes. "Please, I'm sure I can help."

"No! I'm not going to have you work on this case, stuff it up and have the killer walk free. Now, follow your friend Guster and leave! McNab...escort Spencer out of the station."

"Yes, Sir!" McNab replied as he walked up and took Shawn by the arm. "Mr. Spencer."

Shawn was going to put up a fight, but the moment he saw that certain look in McNab's eyes, he let his partner to lead him out of the bullpen.

"What's wrong?" Shawn whispered as they walked.

"He's refusing to pay."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I called him. It seems that Mr. Vick was upset that you shot the Chief in front of their daughter, Iris."

"Really! He's trying to double cross us." Shawn hissed as he turned to face McNab, anger burning in his eyes. "For a man that has no problem ordering his own wife's murder, he's not too bright. What, didn't he think we'd come after him or his daughter for our money."

"He said that we wouldn't be game enough to come after him since the Chief 's murder is too much of a high-profile case and that we should just cut our losses and move on. Otherwise, he will hand us over to the police."

"Well .... " Shawn answered as they walked out the front door of the station. "We better let him know that we're not that easy to get rid of." As Shawn turned to face McNab, he scanned the area to see who was nearby. "I will see you tonight at the Lion's Den. Say about eleven?"

"As long as Detective Lassiter lets us go. But if he doesn't, I'll call you."

"Okay. So, I better go and get our bargaining chip, so we can get paid."

"Be careful."
"I will be. Love you." Shawn gave McNab's hand a tight squeeze before he spun around and skipped down the stairs.

McNab watched Shawn leave, knowing that Mr. Vick was playing an extremely dangerous game with them. Heading back into the station, he thought that grabbing Detective Lassiter a cup of coffee might help calm the man down.

Shawn jumped on his bike and headed to the garage where he and McNab kept their back-up cars. They were cheap and disposable. Perfect for a kidnapping.

Finding the perfect car, Shawn fitted it with a car seat and fake number-plates then put the legal number-plates inside the trunk. He drove the car to the hotel and avoiding the security cameras, he made his way up to the room.

Making sure the area was clear, he pulled his ski-mask down and knocked on the door. As soon as the door was opened, Shawn stormed in, pointing a gun straight at Mr. Vick's head.

"Keep your mouth shut and turn around!"

Shawn's voice was strong and commanding, and Mr. Vick did what he was told. Man-handling him, Shawn forced Mr. Vick to sit down.

"Please...don't hurt me! I will give you anything you want!" Mr. Vick begged as Shawn tied his hands.

Grabbing the front of Mr. Vick's shirt, Shawn pushed his face close to the crying man.

"You'll give me anything I want as long as I don't kill you."

"Yes, anything," he breathed out into Shawn's masked face.

"What about your daughter's life or is it just as expendable as your wife's life was?"

"What ...?"

"You're begging me not to kill you, what about Iris's life."

"I...I didn't know you knew she was here. That...that you just wanted money."

"Ooh, I do just want money." Shawn smirked. "My money for killing your wife. Or didn't you think I would come after it?"

"I was going to ..."

"Save it? It will now cost you another ten thousand dollars for trying to screw me over. And just to make sure that you pay, I will be taking Iris as a hostage. You'll get her back when you pay."

"Please, don't you think you did enough damage to Iris by killing her mother in front of her?"

Shawn let go of Mr. Vick's shirt, only to punch him hard across the face. "You want her back. You will pay for it. Twenty thousand dollars. I will ring you when and where I want you to drop it off and before you ask why not just a transfer, it's easy. This way, you have an excuse to draw the money without the cops thinking that you are paying me for killing your wife. Understand?"

"Y ... yes, I understand."
Shawn gagged Mr. Vick before going to the bedroom. There, Iris lay sleeping. Shawn grabbed some of her father's clothes out of the suitcase and put them on, including a large hat. Picking up Iris he walked out.

Mr. Vick's eyes grew large at the sight that greeted him. His attacker still had on the mask, so his face couldn't be seen, but with the clothes on, he looked so much like himself that no one would stop him walking out with Iris in his arms.

Before leaving, Shawn placed an envelope addressed to Head Detective Lassiter on the coffee table, then left.

After making his way down to the car and placing Iris safely in the car seat, he drove a few blocks away. Once he found a quiet spot, he swapped over the number-plates then drove to his place. Inside, he placed the sleeping child in bed.

He returned the car to the garage, then rode his bike home again. He knew he would have to get someone to watch Iris when he went to meet McNab, but he already had the right person in mind.

When he got home, Shawn checked on Iris before sitting down with a drink and firing off a text to McNab, who was still at the station. He confirmed that he had Iris and that it was now up to McNab to lead Lassie to the hotel.

After reading, then deleting, the text, McNab walked over to Detective Lassiter's desk to tell him and Detective O'Hara that he just received a call that there has been a disturbance at the hotel room where Mr. Vick and Iris were staying.

As they all rushed out of the station, McNab destroyed the phone he was using and texted Shawn so that he would know McNab's new number.
"This is the police. Open up!" Lassiter commanded as he banged on the hotel door.

When there wasn't any response, he nodded at O'Hara who steadied her gun and nodded back. Knowing that she was ready, Lassiter turned to face the door before kicking it in. As soon as the door flew open, they rushed in, guns at the ready. Even though they saw Mr. Vick tied up, they searched and cleared the rooms before returning to him.

"What happened?" Lassiter snapped as he removed the gag.

"A man!" Mr. Vick gasped. "In a … mask. He … he took Iris. I …"

"Easy Mr. Vick," O'Hara said as she tried to calm the man down. "Take some deep breathes and …"

"And what?" he snapped. "My wife has been murdered and now my only daughter has been kidnapped. Why should I be calm? You told me we would be safe here. Yeah, we were really safe, weren't we?"

"That's enough," Lassiter barked. He had never liked Chief Vick's husband and right now, with the way he behaved after Karen's death, he was liking him even less. "We need to know everything that happened here."

"Detective Lassiter," McNab called out. He needed Lassiter to see the letter, before Mr. Vick could put his spin on everything. Seeing that Lassiter wasn't going to answer, he called out again.

"Detective Lassiter, I've found something."

"What McNab!" Spinning around Lassiter saw a little fear in McNab's face.

"Sorry Sir, I just thought you would want to see this," McNab replied as he pointed to the coffee table.

Lassiter's eye's followed to where McNab was pointing and saw the envelope and his name in block letters. "Thank you, McNab," Lassiter replied in a quieter voice, before turning to O'Hara. "Go with Mr. Vick to the hospital and get his statement after he's been checked out."

"Will do, but you let me know what you find."

"Of course I will and …"

"Wow Gus, look at this place."

"What the hell are you two doing here?"

"Easy Lassie, we just want to help. Chief Vick wants us to help," Shawn replied as he put his fingers against his temples. "I see … a man, picking up Iris and carrying her out to a … red car with numbers and letters floating around it. A 3 and 5. A … W, maybe an…upside down M or … both." Shawn slumped against the door frame as if all his energy had been drained.

"Get him out of here, Guster, NOW!" Lassiter snarled through gritted teeth. He knew that Shawn was most likely spot on, but he didn't want him making a fool out of this investigation.

"Come on Shawn, let's go before Lassiter starts steaming from the ears."
Shawn shrugged off Gus's attempt to drag him from the room. "I'm right, aren't I? Iris is missing?"

"Yes, she is," Lassiter said as he moved closer to Shawn. In fact, he was so close that Shawn could feel Lassiter's breath on his face. In a low voice, Lassiter growled. "Iris is missing and if you're really a true psychic, get out there and find her." Lassiter then said in a louder voice for all to hear, "I don't care what you think you know, get...out!" His arm shot up, pointing out of the hotel room door so quickly it made Gus jump.

"Okay...I take it you don't want us here. Come on, Gus." Smiling, Shawn turned around and walked out. He knew that Lassiter would want him to work on this case, even if he didn't want the others to know it.

Lassiter shook his head before turning back around. As he walked over to McNab, the medical crew arrived and tended to Mr. Vick. Lassiter had the envelope photographed before he opened it.

'Detective Lassiter,

Yes, I have Iris and I know this will fall on deaf ears, but trust me, I mean her no harm. In fact, I have taken her from a bigger danger then me. You need to start asking the right questions, to the right person. You have him now, tied up and at your mercy. Don't let him get away with what he has done.

Cheating me out of my money has turned the tide. I either get paid for the job I was hired for or else he pays the price with losing his freedom. When I get either one, I will return Iris. I'm sure you know what he paid me for, but you just need to dig deeper. Mr. Vick has a hidden life. It is now up to you.'

