

"Operation Home Base"

by
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EXT. SMALL HOUSE ON A LAKE: DAY

Greenery and fences limit visual access around the homes, giving the residents a sense of privacy; however, the beach connects the homes like a hub of a wheel, creating a sense of community around the lake. Dressed in dark wet suits, two figures slip out of the patio doors of a two-story house. Expertly they make their way to the beach toward the dock. In the back yard of the house on the left, two small children play with their dog. Their mother watches a few feet away, while she hangs laundry on the line. The figures stop just out of her line of vision. The phone next door rings. The woman quickly runs into the house. Once the woman is out of sight, the couple silently walk into the water. Putting on their air tanks, they vanish beneath the surface. Moments later, the woman reemerges from the house.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE: DAY

Through the patio doors the glow of flame can be seen flickering from deeper within the house. Smoke begins to accumulate.

INT. SMALL HOUSE: DAY

Moving through the kitchen to the living room, the smoke becomes more intense. Lying on a couch, a prone male figure in his early 20's is being engulfed in flames. An empty Jack Daniels bottle lies on an angle beside him.

EXT. OPERATION HOME BASE: DAY

Operation Home Base has been stenciled on the front window. It is a simple building over looking a quiet side street. Although it is well maintained, the building has seen better days. The parking lot beside it is nearly full. A WOMAN PUSHING a TODDLER in a stroller walks out of the parking lot to the front door. She goes inside.

INT. OPERATION HOME BASE: DAY

The room is cramped and cluttered with every inch being used as efficiently as possible. The mismatched chairs in the front of the window are full of people waiting for help. More people stand, reading the bulletin boards on the wall. DENISE O'DELL SITS behind an old

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desk, talking on the phone. The woman with the stroller walks in and to Denise. Denise hangs up the phone, she sees WALTER HUMMEL WALK past the front window toward the front door with another man. Walter walks in. The man with him, DEACON (DEEK) WILLIAMS WALKS passed the door. Denise reaches for the phone and dials.

DENISE
(to the woman)
Just sec.

Smiling, Walter walks up; he takes the receiver from her hand and returns it to the cradle.

WALTER
Don't bother. Let it be a
surprise.

Walter continues toward the back. Immediately, Denise picks up the phone and dials

DENISE
(Nervously speaks in to
the receiver)
Walter Hummel's here. He's on
his way back.

The room beyond has desks with volunteers helping people fill out paperwork. Three doors on the right lead to small rooms. A doorway in the back leads down a hallway and to the staff offices. The conference room is at the end. The door is slightly open.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM: DAY

The room has three windows that over looking a small fenced in grassy area. Several children amuse themselves in a make shift playground. They can be heard laughing through the windows. There is a large old table with mismatched chairs around it. At the end of the room there is a small table with a phone on top and office supplies stored below. MARTIN FLYING CROW SITS on the ledge in front of the window. MICHAEL WOODSMAN SITS in one of the chairs with his feet propped up on the corner of the table. ELAINE REYNOLDS SITS at the opposite end of the table. LORELEI STEWART SITS across from Mike, drumming her fingers. Each has a stack

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of folders in front of them as well as note pads. The open folder with the contract with the government is in front of Elaine.

ELAINE

(Hanging up the phone)
Walter's here for our decision.
I'm inclined to accept.

MARTIN

(Angrily)
The son of a bitch can't be
trusted!

Martin bangs the table with his fist. The vibration causes Michael's coffee to spill over the sides of the cup. Michael tries to save his paperwork.

MICHAEL

We got it already. You hate the
guy. Chill.

MARTIN

(Sarcastic)
Weren't you the one who wanted
to shoot him the last time?

MARTIN

I got over it.

ELAINE

When did this happen?

LORELEI

I have to admit. It's too good
to pass up. With the troops
coming back, the need will be
even greater.

ELAINE

I was thinking the same thing.
But it has to be unanimous. We
created OHB together. It works
for all of us or the answer is
no.

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MARTIN

We'd be making a deal with the devil.

ELAINE

Then we turn it down.

MARTIN

We started Operation Home Base because we saw a need and wanted to help.

INT. OUTSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM DOOR: DAY

Unseen by those inside, Walter listens at the door.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM: DAY

MARTIN

It's not just those who serve who need help, but those who love them.

LORELEI

Martin, what are you saying?

MARTIN

I saying, they are worth it. I'll barter whatever soul I have left to make sure there isn't one more like me.

Elaine walks to him and hugs him. Allows her to embrace him, but doesn't reciprocate.

