

Sheriff in Red

Prologue

Sep 27, 2011

The sun slowly set

A faint trace of warm sunlight that normally filled the ground was all but gone, leaving the cold, dark shadow to infest the city. All was still, a strange sight from New York.

As the sun completely set, the moon started to shine, along with all the lights turning on from the city. A short man with big glasses and a pull over coat approached one of the many buildings in the Slums, the rough and dangerous part of New York. His glasses glistened from the moon, and his dark coat made him blend in perfectly.

The man then took a deep breath, his breath leaving a smoky trail from the cold temperatures around him. He then walked inside and was greeted by a woman who was standing beside a bald man in a suit. The short man with glasses then spoke.

"I got the briefcase you requested."

The man stammered.

"Were you followed?"

"Talia, this is the man's first time in the Slums. I'd bet he's frightened out of his mind right now. Hand over the briefcase and you can leave safely. We can all act like we never met."

The man with the thin black frames nodded and handed the briefcase to the bald man. The chimes from outside the building rang in the howling wind.

"Thank you Fredrick, and for your cooperation, the agreed reward is down the hall on the left. Me and Talia should get going before the storm hits, best of luck."

The bald man said as he grabbed the suitcase and started walking out of the old, rickety building with the woman at his side.

Frederick decided to get the reward. As he walked across the creaky floorboards in the hallway, he noticed a door cracked open. As he turned his head, he immediately felt a prick on his neck. Frederick jumped from nervousness and thought it best to just leave before he got into any trouble. As he started to the door, the old floorboards creaking every step, he blacked out.

"He's out cold."

Soon rain started to pour outside, and Talia turned on the fireplace in the building's main living room. "Looks like we will be here awhile, Thomas."

Chapter 1: Precipitation

Sep 28, 2011

The feeling of rain on my skin is a feeling that has always felt like a slight, burning sensation. Not in any painful way, but in a particularly calming way, similar to a mother's touch. I love this rain, although three days of rain has not been the most enjoyable of all weather, but it's better than the sun.

My apartment was overwhelmed with a delicious smell, leaving my nose hungry and my dry mouth began to drool. As I walk into the kitchen I realize that it's the smell of freshly made pancakes, with a side of syrup.

"The rain's not letting up for a while, huh Seth?"

He said curtly to me.

"Huh? Uh, I guess yeah."

I struggled to think of a response. This case has been keeping me up at night for days on end; even with the soothing sound of the rain on our metal roof at night. A rather old case, but something still seemingly unsolvable.

"So how's the case going?"

How do I respond to that? I can't stomach that question. After hearing that I completely lost my appetite. The sound of the rain outside seemingly getting more aggressive, banging on the roof louder and the smell of the pancakes has morphed into this awful, burnt smell.

"Seth, what's wrong with you?"

I snap back to reality within milliseconds of hearing that.

“Nothing, sorry I zoned out for a second. The case is kinda cold right now, seemingly no leads... I’m not sure where it’s going next.”

“Lame. Well, it’s fine. Your boring case will get solved eventually.”

I sit down and turn on the news. The TV brightness makes me flinch, waking me up a little more. Nothing again. I was hoping for some type of news relating to my case but it’s nothing once again. I begin to pull out my phone and stop paying attention to the newscaster when a news flash goes across the screen and a text notification blares on my phone at the same time. I jump. Apparently a man was found dead near my home. Actually right next to the abandoned building I walk by every day after work. I quickly shower and throw on my uniform from yesterday, slowly walking out of the house.

As I walk out of my apartment, I’m reminded of my solace. Although I have Pat, most days at home I sit alone in my room in the dark. Pat is way too social for me. I’m supposed to be best friends with him as he’s my roommate but I hate him. I exit my apartment complex and walk by a large group of people. The New York City traffic is awful. All of these people are useless to my life, so why do I have to walk near them every day? They don’t care about me, they don’t know me. I shouldn’t have any need to care about them. I scan my metro card and have nowhere to sit on the subway. I guess I have to stand again. Maybe if everyone on this train wasn’t such a hog I wouldn’t have to stand. I hate each and every one of these people around me.

Thankfully, my stop is very close to where I get on the train every day, so I don’t have a long wait on the metro. I get off about 6 minutes before I need to be at work, so I have time to get something to drink. I grab a plain cup of water

from some coffee shop and walk to work. The noise is awful. Everyone is so unnecessarily noisy. What purpose does yelling make for anyone? The brash people I see every day are the kind of people I wish I could arrest, but apparently I'm not allowed to do that. Anyways, I continue to work. As I enter the building officer Ronny greets me and I respond with a glance. I walk to my desk and see to my supervisor about what I need to do today.

“Good morning Seth, you look exhausted. Not that it matters, though, today I need you to patrol and make sure everything is good in uptown, remember that case isn't your job, so you need to stop working on it. I expect to see your patrol car around today. Do not go to the site where that man was killed or you will lose your job. We're short on officers and I need you to be doing your job to the best of your ability, which you haven't been doing as of late.”

He continues and I zone him out. He's useless, this case is more interesting than anything he wants me to do, so I simply ignore what he has to say like I do every day.

“Okay”

I reply, and quickly walk away, forgetting what he said to me moments after I leave his sight. I grab my patrol car keys and they jingle as I walk out the door. I was told to go where, Midtown right? I don't care, I'm going to the slums to check out that homicide and see what happened. As I'm driving to the slums I reminisce on my job. Although I did want a job in the police field, I wanted to be a detective. That's why I run off every day to work on this case. I won't go back to my job until this case is solved, and if it gets me killed, so be it, I don't value my life anyways. My thoughts are so loud that I don't even realize I'm at the abandoned building where everything allegedly went down.

As I walk inside the building a small piece of concrete crumbles from the ceiling. The room is filled with cobwebs made by microscopic spiders. The walls are dirty and bits of the walls are stained with brown. The building is completely

made of concrete and the front door is slightly coming off the hinges. I'm surprised the city government hasn't torn it down. The building catches my eye every time I walk by it on my way home, but even then I don't pay any mind to it. The entirety of the first floor is seemingly empty, I thought maybe there would still be police there or something, but no signs of any police were even there. There are signs of a struggle near the stairs, and blood stains on the ground very close to the front door.

"What's goin on here?"

A strange voice with a deep southern accent calls out behind me. I am on high alert now. Should I reach for my holster? Maybe.. I get a quick and short adrenaline rush similar to the excitement I get when thinking about a new case. I quickly turn around but do not grab my gun yet, I keep my hand on my holster just in case. What appears in front of me is surprising. A stubby and short man is standing in front of me, looking to be about five foot three and chubby. I laugh to myself. *This is what you were afraid of just 7 seconds ago?* I think to myself. I continue to laugh at the man.