Lassiter quickly read the note again, before glaring at Mr. Vick as he was wheeled out of the room. Grabbing O'Hara's arm, Lassiter whispered through gritted teeth, "Don't let him out of your sight."

"Okay," O'Hara replied, even though she was confused about Lassiter's behaviour.

Lassiter pulled out his phone and dialled a number. While he waited for the other end to pick up, he called out to McNab, "Look up Mr. Vick's past. I want you to look under every rock and in every dark nook and cranny. Understand?"

"Yes, Detective." With a smile on his face, McNab headed out the door. It was good when Shawn's plans worked.

After McNab left, Lassiter's call was answered.

"Lassie, what can I do for you?"

"I need to see you, Spencer. Meet me at the Psych office in two hours." Lassiter didn't give Shawn a chance to answer, he just hung up the phone. He needed to finish going over the hotel room before the meeting. After all, he had questions to ask and he had a funny feeling that Spencer had all the right answers.
Confirmation of Things Already Known

It is surprising how slowly two hours can go by.

Finger print dust covered nearly every surface, but this was a hotel room and the prints they collected could have been there for years. Plus, everyone they talked to had the same answers. Either they didn't see anything or they would have sworn that it was Mr. Vick who carried Iris out of the hotel. But the one thing that they all agreed with was that the man and Iris left in a red car.

With the information he had, Lassiter checked the CCTV footage and found a red car with all the numbers and letters Spencer had given them on the number plate.

Sending two officers to track down the owner of the car, Lassiter glanced around the room one more time. After locking the door, he put the crime scene tape up to seal the room. He hoped that the author of the letter was being honest and whoever they were, wouldn't hurt Iris. Sighing, Lassiter headed off to his meeting with Spencer.

During the drive, Lassiter thought back to the CCTV tapes and the way that Iris was behaving. When they left the room, it looked like she was asleep. But then, as they got off the elevator, it was clear that Iris was awake as she was looking around. Yet, Iris didn't seem to be scared. That, to Lassiter, meant only one thing. Iris knew and trusted the person who took her.

Pulling in front of the Psych office, Lassiter could see Spencer and Guster inside. Gus was at his desk, while Spencer was standing at the window, talking on the phone. Lassiter hated the grin that spread across Spencer's face every time he saw him and this time was no different. It was like Spencer was saying that he was better than him. That he knew more than he was telling.

Climbing out of his car, Lassiter made his way inside. As he opened the office door, he heard Spencer say, “Lassie is here...talk later”, before hanging up the phone. Turning, Spencer placed the phone into his pocket, that grin still plastered on his face.

"Lassie, so why'd you call us here?"

"Shawn!" Gus snapped. He was at his breaking point with Shawn. Gus thought that with the death of Chief Vick, who he knew Shawn respected, and now Iris's kidnapping, Shawn would take things seriously. Guess he was wrong. "Sorry about that, Detective Lassiter."

"We're all stressed, Mr. Guster, and I'm sure this is Spencer's way of dealing with it all. Right?" The suspicion dripping from his words.

"Of course it is, Lassie." Shawn replied with a little too much smugness in his voice. “I miss Chief Vick and I'm … concerned about Iris, but if I let my feelings get in the way, I can't channel the spirit world and I wouldn't be any help, now would I?" Shawn sighed. 'Right!' Lassiter growled as he stepped a little bit closer to where Shawn was standing. "And right now, you are going to channel Chief Vick's spirit and find out where Iris is."

"No, I won't."

“What? You said back at the hotel that ...”

“I … I'm not sure if it is Chief Vick's spirit I'm talking to," Shawn replied as he stepped back a little. He loved playing Lassiter, especially when he got some sort of reaction from him, but the anger in the detective's eyes right now is a look he knows not to muck around with.
"What do you mean?"

"What I mean is … I don't think it's Chief Vick I'm seeing and hearing. Sure, they are concerned about Iris, but it's … not a motherly concern. I think it might be another spirit that has some sort of connection to this. Either to the sniper or the person that hired the sniper. Either way, they were killed because of one or the other."

"And what are they saying, Spencer?" Lassiter rolled his eyes, before giving Gus a glance. He was a little surprised at the way Gus was watching Spencer, as if he couldn't believe his eyes or ears. "Well?"

"There is … something about … asking the right questions. That you need to dig deeper. Some sort of justice, but I'm not sure if they are talking about justice for them, Chief Vick or … for the sniper. Whoa! What was that?"

"What Shawn? What did you see?" Gus inquired as he stood up and joined Detective Lassiter.

"Iris! I saw Iris. She was safe, happy and playing. There is something about … she is away from the bigger danger now?"

Stumbling back, Shawn lent against his desk breathing hard. He made sure his face was slightly away from the two men, but enough that he could see their reflections in the window. The sight was priceless. The shocked look, he was expecting from Gus, but Lassie's. Lassie's was one of awe and, if Shawn was right, he could even say Lassie was happy with what he had said.

"Shawn, are you okay?" followed by a hand on his shoulder. Shawn was so distracted by Lassiter's reaction, he hadn't noticed Gus walking up to him.

"I'm fine, Gus," he replied as he turned around. "So, Lassie, does any of that makes sense to you?"

"Yes, it does. The kidnapper left me a note, telling me I need to dig deeper into Mr. Vick's past and that they are after the rest of their money, or him going to jail. They don't really care which one. Plus, they will return Iris when it happens."

"Wow, that Spirit is … really on top of things."

"Shawn," followed by Gus's usual push on his arm, reminded Shawn that Gus knows nothing about what is going on.

"It's fine, Guster. At least I have some form of confirmation of what is going on."

"What do you mean, Lassie?"

"What I mean, Spencer, is that the sniper was a hired hit-man. Someone hired to do a job and they did it. Doesn't mean I still don't want to drag their sorry ass in and rip it apart for killing Chief Vick. It means that the bad guy here is the one that hired him. The one that decided not to pay in full and is now getting our attention, directed by the one they cheated. Anyway, thanks for that, Spencer. I need to get back to the station and I still want you to see if you can find Iris for us."

"You got it, Detective," Shawn replied before nodding his agreement.

Lassiter gave them a small smile before he, too, nodded and walked out of the office.

"Glad that is over," Shawn said as he sat down at his desk, only to be surprised by Gus leaning on it.
"How did you know what was in that note, Shawn?"

"Now Gus, that would be telling and do you really want to know how I knew?"

Gus thought about it for a second before replying, "No! No, I don't want to know. I'm going home." Grabbing his coat, Gus headed out the door.

Shawn smiled as he watched his old friend leave. He loved Gus. He really did, but he knew that Gus would never approve of him being a sniper, only his true love would. And with that thought, Shawn picked up the phone.
"Officer McNab, how can I help you?"

"Buzz, it's me," Shawn answered. "I take it you're at the station."

"Yes and by the sound of your voice, you can talk freely."

"I'm at the Psych office and Gus is gone, but guess who else just left?"

"By the sound of your excitement, I'm guessing Detective Lassiter."

"Yep. He wanted to know what I had worked out and if I had any leads on Iris."

"What did you tell him?"

"I would rather tell you when we are alone, in bed, after I've made hot, passionate love to you."

"Shawn," McNab softly growled. "Don't do that to me." When there was only silence, McNab could see Shawn smiling mischievously down the line at him. "Fine, tonight and you know where." With that, McNab hung up the phone.

The thoughts of Shawn in his arms, naked and doing the things he does to him, echoed around in McNab's head. "Man," he whispered to himself, "I need a cold shower."

As Shawn hung up, a cheeky smirk grew across his face at the idea of what he was going to do to McNab later. Then he remembered his safety plan. Glancing out the window, he could see that Gus was still there.

"Gus."

"No Shawn!"

"What?"

"Whatever you are up to. No, I'm not getting involved."

"But …"

"NO! We need to find Iris and …"

"Iris is fine. You heard me tell Lassie that and have I ever been wrong?"

"Yes!"

"That hurts, Gus. Right here," Shawn faked a painful look as he placed his hand over his heart. "You're my best friend. My comrade in all that is us." Gus let out a deep sigh, smiling even more, Shawn knew he had won. "All I want you to do is ... loan me a few dollars."

"A few dollars. How much is a few dollars?"

"One hundred."

"What for?"
"I have a hot date tonight. They are high maintenance and I can't just take them out for burgers."

"A date...with Iris missing, are you serious?"

"Yes, I'm serious," Shawn replied rolling his eyes.

"Okay, I will give you two hundred." Gus replied as he removed the money from his wallet. But as he was about to hand it over, he pulled it back just as Shawn went to take it. "On one condition."

