



CUTTING A SWATH

By Franscats

Art by Starkickback

PART ONE – JIM ELLISON, A BRIEF HISTORY

SEPTEMBER 1974

“Look Bill,” Dr. Katz sighed and shook his head. “We’ve tested your son before and he has extremely sensitive senses. The headaches he is getting, they are related to his exceptional hearing and eyesight. There is nothing wrong with him or at least nothing that we can fix. He will have to learn to deal with his senses. Some sensory training or biofeedback training could help him.”

William Ellison took a seat and sighed. “I didn’t know my wife had issues with sensitivities in her family until after I married her. Now Jimmy is displaying the same symptoms that she did after that damn vacation she took alone. So far, Steven’s lucky, but Jimmy...” The man shook his head.

“Come on Bill, there is nothing wrong. He’ll need a more protected environment, one with lower sensory input until he learns control, but he should be fine. He’s a healthy boy.”

“A more protected environment and he should be fine.” Bill sneered and glared at the doctor. “I didn’t raise my son to be a weak freak.”

The doctor didn’t answer but shook his head. William Ellison hadn’t done much to raise Jimmy at all. After he had found out Jimmy had the same sensitivities as his deceased wife he had pushed his older son away in favor of his younger son, Steven. Steven was pampered - spoiled, the doctor admitted, while Jimmy was, not abused, at least not physically, but barely tolerated.

“I’ll have to do something about this,” Bill said. “Heightened sensitivities are not something I want the world to know runs in my family. And, I don’t want Steven’s life marred by association with his brother’s illness. They might think Steven is a freak and he’d lose any chance at a brilliant career.”

“Bill, listen to yourself. Jimmy is a great kid, he gets good grades, he’s healthy and active. He deserves a life too and the easiest way for him to have a good one is to get help with his senses.”

“No I won’t do that to Steven. I’ll get Jimmy tutors or whatever else but I will not have him ruin his brother’s life.”

Dr. Katz shook his head. “Do you want me to recommend someone who can help him with his senses?”

“No, I’ll interview a few people and find someone.” Bill Ellison rose and turned toward the door but turned back to look at Dr. Katz. “I don’t want any word of Jimmy’s condition released.”

The doctor nodded. “It is your right,” he agreed, knowing in his heart that Jimmy should have the right to make that decision but wouldn’t for a few more years.

OCTOBER 1974

Jim looked up from the mystery he was reading as his father entered his bedroom. It was a rare enough occurrence that warning bells went off in his head and he stood, letting his book fall to the bed as he straightened. A tall boy, as tall as his father already, Jim had the promise of an athletic build. At fourteen

he already had muscles shaping his arms and chest and clear blue eyes in a strong face that girls mooned over.

"Jimmy," his father said without any warmth in his voice, "We are going for a ride in the country so let's move out."

"A ride?" Jim frowned. He never went anywhere with his father. Steven always went on any outing or trip, and truthfully, Jim preferred it that way. He knew what his father thought of him and it was easier to be home alone with a good mystery book than on the road with William Ellison.

"I'm going down to the car." William Ellison paused and looked around and then turned and walked away, Jim following.

For the most part, the ride was silent. William had little to say to his son and so they drove for almost two hours in silence before William pulled up in front of a ranch-style house practically in the middle of nowhere.

Getting out of the car, he eyed the place thoughtfully before turning to his son. "I guess it's time I told you what's going on," he said in a cool voice. "I'm sending you out to live here," he watched as Jim's eyes widened in shock. "You have a disease and this is the best place for you."

"What disease?" Jim asked, his clear blue eyes wide with concern.

"Those headaches you've been having, you're senses are too strong and out here in the country they won't bother you so much. And no one will know what a freak you really are." William could see the effect of the harsh words, but he needed Jimmy to understand what his place was in the family and where it would be from now on.

Jim frowned keeping his emotions in check, biting back the sting of tears as his father continued. "You're a freak; I don't want your brother contaminated by what you are. I've gone to a lot of expense to buy this place and hire a couple to take care of you. You will stay here and you should be grateful."

"But what about school?" Jim asked in shock, unable to take in the whole situation. He couldn't believe his father would just abandon him here.

William winced at the question. Jimmy liked school and got good grades, better than Steven's. "I've hired someone to work with you." He turned and walked towards the door. "You'll have all the things you need, so don't whine." He stopped at the door and knocked and a woman opened the door.

"Mr. Ellison," she smiled and turned her gaze to the boy even as she opened the door. "You must be Jim. I'm Theresa." Her eyes surveyed Jim thoughtfully and not without a touch of pity as Ellison stepped past.

"Jimmy, this is Ms. Theresa. She will be cooking and taking care of you. She will also be doing school work with you. She's a retired teacher. Her husband..." at this William paused looking around for the man and the woman nodded.

"He's in the barn setting up the gym equipment."

William nodded continuing. "He will be keeping up this place. He's a retired mechanic." He turned as the man in question walked up. "This is Mr. Thomas," he told his son. "Is everything ready?"

"Yes, sir," Mr. Thomas answered. "The boy should be happy here. He has the gym equipment in the barn and he won't have much trouble with loud noises and things out here."

William nodded and turned back to look at Jim's pale face. "I've gone to a lot of expense to make sure you are well cared for, Jimmy. And the Romers," he indicated the couple, "will take good care of you. But until I'm sure you'll be good, there's something else I have to do." He walked back to the car and opened the trunk pulling out a small bag. From the bag he produced a collar and moved toward Jim, who took a step back only to have Thomas Romer grab him. In seconds, despite his pleas and tears, the collar was locked around his neck and attached to a long chain.

William turned and looked at the couple, ignoring his son's hurt appearance. "Reports once a week," he commanded. "I'll try and visit once a month." They nodded and without another word to Jim he turned and left.

As soon as the car turned and pulled away, Thomas relaxed his hold on Jim. "Sorry, Jim," he said softly. "But the collar is your dad's orders and he's in charge. Come on, I'll show you your room." As Thomas said this, he lifted and coiled some of the long chain that hung from around Jim's neck and led Jim into a bedroom just off from the kitchen. There he locked the chain to the wall. "You can reach the bathroom and move all around this room even with the chain. I made sure it was long enough." He then indicated a desk in the corner. "Theresa will work with you there on school work and I'll unlock the chain every afternoon and take you to the barn where you can use all the exercise equipment."

Thomas looked sadly at Jim. "I know it's hard Jim, but let's try and make the best of it. Okay?"

Jim nodded, still speechless with shock.

DECEMBER 1974

William Ellison looked at the swirling snow and cursed as he drove out into the country. He hadn't been to see Jim in over a month and a half and the Romers were asking when he would come to see the boy and whether they could remove the chain and collar.

Glancing at his son, Steven, seated beside him, William smiled. The house was much more relaxing without Jimmy there. When he had gotten home after dropping Jimmy off, he had sat down with Steven and explained to his eleven year old son that Jimmy was moved to a place where he would feel better.

"Is it because his hearing is so off?" Steven had asked watching his father closely. Steven knew his father had some major hang-ups about Jim's hearing and often reminded his father that Jim was in fact some kind of freak.

"Yes, out in the country he won't be bombarded by stimuli." Steven had nodded his understanding. Not that he really cared what happened to Jimmy. His biggest issue was he wouldn't be able to blame things he did on Jimmy any longer.

William had put off going to see Jimmy while he enjoyed time with Steven, but eventually he felt he had to visit and had asked Steven to come. "Ah Dad, I have plans this weekend," Steven had whined. "Could we maybe put it off a week or two?" And Ellison had, for three weeks before telling Steven they were going.

"You know you can do something for me when we get to the country house," William said with a glance at his son. He knew Steven hadn't wanted to go and see Jimmy.

"What's that?"

"Let me know if you think I should have the Romers remove Jimmy's collar."

"His collar?" Steven asked, looking out the side window to hide a nasty grin as he considered his older brother; collared like a dog.

"Yes, let me know if you think he might want to run away. If he tells you he's happy, maybe I could try having the Romers remove it."

"No problem Dad," Steven answered.

Mr. and Mrs. Romer were standing by the door when William pulled up in front of the house and they smiled, welcoming him. "Hello Mr. Ellison. This must be Steven," Mrs. Romer smiled and reached to touch the boy but pulled back at the nasty face the youngest Ellison made.

"Yes this is my son," there could be no doubt about the pride in Ellison's voice, "Steven."

"Hello Steven," Thomas answered. "Your brother's in his room. Maybe you might want to go and say hello," he suggested wanting to speak with William.

"Sure," Steven sauntered away as Mrs. Romer looked on with concern. She had been caring for Jim for a month and half and knew the young man was polite and caring. He was everything a parent could want. Somehow she got just the opposite impression about the younger Ellison boy.

Steven walked in and stared around the room. He had expected something like a prison, but this was like Jim's room at home. It was neat; Jim always kept his room neat - but things he wouldn't expect to find were there. There was a model motorcycle he was building on a work table and a bookcase with books and a basketball and football on the floor near the table. The room was better than Stevie expected but then he looked at his brother standing in the center of the room and a smug smile crossed his otherwise handsome features. There was a long chain attached to a collar around Jim's neck.

"Hey Jimmy," he greeted in a less than friendly tone, unaware of Theresa Romer standing within earshot. "Dad and I drove up to see you. How are you doing?" he asked.

"I'm okay Stevie, how are you?" the answer was cautious.

"Me, I'm fine. Dad turned your room into a playroom. So I go in whenever I want, not like when it was your room."

"I guess you like that," Jim answered softly and Stevie nodded.

"Dad says he's here to check on the people that watch you. He asked me to find out whether we should take the collar off. What do you say about that, Jimmy?" Jim didn't reply but just stared at his smaller brother and Stevie frowned. "If you beg, I'll tell him yes."

"I'm not going to get on my knees and beg."

"Well then I guess you can keep it on like the dog you are. Dad said you were a mongrel freak when he came home after dropping you off. Said if he had his way you'd be in a kennel." Jim watched his brother, saying nothing, light blue eyes still trying to hide all the hurt he felt.

Stevie was going to continue the diatribe but just then their father walked in and stared at Jim. "How are you Jimmy?" he asked with no hint of warmth in his voice.

"Fine, sir."

"Good, you're not giving the Romers any trouble are you?"

"No, sir."

"Good," Ellison took a minute to look over the boy. Jim seemed to have grown even taller and broader in the last month and a half; his face losing the look of the boy as the shadow of the man he would be changed his appearance. Bill hoped Steven would fill out as neatly as Jim had. His elder son was, for all his freaky ways, a handsome young man. "Well then, Stevie and I'll be going, we'll see you sometime in January," he turned and whispered to the eleven-year-old, ignoring the fact that Jim, with exceptional hearing, could hear every word. "Should we leave the collar on?"

"Yes, Daddy, I don't think we can trust Jimmy."

William Ellison nodded and walked out, Stevie behind him. At the front door, he gave a final nod to the Romers and left, Steven getting in the car.

Mrs. Romer watched him leave and then turned to her husband. "Thomas get me the key to the damned collar.

"Theresa, we can't; you heard Ellison."

"I heard a lot more than Ellison. Get me that damn key now!" In their twenty-two years of marriage, Mrs. Romer had never raised her voice to her husband before, but she stood there breathing hard, her face red, her lips white from trying to control her temper.

Looking at her in surprise, he slowly nodded. "We could lose our jobs for this, Terry."

"Jim is a smart boy. We'll tell him not to say a word. Anyway, I'm sure he wouldn't want to go back to that rat's nest."

APRIL 1977

Jim lived with the Romers for three years. They were some of the happiest years of his life. He knew Thomas and Theresa cared for him. Thomas often played basketball with him, taught him how to fix things; the pair even rebuilt a motorcycle from scraps they gathered in junkyards. Theresa tutored him in core subjects and made sure he studied and took the state exams to get high school credit for his home schooling and the three researched how to deal with Jim's senses. Additionally, they took him on outings once his senses were under control; visits to cities where Jim could enjoy shopping, dining and culture. They would always take their outings just after one of Ellison's visits, knowing that he wouldn't be back for two to three months. When they left for an outing, the Romers would give Jim pocket money and

remind him not to contact his father or brother. Not that Jim would. In the three years they had been together Ellison had visited eight times, and only once with Steven.

On his second visit, William had said nothing when he had seen Jim without a collar and after that the Romers stopped worrying about Jim's free rein of the place. But after three years, as much as the Romers knew they loved Jimmy, and they loved him dearly thinking of him as the son they never had, they knew it was time for him to go away to college.

It was early spring the flowers around the house starting to bloom when Theresa sat beside Jim, watching the grounds.

"What do you see, Jim?" she asked softly.

"There are some rabbits in the woods about a mile away. They're rolling around and playing with each other."

Theresa smiled, not able to see what Jim saw, but imagining it. "You know we've been very happy with you," she said softly. "You're the son we never had and Tom and I are so proud of you."

Jim turned and looked at Theresa, seeing love in her eyes.

"But it's time for you to leave. You need to go to college and set up a future for yourself. I don't think your father will pay for it and we've saved up some money but we're going to have to find other ways of paying. And I'm sure your father will evict us when you do go, so we need to find a school with dorms since none of us will be here.

"Your test scores," she continued before Jim could say anything, "and SATs were high, so I think you have a chance at a full scholarship. I've got some information on scholarships you can apply for," she handed them to Jim. "And you and I can look over them starting tonight after dinner. We have some time, but we'll need to start looking."

"I hate to see you get thrown out of this house," Jim whispered, knowing his father wouldn't care for the Romers. He didn't even care for his own son.

"Jim, it doesn't matter. Without you, it wouldn't be a home." Theresa stood and looked down at her son. "I think an ROTC scholarship might be a possibility. You could enter the armed services as an officer and they would educate you, house you and feed you. You're intelligent, you're disciplined, and you're not afraid of hard work. Think about it."