"What are you laughing at, Officer?"

Prick. Hearing myself get called an officer pisses me off. I hate that word. A simple job but such an insult to me. How dare you call me an officer. An officer is a lazy man who sits around and does nothing every day. An officer is useless to society except for the 2 or 3 times in their entire career that maybe they give someone a ticket! An 'officer' is just a loser in blue! Just someone who wants to feel power over someone else. As all these thoughts rush through my head I realize he has been standing there without a reply for a minute now, so I quickly reply, trying to hold back my pure and raw anger from him.

"Oh, Just Seth is fine, thanks."

He looks at me and gives me an approving nod, as I turn around and go up the stairs to continue investigating this case, I see an empty upstairs as well. It seems like either this whole place was cleared out before anyone found out that the homicide occurred, or the body was simply dumped here. *How could this happen?* It simply doesn't make sense... Clearly the body was dumped here but how would they get the body here in NYC traffic? With everyone around I mean it doesn't make sense. There's no way anyone could carry a body in the

New York streets. I walk down the stairs, with the floor cracking below my feet. *Waste of my time.* I exit the building while the man still stands there, seemingly confused at my presence. I should do my job and tell him to leave, but he doesn't seem like a squatter or like he's trying to camp out there.

The rain continues in the city streets. My phone buzzes and a flash flood warning goes across my screen. The rain is so soothing to me, although it's annoying when it happens 3 days in a row. It's flooded the city streets at this point, and my patrol car needs a wash. My hair is already soaked with rain so I grab my poncho from my bag and put it on. I sit in the driver's seat of my car as someone comes through on my walkie talkie

"Hey Seth, you need to head to Uptown, I don't know what the hell you're doing but your supervisor needs you there today"

"On my way now."

I replied and began to head to Uptown. As much as I hate it, I don't want to lose my job. I just drive around, pretending that I'm doing something, but I'm as useless as any other cop. Unsurprisingly, nothing happens throughout the day today. By the time I get on the train, it's 7:46 PM. Normally, I would get on the 6 PM train home but I was running late today. I got a seat on the train today, so I don't have to awkwardly stand in the middle of everyone around me.

About 6 minutes later, I exit the metro and decide to get a quick sandwich. While eating, I realize I haven't eaten all day. I don't know why.. I guess the case has been distracting me. The woman at the sandwich stand is so bland. She reminds me of wheat bread. Somehow she's so boring that she's memorable. I can't remember her face or anything about her, but I remember how boring she was. She wasn't even friendly in a customer service way, just kinda uninteresting. I get a grilled chicken sandwich on white bread. I get lettuce, mayo, and chicken on the sandwich. It's alright, enough to hold me over until tomorrow.

I walk and eat but the sandwich is small, so I finish it very quickly. I would light a cigarette but the rain would put it out, and I don't feel like standing under a shady part of the walkway. I look at my watch. 8 PM, *Just what I expected.* *Where should I go? I hate being home but I hate doing things slowly. I guess I'll just go to the bar.*

I enter the bar and my usual group is sitting at our corner. It's a booth table and I just sit and drink with my friends. They're loud and brash, almost identical in personality to all of the people I despise, but I enjoy my time with them. I get a Jack Daniels and sit down.

"A Jack Daniels today, huh?"

Braxton calls out. He's who I consider to be my best friend, he gets on my nerves sometimes but he's someone who I like to chill out with at the end of long days. I feel like I can tell him anything, although when I struggle I usually keep it to myself.

"Hell yeah, I'm exhausted, man."

I slip off my Poncho and hang it over the back of the booth seat as I sit down. I look around and 2 of our friends are missing. That's a little strange, but nothing out of the ordinary.

"You know where Old man Tom and Austin are?"

Says Daniel while glancing back and forth at me and Braxton.

"I don't know, I guess they're home tonight? Weird because it's a Friday but whatever"

I say, taking a drink of my Whiskey.

"Austin's at home, Thomas hasn't replied to my texts since last night"

Braxton replies. The words echo through my head. *Last night... Tom...* I hope he's just been busy. After the case I'm following and everything that's been going on as of late I don't know what to do. I pull out my phone. My friends continue talking as if nothing happened but I zone them out of my head. I began to text my coworkers for details on what happened last night. Everyone replies with a "Why" which is pointless. Why why why why why why why? Why can't you just tell me. I think to myself in rage. I scream to myself in my head. I get a reply other than just why. A screenshot and a text "sorry, this is all I have, I'll text you if I get anything else"

The screenshot is of a group text in which a picture was sent. It's blurry, but the picture has an open folder with light details and a scribbled out name. Useless. Again. I guess there's nothing I can do about it, so I give up for now.

I continue to drink my Whiskey but not happily. Just trying not to waste my money. Thoughts of my hatred rush through my mind, i'm trying to have fun with my bar friends but i'm reminded of where I live every time I look outside. I hate the slums. I hate the people here, I hate the dirt and filth. This place just sucks. Luckily, I finish my Whiskey fast and say goodbye to Braxton and Daniel. My apartment is only five doors down, so I don't have a long walk. I walk a few steps to my apartment complex, climb the stairs, and collapse into my apartment. I don't have the energy to get to my room, so I fall asleep on the couch.

Chapter 2: Light Showers

Sep 29. 2011

beep beep beep beep I wake up to the sounds of my alarm. Although it is annoying, I don't mind the alarm every morning. It helps me wake up. I throw the sheets in my queen bed off of myself and walk around my apartment. I look out of the window and over the city view. I love living in Manhattan, even though it's been a bit ugly and gray for a few days, I moved here out of my own choice, not just for work. As I look out of the window I remember what I have to do today. I have to go to our main office and meet with the leaders of the

Capertishia family. I walk to my bathroom, still half asleep but ready for another day. I flick the light switch on and there's a slight delay before the fluorescent lights flicker on. I still need to fix those light bulbs, but it's fine. I strip bare and step into my shower. I take a quick 5 minute shower and when I'm out I take my hair and tie it into a man bun so it looks neat and doesn't get in the way today. I step into my walk in closet and put on my best suit. A soft, purple velvet shirt, the top two buttons being unbuttoned of course. A white blazer, white pants and white dress shoes. I look at myself in the mirror and I look great.

I step into my kitchen and take out a pan. I crack two eggs into a bowl and beat them aggressively, the sizzling of the bacon making me excited to eat this morning. I pop three pieces of bread into my toaster. As my eggs are done scrambling and my bacon is fully cooked, my toast pops out of the toaster. I prepare all of my courses on a plate and sit down to eat, fork and knife in hand. As I stick my fork into my eggs, my phone begins to ring.

"Hey Austin, what's up?"

