

THE DETECTIVES OF THE 9TH PRECINCT

THE DERELICT WARRIORS

PART 4

LATER THAT NIGHT BACK AT THE 9TH PRECINCT:

Steve was hoping that it wasn't too late. After throwing the keys to the squad car to that goon Steve had to call for a backup cruiser to come out and give him another set of keys. By now Neal could be in Los Angeles for all he knew. But Steve was hoping as he flew thru the doors that lead to the holding cells that the one guy who could have hurt him, now can help him, was still there. To Steve it felt odd just thinking about needing his help. After Steve secured his gun in one of the lockers there, he ran up to the booking desk and he skidded to a stop trying to catch his breath.

"Jake....Jake Barlow? Please. Is he still....here?" Steve asks out of breath.

"Are you okay Detective?"

"Yeah, yeah I'll be fine. Did the boys from L.A. come and get him yet?"

The booking officer looks at a clipboard. "Nope he's still here."

"I want to see him."

"I don't know he's finally calm down." The booking officer replies.

Steve slams his hand down onto the desk. "I'm not asking I'm telling....I want to see him!"

The booking officer puts the clipboard down on the desk. "Okay sure I'll get the keys."

Steve waited by the main door while the booking officer grab the keys then he met Steve there and after unlocking the door he pointed down the hall to where Jake was. Jake was by himself in the last cell, stretched out on the bench.

"Hey Jake are you awake?" Steve asks him thru the bars.

Jake slowly turns his head and looks at him then he smiles as he sits up. "Steve?! I didn't think I would be seeing you again so soon. You gave me one hell of a headache!"

Just the way he says his name makes Steve pause. "I've been told before I give people headaches."

Jake laughs. "Come to say goodbye? I just want you to know there are no hard...." Jake pauses as he looks at Steve and Steve looks at the floor. "...Feelings." Jake finishes.

Steve scratches his head as he takes a deep breath. "Jake I need your help."

Jakes starts to laugh. He laughs so hard he almost falls off of the bench. He gets up and he walks over to the bars which causes Steve to take a few steps back.

"I don't think I heard you right? You want my help?" Jake asks as he laughs. "Now that's rich!"

"I don't really believe it myself..."

"Say please." Jake replies.

Steve looks at the floor as he thinks about this. "Please Jake."

"Come on you can at least look at me." Jake replies.

Steve raises his head and he looks at him as he takes one step closer to the bars. "Please Jake I need your help."

"That's better. Okay baby blue how can I help you?"

"I need to know who owns a big, black four door sedan. Two big guys were driving it." Steve replies.

"You didn't get the license plate number?" Jakes asks smugly.

"If it had a license plate I wouldn't be here! They took my partner Jake. They took Neal and I have to find him."

"What makes you think I would know something?" Jake asks.

Steve takes a deep breath. "A hunch Jake. Strictly a hunch."

"If I told you what would I get in return?" Jake asks.

Steve looks at him. "My undying gratitude."

"How about a souvenir?"

"Jake I don't have any..."

Before Steve can even finish Jake reaches out and he grabs a handful of Steve's hair and he pulls hard and he comes away with a good size handful.

"OWWWWWW SHIT!" Steve exclaims as he grabs his head.

"Detective! Are you alright down there?" The booking officer asks.

Steve looks at Jake as he rubs the sore spot on his head. "Everything is just peachy! You're a sick bastard, you know that?"

Jake laughs. "That car is owned by Oceanview Construction and Oceanview Construction is owned by C&C Holdings. Those two guys also work for C&C Holdings as did I."

"Thanks for the info." Steve replies as he starts to walk off.

"Anything for you Steve. Next time I'm in town I'll stop by and look you up."

Steve stops and he slowly backs up and he wraps one hand around a bar of the cell. "Just so you know...." Steve whispers so Jake has to put his head close to the bars. "The next time you sneak up on me will be the last time Jake....because I will shoot you."

Steve and Jake look at each other then he covers Steve's hand with his. "Promise? I would like someone to put me out of my misery."

Steve pulls his hand away then this time he walks off without looking back.

OCEANVIEW CONSTRUCTION COMPANY:

Steve sits in his car watching. Even though it is close to three in the morning Oceanview Construction is lit up like a Christmas tree. People are running back and forth and the big, black sedan Steve is looking for is there. Parked right out in front. He has even seen a concrete truck leaving but where it would go at this time of the morning, it made Steve wonder. Now the question is, is Neal in that building somewhere? Steve has to find out.

Steve checks his gun to make sure it has enough ammo then he puts it back in its holster then he gets out of the car. Steve's car is parked up the street but luckily there are others parked there as well and as he runs across the street he hides behind one of them. In the cover of darkness he waits to make sure no one is leaving then he runs up to the chain link fence that surrounds it and he quickly scales it.

Once he landed on the ground on the other side of the fence he sticks close to the building and the shadows. Looking in the first window he comes to. He makes his way around the building looking in all of the windows but he sees nothing, no Neal. He goes back to the fence and

scaling it once again he lands on the outside of the fence and just as his feet hit the ground, the front door to the business opened.

Steve hides behind the trash cans there as he watches the two big goons that had taken Neal off of the street get into the black sedan, start it and drive off. Steve gives them a few minutes to get away then he runs across the street, gets in his car and he follows them. Even at this time of the morning there was some traffic so Steve let a couple cars in between him and the sedan. Then at the light something happened. He lost them. How it happened, he wasn't sure and how a big car like that could just disappear well that was a mystery as well.

He went thru two more lights leaving the confines of the city behind and he was thinking of turning around and going back to look for them when he was suddenly hit from behind. Once and then twice. Looking back over his shoulder it was the guys in the sedan.

"Son of a bitch!" Steve exclaims.