Jim glanced at the forms as Theresa turned to enter the house but then she turned back. "Jim, wherever we end up, there will always be room for you. You can come home any time. We will always want you."

JULY 1981

Jim Ellison lifted his duffel and glanced back at the bus before making his way onto the army base. Four years of college and ROTC service behind him, he had been accepted into OCS and would begin real training to be an officer in the elite Army Rangers.

He had kept in touch with the Romers over the four years and they had even flown to the college to attend Jim's graduation, proud parents of "their" boy. Jim hadn't bothered to send William Ellison an invitation.

Much as Jim had feared, William had kicked the couple out of the house when he learned Jim had left for school but not before berating them, and threatening them, for letting Jim (who he considered mentally incompetent) go. But Theresa was made of sterner stuff. She had doctors' reports proving Jim was completely sane and competent and informed William that she would use them if he tried anything against Jim. As a result, William had sent Jim a letter stating that he was never to try and contact the family; not William, not Steven. It was attached to a check for \$10,000.

Jim had written back asking that his father and brother return the favor and never try and contact him either. The check was returned in the envelope.

MARCH 1989

Captain Jim Ellison read the letter from Theresa Romer, a smile of pleasure lighting his face. Theresa now lived in a small apartment in Seattle and Jim had been to see her every year when he had leave. Thomas had died two years earlier of a surprise heart attack. Jim had requested and received two weeks off to attend to the funeral and help her arrange her life and then had started sending her money every month from his pay. But after three months, he received a letter from Theresa telling him to save his money. She had her teaching pension and the money she and Thomas had saved. It was enough to get by and she wanted him to save up for his future.

In all the time he had been in the army, Theresa had continued researching Jim's senses, even though he had learned to suppress them. So, he was amused when he received this latest letter. In it, Theresa had mentioned a young man at Rainier who did his master's on sentinels, tribal guardians with heightened senses. She even suggested Jim contact the student for more information about sentinels. But Jim was getting ready to leave for Peru and sent her off a quick note saying he was leaving the country.

Theresa knew he was a Captain and medic in the Army Rangers but Jim had never told her about his black ops training and secret missions. Jim didn't want to worry her and he knew she would worry. Instead, he gave her information about Peru and promised to call when he got back and then he had gone to a mission that would change his life forever.

SEPTEMBER 1990

Eighteen months after the mission to Peru began, it ended when Jim was rescued and returned to the States. His mission had been sabotaged right at the start, his helicopter shot down over the jungle of Peru by people who had been informed his team was coming. His men had been killed in the crash and he had been seriously injured and taken in by an indigenous tribe, the Chopec. With their aid he had completed his mission, keeping the Chopec Pass free of drug runners. His first phone call once outside of the jungle was to Theresa to let her know he had survived in the jungle. Unfortunately, he soon found out that Theresa had died a year ago; her heart having given out. Knowing there was no one else he needed to contact and disgusted with the army, Jim had resigned his commission and traveled to Seattle to visit Theresa's grave. Theresa's cousin Emma met him there and handed over some things Theresa had left for

him. He then moved back to Cascade, where he joined the police force. In all that time, he never heard from William or Steven and was content not to hear from them.

PART TWO – THE ELLISON FAMILY (STEVEN AND WILLIAM)

JUNE 1996

RAINIER UNIVERSITY

Seated at one end of the large conference table in the Chancellor's office at Rainier University, William Ellison considered the woman before him. Chancellor Edwards was, in William's opinion, a greedy, self-serving woman. She was pleasant enough to look at, well put together, especially considering she was no longer a young woman. Her short reddish-brown hair framed her face and showed a high brow and an utterly false smile. William recognized the cold, power-hungry and calculating persona hidden behind that smile. And she was just the kind of person he needed. Beside him, his son Steven shifted impatiently as he sipped a cup of coffee Edwards' secretary had delivered. The paper cup he had been handed annoyed William. A university as wealthy and famous as Rainier should provide better tableware for guests. But, in a way, he understood the message this particular type of cup delivered. Edwards did not hold him as extremely influential or useful; if she did, the coffee would have been served on fine china.

Still, she was seeing him and providing him with some refreshment and that said something about his status as well.

"So, Mr. Ellison," she smiled. "I understand you need an anthropologist."

William Ellison nodded. "I have acquired a large collection of artifacts from South America and would like to have them authenticated and then set up a museum-like display at my company's main office and I would need a write up on the items for the museum."

"I see," Chancellor Edwards answered thoughtfully. "You do know that you could hire an appraiser and a set designer."

"Yes," Ellison nodded, "but I would prefer someone associated with Rainier. More than just authenticating the material, I am looking for someone who would collaborate with my son Steven, so that he is listed as a contributor. And, of course, I would compensate the university for the time and trouble."

At the idea of compensation Edwards smiled and she glanced at the haughty young man sitting beside Ellison, realizing the father was trying to improve his son's image by listing him as a contributor to the project. Of course, the son would have nothing to contribute but would be seen in a better light. Edwards looked over Steven Ellison a bit more critically, sizing him up. He looked about thirty-five with light brown hair and hazel eyes. He was average height and well built, not muscular, but not thin. All in all, he would be considered handsome but for the scowl that seemed to perpetually mar his face. "Your son has some connection to the artifacts?"

"Yes, he acquired the artifacts," William answered.

"Should I ask how?"

"Is that pertinent?"

Edwards considered the question and then shook her head. If she didn't ask, she could honestly say she didn't know they were obtained illegally. "The head of our Anthropology Department, Dr. Eli Stoddard, is renowned. Unfortunately, he is out of the country at a symposium. His assistant, Dr. Sandburg, could do the job."

“Is he competent?”

“Extremely,” Edwards answered. “He would not be Stoddard’s handpicked assistant if he weren’t. And he would be more likely to collaborate than Dr. Stoddard.”

“When can we meet him?”

Edwards considered both men and shrugged before picking up her phone and calling her secretary. “Can you get me Blair Sandburg’s schedule? I need to know when he has office hours.”

A few minutes later, Edwards smiled. “He’s in his office now. I’ve asked him to come here.”

Ellison nodded as Steven Ellison sipped a second cup of coffee, looking around the neat office with complete disinterest.

A few minutes later, there was a knock at the door and Blair Sandburg entered, moving forward and smiling nervously. “You needed to see me, Chancellor?” he asked politely, as she indicated William Ellison.

“Good afternoon, Dr. Sandburg. This is William Ellison and his son Steven Ellison. They came to the university looking for some help with some South American artifacts.”

Blair turned and smiled at the men putting his hand out, across the table to shake William’s hand. “Hello,” he offered as William rose and shook his hand and then Blair turned to shake Steven’s hand. The younger Ellison stood and leaned forward smiling as he put out his hand. The look on Steven’s face almost made Blair pull his hand back. Steven looked like a predator and Blair was the first meal he’d seen in days. Pausing fractionally at the unadulterated leer he was receiving from Steven, Blair took a step back, his hand on his jeans where he wiped it against his leg as if he had touched something slimy. “You were saying something about South American artifacts?” he questioned.

“Yes,” William answered. “We acquired some South American artifacts and need to have them authenticated, have the history of the area and tribe where they came from written up, and an appropriate display set up.”

“May I ask how you acquired these artifacts?” Blair asked, aware of Edwards’ scowl at the question.

William smiled. “Ellison Enterprises has many holdings in South America and Steven,” he indicated his son, “was among the team that uncovered the items in a deserted stretch of Peruvian jungle. He sent them back here to be used for an exhibition of native arts that Ellison Enterprises is supporting.”

“I see,” Blair answered, and he did. Ellison Enterprises had stolen artifacts from Peru and wanted to present them in an effort to show that they were supporting the indigenous people of Peru, not just exploiting them.

“We have set aside an area to be used as a display. When will you be able to come and begin?”

Blair noted that William Ellison said “when will you,” “not will you.” “I am free after two tomorrow.”

“Good,” William nodded. “Steven will meet you at the building and will show you the artifacts.” William rose, indicating the meeting was over. “Chancellor, thank you. Dr. Sandburg, we will see you tomorrow.”

Standing at his father's side, Steven nodded and turned to leave a last leering look passing over Blair.

William was nothing if not thorough and within hours had a file on Dr. Blair Sandburg. The doctor was something of a genius with a hippy, fly-by-night mother. He had entered Rainier at the age of 16, had his master's by the age of 20 and had been awarded his doctorate in anthropology in 1995. The young man's dissertation had been on The Role of the Tribal Sentinel as Compared to the Role of the Modern Day Police Officer. It sounded like a rather boring title to William, something that would be of little use in business, but a quick glance at the introduction made William freeze. In the introduction, Sandburg defined a sentinel as a tribal guardian with five heightened senses. The sentinel was one of the most important members of the tribe, and the tribe's prosperity was usually tied to the emergence of a sentinel among the people. Sentinels were rare and honored by the tribe. William closed his eyes, thinking back to Dr. Katz telling him Jimmy had five heightened senses. So, the freak had been a sentinel.

William dismissed the thought. He hadn't spoken with or considered Jimmy in years. Not since his son had entered the army. When Jimmy had gone missing in Peru, Steven had said something about trying to get hold of Jim's trust fund and company stock. Jim did have a sizable portfolio and a large holding in Ellison Enterprises. William owned a controlling interest - 40 percent of Ellison Enterprises, Steven owned 13 percent and Jimmy owned 13 percent. The company had actually been started with Grace Ellison's family money and she had insisted both boys have trust funds set up before any money was used for starting the business and that an equal percentage of the company be given to each boy, the yearly dividends to be deposited into the trust fund. The legal papers had been drawn up when the boys were very young.

Ellison had considered Steven's suggestion, only to discover that Jimmy had left a will and had left everything to Theresa and Thomas Romer and had arranged for them to make financial and legal decisions in his absence.

The Romers. William squinted, remembering the old couple. He had chosen them to take care of Jimmy because they wanted a quiet life in the country and were childless. William had planned on letting Jimmy stay with them until they could no longer be useful and then he had planned on having Jimmy declared incompetent. William would then have Jimmy put into a mental institution under an assumed name and that would be the end of his concerns. But the Romers had not only taught Jimmy, but helped him learn to deal with his freakish senses. And they had made sure Ellison couldn't have Jimmy put away. He had underestimated them and their concern for their charge, but it didn't matter. Jimmy had renounced any relationship with the Ellisons, so for the most part, William had ignored and forgotten him.

William wondered if Jimmy still was a freak or if he had outgrown it. It really didn't matter. He had heard his son had become a successful detective but he hadn't felt a need to reach out to him.

Blair Sandburg glanced up at the large office building situated in the heart of downtown Cascade. Above the door, the sign Ellison Enterprises was displayed prominently and Blair adjusted his jacket and made sure his hair was tied back before walking into the lobby. White marble floors and high ceilings adorned the main entrance and he walked over to the security desk as the guard looked up politely.

"I have an appointment with Mr. Steven Ellison," he said. "My name is Blair Sandburg."

The guard looked over his sheet and nodded, asked for ID, and had Blair sign in before directing him to an elevator bank. In no time, Blair was on the 8th floor and stepping onto extremely expensive carpeting before two large glass doors that led to a giant office with a desk in one corner. Steven Ellison was standing in the middle of the otherwise empty room, near several large wooden crates.

Seeing Steven Ellison waiting, Blair took a deep breath, aware of how uncomfortable the man made him, before he pushed through the glass doors and nodded to Steven as he glanced at the various crates.

"Good afternoon," Steven offered with a smile and Blair watching him once again noted the leer as Steven glanced over him. It made Blair feel dirty. "I've had the custodial staff open the crates but they haven't touched the items inside. If needed, I can provide a secretary ready to take notes on the artifacts as we work."

Blair nodded looking around. "Let's start by unpacking the artifacts," he suggested and moved to the crate furthest from Steven.

First donning gloves and then pulling off the cover, Blair carefully rummaged through the packaging, slowly unwrapping a ceremonial knife. "A Tumi," Blair whispered, his voice almost reverent as he held the Peruvian ceremonial knife, one hand stroking the long blade.

"A Tumi?" Steven asked.

Blair nodded. "A ceremonial knife, it's in perfect condition." Continuing, not even aware that Steven was standing behind him, leaning over him, Blair moved from crate to crate unpacking pottery bowls, some carved with faces, vases, jewelry, many pieces set with turquoise, even spears and hunting knives. He identified each item, recording the information on a small tape recorder as he moved from box to box. Finally, finishing up the last crate, he stood and stretched his back and turned, finding Steven in his personal space.

Taking a step back, Blair looked up at Steven Ellison, all the while holding the small tape recorder. "I've catalogued the artifacts in the room. There are twenty-two and you will have to decide what kind of displays you may..." Blair's voice trailed off as Steven reached out to twirl a finger around one of Blair's long curls that had fallen loose from his hair tie.

"Why don't we take a break," Steven suggested. "We could go into my private office and have a bite."

Blair didn't want to know what Steven wanted to bite and shook his head, his hair falling from Steven's hand as he stepped around Steven, putting some distance between them. "No thanks, man."

"You can't tell me you've never been with a man, not with the way you look."

Blair thought about giving a lecture on appearances and preconceived notions of sexuality but decided it wouldn't be worth it. He had no desire to cast pearls before swine. Also, though he couldn't deny he had been with a man, that didn't mean he wasn't selective about partners or promiscuous. "I'm not interested," he repeated. "So, let's discuss the display set-up."

Steven nodded and Blair breathed a silent sigh of relief. Turning, he glanced around the room, noting the space and pointing to empty areas. "We are going to need glass cases on pedestals that are bolted down to hold artifacts, special lighting and controls for humidity and temperature-" Blair stopped with a yelp as Steven's hands encircled his waist, one hand reaching down to grab his crotch. Anger at this unwanted and uninvited attention bubbled up in Blair and he turned in Steven's arms, balling his hand into a fist. "Don't touch me," he yelled in Steven's face as his fist connected with Steven's chin. "I said No."

