

"Operation Home Base"

by  
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INT. POLICE STATION: NIGHT

Several deputies work behind the counter. Deputy McCloud stands in the back, laughing and drinking coffee. Deek and Randi walk in. Immediately Randi walks to the desk.

MCCLOUD

Lookie here. We have an ex-assistant prosecutor.

RANDI

Where are the Thompsons?

MCCLOUD

You can't pull that con again. We all know about you. You're just another attorney.

DEEK

Yep, you now have a bigger one than a girl.

RANDI

More like he is a bigger one.

A few deputies snicker.

MCCLOUD

They won't be arranged until morning. You can see them after.

RANDI

No. I will see them now. They are still entitled to council.

MCCLOUD

Rumor has it, the prosecutor will be filing ethic charges with the state bar.

RANDI

You're full of it. He was the one who gave me the idea.

DEEK

Speaking of charges. How many complaints do you think will be filed against him?

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RANDI  
Definitely the Thompsons.

MCCLOUD  
I did nothing wrong!

RANDI  
I'll make sure of it.

DEEK  
Tomorrow morning, I might just  
meander over and talk to the  
neighbors.

MCCLOUD  
I was doing my job!

RANDI  
Good idea. No doubt the members  
of your team will also like to  
chirp in.

DEEK  
Lorelei will be able to fully  
explain how the family was  
emotionally and physically  
traumatized.

RANDI  
Two middle-aged parents forced  
to stand in the hot sun all day  
without water.

DEEK  
While their only son's charred  
body is carried out.

MCCLOUD  
You can't make that stick.

RANDI  
Watch me. You and your crew  
have been riding rough shod on  
the county for too long. This  
time you crossed the line.  
Uncle Sheriff won't be able to  
sugar coat this.

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DEEK

Gunnery Sergeant Thompson is a decorated war hero. He deserves your respect. How many hours were they out in the hot sun?

MCCLOUD

All they had to do is tell me the location of Anna Marie Thompson.

RANDI

If I have to wake up a judge, I'll do it.

SHERIFF ALAN MCCLOUD WALKS in from the outside.

SHERIFF MCCLOUD

That won't be necessary. Vern go get the Thompsons.

MCCLOUD

It was arson. I can prove it.

SHERIFF MCCLOUD

Deputy, go wait in my office.

MCCLOUD

It wasn't just booze on the couch. They poured gas all over the floor.

RANDI

The neighbors saw Ken after his parents left.

SHERIFF MCCLOUD

There will be time enough for it tomorrow. Tonight let them mourn their son.

Sheriff McCloud stares down the deputy. After a moment, the younger man reluctantly leaves the room. The Thompsons are led out of a back room.

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SHERIFF MCCLOUD  
You have my sincerest apologies.

DEEK  
As if that means anything.

RANDI  
Let's get you out of here.

SHERIFF MCCLOUD  
Just let us know where you will  
be staying.

Deek intercedes as Randi leads the Thompson out the same  
door they entered.

DEEK  
(giving him a business  
card)  
They can be reached through  
Operation Home Base.

SHERIFF MCCLOUD  
That chicken shit operation.

DEEK  
OHB is now fully funded and  
supported by the US Government  
and all its branches. One phone  
call and the Feds will be so far  
up your ass. Open season on  
military personnel and their  
families ends. Right now.  
Tonight.

SHERIFF MCCLOUD  
The law is the law.

DEEK  
You have a problem, your first  
phone call better be to me. If  
I have to find you-

SHERIFF MCCLOUD  
Who the hell do you think you  
are?

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DEEK  
Deacon James William,  
Governmental Advocate of  
Operation Home Base.

INT. CAROLINE DAVIS'S HOME: NIGHT

Sarah Thompson's younger sister CAROLINE ANSWERS the door. The Thompsons, Randi and Deek walk in. The sisters embrace. ANNE MARIE THOMPSON painfully WALKS down the stairs and into the living room.

RANDI  
(seeing Anne Marie)  
Sweet Mother of God!

ANNE MARIE  
Sarah and Matt were only trying  
to protect me.

CAROLINE  
Aren't you the assistant  
prosecutor?

RANDI  
Not any more. I'm now lead  
attorney for Operation Home Base.

MATT  
Randi is representing us.

SARAH  
Annie darling, you shouldn't be  
out of bed?

ANNE MARIE  
I just want them to know. It  
was all my fault!

DEEK  
Wait!  
(offering his hand to  
Caroline)  
Hi, I'm Deacon William. My  
friends call me Deek.