Their car was big and heavy and Steve's car was faster and lighter. Before they could hit him again Steve threw it into a higher gear and it jumped like a startled rabbit.

"Hey where did he go?" The driver of the sedan asked.

The other guy looks around. "I don't know...."

Then in a form of an answer they were hit from behind but before Steve could hit them again, they sped off with Steve close behind. The sedan was doing at least 60 when Steve pulled up next to them with the right front quarter panel of his car next to the sedan's left rear quarter panel. Then Steve gave their car a good hard tap which sent them off to the right and then into a spin and they landed head first into a tree.

There was a loud crash as metal met tree and the tree rocked back and forth but it stayed upright. As Steve got out of his car and he ran to the sedan he could see by the streetlight the engine beginning to smoke. Steve yanked on the driver side door and he managed to get it open and after checking on the driver he ran around to the passenger side. He had to work a little harder to get that door open but when he did he could see that the passenger was awake.

"Get me out of here! Is he dead?" The passenger asked about the driver.

"No he isn't but you both will be. Do you smell that?" Steve asks.

"It's gas. Get us out of here!"

"Not so fast. What did you do with Neal? My partner! You held a gun to his head! Do you think I would forget about that!? You tell me where's he at!"

"Screw you!" The man replies.

Then Steve takes something out of his pocket. "See this!"

"A lighter?" The man replies.

"Very good. The way things are right about now it wouldn't take much. Tell me where's he's at or this car goes up light a roman candle!" Steve replies.

"If you kill me you won't find out where he is and you could die too."

Steve laughs. "No I don't think so! I can get away, oh I might be a little crispy around the edges and eventually I would find Neal but you.... WOULD STILL BE DEAD! So! What will it be? Tell me where Neal is!!! 1....2...."

"Oh alright. He's at one of the abandon warehouses." The man replies as he stares at the lighter. "Warehouse 22. You might want to hurry, he might not have long."

"What? Why? What do you mean?"

The man laughs. "It all depends on how long it takes the concrete to dry."

"Concrete?" Then Steve remembers watching the concrete mixer truck drive off. "You son-of-a...."

Then Steve hits him. Hits him hard enough to knock him out. Even though both guys are a lot bigger than him he drags them out of the car and gets them far enough away in case the car does explodes and he handcuffs them together and then to the nearest light post. After he gets back to his car he calls it in on the radio then he drives off to the warehouse district.

WAREHOUSE 22:

The last real thing Neal remembers is having a gun pointed to his head. And a big gorilla in an ill-fitting suit telling Steve not to follow them then blackness as he was either rendered unconscious or he just simply passed out. As he slowly begins to come around he realizes that he can't move or see that is until the pillowcase that was covering his head was roughly snatched off. He moves his head back and forth then when he opens his eyes he sees that he is sitting in a chair, actually he is duct taped to a chair. One piece of duct tape covers his mouth and as he looks around he realizes he is in a pit.

"Our guest is awake."

Neal looks over to see a man standing next to him holding the pillowcase that was on his head then he watches as the man climbs up a ladder. Once he is out of the pit he reaches down and he pulls the ladder up and out of the pit. Neal looks around him trying to see what is going on and that is when he saw it. Out of the corner of his eye a big, long metal chute that was swung into position over the pit. Then he heard the noise of the concrete truck as it was started up and the drum began to turn as it mixed the concrete. That is when Neal begins

to scream, the duct tape over his mouth muffling them, rocking the chair back and forth in the chair trying to free himself.

Steve rolled into the parking lot with the engine off and no headlights and finding the warehouse he wanted was easy enough because it was the only one that had lights pouring out of it. After he had parked a few warehouses up he got on the radio and asked for backup then he got out of the car. He kept to the shadows as he made his way to Warehouse 22 knowing good and well that there had to be another big goon standing watch.

Steve, like most people like to be right, but in this case he didn't. Because standing outside the door smoking a cigarette was a big guy and he was holding a gun.

"Damn!" Steve says to himself.

Steve had to do something to get him away from the door, some sort of distraction, so he looked around on the ground until he found it. A beer bottle. He picked it up and he tested the weight of it then he threw it. There was a car parked in front of the warehouse so that is the direction where Steve threw it. When the beer bottle hit the pavement it shattered and the guy standing guard at the door heard it.

"Hey! Whose there!"

The guy left the door to investigate and as he ran out to the car he saw the shattered beer bottle on the ground and when he bent over to pick a piece of it up is when Steve snuck up behind him.

"Psssst hey bozo!!" Steve whispers.

When the guy turned that is when Steve raised the two by four and he swung. The guy tried to raise his arm to deflect but it was too late. Steve made contact and once the guy was on the ground Steve stood over him and hit him one more time for good measure.

"That last one was for Neal."

Since Steve was fresh out of handcuffs he open the trunk of the car and he put him inside of it. After he shut the lid he grabbed the gun the guy was carrying then he turned and ran back to the warehouse.

Neal was in a bad way and he knew it. All Neal could do was sit here and watch this pit, his grave, fill up with concrete. Steve. Steve was his only hope and he knew that Steve wouldn't leave him hanging. Neal closed his eyes. Praying. It might be easier to die if he didn't have to see it. Hearing it was bad enough. The truck making its loud noise, the drum turning, and then Neal thought he heard the truck backfire but when he opened his eyes he saw Steve who had just fired a shotgun into the air.

“Alright boys this party’s over! Spencer! Drop the gun and you, over at the concrete truck, turn it off now!” Steve replies as he holds the shotgun on them.

Neal down in the pit starts to jump around in the chair yelling thru the duct tape on his mouth.

“I said turn it off! Now!” Steve yells again.

“You want it off? You come down here and turn it off yourself!” Spencer yells back at him and then he points the gun at the guy running the concrete truck.

“Hey boss! No! What are you doing?” The man backs up then he starts to run.