Braxton says as I answer the phone.

"Oh not much, just getting ready for a meeting today at work, what's up with you?"

I reply, with a mouthful of bacon and heavily breathing out to let some of the food's heat out of my mouth.

"Nothing, just checking on you.. The guys missed you last night, I guess something happened with old man tom? Seth kinda freaked out when he noticed you two weren't there."

I'm unsurprised. Seth has always been a worrywart. His life is so filled with stress I don't even know how he lives.

"Alright well, I'm gonna go eat and then head out to my meeting, I'll catch up with you later."

I hung up.

By the time the call is over, I've already finished all my food. I quickly do my dishes and walk out of the house. I take the elevator down to the first floor and as I'm walking out the door a voice calls out behind me.

"Hey, looking nice today Austin!"

It's the receptionist lady.. Ugh what's her name! I keep forgetting her name, I'm sure she told me when I moved here but I just can't remember. At this point I'm too far from her to read her name tag and I don't wanna turn around and make it awkward..

"Thank you!"

I replied with a simple reply because I wasn't sure what to say. It's all good she'll forget she even saw me this morning. I exit the Apartment building and walk to the parking garage right across the street. Driving sucks in Manhattan because the traffic is so bad. I wish I could take the train every day like my friends but usually I have a long drive to go somewhere, and I don't think the train routes go that far. Today I have to drive just outside of the Slums, where me and my buddies usually go to the bar. Old man Tom texts me an Address.

As I arrive at the building, I observe how oddly fancy it looks compared to the buildings around it. I've been here but I never notice this nice building when I drive by. It looks so odd in the slums. I hope I don't run into anyone as I walk into here, I don't know how to explain why I'm at this building in the slums. The building looks like a hotel on the outside, but on the inside it's reminiscent of an airport TSA security. I can make my way through the security as I'm supposed to be here. I try my best to navigate the hallways, walking up stairways and trying my best to figure out where this meeting happens. I open a random door on the top floor and there are 3 men and 1 woman sitting on the other side of a long table. One of which I recognize, the other 3 are completely unknown to me.

"Good morning, Austin. Welcome to the Capertishia Family. Of course, you already know what your job entails. Let me introduce you to the 3 others around me. On my left is Mr. Wiche, and the two on my right are Stanley and Talia."

Old man Tom says to me.

"Thank you for the introduction, I am glad to meet you all. Hopefully one day I can sit at that table beside the four of you. I will do the best I can to achieve all that you want of me."

I reply with pure respect. I am genuinely thrilled to meet these people, as it determines the future of my job. At this point in time, many people around me are trying to get out of the Mafia but I'm not. I don't have any family, and don't plan to. I have never had a dream job or anything of the sort. I love my life and I think getting out of the Mafia would make it much worse, so for now I will stay where I am. Talia slides a folder across the table. Everyone is silently staring at me. What's in the folder? Maybe this is why I was called here for a meeting... I wonder.

I open the folder and there is a file. A file of the man who was shot and everything that happened that night. Apparently, his name was Fredrick and he was killed in the building across the street from our usual bar. He was killed over some briefcase and something that happened.

"This happened about 3 days ago, I assume you've seen it on the news and whatnot; but we did it. You mustn't tell anyone, of course. You may be wondering why we're telling you this, and that's because we have a file on someone who was snooping around the area. We don't know much about him, but we need to gather intel on him. Flip the page over and there's information on him."

The woman with a high ponytail wearing a suit stares at me. Her glare is sharp and it feels like she's piercing my skull just with a glance. My b2 completely goes blank. I can't remember her name... Talia! That's it. I quickly respond because this woman has filled me with fear with a simple look.

"I understand, Talia, ma'am."

I then flip the page over inside the file and look at what's written on this side. It's a blurry image of a man with a skinny build, tall and mid length hair. He has a police uniform on. He looks somewhat familiar.. But not enough to tell who he is. No name is listed, a description is though. Brown Eyes, Black hair, around 5'10" roughly 120-140 lbs. Not really enough to know if it's anyone I know, but I really hope not.

"So now you're probably wondering why we gave you this file, we have a mission for you. We need you to track him down and bring him to us. We think he lives in the slums, somewhere near the abandoned building, and our camera footage caught him going into the bar across the street, he may be a usual. Try to find him soon."

Stanley says to me. As he says this, Old man Tom gives me a weird look. I can't understand why, maybe because the bar? Maybe because it's the bar we hang out at with our friends, but it couldn't be anyone we know. I mean, Seth wouldn't even be near that building with his uniform on so there's no way it's him.

"Thank you for your time, I'll do my best to achieve your mission and I will be back within 3 days."

I turn around and walk to the door, walking out of the door, down the hall, almost stumbling down the stairs and leaving the building. I call Seth.

"Hey man, what's up with you?"

I say as I open my car door and kick my feet up on the dash. Talking to my friends always calms me down.

"What do you want"

Seth replies, leaving me disappointed.

"I was just gonna make small talk, damn.. Well I was wondering if there's anyone at your office I can get in contact with, like your boss or something. I wanna shadow them because I'm considering becoming a police officer too."

I say, it's such a dumb lie but I think he'll fall for it. I can't lie for shit. Especially not to a friend like Seth.

"I don't know, I don't care. I'll send you my supervisor's number if you stop bothering me."

He says as he hangs up.

I forgot what an asshole Seth is when he's not drunk. He is the most unpleasant of unpleasant people. I don't understand how I am friends with him. It's fine, I don't have to see him sober so it doesn't matter. He texts me a phone number and I reply with "Thank you so much!" He doesn't say anything back. I text his supervisor. "Hey, I'm Austin, a friend of Seths. I'm wondering if you can send me details on where Seth was yesterday. I've been concerned about him recently and I think something may have happened to him yesterday."

I start the car and exit the parking garage. I drive around in circles for a little bit to stall for time and then make my way to the abandoned building. I walk inside and look for evidence or shoe prints or anything to help show what's going on here or any evidence that Seth was here. Nothing turns up. There's nothing. This is the part of my job where I have to sit and wait. I park my car in a nearby alleyway and sit in the driver's seat, with a perfect view of the abandoned building's entrance. I remove my pistol from the inner pocket of my blazer, opening the glovebox and putting it inside. I leave the glove box open, in case of an emergency.

The sky has been cloudy all morning, I thought the rain would finally be over for a day. But the rain begins. It starts very quickly and is a very sudden break of rain. A cloudburst. I learned about this word and I've wanted to be

able to see it in person but it's been raining for 3 days. I reach into my glove box and remove my book, sipping slow drinks of the lukewarm coffee that's been in my drink holder since yesterday morning. My book is very interesting and I get enthralled in it. A story can change your life, it can change your perspective on something, or even just give you a different point of view on someone or something you dislike. A book is a new experience to me every time I read it.