INT. OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM: DAY

Walter continues to listen at the door with a mixture of emotions.

LORELEI

(Off camera)

When Robert was killed, we got a medal and a flag. They wouldn't tell us how or why. I was an Army brat. I understood. My

(MORE)

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LORELEI (cont'd)
children didn't. They still
don't.

MICHAEL
(Off camera)
I did my best.

LORELEI
(Off camera)
I know. We may never know the
truth.

ELAINE
(Off camera)
Shall we vote?

MARTIN
(Off camera)
No need.
(To Walter from inside
the conference room)
Hummel, you can come in. You
have a deal.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM: DAY

Walter walks in with a flourish and looks around.

WALTER
You always did have the most
amazing hearing. Are you going
to do it?

Martin nods. Walter grabs his hand and shakes, while
his other hand slaps Martin on the back; the force is
enough to push Martin out of the way.

WALTER
Have you signed the contract yet?

As Walter releases Martin's hand, he walks to Elaine.
Martin counts his fingers.

(To Martin)
Don't worry they're all there.

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MARTIN

There's one I'd love to give you.

WALTER

I'm sure there is.

(Offering Elaine a pen)
Elaine, as beautiful as ever.

ELAINE

(taking the contract)
Not yet.

WALTER

We're going to do great things together! It's also no secret that the system is broken. That's why we created the program. Too many have been falling through the cracks.

MICHAEL

Wow! A politician admitting a mistake without a Congressional hearing. There is a God.

ELAINE

What is this Government Advocate position?

WALTER

It's not what you think. You will have total control over your departments. The Advocate will control the rest. Consider him the tie breaking vote. Like the Vice President in the Senate.

ELAINE

The rest of what?

WALTER

The other departments. Legal Aid. The Casualty team. Red Cross Liaison. He will run the office.

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MICHAEL

A glorified office manager?

WALTER

You don't understand how big this is. You make this work here and every state in the union will have its own Operation Home Base. There will be no more cracks for anyone to fall through.

The team looks questioningly at one another.

LORELEI

We have complete control of our departments?

WALTER

That's what the contract says.

MICHAEL

A politician?

WALTER

Better. He knows how to get things done. Everything's all set. Agree and you can start today.

ELAINE

What's the hurry?

WALTER

Hurry? Don't you think this is past due?

They hesitate. Elaine looks from Walter to the contract in front of her, taking a moment to decide. She picks up the pen and signs it before pushing it across the table.

ELAINE

I'm in.

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LORELEI

Me too.

Michael also hesitates. He looks to Martin. Martin turns away. Michael scans the contract and signs it.

MICHAEL

If it doesn't work, we can always start over.

WALTER

(Taking the contract)
Not a ringing endorsement, but I'll take it. Flying Crow?

Martin looks out the window. Walter walks up behind him with the contract.

MARTIN

I don't trust you.

WALTER

(Holds out the contract)
Are you going to make the wounded warriors suffer because you can't let go of the past?

MARTIN

(Slowly turning around)
If this is another trick-

WALTER

It's straight up.

Martin takes the contract. For a moment, it looks like he is going to tear it up. Instead, he signs it.

MARTIN

If I regret this, I promise that you will regret it more.

Walter holds out his hand to Martin. Martin walks around him toward the door.

I'll make the announcement.

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Martin leaves. Walter signs the contract and tucks into the inner pocket of his suit jacket.

WALTER

Now that the formalities are out of the way. I need you to start now. There was a house fire with a death at Gunnery Sergeant Matt Thompson and his wife. His son was killed. It's listed as suspicious. The NCIS team is already on scene.

LORELEI

I arranged safe haven for his daughter-in-law and grandson early this morning.

WALTER

Rumor has it. They think she did it.

LORELEI

I need to get out there.

ELAINE

What Deputy Sheriff caught the call?

WALTER

Donald McCloud. Heard of him?

MICHAEL

Everyone in the country knows that jackass.

ELAINE

According to Larry, he isn't liked at the station either.

WALTER

(Confused)
What's his deal?

ELAINE

He has a grudge against the
(MORE)

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ELAINE (cont'd)
Marines. Especially the Gunny.
He was the one who turned him
down.

MICHAEL
(sarcastically)
Uncle Sheriff hired him to keep
the streets safe.

LORELEI
Ever since he has gone out of
his way to make life miserable
for military personnel and the
families.

MICHAEL
Last year he sued to get
military housing. He claimed
after 9-11, law enforcement was
on par with military personnel.
He wanted the same housing
benefits.