“Spencer don’t do it!!” Steve yells.

The man doesn’t get far before Spencer shoots him. Down in the pit Neal seeing and hearing all of this, only causes to agitate him more as he makes the chair jump up and down. His yelling muffled by the duct tape.

Spencer then takes a shot at Steve who ducks behind some crates then Spencer turns and runs off towards the back of the warehouse. After Steve jumps down from the crates he runs over to the man that had been shot and he’s still alive.

“Tell me! Tell me how to turn it off!”

“That handle right there. Push it up.” The man says as he points.

Steve gets up and he runs over to the concrete truck and he wraps his hands around the handle the man pointed to and then he pushes it up. The drum on the concrete truck stopped turning and the concrete stopped coming down the chute. Steve then runs over to the other side where the ladder is, he lets the ladder down into the pit then Steve climbs down it.

“Neal! Neal! You’re going to be alright.”

Neal is still jumping around in his chair his voice muffled by the duct tape as he looks at Steve.

“Neal I can’t understand a word you’re saying, here let me get that off....”

Steve reaches out and he rips the duct tape off of Neal’s mouth taking most if not all of Neal’s facial hair.

“Owwwww!! Shit! That hurt! What is that smell?” Neal asks as he wrinkles his nose. “Is that you?”

“Sorry! It’s possible. Ode of dumpster. You see my jacket was in a dumpster. I’ve had a bad night.”

This causes Neal to laugh. "You? You've had a bad night!! What about me! I've had a gun pointed to my head and now I'm duct tape to a frigging chair! Have you ever been duct taped to a chair?!" Neal yells at him slightly hysterical.

"No I prefer handcuffs." Steve smiles and winks at him.

"Steve! Get me out of this chair!! Now!"

"Not so fast! Besides you're safe I turned it off. So Neal did you miss me?" Steve asks.

Neal puts his head back. "I think you're enjoying this way too much! Yes Steve I did miss you. Now could you please get me out of this chair?"

"Just one more thing." Steve replies as he holds up one finger. "While I have your undivided attention."

"Holy shit! Ruby doesn't even make me grovel this much! What is it?" Neal asks.

"You know." Steve replies.

Neal takes a deep breath. "Alright Steve I'm sorry I didn't tell you what I was going to do. I'm sorry that I left you like a bride at the altar and I'm sorry I tried to sneak out on you. I won't do it again." Neal replies.

"Promise?" Steve asks.

"Yes I promise. Now please get me out of this chair!" Neal replies as he jumps around.

Steve looks at the duct tape. "How did they get you down here?"

"How in the hell should I know I was passed out! What about Spencer?"

"Don't worry about him. The place is lousy with cops, he won't get away." Steve replies as he finds the end of the duct tape and he starts to pull on it. "Damn how much duct tape did they use?"

"I don't know. A lot?" Neal replies.

"Well it's a good thing I have your pocket knife." Steve replies as he starts to cut the duct tape away. He was almost finished when they heard a strange noise. They both stopped what they were doing and they look around.

"What is that?" Neal asks.

"I don't know....oh shit!" Steve exclaims as they both watch the drum of the concrete truck begin to turn again and then as more concrete comes down the chute and down into the pit.

"I thought you turned it off!" Neal yells as Steve cuts the duct tape away from his arms.

"I did! I thought I did! Maybe it's faulty or something!!" Steve replies as he continues to cut away the duct tape and Neal watches the concrete get closer and closer.

"No shit! You think so! Steve!"

"Almost done! There! Come on let's go!" Steve grabs Neal by the arm and they both run over to the ladder where Steve pushes Neal up and Steve is right behind him. They get to the top of the pit where they watch the concrete wash over the chair and consume it.

"That was too close." Neal replies.

"I'll say. Here comes the cavalry." Steve replies as he points to the other police officers pouring into the building from all sides.

"Detectives are you two alright?" Lieutenant Sawyer asks as he looks down into the pit.

"Oh we're fine aren't we Neal?"

"Yeah peachy. Did your guys get Spencer?"

"Oh yeah. He didn't get far." The Lieutenant replied.

"Oh by the way Lieutenant that car that's parked in front of the building." Steve replies.

"Yeah what about it?"

"There's a guy in the trunk, you might want to let him out before he suffocates. Come on Neal let's go." Steve replies as he pats Neal on the back.

"Suffocates? Wait? What?" Lieutenant Sawyer asks as he follows after them.

A FEW HOURS LATER BACK AT THE 9TH PRECINCT:

"Okay Wally have a seat right there." Neal replies as he points to the chair across the table.

"What's wrong you look a little pissed off?" Steve asks. "Having a bad morning are we?"

"I don't have time for this, I'm busy, and I'm trying to get a newspaper...." Wally replies.

"Yes we know Wally you're trying to get a newspaper out. Here sit down." Steve replies as he holds the chair out for him and reluctantly he sits down.

"What's that smell? And you?" Wally replies as he points at Neal. "What are you wearing? Don't you two have anything better to do than to harass me?"

Steve starts to laugh and this causes Neal to laugh as well.

Wally looks back and forth between them. "What's so funny?" Wally asks nervously.

Steve leans on the desk. "Oh Wally if you only knew. Neal and I we have been up for hours...."

"Days probably by now working this case...."

"Does this have to do with Robert again? I told you I don't know anything. You guys are barking up the wrong tree!" Wally replies.

"Oh Wally you see this case had us chasing our tails, it's very complicated and very convoluted." Neal replies.

"And your right Wally when you say that we are barking up the wrong tree, we were looking east when we should have been looking west." Steve replies.

"Wait did you just say that you two guys were....wrong?!" Wally laughs. "Did hell just freeze over?"

Neal and Steve look at each other then they look back at Wally.

