Strangers in a Strange Land

by prettybirdy979

Summary

When a marine with a father in high places dies in London, the team from NCIS is sent to investigate. There they meet a strange man who seems to know everything about everyone...

Notes

A fill (finally!) for this Make Me A Monday request by subway_silence With thanks to misanthropyray for Brit picking, and to my wonderful betas Fifi and Lily
“Why are we here again, Boss?” Tony asked as he craned his neck searching for his bag through the crowd. He was standing beside Gibbs, whose bag had already been found while Tim and Ziva had gone looking for a trolley and their ride to the hotel respectively once their bag had come. Even Ducky had his, and was now happily chatting to anyone around him who would listen. His accent always had them believing he had just come home and he seemed to love using that as an opening to tell them his life story.

“We’re here because a marine is dead.” Gibbs said shortly.

"Yeah, but why us?” at Gibbs’ glare he quickly added, “Not that I didn’t want to come, but can’t the local police have handled it?”

Gibbs huffed as he returned his attention to searching for Tony’s bag. “Father has enough influence in high places to get us here, and not enough trust in non-Americans to want us here.” He said bitterly. Gibbs had made no secret of the fact that the director had ordered him to come and to co-operate with the local authorities.

“Ah-ha!” Tony suddenly stated, dashing for the bag he had just spotted. He quickly confirmed it was his. Tim was standing by Gibbs when he returned, helping the Boss load everyone’s bags on it.

“I have found our ride.” Ziva stated as she made her way over to the group. Ducky finished up his conversation in time to hear the woman by Ziva’s side introduce herself.

“I’m Sergeant Donovan from Scotland Yard, and I’ve been asked to escort you all to our crime scene.”

“Wouldn’t it be better if we went to our hotel first?” Tim asked, ‘So we can freshen up a bit.’

“Yeah, it’s not as if the crime scene is going anywhere.” Tony added.

Donovan shook her head. “There’s been a second murder.”

That was all it took. Instantly the entire team drove thoughts of hotel rooms out of their heads. Donovan turned to leave, but Gibbs stopped her. “McGee, David; find a taxi and go to Scotland Yard. Start going over the first murder. Ducky, DiNozzo you’re with me.”

“Ah Boss, do you want Ziva and me to drop our bags off at the hotel first?” Tim asked. Gibbs gave him a cold stare and then left with Donovan.

He did, however, leave the bags with Tim.

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As they arrived on the scene, which was a small house on a deserted back street of the outskirts of London, all three Americans were shocked to see a member of the public standing by the door. Donovan, however, seemed disgusted to see him there and barely parked the car before she was moving to his side.
“Freak inside then?”

The short, blonde man who was wearing a brown, woollen jumper and looked remarkably unremarkable gave Donovan a hard stare. “Don’t worry, Sergeant. He’s gone.”

Donovan looked thrown. “Why are you still here then?”

The man nodded towards Gibbs and his team. “Them. He wanted me to meet and give my opinion of the American police.”

“He trusts your opinion?!”

The man smirked. “I find, if you don’t insult him and actually use your intelligence, he will trust your opinion to a point.”

He then moved pass her to stand in front of Gibbs. Gibbs glared at the man as he gave him a quick searching glance.

“Which one, Navy or Marines?”

“Excuse me?” Gibbs asked.

“You have a military stance and you work for a military agency focused on the Navy and the Marines. Therefore you must have served in one of those, or you would be in another agency. So, which one?”

Gibbs narrowed his eyes. “Marines. Who are you?”

“John Watson.” John said, holding out his hand. “And you are?”

“Special Agent Gibbs.” Gibbs said as he ignored the hand. “This is Special Agent DiNozzo and Dr Mallard. Why are you on this crime scene? “

“A few reasons. I’ll introduce you to the main one soon.” John said as he lowered his hand and headed for the crime scene tape.

“Wait, how did you do that?” Tony asked. “That was awesome, man!”

John turned to Tony, “That was nothing.” He said with a smile. “Just a trick I’ve picked up and can never do as well as the man who taught me.”

With that cryptic remark, he walked away.

“Who was that?” Ducky asked Donovan as she led them to the body.

“The sidekick of a major pain in the arse of Scotland Yard. The less said about that pair the better.”

“Pair?” Tony asked, but Donovan refused to answer and instead introduced them to her Boss who was standing by the body.

“Detective Inspector Lestrade. Inspector, this is Agent Gibbs and DiNozzo and the NCIS medical examiner Dr Mallard.”

“You brought your pathologist?”

“Technically, my dear fellow, I decided to visit my homeland and stopped to help Gibbs out on the
Lestrade’s eyebrows rose. “You’re Scottish?”

Ducky bent down to examine the body. “I believe my accent would prove that point without any further evidence. Now my boy, what happened to you?”

Donovan glanced around the room and turned to Tony. “Who is he talking to?”

Tony pulled on a pair of gloves as he answered. “The body.”

“Why?”

“Because Sergeant, while my patients may be dead, it doesn’t mean I can’t treat them with respect.” Ducky cut in. “Anthony, would you so kind as to hand me the liver probe from my bag?”

“Here you go, Ducky.”

“DiNozzo, I want you to bag and tag everything.”

Donovan turned to Lestrade. “Are you just going to let them take over our crime scene?” she demanded.

“If it means they take over dealing with Sherlock, yes.” At her disbelieving look he continued, “Sergeant, they’re here to solve this case and personally, I would rather give it to them and work on other cases, knowing they’re only working this case and can give their full attention.” He broke into a sly grin. “Plus, it may shake Sherlock up a bit.”

Donovan smiled in return and turned to see if she or Anderson could help.

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“McGee, what have we got so far?” Gibbs demanded as he strolled into the conference room the NCIS agents had been allocated while in London.

“So far Boss, we have three deaths and a lot of assumptions.” McGee stated as he dropped the file he was holding onto the table and grabbed a photo from it.

“McGee-”

“Sorry Boss, but some of the notes in that file don’t make sense as there is no evidence to support them.” He placed the photo onto the whiteboard in the room.

“This is our first victim, John Walkers. He was found in a locked room, two blocks away from his actual home. He was found hanging from the ceiling, though he was actually killed by some unidentified poison. They still haven’t gotten the results of the tests for that yet. He didn’t have a girlfriend or any siblings, both his parents are dead and all his close friends have some form of alibi or no motive to kill him. The strange thing is-”

“What is strange, McGee?” Tony asked after a long pause.