Steven staggered back at the blow. "Not good enough for you, Professor?" he snarled, rubbing his face. He glared at Blair. "Well, we'll see about that. Leave a list of things we need and I'll take care of it." Spinning, he stormed out of the room.

Blair stared at the departing figure in disbelief. And then, reaching in his pocket, his hands shaking slightly, he pulled out the small tape recorder, realizing, with some relief, it had recorded the whole disgusting scene.

Using the tape recorder as a guide, he pulled a pad of paper from his backpack and wrote up all his notes on the artifacts, the special housings they would need, and how they should be displayed, adding a general sketch of how they could be displayed. Finishing, he took out a camera, took pictures of all the artifacts and then called down to security to have someone come and lock up the room.

The security guard was there within moments and locked up, Blair leaving with him.

Three hours later, Blair was in his office grading papers when Steven Ellison sauntered in without so much as the courtesy of knocking. He smiled, a cold feral look on his face, as he stared at the anthropologist. "You are no one," he said coldly, closing the door. "And you don't get to say no to me. I'm an Ellison."

"I already have," Blair answered, standing, a hand on his phone even as another reached unobtrusively in his pocket to turn on his tape recorder.

"Pick up that phone and I'll have you accused of stealing an artifact. That Tumi thing has gone missing."

"It was there when I left."

"It isn't now. And if I call the police, they will find it in that warehouse you call a home." Steven moved closer and Blair noted he reeked of alcohol. In the back of his head, Blair realized that Steven Ellison must know where he lived. Blair did live in a converted warehouse.

"Get out," Blair answered, angrily. "The answer is still no."

Steven shook his head and turned to go. "You can't say I didn't give you a chance. A little time with me on your hands and knees and you could have kept the Tumi thing." Steven turned and walked out.

Blair watched him leave and then picked up the phone, dialing campus security.

Twenty minutes later, Suzanne Tomaki, head of Rainier security, sat in Blair's office listening to the tape. "The man is disgusting," she mumbled softly as Blair nodded. "So, you think he broke in and put the object in your apartment."

“That would be my guess.”

“I can go with you to the apartment and check it out. But he may have been lying and was bluffing, just trying to coerce you. In either case, you should contact the police. I have connections on the force. I could call a friend in Major Crimes.” She smiled in memory. “It’s funny but his name is also Ellison, though I doubt they’re related.”

Blair considered it. “Maybe I should check and see if Steven Ellison did break in, first. I don’t want to start accusing Ellison of something he didn’t do.”

Suzanne nodded her understanding. “Do you need me to go with you?”

Blair considered the offer and shook his head. “I’ll call if I find anything.”

“Okay,” Suzanne agreed. “In the meantime, I’ll personally log this info, just in case questions come up later.” She turned to the door but turned back. “Dr. Sandburg, make sure you contact the police.” Blair nodded as he gathered his stuff and grabbed his car keys.

On the way to his apartment, Blair considered what had happened. If Steven felt comfortable doing this, then the chances were he’d done it to someone else and gotten away with it or, because of his wealth, had never been rejected. Deciding if he did find out that Steven had broken into his house, he’d report it to the police, he made his way home.

Forty minutes later, Blair entered his apartment and looked around. Blair’s home was drafty and not in the best part of town, but it was cheap, and on an assistant professor’s salary, all Blair could afford.

He walked around looking for anything out of place but after a few minutes decided no one had been there. Putting his stuff down, he called campus security and let Suzanne Tomaki know he hadn’t found anything out of place and then made a cup of tea. Sipping it, he considered what he should do about Steven Ellison.

The man had threatened him and groped him, but he wasn’t sure if that amounted to anything more than a minor harassment complaint. Considering it, but knowing he had to do something lest Steven try this on someone else, Blair decided to complain to the senior Ellison. Let William put a leash on his son. Having decided on the course of action, Blair finished his tea, and ordering a pizza, sat down to work on an anthropology article he was writing.

Two hours later, Suzanne Tomaki called. “Hello Dr. Sandburg,” she said over the phone. “I think you should come back to the university. Someone from Ellison Enterprises called Chancellor Edwards to complain that you walked off with an artifact.”

“What? That asshole complained about me! I’m on my way,” Blair grabbed his jacket, the small recorder and his keys and headed for the door, his anger mounting.

At Rainier, there were three security guards and a cop in his office when Blair arrived. Nodding to Suzanne Tomaki, he stepped into the office as the cop came over.

“Dr. Sandburg, I’m Officer Howard. I’ve been discussing your case with Chief Tomaki. She was explaining the circumstances.” The cop glanced at his paperwork. “We can resolve this quickly and easily if you wouldn’t mind coming with me.”

"Where do you want to go?"

"The station. I'll have you write up a statement."

Blair nodded his understanding as the cop indicated the door and Blair, with a glance at Suzanne, walked out following Officer Howard.

Blair started towards his car but the cop stopped him. "You should come with me." He opened the backdoor.

"But my car—"

"You can retrieve it later," Officer Howard insisted and Blair got in the patrol car, watching the route as they drove to the station house, his anger mounting.

At the precinct, Blair was led to an interview room where he filled out a statement, signing it. Finishing, he handed it to Officer Howard and stood, expecting to go home. "Dr. Sandburg, if you would be willing to wait a few more moments," Officer Howard asked. "Mr. Ellison is on his way here."

"What, so I can face my accuser?"

"No, Mr. William Ellison. He asked to speak with you." Blair sat back down and Officer Howard smiled, relieved. "Can I get you something? Soda? Coffee?"

Blair shook his head, sitting back and waiting until William Ellison was led into the room by Officer Howard.

"Dr. Sandburg," he inclined his head and turned to the cop. "I would like to speak with the doctor alone," he practically ordered the cop from the room.

Officer Howard shifted uncomfortably, his eyes going to Blair who gave a small nod of consent. "I'll be outside," he answered.

William Ellison took a seat and looked Blair over. "Dr. Sandburg, I understand that you have proof that my son was trying...was involved with you."

"Involved? Mr. Ellison, your son groped me, threatened me and tried to blackmail me," Blair answered angrily.

Ellison sighed and looked down. "My son has issues, Dr. Sandburg. What can I do to make this difficult situation go away?"

"Issues," Blair scoffed, "your son should go to jail."

Ellison sat back. "I will give you my word that I will get Steven into therapy and that this will not happen again. And, of course, I would compensate you."

"I don't think you get it. If he's done this to me, he's probably done this to someone else and gotten away with it. He is a danger."

“And if you will forgo charges, I will make sure he is no longer a danger. And, I say again, I will compensate you.”

“I don’t want your money,” Blair spat out, wondering why the rich always felt money was the solution to everything. Pushing his hands through his hair, he stood and paced the room, his loud footsteps reflecting his mood.

“What if I were to find your greatest desire?”

“My greatest desire?” Blair stopped pacing and turned to William Ellison.

“I understand you have been searching for a sentinel. What if I could find one?”

Blair paused looking over the older man. “You can’t,” he said softly.

“And if I could?”

“I don’t believe this. You know a sentinel?”

“Are we agreed upon the terms?”

“I need to know this will never happen to anyone again.”

William Ellison nodded. “Dr. Sandburg, you wouldn’t understand this, coming as you do from a different background, but people like Steven have lived with a certain level of accommodation and would not function well without it. I can use that to rein in my son. You have my word, I will put Steven into therapy and monitor his behavior more closely in the future.”

“You are going to cut his purse strings?”

William sat back and watched the anthropologist. “Among other things.”

Blair nodded his agreement.

“Will you give me some time to gather information on my compensation?”

Blair nodded again and William rose. “Oh, and you need to call Rainier and let them know I did not walk off with an artifact.”

“I will see to it, and I do apologize.” William turned and walked out.

While William was talking with Blair, Steven Ellison stood in a large warehouse by the waterfront of Cascade’s industrial area and looked over at the heavysset man seated before him, shifting uncomfortably, all too aware of the henchmen on either side of him. “Listen Larry, I don’t have all of the money. I can get half.”

“Steven,” Larry shook his head. “Half is not good enough.” Larry’s eyes lingered over Steven’s hand. “Maybe, I should take off one of your fingers to give you some incentive to get the other half.”

“Larry,” Steven whispered, hating that his voice shook as he looked at the loan shark. In the dim light of the warehouse, the loan shark looked more like Jabba the Hutt than a human. “I have half the cash, but I have stock worth the rest of the debt. I was going to sell it to get your money.”

“Stock?” Larry answered thoughtfully and waved a hand, the two bodyguards/henchmen stepping back. “Do I look like the kind of person who keeps stock?”

“Preferred stock in Ellison Enterprises. I’ll sell 500 shares; it will be worth \$50,000.”

Larry leaned forward in his leather chair and looked at Steven Ellison, his eyes once again studying Steven’s fingers. “How many shares do you own?”

Steven glanced at the man, nervously. “750 shares of the company.”

Larry nodded thoughtfully. “And each share is worth \$100?” Larry watched Steven nod. “I’ll take all 750 shares and the \$50,000 and consider the debt paid.”

“That’s more than I owe,” Steven started to protest but stopped as Larry leaned forward to pat his face, his beefy hand smacking hard enough to bring tears to Steven’s eyes.

“That’s the vig. You should have had the money ready. Next time don’t gamble money you don’t have.”

Steven looked away and nodded. “I’ll sell the stock; it will take a few days.”

“No need. I’ll take the stock,” Larry looked at the briefcase Steven was carrying. “Are the stocks in there or do I have to send someone with you to get them?”

“They’re here,” Steven admitted, reluctantly, opening and pulling out the shares. “I’ll still have to arrange the transfer.”

“I’ll let you know when I want you to,” Larry answered with a chilling smile before turning to the henchmen. “Show Mr. Ellison out.”

The men nodded and led Steven none too gently out the door of the warehouse. Parked in front was Steven’s Jaguar. Slipping in behind the wheel he gave a sigh of relief that his body was still whole before driving to his apartment. He was going to have to find some way of transferring a large share of Ellison stock without letting his father know. The last thing he needed was for his father to find out he had been gambling again.

William owned 40 percent of Ellison Enterprises, Steven had originally owned 13 percent and somewhere or other, his brother Jimmy owned 13 percent. Both of the Ellison sons had trust funds set up and the yearly stock dividend had been deposited in the trust fund. The legal papers had been drawn up when the boys were very young with the stipulation that neither boy could touch the money until the age of 25. Steven, now 33 years old, had already gone through his million dollar trust fund and, because of gambling debts, had sold off 12% of his company stocks. He often wondered if his brother Jimmy had ever touched his. When Jimmy had been declared MIA in Peru, Steven had tried to get both the trust fund and the other 13 percent of the company but Theresa Romer’s lawyer had informed the younger brother that until Jim was missing for seven years he couldn’t be declared dead and therefore his assets could not be touched. Shaking his head in annoyance, Steven wondered what a soldier, now a detective, needed with that kind of money.

As he pulled into his parking space beside the building, Steven straightened his shoulders, not wanting to look like some whipped puppy, and exited the car walking past the doorman without a glance and taking the elevator up to the 23rd floor.

Going into the apartment, he went to a wall safe and, opening it, pulled out the contents pushing aside a handgun he had won in a poker game. Dismally, he inventoried what was left of his net worth. When Larry gave him the word he would contact a broker and transfer the stock. He would be \$125,000 poorer and would lose any dividends from the stock.

He knew his father would have a fit if he found out about the stocks, but there was nothing else he could do short of killing Larry. Going to the bar, he opened a bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue and poured himself a double scotch, downing it as he considered the day. First, that anthropologist had turned him down, now this. This was a day of hell. What's worse, he was fairly broke. He'd lost a lot of money gambling at the race track recently and had just agreed to give up what remained of his trust fund and his stock. That meant he'd have to behave for the old man until he could think of a way to talk him out of some money.

He didn't have to worry about the apartment or utilities: dear old dad footed the bill for those things but there would be no money for other things. He was just thinking over what he would cut out (for the time being) when security called to tell him William Ellison was on his way up. "Sure, why not," Steven said aloud to the empty room. "What's one more problem on top of all the others?"

Going to the door, he opened it, leaning against it, scotch in hand and watched his father come down the hall. "Steven," William nodded as he entered the apartment. "We have some things to discuss."

Steven shrugged, closing the door and following his father in. "Want something to drink?" he asked and William looked him over, noting with some displeasure the large glass of scotch.

"Have you any idea where I've come from?" William asked taking a seat in the living room.

Steven debated saying "Larry the Loan Shark's warehouse," but decided against it. "The office?"

"The police station, where I kept Dr. Sandburg from having you arrested on a number of charges." Steven had the decency to look away. "He had a tape of you outlining your threats." William waited for a response but all Steven did was swallow the rest of the amber liquid in his glass. "I've had to make some concessions to keep you out of prison."

When there was no response, William continued. "I've agreed to put you in therapy. I have also given my word that nothing like this will happen again. And, I am going to limit your funds.

"You will be expected to work at the office from 9 to 5 daily, and I will make sure that you are there."

Thinking over the fact that he had just lost the last of his trust fund, Steven nodded. "What about Sandburg?"

"What about him?"

"He has one of our artifacts," Steven answered.

"You left one in his house?"

“No, his office.”

William shook his head, wondering how he had gone so wrong with Steven. “He’ll return it.” He stood. He still had to deal with the sentinel business. “I’ll see you in the morning.” He paused at the door. “Steven, I am choosing a therapist and a bodyguard tomorrow.”

“Bodyguard?”

“I gave my word that this would not happen again. As of now you have a bodyguard, who, by the way, will answer to me.”

“You might as well call him a babysitter,” Steven answered bitterly.

William shrugged. “It is apparent you need one.” Turning, he took a look over his son wondering how Steven, who had been given all the advantages of growing up in a rich and powerful family, had turned out so badly. Shaking his head he went to his car.