"Don't get too happy there old Wally. There were two different things going on here at the same time and one really had nothing to do with the other." Neal replies.

"I don't follow." Wally replies.

"You know for a long time Neal and I didn't either that is until we put the pieces together."

"You're a newspaper man Wally you like stories and brother do we have a dozy for you!" Neal replies.

"Yeah it's a little complicated so try and keep up." Steve replies.

"I'm....I'm not going to like this, am I?" Wally asks.

"Oh probably not." Steve replies as he sits on the table.

"You see Wally cops are a lot like reporters, we do our research, and we found out that you knew Robert." Neal replies.

"I already told you two that! Everybody knows Robert...." Wally replies.

"No Wally when we say that you knew Robert it was way before he became a famous freelancer and nominated for a Pulitzer....Steve care to do the honors?" Neal asks as he looks at him.

"Don't mind if I do...." Steve replies as gets off of the desk and he goes over to a box and he pulls out a book. After he finds the right page he sits it down in front of Wally. "You, Robert and Wendy all went to the same Journalism school together, didn't you?"

"So that isn't a crime is it?" Wally snaps back.

“No, no it isn’t we also found out that you and Robert didn’t like it each other very much, did you?” Neal asks.

“I bet Wendy told you that didn’t she?” Wally asks. “Did she also tell you that Robert was a prick?!” Wally says as he stands up. “Did she also tell you that in College Robert would write papers for people then later he would blackmail them? Robert and I were roommates and he stole my notes for my thesis! I couldn’t prove he did it but he did! If it hadn’t been for him I would be in Los Angeles now or New York! He stole my future!!”

“And that wasn’t the only thing he stole was it?” Steve replies.

Wally just looks at them.

“Wendy. He also stole Wendy from you too, didn’t he?” Neal asks.

“Son of a bitch! Yes! Yes he did! I saw her first!” Wally sinks back down in the chair holding his head in his hands. Steve and Neal look at each other then Steve scratches his head.

“One of the things we were wrong about Wally was the fact that we thought that somebody had lured Robert here.”

Wally looks up at Steve. “He wasn’t lured here?”

“Nope you see from our research we found out that Robert was in Los Angeles for something or other and since he was close by he decided to come by and see Wendy. He was just here to see her.” Steve replies.

“But somewhere along the way you saw him. Maybe he was in the bullpen with Wendy or maybe you went by her apartment and saw them there, but whatever the case, seeing Robert here scared you.” Neal replies.

“Because Wally you were hiding a big secret. A big story, a story so big, it was your redemption. A way possibly out of Oceanview.” Steve replies.

“It was MY STORY!” Wally yells.

“So you decided to lead him astray. We talked to Randy. We found out that Randy came to see you Wally. He thought he had a perfect human interest story. He was trying to raise money to help the homeless men downtown, so he came up with a unique program. So he was trying to get all the publicity he could. Have the homeless men downtown get involved in fighting, organize fighting.” Neal replies.

“You see Randy at one time was homeless but now he has a good gig going working at the docks he just wanted to help. So to lead Robert in another direction you told Randy about Robert and they met up. Robert was this big, famous freelance writer and Randy thought he found the pot of gold. But Robert not so much. He liked his stories with more meat to them.” Steve replies.

“So now we add another plate to this table.” Neal says as he shows a picture of Spencer Williams to Wally. “Somewhere along in this crazy story Robert saw Spencer Williams here. We don’t know how but he did. We don’t even know if Spencer saw him. He told us he didn’t see him. In the past Robert had helped put away Spencer Williams father and older brother in the federal pen.”

“Robert recognized Spencer right off the bat and he knew if he was here in Oceanview he was involved in something big. So Robert started snooping, didn’t he Wally?”

Wally doesn’t speak he just looks at them. Steve turns around and he goes back to the box and he pulls something else out of it and he shows it to Wally who practically crawls up on the table to get it.

“That’s mine! Give it back!”

“Oh no not so fast Wally this is evidence.” Steve replies as he holds it above his head.

“That’s my Journal! Robert stole it from me!!” Wally replies.

“At first we thought it belong to Robert but the more we dug into it we realized it was yours. This Wally old man is quite a barn burner!” Steve replies.

“Wally you had found out the biggest story to ever hit Oceanview. Rampart city wide corruption starting with the Mayor. Brides, kickbacks so much money was being funneled illegally there wasn’t enough money for legit things, like Randy and his program. You finally seem to be in the right place at the right time, this story of a local government being brought down to its political knees but then that Journal was gone. How did Robert get ahold of it?” Neal asks.

“I don’t know! God help me I don’t know how he ended up with it. He had it and he was throwing it up in my face! That no good bastard!”

“You see Wally there was another thing we were wrong about.” Steve replies.

“What was that?” Wally asks.

“You see we thought Spencer and his goons killed Robert because of what happened to Spencer’s father and brother.” Neal replies.

Wally looks at them. “You mean he didn’t kill Robert?”

“You see we already have the what, the when, and the who now we just need the....” Neal replies.

“Why and the how? Wally look at me.” Steve replies.

Wally looks up at him. “Tell us what happened. After all the things that Robert did to you no one would blame you....”

Wally slams his hands down on the table then he stands up. "Alright! Alright damn it! I killed Robert! There! Jesus God I killed him but I didn't mean to it was an accident!! God help me I didn't mean to."

Wally sinks back down into the chair his hands covering his eyes. Steve pulls up a chair and he sits down next to him. "We're listening." Steve replies.

"Do you want us to call your lawyer?" Neal asks.

"No I don't need my lawyer."

"So you're waiving your right to counsel?" Neal asks him.