As I'm about to drift off to sleep, something finally happens. I take note of the time, 1:48 PM. It's Seth. He's walking into the abandoned building; this is my opportunity. I ran to the payphone on the opposite side of the street. If I can make it fast enough, he won't know it was me calling. I can't let him know it was me. As he picks up the phone, I say "Seth, you need to leave, this is a warning call. The Mafia is after you. STOP SNOOPING." I whisper into the payphone, and immediately hang up and speed out of there. I arrive back at my apartment and destroy any evidence that I knew Seth. Breaking burner phones, burning photos. It's like he never existed. Completely covered my tracks and all tracks that he was ever in my life.

After everything relating to him is gone, I return to his street in the slums. I stand on the roof across the street, looking through his window with binoculars. His car is parked where it should be if he was home. As I wait for him to leave the house, 2 gunshots clap through the streets. Seemingly coming from his apartment. Did they know? They couldn't have... They could've seen him at the abandoned building. Shit... I hope Seth is okay. And his roommate, that guy didn't do anything. As I lie on the roof with my head barely peeking over, a taxi arrives at the apartment entrance.

Chapter 3: Heavy rain

Sep 29, 2011

My head is down in the taxi. A tear drops from my eye, streaming down my burning face and hitting the ground. I don't know what to do. He pats me on the back. "Pull yourself together. You know it had to happen." I audibly sob. I never wanted to kill anybody. I just liked the case. He had a family. Both of them did. It was a wrong place at the wrong time, even though he was a criminal he just got wrapped up in the wrong thing. Now I'm a criminal. Now I'm worse than him-no worse than both of them combined. I would be better off dead but I don't even have the balls to do it.

"Seth, stop. We're here. You need to get your shit together."

Pat says to me.

I open the door, basically flopping out of the taxi. My suitcase right beside me, he opens the door of.. Whatever this place is. I didn't know where we were going, Pat got home at the perfect time and helped me out. Pat walks into the office. I can't hear anything, until a tall, skinny man, with a similar build to me pops out from out of the office. "Get the hell in here."

"So, I'm Gordon, what's your name?"

"S-S-Seth."

I'm still shaking from what happened.

"So, Seth. I just wanna let you know that it reaks, and it wasn't smelly before, only after you two walked in here." Gordon says.

Pat grabs the suitcases and unzips them. We somehow managed to fit their bodies inside the two suitcases, a little bit dismembered. The sight of the body parts again shook me to my core. I can't live like this.

"Again, Marco? What the hell. So this means... what? This means I have to make you two disappear? This is just like last time." Gordon says to Pat

Marco? He's talking to Pat... I stare at the two of them with confusion until I piece together the fact that Pat is not actually Pat. He's probably a criminal... or something. It's hard to know that my roommate isn't really who I think he is, but it's not the worst that's going on right now.

"I need to disappear. I need to become a new person and start a new life. I shot two people in my apartment complex and the mafia is chasing me down... How soon can you make me disappear?"

I speak up to Gordon. The smell of the bodies is still flooding my senses, I gag at the smell again.

"Seth, I can make you disappear, but it's not easy. I don't just give them new names and drop them off, I'm gonna be giving you a new ID and making you a whole new person. You don't think this is easy, do you? It's gonna be at the very least \$20,000. And I normally charge way more but you get a discount because I know Marco err... Pat."

20... thousand. I mean, that's my entire savings account. What can I do?

"I'll get the money."

Pat, or Marco, or whatever his real name is.

"No, you can't do that, I mean, you have to disappear too, right? And you already have so it can't be as easy!"

I interrupted him. Without saying anything, he removes a large portion of money from his wallet, puts it on Gordon's desk and motions for me to leave. I sit outside while the two of them make a racket in the room, probably doing something with the bodies. I didn't get any of my belongings... I guess it's too late. I go with the clothes I have on my back. I feel dirty. My skin is crawling. Visions run through my head of the bullets going into their heads. Pat choking the other to death. Everything seems so tense. The soft red walls reminding me of the burst of blood from his brain. The bits of body spewing out of the suitcase no less than 5 minutes ago. But one big thing.. Who made that call? The number was marked Unknown, it was probably from a payphone. But that means someone has connections to the Mafia and was looking out for me. But who has my personal

phone number and info from the mafia? All the thoughts rushing through my mind echo over and over my mind feels like it's about to burst but the-

"Come on Seth, let's get you everything you need to start over, and by the way you're not seeing Marco ever again. He's gotta disappear too." Gordon says. He makes me stand on a blue X and takes my new ID picture.

"Clearing your record wasn't hard, you're not very interesting and nobody really cares for you so, lucky for you, nobody's gonna miss you." After saying that, he chuckles to himself. I look at my new ID, memorize who I am.

He loads me into a van with nothing but the clothes on my back. I don't have a phone, wallet, keys, anything. Great. I'm in for a long car ride. But, a lot of stress is released off of my shoulders. At least nobody will come after me, the cops, the Mafia or anything. Nobody knows me anymore. The only person who knows me is Gordon. It's a new feeling, with a strange sense of freedom. I can be whoever I want to be and do what I want to do.

Chapter 3.5: Calm after the storm

October 29, 2011

My name is Wayne Ledger. I live in Whitefish, Montana. As of recently, I have been established in this small town, and I have begun to call Whitefish home. My life took a turn after I was hit by major trauma, about 1 month before today. I am grateful for the people who used to be in my life, and the people who brought me into this new life. I have received a care package, as you anticipated, from the man who brought me here. Although what we did together upset me, it brought me to where I am today, and I can be nothing but grateful for that.

I have changed my life from a hateful one to one of growth and self-improvement. Thank you for all the time we spent together, Marco. I believe

I owe you something. Attached is a \$1000 cash, although it is not even close to the amount of money you spent to get me here, I at least feel as though I should do my best to repay you. I will do the best of my ability to pay you back every single cent you gave me and more.

I sign Wayne Ledger, write the return address, stamp it, and write Marco's new name and address. Marco is the name I know him by now, even though it is no longer the one he goes by, Marco is who he truly is. In my heart, I still consider myself Seth, but I am a completely different person than I was a little more than a month ago. I open my front door, walked out to my mailbox, put the letter in the mailbox and flipped the flag up. When I first moved here, I actually didn't have a mailbox. It's a small detail, but I remember it. Apparently a sandstorm hit and swept away my mailbox.

It took me about 2 weeks to repair the mailbox. Actually, I didn't leave the house for a week. I only left to get food. I felt allergic to the outside. But when I finally went to the stores everything haunted me. The red just flashed me back to that exploding moment in my mind. After the cashier checked me out, though, she said "thank you for shopping with us today! Have a good day!" It wasn't about what she said, but it was about how she said it. She was so nice and welcoming.