WALTER
He wasn't taken seriously.

MICHAEL
He was laughed out of the courts.

WALTER
Good thing I sent the Advocate
team ahead.

MICHAEL
Advocate?

WALTER
(Walking toward the
door.)
He arrived this morning. Did I
forget to mention it? Silly me.

Walters exits. The others look as if they have just
been had.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SMALL HOUSE ON THE LAKE: DAY
Deputies tape off what's left of the house and the yard. A few neighbors are still watching from across the street. Deputies are loading the body into the back of the Coroner's van.

GUNNERY SERGEANT MATT THOMPSON and his wife, SARAH STAND near one of the patrol cars. A woman walks across the street, carrying bottled water to them. Deputy 1 intercepts her.

A silver SUV pulls up and parks just outside the activity behind the NCIS vehicle. Deek gets out of the driver's side. RANDI CULLEN EXITS from the passenger side. Deputy 1 intercepts them as they walk toward the house.

DEPUTY #1
Go back to your vehicle.

DEEK
Operation Home Base. We're here to help the Thompsons.

DEPUTY #1
I said go back to your vehicle.

RANDI
(Pulling out her ID)
Randi Cullen. Prosecutor's office.

DEPUTY #1
Deputy McCloud's orders. No one is to talk to the prisoners.

DEEK
What are they charged with?

RANDI
Prisoners? No charges have come from my office. There's no crime until someone from Prosecutor's office says there is. That would be me.

Deputy 1 continues to block their path.

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RANDI (cont'd)

Get out of our way or you'll be facing disciplinary action.

Randi pushes past him and walks to the Thompsons. Deek smiles as he saunters past.

DEPUTY 1

Aren't you embarrassed to hide behind a woman's skirts?

DEEK

Aren't you embarrassed to have your ass kicked by her size six pumps?

Deek quickly catches up.

DEEK

You didn't quit?

RANDI

Yep. Wrote a real nice letter. George will get it tomorrow in the morning mail. When I found out who caught the case, I figured we'd need my badge for another day.

DEEK

Quick thinking. You won't be able to get away with it again.

RANDI

Won't have to. That'll be your job.

DEEK

I see how you are.

The woman with the water quickly walks up to them. Deputy 1 tries to intercept her again. Randi walks back to them.

RANDI

Problem?

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WOMAN

It isn't right.

DEPUTY 1

Go back to your house.

RANDI

What isn't right?

WOMAN

The deputies have kept them in the hot sun all afternoon. Several of us offered to let the deputies interview them in our homes. They threatened to arrest us.

RANDI

Is this true?

DEPUTY 1

I have my orders.

RANDI

Oh really? If the offer is still good, they'll be over in a few.

WOMAN

Of course! I live in the corner house.

RANDI

I'll tell them.

WOMAN

(holding out the bottles)
Would you please give it to them?

DEEK

Off course. I'm sure they'll appreciate your kindness.

WOMAN

They are good people.

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DEEK
I'm sure the Deputy
misunderstood.

The Deputy glares at him. The woman returns to her home.
They continue to walk toward the Thompsons.

DEEK
I know that look.

RANDI
What look is that?

The DEPUTY 2 approaches. Randi shows him her badge.

Where's Deputy McCloud?

DEPUTY 2
Interviewing the neighbor.

RANDI
Go get him.

DEPUTY 2
I was ordered to watch the
suspects.

RANDI
Now!

DEPUTY 2
Yes Ma'am.

Deputy 2 walks toward the neighbor's house.

DEEK
You're digging yourself deeper.

Randi pats him on the cheek and walks to the Thompsons.
DEPUTY DONALD MCCLLOUD angrily WALKS out of the
neighbor's house.

RANDI
Hi. I'm Randi Cullen. Your
neighbor brought these for you.
She's offered you safe haven
while we investigate.

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Deek gives them the drinks.

SARAH
Thank you.

MATT
Even if we knew where Anna Marie
was, we wouldn't tell you.

SARAH
She didn't hurt our son.

RANDI
Who says she did?

MCCLOUD
I did!

RANDI
(Flipping open her
badge.)
Whose is bigger?

McCloud glares at her.

(to the Thompsons)
It's my understanding that the
two of you have been kept out
here all afternoon without food
or water.

MATT
Yes Ma'am.

MCCLOUD
They refused to tell me the
location of daughter-in-law.

RANDI
You have my sincerest apologies.
That is not departmental
procedure. Your friend has
invited you to her home.