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CAROLINE

Caroline.

DEEK

We can't hear this. It breaches privilege. They could force us to testify to anything we hear.

CAROLINE

I've been a Marine's wife for over twenty years. They can't force me to tell them the time of day.

DEEK

Be that as it may.

SARAH

Carol, it's okay.

CAROLINE

You must be hungry. They probably didn't feed you.

MATT

That would be great. Where's Duane?

ANNE MARIE

He took Kenny to the VFW.

CAROLINE

(to Deek)

You any good in the kitchen?

DEEK

I've played around a bit.

Caroline crooks her finger and he follows her.

RANDI

Don't show her up too much.

She waits until the kitchen door closes.

One rule. Don't lie to me. I  
(MORE)

CONTINUED

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RANDI (cont'd)  
can't help you if I don't have  
the truth.

SARAH  
I don't understand. It was an  
accident. It had to be. Ken  
passed out and his cigarette  
ignited the Vodka.

RANDI  
They found two accelerants.

MATT  
That's not possible.

RANDI  
They found gas on the floors in  
the front of the house. It's  
what caused the fire to spread  
so fast.

MATT  
There were a couple of gallons  
in the garage for the mower.

RANDI  
Was that unusual?

MATT  
Not around here. We take pride  
in our yards.

ANNE MARIE  
It's my fault. If I hadn't take  
the DVDs-

RANDI  
Did you start the fire?

ANNE MARIE  
No.

RANDI  
Were you involved with the rapes?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

ANNE MARIE

No. I was going to turn him in.

RANDI

Than stop taking responsibility  
for what you didn't do. Where  
did you hide the DVDs?

ANNE MARIE

Behind the freezer in the  
garage.

RANDI

(to Sarah and Matt)

How did they get into your trunk?

SARAH

Anne Marie told me where they  
were.

RANDI

You took them when you left?

MATT

We came here and swam back.

RANDI

Why?

MATT

He said he'd kill whoever tried  
taking the DVDs out of the house.

RANDI

Why swim back?

SARAH

We had a dive scheduled with our  
group. Our gear was already in  
the trunk.

MATT

It was the only way we could  
think of to get in and out  
without him having to confront  
him.

CONTINUED

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RANDI

Did you see him?

MATT

Through the back door. He was sleeping on the couch.

RANDI

The police are going to claim that you swam back in order to give yourselves an alibi.

SARAH

No matter what he did, he was still our son.

RANDI

How long were you gone?

SARAH

About an hour. More or less.

RANDI

Did you smell the gas when you came back?

MATT

We didn't actually go inside the house. Just the garage.

ANNE MARIE

Someone else could have come into the house after you left?

RANDI

None of the neighbors saw anyone go up to the house. But that doesn't mean there wasn't. No one saw the two of you either. Did your son have any enemies?

MATT

To many to count.

ANNE MARIE

He changed over there.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

SARAH  
(quietly)  
Yes. It was the war.

MATT  
Be honest. My son was a bastard before he served. But he was bigger bastard when he came back. Even losers that tolerated him before hated his guts!

RANDI  
Let me clarify. Anyone hate him enough to kill him?

MATT  
His in-laws. The families of the girls he raped. The men he served with. The shorter list would be those who liked him.

RANDI  
Would you be on that list?

SARAH  
He was my son. I loved him.

ANNE MARIE  
I tried to still love him. He wouldn't let me.

MATT  
He disgraced me in the eyes of the Corps.

RANDI  
Why was Ken dishonorable discharged?

MATT  
It was listed as conduct unbecoming and for the good of the Corps.

RANDI  
Specifically what did he do?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

MATT

I don't know.

SARAH

He wouldn't talk about.

ANNE MARIE

He got so angry if anyone brought it up. He keep claiming it wasn't his fault. He was just following orders.

MATT

I tried. The incident was classified above my clearance.

RANDI

I see. That's enough for tonight.

(raising her voice.)

Deek. Let's go.

EXT. HOME: NIGHT

Randi and Deek are walking to his vehicle.

RANDI

Can you find out why Ken Thompson was dishonorably discharged?

DEEK

The Gunny doesn't know.

RANDI

None of the specifics. The details were classified.

DEEK

That's never good. Either it involved officers or someone decided it was best for the family.

RANDI

Could you discretely see what you can find out?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK

Are you thinking it was the  
reason he was killed?

RANDI

Possibly. In any case, the more  
we know the better.

DEEK

How much do you want me to share  
with Behan?

RANDI

Just enough.

DEEK

I can do that.

RANDI

Now about my benefits?

INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE: DAY

Martin is finishing transferring the files from his old  
filing cabinet into his new ones. Deek walks down the  
hallway, carrying a large box of donuts. He stops in  
the doorway.

DEEK

You're here early.

MARTIN

I heard the Thompsons were  
arrested last night.

DEEK

Randi and I sprung them.

MARTIN

They are good people.

DEEK

I got that.

MARTIN

There are a lot of good people  
here.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK

I got that too.

MARTIN

Why are you here?

DEEK

For the same reason as you. The ghosts.

MARTIN

To have ghosts, you have to have a conscience.

DEEK

(sadly)

Unfortunately I have one of those as well.

Deek continues down the hallway. Martin stares at the empty doorway.

INT. BREAK ROOM AT OHB: DAY

Simon Behan is pouring himself a cup of coffee. Deek walks in.

DEEK

What are you doing here?

SIMON

Didn't Martin tell you I was here?

DEEK

It must have slipped his mind.

SIMON

The Local Leos said you knew where the Thompsons are.

DEEK

Randi Cullen is representing them. You're welcome to interview them here.

CONTINUED

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SIMON  
When will she be in?

DEEK  
Not for a while.

SIMON  
State secret?

DEEK  
Donut? No sub-text. Just being  
polite.

SIMON  
In that case.

Deek opens the box and Simon takes out a donut. Closing the box, he puts it on the counter next to the coffee pot and pours himself a cup.

DEEK  
They couldn't have done it.  
They left long before the fire  
started.

SIMON  
Not necessarily. The primary  
evidence shows a cigarette  
ignited the accelerants. Most  
likely the gas first. It could  
have acted like a long fuse.

DEEK  
Why didn't Ken try to leave?

SIMON  
Good question. Was he dead  
before the fire? Or did the  
fire kill him?

DEEK  
When will you have the autopsy  
results?

SIMON  
This afternoon. I don't think  
(MORE)

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SIMON (cont'd)  
they did it. If it was just the  
Gunny, maybe. But by all  
accounts, she loves her son.

DEEK  
You don't suspect his wife?

SIMON  
She couldn't have.

DEEK  
Any other ideas?

SIMON  
Lots. More than one person will  
be dancing on his grave.

DEEK  
I feel sorry for his mother.  
She seems like a nice lady.  
I'll be checking into his  
discharge.

SIMON  
Keep me in the loop.

DEEK  
You'll be the second.

SIMON  
Good enough. The beach is a  
favorite jogging path. That  
morning the neighbor saw half  
dozen people. She was surprised  
to see Rex Schuelke.

DEEK  
Why?

SIMON  
Ken Thompson is accused of  
raping his step-daughter. I'm  
no my way to talk to him.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DEEK  
Want company?

SIMON  
My show.

DEEK  
No problem.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S BACKYARD: DAY

The children are playing on the swing set. Randi and the neighbor sit at the patio table.

NEIGHBOR  
Even before he deployed no one liked him. When he came back, he was worse. If it wasn't for Sarah, we would have petitioned the Base to have him kicked out.

RANDI  
Is there anyone in particular?

NEIGHBOR  
Devlin--Sergeant Devlin Hanson. He shot at her dog for no reason except she barked at him. I could go on all day.

RANDI  
Did you see him-

NEIGHBOR  
No. As I told the Special Agent. The morning was pretty quiet. Normally there would have been a couple dozen joggers running past on the beach.

RANDI  
What changed?

NEIGHBOR  
We found out Ken raped Mary. Here on the lake, we're a close knit bunch.

CONTINUED

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RANDI

She lives on the lake?

NEIGHBOR

Her parents do. Right across there. She was just visiting. I was surprised when Rex jogged passed yesterday. Ken yelled something obscene.

RANDI

Did he go up to the Thompson's house?

NEIGHBOR

I don't think so. I closed the windows. My kids don't need to hear that kind of language with their breakfast.

RANDI

What did Rex do?

NEIGHBOR

He was more tolerant than I would have been. He didn't even slow down. Which was strange. Normally, he's a hot head. If he had said that about my daughter, I wouldn't have waited for my husband. As much as I love Sarah--even with her standing there, I would have kicked his ass right then. You know that he raped two other girls and video taped it!

RANDI

Who do you think killed him?

NEIGHBOR

I don't care. If he hadn't died that morning. He would have been dead by night fall when the other families found out. Don't look surprised. We're military

(MORE)

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NEIGHBOR (cont'd)  
wives. There isn't anything we  
don't know or can't find out.