"And what would that be?"

"You know something … about who has Iris or where she is. You ring an anonymous tip to Lassiter as to her whereabouts, otherwise that is it. No more money. No more me. I will walk away from Psych and you forever. Understand?"

"Got it," Shawn answered. "I will do it in the morning, deal?"

Gus answered by handing Shawn the money. "Well, I'm off to bed, so I can do my real job in the morning. I will see you some time tomorrow."

Shawn waited until Gus and his car were out of sight before he headed back inside. Walking behind his desk, he lifted up the painting there to reveal a safe in the wall. Opening the safe, Shawn placed the two hundred with the rest of the money he had gotten off Gus over the years.

It was his safety plan. If ever questioned about where he got his money from, he could always say that Gus had loaned it to him. In a way, it was the truth; the only thing was, all of Gus's money was here. Closing and locking the safe, Shawn put the picture back in place before locking up.

Sitting in a car across the road was Lassiter. He had his suspicion that Spencer somehow had something to do with Iris's disappearance, maybe even in the Chief's death. He just needed the proof. After all, there was no way that Spencer knew what was in that letter unless he had either read or written it and he knew that Spencer hadn't read it.

As soon as Shawn climbed on his bike and drove off, Lassiter followed. He was sure Shawn was going to lead him to Iris and he would kill two birds with one stone. He would have Iris back and Spencer out of his life forever.
'I cannot believe this,' Lassiter thought to himself as he rolled his eyes and watched Shawn pull up and enter another shop.

This was the fifth one he had gone into since leaving the Psych office and he always came out empty handed. At least that was how it looked. As Shawn hopped back onto his bike, Lassiter prayed he was heading home now, but he was wrong.

Instead, Shawn pulled up outside an apartment building. Lassiter drove a little further up the road before pulling up. Through his rear vision mirror, he watched as Shawn climbed off his bike and headed into the building.

He waited a little bit before getting out of his car then headed into the same building. He was sure that Shawn was up to something. Adding in the fact that this wasn't the building Shawn lived in, Lassiter was curious as to what the fake psychic was up to.

Entering, he was a little surprised to find that the inside didn't reflect the outside of the building. In fact, it was done up as a high-class hotel, including a desk clerk. Taking a deep breath, Lassiter made his way over to the check-in desk.

"Excuse me." The clerk looked up to find Lassiter's police badge in his line of sight. "I'm looking for the man that just came in here."

"You mean Mr. Spencer?"

"Yes! What floor and room is he in?"

"Let's see." The clerk clicked a few keys on the computer before continuing. "He's in room 21 on the second floor. You can use the stairs or the lift."

"Thank you and please, don't warn him I'm coming."

"Wouldn't think about it, Officer."

Lassiter put away his badge and headed to the lift. Once on the second floor he located room 21. Pulling out his gun, he steadied himself and knocked hard on the door. "Police, open up!"

The door opened and a seemingly relaxed Shawn stood there staring at him. He had no shirt or shoes on, his belt was undone and he was holding a drink in his hand.

"Lassie, now isn't this a nice surprise." The seductive tone Shawn was using made Lassiter feel sick to the stomach. He didn't have a problem with gay people as a whole, just the ones that try to hit on him. "Come on in," Shawn continued as he turned around and headed back into the apartment.

"Honey, we have a visitor."

Lassiter followed Shawn into the room, gun still by his side, ready if he needed it. Hearing a sound coming from the bedroom door, Lassiter raised the gun, but put it down as soon as he saw who it was.

"McNab?"

"Detective Lassiter."
Like Shawn, McNab was in a state of undress. There was also an air of relaxation floating around McNab, something he had never seen before.

"Have you offered the Detective a drink, Shawn?"

"No, Buzz dear, he just got here. You could have told me you organised this. I was soooo surprised when I opened the door." Even though Shawn's back was to him, Lassiter could feel the fake psychic rolling his eyes.

"Not nice, Shawn," McNab chided, before turning his attention back to Lassiter. "Would you like a drink, Detective Lassiter?"

"What's going on here?"

"Really, Lassie! You can't tell what's going on here. Well, let me show you," Shawn answered in a sarcastic tone before he moved towards Lassiter, who held his breath. But before reaching him, Shawn changed directions and pulled McNab into a deep kiss. Lassiter didn't know what to say, but when the kiss was over, Shawn did.

"So, Lassie, you have found out mine and Buzz's big secret. What are you going to do about it?"

"You're lovers?"

"Yes, have been for years," McNab replied.

"But you are married, McNab. What about Francine?"

"It's an … arrangement we have. She couldn't be with the person she loved and she knew I was gay. I get to hook up with whoever and she gets to be with him."

"This is wrong on so many levels."

"I never took you for a homophobic person, Lassie"

"I'm not! It's just … in this day and age, you shouldn't have to hide who you are, or marry someone you don't love. So, Spencer, I take it this is how you get your information? From McNab? I finally have the evidence I need to get rid of you."

"I would slow down there, Lassie. Sure, you've got us for being lovers. For...adultery, that's the right word for it, isn't Buzz?"

"Yes."

"But that is all you have. Nothing else."

Lassiter couldn't believe in what he was seeing… another side of Spencer. The seriousness in his tone and the look that could kill in his eyes, was enough to make Lassiter shiver a little. This side of Shawn was dangerous, maybe even a killer. Somehow Lassiter knew he never wanted to get on the wrong side of this Shawn, but he still had him.

"Wrong. I can now prove that you are nothing but a common conman and you both are going to prison for this." Lassiter turned around to leave, only to find himself being pushed against the wall, arm pinned behind his back.

"You listen to me, you piece of shit. Go ahead, report us. But before you do, think about this." Shawn's voice was a low growl, full of anger. "You have no proof that I'm not psychic, only that I'm
screwing one of your officers. Also remember, if it were true and you could prove it, think about how many cases you will have to go through. How many murderers will walk free? The families of the victims asking why and finally, the overall affect it will have on the station, the Chief's, yours and O'Hara's reputation. Remember, every action has a reaction and the domino effect from your little comment could mean many years' worth of damage."

Shawn pushed Lassiter harder against the wall, before letting him go. By the time Lassiter turned around, Shawn had already walked away and was out of sight. McNab was looking down at the glass in his hand, biting his lip.

"He's right, you know. You can never prove that he is or isn't a psychic. Unless he says so. Even if his dad, Guster or even me, told you the truth, you still can't prove it without his word. I think you should go, Detective, and think about what he said and thank you."

"What for?"

"For what you said about that we shouldn't have to hide who we are or that we are in love, but Shawn and I don't have a choice and ... I doubt I could ever explain it to you. It's just nice to know that you won't have trouble with us because we are gay. Please close the door behind you and ... remember this, you think I'm feeding him information, but, he told me what was in that note about Iris. I never saw it. You didn't show me what was in it. So, unless you think that Shawn wrote that note and kidnapped Iris, how did he know what it said?"

McNab didn't give Lassiter a chance to reply, he just turned and walked away.

Leaving it for another day, Lassiter left, closing the door behind him and returned to his car. He had a lot to think about, including how Spencer got so strong. Rubbing his arm, he glanced in the rear vision mirror at the building he had just left and wondered what else Spencer and McNab were hiding.
A Single Shot Rang Out

Lassiter had a restless sleep that night. Too much information ran around his head and a lot of it had nothing to do with him. Like how Spencer and McNab met? Had they known each other before Spencer, or McNab, had started working at the station? How did they sort things out in the bedroom? That last one really nothing to do with him.

Then he had the other stuff to think about, like the fact that McNab was right. Only he knew what was in that letter, not even O'Hara knew, so there was no way McNab could have fed Spencer the information. Spencer could have guessed what was in it. After all, he did ask McNab to dig into Mr. Vick's background, but even then, that was a stretch. Spencer was too … accurate. Too on the ball with what was in the letter, for a simple guess.

Then, there was the suggestion that maybe Spencer wrote the letter himself, but what purpose could that have? It seemed to all come down to putting Mr. Vick on the top of the suspect list for hiring the hit-man that killed Chief Vick. Again, what reason would Mr. Vick have to kill Chief Vick? Nothing seemed to make sense.

Looking up from his desk the next day, thoughts quickly faded into the recesses of his mind as he watched Spencer walked up the stairs and into the bullpen. As usual, he did it with his normal noise and flare, as if all eyes needed to be on him. The sight was so familiar that most of the officers barely glanced up before returning to their work seconds later.

Shaking his head, Lassiter couldn't believe that McNab put up with that. Maybe Spencer was different when they were alone. Maybe all the flare, the noise, the child-like behaviour disappeared, replaced by a different Spencer no one else ever sees.