MCCLOUD
They aren't going anywhere until
I get answers.

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RANDI

I'll be over in a few minutes to talk to you.

The Thompsons hesitate. Randi steps between them and McCloud. They walk toward the house on the corner.

MCCLOUD

I was just doing my job.

RANDI

Give it a rest!

Randi and Deek's eyes meet. Deek snickers. Slowly Randi turns around and glares up at McCloud.

RANDI

Where is the NCIS team?

MCCLOUD

In the back. They'll be allowed inside when we're finished.

RANDI

McCloud, have you ever thought about what your next career will be? Never mind. You'll have plenty of time to think about what options you have left.

Pulling out her cell phone, Randi walks toward the back of the house. Deek starts to follow, but stops as if he is going to say something. Instead he laughs and continues.

EXT. BACK YARD OF HOUSE: DAY

Deek has caught up with Randi as they walk toward the team by the lake.

DEEK

You're digging yourself in deeper.

RANDI

Not so much.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

SPECIAL AGENT SIMON BEHAN WALKS to meet them, motioning for them to follow the edge of the property. The other member of his team remains at the shore.

RANDI

Simon. Has your wife popped the third one out yet?

SIMON

Any day now.

RANDI

Deek-Special Agent Simon Behan.
Simon-Deacon Williams.

DEEK

Call me Deek.

RANDI

What do we got?
(Teasing)
Did Deputy D-

SIMON

Don't go there. He's just doing his job. Before you ask. No he wouldn't let us examine the crime scene. We were able to snap a few pictures through the window. The crispy critter is Kenneth Thompson. 27. Dishonorably discharged.

DEEK

Marines?

SIMON

(Nods)

His wife, Anne Marie and his son, Kenny moved in with his parents when he was deployed. He moved in with them when he was discharged.

RANDI

Was it murder?

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CONTINUED

SIMON

Not sure about that. The coroner hasn't had a chance to do the autopsy. On the surface, it looks like he passed out and set himself on fire. The Deputy thinks he had help.

DEEK

Find anything to support either case.

SIMON

There aren't enough credible facts for me to have an opinion one way or another. We did find fresh fin prints the shore. We made casts.

DEEK

Someone testing their diving gear?

SIMON

Don't know. The Gunny and his wife are experienced divers. But so are most of the residents.

RANDI

Has the widow been notified?

SIMON

Not as far as I know. No one has been able to find her.

(Pointing the
neighbor's house)

Cheryl McManus said she heard another fight last night. The wife and the kid drove off with Sarah about two. The Gunny held his son back.

DEEK

Was that unusual?

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CONTINUED

SIMON

According to McManus, last night was louder than usual.

RANDI

Did she know why?

SIMON

(shaking his head)

Sarah Thompson returned alone the same time the bus was picking up the McManus son. Shortly after Matt and Sarah Thompson left. The son stood in the yard, screaming obscenities. Two hours later, McManus called the fire department. It was already engulfed by the time the trucks arrived.

DEEK

Just the four adults and the child living in the home?

SIMON

Yes. I have the rest of my team canvassing the rest of the remaining houses and shore.

Deek's cell phone rings. He answers it.

DEEK

(Into the phone)

Yep. We're behind the house. We'll be right there.

(To Randi and Simon)

We have trouble.

RANDI

Now what?

Deek runs toward the street, followed by Randi.

SIMON

(To the agent at the lake)

Stay here.

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Simon follows.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF BURNT HOUSE: DAY

Hummel is out the vehicle; Flying Crow and Lorelei are still attempting to get out; a deputy leans on the driver's door.

WALTER

Where are the Thompsons?

MCCLOUD

I'm not going to tell you again.
Get back in and get out of here.
This is an official crime scene.

WALTER

Do you know who I am?

MCCLOUD

I don't care.

MARTIN

We're not here to interfere. We
just want to help the Gunny and
his wife.

LORELEI

Just tell us where they are!

WALTER

I'll have your badge for this.

Led by Deek, Randi, Simon and Deek walk up from behind.

RANDI

I have a prior claim.

(teasing)

Hey, Flying Crow. You still owe
me dinner.

MARTIN

(seeing Deek)

Son of a bitch!

CONTINUED

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LORELEI

What?

MARTIN

What is he doing here?

WALTER

He is the Advocate.

MARTIN

What are you doing with him?

RANDI

Tell you later.

DEEK

Flying Crow, late as usual.

WALTER

Now, now. One battle at a time.
It seems the Deputy doesn't care
for Flying Crow.

DEEK

Is there anyone you do get along
with?