"Yes! I need to get this off of my chest! Robert came to my office to gloat. He had my Journal! I don't know how or when he got it but somehow he had it. He told me he had it locked away in one of the lockers at the bus station. He wouldn't give me the key! He even thru a wad of money at me! He thought he could buy it! He laughed at me! Laughed at me!! We....we had a fight there in the office. We struggled and I pushed him. All I did was push him I swear! He fell backwards and he hit his head on the filing cabinet...Jesus I didn't mean for it to happen."

"You ransacked Wendy's apartment too, didn't you?" Steve asks.

Wally nods his head. "I thought the key to the locker might be there. I never did find it."

"And afterwards? You took his body to the construction site?" Neal asks.

Wally nods as he wipes his eyes. "I couldn't believe he was dead. I knew that he and Spencer knew each other and I thought if I left his body there then Spencer would be blamed for it."

"You said he threw a wad of money at you? How much was it?" Steve asks.

"It was \$10,000 dollars."

Steve whistles. "Wow that is a lot of scratch. Where would he get that kind of money?"

Wally shrugs. "I don't know. I bet you two guys are enjoying this, aren't you?" Wally says as he looks at them.

"No Wally you see that's where you're wrong." Neal replies.

"Yeah we don't like this. We believe you when you said that you didn't mean for it to happen." Steve replies as he puts his hand on Wally's shoulder as he starts to cry.

"I'm sorry. God I'm so sorry." Wally replies as he puts his head down on his arms as he cries.

"I'm going to go and get a stenographer Steve...?"

"I'll stay here."

Neal leaves the room and as he does so he is stopped by the Captain and the Assistant District Attorney who had been watching thru the two way mirror.

"Good work Detective!" Captain Reynolds replies as he shakes Neal's hand.

"Yes Detective good job in getting the confession."

Neal puts his hands in his pockets. "Thanks. You heard the part about him waiving his right to counsel?"

"Yes. After you get his confession down on paper arrest him for Voluntary Manslaughter."

"Okay. What about Spencer Williams and his gaggle of goons?" Neal asks.

"Well Mr. Williams will be charged with attempted murder on a police officer and as for his goons as you call them, Second Degree murder in the killings of Mario Garcia and Mark Walker. And Jake Barlow two counts of assault on a police officer, your partner Detective Perry in there."

"Two? I thought there was just one." Neal asks.

"Nope they are two." The ADA replies after he consults his paperwork.

"Okay. Well I better go and get the stenographer." Neal replies as he walks off.

TWO WEEKS LATER AT THE OCEANVIEW DAILY NEWS:

"Wow Wendy congratulations on your promotion to Editor!" Steve replies as he hands her a boutique of flowers.

"Thank you. They are beautiful!" Wendy replies as she smells the flowers.

"So you get Wally's old office?" Neal asks.

"Yes. It needs a good cleaning. This desk hasn't been cleaned out in years! That is why I called you guys, when I was cleaning out the desk I found this."

Wendy hands Neal an envelope and when he opens it they all gasp.

"How much is it?" Steve asks.

"Give me a minute." Neal replies as he starts to count it. "There's \$10,000 dollars here."

"That must be the money Wally mentioned." Steve replies.

"So what are you guys going to do with it?" Wendy asks.

Steve stands there with his hands on his hips and Neal holding the envelope full of money as they look at each other.

"I think we have a pretty good idea of what we're going to do with it. Right Steve?"

"Right." Steve replies as he smiles.

LATER THAT DAY AT WAREHOUSE 12:

"Uh oh look it's the fuzz!" Randy exclaims as he walks over to Steve and Neal shaking their hands. "Neal I still can't believe you're a cop!"

Neal laughs. "I guess I did a better job of acting than I thought."

"Well I wish you weren't a cop. The guys just loved you! You put on a great show! You really whipped that guy's ass!"

"Trust me my motivation was fear!" Neal replies.

"So the City going to let you stay here?" Steve asks.

"Oh yeah. They are going to make me a deal, half price on the rent just so long as I keep it in good shape. They tell me I need a permit and a license etc. I have to raise the money to get those, I was thinking of doing some fundraising. Hey maybe you guys can help?"

Steve and Neal look at each other then they look at Randy. "Well you see Randy that's why we're here. In a roundabout sort of way." Neal replies.

"I don't understand."

"Let's just say we want to make a donation." Steve replies as he hands Randy an envelope. Randy looks a little skeptical as he takes it. Then he opens it and he looks inside.

"Guys! Is this real?" Randy asks.

"Yeah it's real." Steve replies as he smiles.

"Wait! It's not stolen is it?" Randy asks.

"We don't think so." Neal replies.

"I'm afraid to ask...."

"There's 5,000 dollars there." Neal replies.

"Holy shit! Guys I don't know if I can take this."

"Yes Randy you can. Just look at it as a reward." Steve replies.

“A reward? A reward for what?”

“A reward for being a good guy. You’re trying to do something good for these people, most people wouldn’t even care, but you do. You deserve it.” Neal replies.

“Guys I don’t know what to say. If you ever need a favor just ask.”

“Well now that you mention it.” Steve replies.

“Anything.”

“Keep this to yourself. Let this be our little secret.” Steve replies.

“Yeah on the QT.” Neal replies.

“Oh hey no problem.”

“Well we better get going. Good luck Randy.” Neal replies.

“See ya later.”

CITY OF OCEANVIEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING:

“Look Neal there she is!” Steve leans over Neal as he blows the horn on the car. “Hey Laura over here!”

When Laura sees them she waves at them then she crosses the street. “Hi guys!”

Steve gets out of the car. “Wow you look great. Get in we’re here to take you to lunch.”

Steve helps her into the back seat where he joins her.

“Hi Neal!”

“Hey Laura. Steve is right you look great. How’s the apartment?”

“It’s wonderful and thank you Steve for helping me get this job.” She reaches over and gives Steve a kiss.

“Oh it was nothing really.” Steve replies. “New clothes?”