It's now that he knows the truth about Spencer and McNab, he can see the way they interact. The way Shawn looked around the bullpen, stopping a few seconds longer when his eyes fall on the tall officer before moving onto the others in the room. The small smile which flashes on McNab's face when Shawn makes some sort of smart comment.

Yes, the signs were always there; Lassiter can see that now. He just couldn't see what was right in front of him. So what else was he missing? Smiling, he watched as Spencer walked his way.

"Here comes trouble," he whispered to O'Hara.

Juliet had been watching Shawn and Gus ever since they walked into the bullpen. Shawn had been his usual self, but Gus seemed to linger back, as if he didn't want to be here. Sighing, Juliet just left the idea linger a little bit more, before pushing it away.

"How's things going, Lassie dear?"

Lassiter really wanted to slap that smirk off Spencer's face, but controlled the urge.

"What can we do for you, Spencer?"

"I have a message from beyond the grave."

"Is it about the death of Chief Vick or the kidnapping of Iris?" O'Hara asked, knowing full well, Lassiter wasn't in the mood.

"Both, actually! The spirit which has been talking to me wanted us to know that Iris is with her
mother."

"Shawn," Gus snapped in surprise.

"What?" Shawn replied as he looked at Gus offended. "It's what the spirit told me. Iris is with her mother and she is safe."

"How can she be safe if she is dead, Spencer?" Lassiter growled.

They say you shouldn't kill the messenger, but right now, he really wanted to. How in the world can he just blurt that out. Lassiter will never know, but it was the wrong thing to say right now.

"Lassie, look where you need to look. You will find comfort in the answer."

"Get out!"

Shawn smiled at Lassiter's attempt to grab his gun. He knew that Lassiter wouldn't shoot him, especially in the station.

"I'm leaving," Shawn replied, before his expression became serious. "But the spirits are getting restless and they need justice for Chief Vick and Iris. So, step up, Detective, and start digging."

"We are, but can't do anything while you are getting in the way."

Shawn nodded his understanding before he turned around and headed towards the exit.

"Sorry," Gus whispered, evidently shaken by what Shawn had said.

Gus turned to catch up with Shawn, but Lassiter was too busy watching as Shawn and McNab exchanged words. Shawn then gave Lassiter one more glance before disappearing.

Outside, Gus walked to the blueberry, but stopped short when he realised that Shawn wasn't following him.

"Coming?"

"You're angry at me, Gus, so no. You go and we will catch up at the office later."

"Shawn, get in this car right now."

Shawn raised an eyebrow at the determination in Gus's voice. Shaking his head, Shawn took a step as he went to reply, but a word never left his mouth. Instead, a single shot rang out before Shawn's body dropped to the ground.

"Shawn!" Gus yelled out as he hid behind his car.
Who Shot Shawn

Lassiter was still stewing over Shawn's words when an officer rushed into the station.

"Shots fired out front. Shawn Spencer's been hit."

"What?" Lassiter gasped as he looked at Juliet.

He then searched for McNab, who was stepping out of the records room. McNab's face grew white as the news sank in. Knowing that McNab wouldn't be much good to them, Lassiter quickly made up a plan.

Pulling his gun, Lassiter, along with the rest of the officers, made their way out to the front. Gus was an ashen colour, his eyes glued on Shawn's unmoving body.

"Guster," Lassiter called out. The evidently shaken up man jerkily lifted his head to look at who was calling is name. "Where did the shot come from?"

Gus lowered his eyes as he thought about Lassiter's question. "The park," he finally replied as he looked back up. "It came past me and hit …"

"The park," Lassiter repeated as he looked out towards the park across the road.

There wasn't much cover there for someone to hide. They had it cleared for this exact reason. But there were still a few trees and the water fountain. Scanning the area, there wasn't anything, or anyone, to see. Sure that it was safe, Lassiter had ordered several people to clear the area, while he, O'Hara and McNab dealt with Spencer.

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When the ambulance arrived, he sent McNab and Gus with Spencer to the hospital. It was the only way he knew McNab would be any help to them. Of course, the other officers found nothing. Searching the park himself, Lassiter, too, came up empty. That was, until he leaned over the fountain. There it was, the bullet shell and, looking up, the mark where the gun barrel had been resting.

"I want this fountain dusted for prints and this area blocked off."

After the forensic people took the photos, Lassiter collected the shell himself and took it to the lab. He had a suspicion and needed to get it checked out.

The waiting on news was killing them all. They wanted to hear how Spencer was doing and Lassiter really wanted the results back from the test. Which news came first, he really didn't care. But it was news about Shawn that arrived first. In the form of Shawn himself.

"Spencer, what are you doing here?"

"Easy there, Lassie boy, I'm fine. It was just a graze and I hit my head."

"Spencer," breathing through gritted teeth, Lassiter calmed himself. "What I meant was, you should still be in hospital."

"Why, this is just a scratch. I've had worse."
"When? Actually, don't worry that. Any idea who would want to shoot you?" Lassiter looked back and forth between Shawn and McNab.

"I have a lot of people that would love to kill me, but none here. At least, none that I know of. Other than you of course."

"One of these days, Spencer."

"Sir, the report you were waiting for." The young officer stepped back when Lassiter turned his angry stare at him.

"Thank you." Taking the report, Lassiter opened it up. Letting out a sigh of relief, the officer took this moment to slip away. "Just as I thought," Lassiter mumbled to himself.

"What's that?" Juliet asked.

"Shawn was shot by the same sniper rifle that killed the Chief. So, either the sniper wants you dead or the person that hired him."

"I would go for the person that hired him."

"Why is that, Shawn?"

"Simple, Juliet, the spirits have been pointing me towards who hired the sniper, not who the sniper is. The sniper could have killed me, but didn't."

"Right, they didn't kill you, but they killed the Chief and little Iris, why?"

"I don't know."

"Any idea, McNab?"

"Sorry, Detective, how would I know?"

"Just checking. So, Spencer, you didn't see anything before you got shot?"

"I was … Gus and I were having a discussion when it happened. Sorry."

"I'm sure you are. Come on, O'Hara."

Before following Lassiter, Juliet added, "Shawn, if you know anything or you are wrong about Iris, please tell us."

"Sorry, Jules, Iris is with her mother. That is all I can tell you."

Nodding, Juliet took off to find where Lassiter had gone.

"Shawn, I still can't believe you can say that. You don't really know and ..." Gus pursed when he realised that McNab was still there.

"Look Gus, you go home or to your other work, I'll catch you later."

"You need a lift home?"

"I'll get McNab to give me a lift. I have something I need to do."

"Okay, just don't … go and get shot again."
Shawn gave a little giggle as he watched Gus walk away. "Nice shot, Buzz."

"I was worried I'd killed you."

"I trust you with my life, you know that. Now, we really need to get Lassie back on the right track. Otherwise, Mr. Vick is going to get away."

"Don't worry about that. I've found the reason he wanted Chief Vick dead."

"Good. I will catch you later. I need to check in and let the others know what is happening."

Lassiter watched as Shawn headed out of the bullpen. When he looked back, McNab was heading his way with a file in his hand.
"What is that, McNab?"

"It's the report you wanted me to do on Mr. Vick."

"Oh," he replied as he looked over at Juliet. "Did you find anything?"

"Yes, I did. It seems that he took out life insurance on Chief Vick two years ago. It's valued at two million dollars. It also has a clause in it for if she is killed off duty, due to the job. In other words, if she is killed while off duty by a known criminal or a criminal act, he gets an extra million. Also, he has a gambling problem."

"How bad?" inquired Juliet

"He's in debt to Mr. Black to the amount of about ten thousand," McNab explained.

"That gives him a motive, not necessarily a means to hire a hit-man," Lassiter replied.

"No, but his connection to the army might. It seems that he was in the military before he and Chief Vick met. He was discharged for gambling on base."

"Really? We better check this out. I take it you would …"

"Shawn is fine. As he said, he's had worse and I'm not his nursemaid, Sir."

"Okay then, let's go and talk to the army."

O'Hara was confused. What the hell was all of that about? Is there something going on between Shawn and McNab that she doesn't know about? Ever since Chief Vick's death, things have been happening. Juliet had seen strange behaviours and heard things. Things which have left her with more questions than answers, but no matter what, she was determined to get to the bottom of it all.

"O'Hara!" Lassiter barked when he saw that Juliet wasn't moving. "Come on."

Grabbing her phone, Juliet let out a heavy sigh before following Lassiter and McNab out of the station.