MARTIN

Your sister.

DEEK

No wonder her girlfriend has
been cranky.

MARTIN

Must be you. The three of us
get along quite nicely.

RANDI

Deputy, what's the problem?

MCCLOUD

They are interfering with my
investigation!

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DEEK

Now why do you have to be that way? Sure, Flying Crow is a cantankerous bastard. If there is a right way and a wrong way, he'll choose the wrong every time.

Stepping between the vehicle and the deputy, Deek opens the car door for Flying Crow and Lorelei. Martin quickly gets out. Deek pushes back the seat and helps Lorelei out. He closes the door.

In this case, he is just trying to do his job.

WALTER

Don't you just love reunions? They give you a warm fuzzy feeling.

LORELEI

I have the same feeling after eating really spicy food. Can we please drop the macho posturing long enough for someone to tell me where the Thompsons are?

MCCLLOUD

Sheriff McCloud ordered me to keep the crime scene secure until he arrives.

McCloud walks around the front of car and squares off with Deek.

Which means civilians stay behind the tape.

DEEK

(Amused)

You can't be serious.

RANDI

They are with me.

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DEEK

I'm trying to be reasonable.

MCCLOUD

I'm only following orders.

RANDI

Fine. You are ordered back to base.

MCCLOUD

The crime scene--

RANDI

Special Agent Behan and his team will take over. Their labs are better equipped than ours.

MCCLOUD

Since I'm no longer needed.

WALTER

Now that we're all playing nice. Where are the Thompsons?

McCloud motions to the other two deputies; all three leave together.

RANDI

The corner house. You can follow me. I was just going to talk to them.

MARTIN

Why is the prosecutor's office already interested?

RANDI

I don't work for the prosecutor's office any more.

LORELEI

I'll let you work this out among yourselves.

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WALTER
(to Lorelei)
I'm with you. Methinks I will
need plausible deniability in
the near future.

Lorelei and Walter walk toward the corner house.

SIMON
(backing toward the
house)
I don't need to hear this.
Thanks for the access.

DEEK
Let us know what you find.

SIMON
Will do.

Pulling out his phone, Simon turns and walks toward the house.

MARTIN
Randi, what are you talking
about?

RANDI
I quit.

DEEK
I made her an offer she couldn't
refuse.

RANDI
Oh, they won't be able match the
benefits Deek offered.

MARTIN
Benefits?

DEEK
Not that!

RANDI
Now that you mention it. That
would be fun too.

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DEEK
We're friends.

MARTIN
How good of a friend?

DEEK
A good friend. What do you care?

RANDI
(teasing)
A friend with excellent benefits.

Randi walks away.

MARTIN
These are good people.

DEEK
Unlike me. Or better said us.

MARTIN
I'm not going to let you get
them involved.

DEEK
People change.

MARTIN
Not that much.

DEEK
Do I need to remind you?

MARTIN
Go ahead. I did what I had to.
I didn't have a choice. You did.

DEEK
I chose the lesser of two evils.

INT. LIVING ROOM: DAY

Matt and Sarah Thompson sit on the sofa next to each other. Their half eaten meals sit on the coffee table in front of them.

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LORELEI

Why do they think she killed him?

MATT

We tried to tell him she
couldn't have.

SARAH

The deputy just kept twisting
our words. He kept saying he
had proof.

LORELEI

That was a lie. I picked up Anna
and her son from the hospital.
She called me after you left.

SARAH

Is she okay? She wouldn't let
me stay.

LORELEI

She'll be hurting for a long
time. I took them both to a
safe house. They've been there
ever since. I checked.

MATT

It's my fault. All of it.

RANDI

(walking in)

Why do you say that? Tell me
then never say it again.

Matt looks confused.

RANDI

Lorelei is your grief therapist.
I'm your attorney. Neither one
of us can repeat what you tell
us.

LORELEI

Aren't you the assistant
prosecutor?

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RANDI

Not any more. Don't ask. Where are the neighbor and Walter?

LORELEI

I asked them to leave while we talked.

RANDI

Good. Gunny, why do you feel responsible?

SARAH

(taking Matt's hand)

It's just as much my fault. When we found out Anna Marie was pregnant, we asked Ken to do the right thing. That's how we raised him.

MATT

He wouldn't unless I agree to ignore the Regs and allow him to enlist.

LORELEI

I don't understand.

SARAH

My husband takes his job very seriously.

MATT

My son just wasn't a Marine. He didn't have what it takes.

SARAH

Matt, please. We couldn't have known.

