

Detective Jennifer Morgan watched the suspect through one way mirror as she swirled the ice in her coffee. He looked normal. Attractive even with his dark hair and tanned skin. But his eyes. There was something about them that sent a chill down her spine. He looked up from the cuffs on his wrists to the mirror. Those electric blue eyes pierced her soul. If she didn't know any better she'd think he could see her. His started moving as he turned his attention back to the cuffs. She turned up the volume from the room and heard singing. She searched the lyrics on her phone. It was the opening lines from Volbeat's *Still Counting*. A smile spread across her lips. He was a cocky asshole.

"You think you can get a confession?" Captain Reynolds stood in the doorway behind her.

"He's rich so theres a good chance he thinks he's untouchable but I plan to try my hardest."

"Keep me posted, we had robbery gone bad about an hour ago and Jefferson is bringing the suspects in."

"Driskle will be back in a few, he just went to get decent coffee." She teased. He'd changed the coffee brand in an effort to save some money for new bullet proof vests but it was god awful. It tasted burnt no matter how fresh it was.

"Fine, next time I'll get premium blend made from only the perfect beans. Of course I'll have to dock everyone's pay to do it," he snapped.

"I'm only teasing," she smiled at him. "But seriously, no coffee is better than that coffee."

"Prefect. I'll save even more money next month when I don't buy any at all."

"You won't need too, there will still be some of that shit left I'm sure."

He waved her words off as he left the room. She looked back to her suspect. Then to the security photo she'd taken from the preowned video store. There was no doubt about those piercing eerie eyes.

She steeled up, straightening her shoulders and put on her best bitch face and opened the door file in hand. She entered quickly like she had been busy looking at file as if she'd never seen it before and sat at the

table. She could see him sizing her up from across the table.

“Zurik D’Vordi?” she asked still not looking at him. “That’s an interesting name.”

“My mom liked to travel,” his voice was low and gravely as a steady tick from the handcuffs hung in the air between them.

She closed the file and looked him in the eye. He held her eye contact making it hard for her to hold it.

“I see you’ve called a lawyer, would you like to wait until they arrive?”

“No I think we can clear this up before he gets here. Then I can take him out to dinner instead. That will be significantly more fun.”

“Don’t like our hospitality, Mr. D’Vordi?” she smiled.

“Not particularly.”

“Do you know how many homicide cases your name come up in?”

“I lost count,” he smiled. Morgan felt a smile at the edge of her lips and fought it back. He was charismatic and his smile was contagious. He was probably a serial killer.

“Seven, in North Carolina alone. That’s a lot for a twenty-eight year old,” she said. “And now that we’ve picked you up, congratulations Mr. D’Vordi, you’ve hit double digits.”

“Had to happen eventually.”

“Really now? I’ve never been involved in any. In fact, I could argue most people aren’t involved in any their entire lives.”

“When your job is protecting people who other people want dead, that raises the odds.”

“Yes, I see here you’re employed by your Uncle? Lex M’Kray?”

“Yes ma’am,” he sighed in irritation as he tipped his chair back on two legs.

“As private security?”

“Yep.”

“So, who were you protecting when you killed the five men in front of the video store?” his face went pale as he set the chair back on all fours. She had him now.

“I beg your pardon?”

“We have security footage of you killing five men in front of Al’s Discount Audio Video. According to the time stamp, last night at about 9:30 PM.”

“Let’s see it then.”

“The footage?”

“Yeah,” he said. His voice held the distinct edge of irritation.

“One moment,” she stood to go get the TV.

She let the door close behind her and moved watch Zurik. He still didn’t look too worried but his foot was bouncing and his hands were clenched together. She was starting to get to him.

“Have you talked to him yet?” Paul Drisckle’s smooth baritone rolled over her with the promise of coffee and second pair of eyes and ideas to crack this suspect.

“I told him about the footage. I’m going to get the video now. Just wanted to observe him for a moment.” She took the coffee Paul offered and swirled it in her hand.

“He looked pretty cool to me.”

She looked back at Zurik and he was relaxing with his head back slumped in the chair as if he might fall asleep.

“I guess he’s decided not to worry yet.”

“Can I ask you a question?” Paul asked before sipping his coffee.

“Of course.”

“Why’d you come here?” It was the question she’d been dreading for the last six weeks. “Not that I don’t like having you and all your experience on my side but you seem like a go getter. You know, someone who’d thrive in the city.”

“I needed a change of scenery.” It wasn’t exactly a lie. She’d left New York City for a whole slew of reasons. None of which were the sticky humidity and flat beige scenery of coastal North Carolina.

“You keep going I’ll hold back until it seems like we need to really put the screws to him.”

“Alright,” she grabbed the TV cart and DVD and pushed it into the interrogation room. Zurik laughed as she entered. “Something

amusing?”

“No ma’am, just the idea that Starsboro PD could actually get enough evidence to arrest me never mind try the case.”

She glared. She was use to the suspects at least respecting the establishment she worked for. “I’m new here, but I promise you, if you did this, I will not only find the evidence to arrest you, I will also see you thrown in a hole so deep you’ll never see another living creature.”