I felt that I would finally be allowed to be here, and not like a stranger to these small town people. After that week, I took around 3 days to get all the materials to put a new mailbox on, and I put it in. I used a tutorial off of youtube, and it was surprisingly simple. The mailbox wasn't really important to me, but I felt that it was important for me to leave. My thoughts told me it would be best for me to stay inside, but I craved to get out. To see someone. To become the investigator-no-the sheriff that I always wanted to become. After I did the mailbox I started to roam around town more often. Word of mouth got around about me and I met a lot of locals. Some of them were cold to me, reasonably because I am an 'implant' but everyone I had a conversation with welcomed me with open arms to their town.

After mailing my letter to Marco, I walk back inside my home. In my closet I find my favorite outfit, the one that Gordon gave me to help me fit in in Whitefish. It consists of some bootcut Wrangler Jeans, which I always hated, but wearing them now makes me feel badass. A red flannel shirt, buttoned up. Cowboy boots, and a big cowboy hat. The cowboy hat covers part of my face when I walk around. It only shows my nose, cheeks, mouth, and stubble. I used to hate shaving, and when I moved here I stopped because I didn't want to be recognized by anyone. My house is just outside of town, about a quarter mile walk. I don't have a car yet, I don't feel like I need one. I leave my house and walk into town.

As I arrive in downtown Whitefish, I enter the police station. Gordon found a way to change my degree and references, and after finding out that I used to be an officer in Manhattan, they offered me a job. Of course I accepted, because I wouldn't have to deal with the big city like I did at my old job. I like working in Whitefish. My badge is a large 8 pointed star, and I wear it proudly on the pocket of my flannel. My associate who introduced me to town and told me everything I know about Whitefish, Ryder, approaches me.

"Hey, we need to split up today. Someone robbed a train and is supposedly hiding in Whitefish. You probably have seen, but he's wanted dead or alive, the reward being \$20,000" He says to me.

"Holy shit. I'm doing my best to track him down right this minute."
I storm out of there, holstering my revolver but putting it off safety, just in case I need to act fast.

I ran around town, searching all over for him. By the time I've searched the whole town, ground to roof on every building, the wind is blowing against my dry skin. I am starving by now. Sitting on a bench, I pull out a sandwich from my pocket that I've been saving all day. Eating it, I look around and admire my surroundings. I love the mountains. I would like to climb a mountain one day, if I ever make it to that point. Living in Montana has given me a new perspective on life, and just living it. I feel that each fleeting moment has something positive

to look for, and that my surroundings can be admired no matter where I am. I regret never taking advantage of city life. Sometimes I wish I could go back to Manhattan, or any city. But as I've heard from my letters back and forth with Marco, you can't go into a big city anymore. The mafia has eyes on everyone and everything.

I'm okay with that, though. I think I've become completely content with wherever I am. Nature puts me at peace. I would like to go camping or hiking in the mountains one day, but I know I'll never buy any camping gear or a tent. I like the climate here in Montana. It's cool, but a lot more dry than New York was. I imagined Montana to be a flat, dry, desert but it has mountains, it's beautiful. I love this place, I think, unless something bad happens, this may be where I settle. Since moving here I've been happier than ever, and I regret being the person who I used to be. I was hated by everyone. Anyways, I think that for today the case has gone cold.

Arriving back at home, I turn on the TV. Flipping through the channels mindlessly. This life is a slow, but enjoyable one. I only have a flip phone to my name. I flip to a dumb black and white western cartoon. I struggle to follow the story, and as I watch this I slowly... fall... asleep.

Chapter 4: Cloudburst

October 30, 2011

The rain has started up again. I find it unpleasant. Not only do my suits get wet, but as of late it has reminded me of Seth. I've missed him. He doesn't have any signs recently of him showing up, and it scares me. I hope he's okay. I hope he disappeared to some far off state so the Mafia could never get to him. Although they're new, the Capertishia family can be scary. Especially Tom and Talia. They're not people to be messed with. Sitting on my bed and staring at my reflection in my headboard mirror, I feel sorrow. Crying is something I shouldn't do as a man, but lately I can't help myself. As a tear swells up in my eye,

Ring Ring *Ring Ring* *Ring Ring* "Hello?" I answer

"Austin I expect to see you in the boardroom today. An hour and a half on the dot." Tom says, hanging up the phone instantly.

I shower, shave, and brush my teeth in 10 minutes. I put on my favorite suit. A purple velvet button up, light gray blazer and suit pants, and some of my regular dress shoes. I run down the stairs of my studio apartment building and enter my car. I put on the daily podcast and listen to some people talk. As always, nothing important happens around town since Seth has gone, at least nothing I care about. I want to try to track Seth down, but I don't think I can. Driving past his street in the slums is painful. I know he must be struggling right now, but I really truly hope he's doing well. I go to my normal parking garage. I have about 10 minutes to get to the conference room.

I look over the balcony of the parking garage, examining the door. They have made it look like a fancy hotel now, which is weird for the slums. The building stands out but if you go inside they tell you they only accept certain clients at their hotel. You need to have confirmation to go inside or use a passphrase to go inside. The door is a push door that spins when you open it, being glass and lined with gold lining. The inner carpet is a red velvet material, the walls are velour and the room is as fancy as can be. I live in a nice apartment, and this is unfathomable. The hotel has a strong smell of eucalyptus and nicotine. A really weird mix, but I guess they light candles to get rid of the smell of cigars.

Walking to the elevator, I click floors 3,5, and 8. When you click these floors you are brought to floor 13, which is not on the list of floors. Entering floor 13, there is a conference room with a padlock. To go inside, the security guards outside the room have to let you in with confirmation of each member inside.

Entering the room, I am filled with a terrifying aura. Each and every chairperson has a menacing stare. Tom and I are no longer friends, only creatures that pass by each other in business. These people are nothing more than criminals. I am too, but I got wrapped in the wrong business.

“Austin. I’ll have you know we’re not happy with the work you’re doing. If you don’t track down anyone related to that Seth friend of yours, there will be severe consequences. Not termination, but you will be killed. We will slit your throat, and anyone who knows you. So find someone who can tell us where he is. Or else.” Talia says to me.

Wh-what.. So it’s me or him, I guess. I need to choose. I can’t believe this.. How will I be able to...

“I understand, ma’am. I will do my best.”

I reply, exiting the room and beelining it for my car. Before I leave, the receptionist tells me to come closer to her. She whispers in my ear,

“Austin I heard them talking the other day. They’re planning on ‘eliminating’ you before the end of the week if you don’t ‘carry out your assignment’. I didn’t tell you anything, okay?”