LORELEI

(gently)

What couldn't you've know.

MATT

That he would come out a bigger monster than when he went in.

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CONTINUED

SARAH

We couldn't understand why he did those things. Why he would deliberately hurt others. He didn't learn it from us.

MATT

We did everything. More discipline. Therapy.

SARAH

No matter what we did for him, he resented us, our life and the help we gave to others.

RANDI

What did you mean he was a bigger monster?

MATT

You should know. Your office is investigating him for rape.

RANDI

I'm not familiar with the case.

MATT

Two days ago, my son raped Mary MacCalister. She is the daughter of a friend of mine. She thought she could trust him; they practically grew up together.

RANDI

I've heard about it. The prosecutor is on the fence. He sees it as a he said-she said.

SARAH

Last night, Anne Marie found proof not only that he raped Mary but two others.

LORELEI

She found his home movies. It
(MORE)

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LORELEI (cont'd)
seems he likes to watch himself
perform. She hid them and was
going to turn it over to the
police.

RANDI
Why did she tell him?

LORELEI
She didn't. He found they were
missing and confronted her.

SARAH
If we hadn't got home when we
did--I think he would have
killed her. He wouldn't let me
take her to the hospital until
after he searched us both.

MATT
After they left, he started
searching the house.

RANDI
Did he find them?

Matt shakes his head.

RANDI
I see. They're a double edged
sword. They are proof, but they
could also be motive.

LORELEI
It would have helped us find the
two other girls.

RANDI
Agreed. By the looks of the
house, there isn't much left.

MATT
Mary's father was a friend of
mind.

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SARAH

What can we say to them? I birthed a monster.

LORELEI

Wait a minute. You gave birth to a child. At some point, it stops being your fault and becomes his.

SARAH

If I had known what he was going to become...

RANDI

What? What could you have done?

MATT

Stopped him.

INT. BURNED HOUSE LIVING ROOM: DAY

Simon is doing a preliminary search of the room. Deek walks up to the doorway but doesn't cross the threshold.

DEEK

What do you think?

SIMON

Curiouser and Curiouser. I'm not an expert on arson.

DEEK

Observations?

SIMON

The couch and around it has the most damage. But look. Even with all the damage, you can still see long darker burn streaks.

DEEK

The fire was following an accelerant?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

SIMON

That would be my guess. I called my team back. Maggie is our burn expert. The deputies bagged and tagged already.

DEEK

Randi will make sure you have access to it.

SIMON

Thanks.

DEEK

You're thinking murder.

SIMON

I don't speculate. I need a whole lot more information, including the autopsy.

DEEK

You'll get it.

SIMON

I hear you're the new big man on campus.

DEEK

Me. No. I'm just here to help plow the road. Let me know if you and your team need anything.

SIMON

Will do.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE BURNT HOUSE: DAY

Deek is simultaneously talking on his cell and taking notes.

DEEK

What's the address? That's great. Bring the vouchers to Eighty-sixty-three Beech. The Thompsons are there now.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK (cont'd)
Clothing definitely. I'll let
you know about the shelter.

Martin and Randi walk across the street.

Hang on.
(to Martin and Randi)
What have they decided?

MARTIN
They're going to stay with
Sarah's sister.

DEEK
(to the person on the
phone)
Just the clothing and food. Get
here ASAP.

Deek hangs up the phone.

DEEK
The office is sending over
prepaid credit cards. They'll
be able to buy the necessities
until everything is sorted out.

MARTIN
We don't have a budget for that.

DEEK
You do now.

MARTIN
Money can't solve everything.

DEEK
No, but it helps.

RANDI
Any chance DVDs could have
survived the fire?

DEEK
Depends on where they were and
how protected. Why?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

RANDI

The victim was accused of rape.

DEEK

And?

MARTIN

He taped it.

DEEK

Is that why he was dishonorably discharged?

MARTIN

Don't know.

RANDI

The rape happened here after he got back. His wife found DVDs. She hid them until she could turn them over to the cops.

DEEK

He's dead. There is no one to prosecute.

RANDI

There were two other girls. If the fire wasn't an accident, it could also be the motive.

DEEK

I looked inside. The second story and the front were gutted. Don't know about the back or the garage. I don't think it was an accident. But that's just my opinion.

MARTIN

His wife has a solid alibi. She couldn't have done it.

DEEK

Randi, what did the parents tell you?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

RANDI

Can't. Confidentiality.

MARTIN

Before we point finger, let's know what happened. It could have been an accident.