There was a glint in his eye that was irritating as a half smile tugged at his lips. “You’re feisty. I like that. They need people like you around here.”

She felt something strange stirring in her. Butterflies? She cleared her throat to steady herself and turned on the TV.

The street outside the video store was lit up in the distinct green of a night vision cameron as a group of teenaged girls walked by. Laughing and teasing each other as they went.

Morgan looked to Zurik he was grinning from ear to ear. The picture wasn’t the clearest but she knew his face would show up clear enough.

Now a group of young men came into view and then a single man, who she knew to be Zurik, entered and started attacking. One by one he severed their heads with a machete. Keeping his face from the camera until the very end. He watched as the last one ran off and then looked right at the camera.

Morgan felt her stomach drop. The film glitched before he turned his head and then went black.

“Alright, Benson, I don’t know about you but I couldn’t recognize any faces on that tape. Let alone my ugly mug.”

She paused. There was something about beautiful people calling themselves ugly that irritated her beyond rational thought.

“We know it was you,” she said after a few deep breaths.

“Itcould have been anybody.” Zurik said with a smile. “It could have been you.”

“It was you,” she snapped. Someone one in this building tampered with the tape.

“I didn’t see me. And since I look at me more than you do I think I’d

know better.”

She pulled the photo of him looking at the camera from the file and slid it across the table. “Whoever you had tamper with the tape forgot something.”

He frowned at the image. Finally shaken.

“I want my lawyer.”

“It sucks when you can’t get away with murder doesn’t it. Now I want to know Mr. D’Vordi, why did you let the last one go?”

“It wasn’t me, and I’m not answering another god damn question until my lawyer gets here.”

“Who is it?” Morgan asked. “I’ll find out his ETA”

Zurik smiled a toothy grin and she felt her adrenaline pump into her veins. She couldn’t get a decent read on this guy. “Jack Turner.”

“His lawyer is Jack Turner?” Driscle asked sounding defeated.

“Yeah, who is he? Some crooked defense attorney? He’s obviously in D’Vordi’s pocket. The guy’s been to more crime scenes than most cops.”

“Turner is the not only the best defense attorney in the state, he’s also the one who starts charities and gets wrongfully convicted people out of jail for no charge.”

“How?”

“He made a name for himself when he was pretty young and tried a lot of high profile cases. He made a lot of money, but I was thinking he must have been taking donations or something but maybe it’s Zurik.”

“Zurik is rich,” she slumped down in her chair. “Perfect.”

“Well his grandfather is for sure. And the old man would probably rather pay Turner when this shit pops up rather than deal with it himself.

“I’m sure Markus would love to hear the Starsboro Police Department think’s he’s paying me to babysit.” The man standing behind Paul was tall with dark brown skin and a tailored grey suit. His hair was kept short but he had a thick beard that was starting to go grey on his cheeks. “I’d like to

see my client now.”

“Mr. Turner,” Morgan held her hand out to him. He shook it and gave her a genuine smile that told her far more about his capabilities than Paul had. “Right in here.”

As soon as they entered the room Zurik gave Turner a goofy smile followed a wave that showed off his handcuffs.

“Can we get the cuffs off of him, we’re in an interrogation room, he won’t be escaping.”

“Why’d I call you then?” Zurik teased as Morgan slid the key in the cuffs.

“You’ll be leaving very soon, Zurik don’t worry about that.”

“I don’t think so,” Morgan asserted. She offered the photo to Turner.

“We’ll need a moment.”

As she left she heard Zurik speaking “I know it looks bad, but you can’t shit on the actual video.”

She sighed. He didn’t act or sound guilty. Something weird was going on but she couldn’t put her finger on what it was. She looked at Paul out in the bull pen typing away. And stuck her head out the door.

“What are you doing?”

“Getting the release papers ready and starting my report.”

She slid up to him. Eyeing the work he was doing. “You’re that certain our photo isn’t going to matter?”

“He’ll be out before the hour is up, Morgan.” Paul said. “We’ll continue to work the case, find more evidence. But he’ll be back on the street tonight.”

She crossed her arms over her chest. This wasn’t justice. This wasn’t how the system was supposed to work. They should be able to hold him at least. “Where’s Reynolds?”

“He should be back in his office.”

Without responding she headed up the three stairs to the offices. Sure enough he was on the phone yelling at someone about jurisdiction. When he hung up and slumped down into his chair she ended the office. He looked like he’d aged a decade in the last five minutes, she didn’t want to

tell him about the tape. She closed the door and approached his desk determine to bring him up to date.

“More good news I assume?”

“You know me,” she gave a fake laugh. “I only bring good news.”

“What is it?”

“The D’Vordi case is going to be a real challenge.” She gave him an exaggerated smile and raised her brows. He didn’t move or react in anyway. He just stared at her. “Someone tampered with the security footage. It cuts off just before Zurik looks at the camera.”

He let out a heavy sigh, his eyes fell to his desk and he brought both his hands up to his face as if he were praying. “So we have a bigger problem than Zurik D’Vordi.”

“I would say equally big, Sir.” Morgan said shaking her head. “The way Zurik cut down those men. He’ll do it again. We need to find the survivor before he does.”

“You work on that, I’ll try and find the compromised officer.”