RANDI  
Any else unusual happen?

NEIGHBOR  
Now that you mention it. I did  
get a phone call. It's not  
unusual for me to get phone  
calls. When I answered it, no  
one was there.

RANDI  
What number came up in the  
caller Id?

NEIGHBOR  
None. If I hadn't made a  
special trip inside, I wouldn't  
have even answered it. Are you  
building a suspect list?

RANDI  
I'm just trying to get a handle  
on what was happening.

NEIGHBOR  
Everyone dislikes-disliked the  
boy. The Gunny took a lot of  
heat when he approved his  
enlistment papers. Everyone  
knew he would eventually  
disgrace the uniform. There was  
a deputy sheriff who talked a  
lot of trash. Rumor has it that  
he and Ken got into it more than  
once.

RANDI  
Before or after the discharge.

NEIGHBOR  
As I recall. Both. But it got  
worse after the dishonorable.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

RANDI

(standing to leave)

Thank you. Here is my card. If you think of anything else, please call. Oh. Could I have your phone number? Just in case I have any more questions.

NEIGHBOR

Sure.

She writes her name and phone number on the piece of paper Randi gives her.

I don't know if I should mention it. He is such a good man. He probably didn't mean it.

RANDI

Mean what?

NEIGHBOR

Anne Marie's father threatened to kill Ken a while back. It was after the last time he hit her.

RANDI

Thank you for your help.

NEIGHBOR

Tell Sarah if she needs anything, she should call me first.

RANDI

Will do.

EXT. BEACH BEHIND THE NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE: DAY

Randi walks along the shore, while talking on her cell phone. She scans around the lake. There are at least a dozen residents jogging. She starts to walk back toward the house. A jogger runs passed on the beach. She turns back to talk to him and she can no longer see him.

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RANDI

Tell him, I'll pick up the  
Thompsons on my way in.

While she stands on the sand, she can easily see all of joggers; however, by stepping just a few feet closer to the neighbor's house, the privacy hedge and the angle of ground conceals part of the beach behind the next four houses, including the Thompsons.

I found something. It can wait.

(hanging up the phone)

Cheryl, do you know the schedule  
for the neighbors on the other  
side of the Thompson's.

NEIGHBOR

Jean and Max are 9 to 5'ers, but  
they've been on vacation for a  
week; they'll be back in a  
couple of days. Leona and Helen  
leave early for work. Don't  
ask; don't tell. Mitchell  
sleeps mornings. He's an MP. He  
usually pulls the night shift.

RANDI

Thanks.

Using her phone, she documents how a jogger disappears from sight once she passes the privacy hedges, but can be seen once again once she passes fourth house to the left of the Thompsons.

NEIGHBOR

I never noticed that before.

RANDI

Fascinating. Thank you. Please  
don't hesitate to call if you  
think of something else.

INT. REX SCHUELKE'S BACKYARD: DAY

Sergeant Major Rex Schuelke is cleaning his grill. Deek and Simon walk around the side of the house. Rex hears them; he stops only for a moment.

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SIMON  
Sergeant Major Rex Schuelke?

REX  
I wondered when you' be getting  
round to me.

SIMON  
Special Agent Simon Behan

SIMON  
I know who you are.

DEEK  
Deek Williams.

REX  
I heard about you too. We  
appreciate what you did for the  
Gunny.

DEEK  
Just doing my job.

REX  
Good luck with that.

DEEK  
Don't need luck. I have the  
angels on my site.

REX  
Like I said, good luck with that.

SIMON  
Where were you yesterday morning?

REX  
Cleaning out my daughter's dorm  
room. She's quitting college.

DEEK  
How is she doing?

REX  
Can't sleep. Can't eat. Afraid  
to leave her bedroom.

CONTINUED

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SIMON

I'm sorry she--

REX

He was a rabid dog. He needed to be put down.

SIMON

Vigilante justice?

DEEK

That's not what the Sergeant Major said.

REX

No one around here cares who killed him.

DEEK

What about his mother?

REX

She mourns the son, not the monster.

SIMON

Could I talk to your wife and daughter?

REX

Not a chance in hell.

SIMON

I'll be--

REX

(threatening)

Not going to happen. They don't know anything about anything when it comes to Ken Thompson!

SIMON

Sounds like you know more than you're saying.

CONTINUED

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REX

I know most people would have preferred that he had come back in a box.

DEEK

Scuttlebutt is that the two of you had words that morning. Why did you run down that part of the beach?

SIMON

Sergeant Major I truly hate it when people lie to me.