DEEK

If the wife is out. Who else is left? Her family? His parents? The family of the rape victim.

MARTIN

Deputy McCloud has a long standing beef with both the Gunny and his son.

RANDI

The neighbor saw Ken alive after his parents left.

Lorelei joins them.

LORELEI

If you are compiling a suspect list, you can add in most of the Marines in the area. They hated his guts. He made them look bad in and out of the sandbox.

MARTIN

Before we start hauling people in, let's make sure we have the facts.

DEEK

Good enough. Special Agent Behan gave me his word that we'll be kept in the loop. Are you ready to see your new offices?

RANDI

What about Walter?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

LORELEI
He'll be along. He wanted to
talk to the Thompsons.

DEEK
I'll drive.

INT. NEW OHB OFFICE: DAY

Led by Deek, Lorelei, Martin, and Randi walk into the lobby. Singing with the music on the intercom, Denise stands on a step stool, putting up notices on the new bulletin boards.

LORELEI
Wow! The lobby is half as big
as our old offices.

MARTIN
Hopefully it's over kill.

DEEK
Rather over than under.

DENISE
Hi. Elaine and Mike had us
start moving everything over.

LORELEI
Randi, Denise O'Dell. Denise,
Randi Cullen.

DENISE
The Assistant Prosecutor?

RANDI
Ex.

DENISE
When did that happen?

RANDI
In reality, this morning.
Officially tomorrow.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

MARTIN

Denise is a third year law student.

RANDI

Is that a hint?

MARTIN

A suggestion. Denise has volunteered with us for over a year. Receptionist. Babysitter.

DENISE

Little plumbing.

DEEK

Where is everyone?

DENISE

Jake took the credit cards to the Thompson.

MARTIN

Who's Jake?

DEEK

Jake Mackey, my assistant.

DENISE

Last time I saw Mike, he was making phone calls in his office. Elaine was supervising the unloading the last load from the old digs in the ally.

MARTIN

You moved everything? We weren't gone that long.

DENISE

Many hands make light work as my Granny used to say. Between our volunteers, the staff and those in the waiting room that offered, it took a little over an hour. There was a mini convoy.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK

Good deal.

DENISE

We didn't bother boxing the records. They guys just picked up the filing cabinets and hauled them over. Lorelei, I locked yours.

LORELEI

What about the files in my desk?

DENISE

Everything on top is now in the center draw. The desk is in your new office. You can have fun moving everything into the new one later.

DEEK

I'm going to have to make some changes. There will no longer be unpaid volunteer positions.

MARTIN

Wait a minute!

DENISE

You're firing me?

DEEK

No. I'm hiring you. Of course, you will have to dress a little different. No bare stomach and cover your tats. What you're wearing might be fine for campus or hanging with your buds.

RANDI

Excuse you. My department. My assistant. My rules. Her tats are fine.

DEEK

You intend to show yours?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

RANDI

Loud and proud.

Martin lifts his sleeve to show off his on his upper arm. Deek turns to Lorelei.

LORELEI

Don't look at me. I don't like needles.

RANDI

Really, it doesn't hurt.

LORELEI

I made it this far without. I'll go the distance.

DEEK

We'll talk about it later. Still coming over later for benefits.

RANDI

Most definitely!

MARTIN

Can we say sexual harassment suit?

DEEK

It's not what you think.

RANDI

Can't harass the willing.

DEEK

You! Already you have me in trouble. I don't know why I put up with you.

RANDI

I'm cute, loyal and the best damn litigator you have ever met.

DEEK

True. You've kept my ass out of jail more than once.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

RANDI
Hence the benefit entitlement.

DEEK
Seven o'clock?

RANDI
Red or white wine?

DEEK
I got it covered.

Smugly smiling, Randi nods.

We'd better get started.

Deek walks to the reception office. Leaning in, he picks up the mic.

DEEK
Everyone to the conference room.

Deek and Randi lag behind as Denise leads the way to the conference room.

They think I'm bribing you with sex.

RANDI
What's your point?

DEEK
We're not. We tried that.
Remember?

RANDI
I know.

DEEK
Then why?

RANDI
If they knew what a good cook you are, I'd have to share. It ain't going to happen. Nope. Mine. All mine.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

Randi walks through the open doorway. Deek shakes his head.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM: DAY

Michael, Martin, Lorelei and Elaine stand at the head of the table; Deek remains on the sidelines. Thirty-some people nearly fill the room.

MICHAEL

We started Operation Home Base because we saw there was a need we could fulfill. We did our best. It was never enough.