The ride to the nearby army base was quiet. Juliet was lost in her thoughts as she tried to work out what was going on. To try and clear her mind, she shot off a text to a close friend. Lassie was going over the questions he was going to ask in order to get the army's help, instead of being kicked out. McNab was wondering if all this planning Shawn was doing was going to blow up in their faces.

Pulling up at the check point, McNab wound down the window so Lassiter could talk to the guard on duty.

"I'm Detective Lassiter and I'd like to see the Post Commander, please," Lassiter said as he held up his badge.

The guard took the badge and looked it over. "One moment, Detective Lassiter," the guard replied, before returning to his booth and making a phone call. A few moments later he returned and handed Lassiter back his badge. "Drive through, follow the arrows and they will lead you to the Headquarters. They will be waiting for you."
"Thank you," Lassiter replied, before McNab put the window back up and drove off.

As they pulled into a parking spot near the Headquarters building, another man in army greens greeted them.

"Sir, I'm Sergeant Harm. Please follow me."

"Sergeant. This is Detective O'Hara and Officer McNab. Please, lead the way." Lassiter looked back at the others before they followed Sergeant Harm into the building. It wasn't long before Sergeant Harm was knocking on a door.

"Enter!"

Inside, Officer Harm stood at attention, then introduced the group. "Sir, these are Detectives Lassiter and O'Hara, and Officer McNab."

"Thank you Sergeant, dismissed," the Post Commander said as he returned the Sergeant's salute. After the Sergeant left, he turned his focus to Lassiter. "I am Post Commander Colonel Straight. What can I do for the Santa Barbara Police?"

"Colonel, I'm wondering if you could give me some information on a former soldier by the name of Richard Vick. From the information we could find, he was stationed here a few years ago."

The way the Post Commander's muscle's tensed and his lips pressed tightly together, Lassiter guessed that Chief Vick's husband wasn't a popular topic.

"Richard Vick you say," the Post Commander breathed out. "What has he done?"

"Nothing that we know of, yet." The look Lassiter got he knew well. It was the look he gave when he didn't believe what someone was saying. "His wife was assassinated a few days ago. His daughter, since then, has been kidnapped with a massage being left for me saying that either they get their money or him behind bars. We're not sure if the two are connected, but if they are, well …"

"You want to know if Mr. Vick knows how to get hold of an assassin?"

"Yes."

"I can't give you that information. You know that, don't you? But what I can say is, there are those that still believe that Richard's dismissal from the army was wrong and he had a lot of friends who are still here."

"Can you tell me why he was dishonourably discharged?"

"Not really. Just know that his actions and behaviour were … unbecoming a soldier of the USA."

"So it was more than gambling on base?" Even though Colonel Straight didn't say anything, the look on his face answered Lassiter's question. "Thank you, I think you have answered all of our questions."

"Detective Lassiter," Colonel Straight called out as Lassiter started to exit the room. "I will tell you this. Mr. Vick's skills mean he wouldn't need to hire someone."

"I understand and thank you."

Outside the office, Sergeant Harm was waiting to lead them back to their car then directing them back to the main gate.
"What did you two get from all of that?" Lassiter asked as they headed back to the station.

"We need to talk to Mr. Vick again," Juliet suggested.

"That Mr. Vick isn't what he seems and maybe you need to get Shawn in to read him," McNab added.

"You might be right, McNab. When we get back, O'Hara, you call Mr. Vick in and, McNab, you get Spencer."

"What are you going to do?" Juliet asked as McNab pulled the car up in front of the station.

"I've got something I need to check first," Lassiter replied as they all got out. Lassiter got back in on the driver's side. "When I get back, we will interview him."

With that, he closed the door and drove off. Confused, Juliet and McNab stood there for a second watching the car disappear, before heading up the steps of the station.
Lassiter cursed under his breath as the traffic moved slowly and then finally came to a complete stop. He hated when there were traffic jams, even worse when they stopped him from getting to his destination. But it did give him time on his own to think. He put the car in park and let his thoughts come.

Spencer said that Iris was safe with her mother, but Chief Vick is dead. Plus, the person that kidnapped Iris promised me they wouldn't hurt her. Which Spencer did confirm by telling me what was in the letter, even though I know he hadn't seen it.

Secondly, Spencer said the so-called spirit he was talking to wasn't Chief Vick, but another one that was either connected to the person that hired the assassin or the assassin themselves. So does this mean both Iris and Chief Vick are dead, or are they alive? And if they are alive, then what? No, I saw Chief Vick's body. She's dead. I know that.'

And why do I have this funny feeling Spencer is only feeding me the information he wants me to know. Information that implicates Mr. Vick as the only one that hired the assassin. But why not point towards the assassin as well? Or maybe Mr. Vick was the assassin and the kidnapping of Iris had nothing to do with Chief Vick's death, but his gambling problem.

That still didn't explain all the information Spencer knew. There was no way anyone will ever convince me Spencer is a real psychic. Unless McNab was telling the truth, even if he didn't mean to, and Spencer wrote the note himself. It could explain why Iris seemed to be relaxed around her kidnapper.

Of course that would mean Spencer would be Iris's kidnapper and if it is linked to Chief Vick's death, Spencer is the assassin as well. Could Spencer be a cold-hearted killer?

And what about McNab?

Is he a killer too?

Pinching the bridge of his nose, Lassiter let out a heavy sigh. These thoughts were going around and around in his mind, and he wasn't getting anywhere. Hopefully, when he got to where he was going, a lot of his questions, if not all of them, will be answered.

Realising that he wasn’t going anywhere soon, Lassiter quickly made a phone call. After pulling in a few favours he got one of the things he was after.

Letting out a large yawn, Lassiter looked at his watch; he’d been sitting there for half an hour. When he looked to the road ahead, he saw that the traffic had started moving. He put the car back in drive and made a bee-line to his first stop. He picked up the papers he needed and headed over to where he hoped to finally get some answers.

Pulling up at his next stop, Lassiter entered the building and made his way straight to the service desk.

“Can I help you, Detective Lassiter?”

“Yes Tony, you can. May I speak to the manager?”

“Can't see why not. Just a second.”
Lassiter looked around. How many times he'd stood in this same spot, he didn't know, but this was
the first time he's ever really looked at the place. People he'd never really noticed before coming and
going; people from different walks of life, different ages and sex. Yet they were all here for the same
damn thing.

To shoot a gun.

“Detective Lassiter, what can I do for you?”

Turning around, Lassiter watched as the manager of the shooting range approached him. Lassiter
took the outstretched arm and the two men shook hands like old friends.

“Can we talk in your office, please?”

“Of course, follow me.”

“Thank you, Joel” Lassiter replied as he followed.

“I hope I'm not in trouble,” Joel joked as he held the door to his office open for Lassiter to walk
through.

“No, nothing like that, but I have these.”

Joel took the papers as he closed the door.

“Warrant papers?”

“They give me the right to your security footage and to search both Mr. and Mrs. Vick's lockers and
take possession of any firearms.”

“Well then, what do you want to do first?”

“I'd like to see your security footage.”

“By all means. I'll take you to the security room. I hope you find what you are looking for.”

“So do I,” Lassiter replied.

It didn't take long for Lassiter to find what he was looking for.

“I need a copy of this.”

“I'll get it for you. Do you want to search the lockers while you wait?”

“Yes, please.”

Smiling, Lassiter finally had everything he needed, yet … it didn't feel as good as he thought it
would.
"Thank you for coming, Mr Vick," greeted Juliet, but when there was no answer she continued. "Please follow me."

As she led the way, she received a text message. Seeing who it was from, Juliet frowned.

"Is everything okay, Detective O'Hara?"

Juliet gave Mr. Vick a nervous smile, "Yes. Yes everything is fine. Please wait here," she replied opening the door to interview room four. Once he entered, she closed the door behind him.

Walking over to her desk, Juliet read the text again. [Ring me. ASAP. It's important.] Concerned, she dialled the number.

"Hi Dale, what do you have for me?"

Listening to the voice on the phone, Juliet watched as McNab and Shawn talked near Lassiter's desk.

"Do you think he will break?" McNab whispered as he watched Juliet.

"Hard to tell," Shawn answered. "Has he paid us yet?"

"Yes. Everything he owes us. So what now?"

"Nothing. We wait and see what happens. After all, he still needs to pay for Chief Vick and you did say that Lassie just took off, right?"

"Yeah. He said he had to check something out and would be right back. Have no idea what it could have been. We've giving him everything he needs and … here he is."

Lassiter walked swiftly over to where Juliet was.

"I hope that call is important, O'Hara."

"It is. I've just found out some interesting information that might prove Mr. Vick isn't the assassin."