“There’s no evidence of this being investigated as a suicide. It looks like a suicide, except for the fact
there’s no note and the door was locked from the outside but this was always assumed to be the first identified kill of a serial killer.”

“We’ll have to ask our friendly inspector about that, McGee.” Tony said. McGee shrugged and stuck the second photo next to the first.

“Yeah. Anyway, our second victim was Staff Sergeant Jonathon Winston who was on vacation here during his two weeks of leave. He just returned from a two-year duty in Iraq and while he wasn’t well liked in his unit, they all have the alibi of not being in the country when he died. In fact, he had barely been here two days-”

“Doesn’t mean he couldn’t have made an enemy, McGee.” Gibbs interrupted.

“I know, Boss. He was killed the same way as the first victim according the Met and they’re also running tests on him to find the fatal poison. What did you guys find on the third victim?”

“Not much yet, McGee. He had ID on him, identifying him as a-”

“What is it, Tony?” Ziva asked.

“Johnny Wiggles. Is it just me, or there a connection between our three victims?”

“They all have first names of ‘John’ and a last name beginning with ‘W’” Gibbs stated. “DiNozzo! What was the name of that man on the crime scene?”

“What man?” McGee asked.

Tony ignored him. “John Watson, Boss. Think it’s related to this?”

“It’s one hell of a coincidence. DiNozzo, you’re with me.” Gibbs stormed out, looking for D.I Lestrade.

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Lestrade had quite willingly given them John Watson’s address, on the condition he came with them. When asked why, he just mentioned something about a show and eyes in microwaves and clammed up.

At 221 Baker St, Tony knocked on the door to be greeted by an elderly woman who introduced herself as Martha Hudson and recognised NCIS without them explaining who they were. She explained that she had lived in Florida for years and her husband had had a few run ins with NCIS as she led them up the stairs to 221b.

“John,” she called as she knocked on the door. “There are some agents from an American agency to see you.” She turned to her followers, “Such nice men they are, John and Sherlock, even if Sherlock is a bit odd. They always help me out when I need it and John is such lovely company when he’s between jobs.”

“Which is far more often than I would like, thanks to him.” The man from the crime scene, John Watson said as he opened his flat’s door. He had clearly caught the last moments of conversation.

“John Watson, we have a couple of questions to ask you.” Tony said as he moved past Mrs Hudson.
“Mind if we come in?”

“Sure, but I’m afraid you’ll have to stand. Our chairs are…out of commission.” He moved back to let them in and Mrs Hudson caught sight of the burned lounge chairs and sofa.

“Sherlock, what did you do to my bloody chairs?!”

A tall, slender and black haired man poked his head out from the kitchen. “Nothing, Mrs Hudson. These are John’s from storage. I swapped them for yours for the experiment.”

“I never did thank you for that, did I?” John grumbled as he walked over to the kettle. Mrs Hudson huffed and left the flat, closing the door behind Lestrade who was grinning.

“You weren’t using them and I needed to-”

“Sherlock, I don’t want to know so long as you get rid of them. Tea, anyone?”

It took a moment for the NCIS agents to realise he was talking to them. They had been using John’s lack of attention on as an opportunity to examine the flat. It was a complete mess, which fitted the fact that two bachelors lived here. There was also a skull sitting on the mantelpiece, next to a knife, which was holding what looked to letters there. There was a violin leaning against the overfull bookcase and a Union Jack pillow lying beside it.

“Umm, no thanks. Look, John we have few questions to ask about t-” Tony said.

“Oh how boring.” The other man, “Sherlock”, suddenly interrupted. He ran an eye over the two agents, much like John had earlier but he gave the impression of having seen your soul and found it lacking.

“What is, Sherlock?” John asked.

“They think you are the killer as you share the same first name and last initial with the victims.”

“And you don’t think that’s a realisable conclusion?” Tony asked.

“It’s a conclusion worthy of the idiots at Scotland Yard who don’t observe anything even if it’s right before their eyes! John clearly isn’t the killer, as the killer was at least six foot tall and John-”

“Is not.” John interrupted, gaining a glare from Sherlock, which he answered with a shrug.

“And how would you know that?” Gibbs said stepping forward into Sherlock’s personal space. Sherlock didn’t seem intimated and had a smug grin on his face. “Because, our killer was tall enough to hang the first victim from the roof using only a small stool he found and replaced in the bathroom. He was also able to overpower a man who had just returned from active service in Iraq, which I don’t doubt John could do but not without injuries to himself which he doesn’t have. Besides, this man has been killing for years and John only returned to England a year ago and was not capable of these crimes for at least two months.”

“You can’t possibly know that. How could you know this is a serial killer?” Tony asked, dumbfounded.

“The same way I know your Boss has been married at least twice, with at least one wife dying, and was a Marine. He builds a large wooden item, likely furniture in an enclosed room on a regular basis. He dislikes fools and is in the habit of striking you on the back of the head when you say something foolish. He also prefers coffee. You both came here with at least two other people, one of them a
woman and another who is British. You, Agent DiNozzo, have never been married and live in a flat of similar status to ours. You have suffered from some severe illness related to your lungs and have an extreme amount of trust in your boss. You have a fascination with films, especially the James Bond ones John loves and would like to see yourself as being thought as ‘cool’ as them.”

The two agent’s jaws dropped. Sherlock smug smile grew.

“Figuring out our killer was a serial killer was simple compared to that. Coming, John?”

He grabbed his coat and scarf, throwing John his as the two agents tried to get over their shock. The two men were out the door and down the stairs before they managed it.

“Lock it on your way out, will you Inspector?” John called as the door slammed shut.

“What was that?!”

Lestrade’s grin grew. “That was Sherlock Holmes.”
“So, where are we going?” John asked ten minutes later as he sat in a cab with Sherlock.

“You do that a lot.”

John blinked at the seemingly unrelated answer. “Do what?”

“Follow me without knowing where I’m going.” Sherlock had an odd look on his face.

“Because I trust you. Now, where are we going?”

“To interview the owner of the third crime scene, a Mrs Borelli.”

John threw Sherlock a confused glance. “Didn’t we already do that? Or at least, didn’t the police already do that?”