ELAINE

We never had enough resources or power to do more than scratch the surface. When Walter Hummel approached us, we were hesitant.

MARTIN

Some more than others.

ELAINE

What he offered was too good to pass up. Operation Home Base is now working in partnership with the government. It makes us unique. We do this right and every state will have a program.

MICHAEL

There will be a few changes. Most of which everyone will like; some you won't. The volunteer program is being closed. Everyone who wants to be will be hired and will be paid.

WOMAN

What we can't work 9 to 5? I help when I can.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK

You are on the payroll or you don't work here. This is the program's flagship. The whole nation will be watching what we do. Volunteers can get sloppy. Employees can be held responsible.

ELAINE

No one panic. We will still be very flexible with schedules.

MAN

Who the hell do you think you are? Most of us have been with OHB since the beginning!

DEEK

I'm Deacon James William. Deek. Most of you don't know me. But you will. I'm the Government Advocate.

MICHAEL

Hank, he'll get me access to the all the VA's records.

MAN

(suspicious)

All of them? Even the classified?

MICHAEL

Private Hank Stanwicki disappeared during Desert Storm. His body was never found.

DEEK

Give me the details. I'll look into it.

MAN

How can you do this? Not even my Senator could get answers.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK

I have friends who have friends. It's why I'm here. My job is to make your jobs easier. If you have a question or if someone is giving you grief--come to me. I'll take care of it.

LORELEI

We can do this. It'll be the same work. We'll just have better tools to work with.

DEEK

I've brought several new people with me. Please introduce yourselves.

Thirty-something, MASTER SERGEANT STELLA GARCIA STANDS up.

STELLA

I'm Master Sergeant Stella Garcia-Casualty and Mortuary officer. We will do more than notify the next of kin. We will be speaking for the dead and insuring their wishes are followed. We will do what the family needs when they need it for as long as they need us.

DEBRA ANNE LEE SITS in the seat next to Stella.

DEBRA

Debra Anne Lee. I'll be working directly with the Red Cross.

DEEK

Some of you may already know Randi Cullen from the Prosecutor's office. She's joining us as our head legal advisor.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

RANDI

(walking toward the
front of the table)
That would be me. Before the
rest of you get any ideas, I
have dibs on Denise.

DENISE

It's a deal.

RANDI

Legally, I'm your first call.
Call me then shut up. I don't
care how small. If you get
pulled over for a traffic stop,
call me while the officer is
writing the ticket. My cell is
always on.

ELAINE

What happened? We've had a few
problems before, but nothing
that serious.

RANDI

Let's just say, I'm no longer in
a position to be a voice of
reason in the system.

DEEK

That'll be my first project.

MICHAEL

Good luck with that. More than
one person has tried.

DEEK

None of them were me. Unless,
someone else has something that
can't wait--it's getting late. 9
a.m. sharp everyone.

The group disburses, filing out one of the two doors.

MARTIN

(walking up to Deek)
(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

MARTIN (cont'd)
Works for me. We start at 8.
Last one in brings Danish and
muffins. I like blueberry.

DEEK
You'll trust me not to poison
you.

MARTIN
It's not your style.

DEEK
You never did know what my style
was.

ELAINE
(on her way to the door)
Boys, play nice. Or I'll give
you both a time out.

MICHAEL
She'll do it too. Lieutenant
Colonel wasn't honorary. She
earned those clusters.

DEEK
I'm well aware of all your
histories.

MICHAEL
Good. If you'll honor us with
the same info, it'll save us a
lot of time.

DEEK
Just ask. I'm an open book.

MICHAEL
I'll keep that in mind.

Deek walks away.

MARTIN
Don't be surprised if you find
most of that book blacked out.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

MICHAEL

He's not the only one with friends.

MARTIN

Good luck with that.

INT. DEEK'S KITCHEN: NIGHT

Deek is cooking. Half his kitchen wares are still packed away in boxes. Randi knocks on the back door. He sees her and waves her in.

DEEK

About time. Don't expect anything fancy. I haven't had time to unpack. What's wrong?

RANDI

Special Agent Behan called. The Sheriff department is asserting jurisdiction. They're calling it murder.

DEEK

I'm not surprised.

RANDI

They're arresting the Gunny and his wife.

DEEK

Why? They left.

RANDI

He thinks they came back. Behan found their diving gear and the DVD's in the trunk of their car. They'll be charged with be first degree murder.

DEEK

When?

RANDI

Now.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK
(turning off the
burners)
Let's go.