"You mean that he hired someone else to do it?"

"Yes and I know who it is."

"Let me guess, Spencer." The confused look in O'Hara's eyes told Lassiter he was right. "Before we do anything, let's compare notes. Is Mr. Vick here yet?"

"I put him in interview room four."

"Good! Put a guard on the door while I get some officers to watch Spencer. Then meet me in the Chief's office."

Juliet nodded before heading off one way and Lassiter, the other.

Shawn gave McNab a confused look. Of all the scenarios he had come up with, this wasn't one.

"Any idea what they are up to?"
“Who’s up to what?” Gus interjected as he walked up.

“Jules and Lassie. They’ve pulled Mr. Vick in to question him about Chief Vick’s murder, but all they are doing is talking to other officers and ...”

“Now they are going into the Chief’s office,” McNab added. “I don’t like this Shawn. Something’s wrong.”

“Maybe, or they’re just putting all their eggs in one basket.”

“That’s a metaphor for a bad idea Shawn,” Gus added, which got him a nod of approval from McNab.

“Wish I could hear what they are saying,” McNab said as he tried to see, but Lassiter and Juliet had their backs to the bullpen.

A second later, the two detectives exited the office. Juliet headed to the interview room, while Lassiter walked over to them.

“As you suggested, McNab, we’re getting Spencer here to give us a reading on Mr. Vick while O’Hara and I interview him. You’re right with that, Spencer?”

“Anything to help, Lassie,” Shawn replied.

“Great,” the smile Lassiter gave worried Shawn. It was like he knew something he wasn't telling.

“Go behind the mirror.” With that, Lassiter was off to the interview room, but stopped and said something to the guard before looking back at them. Then he entered.

Shaking off the unsettling feeling, Shawn, McNab and Gus went into the small room between interview rooms three and four, closing the door behind them.

“Mr. Vick,” Lassiter started as he placed some evidence bags on the table. “We know you hired someone to kill your wife and because you tried to trick them out of their money, they took Iris. Give them up to us and things might not be so bad for you. Especially if we find Iris alive.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Mr. Vick snapped back as he stood up.

“Fine,” Lassiter sighed. “Let’s put it this way. They’re smart. They shot Chief Vick with her own sniper rifle. We know this because the bullets match her gun from the gun range. The same rifle you sent Officer McNab to retrieve a few days before the shooting, along with this note,” Lassiter pointed to one of the evidences bags, “giving him permission to collect it.”

“I …” Mr. Vick looked like he was about to choke on his own breath. “You’re right,” he finally breathed out. “But I don’t know who the shooter is. I got the rifle from Officer McNab and left it in my car. It was gone before the shooting and was back there the day after. I had McNab to return it that day.”

“Why McNab?” Juliet asked.

“Why not. From what I’ve seen, he’s an idiot. How he got to be a cop I’ll never know, but I figured he wouldn’t say anything and … and I guess since it took you this long, he hadn’t.”

“Fair enough, but you were taking a big chance that McNab wouldn’t say something.”

“I know, but you need to understand. I couldn’t … I needed the money and ...” Mr. Vick looked
down at his hands. “I had no choice. They were going to kill me.”

“So instead of paying the people you owe money to, you hired someone to shoot your wife and then tried rip them off,” Juliet added as she showed him his bank statements.

“Yes.”

“Right.” Mr. Vick you are under arrest for conspiracy to assassinate your wife, Chief Karen Vick. You’re also under arrest for your part in the kidnapping of your daughter Iris. If she is found dead, that charge will be changed to accessory to the murder of a child. Do you understand?”

“I understand, Detective Lassiter.”

“Officer Loud, please escort Mr. Vick to the lock-up.”

After Mr. Vick was led away, the gang all converged at Lassiter's desk.

“Looks like you didn't need me after all, Lassie,” Shawn smiled, feeling the stress leave his body.

“I wouldn't say that, Spencer,” Lassiter replied, smiling. The uneasy feeling returned, especially as Shawn caught out of the corner of his eyes that they were surrounded by officers. “Tell me honestly, is Guster part of this or is he innocent in all of this.”

“In what?” Gus asked totally confused.

“In the shooting of Chief Vick, the kidnapping of Iris and blackmailing of Mr. Vick. Are you part of it?”

“Whoa, what … No way. Shawn?”

“I have no idea what you mean, Lassie.” Shawn's voice was low and growled as the words escaped through his gritted teeth.

“What about you, McNab. Did Spencer shoot Chief Vick?”

“I can honestly tell you, Shawn didn't not kill Chief Vick.”

“Well then. You won’t mind if we interview you two, will you?”

“Actually, I do. Come on Gus, we're getting out of here.” When Shawn turned to leave, he was greeted by nearly every officer at the station pointing guns at him. “Then again …”
“What do you want to do with them?” Juliet asked as she looked back and forth between the two mirrors.

She and Detective Lassiter were standing in the viewing room between interview rooms three and four. Shawn in one and McNab in the other.

Neither man seemed to be too worried. McNab sat still, his eyes closed and hands, with fingers intertwined together, on the table before him.

Shawn on the other hand was … well, Shawn, never sitting still and fidgeting most of the time. He would stand up and walk around the table beating his chest for some reason. Then he’d stand in a corner, sit down for a few seconds then jump back up and returning to his seat. Then the moment they thought he had settled down, he would be back on his feet, looking straight into the mirror. It was like he could see them standing there, but it was the smile that had her worried the most. A smile saying you can't catch me.

“Let them sweat it for a bit,” Lassiter answered. “I have a search warrant for McNab's place, Shawn's place, the Psych office, plus the apartment they meet at.”

“What apartment?” Juliet frowned at being left out of this information.

“I'll explain on the way. Come on,” Lassiter replied as he headed out of the viewing room. “Oh, no …”

Coming their way was Henry Spencer and he looked angry. Lassiter glanced over at Gus, who sheepishly looked away.

“Detective,” Henry barked across the room. “What's this I hear. You've arrested Shawn. For what?”

“Thanks Guster,” Lassiter growled.

“I thought Mr. Spencer should know what was happening,” Gus squeaked out in his defence.

“Leave him alone, Gus was doing what he thought was right. Are you going to answer my question?” Henry inquired.

“Just a second, Mr. Spencer. We’ll do the Psych office first. Meet me there and ...” Lassiter glanced at Gus again, “take him with you.”

“Come on, Gus, since you're part owner of Psych, you need to be there anyway.”

Gus didn't answer, but quickly followed Juliet and a few other officers out of the bullpen.

“Now Mr. Spencer, yes I have arrested Spencer, and McNab if you’d like to know, for the assassination of Chief Vick and the kidnapping of Iris.”


“Be honest with me. You saw the report. Could Spencer make that shot?”

“Are you trying to ...”
“Could he?” Lassiter interrupted.

“Yes,” Henry breathed out. “But why would he?”

“We think Spencer and McNab are hired assassins. Have been for years. I need you to stand back and let me do my job. Please?” Henry nodded his agreement. “Thank you for being honest with me.”

“You're welcome and thank you for being honest with me too, Detective.”

Lassiter watched as Henry walked over to his desk and sat down. This was getting harder and harder to do and slowly but surely, the domino effect from this would be felt for years to come. Walking out, Lassiter headed off to meet up with Juliet.

Gus sat in the corner watching in horror as the Psych office was demolished. Every drawer, filing cabinet and potted plant was emptied out; and anything that wasn't tied down was tipped over. They even took their computers and game machines.

As Lassiter walked into the Psych office, Juliet looked up from the mess around her. “We haven't found anything. Taking the computers to see if there is anything on them, but … I'm not holding my breath.”

“Don't worry about it. We still have their homes and their apartment to search.”

“I hope you're going to treat the homes better then you did here,” Gus mumbled,

Gus was disappointed with what was happening. He had always thought of the officers at the station as friends; family even, since a lot had seen him and Shawn grow up.

“Maybe,” Lassiter replied. He was sure Guster wasn't part of this, but he couldn't dismiss that he could be either. “Let's go to …”

“Detective …”

“What have you found, Officer Mann?”

The officer stepped back to reveal what he had found.

“A safe?” Gus gasped as he stood up.

“I take it, you didn't you know about this?” Lassiter asked as he walked over.

“No! No I didn't, but I do know about safes and this is an easy one to get into.”

“Without the code?” Juliet inquired.

“Yeah,” Gus replied flexing his fingers. If Shawn has been keeping things from him, he really wanted to know what was inside this hidden safe. “Do you want me to open it for you?”

“No!” Lassiter snapped. “Get it photographed and dusted, O'Hara. Then you can open it, Guster. As long as we can exclude you from ever having touched it.”