“Oh the police are a bunch of idiots who never ask the right questions. Now, which police officer interviewed her?”

“Ah, it was Sergeant Donovan. “

“Perfect.”

Sherlock settled back into the seat and John took that as his cue to be silent.

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Getting into Mrs Borelli’s wasn’t a problem, all Sherlock had to do was flash a badge he had pickpocketed from Lestrade on the way out and they were in. Once inside, Sherlock instantly asked to see the room where Johnny Wiggles had died, despite having seen it earlier.

John just followed along, completely confused as to why they had come here. Sherlock spent two minutes in the room, asked two questions of Mrs Borelli about what she saw and then thanked her for her time and left.

“And what was the point of that?” John asked as they walked down the street, looking for a taxi.

“Proving a point.” With that Sherlock hailed a taxi leaving John to follow as always.

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Half an hour after meeting Sherlock Holmes, Gibbs stormed into the NCIS room, as it had been nicknamed to demand progress of Tim and Ziva.

“What have you got McGee?!”

“Not much, but there’s not much to go Boss. The only thing linking the victims in any way is their name.” Tim said. At Gibbs’ glare he continued, “But I’ll continue looking as this guy has to pick his victims somehow.”

“Ziva?” Gibbs turned his glare onto her.

“I’ve requested the Met’s files on all similar cases with men named John and a last initial of ‘W’.
They should be arriving soon.”

Just then a knock at the door caught everyone’s attention. Ziva opened the door to find a tall male detective with dark hair standing there, holding what looked to be a heavy box overflowing with files.

“Detective Inspector Lestrade said you wanted these. Where would you like me to put them? He also said you might want a hand… is that right? Or not, because I’m sure a woman like you doesn’t need help. I’m Detective Stanley McDonald by the way.” The man said in the space of ten seconds and in a Scottish accent.

Ziva blinked as she processed what he had said. “I do not need any help, thank you.” She said eventually.

It was then John Watson poked his head in the door. “Is this the ‘NCIS room’? Lestrade asked me to give this box to a Zi-va Da-vid.” He walked fully into the room, carrying another box like Stanley’s which he placed on the table by the other.

“On the other hand, help may be welcome.” Ziva revised. Stanley gave a broad grin, clearly happy to help.

Tony, however, was more focused on John’s appearance at the station. “What are you doing here Mr Watson?”

Tim snapped his head to focus on John. “You’re John Watson?”

“Yes, McGee; that’s the man we thought could be the killer. Now, what are you doing here?!”

“I’m here with Sherlock; we’re helping out on the case. Have been since the first victim.” John looked slightly bemused. “Didn’t Lestrade tell you that?” He turned to Tim.

“No, he didn’t.” Gibbs said from behind John. To John’s credit, he didn’t jump but simply moved slightly so Gibbs was in his range of view.

“Where is this ‘Sherlock’?” Ziva asked.

“He’s around. Probably telling Lestrade where his investigation is wrong.”

“Not quite John, but an excellent deduction.” Stanley said, losing his accent and startling Tim whose head snatched round to look at the additional voice in the room. Stanley straightened up, gaining another inch of height. He also changed his posture, making it so there was a completely different man sitting at the table searching through piles of files.

“It was more of a guess actually, based on my knowledge of you.” John didn’t seem thrown by Sherlock’s sudden appearance and moved slightly so Gibbs was in his range of view.

“How did you get in here?” Tony asked eyes wide.

“The same way John and I got into the third crime scene and our killer got these men to enter strangers’ houses.” With that, Sherlock threw a badge onto the table.

Tony picked it up and read it. “Detective Inspector Lestrade. How did you get this?”

“Borrowed it. We need a list of police who have reported their badges missing. John?”

“Lestrade is bringing it down.”
Gibbs slammed his hands down in the table, causing everyone except Sherlock to jump. “Give me one reason why I shouldn’t arrest you two now.”

“You don’t have the authority to, at least not on British soil.” Sherlock said with a bored tone.

“I can get Lestrade to do it.”

“Lestrade won’t arrest me.” Sherlock retorted smugly. John made an amused huff beside him.


“It was part of my plan.”

“Yes because all your plans require spending a night in gaol.” John said with sarcasm in his voice.

Gibbs was sick of being ignored. During their conversation he had moved behind John and Sherlock and after John spoke he head slapped them.

They had two completely different reactions. Sherlock’s blow landed, creating a look of deepest shock on his face along with a shade of disbelief and self-anger at having missed the movements. John, however, saw the hand in the corner of his eye and reacted with the instincts of a recently returned war veteran. He grabbed the hand as it touched his head, stepped under it and twisted it back behind Gibbs’ back. He stood there for a second, before releasing Gibbs as he realised what happened.

“Sorry about that. I’m used to people wanting me dead when they do that sort of thing—“

“How did you do that?!” Tony asked gobsmacked. “Gibbs is a marine! No one can defeat him.”

“I was in the army. And I hang around with this idiot.” John said fondly. “You have to be able to defend yourself.”

“You were in the army?” Tim asked.

“Oh for goodness sake, don’t tell me you are that stupid to have not noticed that!” Sherlock shouted. “Next you be saying you didn’t know he is a doctor!” He groaned at the NCIS teams’ blank looks and put his head in his hands muttering about having to work with unobservant idiots, causing John to smile.

“Right, I can’t arrest you but I want you gone from here. Now.” Gibbs said. He pointed at the door when neither of the two men moved. “I can and will force you two to leave.”

Sherlock gave him a considering look. “You would endanger lives to assert your authority?” When Gibbs expression didn’t change he nodded to himself. Then a smirk broke onto his face and John found himself tensing.

“Sherlock...” he warned.

Sherlock ignored him. “Earlier you were shocked at how much I knew about you and your man. You’ve both been wondering how I got a hold of your file. I didn’t. I did however observe. Take you—” he pointed to Gibbs, “It’s obvious you are a military man, even John noticed. That you were married was harder but not much. You have a faint tan line on both your ring fingers. Left means you were married, right means you were widowed. But the left is slightly more distinct meaning you were married more recently than you were widowed. At least two wives then. Building something
wooden is easy; you still have sawdust on your clothing and it’s statistically most likely to be furniture, people are boring and don’t build anything else. Enclosed space is obvious, it’s autumn and you have sawdust on your arm under the shirt meaning you work with sleeves rolled up. Weather has been unseasonably cold all round the world so you must be indoors. You just proved my point about not suffering fools and striking them on the heads—” Here Sherlock grimaced and John smirked, “which was made obvious by your agent’s interaction with you at my flat. Your preference for coffee was clear from your grimace at John’s offer of tea.”