Steven watched him go as he gently shook the glass, ice clinking softly. Having a bodyguard meant he would have very little freedom, especially if he sold all his Ellison stocks. It didn’t seem fair that Larry was asking for so much more than had been agreed upon. Downing yet another scotch, he went to the wall safe and again looked through his finances.

William drove home and, after parking in his garage, went into his study, pouring himself a snifter of cognac and looking at his left desk drawer. Finally, with a sigh, he unlocked the drawer and pulled out a folder. Across the top were the words James Joseph Ellison. Opening the folder, William looked over the information he had kept on his elder son. Near the bottom of the file was a 22-year-old report from Dr. Katz that catalogued and described the heightened senses of then 14-year-old James.

Closing the folder and putting it back in the drawer, he glanced at the phone. As much as he hated to do it, William would call Jimmy and see if he would help out with this situation. He hadn’t spoken to his older son in more than 15 years.

Over the years he had kept up with his son’s career. He had read about his return after being MIA in a Peru for 18 months, followed his successful career as a high-profile detective and read about his award when he was recognized as Cop of the Year.

But after William had cut all ties with Jim, he’d never felt the need to speak with Jimmy. So there had been nothing but silence since he graduated college.

He wasn’t sure how he would approach Jimmy - he wasn’t even sure if Jimmy retained those heightened senses - but for Steven’s sake he would try.

He didn’t have Jimmy’s home phone number and he didn’t know his work schedule, so he looked up the number for Major Crimes.

“Major Crimes, may I help you,” a professional voice asked when he had finally dialed through several automated responses to get a live person.

"Hello, yes, may I speak with Detective Jim Ellison."

"Is this an emergency?"

"No."

"Is this regarding a case?"

"Yes."

"Detective Ellison is not in the office. Should I put you through to his voice mail?"

William considered the question. If he went through to Jimmy's voice mail the chances were Jim would not return the call. Not that he would blame his son.

"I would rather not leave a message. Could you tell me what might be the best time to try and reach him?"

"You could try calling tomorrow around seven am. He usually checks his messages at that hour when he's on this shift."

"Thank you, I'll do that," William hung up the phone and considered his options. He could call Jimmy or go to the station. And as much as he hated the idea of going to the station, he was guaranteed that Jimmy couldn't hang up on him, if he went. Action decided, William sipped his drink as he made a mental list of things to do the next day.

His thoughts were interrupted by the ringing of the phone. "Hello," he said rather brusquely as he put down his cognac.

"Mr. Ellison," the man on the end of the phone asked.

"Speaking."

"My name is Larry Fowler and I have some Ellison stock I'd be willing to sell you for, say, one hundred thousand dollars."

"What the hell are you talking about?" William demanded.

"Your son just turned it over to me. Perhaps, we could discuss a sale."

The Major Crimes bullpen was not a quiet place. There was a constant bustle of movement and noise, even at seven in the morning, as people moved around shouting to each other, phones ringing, suspects and witnesses moving in and out, accompanied, by cops.

Jim Ellison was used to the noise. Theresa and Thomas Romer had taught him how to suppress his senses, and Incacha, the shaman of the Chopec Indians, had helped him use them when he was in the jungle but had also made sure he could suppress them until his companion appeared. Jim hadn't understood what he was talking about when Incacha mentioned a companion but Incacha had told him the spirits had

shown the shaman that Enquiri (as the Chopec called Jim) would be sentinel to the Great City and would stand with a shaman at his side.

Walking into the bullpen and heading to his desk, Jim nodded to Joel Taggart, Captain of the Bomb Squad. A heavysset black man, Joel had a gentle soul and easy going manner that made him a good ear for police officers. "Hi Jim," he smiled, "great job on the Slocum bust. I heard you even got a confession."

Jim leaned back in his seat and smiled. "Once he and his lawyer saw the pile of evidence," Jim shrugged, but the smile brightened.

Taggart nodded. "Someone came looking for you this morning while you were with the DA. He's in Simon's office."

"Looking for me?" Jim questioned, and Taggart nodded.

"Yeah, Simon asked that you go in."

Jim nodded, rising and walking to Simon Banks', Captain of Major Crimes, door. Knocking lightly, he didn't wait for a reply, but entered and stopped in his tracks, shock evident on his face. Sitting at Simon's small conference table was his father. Jim had seen William Ellison's face off and on in the newspaper's business section over the years but had given little thought to the man, not expecting to ever hear from him.

"Good morning, Jim," Simon said, noting the cold impassive look that very quickly replaced shock on Jim's face. Simon had been introduced to William Ellison that morning and had wondered why Jim never mentioned how influential and well-off his family was. But watching Jim's reaction, he could guess this was not a typical family.

"Good morning, Captain," Jim answered automatically, turning his attention back to his father. "Good morning, Mr. Ellison." He turned back to Simon. "Is there a problem he needs help with?" The cold tone of voice confirmed Simon's suspicions.

"Mr. Ellison came looking for you," Simon nodded to the older man and rose from his seat. "I need to talk with Joel about the Slocum bust - good job by the way - and I'll be back..." he wasn't sure how long Jim would need, "later," he finished.

Jim nodded as Simon walked past him, the Captain closing the door on his way out.

Stepping further into the room, Jim took a moment to study his father. At 17, when William had visited Jim in the country for the last time, Jim had already towered over him, but William was still strong and intimidating. It took Jim a minute to get used to the fact that this worn and old William was the same man.

"Is there something you want here?" he asked as he moved over to the conference table taking a seat as far from his father as he could.

"Hello, Jimmy," William said quietly. William had known this was going to be a difficult meeting but he hadn't expected to be shocked when he saw his son. "Handsome," didn't come close to describing his elder son's fine features, blue eyes and impressive frame. In the back of his mind, he wished Steven looked half as good. "I need your help, and I understand that you have no reason to help but I will

compensate you. I know the Chief of Police and could probably get you a promotion or, if you don't want that, I could offer you some financial gains."

"What do you want?" Jim asked again a bit more coldly, not wanting to hear what his father offered. There was nothing that William had that Jim could want.

William drew in a deep breath. "Steven got into some trouble at Rainier with a doctor. I've already arranged for Steven to enter into therapy and the doctor agreed to drop any charges. But, the doctor has been studying sentinels and has been searching for one. I promised him I would find him a sentinel."

"A sentinel," Jim repeated.

"Yes, it seems a sentinel is someone with five heightened senses. Like you had when you were 14." William paused. He didn't know if Jim still had heightened senses. He certainly seemed to live a normal life.

For his part, Jim already knew what a sentinel was thanks to Incacha, but he wasn't going to confirm for his father that he still had heightened senses. He wasn't going to do more than boot his father out of the station.

"If you would let this doctor do a bit of research on you, it would help Steven."

Jim looked at William with disgust. "Let me put this into perspective," he began coldly. "For 15 years I haven't heard from you. As a matter of fact, your last request was that I never contact you or Steven. Then you turn up and ask me to become a guinea pig for some scientist, to keep Steven out of trouble."

William nodded, noting with a degree of respect that Jimmy cut straight to the heart of the matter. "I would compensate you for your time and trouble."

Jim rose and indicated the door, fighting to keep his anger in check. "Get out before I bodily throw you out. And don't ever contact me again."

William looked up in surprise before deciding his son had every right to be angry with him. "I didn't think you would want to help your brother," he admitted, standing. "But I had to ask." Jim said nothing and William turned and walked out the door.

Jim was sitting at Simon's conference table twenty minutes later when Simon returned. Seeing his detective's stone face, he went and got two cups of coffee, handing one to Jim. "I didn't know your father was William Ellison of Ellison Enterprises."

Jim shrugged. "I haven't spoken to the man in 15 years. Not since I left for college."

"He disinherited you?"

Jim laughed but there was a bitter note to it. "You have to be an heir to be disinherited," he said softly. "My father hated me because I inherited some unique traits from my mother's side of the family."

"What traits?"

"You remember I told you how I have extremely strong hearing and sight and sometimes they could be a problem, causing me headaches?" Simon nodded. "My father called me a freak because of it and sent me to live in the country, isolated, so I wouldn't be an embarrassment to him."

"Shit," Simon whispered softly. "So what did he want?"

"It seems his son," Jim used the phrase deliberately, not acknowledging any familial link to Steven and admitting William didn't consider Jim his son, "got himself into trouble. To get out of it, he promised some doctor he could use me as a research subject."

Simon shook his head in disgust. "And he expected you to go along with this."

"Not really, but he felt he needed to try for his son's sake."

"I'm sorry, Jim."

"It's all water under the bridge. I haven't thought of myself as having family since Theresa Romer died."

"Theresa Romer?"

"When my father sent me away, he hired a retired teacher and mechanic to take care of me; Theresa and Thomas Romer. They were a childless couple and treated me like I was their son. Truthfully, I considered them my parents. They cared about me and I enjoyed being with them. They died while I was in the service."

Simon thought this over a moment, realizing it explained Jim's behavior when it came to family holidays and traditions – not hostile, but distant.

"What kind of trouble is..." Simon paused, not wanting to say "your brother."

"Steven," Jim interjected.

"Steven Ellison in?" Simon finished.

Jim considered the question. "My father said something about Steven getting in trouble with a doctor at Rainier. That's all I know, but Steven was always a nasty, spoiled kid. He would blame me for whatever he did wrong and, of course, my father believed him." Jim paused for a moment and then looked at Simon. "Going to live with the Romers was the best thing that ever happened to me."

Simon nodded, not sure what to say. He knew Jim and he knew Jim was a decent guy, hardworking and honest. He couldn't imagine a father thinking Jim was some kind of freak just because his senses were stronger than other peoples. "I'm sorry: you deserve better."

"Like I said, water under the bridge," Jim answered softly, rising. "I'd better get the Slocum report done."

Simon, knowing there was nothing he could say that could make Jim feel better, nodded and watched his lead detective walk out.

Jim was just putting the finished Slocum report in Simon's inbox when Detective Henri Brown, aka H, and his partner, Detective Rafe, came walking in the bullpen. "Hey, Jim," H called, moving over to his own desk and dropping some notes. Jim glanced over and waved.

At first glance, H and Rafe seemed complete opposites. H, a tall black man with a high brow and a bald head, had a taste for Hawaiian print shirts, and Rafe, a white man with a full head of carefully coiffed hair, dressed in clothes out of GQ. But as partners each complemented the other's strengths, making them a successful pair.

Dropping his jacket on the back of his chair, Brown walked over to Jim. "You are never going to believe this but Larry Fowler was murdered in his warehouse down on Pier Street. He'd been shot in the chest."

"Larry Fowler?" Jim answered with a raised eyebrow. "Larry the Loan Shark and gun runner? Who took him out?"

H shrugged. "We're going to have to find out. The gossip is the case is being bumped up to us."

"Shouldn't Homicide or Vice get the case?" Jim asked.

Rafe shook his head, joining the conversation. "You know there was a lot of talk about him having connections inside Cascade PD, which is why we never caught him with any weapons dealer. I guess IA thinks we're honest."

"What it means," Jim clarified, his voice reflecting disgust, "is that IA is going to be breathing down our necks as we deal with this case."

After his meeting, William went home and straight to his study, sitting in the leather chair at his desk and going over the meeting with Jim. "I knew you wouldn't agree, Jimmy," he said softly imagining his son standing in the room. Closing his eyes, he could see his fourteen-year-old son. "And I can't really blame you. You always had a sense of pride and strong character. Stronger than your brother's, it seems. You worked your way through college, became an army officer, carried out a mission by organizing a local tribe and became a successful officer."

William sighed. "Steven could never hold a candle to you in school. Hell, he barely made it through college with tutors and me footing the bill.

"Where did I go so wrong?" he asked aloud, rubbing his face with his hands. "And how do I fix it? Jimmy you deserve better."

Shaking his head sadly, William pulled out the file on 14-year-old Jimmy. Despite the fact that he knew what he was about to do was wrong, William acknowledged that he had created Steven and so he had the responsibility of protecting him. Glancing at the folder, he considered what to do. He had told Dr. Sandburg he would find a sentinel and he had. If Jimmy wouldn't help, well then this medical file would.

Picking up his phone, William glanced over at Dr. Sandburg's phone number and dialed.

"Hello," William heard the young man answer in a cheerful voice.

"Dr. Sandburg, this is Bill Ellison."

"Hello Mr. Ellison." The voice was far more cautious.

"I would like a meeting with you. Would you be willing to come to Ellison Enterprises' main office?"

"Okay," Blair answered slowly, and William could hear suspicion in the voice.

"Say, two o'clock?" William asked.

"That will be fine."

"Very good, I'll see you then." William hung up. He knew what he was doing was another betrayal of his elder son but he had little choice, or so he told himself. Looking through the medical information one last time, William put the file in a large manila envelope, addressing it to Dr. Blair Sandburg, and slipped the envelope into his briefcase. This morning, he would go into the office a little later than usual because of his visit to the PD. Once there, he would arrange to interview someone to act as Steven's bodyguard. He knew Steven would hate being under such scrutiny but his son's lack of self-control made it necessary. Then he would meet with Dr. Sandburg. Deciding he would not have his son a part of that particular encounter, he made his way into breakfast.

William, following his self-made itinerary, called a protective service company and they sent three men over for interviewing. Each signed a non-disclosure contract before speaking with William and then William outlined his needs. Two of the three had experiences in executive protection and the third had worked, handling dignitaries. All three men seemed competent and none of them had the stereotypical appearance of a bodyguard.

Finally, deciding on Mr. Robert Mitchell, the two men entered into contract before Steven Ellison was called into his father's office to meet his new bodyguard.

Steven was not happy, but he went along. He couldn't do much else with his funds in short supply and so he agreed to the bodyguard and Mitchell followed Steven back to his own office at Ellison Enterprises.

In the meantime, Blair arrived at Ellison Enterprises and, after telling the guard he had an appointment with William, was shown into William's private office.