“Thanks,” Gus sighed in relief. Since he didn't know about it, his finger prints wouldn't be on the safe.

“When you're ready to open it, call me. I'm taking a few officers over to McNab's house.”
“Good luck and remember, Francine is pregnant so don't stress her out too much.”

“Right,” Lassiter huffed as he walked out, followed by two officers.
Lassiter took a deep breath before pressing the doorbell. Its homely sound matched the setting perfectly. A quaint little house in a quiet urban neighbourhood. How a man like McNab could be a killer, or involved with one, Lassiter would never understand.

Glancing over at the dark car parked in the driveway, Lassiter wondered if it belonged to the person Francine McNab wanted to be with, but couldn't. No matter what, it had nothing to do with why he was here.

The door opened and a confused Francine stared out at him.

“Detective Lassiter,” she breathed, “I'm sorry, but Buzz isn't here.”

“I know Mrs. McNab and … I'm sorry, but I'm here to execute a search warrant on your house.” Lassiter handed her the warrant.

“What for? Where is Buzz?” Panic made Francine's voice to rise as she glanced passed Lassiter looking for her husband.

“He's back at the station, under arrest for his involvement in the assassination of Chief Vick.”

“No!” Francine's whole body started to shake. “Buzz wouldn't … he couldn't. That damn Shawn.”

“Sorry?”

“If Buzz has done something wrong, Shawn Spencer would've gotten him involved. I…”

“Don't say anything else, Francine,” a gentleman said as he stepped out from behind the door. Taking the warrant, he glanced over it. “Let the Detective do his job,” he added looking at Lassiter.

“And you are?”

“Matt, David Matt and I am Francine's lawyer.”

“Right, her lawyer.” He had heard that Matt was like a dog with a bone in the court room and even worse in the real world. “Can we come in?”

“We can't exactly stop you,” Matt replied as he stepped aside.

“You're looking for anything to do with the shooting, kidnapping or any sign that Iris Vick has been here,” Lassiter ordered the two officers with him. “And keep the place tidy. Mrs, McNab is pregnant and doesn't need the stress.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied before heading to the back of the house.

“Mrs. McNab, Francine, I know this is hard, but if you know anything, please tell me.”

“I don't…”

“Francine, I advise you to say nothing,” Matt interrupted as he turned to face her.

“Mr. Matt, please. I know all about you, Francine, and McNab's arrangement. I will admit I don't understand why you two, or McNab and Spencer can't be with each other, but it has nothing to do
with this. I only want to know if Iris was here. McNab has a hidden place or somewhere Francine isn't allowed to go. That's it.”

“David, please?”

Seeing the pleading in her eyes, Matt gave in. “Okay,” he nodded in agreement.

“Follow me, Detective,” Francine said as she headed to the kitchen. Moving the chair that was sitting in the corner, Francine pushed on a panel, and the wall slid open. Once the door clicked in place, a light turned on, revealing a small room. “Buzz said it was a panic room. It creeps me out, so I've never entered it.”

Stepping back into Matt's arms, Francine watched as Lassiter pulled gloves on and entered the room.

Lassiter was shocked. For a small room, it held a lot. One wall was lined with filing cabinets. The back wall was covered by an array of weapons and the third wall had a desk against it.

“Officers, come to the kitchen,” Lassiter called out the door before he walked over to the desk.

Sitting on top was an open book. On closer inspection, Lassiter could make out times, dates and some sort of code next to numbers.

“Sir?”

“Take photos of everything, starting with this book, then secure the room. I'll send the forensic unit over,” Lassiter ordered, before stepping back into the kitchen. “Thank you, Mrs. McNab.”

“Francine knew nothing about this, Detective. Neither of us did.”

“I'm sure you didn't but please, both of you report to the station to give a statement tomorrow.”

“I'll make sure we're there. Can Francine get some clothes? I'll put her up in a hotel for the night.”

“As soon as the forensic unit has finished, yes, of course she can.” Lassiter popped his head back into the room. “I'm going onto the next place. Don't leave this house until I say you can.”

“Yes Sir,” came the replies.

Lassiter nodded at Francine and Matt before making a call to the station to get two more officers to meet him at Shawn's apartment.
Not All is as it Seems

Stepping into Spencer's apartment, Lassiter, with wide eyes, looked around. Except for a small table and one chair in a corner, the room was empty. It was as if no one had ever lived there.

Off in a corner was a small kitchenette. Again, on searching the cupboards, drawers and fridge, he found that they were unused and empty. In fact all the rooms were the same. The single bedroom contained an unmade bed and an empty set of drawers.

At least the bathroom had more in it ... just. Soap, hair products and ... somehow it didn't surprise Lassiter, but there was make-up. Drawing in a deep breath, Lassiter mumbled to himself.

“I take it, this is the only room you ever used, Spencer,” He turned to the two officers with him. "Search everywhere, push on every wall for hidden rooms, photograph and bag everything not tied down."

Taking one more look around, Lassiter shook his head. Something wasn't right here. Spencer's personality was chaotic, so having a place so ... neat and void of everything, didn't seem to fit. Nothing about this seemed right, and yet, at the same time it did.

Heading out to the hallway, Lassiter needed to talk to the caretaker of the building.

"When we arrived, you said we wouldn't find anything. What did you mean by that?"

"Mr. Spencer doesn't live here anymore. He moved his stuff out a week ago."

"Why didn't you say that when we first got here."

"You didn't let me, plus ... Mr. Spencer paid for one more month. He said you would be coming around and to let you search to your heart’s content."

"Did he now?" Lassiter mumbled, rubbing his chin. “Thank you, I will get one of the officers to take your statement soon.”

Glancing at his phone, Lassiter wondered what was holding O'Hara up. He thought she would've call by now.

"Sir,"

“Mmm,” Lassiter replied without looking up.

"We've finished, Sir."

"Good," Lassiter replied, not surprised that it didn't take long.

Locking the door, Lassiter watched as the officers put up the crime scene tape on the door. It was time to head over to the other apartment. He knew O'Hara wanted to see this mystery apartment, but evidently, she wasn't finished at the Psych office.

Driving to the 'love' apartment Lassiter thought about how different Spencer's apartment was compared to his area of Psych office. Spencer's desk, drawers, even the floor around his chair was messy and cluttered from rubbish to things that didn't seem to have any reason to be there. Yet the apartment was empty. Sure, the caretaker said Spencer had moved out, but Lassiter still expected it to be in a mess, or at less more in it. Then again, Spencer did still have his hair care product there, so
maybe he didn't fully move out.

Sitting in front of the 'love' apartment building he wondered if it would reveal a different view of Spencer again.

Spencer and McNab.

Sighing, he climbed out of the car and made his way through the front door. Even though he had been here not that long ago, he was still taken back by the difference between the street view and inside. Walking over to the check-in desk, he already had his badge out.

“I'll like you to open up the room belonging to McNab and Spencer.”

The badge and firmness of Lassiter's voice made sure the desk clerk didn't argue.

“Yes, Sir. I will get the manager.”

It took a second for the clerk to make the call and a few more for the manager to arrive.

“Can I help you?”

“Yes you can,” Lassiter replied with a smile. “This is a search warrant for the apartment leased to one Shawn Spencer and/or Buzz McNab, as well as anything like a safe they use on the premise.”

Taking the warrant, the manager looked over it, nodded his understanding.

“Do you want to see the apartment first or the safe deposit boxes?”

“The safe deposit boxes I think first. Lead the way,” Lassiter replied surprised they would use anything like that.

In the apartment building's walk in safe the manager lead Lassiter to two deposit boxes side by side. Unlocking them, he stepped aside for Lassiter to see what was inside them.

In one belonging to McNab were a few photographs of him, Shawn, Francine and her lawyer friend. Evidently, they often took holidays together. There was also some jewellery, money and a small note book.

Of course, it was Spencer's box that had the more interesting things in it. Neatly packed were several note books, each one with a year on it. There was also a plastic bag that contained what looked like bones. But it was the photographs in this box that caught his eyes the most. They were of him. Some were recent, but a lot were from when he was younger, like when he first started in the police force and even younger, as a child. How and why Spencer had these, Lassiter didn't know, but he was surely going to find out.

“I want these locked up again, until the forensic team can get here. Officer Hue, stay here and make sure no one removes anything.”

“Yes sir.”

“Officer Mann, come with me.” Lassiter nodded to the manager. “You can take us to the apartment now.”

“Of course, Detective Lassiter. Follow me.”

The apartment, at least the part he saw when he caught the two men together, looked the same. But
this time Lassiter was going to get a better look, without Spencer threatening him.