Gibbs looked murderous again, so Tony jumped in. “And the other stuff? About me and our team mates. How did you know that?”

Sherlock was pleased to able to continue showing off his brilliance. “Your clothes told me you travelled with a woman, as you both smell of a woman’s perfume. It’s the same perfume, meaning a woman sat between you for the long flight, which meant you had at least one other team member. You seem comfortable with another, meaning you work as partners regularly so the woman must have her own partner which I doubt you would have left behind. That this partner was British I deduced from your lack of reaction to John’s offer of tea. Most tourists share a smug smile when seeing this stereotype confirmed so you must have already adjusted to a tea loving Briton.”

“I assume you mean me as the British partner?” Tim asked.

Sherlock frowned. “Yes and I was sure you should be. The facts only allow for that conclusion—”

“Medical examiner.” Sherlock’s head jerked to Ziva as she explained. “Our M.E is British.”

Sherlock huffed. “Of course.” He appeared lost in thought for a moment, before glancing down at the files on the desk. He seemed to want to go back to work on the case.

Tony, however, was still not satisfied. “And how did you know all that stuff about me?”

Sherlock sighed dramatically. “Obvious!” he roared. “You showed no surprise or disgust at the mess in our flat so you are used to something similar. You have no tan lines on your hand either, both of which show that you have never married. Your appearance is trying too hard to be cool, especially with the glasses and you had a long glance at the movies John left out from our movie nights with a smile especially the James Bond ones. So you like movies and your appearance is similar to that of the ‘spy’ stereotype. Your interaction with your Boss screams the amount of trust you have in him and your illness can be deduced from the slight shallowness to your breath. It had to be serious to have had that great an effect on you.”

The room was silent for a few moments before Tony said, “My appearance is not try hard!”

Sherlock slammed his hand into his head in frustration. “Idiot. You are a team of Andersons!”

With a growl he stormed out of the room, John following after an apologetic shrug, grabbing a piece of paper off the table as he went.

Lestrade walked into the room seconds after they had left holding another box and looking back over his shoulder. “That’s odd.” He said as he placed the box on the table.

“What is?” asked Tim as Tony and Gibbs were still trying to control their anger and Ziva was just thoughtfully looking at the door where they had exited.

“Sherlock. He left without getting the information he asked me for.”
“Which was?” Gibbs snapped.

“This box. All the requests made by officers for new badges over the last five years. Minus mine.” He seemed unsurprised to see his badge on the table and simply slipped it into his pocket.

“McGee, go through that box. See if that madman was onto something.” Gibbs ordered grudgingly. “Tony, you look for connections between the victims.”

The team rushed to their jobs. Tim looked down at the box then up at Lestrade. “Detective Inspector…”

“Yes?”

“These wouldn’t happen to be on computer, would they?”

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He watched the man closely. It had been only a few days since he had eliminated the last one, but he had to strike now. He was getting closer and the quicker he eliminated the wrong ones, the quicker he would find the real one.

He watched the man hobble into a coffee shop and decided to make his move.
“You do know you left all those files Lestrade got you with the NCIS team?” John mentioned to Sherlock two minutes later. They were in the back of a cab, headed for…well John wasn’t sure where but it was somewhere important. Hopefully.

“I am fully aware of that John.”

When Sherlock didn’t elaborate, John pressed him. “Well?”

Sherlock glanced at him. “Yes?”

“Why did you leave them behind then?”

“Because it’s a long shot. Way to pass the time. I figured I would leave the police and their American counterparts to waste their time searching while I find the actual killer. And it gave me an excuse to meet the rest of the NCIS team, see if any of them were worth anything.”

“Were they?”

“Nope.”

“Right.” John was silent for a second, before he slipped a piece of paper into Sherlock’s glove. “Thought you might want this.”

Sherlock glanced down at it. “The woman’s notes? Why would I want those?”

“I believe her name was Ziva, and I thought you would want them because she has written down some the addresses from the files Lestrade wouldn’t let you have.”

Sherlock smiled. “Sometimes John, you are a genius.”

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“Ducky! What have you got?” Gibbs was calling Ducky as Ducky had followed the body to the lab at ‘Barts’ as Lestrade had called it.

“My dear boy, give me a chance! I’ve barely had three hours to get acquainted with our two victims.”

“Ducky-“

“I do however have something. Or at least, the lovely young lady who works here has something. Molly, this is Agent Gibbs; Gibbs this is Molly Hooper.”

A young woman’s voice came over the phone. “Agent Gibbs? I have the results from the first autopsy. The man died of a fast working toxin, which I’m still running but I also found slight bruises on his wrists and ankles.”

“Those same bruises are on the other two victims Gibbs.” Ducky interjected. “They’re consistent
"with punched a few times."

“Our killer hit them?”

“Yes Gibbs”

“Call me when you get something more, Duck.”

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“Damn it!”

Tony looked over at his teammate’s cry. “What is it Ziva?”

“My notes will all the addresses… it has gone.”

“Ohhhhh!” Everyone turned to look at Lestrade as he sighed, sounding both angry and resigned.

“Yes?” Tony asked after Lestrade remained sitting and didn’t elaborate.

“Sherlock. He only wanted those files on the missing badges so he had an excuse to be here and a chance to steal the addresses of the witnesses from your marine’s death.” Lestrade signed again.

“So… is this a wild goose chase?” Tim asked from below the mountain of files related to the missing badges. He had been dismayed to find out that while the files were all on computer, Scotland Yard did not have a method of bringing them all up in one screen with all the details of the incident. It was easier to go through the files…which had not pleased Tim.

“Most likely. Sherlock has a habit of passing all the tedious jobs onto us. He seems to think that’s all the police are good for. We are, after all, a bunch of idiots.” There was no bitterness in Lestrade’s voice as he insulted himself; instead he seemed almost to have a fond tone.

“And you let him treat you like this?” Gibbs sounded outraged.

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because, God help us, we need him.”