“These? No not really. I had to borrow them. I don’t have any suitable clothes. That is where my first paycheck is going to go, that is when I get it.”

Neal looks in the rearview mirror at Steve. “Well go ahead and give it to her.”

“Oh yeah.” Steve replies as he takes the envelope out of his pocket.

“Give me what?” Laura asks.

Steve hands her the envelope. "Now you don't have to wait. This is for you."

Laura takes the envelope and when she opens it she gasps. "Oh my god! How much....?"

"Two thousand dollars." Steve replies.

"Two thousand dollars? Guys! I don't know if I can take this. This is your hard earned money."

Steve looks at Neal and Laura sees that look. "This is YOUR hard earned money, isn't it?"

"Well....?" Steve replies as he scratches his head.

"You two guys didn't do something, did you? Wait, you did? Didn't you?" Laura asks.

"No we didn't do anything. It was a donation made to the city and we were assigned to hand it out to deserving people. And you are one of those people." Neal replies.

"You two didn't rob a bank did you?" Laura asks.

Steve laughs. "No we didn't rob a bank. It's just like Neal says. Laura you deserve it. Take it and buy new clothes or whatever you want. We just ask one thing in return."

"And that would be?" Laura asks.

"That's it's our secret. Just in case anybody comes asking, okay. Mum's the word." Neal replies as he holds one finger over his lips as he looks in the rearview mirror at her.

Laura looks at them and she smiles. "Okay I trust you two. Mum's the word. Now how about that lunch, I'm starved!"

Steve smiles as he puts his arm around her and they both settled back in the back seat. "Tell me about your new job." Steve replies.

THE NEXT DAY IN ANAHEIM CA:

"Neal pull over right here." Steve replies.

"Why? Is this the address?" Neal asks as he pulls over to the curb.

"No it's up the block. I think we should write a note and put it in the envelope. Otherwise they won't know whose it's from." Steve replies as he takes a notepad out of the glove box.

"Good idea. Maybe I should write it."

"Steve looks at him. "Why?"

"So they can read it."

Steve makes a face. "I'll write it. Okay. To Mark's Family, We would like for you to have this money to cover any expenses that you might have. We are sorry for your loss. Friends of Mark." Steve looks at Neal. "How did that sound?"

"Good. It sounded good." Neal replies as he counts out the money.

"How much are we going to give to them?"

"1,075 dollars." Neal hands it to Steve who puts it in the letter then he folds it over and he puts it in the envelope.

"Okay let's go."

They drive up the block till they get to the right house then they stop in front of it.

"Do you see a mailbox anywhere?" Neal asks.

"Oh yeah they have one of those mail slots in the front door. I'll be right back."

Steve gets out of the car and he runs across the lawn and to the front door then he quickly shoves the envelope thru the slot in the door then he runs back to the car.

THE NEXT DAY BACK IN OCEANVIEW:

"Okay so how much do we have left?" Steve asks.

"1,072. What do we do with what's left?" Neal asks.

Steve smiles. "I know what we should do with it."

TWO HOURS LATER:

"Father Owens this letter was left for you."

Father Owens takes the envelope and he looks at it. "Did you see who left it?"

"No, I was gone from my desk for a few minutes and when I came back it was there."

"Okay thank you." Father Owens looks at it then he tears it open and when he grabs the letter inside of it to read it the 1,072 spills out onto his desk. He looks at the money for a few minutes, counts it once than twice, then he reads the letter.

"Father Owens, we would like to donate this money to help out the soup kitchen. You do good work and we think you deserve it. Signed Two Citizens of Oceanview."

"Neal you know I've had a bad thought." Steve replies as they sit in the car across the street from the soup kitchen.

"You know it's a little too late for that now don't ya think?"

"What if...?"

"What if what?" Neal asks.

"Somebody comes looking for that money?"

"Who's going to come looking for it? I mean we don't know where he got it. It could've been his own money. Besides it's only \$10,000 dollars. If it was a million yeah I could see it. I mean whose going to come looking for a measly \$10,000 dollars?" Neal asks.

TWO WEEKS LATER AT THE 9TH PRECINCT SQUAD ROOM:

"Wow Neal did you read the part about?" Steve asks as he shows the paper to Neal.

"Yeah I did. You know Wendy can write a good story."

"Yeah she even spelled your name right! I think Randy is getting all the publicity he wants for his program." Steve replies as he continues to read the paper.

"It was nice of Wendy to do the story about Randy." Neal replies.

"Well since she is the Editor now she can published what she wants. I like the title the best. The Derelict Warriors. I wonder where she got that name from."

Neal shrugs. "She's a writer. That's what writers do, come up with cool shit like that. By the way have you seen the scissors?" Neal asks.

"Why?" Steve asks as he looks around the paper at him.

"Because I want to cut out these articles for Ruby. Especially this one." Neal says as he holds up another paper with the headline "OPD DETECTIVES PERRY AND SCHON CREDITED WITH BREAKING THE CITY HALL CORRUPTION CASE!" "Why does your name always come first?" Neal asks.

"P comes before S that's why."

"Ruby is putting together a scrapbook of our exploits." Neal replies.

"Oh she is? Well that's nice of her."

"Look this one has a picture!" Neal replies as he points.

Steve makes a face. "You know that isn't my best side and my hair looks awful! Bleeech!"

"Steve you don't have any bad sides and your hair always perfect. Kinda like now."

"Do you really think so?" Steve replies then he sees the Captain and two men, wearing some highly pressed suits, following behind him headed for his office. "Hey Neal who are those two guys?" Steve asks as he points.

Neal shrugs. "Beats me." Then Neal starts opening his desk drawers looking for the scissors.

"Boys." Steve and Neal both look up at the Captain's voice. "Could you two come to my office please?"