An expensive apartment, with expensive and extremely stylish furniture, made it homely and roomy at the same time. This was their home, not a place they secretly meet.

Each room was styled and furnished the same way and revealed nothing sinister. The exceptions were the whips, chains and handcuffs in the bedroom, which Lassiter was sure they used on each other and no one else.

Still, he needed the forensic crew to go over ever inch. As he closed the 'sex' cabinet, his phone rang.


"We're ready to open the safe when you get here."

"Okay and you took your time."

"We had some … unexpected complications," in the background, Lassiter could hear Guster going off about something. "I'll explain when you get here."

"I'm on my way." Hanging up, Lassiter turned to Officer Mann. “Continue the search until forensics gets here.”

"Yes sir."

Walking out, Lassiter wondered what the complications were.
Doubt

Upon seeing O'Hara standing outside the Psych office, Lassiter frowned with concern. Maybe these complications were worse than he first thought. Pulling up, he noticed a locksmith van nearby.

“What's going on, O'Hara?” Her crossed arms and hung head gave Lassiter an unsettled feeling. “What have you found?”

“We better talk inside,” she replied as she led the way. “Since you said you were on the way, I got the locksmith to start on the safe.”

“I thought Guster was going to ...”

“Detective Lassiter,” interrupted the panicked voice of said mentioned. “I swear, I don't know how my fingerprints got on that safe. I didn't even know there was a safe until now.”

“That's the complication?” Lassiter asked as he pointed at Gus.

“Yes, and,” Juliet paused giving Gus a frustrated stare, “they're not just on the safe. They are on the locking devices as well, as if Gus had opened and closed the safe himself.”

“But ... I ...” Gus gasped out. “I'm being framed!” He sighed heavily as he sat down at his own desk.

“We will see about that,” Lassiter mumbled. He was sure Guster had nothing to do with this, but right now, it didn't look good.

“Done,” the Locksmith called out.

“Good, we can finally find out what's in there. Stand back please,” Lassiter continued as he and O'Hara moved forward. “Let's see what we've got.” As Lassiter opened the safe door, everyone in the room took in deep a breath of shock, followed by mumbles. “Oh my God,” was all Lassiter could muster.

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Henry sat at his desk staring at interview room one's door. He knew his son was behind it and what Shawn had been accused of. It didn’t stop him from wondering.

Was Shawn capable? Of course he was. Henry had taught him to shoot and with his ability, the chances of missing were slim.

Could Shawn kill in cold blood? This was a tricky question to answer. Henry did his best to keep Shawn away from violent video games and such, but even he knew that wasn't always possible.

Plus, all those years away, Henry didn't really know what Shawn had gotten up to. They never talked about it and Shawn never offered anything up. In fact, Shawn had always been a closed book, hiding his true self behind a smile.

Had he failed his son? Taking Shawn and Gus to crime scenes, letting them see what goes on in a police station. Letting his mother walk away from them. Was Shawn’s childhood that bad, he turned into a killer?

But what worried Henry the most was McNab, his relationship to Shawn and all of this mess. This
seemingly clumsy, quiet officer seemed to have turned out not to be who they thought he was. Letting out a deep breath to calm his nerves, Henry stood up, picked up a note book and made his way to the room holding his son.

“Sorry Mr. Spencer, but Detective Lassiter said no one was to enter. Not even you,” the officer standing guard said as he blocked Henry’s way.

“I understand, but did Detective Lassiter say anything about the viewing room?”

“No, but there's an officer in there as well with his own orders.”

“Thank you,” Henry replied, before entering the small room between the two interview rooms.

“Sir,” the officer greeted Henry. “Detective Lassiter said you were allowed in here, but you cannot talk to your son.”

“I guessed as much. Do you think Shawn and McNab did this?”

“I don't sir, but we need to wait for what the evidence says.”

“Nice to hear someone hasn't already made up their mind.”

Silence fell between the two as Henry looked through the two-way mirror. Shawn seemed to be agitated, twisting his hands until they turned white before letting go for the blood to return. However, when they looked through the other mirror, McNab was calm and nearly asleep it seemed. Something was really off and this worried Henry even more.

“Anyone see Mr. Spencer?” Henry smiled to himself upon hearing Lassiter's voice saying his name and with the way the detective walked into the small room, it was easy to guess Lassiter was pointed straight to him. “We need to talk. Now.”

Lassiter's voice was stern and Henry really wanted to know what they found at Shawn and McNab's homes and the Psych office. What Henry wasn't expecting was to follow Detective Lassiter into the bullpen to find Gus, in handcuffs, being led into interview room three.

Now what was happening has become real.
Henry's Interview

It was like a staring competition. The only difference is, no one was looking the other in the eyes. Lassiter stood staring out at the bullpen. He could see the tension in the air. No one was sure who they could trust anymore. The death of Chief Vick started the domino effect, followed by Iris's kidnapping then to the arrest of two people everyone here trusted. The station was falling apart and Lassiter wasn't sure he could stop it. He's not even sure a miracle could.

Ever since Lassiter had dragged Mr. Spencer and O'Hara into Chief Vick's office, O'Hara had taken turns staring at the back of Lassiter then the man sitting next to her. On the trip back to the station, Lassiter had filled her in with what they found at McNab and Shawn's three apartments, plus their little, although O'Hara found the idea they were lovers not so little, secret. Then, combine all of that with what they found in the safe, things weren't looking good for Shawn, McNab or Gus. Looking over at Mr. Spencer, O'Hara wondered how much he knew.

Henry wasn't a fool. He knew whatever they found wasn't good. For Shawn. Or for him. Not that he knew anything, but Shawn was his son and that would have been enough for Henry to drag a father in for questioning over a son's activity. He just couldn't believe Gus would be involved in anything like this.

Like Lassiter, he could see the crumbling walls of trust falling and if you can't trust your fellow officers, it becomes a dangerous place to work. But he could also see the tension in the detective; how his muscles tensed, relaxing only for a second. Lassiter's breathing was deep and controlled. He was doing his best to keep the station, its people, and himself together, but it might be a losing battle.

“So, what did you find?” Henry was over the silence.

“You trained Spencer, didn't you?”

“In what way, Detective Lassiter?”

The lack of sleep showed in Lassiter's eyes. He was tired of the games.

“You taught your son how to shoot a weapon, right?”

“Yes. I also taught him how to survive in a world full of killers, but I didn't teach him to be one. I tried to teach him to be a cop. Anything else you want to know?”

“What about Gus?”

“I don't understand,” Henry replied looking over at O'Hara. “What about Gus?”

“Did you teach him the same lessons?”

“No. Sure he had some of the same lessons as Shawn, but not all of them. I mean, I didn't teach him how to shoot a gun. In fact, I don't think Gus even knows how to.”

“You already said that you think Spencer could do this. Do you think he did it?”

“If you had asked me that a week ago, I definitely would've said no, but to be honest, I have no idea. Not anymore, anyway. I guess, I never knew my son.” Henry wiped his hand over his face as he let out a heavy sigh. “Anyway,” he added looking up at Lassiter, “do you think I'm involved, too?”
“No, I needed to know what you thought. You know your son better than anyone else. At least, compared to those who are involved that is.”

“Can I ask you and O'Hara a question or two?”

“Sure?”

“Do you really believe Gus is involved?”

“We found a safe behind Spencer's desk at the Psych office. Guster's finger's prints were all over it, inside and out, even though he claims not knowing anything about it. So what do you think? Is he involved?”

“Gus practices safe cracking and before you say it, no, that isn't an excuse, but maybe Shawn got hold of a safe Gus had used. I don't know. I do know Gus and know he would've freak out over something like this.”

“Any other questions?” O'Hara enquired.

“What is going on between Shawn and McNab?”

“They're partners,” Lassiter replied in a flat voice. “It turns out they have known each other long before either of them started here.”

“Partners? As in crime or the bedroom?”

Lassiter glanced at O'Hara before he answered.

“Both.”

“I thought that was going to be your answer.”

“Can I ask you a question?”

“Do I have a choice?”

“Of course you do, but … do you know how and why your son would have photos of me? And I'm not talking about current photos. I'm talking about from when I was a kid and first started at the station.”

“I can't tell you why. I really can't.”

“Looks like they're ready for us,” O'Hara interrupted.

Turning, they could see a few officers carrying in some boxes.

“Right, we're starting with McNab first,” Lassiter added before all three walked out. “You can watch from the viewing room, Mr. Spencer.”

Henry nodded his agreement. After watching Lassiter pick up one of the boxes and enter interview room two, Henry entered the small room, praying that all of this was a big mistake.

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