The conversation was interrupted then as Donovan walked into the room. “Inspector? There’s been another murder.”

Lestrade stood up, clearly in shock. “Another? But Sherlock said there would be at least three days between murders.”

“Freak was wrong then.” She offered Lestrade a piece of paper. “I’ll go call Anderson and get forensics there.”

Lestrade nodded. Donovan left the room and the NCIS team scrabbled for their stuff. “Where are we going?” Gibbs asked.
“Oh, umm here.” Lestrade gave Gibbs the slip of paper. “I’ll drive us there.” He frowned. “Are you all coming?”

“Yes. We’re definitely missing something here.” Gibbs said.

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Sherlock was waiting for them at the crime scene. He was pacing in front of the crime scene tape while Donovan looked on smiling. It was clear she wasn’t allowing him access. John was standing off on his mobile, clearly having an argument with someone called “Harry”.

“Finally! What did you do? No don’t answer that. It’s clear we’ve spooked him somehow. But why step up the murderers instead of disappearing? It doesn’t make sense…” Sherlock began talking at Lestrade as soon as he reached him. The NCIS team looked taken back.

“We may have allowed the press to get a hint these weren’t suicides when a foreign agency came over to help investigate.”

“Idiots!” Sherlock yelled. Gibbs gave a small huff in agreement. Sherlock immediately turned to look at him. “You don’t want to be here. Why…of course. Its politics and you hate those.” He sounded vaguely approving. “John! Stop fighting with your sister and come on!” he shouted over his shoulder as he pranced into the crime scene.

“Bye Harry.” Ignoring the shouts from the phone, John followed Sherlock’s instructions.

“Sister? But you said…” Tim said.

“Harry’s short for Harriet.” John said with patience, like he had had to explain this a thousand times before. He smiled at the teams looks and caught up with Sherlock.

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The body had not been cut down yet, and was therefore still hanging off the ceiling fan in the middle of the room. He was about six foot tall, with brown hair and a slight tan. Sherlock seemed to be ignoring the body and was instead swooping around the room. By a silent, mutual agreement the team ignored him and proceed to examine the room.

It was a mess, but not the kind that came from a struggle. It looked as though no one had cleaned the room in months, which was going to make finding relevant evidence hard.

“DiNozzo, photos; Ziva bag and tag; McGee interview the witnesses.”

“We have someone already on that.” Donovan interjected.

“McGee, help them.”

“On it Boss.”
Quietly, the team moved to their jobs. Ziva was trying to shift through the rubbish to spot things that didn’t belong there. It was hard; the floor was covered in paper and clothes. She moved over a book and flinched when she found the rotted apple that had been beneath it.

“Don’t touch that!” Sherlock yell had Ziva freeze seconds before she went to move the cane she had just uncovered. She turned to glare at him.

“Why not?”

“I need it there.” He said simply. When her glare didn’t lessen he rolled his eyes and continued. “It belonged to our victim and I need it there to help recreate the murder.”

“How do you know it wasn’t our killer?” Tim spoke up from his position by the door. He was waiting for the paramedics to finish examining the witness before he talked to her. She had been in hysterics when the police had arrived and was only just starting to calm down.

Tony asked before Sherlock got a chance. “Come on Probie. What chance would a man with any sort of injury have of overpowering a marine?”

Sherlock looked grudgingly approving as Tim went on the defensive. “Sorry, Tony. I just wanted to know how he instantly knew whose cane it was!”

Gibbs broke the fight up quickly. “McGee! You go interview the witness now!”

“Got it Boss.”

Just then John’s stomach chose to rumble rather loudly. John gave a smile embarrassed smile to the rest of the room. “Sorry, it’s just been a while since I ate.”

Sherlock barely spared him a glance. “There’s a café up the road.”

John smirked. “Is that you saying you’re almost finished here and you’ll meet me there?”

Sherlock waved a hand at him and John gave a small huff of laughter as he left. Two seconds he poked his head back in. “While I’m there, anyone want anything?”

DiNozzo turned to John with a glad look in his eyes. “I’d like-“he caught sight of Gibbs’ glare and changed track, “nothing. I’m fine, thanks.”

John laughed fully at this and left. He passed Donovan on the stairs and smiled at her. She rolled her eyes and stepped into the room. “Inspector? The owner of the building is here and demanding to speak to the man in charge. Oh, and the pathologist from NCIS is here too.” Lestrade sighed and followed Donovan down the stairs.

“DiNozzo, go help Ducky.” Gibbs ordered. Tony passed him the camera and followed the English police down.

Sherlock was standing in front of the body, his magnifying glass out, examining it closely. He began to ruffle through the man’s pockets, just as Tony returned with Ducky.

“What are you doing?!” Ducky said as he caught sight of Sherlock.

“Checking the victim’s pockets for ID. Something Lestrade should have done when he first arrived.”

“And you are?” Ducky asked still angry.
“Someone who has enough intelligence to not damage the small amount of evidence you are competent enough to find, Doctor.” Sherlock turned slightly and gave Ducky a quick once over. He hummed to himself and returned his attention to the body. He pulled out the wallet, checked the cards and then replaced it.

Ducky gave Tony a confused look. “Sherlock Holmes.” Tony said as explanation. “He’s a…well I’m not sure what he is but he helps the police here and can tell you your life story with a single glance.”

“Really?” Ducky said, intrigued. Tim chose that moment to return, preventing Ducky from interrogating Sherlock.

“What have you got McGee?” Gibbs barked.

“Nothing really. Our witness saw two men enter the building from her window but wasn’t close enough to see their faces. She said one had a limp and a cane, and the other was rather tall. She thought it was weird they went into this empty building and so when her show finished came over to see what was happening.”

“A real sticky beak then.” Tony interjected.

“Yes. Anyway, she knocked on the door and when she didn’t get an answer went to go home. She happened to glance back from her doorstep and saw the shadow of the body in the upstairs window and called the police.” McGee looked around. “Where’s Mr Watson?”

“Doctor.” Sherlock corrected. “And he’s gone to get food.”

“From… Speedys, I think.” Tony said.

Sherlock turned to him giving him another odd look. Tony held up a disposable coffee cup in answer. “Just found this. I’m amusing it’s a local café.”

Sherlock reached over and ran his hands along the cup. “Clever. Why is it clever?”