"Yeah sure Cap." Steve replies as he and Neal get up and they follow him into his office where they see the men that Steve saw earlier. The Captain shuts the door behind them.

"Boys this is John Harper and Roy Alan."

Steve and Neal walk over to them and they shake hands.

"We're....." Steve replies but doesn't get to finish.

"We know who you are." Roy says with tone that smacks of some authority.

"Oh do you want our autographs?" Steve asks as he laughs.

But Roy or John aren't laughing. They just stand there looking at them with their arms crossed over their chest.

"You guys don't have a sense of humor do you?" Neal asks.

"No. No we don't. We don't have a sense of humor when it comes to \$15,000 dollars missing."

Steve's mouth opens. "What do you mean?"

"Who are you guys?" Neal asks.

"Boys I didn't get to finish the introduction Roy Alan and John Harper are agents." The Captain replies.

"Uh agents from where?" Steve asks.

"Guess." John replies.

Neal scratches his head. "The IRS?" He asks reluctantly.

"No try again." Roy replies.

Steve takes a deep breath as he looks at the floor. "The CIA?"

Roy shakes his head no. "It's another agency that has three initials."

Neal rubs his face. "The FBI?"

"BINGO!" John replies then Steve starts to cough. He coughs so much he thinks he's going to pass out.

"What's wrong with him?" Roy asks as Neal goes over to him.

"Asthma." Neal replies.

"Water! Neal! Water!" Steve replies as he holds his chest.

Neal goes over to the water cooler and he gets Steve some water. And Steve quickly drinks three cups of water. "\$15,000 dollars?" Steve asks.

"Yeah \$15,000 dollars. You see Robert Stone was an informant of ours. We gave him that money to buy info from his sources then report back to us. We're conducting the investigation into the corruption here at city hall. We arrested everyone from the Mayor on down. All our ducks are in order except for one thing." Roy replies.

"The \$15,000 dollars. We would like to have it back. And since you two are the Homicide Detectives on record we thought you might know what had happened to it." John replies.

"We didn't know anything about any money." Neal replies.

"Yeah we never saw any money." Steve replies as he clears his throat.

"Well you see guys that poses a problem." Roy replies.

"How so?" Neal asks.

"We were hoping to collect it today and go back home but since you two claim...." John replies.

"Claim? We don't know anything about any money!" Neal replies.

"Yeah you two can check...." Steve replies.

"Oh we plan to do just that." Roy replies.

"What do you mean? These Detectives are under my supervision and I think whatever you're going to do you need to run it by my Boss, the Chief!" The Captain replies as he stands up to them.

"Well Captain you're wrong there! The Federal Government out trumps you! You see we're going to check their finances. Their bank accounts, their families bank accounts, any place they can put money we're going to check." John replies.

"We're going to check under their mattresses and in their freezers." Roy replies.

"Go ahead and check I have four dollars and twenty five cents in my savings account." Steve replies.

"You come with me." Roy replies as he points at Steve.

"Me?" Steve replies as he points to himself.

"Yeah we're going to go someplace a little more private." Roy replies as he hauls Steve up and out of the chair.

"Hey! Don't touch me! Wait! What do you mean more private? Neal!!" Steve replies as he looks over his shoulder. "You can't do that! Can you? NE...AL!!"

"We're the Federal Government we can do anything." John replies.

"I'm going to turn you upside and shake you and see what comes out of your pockets!" Roy replies.

"Am I under arrest?" Steve asks.

"Not yet!" Roy replies.

"NE.....ALLLLLLL!" Steve yells as Roy drags him out of the office.

John steps in front of Neal so he can't go after Steve. "Captain. Can we have your office?"

"I get this feeling it's not a request." The Captain replies.

"You're right it's not." John holds the door open as the Captain leaves then once out of the office he shuts the door as he looks at Neal.

"Let's you and I have a talk." John replies.

A MONTH LATER:

"God I hate moving!" Steve replies as he brings in another box.

"Yeah so do I." Neal replies as he carries in two pizza boxes and he sits them on a box then he sits on the floor next to them. Then Steve hands him a beer.

"Pizza! I am starved!" Steve replies as he grabs a slice of pizza then he sits down next to Neal.

Neal holds his beer bottle up. "Here's to your new apartment. I hope you will be very happy here. I hope you live here a long time because I am getting too old to help you move again."

Steve laughs as they click beer bottles. "Here! Here!" Steve replies.

"I know it's not the apartment you originally wanted. The one at Cherry Hill." Neal replies.

Steve shrugs. "Well what can you do when the Feds come in and shut you down. At least I got my deposit back. And this is nice. It still a duplex, which is what I wanted, nobody above me and nobody below me. Two bedrooms. The complex is only four years old. So..." Steve shrugs.

"Yeah but's it's not brand new. I know that was important to you. Oh shit which reminds me!" Neal replies as he tries to get up. "Remind me never to sit on the floor again."

"Where are you going?" Steve asks.

"Wait there, I'll be right back." Neal replies as he goes out the front door and Steve moves closer to the pizza and he grabs another slice. A few minutes later Neal comes back and hands Steve a box.

"Neal you didn't have to get me a present! But I'm glad that you did! Is this from Ruby too?"

"Na that's from me. Hers will come later. Go ahead and open it."

Steve opens the box as Neal grabs another slice of pizza and he sits down on the sofa. After Steve opens the box he takes it out and he looks at it.

"A toilet seat and lid?" Steve asks.

"Yeah you know you talked about how much it meant to you to sit your ass down on a new toilet seat that nobody had sat on. And since you couldn't move into those new apartments I thought I would get you a new toilet seat, so at least that part of your dream would come true."

Steve laughs. "Neal it's a great gift and every time I sit on it I will think of you. Speaking of asses I thought for sure those FBI guys were going to ream us a new one. At least we finally found out who owned C&C Holdings."