I shake my head yes and walk back to my car. Sitting in my car I get a call from a number marked UNKNOWN. A familiar voice speaks to me when I answer the phone, sounding much more confident than I’ve ever heard. It’s Seth. He tells me he misses me and all his bar friends back home and asks if everything is okay for me. “Yeah. Everything is good. Well, kinda. Some people I’m involved with want to kill me. I need the name of the person or the company who helped you disappear. I need to disappear too.” I say into the phone, leaning on my car because I’m almost 100 percent sure the inside of my car has a wire. “Okay, well you can’t let anyone know it was me. He can make you disappear in a day. Don’t bring any belongings with you, they’ll get destroyed. Give your house keys to a family member. His office is in the outskirts of New York state. I’ll text you the address. Destroy your phone after this so the people you are involved with don’t know you made contact with me.” He hangs up, it sounds like Seth is more than okay. Good.

Immediately after, a number with the (406) area code messages me. It's a name and an address. Someone named 'Gordon' 434 Ridgedale Ave #436, East Hanover, NJ 07936 is the address. 406... I go on my phone and search up where the '406' area code is from. Montana. That means that Seth is living in Montana! Maybe I can track him down. I get in my car and rev the engine. Hell yes. I finally got more information. I drive over to the address he sent for me, almost getting lost a few times but, in the end, still making it there.

The way to 'Gordons' was a reflective drive. All of the things me and Seth have done for each other. All of the times we spent together felt like they... got cut short. I wish he would come back to Manhattan. The group just isn't the same, especially since Tom stopped coming. After finding out that Seth was the one they were tracking down and that he fled the State, Tom was enraged. He spent almost a full week angry. He stopped coming to the bar, stopped going anywhere except working on finding Seth and spending all of his days in the conference room.

Since Seth disappeared everything just seems to feel a little more cloudy. More hopeless, I spend my days feeling as if he never came back. I actually thought that he died and Tom covered it up for a little while, but getting the call from Tom this morning lowered my suspicion, and it was confirmed that everything was okay for Seth. I'd like to imagine that he moved to some small town, tracked down some criminal and became a local hero. That he turned his life around, that he wasn't a depressed asshole anymore. I mean, hearing him talk was insane to me, because that was the happiest I've ever heard him sound.

While cruising on the freeway I look around. Cars, and people, everywhere. When you really, truly, think about it, one life being taken doesn't matter. In the grand scheme of things there's about, what 7 billion people on earth? Yeah we hit 7 billion this year. I believe I saw it on the news the other day. 7 Billion people, and how does my life matter? Would it be worth it to sacrifice

my life for Seth? Maybe. If I disappeared like Seth did, the Mafia would track Gordon down, though. Then Gordon might give up where Seth is, or anyone else he's hid from the Mafia or police. The illusion of choice, live or die?

On one side of the coin, I live, getting away from the city of Manhattan but seemingly everyone I care about can die. On the other side of the coin, I die, but that doesn't ensure anyone's safety, they could do the same either way. This situation seems like a lose-lose to me. I guess I'll have to leave it to a coin toss. I pull out a coin from the pocket of my blazer, and flip it. The coin flies in the air, but right before hitting the ground, it slides backwards under my seat. Shit. It's fine, I'm right here anyways. I take exit 12B, pulling into the parking lot of this place.

This place is shady. The windows are boarded up, the sign having 2 or 3 letters falling off. I get out of the car and crouch down, looking under the seat. The coin landed on its side. I could flip it again, but also... I could do both. I could both live and die. Now that I think about it, that really is the best option. I ran inside the building. "Are you Gordon?"

"No, but I can take you into his office, come with me!" The kind-spoken, pretty woman says to me

Entering the back office, I see the walls lined with vintage-looking wallpaper. The office looks old, but well kept. A large safe is contained to the side of a long desk. A camera with a large X in front of it is there. A skinny, tall looking man with a similar build to Seth, from what I remember, stands up from the desk.

"Good afternoon, I'm Gordon. A friend of mine told me to expect you. What can I do for you?"

"I don't need to disappear. I just wanted to... confirm something." I reply, walking out of his office slowly. As I exit the building, I press speed dial.

"I got him. He'll be at 434 Ridgedale Ave #436, East Hanover, NJ 07936." I close my phone, returning it to my inner blazer pocket and shutting my car door.

Gordon runs out of the door, almost reaching for me as I speed away. It is much too late for him. As I pull out from the parking lot, the coin slips out from under my driver's seat. It landed on tails. Well, it's too late to use the coin to decide, though. I picked my option, option number 3. I picked the Mafia. Loyalty will keep me alive and I learned my lesson with the Capertishia family. The drive back takes a while, but I arrive at home safely. Parking in my apartment's parking lot, I open the door of my car, slamming it shut and walking into my apartment building.

I don't feel particularly proud of what I've done, but I don't feel shameful either. In a way, I feel... apathetic. I don't even strip off my suit before laying in my bed. Today has been a long day and I'm exhausted. It's only 7 PM and I'm already tired. I drift off to sleep.

My dream is a dream with heavy rain. I'm inside of an abandoned building and I see Seth in front of me. He condemns me for what I did. Tell me i'm a horrible friend and person that after he tried to help me I just went back and betrayed him. I'm swaying back and forth just absorbing everything he says to me.

I awake to water being splashed in my face

"Wake up!" Is screamed into my ear. A semi-familiar voice is cloaked but a hooded figure only shows the man's eyes. Looking down at my arms, they are dripping with blood. A pool of stained blood is below me. As I'm looking around, memorizing my surroundings, I realize I'm strapped down. I can't move anything except my neck. To my right, I see Gordon. He is covered in bruises. He must be out by now. I wonder what he's said to Tom.

"So Austin.. Guess what I heard?" He beckons me in a maniacal voice, seeming to enjoy my pain and torture

"I heard that you got a phone call today! One from a little friend of ours who disappeared..." He pulls out my phone in front of me and dials the number who texted me Gordon's address

"So.. Seth. Wayne Ledger. Whatever you wanna call this little character of yours, I don't care. Just know that I have your little friends in the abandoned building where all of this began. You have 12 hours before I slit their throats open" He lets out a long, hysterical laugh, shaking me to my core. I get a chill down my spine. The smell and aura of this basement were overwhelming before, but they've seemed to disappear because of all my focus on Tom.