“And it is another John. John Williams this time.” Ziva said as she checked the wallet.

“Why John? And why only John’s with last names beginning with Ws? Does he have something against John Ws?” Tony mused.

“Or a specific John W.” Gibbs added. Everyone, including Sherlock turned to look at him. “He’s eliminating men with the same sounding name so-”

“He’s looking for someone, but doesn’t know exactly who!” Sherlock interrupted. “So he’s killing everyone he meets until he finds the right one-“ Sherlock’s eyes widened. “Oh! You!” he pointed at Ziva.

“Me?”

“You have a photographic memory. Was there a cup like this at the first scene?” Ziva glanced at it.

“Yes. Do you not remember?”

Sherlock looked slightly disgruntled. “Lestrade won’t let me see the photos from the first scene and didn’t call me in until it was cleaned up.”

“So our killer works at the little café up the street then?”
“Yes!” Sherlock was angry at having to repeat himself. “He uses the fact customers give him their names to select his—"Sherlock suddenly froze.

“What?” Gibbs asked.

“John…” Sherlock whispered, then turned and dashed down the stairs past Lestrade.

“McGee, Ziva; stay here. DiNozzo, with me!” Gibbs ordered as he followed the sprinting figure down the stairs.
Chapter 4

Sherlock was quite used to sprinting for someone’s life. Generally it was his own life; occasionally it was a potential victim or police officer. But never had he felt like this. His heart thumping with fear and what felt like ice running through his veins.

Never had the life he was running to save mattered as much as John’s did.

He could hear the footsteps thumping behind him as he wrenched open the door to the café. His frantic arrival attracted every customer’s attention. Sherlock swept the room over and froze.

“Sherlock what’s wrong?” John was two people from the counter and had looked around when Sherlock had barged into the café. He took a few steps forward as he spoke.

Sherlock unfroze and closed the distance between them. He stepped right into John’s personal space and ran his eyes and hands over his friend. Finding no injuries, Sherlock gave him a quick squeeze stepped back and turned his attention to the baristas as the door to the café opened again. John just stared at Sherlock, a little shell shocked and completely confused.

Tony and Gibbs dashed through the door, breathing heavily. They both spotted John at the same time and identical looks of confusion spread across their faces.

“You’re alright?” Tony wheezed as he caught his breath.

John was so far beyond confused now he wasn’t sure he was on the same planet as Sherlock and the NCIS agents, yet alone the same page.

“Umm… could someone explain what’s happening?” he asked, but he still hadn’t taken his eyes off Sherlock.

“All the victims were chosen using this café. And-“ Sherlock began.

John interrupted, having caught on quickly. “I fit the profile.” He gave Sherlock a searching look. “If you were going to have me play bait, couldn’t you just text me?”

“Wait, what?!” Tony demands. “Why would we have you play bait? You’re a civilian. We just thought he’d got you.”

“We might want to take this outside.” Gibbs commented quietly.

Sherlock shook his head and suddenly stepped up to the counter. “Who just quit?” he asked the confused man behind the counter. When he didn’t reply Sherlock repeated the question. “Who just quit?!”

“Um…Mitchell Thomas. He came in this morning, went for a break a few hours ago and came back to quit.” He frowned, “Sorry, how did you know?”

“Your appearance is dishevelled; you were in a rush to get here and haven’t had time to fix it. You weren’t expecting to work, so either someone called in sick or quit. Given that Mitchell is a murderer, it’s not hard to tell.”

“Sorry, what?!” the man exclaimed but Sherlock ignored him, instead turning to the NCIS agents.

“Come on then. Let’s see if you’re any better at your job than the fools at Scotland Yard.” He swept
They were after him! He hadn’t done anything that wrong and the damn police were going to lock him up for it.

And he was so close. James had escaped him once, but now…now he knew his new name, and even what he was pretending to be.

Mitchell observed the pathologist assisting the police, an elderly man with a Scottish accent. He didn’t look like James had, but it didn’t matter— they could do miracles with plastic surgery and make-up. Plus, the colonel who worked for Mo—the shadows had said the man he was looking for was pretending to be a doctor, and worked for the police and this was the only doctor around.

Mallard didn’t begin with a ‘W’ but that could have just been a bad bit of information.

Ducky didn’t have a chance.

He had finished his examination of the body but Gibbs hadn’t returned yet so McGee and Ziva stayed to help Scotland Yard with the scene. He enlisted the help of one of the other police on the scene to move the body down to the van. They had just closed the door, when a man approached them staying just behind the tape.

“Excuse me, but what happened here? I live in the building, and I want to get in…”

The police sighed. “Sorry, but it’s a crime scene. We should be finished here in an hour and then you can get in.”

“But, please! I need to get into my apartment, can’t I just go up for a second?” The man fished his wallet out, and held it up clearly to show ID and prove he lived there. The police officer looked unsure, but then sighed and walked over.

“I suppose if I stay with you it sho—” the man suddenly pulled a needle out of his coat and jammed into the officer’s neck. Taking advantage of the officer’s shock, he reached around and grabbed the man’s baton which he then slammed into the man’s skull.

Ducky, who was two steps behind the downed officer, turned back towards the building, but stopped when a knife appeared before his neck.

“Get into the van and drive where I tell you.” When Ducky stayed still he pressed the knife in closer. “Now James!”

This terrified Ducky more, as it proved the man wasn’t mentally stable. Slowly he walked towards the van and got in, waiting until the man was in before taking off.
When asked later how this whole event was missed, Lestrade’s men hid behind the excuse it happened behind the van and out of their view. Sherlock would just call them idiots who didn’t observe.

Gibbs would agree.

******

They had a name. Now all they had to do was find him.

The NCIS agents had returned to their room at Scotland Yard, where to their surprise Lestrade had given them complete access to any files on Mitchell Thomas they could find and left them to it. He had said that he would help them capture him, but this bit they could handle.

It wasn’t the pissing match Gibbs was used to, but he didn’t complain. Right up until Sherlock and John showed up and joined in their search.

“Imbeciles!” he cried upon spotting their whiteboard covered with the victim’s photos (Tim missed the technology of NCIS fiercely and was trying to mimic it here…and failing) and other information. Sherlock ripped down half the photos they had up that matched the pattern. “These weren’t victims, just boring suicides.” He said to the shock of the NCIS agents.