REX

My son and I left at 0-800. Two hour drive there. Two hours back. We were gone long before the fire started. Check with Deputy McCloud. He roused us at the turn off to the lake. We went north. I saw that he continued on toward the lake.

SIMON

What about your rest of your family?

REX

The rape councilor was with them most of the day.

DEEK

You and everyone had been avoiding that part of the beach. What changed that morning? What were you looking for?

REX

You want anything else, talk to our attorney.

SIMON

Anyone else keep tabs on the Thompson home that morning?

CONTINUED

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DEEK

(offering his card)  
If you or your family needs anything, don't hesitate. We can make sure your whole family will have access to the best therapists.

REX

I can take care of my family!

DEEK

Yes, you can. You just don't have to do it alone.

SIMON

(offering his card to Rex)  
I can wait a few days.

Rex refuses to accept the card. Simon put it on the picnic table and leaves.

DEEK

You're a good father.

REX

I stand watch over the world, but I can't protect my family.

DEEK

You watch the world. It's our job at home to watch your back. The failure was ours, not yours. I'm going to do my best to change that.

EXT. AT THE CAR: DAY

DEEK

He didn't do it.

SIMON

Why are you so certain?

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CONTINUED

DEEK

He planned to. I think they were planning to wash the stain off the flag. They just didn't get the chance to carry it out. I suspect he wasn't the only one. Have you identified the other two girls yet?

SIMON

Both were dependents. There were more.

DEEK

How many?

SIMON

By the MO. Same age. Same body type. At least three in the past six weeks. My team is taking care of it. The Local Leos missed a serial rapist.

DEEK

None so blind as those who refuse to see.

SIMON

Philosopher Marine?

DEEK

Most think I'm a Spook.

SIMON

Once a Marine. Always a Marine.

DEEK

If his story checks out, we can eliminate him as suspect.

SIMON

Deputy McCloud interests me.

DEEK

Talk to Martin.

INT. OHB LOBBY: DAY

Simon and Deek walk in. Denise is behind the reception desk helping the new staff understand OHB's filing system.

DENISE

Randi and the Thompsons have been waiting on you. They're in her office.

DEEK

Martin here?

DENISE

Out back organizing the food bank.

DEEK

Could you ask him to pretty please come to Randi's office?

DENISE

Only if I don't have to say pretty please.

DEEK

Deal. Denise O'Dell-Special Agent Simon Behan. Behan-O'Dell. She's Randi's assistant.

SIMON

Howdy.

DENISE

By the looks of the two you, shouldn't he be saying that?

DEEK

Don't be a smart ass.

DENISE

Can't help it. I was born intelligent. If you want to survive the OHB crew, you'll have to be quicker on the trigger with those come backs.

CONTINUED

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DEEK

I'm going to regret letting them work together.

SIMON

I can get you a flak jacket.

DEEK

Maybe a big hat.

DENISE

I can order you a ten gallon?

DEEK

Yep. I'm going to regret it.

DENISE

(to receptionists)

No. The files need to be kept separate.

The men continue to walk through the lobby.

INT. OHB HALLWAY: DAY

Simon and Deek are walking toward Randi's office. Martin walks up from the opposite direction.

MARTIN

Simon. Denise said you needed to talk to me.

SIMON

Deek said you were the go to guy about the Local Leos.

DEEK

I told him you were the expert.

MARTIN

That would be Elaine. Her husband, Larry is city officer. Captain I believe.

DEEK

What do you know about Donald McCloud?

CONTINUED

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MARTIN

Typical bully who has a grudge  
against the military.

SIMON

What about Gunnery Sergeant  
Thompson?

MARTIN

Him especially. Or should I say  
his son. Where are you going  
with this?

SIMON

Do you think he was capable of  
killing Ken Thompson?

MARTIN

Not yet.

DEEK

What do you mean?

MARTIN

He is escalating. He doesn't  
have the stones now. Give him a  
little more rope. He'll either  
hang himself or use it to hang  
someone else. Why do you ask?

SIMON

He was seen at the lake the  
morning of the fire.

MARTIN

Not unusual. He likes patrol  
the area. When he and his crew  
are on duty, the traffic stops  
around the bases and military  
housing triples.

DEEK

That is going to stop.

MARTIN

Good luck with that. Anything  
else?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

SIMON

I'm interviewing the Thompsons.  
Want to sit in?

MARTIN

Why not?

DEEK

(knocking on the door)  
Good. We'll have someone we can  
send for coffee and donuts.

RANDI

(off camera)  
Come in.