I think this is the end for me

Chapter 5: Hail

October 30, 2011

The sound of ringing echoes through the payphone into my ear. I hope this call goes well, I miss him, I wonder what he's like now. "Hey Austin. I just wanted to call to make sure everything's okay. I miss you and all of our friends back home, you know? And if you ever need help let me know" I say quickly into the phone "Yeah. Everything is good. Well, kinda. Some people I'm involved with want to kill me. I need the name of the person or the company who helped you disappear. I need to disappear too." He replies. I give him the typical spiel that Gordon gave me, just telling him not to bring any belongings. Or he'll lose them for good. I hung up the phone.

It's risky, but I text him with my real phone. I text him the address and the name of the guy who can make you disappear. How did Austin get involved with the mafia? Damn. Although I care about Austin, I need to get back on the case. I can't sit around texting or calling him. We've gotten pretty close to catching the train robber today but we haven't quite caught him yet. I think I know exactly where he ran off to. I entered the saloon, chatting it up with the barkeeper as usual. "Hey, uhh barkeep, can I use your can? I gotta go pretty bad. You know how it is, workin, day drinkin"

"Yeah, of course. Down the hall, the one on the left."

He replies to me. I stand up from the bar stool, turn to my right and walk up the stairs, removing my revolver slowly from its holster.

As I reach the top step, I peak around the wall covering the rest of the room. A man is sitting on the ground, seemingly hiding from everyone who tries to enter. He jumps up and points his gun at me right as I enter. I dodge, shooting him in the leg and knocking him to the ground. I charge him and remove his gun from him. Grabbing his wrists, I handcuff them together and slowly walk him down the stairs.

“Don’t test me. I’m gonna take this guy you hid up here, take him down to my station, and you’ll be innocent. Now if you try anything else, I will shoot you. I’m holding my revolver in my left and your little friend in my right. So try me.” I yell at him from the hallway.

“I understand.” He yells back.

I exit the Saloon slowly, pointing the gun at the bartender. As I enter the station, I see everyone waiting for me. How did they already hear? We put the train robber in jail and I got my \$20,000 reward. Nice! I get the day off, since I caught him. It’s only about a 10 minute walk from my house, so I decided on just going home. Entering my house, I see a banner streamed across the ceiling that says “Welcome home, Sheriff In Red!” I smile a big smile about it.

The people at my party treat me like the hometown hero. I don’t even really care about the cash, I’m excited to be the hero. The Sheriff In Red. I’m settling into the party, people are watching TV, eating snacks and drinking the fizzy soda someone brought over. I can’t believe they gave me a surprise party. I sit down at my counter and let out a sigh of relief. Gladly, it only took about a day to get the train robber, but the more important part is that I’m accepted by the town. I guess I’ll go down as a local legend... The Sheriff In Red. I hang out, basking in my own glory. By now it’s... What? It’s 5 PM already? As I ponder about the time, I get a call on my phone from Austin. That’s weird, I didn’t think he’d call me from his main phone. It’s, what 8 over on the East coast? Weird time to call, but maybe he’s with Braxton or something. Or maybe he wanted to tell me he made it away from the city safe, yeah that’s gotta be it.

“So.. Seth. Wayne Ledger. Whatever you wanna call this little character of yours, I don’t care. Just know that I have your little friends in the abandoned building where all of this began. You have 12 hours before I slit their throats open” The phone hangs up. A somewhat familiar voice answered the phone. It’s someone I know, definitely not Austin but someone I know. I drop to my knees, a feeling of despair overwhelms me. So Austin is going to die?

I think this is the end for Austin.

Speeding to the airport, I pull up and jump out of my car. They can tow it if they want, I don't care. I ran up to the counter, gasping for breath, "One ticket... To Manhattan." I remove 500 from the \$20,000 I just received and hand it to her.

"Thank you, sir! Here is your ticket. Your flight will take about 5 and a half hours. Please have a safe flight!"

I check through screening and barely make it on to my flight. My leg is shaking from stress. I don't even know if I'll make it to Manhattan without dying. My first time on a plane, I wish I could admire being on a plane, way in the sky. Sadly, this trip isn't recreational. I find my seat, sit down and buckle my seatbelt. I've brought nothing with me on this trip other than \$20, well \$19 and a half thousand dollars. I close my eyes, trying to rest but nothing comes of it. The feeling of leaving the ground is strange, I can feel the wind hitting beneath my feet. The plane feels almost flimsy and strong at the same time. I continue to close my eyes and try to go to sleep, but to no avail. About 30 minutes into my flight, the longest 30 minutes of my life, a flight attendant approaches me.

"Hello sir, would you like anything off of this menu?"

I gently take the menu out of her hand, looking over it for about 30 seconds and deciding on what I want.

"I'll have a grilled chicken sandwich on white bread. lettuce, mayo, and chicken on the sandwich."

She walks away and comes back swiftly with my sandwich. I take a bit out of it and it reminds me of everything before this even started. I used to eat a chicken sandwich like this every day before work. Last time I remember eating it was, well maybe a day or two before everything happened. The night after that man died in the abandoned building. A tear begins to swell up in my eye and stream down my face. I put my head down and cover my eyes, my tears seemingly falling faster and faster from my eyes. I begin to sob, the waterworks from my eyes flowing intensely like the rain on that fateful day. I have not experienced rain in so long, maybe a sprinkle of rain, or the extremely unpleasant hail that Montana gets. but nothing like those days.

Arriving in Manhattan, I can hear the storm hitting the roof of the airplane. The rain has the same moisture as I remember. The same sound I grew to love. I stand up, walking to the tarmac and am the first to exit the plane. It has a moist feeling and a strong smell of rain. As I walk out of the tarmac and into the airport, I remove my phone from my pocket, and call myself a cab. "A cab. Last name Ledger." The airport is huge, I look out of one of the massive windows to the heavy rain. There have been multiple flight delays because of the weather. Before exiting the airport, I make one more quick call. I may have to take a nuclear approach.

Chapter 6: Drenched

October 31, 2011,

My plane landed about a half hour ago. The taxi company called me and said that because of the traffic, the taxi may take a while. Strange to me though, even though it is an airport all of the traffic is dead, the area is silent; and, for what seems like the first time in years, it is not a constant rain. The rain has actually completely stopped. Although the asphalt is still drenched, I am not. I am clutching a medium-sized paper bag, and as the taxi arrives I stuff it into my coat pocket. I consider this more of a safety measure than anything, but right now my odds are million-to-one. And with this, my odds for survival may go up one thousandth of a percent. The taxi is strange looking, the decals look brand new, and the taxi looks different from how I remember this service's taxis looking. Must be a new branding. The taxi stops right in front of me, the front windows are tinted with what's definitely an illegal tint.