“Sherlock…” John warned.

Sherlock waved a careless hand at John, but did turn his attention to the files on the table. Carefully, he grabbed the one on Mitchell and began to read it, frowning in seconds.

“This isn’t the full file. There’s pieces missing, there has to be more to this file.” He turned on Tim, who had last had it. “Is this all you got?”

“Yes! That’s everything Scotland Yard has on him!”

John’s phone rang, distracting him from the argument between Sherlock and Tim. “John Watson.”

“John? Hi, it’s Molly…Isn’t this Sherlock’s phone?”

“No, this is mine.”

“Oh…this is the number he gave me for his phone…anyway, are you working the NCIS case? Because I don’t have any of their numbers and Lestrade isn’t answering his…”

“I think he’s in a meeting. Is there something you wanted me to tell the NCIS agents?” At the sound of their agency, everyone but Tim turned to look at John.

“Oh…so you aren’t still at the crime scene? It’s just, their pathologist went to assist them and he’s not back with the body…”

“Molly, we left the crime scene two hours ago.” Something close to worry started to run through John’s veins.

“Oh…”

“Molly, I’ll call you back.” John hung the phone before she replied and turned to Gibbs. “Call your pathologist.”
“What?” Gibbs demanded, taken aback.

“Call him. Now!” John barked, in his military commander’s voice. Slightly mad, Gibbs fished out his phone and called Ducky. John grabbed it and put the phone on speaker.

It went through to voice mail. Sherlock had stood up by now, and had a disbelieving yet pleased smile on his face.

“He’s breaking pattern…” Sherlock breathed in awe. Then his eyes widened. “Or he made a mistake.”

“What do you mean?” Ziva asked looking between the two men.

It was Tony who answered. “Ducky’s missing…he took Ducky! But why…he doesn’t fit the pattern-“

“What does it matter? The bastard has Ducky!” He suddenly stepped right into Sherlock face. “You keep saying you’re the best. Now prove it. Find Ducky.”

Sherlock turned his head to the side, a faintly pleased smile on his face.

********

“Are you sure it’s this building? Looks a little…run down.” Tony asked Sherlock as they hid in an alleyway. Across the road was the building Sherlock had deduced to be where Ducky had been taken. It had boarded up windows, a broken front door, extremely high grass and vines all over the building. In short, a very run down old house on the outskirts of London.

“Positive. Mitchell spent a large part of his childhood here, and he’s running scared. He knows we’re after him, and he also knows this house still belongs to his sister who lives in Australia at the moment. It’s the safest place to hide in his mind.”

“Hopefully you’re right Sherlock.” Lestrade said, as he walked softly up behind them. “We’re all ready, how about you guys?”

Gibbs nodded and pulled out the baton they had been given with disgust on his face.

“Right then. Sherlock, go back to the cars and we’ll call you when we have him.” Lestrade ordered. Sherlock went to protest, but suddenly closed his mouth and nodded. With a swirl of his coat, he walked back down the alleyway.

Lestrade was surprised at the lack of argument, but decided to ignore it and be happy with his lucky stroke. “Ready?” he asked.

The team nodded, and slowly the police began to advance forward.

********
“Where is it?!” Ducky’s captor waved the knife in his face once again. “Where did you hide it James?!”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about! My name is Donald, not James.” Ducky shouted back. He was tied to a chair in the living room, the rope far too tight. Mitchell was standing before him, his back to the hallway doorway. Other than them, there was nothing in the room but rotting floor boards and a hole in the roof.

“You’re lying!” Mitchell slammed his hand into the wall, causing a louder than normal bang. Both men stared at the wall in shock, until a second bang echoed through the room and the sound of voices rang through the house.

“Police!” Came the cry, as a tall dark haired man followed by a short blonde one entered the room. It took Ducky a second to realise the men weren’t wearing police gear, and were in fact familiar. However Mitchell didn’t notice and simply swore as he tried to escape.

He turned and ran through the second door to the room which lead to the kitchen, causing the two men, Sherlock and John if Ducky’s memory was correct, to follow just as Gibbs entered behind them.

He spotted the fleeing men, and after a quick glance at Ducky who nodded, followed.

“Ducky!” Ziva called as she entered, and after a quick scan of the room, she knelt to cut him free.

********

John wasn’t thinking, he was just chasing. Mitchell was just before him, and all he had to do was- Mitchell suddenly turned, and dashed up the set of stairs on his right. John swore under his breath and followed, not hearing Sherlock’s sudden breath as he deduced something.

“John!” he called, but John was too close- Mitchell stepped out into the empty room on his left and John followed. He barely had a moment to think, before he realised the floor of the room had collapsed and only a thin floor remained around the edge of the room. He wasn’t going to end up on it.

Shocked, he half turned, hoping to be able to grab something before he fell. A firm hand suddenly grabbed his outreached left hand causing him to stop falling with a jerk that made his shoulder scream with pain.

Sherlock grunted with the effort of holding John up. He quickly calculated the results of letting go now, and if the drop would be survivable when a voice spoke up close by his ear.

“Drop him.” Mitchell said, slowly moving the knife to Sherlock’s throat. Sherlock glanced to his left and saw Mitchell right beside him. But over his head, he could see Gibbs, baton raised having come from the adjoining room. He could also see that John had gotten his right hand up and had a shaky grip on the remaining floor.

“No thanks. I like John, and I don’t particularly want to drop him.” He said. At that, Gibbs’ baton smashed into Mitchell’s side. It caused him to gasp in pain and twist away. Sherlock took that
opportunity to let go of John, knowing he was safe and roll backwards out of reach of the knife. A second hit from Gibbs caught the knife hand and Mitchell dropped it.

In an instance Sherlock was nudging it into the room below, out of reach.

“Police, you’re under arrest.” Gibbs growled. As he said it, other police entered the room from behind him. John could also feel people grabbing his legs, taking his weight so he could let go. He did so with a relieved smile.

Sherlock looked at Gibbs the entire time Mitchell was being restrained and removed from the building. Finally he snapped.

“What?!”

Sherlock gave him a half smile. “I suppose you have your uses.” And with that, he stalked away.

*******

“Why did you do it?” Gibbs growled as he stormed into the Scotland Yard interrogation room. Mitchell was sitting at the table and he knew his team and Lestrade were watching. Sherlock and John were in Lestrade’s office, waiting to be chewed out for their actions at the crime scene. And for them to break Mitchell which Sherlock had declared he already knew.