The office was impressive. Large leather chairs were placed before a massive mahogany desk. There was a Persian carpet on the floor and a bar in the corner of the room. Walking into the room made Blair feel small and he guessed that was the purpose. William Ellison would want the psychological advantage this room would afford when dealing with business.

"Good afternoon, Dr. Sandburg," William offered and, rising, shook Blair's hand "Please take a seat." Before he could say anything else, Blair handed over the Tumi knife that had been planted in his office.

William grimaced. "Thank you for returning this. As per our agreement, I have taken steps to ensure that this type of unpleasantness never happens again." He paused, glancing at the young man. "I apologize on behalf of my son." Slowly, almost reluctantly, he reached down and pulled out an envelope, handing it to Blair. "This is the compensation I promised you. It is the medical details on a sentinel."

Blair looked at the envelope and then at William, shock evident. He hadn't actually believed William would find a sentinel. "Go on - open it. Then you'll understand."

Blair did and realized he was looking at information about an Ellison. "My son was fourteen when my doctor realized what was causing Jimmy's headaches. His senses were heightened. He couldn't eat any

prepackaged foods. Loud noises and bright lights gave him headaches, he could only wear cottons and silks comfortably and sometimes he would complain about smells that no one else noticed. Sometimes he would even appear to be catatonic. I don't know if his senses are still heightened," William admitted. "But at fourteen I believe Jimmy was what you referred to as a sentinel."

Blair was still studying the papers but then he looked up. "You don't know if his senses are still online?"

William glanced away, uncomfortably. "Until this morning, I haven't seen or spoken to Jimmy in 15 years."

Blair tried to hide his shock and only nodded at this and William sighed, looking back at the anthropologist. "He's done alright, so the senses cannot be too much of a problem. He's a detective with Major Crimes: James Ellison. You would have to contact him if you wanted to know about his senses. But I believe I've kept my part of the bargain and found you a sentinel."

It was obvious from William's last statement that this was the end of the meeting. Placing the folder in the envelope Blair rose, and, with nothing more than a thank you and nod, left the building.

Walking out into the late afternoon sun, Blair glanced around, mostly in a daze. If these tests were correct, and at this point Blair had no reason to doubt them, then William Ellison had a son who was a sentinel.

Blair couldn't understand a father not speaking to his son in 15 years. Blair had no idea who his father was, but he couldn't conceive of not speaking to his mother, Naomi.

However, he was more than aware that the Ellisons were not quite the normal family. Thinking over the medical records he had been handed, Blair realized he couldn't just barge in on James Ellison and ask whether or not he was a sentinel. He would have to do a little research and find out about the man before contacting him. Deciding on this, he headed home and logged into his computer where a search of the name James Joseph Ellison pulled up the story of a hero found in the Peruvian jungle after 18 months.

Blair remembered reading that article at the time it was published. Jim Ellison had lived with the indigenous tribe and completed his mission to secure the Chopec Pass from drug runners. When Blair had read the article, he had been somewhat envious of Ellison. He had felt bad that the man had been stranded for 18 months and he certainly didn't want the Ranger's team killed in a helicopter crash, but the soldier had been accepted into the Chopec tribe. Anthropologically speaking, the Chopec did not accept outsiders into their tribe. At the time, he wondered how Jim had garnered such an honor. Of course, if he was a sentinel, the Chopec would see his value to the tribe and accept him.

There were other articles: one about Jim receiving the Cop of the Year award, a couple about high-profile arrests he had made. Looking at a grainy picture taken by a newspaper some months ago, Blair noted the stern face that had little resemblance to either William or Steven Ellison. Even in the bad picture, Blair could see Jim had classic good looks.

Finishing up on his research, and theorizing that Jim Ellison wasn't someone who would take well to manipulation and obfuscation, he decided the best approach would be an honest, direct one. Accordingly, he called the police station and dialed the extension for Major Crimes. When a woman with

a lovely voice answered, he asked for Detective Ellison and after a moment was transferred to the detective's line.

"Ellison," the man answered, and Blair decided he liked the voice. It was a strong, deep, no-nonsense voice.

"Detective Ellison, my name is Dr. Blair Sandburg. I'd like to make an appointment to speak with you."

"If this is regarding a crime—" Jim began but Blair cut in.

"No, it's a personal matter."

Jim looked at the phone and frowned. "Listen, Doc, if you are selling anything or—"

"No, Detective, nothing like that. I was given your name by someone who suggested you could help me."

Blair didn't want to say "by the father you haven't spoken to in 15 years." "Could I possibly meet with you for just a few minutes? Maybe, we could meet somewhere and grab a bite? My treat."

Jim considered the request and then shrugged. Perhaps, Dr. Sandburg had some information. It wouldn't be the first time he had been contacted by an informant. He had been planning on grabbing some food on the way home, so why not. "I'll meet you at the Wonderburger on 4th Avenue at six. I'll be driving a Ford F150."

"Thank you. I'll be there."

Blair hung up the phone and grimaced. How could a sentinel eat Wonderburger? Shaking his head in exasperation, Blair gathered some information to share with Detective Ellison.

PART THREE – INVESTIGATIONS

Blair was waiting outside Wonderburger when Jim pulled up and parked his truck. As Jim was getting out of the truck, Blair glanced over the man and decided the newspaper pictures didn't do him justice.

"Detective Ellison, I'm Blair Sandburg."

Jim glanced at the young man, automatically assessing his physical threat level, before nodding and shaking Blair's hand. He had, right after the phone call, run a check on Blair Sandburg. So, he knew the man had no criminal record and was a professor at Rainier. "Jim Ellison, how can I help you?"

Blair looked up into the clear blue eyes and wondered how to approach the topic of sentinels. He didn't want to say, "Your father gave me your medical records and I'd like to study you." He knew that wouldn't go over well. Deciding to delay the discussion, hoping food might give him inspiration on how to approach Detective Ellison, he turned indicating Wonderburger. "Why don't we talk over some food?"

Jim nodded and followed Blair into the fast food place where Blair insisted on paying for the food before the pair sat down in a back booth.

Having found no inspiration on how to approach the topic, Blair finally stated, "I'm not sure where to start." He could tell Jim was not the kind of guy who wasted words. "I guess I should tell you, your father gave me information about you."

A frown immediately darkened Jim's face and Blair could sense Jim's caution and anger rising in the tense lines of his body and set jaw at the mention of his father.

"What information?" Jim asked, dangerously soft, alarm bells going off as he remembered the conversation with dear old dad.

Blair sighed. "He shouldn't have given me any information without your permission, and I will keep this information confidential," he added quickly, "but he handed me some old medical records from when you were a kid because I've been researching sentinels for years. They were watchmen with heightened senses - like you had as a kid."

Jim pushed his food aside and glared at Blair. "You're right; my father shouldn't have given you any medical records, and I will want them back. You can send them to me at the station." He stood. "This meeting is over."

Jim started to walk from the table and Blair sprang up to follow him, reaching out a hand to rest on Jim's arm. "Wait Detective, please. Just hear me out. What your father did was wrong, but I can help you with your senses."

Jim paused, glaring at the hand on his arm, and Blair quickly pulled it away. "Look Sandburg, I don't want or need your help. I'm not some test subject."

"No, you are not," Blair agreed. "But you are a sentinel living in a hostile environment. Any urban setting would be."

Jim paused and looked around at the curious stares of the other patrons and then down into the earnest face of the young man beside him. Jim was a good judge of character - he had to be in his line of work -

and something told him Sandburg was on the up and up. Moving back to the table, he took a seat. "I'll give you ten minutes and then I am out of here." As Jim said this, he picked up a fry.

Blair nodded and took a seat across from him, food all but forgotten as he stared at Jim. "Sir Richard Burton, the explorer not the actor, wrote about tribal watchmen. He called them sentinels. They had heightened senses and could alert the tribe to changes in weather, game movement, approaching enemies. Sometimes a tribe's very existence depended on the sentinel's abilities to find food and shelter.

"I did my master's thesis on the history of sentinels in tribal cultures. My doctorate compared tribal sentinels to today's police force. I couldn't do my doctorate on how sentinels function in an urban environment because I couldn't find any that lived in a modern city. I've tested hundreds of people with heightened senses of smell and taste; perfume noses and sommeliers - but no one with all five senses heightened. And that's because a sentinel would find a city a hostile place to live. There's too much sensory input."

He looked at Jim with large, sapphire blue eyes pleading for understanding. "I'm sure there are sentinels out there struggling to survive and if I could study you, see how you cope with the day-to-day life in the city, I know I could help them as well."

Jim considered this thoughtfully. He knew he didn't want to be studied but natural curiosity made him ask, "Why did my father give you information on me? What happened with Steven?"

Blair looked down, a blush on his cheeks. "He wouldn't take no for an answer when I said I wasn't interested in him."

"What?" Jim's voice rose in shock and anger.

"He didn't," Blair paused and took a breath. "When I refused his advances he tried to accuse me of stealing an artifact and blackmail me into agreeing to um..." He waved a hand not finishing the sentence, knowing Jim would understand. "But I taped the encounter. Your father promised he would put your brother in therapy and that nothing like this would happen again."

"So that's why my father gave you information about me," Jim answered with disgust, knowing his father would never give out information about his "freak" son unless it would help the golden child, Steven.

Blair nodded. "There were no conditions attached. I didn't even know you were his son. He said if I dropped any charges against Steven Ellison he would give me information about a sentinel. I agreed, but only if your father could assure me this would never happen to anyone else. When I met with him, he said he took steps to keep this from happening again." Blair said this in practically one breath.

Jim considered him with a frown. "What steps?"

"I'm not exactly sure. He said he was putting Steven into therapy, he'd be watching over him and was limiting his funds."

"I'm sure limiting his funds will have an effect," Jim said with disgust. Jim knew that Steven had tried to get hold of his trust fund when Jim was missing in Peru and that Theresa Romer had stopped him. Jim had never touched the money, just letting it accumulate. He could, if he wanted, live comfortably off that trust fund for the rest of his life but Jim considered not working a wasted life.

Glancing over at the young man, Jim could see why Steven might be interested in Blair. The anthropologist had long curly hair that framed a handsome face with large lips, long eyelashes that, when he blinked, rested on high cheekbones and expressive, sapphire blue eyes. "Look, I'm not really-" He never got to finish his statement as there was a huge crash in the kitchen and Jim winced.

Blair watching him reached out a hand. "Breathe through the pain, man. Relax and let it go."

Jim did and nodded. "Thanks. Once in a while..." he paused.

"Once in a while unexpected loud sounds cause you pain," Blair answered. practically vibrating with excitement. "You are still a sentinel."

"Look, Sandburg-"

"How do you handle all the sensory input?" Blair interrupted speaking quickly. "I mean you must be bombarded by all kinds of sights, smells and sounds. Hell, this room," Blair glanced around, "must be sending a mixed up bunch of smells at you. The conversations around you must be a constant buzzing irritant and florescent lights must be distracting, maybe even painfully so."

Jim looked around. Jim, when he had time, liked to surf and one thing he knew as a surfer was you don't fight a wave. For some reason he was getting the impression that Blair Sandburg was a large wave. "It's annoying," he admitted. Jim hesitated a moment and then added reluctantly, "My senses do cause migraines."

Blair nodded sympathetically. "Man, I can help you. Every sentinel had a companion who watched out for the sentinel. I can do that."

"I appreciate the offer, Chief, but I'm not a lab rat." Jim stood, leaving his food and starting for the door again.

"Wait, Detective," Blair pleaded and then continued in one fast breath, "There are things you need to know. Like about zone outs. In your job they could be deadly."

Jim stopped for a moment. When he was Peru, the village shaman, Incacha, had helped him with his senses. When Jim was leaving Peru, Incacha had told him he had been blessed by the Spirits and would find a shaman to be his companion in the Great City. Incacha's words running through his head, Jim looked at Blair. "Zone outs?" he asked.

"If you focus on one sense too long or too hard you can get lost in that sense and zone out. Tribal sentinels always had a partner to keep that from happening." And Jim could remember Incacha helping to use his senses and keeping him from doing just that. Incacha had warned him about relying on just one sense. He had insisted that Jim always use at least two senses when concentrating.

"I try not to focus on any of my senses," Jim admitted and Blair looked at him in shock.

"You're a detective and you don't use your heightened senses? Man, you are seriously undermining your strengths. With your senses, you could be a walking crime lab."

Jim shook his head and started for the door, Blair following. "Detective, please. Let me show you what you can do with your senses."

Jim stopped and turned, taking a breath and looking down into Blair's face, noting the earnest look. "Let's walk," he suggested.

Forgetting about the food, they walked outside: Jim heading for his truck, Blair beside him. "I know all this must sound crazy but it's not, Detective," Blair said softly. "And dealing with heightened senses is so much more difficult in a city. You need someone who knows what is going on to help you."

"Where's your car, Sandburg?" Jim interrupted.

"Back at the uni. It wouldn't start," he added sheepishly, "and since I didn't want to miss the meeting, I left it there."

"Alright, I'll drop you by Rainier. You have until then to try and convince me why I should work with you," Jim stated, thinking his idea that Blair Sandburg was a wave might be wrong. Blair was more like a tsunami.

Jim was about five miles from Rainier and had been listening to Blair talk about how Jim could use his senses for investigations when a call came in from Simon. Simon informed Jim that Fowler's murder had officially been bumped up to Major Crimes and he wanted Jim to go look over the warehouse where Larry had been killed. Jim turned to Blair. "Sorry kid, I've got to drop you and head over to the docks."

"Detective, this is a chance for me to help you with your senses. Let me go with you."

"It's a crime scene, Sandburg. There's no way I can take you there."

"Look, I'm sure we can come up with some reason why I could be there with you. And I'm an anthropologist: I'm familiar with investigating scenes. Mine are just a lot older and more remote."

Jim considered Blair's request thoughtfully, Incacha's words again going through his head and then turned toward the pier, putting on his lights and siren and shaking his head in disbelief that he was going along with this. "I'm probably going to regret this," he mumbled glancing at Blair. "We're going to a crime scene, Sandburg. You do what I say when I say it."