Stepping inside the taxi, I notice the extreme cleanliness. It's unusual for a taxi. The man driving the taxi begins to inch forward before beckoning me, without looking back at me or even making acknowledgement that I am behind him, he says "So, where are we heading?" He has a hardened voice which I think for a second that I've heard before, but then I realize I definitely haven't. I read the address aloud, and he lets out a small chuckle before driving. I continue to clutch the brown paper bag in my coat pocket, basically putting my hand inside of it by now. Something about the driver I just.. Can't trust. I feel a goosebump on my arm and, looking into the driver's mirror, I realize this man is staring directly at me. Almost like he's piercing through me this, menacing stare. For a second, time seems to pause. I realize and feel everything around me. My senses almost extremely heightened. I feel the brown paper in the paper bag drying my hand out. I can smell the smell of dried out cleaning products, which makes me realize why this car seemed so unusually clean. Something about this taxi isn't right.

I remove the second item from the bag, holding it in my right hand at an angle that the taxi driver can't see. I'm unsure what's in the bag, but I have a kind of rough idea. I look down at the item. It is a hunting knife with an insanely sharp point. This could easily rip through the hardest bone in the body. It's almost menacing just to hold it, but I understand what I have to do. We're about a turn away from the street when I realize who it is. The man who got me into all this trouble. Although I never knew his name, I know who he is. He is the man who ruined Seth. He is the man who got me into all this trouble. He is the one I met at the abandoned building. The man who orchestrated the destruction of my life and ordered my death. I lunge forward, pulling the knife from my side and slitting his throat from behind. His blood runs down his throat and stains his fancy suit.

I jump forward and slam on the brakes, they screech loudly. I've clearly let anyone who's after me let them know I'm coming. I turn the car off, leaving it in the middle of the street. I return the knife to the brown paper bag I got it from. Then, I remove his wallet from his coat pocket and look at his I.D his name is Stanley. Throwing the doors open, I drag him by his wrist. We are at the corner of the abandoned building. His blood seems to make a trail on the sidewalk. I bring his body inside, dragging it to the back of the building into an open door with a large red arrow spray painted towards it. I run my head inside the door and there is a long set of stairs leading to a metal door. I look around a little longer and find a place that I can hide. I drag the body of the man whose life I just ended to the top of the stairs, dropping it with a simple push. I hear his body thump against the stairs and he tumbles. His head hits the metal door extremely loud and no matter how thick those walls are, I know someone heard it.

Two people, most likely bodyguards, come upstairs. They agree to split up and I can hear one approach the stairs. He is heavy footed, I would be able to hear him walking from a mile away. The other one walks quietly, but I can hear his breath inching closer to me. I approach him quickly and hold my knife to his throat, not intending to use it. I murmur into his ear in the quietest voice possible.

"I'm going to do something, okay? I want you to go down there and talk to your boss or whoever you work for. I will kill you faster than you can blink if you try to test me. I am going to go upstairs and talk to your associate while you go downstairs and distract anyone else down there."

He shakes his head yes, basically running down the stairs. I hear the metal door open and then slam shut. I walk slowly up the stairs and before he can even turn around, I murder the associate. I leave his body exactly where he was, the blood staining my jeans. The splatter of blood from the short stubby man was a lot, but the splatters of blood have become much bigger now. Now that it's safe, I examine the inside of the brown paper bag. The man I bought it from gave me a hunting knife, already covered in blood from my 2 kills, and a revolver. I removed the revolver from the paper bag, putting it in my holster. I walk down to the top of the basement stairs and stare down at the metal door. The associate I threatened earlier lying on the inside on top of a pool of blood right by the door, I can see him through the small window in the upper middle of the metal door.

I stare down at the metal door, knowing that this may be the end for me, but it could be the end for an evil Mafia family. The words "this is a warning call. The Mafia is after you." continuously echo through my head. I count slowly from 60. 59. 58. 57. 56. 55. 54. 53. 52 51. 50. 49, 48, I run out of patience. I charge the metal door, pushing past the bodies. I hold my revolver in my right hand, Entering the basement, it has multiple doors. I hear muffled screaming, almost like someone is being held hostage. I enter the door to the far right, the one where the volume is coming from.

I walk quietly in the room, but when I enter I see two people who aren't alarmed by my presence. A man, with an extremely strong build and medium length black hair, and a woman with a scary look in her eye. They are both unarmed from what I can see. They are standing in front of a metal door with a small, boxy window on it almost identical to the one outside. The woman speaks to me.

“Good morning Wayne. We've been expecting you here. So you have some optio-” I pierce the bullet through her skull, not even caring what she has to say. The man next to her immediately charges me. The strong man charges me, instantly knocking me to the ground and holding his forearm against my throat. I remove the knife from my coat and stab him in the throat. He removes the knife and snaps it in two, he begins to stand up and pull himself together. I charge him, putting him against the wall. A vein pops out in his head, and he begins to scream at the top of his lungs. “This isn't over. We will fight this fight forever.” He says to me, his vocal chords being almost ripped out by my arm against his throat. I remove my revolver and put it in his mouth, firing it with no remorse.

I drop my revolver to the ground as his heavy body lets out a loud thump on the concrete floors. The blood must be permanently stained in my clothes by now. My clothes are drenched in blood. I step towards the metal door, shut by a lock. I look through the small, boxy window and see an old man. Old man Tom. The man from the bar... the voice on the phone... the man who was behind it the entire time. I see him remove a blood-stained chainsaw from a long wall of torture devices. He fires up the chainsaw with a pull of a switch. Two people are laying on tables, tables almost like you'd find at the dentist's office. Austin and Gordon. He uses the chainsaw and saws Austin's head off, looking at the window and making direct eye contact with me. He walks slowly back to his wall of tools, with a psychopathic smile on his face. He removes a scalpel from the wall and walks towards Gordon, He forces Gordon's mouth open and shoves the scalpel down his throat. He screams and I look away, only hearing the sound of him choking on his own blood.

I drop to the ground, searching the body of the woman, then the man looking for the key. The key was around the man's neck attached to what looked like a chain. I force the key into the keyhole and throw the door open. I inch towards Tom, backing him into a corner.

“I see you've already gotten to Talia and Wiche. Stanley's plan failed too? And I assume you left the bodies of my bodyguards upstairs?”

I kick his leg down, leaving him in a sitting position, leaving him leaning against the walls that were already stained with blood. I punch him in the face leaving him with a bloody nose. His old body can't take a punch? I thought a psychopathic Mafia leader would be stronger than this.

"So, at the end of the day you win, don't you?"

He says to me, his voice slowly becoming quieter until it's a whisper. We make eye contact and the look he gives me shows me that he knows this is the end for him. I kick him in the throat, he spits up blood and it continues to drip from his mouth. He looks up at me with despair.

cough "I'll see you in hell, Seth." Thomas speaks, breathing his last breaths

"Seth died a long time ago."

I stomp his head in. This is the end of Thomas' legacy.