“Do what?”

Gibbs slammed his hands into the table. “Kill all those people! Why?!”

Mitchell smiles. “I had to. James is out there, hiding from me and I had to find him. He thought he could escape, take a new name and leave me all alone but I found out his name and I’m going to catch him.”

“John.” Gibbs supplied.

“Yes, John. The man who saw him didn’t catch his last name but remember it started with a ‘w’ so I’ve been looking through all the men with names like that.” He frowned. “But he must have been wrong about the last name.”

“Dr Mallard?” Gibbs deduced.

“Yes. The colonel of the shadows said the doctor who worked for the police was the man I wanted and the shadows is always right. So he must have been mistaken.”

“And why did you want to find James?” Gibbs asked.

“Because he left! Everyone leaves me, but not James! I have to find him! He’s the only one who knows where it is.”

“Where what is?”

“My watch. He took my watch…it belongs to me! I have to have him and it back. They’re mine.”

“And killing all those men…it helps get them back, how?” Gibbs sounded very mad by now.
Mitchell looked confused. “It doesn’t help, but it makes sure he doesn’t know I’m coming. It stops them telling him I’m after him. It was the only way to keep them quiet.”

Gibbs had had enough. Without saying anything, he rose from his seat and left the room, slamming the door behind him.

********

“He’s insane.” Tony said as they met Gibbs outside Lestrade’s office. “He is completely insane.”

“And a brilliant killer.” Lestrade said as he opened the door. “How is that?”

“He has help.” Sherlock cut in. “You’re looking for another man. He supplies Mitchell with his poison, and helped him find victims. Possibly put the idea of killing the rejects into Mitchell’s mind in the first place.”

“I have to feel a little sorry for Mitchell.” Tim started to say.

Gibbs turned on him. “Feel sorry for him McGee? Feel sorry for the monster who killed at least ten people?!”

“…No? It’s just; Boss…his son is dead.” It took a second for this to sink in for everyone but Sherlock who huffed what sounded like “Obvious” at Tim’s statement.

“What?” Tony asked.

“It’s in his file. His son James killed himself eleven years ago, by hanging himself off the ceiling fan. Mitchell didn’t take it well…obviously.”

“And the watch?” Ziva asked.

“Buried with him.” Sherlock cut in. At the confused looks from the rest of the room, he elaborated. “I researched the son’s death as it was so similar. When James Thomas was buried, his father made such a fuss about his son not receiving his grandfather’s watch it was decided to bury him with it.”

“Huh…” Lestrade said as he processed this. He shook his head to clear it and changed the subject. “So Sherlock, any ideas on our accomplice?”

“A few. Did Mitchell mention anyone?”

Lestrade just shook his head. “No one except the colonel of the shadows.” Both John and Sherlock sat up at this, John’s hand subconsciously jerking towards his right leg. “What?” Lestrade asked, noticing their reactions.

Sherlock just ignored him and rose from his seat, John a step behind.

“Hey, where are you going? Sherlock!” Lestrade called after them, but they ignored him, heading for the interrogation room. Sighing, he followed accompanied by the NCIS team.

When they reached it, they were shocked to see John by Mitchell’s side on the floor, the later clearly dead.
“How?” breathed Lestrade.

“How?” Sherlock said grimly. “Examine the body and you’ll find he was poisoned, most likely by one of Moriarty’s men among the police.”

He grabbed John’s arm and pulled him away from the body. “Come on, John. We have another lead to investigate.”

“Sherlock!” Lestrade called uselessly after their retreating backs. Sighing he added “Statements tomorrow please!”

********

“It’s not fair you know.” Tony complained as the team waited to go pass airport security the next day. He, Tim and Ziva were sitting on a bench just inside the airport while Ducky and Gibbs had gone in search of a decent cup of tea and coffee respectfully. Lestrade had recommended a decent café nearby, and the team were waiting for them to return.

“It never is.” Ziva sighed. “But what exactly isn’t fair this time?”

“We solved the case and they can’t even give us one day for sightseeing in London! We spent all of eight hours at our hotel…I didn’t even get to unpack!”

“You want to sight see DiNozzo, come on your own time.” Gibbs said as he came up behind them, his coffee in one hand, and tray of coffees for the team in the other.

“And technically, we didn’t solve the case. Sherlock Holmes did.” Tim cut in.

“Well that’s the first time I’ve heard any policeman admit that.” The whole team jumped as Sherlock’s smooth voice interrupted them. They looked up to see the man, and his friend almost upon them.

“What are you two doing here?” Gibbs snapped out.

“We’re on another case.” John answered. “A client of ours has had a little problem in the airport and we’re here to check it out. I thought I would come up and say goodbye when I spotted you.” He spotted the bag by Tony’s feet and frowned. “Whose bag is that?”


“You were in the RAMC? Where did you serve?”

“Many places my boy. How did you- ah of course, the badge. But why the interest...?”


“Barts. You?”

As Ducky and John began to discuss their medical and army careers in detail, Sherlock discreetly pulled Gibbs aside.
“Here.” He presented Gibbs with a set of boarding passes. Gibbs looked at them in confusion, then disbelief as he realised they were first class. For their flight.

“What-?”

Sherlock just shook his head and stepped away. Gibbs grabbed his coat as he did.

“Why?”

“You know why.” He glanced at John and Ducky (who now were discussing a man they had both met while in Afghanistan, though he had been much younger went Ducky met him) a look of such fondness on his face for a millisecond.

Gibbs just nodded and Sherlock gave him a tiny smile in return.

“Come on John, this isn’t going to solve itself!” he called.

John sighed, and pulled out a notebook and pen. He scribbled down his details and passed them to Ducky. “Keep in contact?”

“Of course, my dear boy.”

Fed up, Sherlock grabbed John’s coat and began to drag him away.

“I

it's a boat.”

Sherlock turned in confusion. "What?"

"That I build in my basement. It's a boat." Gibbs explained.

The team and John burst out laughing at the grimace on Sherlock’s face.

“There's always something...” Sherlock muttered as he walked away.

Still laughing, the NCIS team watched the pair walk off, John turning around to give them a happily returned wave. They then gathered their bags and headed for their plane home.

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