Blair nodded his agreement as Jim headed for the pier.

Larry's body had been removed earlier in the day, but there were still investigators around when Jim pulled up and walked under the yellow tape and into the warehouse, signaling the officers to let Blair through with him.

The two men entered the warehouse and found two officers from the forensic department reviewing the crime scene. On the floor was a taped outline of where the body had been found and Jim, waving to forensic expert Serena Chang, crouched down by the outline.

A minute later Serena joined him. "I heard this was bumped up to Major Crimes," she said looking down at the outline. "Captain Banks asked me to come back and meet you here, just in case you had any questions as you go over the scene."

Jim nodded. "Serena Chang, Blair Sandburg. He's a professor at Rainier. I was giving him a lift when the call came in. What have we got Serena?"

Offering Blair a quick smile, she turned back to Jim. "Dan Wolf will be doing the autopsy but it was two shots fired at close range right into Larry Fowler's chest. There was no sign of a struggle. We also found a notebook, it's been tagged and bagged and is at our lab."

"Where were his guards? Fowler always had guards with him."

"Some boat on the pier had caught fire and was sinking. They may have gone over to get a look."

"And left Larry?" Jim answered, standing. "Not particularly good guards."

"I doubt they thought anyone would take him out," Serena answered. "You can interview them: their names are in Homicide's report but we checked, their guns hadn't been fired. CSU sent out a diving team and found no gun near the pier, so the weapon that killed him is still missing." Jim nodded as she turned and went back to gathering her stuff and preparing to leave.

Jim looked around the warehouse and Blair moved closer to him. "Okay," Blair whispered. "Focus on your sight and look around. See if there is anything that is out of place."

"In a warehouse?"

"Look for anything that shouldn't be here," Blair answered softly a hand dropping to Jim's arm. "I won't let you zone, so concentrate."

Jim gave a resigned sigh, despite the fact that in the back of his mind he acknowledged that somehow using his senses seemed easier with Blair beside him. Turning away from the professor, he let his eyes sweep the large empty building, noting the various stains on the floor, the peeling paint on the walls, and the filthy wooden pallets. His eyes moved slowly over the spot where a large leather office chair and table occupied one wall, Jim automatically noting that this was Larry's corner. Frowning when something small caught his attention, Jim walked over and called Serena. Caught between two floor boards was a small gold and diamond button, obviously from a suit.

Bagging it, she gave Jim a smile. "This I'm sure will be traceable. There aren't that many men's suits that have gold and diamond buttons. Nice find, Jim," She turned and catalogued the new evidence before continuing her packing as Blair leaned in close. "Try focusing on your sense of smell. What do you get?"

"Smell?" Jim repeated. "What am I going to get in a warehouse, Sandburg, and how the hell do I focus on smell?"

"Think of each of your senses as having a dial that raises their sensitivity. When your senses aren't spiking you keep them within normal range, like at a three or four but if you want to concentrate on something, you raise the dial to a seven or eight. I'm guessing you might zone at a nine or ten but we can work on that. Right now try and raise the dial for your sense of smell. You'll get a lot of input, you'll identify them, and we will filter out known scents," Blair repeated his instructions, with a degree of patience he didn't really feel. He could already tell that Jim did not see these abilities as a gift. Attitude adjustment would be the first order of business, but it would have to be done delicately. "What do you smell?"

“Salty air.”

“Good, catalogue it and ignore it.” Jim frowned but did what Blair suggested. “You’re a sentinel, you should be able to separate smells. What else?”

“Um, mold,” Jim tried again and then continued filtering out: dirt, rat droppings, blood, tobacco, scotch, and Chinese food. Finally, he stopped. “I smell cologne, expensive cologne, Clive Christian.”

“Could Larry or one of his men have used it?” Blair asked.

“Maybe,” Jim answered. “But I doubt it. We’re talking really high end stuff. Not the kind of stuff Larry would use in a warehouse and I doubt his bodyguards would buy a thousand-dollar bottle of cologne. Carolyn gave me a bottle for our first anniversary.”

“Carolyn?” Blair asked.

“My ex,” Jim answered, looking around. “I think we’re done here. I don’t smell anything else.” He turned and moved back to Serena. “Let me know if you find anything?” Jim asked and Serena nodded.

“We’re finished here. I’ll be heading back in a bit. I’ll see what I can find out about this button and I’ll have Fowler’s book photocopied and ready sometime tomorrow,” she promised.

“Thanks,” Jim moved to the door, Blair beside him. “I’ll drop you by Rainier, Chief.”

Blair nodded glancing over at Jim. “You do see how your senses can help you,” he asked and Jim, albeit reluctantly, agreed.

“Yeah, alright, I wouldn’t have noticed the cologne,” Jim admitted. “And maybe not the button.”

“And you might have discovered a lot more if you were at the crime scene before others were walking all over it,” Blair answered. “Look, Jim, a tribal sentinel had a companion to offer just this type of support. I can help you, if you let me.”

“And in return you’ll write about me.”

“Anonymously,” Blair promised.

Jim considered this a moment and then nodded with a resigned sigh. “I’ll have to get you a ride-along pass. And we’ll have to come up with a reason why you might need one. I don’t want anyone knowing about this little edge.”

“I’m an anthropologist. I can say I’m studying police interactions with the general public. Or maybe studying the thin blue line.”

Jim shook his head. “How about we claim you’re my cousin’s kid and you need to research an article on police agencies?”

“Are you crazy? That will never work.”

Jim shrugged. “I’ll take you to meet my boss tomorrow. He knows a bit about my senses so he can help come up with some plausible explanation for your ride along.”

Blair nodded. "We'll also have to do some tests," he warned, but for all the warning Blair sounded excited. "I'll secure some lab time. I need a baseline on your senses."

Jim groaned, but in the back of his head he could almost hear Incacha laughing. When Incacha had acted as his companion, he had insisted on testing Jim's ability to see, hear, and smell things in the jungle. He hadn't been quite as pushy about taste and touch but the Chopec Shaman had said it was the duty of the companion to know the abilities of the sentinel.

Jim met Blair outside the PD the next morning and the two went up to Major Crimes where Simon Banks was introduced to Dr. Blair Sandburg. The interview went on for about an hour, Blair explaining what a sentinel was and what he could do with assistance. Blair had brought research including an ancient tome written by Sir Richard Burton. But what finally swayed Simon was Blair's suggestion that if he could support Jim and help Jim learn to use his senses, Jim would stop getting debilitating migraines. Simon had been skeptical about Blair's ability to aid Jim but agreed to sign off if Blair passed the PD security clearance. They decided for official purposes they would say Blair was studying police and civilian interactions.

Several hours later, as Jim returned from picking up lunch, Simon called him into his office.

"Where's the doc?" Simon asked pouring two cups of coffee and handing one to Jim.

"Down in personnel filling out paperwork."

Simon nodded and indicated Jim should sit. "You really think he can help you with your senses?"

Jim nodded. "When you called about Fowler, Sandburg was with me and went with me to the warehouse. He walked me through using my senses and I discovered the diamond button Serena is tracking down and that one of Fowler's last visitors wore Clive Christian cologne. I caught faint traces. It's not something you come across every day in Cascade. I spent part of today tracking down where you can buy the stuff."

"What's so special about the cologne?"

"Other than the fact that it is the most expensive men's cologne in the world," Jim supplied.

"You use this cologne?" Simon asked surprised.

"Sparingly. Carolyn gave me a bottle for our first anniversary. I was going to check out stores that sold the cologne. Get a look at their clientele lists. See if any might have connections to Fowler."

"And you only found this because of Sandburg's help? You're going to tell me you wouldn't have noticed it without him."

"I don't know how to explain it, but he helped me concentrate."

Sighing, Simon shrugged giving in. "If you think he's that much help," he didn't finish as his secretary, Rhonda, knocked on the door.

Looking up at the pretty blonde, Simon beckoned her in. "Sheila Irwin from Internal Affairs is here. She wants to speak with you."

"It must be about the Fowler case," Jim stated with distaste. He and Irwin were not on good terms and Simon knew it. It was the reason Simon had deliberated before handing the case to Jim. Simon knew IA would be involved in this case and Sheila and Jim had already had a loud and turbulent history.

Simon remembered the incident. Jack Pendergrast had been Jim's partner when Jim first came to Major Crimes. When Jack disappeared while delivering ransom money from a kidnapping case, IA had claimed Jack had taken the money, killed the kidnapped victim and the abductors and run. Jim had defended his partner, swearing Jack wouldn't kill the kidnappers and hostage and take off with the money. Sheila Irwin, at that time new to Internal Affairs and wanting to make a name for herself, let a lot of accusations fly. She'd been ready to book him as an accomplice to murder, but Jim had proved both his own and Jack's innocence, catching the real killers. Unfortunately, Jack had been killed by the murderers.

During the incident, among other accusations, Irwin had accused Jim of taking bribes. He had put fifty thousand dollars down as a payment on his loft. It had taken Jim almost a month and a lot of paperwork to get some proof from the army that it was back pay from his time in Peru. But when he got it he marched into IA and, in front of the whole office, had slammed the proof down on Irwin's desk, saying nothing and walking away. There had been no words between them since, but Jim knew she fumed over the incident. The case had not been the career maker she had hoped.

Simon had hoped someone else in IA would be assigned the case but it looked like his hopes were dashed when Sheila Irwin walked in. A redhead with gray eyes, most men would consider her pretty, but not most cops. She was quick to condemn cops without enough information and though she didn't go over the line with her accusations, she always pushed the limits of what she was allowed to say.

"Captain, Detective," she inclined her head as she looked at the two men and Simon indicated she should take a seat.

"How can we help you Lieutenant Irwin?" Simon asked politely. "I am guessing this is in regard to the Fowler case."

"Yes, Captain it is," she answered, her eyes moving from Simon to Jim and back. "But I need to discuss a few things with you in private."

Jim glanced at Simon and shrugged. "I'll go find Sandburg and eat my lunch. Then I'll head off to see what I can find out about those cologne shops."

Simon nodded and watched Jim leave before turning back to Irwin.

There were four high-end specialty shops that sold Clive Christian in Cascade. Jim knew finding a suspect by just going on a fragrance was a long shot. The cologne could have been bought outside of Cascade and who knew if the wearer even was the killer. But it was something to do while awaiting reports from the forensic and coroner's departments. So, Jim, Blair in tow, went to all the shops, getting the names of people who had bought the cologne in the last three months. The lists were small, mostly executives but glancing over the lists Jim gritted his teeth as he looked at one name that stood out: Steven Ellison. He

doubted his brother would have any interaction with Fowler, and he didn't relish speaking to his brother any more now than he had twenty-two years ago, but he added it to the list of names to be investigated.

After dropping Blair by Rainier, Jim went back to the PD, list in hand and put his paperwork down on his desk. He was about to log into his computer when Simon opened his door. "Jim can I see you in here?" Simon asked. He turned to his assistant. "Rhonda, please hold my calls." Jim took a seat and waited expectantly. Look Jim," Simon sighed hesitantly, "I don't know how to tell you this but Irwin is screaming for your arrest because your name is in Fowler's book."

"My name is in that book? What do you mean my name is in that book?"

"There was an appointment with Ellison the night Fowler died," Simon answered.

"You know I am not the only Ellison in Cascade," Jim answered, a hand rubbing across his forehead as a tension headache started to form behind his eyes.

"I know," Simon agreed. "That's why you're not being interrogated by Irwin right now. But I have to take you off the case." Seeing Jim about to protest, Simon held his hand up. Taking a seat Simon gave a weary sigh before continuing. "There's always been talk of someone in the PD feeding Fowler info and with the name Ellison in the book, well, you can see why I have to turn the case over to someone else."

Jim nodded his understanding. "Did Serena find out anything about the button I found in the warehouse?"

Simon nodded. "H and Rafe are following up on it. There's only one store in Cascade that sells a suit with those buttons. I'll have them cross reference the clientele who bought suits with the cologne you smelled and see if any names are common to both."

"Okay, Sir," Jim started to rise. "I'll give them the info and head out."

"Um, Jim, one more thing," Jim turned. "Where were you last night?"

"Simon, you can't think I killed Fowler!"

"No, I don't but..."

Jim nodded his understanding. Simon wanted to be able to clear him as a suspect. "I left here at seven, went to Mario's for a bite to eat and then home. I guess I got home about 8:30."

"Did you talk with anyone at home?"

"Carolyn called around ten to tell me about the job she's taking in San Francisco."

"Good," Simon answered. "Then you can prove you were home when Fowler was being shot."

Jim stood and turned to leave but stopped at the Captain's door. "Has the book been analyzed? Does it give any hint as to who his contact was in the PD?"

Simon shook his head. "There are references to SM calling just before we ran a couple of raids on his warehouse but we don't know who SM is, yet."

Jim didn't answer but continued out the door and over to H to give him the information on the cologne.

Jim wasn't actually upset over handing the Fowler case to H and Rafe. He had enough to do and with Irwin's interference, he didn't need to be part of it. And he certainly didn't want to interview his brother. Stopping by H's desk, Jim handed the four lists he had gathered to the detective. "Henri, cross reference this list with your button list. I smelled Clive Christian in the warehouse. It's a very exclusive men's cologne. These are the people who bought it in the last three months. It might help."

"Did you notice my name on that list?" Rafe asked, practically preening.

"Yeah, I did," Jim answered, turning to H with a smirk. "Make sure you add him to your list of suspects."

"Thanks." H and Rafe quickly looked over the list and then froze. "Jim, do you have any relatives?"

"What?"

"At a quick glance, I can see one name on both lists," he looked at his partner. "The only reason I noticed it was it was your last name," H added apologetically.

"Steven Ellison," Rafe continued. "He's not related, by any chance?"