"Yeah the Mayor, I know what you mean by those FBI guys but they couldn't find what wasn't there. They checked my bank account, Ruby's, Ruby's account for the club. They even checked my mother's bank account! And the kid's college fund." Neal replies.

"Yeah they checked my bank account and Ray's. You know they were pretty smart using that ploy on us that we ourselves have used on countless suspects." Steve replies.

"Yeah the \$10,000 dollars suddenly becomes \$15,000 thinking we would correct them. That way they would know we really saw the money. Smart! I'm going to grab another beer do you want another one?" Neal asks.

"Sure."

Neal gets up and he goes into the kitchen and after he grabs two bottles of beer he goes back into the living room and hands one to Steve. Neal sits back down on the sofa.

"So."

"What?" Steve asks.

"When were you going to tell me about Jake coming back for seconds?" Neal asks.

Steve takes a deep breath. "Try never. I didn't want to hear you say I told you so."

"I like to be right but not in this case. Don't you ever get tired of it?" Neal asks.

"Tired of what?"

"Guys. Guys hitting on you?" Neal asks.

"I don't like it and I wish whatever I'm broadcasting I could find the button and turn it off! But a lot of time I can use it to my advantage. Like with Jake. And sometimes it backfires. Like with Jake. That's why I thought about cutting my hair."

"Like I said I don't think it would help. It's just you." Neal replies.

"Don't tell me Neal that you hadn't had guys hit on you."

"Yeah but not like they do you."

Steve shakes his head. "Jake was a different thing altogether. That was the first time some guy actually put his hands on me that had bad intentions behind it. He wanted something more than a little slap and tickle, he wanted to own me."

"He wanted to do to you what he did to that 16 year old boy in L.A."

"He would have to kill me first." Steve replies.

Neal is quiet for a few minutes as he takes another sip of beer.

"Ask me." Steve replies quietly.

"Ask you what?"

"What you have been wanting to ask me for some time now." Steve replies.

Neal looks at the floor. "Okay. Back when you were doing the escort thing, were then any...."

"Guys?" Steve shakes his head. "No. Not that I wasn't approached. But I turned them all down. I have to live with myself." Steve pauses. "If I had said yes, would it had made a difference to you? Would we be different?"

Neal thinks about that for a minute. "No. You're still be my best friend. Owww Shit!" Neal replies as he grabs his neck.

"What is wrong with you? You've been belly aching about your neck for the last couple of days."

"I don't know! I think I slept wrong on it and ever since it's been killing me!"

Steve gets up off of the floor and he sits his beer bottle down on a box then he goes over to Neal and he climbs up on the sofa then he sits down behind him.

"What cha going do?" Neal asks as he tries to turn his head and look behind him. "Owww shit!" He replies as he grabs his neck.

"I'm going to rub your neck." Steve replies as he flexes his fingers.

"Oh no see Ruby tried that and it didn't really help."

"That's because you need some strong hands." Steve replies as he puts his hands on Neal's shoulders and he starts to rub. "Relax for god sakes. Don't be so tense."

"Oww that hurts! Steve!"

"It's going to hurt if you don't relax. Where's it hurt? There?" Steve replies.

"Yes! Damn it!"

"God you're such a baby! Hold still!" Steve replies as he rubs his neck and shoulders a little harder.

"Hey you know that's starting to feel better. "

"Sure. Close your eyes and relax. Let me do all the work." Steve replies as he rubs his neck and shoulders a little harder.

Neal closes his eyes. "Damn that does feel better. You know you have good hands. A little more to the left. Right there."

Sitting behind him Steve starts to smile. "You mean right here."

"Yeah, yeah right there. Oh don't stop."

"Neal." Steve leans forward and he whispers in Neal's ear.

"Hmmm?"

"How does that feel?" Steve asks.

"Wonderful."

"Neal I have always wanted to tell you something." Steve replies.

"Hmmm. What's that?" Neal replies.

"I think you're cute." Steve whispers in Neal's ear as his eyes fly open then Steve wraps his arms around him. "And there is one thing I would love to have you do with me...."

"Ah, oh, what?" Neal asks.

"...Help me...."

"Yeah?" Neal replies.

"Hook up the washer and dryer." Then Steve kisses him on the cheek and he pats him on the chest as he gets up laughing.

"Oh man I had you going!"

"That wasn't funny." Neal replies as he stands up.

"Oh yes it was."

Neal follows Steve into the kitchen which leads into the laundry room. "So, you think I'm cute?" Neal asks.

"As a bug's ear." Steve replies.

"Really?"

"You're the greatest thing since sliced bread." Steve replies.

"Oh I bet you say that to all the Detectives."

"Oh no partner just you. Just you." Steve replies.

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"Neal."

"Yeah Steve?"

"You know there was one thing you never explained to me while we were working on the Derelict Warriors case."

"What was that?" Neal asks.

"Remember when Spencer's lawyer said that he would have us walking a beat in Tijuana?"

"Yeah?" Neal replies.

"And you said we're be watching the girls with the donkey show at night." Steve replies.

"Yeah."

"Well?"

"Well what?" Neal replies.

"What did you mean by that? What show with the girls and the donkeys? Is it a kid's show?"

Neal laughs. "No! Come on I'll explain it to you later. Let's go home." Neal replies as he opens the door.

"Then what is it?"

"You've never heard of it?" Neal asks.

"No if I've heard of it do you think I would be asking you." Steve replies as he goes out the door then Neal shuts the door behind him.

"Okay I'll tell you come a little closer." Neal replies.

A few minutes later you hear Steve say, "No way! Oh that is just disgusting! Neal!"

"What?"

"I know let's go to Tijuana this weekend!" Steve replies.

"Oh no no!"

"Brochures? Do you have any brochures?" Steve replies.

"No!"

"Come on...." Steve replies.