Jim nodded, grimacing. "He's my brother. I haven't spoken to him in more than twenty years, so, I can't tell you anything about him."

"Right," Rafe nodded, keeping his tone professional. "We'll treat him just like any other suspect."

"Good." Jim turned back to his desk and grabbed his coat.

Jim made his way home while the day's events replayed in his mind. For almost twenty years he hadn't heard from his father and suddenly, not only did he see his father, but his father gave his medical information out to a third party, for Steven, of course, he added bitterly. Though he didn't want to admit it, Jim felt betrayed, again. Not that he should have expected anything less.

Rubbing his neck, trying to release the tension building there, he tried to ignore the fact that Steven was the number one suspect in Fowler's murder. Jim knew this would make things uncomfortable at the PD. Especially as IA was investigating him, again.

And, suddenly, there was a guide in his life. Yeah, Incacha had told Jim he would find one but with all this going on, it didn't seem the right time to try and establish a guide sentinel relationship. Still, conjuring up an image of Blair, Jim actually smiled for the first time all day. The kid was cute too!

Telling himself to forget about the day, Jim grabbed a beer, hoping his sense of taste wouldn't go off. He rolled the cold bottle across his forehead, enjoying the cool feel before opening it and taking a small, tentative sip. When his taste buds didn't over react he took a large gulp and checked the fridge for food. There wasn't much to pick from and he called for a pizza, dropping down on the sofa and turning on the television.

The news was on and Jim watched as a reporter, Wendy Hawthorne, stood outside Fowler's warehouse.

"This is Wendy Hawthorne. I'm live on Pier Street, near the Cascade industrial area. Behind me, inside the warehouse, Larry Fowler, reputed arms smuggler and drug dealer, was found murdered. Fowler was believed to have a hand in several illegal operations throughout Cascade, but never got caught. There has been some speculation that he might have connections within the police department, and so the murder has been assigned to Major Crimes for review and is being overseen by Internal Affairs.

"Sheila Irwin is the lead investigator for Internal Affairs. During an interview she stated that a detective inside the PD was being investigated for his connection to Fowler. Lieutenant Irwin would not name the detective but said that he was a highly decorated officer. Fowler was killed while his bodyguards were done on the docks where a boat had caught fire...

Jim sat back in shock, his jaw clenching in frustration and anger. He was sure Irwin was referring to him because of the Ellison in the book. How could Irwin think he had anything to do with Fowler? And how could she make veiled accusations about the PD? She had no proof and, for God's sake, she was a cop.

Rising, Jim walked to the door, opening it as the pizza delivery boy came off the elevator. Reaching into his wallet, he handed the kid money, all the while wondering what she would say when she found out that Steven Ellison was on the list of suspects. It was circumstantial, but it would certainly condemn Jim in her eyes.

Putting the pizza box down on the counter, Jim was about to call Simon when he caught the scent of a cigar. His Captain was outside. Jim put two plates down on the table before walking to the door and opening it before Simon could knock. "You know I hate when you do that," Simon groused, walking in.

"Yes, Sir," Jim answered and indicated the table. "Pizza?"

"Thanks," Simon took a seat, grabbing a slice as Jim put a beer bottle down in front of him.

"I heard Hawthorne's news report tonight," Jim stated.

"Irwin, right?" Simon asked, annoyance obvious in his voice as Jim nodded. "One of these days she will go too far and we'll be rid of her."

"You don't think her accusing me is overstepping?" Jim asked in disgust, throwing down his pizza and reaching for his beer.

"Did she say your name?"

"No, but everyone knows she means me."

Simon shook his head. This was so wrong but there was nothing either of them could do about her vendetta against Jim. At least not until she stepped over the line. "H and Rafe interviewed the bodyguards. The names in the book were people who owed Fowler money and appointments when they were paying it back. Your broth - Steven Ellison was one of the people who owed him money."

"Why would Steven owe him money? We both have large trust funds. Hell, I have close to two million in mine and he had to be bringing in a good salary from his position at Ellison Enterprises."

Simon, about to drink beer, put the bottle down and looked at his detective in shock. "You have two million in the bank?"

Jim nodded. "The trust funds were set up when we were babies. I've never touched mine. It's accumulated over the years."

"I guess Steven Ellison used his. According to Fowler's guards, he liked to gamble on the horses and that's why he owed Fowler money."

Jim looked down at his food, no longer hungry. "When Irwin finds out my brother was involved with Fowler the accusations are going to get worse." Simon nodded knowing Jim was right. "What I need to do is find Fowler's connection in the PD."

"That's IA's investigation, Jim. You can't get involved."

"If I don't then Irwin's going to crucify me with innuendo. I wonder if she even bothered to look for anyone else or just assumed it was me."

"Officially, you can't be involved," Simon warned. "But I'll see what I can find out about IA's investigation into Fowler's PD contact. I have a feeling it never went anywhere. I can use the investigation into Fowler's death to ask some questions."

"Thanks Simon," Jim answered before taking a bite of his pizza.

Sarah Miller glanced over the file she was placing in the cabinet as she listened to the buzz behind her. Dispatch was sending a car to a jewelry store on Clarkson. The store's alarm had gone off.

Closing the drawer she glanced around at the busy room and took a seat at her desk, where she started preparing the next report for filing, her ears attentive to the various conversations around her. Her cubbyhole was situated just right. She could see and hear everything going on and no one would pay attention to her, since she was just a filing clerk, not one of the cops.

When she had gotten this position five years ago, she had called her brother's wife, Margaret, and who put her in touch with Margaret's cousin Larry Fowler. She told him she could get information about PDs dispatch units. He had been thrilled and it had been profitable for both. Larry paid her for information and she let him know when cars were being routed to his warehouse. Since she worked the evening shift, she usually got information about upcoming raids. Upon getting a call from her, Larry would cancel meetings with his associates.

Sarah didn't really know who Larry's associates were and what they did. She didn't want to know and fooled herself into believing Larry couldn't be doing something too bad. After all, Larry was Margaret's cousin, and Margaret was a sweet housewife whose biggest crime would be mixing recycling into regular garbage.

Unfortunately, with the untimely death of Larry that particular revenue stream dried up. She knew she should move on, find new ways to supplement her income; maybe even consider giving up her filing job before anyone discovered her connection to Larry. But she had gotten comfortable with both jobs and both incomes and she was fairly sure no one knew her connection to Larry. Hell, no one really knew her at all. She hadn't made any friends on the night shift, and after a moment's consideration, decided she was still safe as a file clerk. And she didn't want to raise any suspicions by leaving. So, why not stay. If

she could find someone else who needed the odd tidbit of info she could keep the extra income. Gathering her file, she walked over to the file cabinet and looked around. She would have to investigate who might want a little info.

Blair Sandburg pushed down the snooze button on his alarm clock and rolled over. He knew he would need to get up soon and get his day started. He wanted to meet Jim before heading to Rainier to hand in some grades. He also had to review the exhibition work at Ellison Enterprises.

William Ellison's secretary left a message that the displays had been set up per Blair's instructions and they needed him to review the exhibition before it opened. Their Security Officer would meet with him, as both senior Ellisons would be unavailable. Blair guessed it was William's way of saying Steven would not bother him.

When the clock went off for the second time, Blair rose and headed for the bathroom, his mind on Jim. Technically, he would not have an observer's pass for a good two weeks. It would take that long for the PD to process his application for a ride along and run a full background check. But maybe he could do a bit of traveling with Jim, "unofficially."

And he needed to do some baseline testing to see just how strong Jim's senses were. Actually, he would have to find a way to get Jim into Rainier's lab. That would take a bit of finessing. Blair could already tell Jim would not be inclined to participate.

Gathering his gear for the day, Blair headed over to the PD looking for Jim but Jim wasn't at the PD. Going over to Captain Bank's secretary, Rhonda, Blair smiled his most winning smile and asked for Jim.

Rhonda looked up at the young man before her and frowned. "Jim," she stated and then stopped. "Do you have an appointment with Detective Ellison?"

"Yes, no, sort of." Blair smiled again, getting an answering smile from Rhonda. "I was going to help him with something today but we didn't set up a specific time."

Rhonda nodded her understanding. "He and Captain Banks are in a meeting right now and I don't think they'll be free for some time."

Blair sighed and nodded. "Okay, I'll come back later," he turned to leave but then turned back. "Can you tell Jim I was here?"

"Of course, Mr.?"

"Sandburg, Blair Sandburg."

Blair left, figuring he would go to Ellison Enterprises, and come back after he had seen to the exhibition.

Hefting his backpack, he opted to leave his car where it was parked and walked to the large building. He entered, once again noting the size as he made his way to the security desk.

"Hi," Blair smiled. "I'm here to review the Artifact Museum. My name is Doctor Blair Sandburg."

“Yes,” the guard answered after reviewing a list on the desk. He handed Blair a sign in sheet. “Our Security Chief will meet you on the 8th floor”

“Um thanks.” Blair debated asking if Steven Ellison was in the building. He really didn’t want to see him again, but decided not to. He would rely on William Ellison’s promise. Instead, he took the elevator up to the 8th floor. He wasn’t comfortable with the idea of being in the Ellison building but his anxiety level jumped when he got off the elevator and saw Steven Ellison standing by the office door. Next to Steven stood a large, neatly-dressed man and Blair was sure he was gauging Blair’s threat level.

Steven straightened his shoulders when he saw Blair and stepped forward. “I’m here to apologize for our misunderstanding the other day.”

“Misunderstanding,” Blair repeated, guessing William Ellison had insisted Steven apologize.

“Yes, I want to thank you for letting the incident go,” Steven glanced at the guard beside him, “and for helping me see that I was in need of counseling.” Sticking out his hand, Steven continued, “I won’t bother you again.”

Blair considered not shaking Steven’s hand. He didn’t want to, but he was not in a position to insult William Ellison so he reached over. He was surprised when Steven grabbed his extended hand and pulled him into a tight embrace. He was about to pull free when Steven whispered softly into his hair, “Your loss, Sandburg. You could have gotten a lot out of being with me.” Steven quickly nuzzled Blair’s hair, his crotch for one moment grinding against Blair’s before releasing him and stepping back. With a smug smile, Steven nodded to the guard, the pair turning to the elevator just as the security officer came off.

An hour later, Blair was back at the PD. The Ellison exhibit was ready and from what Blair was told, would be open to the public. The security officer mentioned that one of the elevators would be set to go only to 8th floor so visitors could see the exhibit without disturbing the working staff. As Blair entered the bullpen, he wondered how many people would visit it. Jim, who had spent 18 months with the Chopec, certainly should, but Blair doubted he’d go anywhere near Ellison Enterprises.

Looking around and not finding Jim, Blair again walked up to Rhonda and smiled. “Is Jim available?” he asked.

“He’s in with the Captain, I’ll tell him you’re here.” Blair watched as she knocked politely on the door before entering.

A few minutes later Jim walked out looking grim, the tension in his jaw so tight Blair wondered if his teeth would crack as he stopped by Rhonda’s desk.

Simon Banks was following him and patting his back. “I’ll keep you informed and I promise I’ll fill in Rafe and H and have them working on this. It will be a priority, Jim,” Banks whispered softly before looking around the bullpen. Rafe and H were at their desks. “Rafe, H, my office.”

Jim nodded to the two detectives as they passed him and then moved to his desk, grabbing his jacket. “Come on Sandburg, let’s go somewhere where we can get something to eat.”

Aware that something major was up, Blair nodded and followed Jim out of the bullpen. Jim didn’t start down to his truck but walked outside and down the street.

"Jim what's going on," Blair asked as he walked quickly to keep up with Jim.

"Not now, Sandburg. Let's wait until we're at the restaurant. I just need a little time to think."

Three blocks away was a small café that a lot of the cops frequented. It was owned by Charlie Green, a retired cop and he would usually come out and talk with his fellow officers whenever things weren't too busy – which wasn't often. Today was no exception and he waved Jim to a booth in the back, sending over his waitress.

"Hey Jim," Millie greeted. "Coffee?"

"Thanks, Millie, yeah," Jim nodded as the waitress turned to Blair who asked for a cup as well. After Millie disappeared, Blair ignored the menu and looked across at Jim.

"What's going on?"

"I've been put on leave," Jim answered practically through clenched teeth.

"What, why?"

"Because my brother was connected to Fowler."

"Your brother?"

"Despite the fact that I haven't seen or spoken with him in twenty years, IA thinks I may be the person in the PD that was feeding Fowler information."

"Feeding Fowler information? You wouldn't," Blair stated emphatically. He'd known Jim one day and he already knew Jim wouldn't do something like that. Jim was a sentinel, a tribal protector, he would no more betray the tribe than put on a pink tutu and dance around the café.

Jim sighed. "You know that and I know that, hell, Simon knows that, but Sheila Irwin is using my brother's connection to Fowler against me."

"What can you do about it?"

Jim shook his head. "Officially, I'll get a PBA lawyer and fight her accusations. She has no facts to support them. And H and Rafe will see what they can do to find the leak. They're both good detectives and they've been assigned the Fowler case. They'll push hard to find out what is going on and who the leak is."

"And unofficially?" Blair asked.

"I'm going to do some checking on Fowler. My brother borrowed money from him. It seems in addition to his other problems," Jim gave Blair a meaningful glance, "he had a gambling addiction."

"You don't think your brother killed Fowler, do you?"

"I don't know my brother. I haven't spoken with him in twenty years. I don't know who or what he is or, for that matter, what he is capable of." Jim paused a moment and then added, "The fact that he tried to

coerce you says something, doesn't it? At this point, you know him better than I do. What's your impression?"

Blair sat back and sighed. "I think he's used to getting his way, but that doesn't necessarily make him a murderer."

"But do you think he would be capable of murder?"

Blair paused, thinking it over. At that first meeting in Chancellor Edwards' office, Blair's immediate impression of Steven was that of a predator. He remembered not wanting to shake Steven's hand. "He might be capable of murder," Blair admitted, apologetically. He couldn't imagine what Jim must have gone through with his family. Blair's mother was his only immediate family and she was so important in his life.

Jim considered Blair's answer as he drank his coffee. "I think I want to talk with those bodyguards."

"But you're suspended."

"They don't know that," Jim answered, raising an eyebrow and Blair smiled.

"I have to drop some grades off at the university but I can go with you right after to see the bodyguards. And while you are talking to them, I want you to focus on their reactions, their respiration and scent. I'll make sure you don't zone."

"You know Sandburg, as a trained interrogator," Jim began, pulling out the keys to his truck, "I do keep an eye on a suspect's reactions: how long it takes to respond, how relaxed he is, physical responses, eye contact. But I get the feeling you are talking about something a lot deeper."

Blair nodded a smile forming. "You're a sentinel. You should be able to pick up an increase in respiration, increased perspiration. It will help gauge people's reactions."

"I'll get the bodyguards' names and addresses from H and Rafe and you can head off to Rainier."

"No way, man. How many times do I have to tell you about a sentinel having a companion to help him? Especially a sentinel who's just learning to control his senses. I'm it, man. You and I have to do this together. You can wait in my office while I drop off the grades. It should take about ten minutes but then we can go together."

Jim considered Blair's words, debating whether he trusted Blair and how much to tell him. Something inside of him, the sentinel part he admitted, told him this was his guide and he could trust this man to watch his back. Incacha had told him he would find a shaman to stand by his side and Jim was pretty sure Blair was it. Finally, he nodded his agreement. He paid the bill and left the café, starting back to the PD and his truck, Blair at his side.

"When I was in Peru I had a guide," he stated, as he indicated Blair should get in the truck. "Incacha, he was the tribe's shaman. Whenever we went out as a hunting party, he was by my side."

"You have to tell me all about that," Blair practically bounced with excitement. "You studied with a tribal shaman. That is so cool."

"Another time, Chief. Right now we have to catch the bad guys. I'll wait in your office and get some information together and then we'll interview the bodyguards."

Jim drove to the university and parked outside Hargrove Hall. Following Blair in, he took a seat at Blair's desk and called Rafe.

"Detective Rafe," the man answered the phone.

"Hey Rafe, it's Ellison."

"Hey, Jim," Rafe answered in a much softer voice. Jim could imagine him turning away from the bustle of the bullpen. "Simon filled us in about IA. Irwin is out of her mind if she thinks you would help Fowler. H and I are going to find the connection."

"Thanks Rafe. How is the investigation into Fowler going?" Jim asked glancing around Blair's desk looking for a writing implement and paper. Finding a pad of yellow paper he grabbed a pen.

Rafe sighed. "We matched the list you gave us with the names in the book and the button and only one name came up - Steven Ellison. We're going to interview him this afternoon. He's in therapy this morning. I'm sorry Jim."

"That's fine Rafe. I told you to treat him like any other suspect. After a moment of uncomfortable silence, Jim asked, "How did the interview with the bodyguards go?"

"They were down at the pier, lots of witnesses say so, and didn't see Fowler get shot. There was no residue on their hands so they hadn't fired a gun." Rafe gave a sigh, "This is looking pre-meditated. We're guessing the murderer set fire to the boat as a diversion and waited till the guards went down to check it out and then shot Fowler."

It was the theory in the back of Jim's mind as well. "Can you give me the guards' addresses? I'd like to talk to them, unofficially."

"Sure. And...if you find out anything, let us take care of it." Rafe quietly offered two names, addresses and phone numbers

"Will do and thanks Rafe, thank H too."

After getting off the phone, Jim sat back considering the conversation and his memories of Steven. Could Steven be capable of murder? As a kid, Steven had been a manipulative brat. He'd do something wrong and blame Jim for it, and for some reason his father always believed Steven, even when it was obvious Steven was the culprit. Still, being a brat didn't make you a murderer. But there had also been the incident with Blair. Blackmailing someone into having sex was a lot closer to committing murder.

His thoughts in turmoil, Jim paced around Blair's office. Jim considered it chaotic and wondered how the anthropologist found anything in the room. Stopping by a file cabinet he picked up a picture of Blair standing beside a tall, lovely red-headed woman. He was still holding it when Blair opened the office door. "That's my mother," Blair said as he entered the room.

"She's pretty," Jim answered.

"She's as pretty on the inside too," he answered, standing beside Jim and looking at the picture.

"What about your dad?"

"Naomi was an original flower child during the 60s. She doesn't know who my father is."

"I'm sorry," Jim put the picture down.

"Don't be. We have a great relationship," Blair answered, remembering William Ellison's statement about not speaking with Jim. And if that wasn't enough, the fact that the senior Ellison had handed over, to a complete stranger, his estranged son's medical records so his other son could get out of a blackmail and assault charge, said a great deal. There was a lot of hurt there and Blair felt sympathy for what Jim must have endured when he was younger.

"Did you get information about the bodyguards?"

Jim nodded. "Rafe and H," he saw Blair's blank look, "the detectives working the case, said they're investigating Steven. The button I found in the warehouse belongs to him. They'll talk to him later today," Jim glanced over at Blair. "He's in therapy."

"Your...William Ellison...said he'd put Steven in therapy," Blair stated quietly.

Jim nodded grabbing his keys. "Let's go. I want to talk to the bodyguards today. Tomorrow is Fowler's funeral and after that they make take off."

The bodyguards, Dennis Kramer and Leroy Mitchell, lived over by State Park, a quiet middle-class area not far from the shipyards. Pulling up in front of Kramer's building, Jim glanced at the address and then at Blair. "We have no official standing, Chief, so I can't push too hard."

Blair nodded. "I'll keep an eye on you to make sure you don't zone, you watch the guard's respiration. See if you pick up anything."

Jim nodded, and getting out of the Ford, went over and knocked on the door. A minute later it was opened by a large man in his late twenties. "Yeah?" he asked in a less-than-friendly voice.

"Are you Dennis Kramer?" Jim asked. When the man nodded, Jim flashed his badge. "I'm Detective Jim Ellison of Major Crimes and this is my associate, Blair Sandburg. We have a few questions for you Mr. Kramer."

"I already answered questions," the guard snapped, belligerently.

Jim nodded. "These are just a few follow-up questions," he answered, watching the bodyguard. "This shouldn't take long." Jim could feel Blair's hand unobtrusively move to his back, lightly pressing against him. In the back of his mind, Jim remembered Incacha clutching his arm as he led the tribe in a hunt. Incacha had insisted it would keep Jim from getting lost as he focused.

Kramer leaned against the door. "Go ahead, ask."

Jim nodded and pulled out a small notepad. "The night Mr. Fowler died," he glanced up. "You said there was a fire on the dock, a boat had caught fire."

"That's right."

"Before you went to look at the fire did Mr. Fowler have any phone calls or visitors?"

"Yeah, Steven Ellison," the guard paused and peered at Jim. "You're not related are you? You don't look anything like him."

Before Jim could answer Blair jumped in. "I don't think a son of William Ellison would end up in a career as a detective."

"That's true," Kramer agreed, "that reminds me, Fowler called Ellison right before the fire."

"Called Steven Ellison?" Jim asked.

"No, the other Ellison, the father. He had gotten some stock from Steven in payment for a loan and was offering to sell it to the father."

Jim, his face completely impassive, wrote this down. "Was he planning on meeting William Ellison?" he continued, not looking up.

"I think so, but he was on the phone when I went down to the dock."

Jim nodded closing his notepad. "Thank you, Mr. Kramer. We'll be in touch if we have any more questions."

He turned and headed for the truck, Blair in his wake. As Jim put his keys into the ignition, he said, "Kramer's respiration didn't change, Chief. I think he was telling the truth."

Leroy Mitchell did not live far from Dennis Kramer and he confirmed exactly what Dennis had said. Finishing up, a silent Jim headed for the truck. Blair, beside him, couldn't imagine what Jim was going through. Both his father and his brother were suspects in a murder.

"Jim," he began, pitching his voice to a soft comforting tone, knowing instinctively that Jim would not want comforting but would need it anyway.

"Not now, Sandburg."

"I know this has to be hard," Blair began, turning to face the detective.

Jim glanced over at Blair. "They're strangers to me, Sandburg and, as a cop, I can check my humanity at the door."

"But--"

"But nothing," Jim interrupted, making it very clear he didn't want to discuss the situation.

Blair knew Jim needed to discuss this but he also knew their relationship was new and fragile, and so he nodded, holding his peace. "If you change your mind, I just want you to know, I'm a good listener."

"Thanks, Chief," Jim sighed. "Where should I drop you?"

"Near the PD. I parked there."

Jim turned the truck away from State Park.

After picking up his car, Blair returned to Rainier and pattered around his office, looking over work and rereading info on sentinels for a couple of hours and then headed home with notes on various tests he would give Jim – just as soon as he could get Jim in a lab. The Volvo started up immediately and he smiled at the whirring of the engine, patting the engine, but frowned again when he thought of Jim.

He made his way to his home and, after fixing a quick meal and making a cup of herbal tea, picked up his phone. On the third ring the phone was answered. “Is Naomi there?” Blair asked.

Two minutes later, a much-loved voice greeted him.

“Hello Sweetheart. Is everything alright?”

“Yeah, Mom, things are fine. I just wanted to talk with you,” Blair answered, putting the cup down on the table.

“Blair if there is a problem I can be there in four hours.”

“No, Naomi, there’s no problem. It’s just, I met someone, a great guy but his father and brother disowned him and it started me thinking about family and you.”

“Why would someone disown his son or his brother?”

“I guess he had special needs as a kid and they didn’t like it.”

“Blair, listen to me, those people are not his father and brother. They may share a name and a bloodline but that doesn’t make them family. Family members take care of each other, accept each other and help each other.”

“You are right,” Blair agreed. “But I don’t think my friend will see it that way. I think he sees betrayal.”

“It can’t be easy for him,” Naomi agreed. “So, tell me about him.”

“He’s a cop,” Blair began, but hurried on before she could comment, “but he’s one of the good guys. He’s not a jack-booted pig and he works hard to keep the city safe.” Naomi had a long-standing history of fighting against the establishment and injustices, and in many cases the police had been called in to break up peaceful demonstrations. So, Naomi’s experiences with cops influenced her belief that they were regimented automatons.

“How did you meet him?”

“Through a mutual acquaintance,” Blair obfuscated.

“It sounds to me like you’re attracted to him,” Naomi said, her voice teasing and Blair could feel himself blush knowing his mother had, with the accuracy of a guided missile, hit the nail on the head.

“He’s gorgeous, Naomi. But he’s a cop, he was a soldier, and I’m sure he’s straight.”

"Never judge a book by its cover," Naomi lectured. "If you don't ask you'll never know if he might be interested."

"We're still little more than acquaintances, maybe when I get to know him better," Blair answered, all the while thinking that was never going to happen. He couldn't imagine asking Jim if he'd been interested in a guy.

Naomi gave a sigh and Blair envisioned her shaking her head with disapproval. Deciding a change of subject might be the best course, Blair asked about the retreat she was visiting.

The morning started out gray and rainy. It was not an unusual occurrence in Cascade, but it wasn't particularly pleasant for Detectives H and Rafe standing far back from a circle of mourners at Pinewood Cemetery. Rafe, holding a large black umbrella over both his head and his partner's, stared dismally at the small gathering.

"You know," he whispered softly to H, "we could sit in the car and watch this."

"You're wearing a fancy raincoat. What, it doesn't handle a little wet?" H teased.

"It handles the rain fine. But why are we standing out in the rain when we could be sitting in a car."

"Because Rafe, I want a clear view of who attends Fowler's funeral." As H said this, a small group that had been standing by cars, approached the grave site, black umbrellas making visibility difficult.

Opening the car door, H reached in and grabbed a pair of binoculars off the dashboard and used them to scan the gathered mourners. He let his eyes sweep across the group three times, each time waiting till people shifted, umbrellas moving, so he could get a look at the faces of the mourners. After the third pass, he stopped. "Rafe," he took hold of the umbrella and handed over the binoculars. "Look at the woman wearing the gray and blue raincoat."

Rafe did and frowned. "I've seen her in the PD," he commented. "I don't know her but I'm sure she works there."

H nodded in agreement. "In records or something."

"It could be a coincidence," Rafe warned.

"Yeah, it could, but it's worth checking out. Let's have a quick word with her after the funeral."

In agreement, the detectives got in the car and waited for the service to end.

Jim was an early riser. The practice had been drilled into him in the military. And, despite the fact that he was suspended and didn't need to get up and go into work, he got up early, after a mostly sleepless night. Carrying a cup of coffee out onto the balcony, he sipped it as he stared out at rain falling on the bay.

Tired, bored, he watched the boats bobbing on the turbulent churning water, trying to consider what his next moves should be. Jim knew he couldn't interview his brother, that would be stepping way over the

line considering his current status with the PD and he didn't want to speak with his father either. Both were suspects in the murder of Fowler. He could just hear Sheila Irwin gloating about that. He could imagine her words, "Apples don't fall from the tree, Ellison. Your family's dirty and so are you. You may have convinced the PD that you had nothing to do with Pendergrast's murder, but I always knew you'd show your true colors eventually."

Jim knew that Irwin had hurt her career when she went after him, throwing unfounded accusations publicly at a highly successful and decorated officer - but she was carrying the grudge way too far.

On the bright side, if he did prove his innocence, Jim was pretty sure IA would never let Irwin near him again. If, for any reason, he was investigated, he could claim she had some kind of vendetta against him.

Deciding to regroup, Jim finished his coffee and, sitting at the dining table, pulled out a pad of paper and pen. He drew a box in the center of the paper and wrote the name Fowler inside and then added a line out from the center, drawing an empty box. Above the box he wrote the words PD. In the box he put a question mark. Drawing a second line out from Fowler, he made a box and wrote Steven Ellison inside it and then drew a line out from the Steven Ellison box to another, writing the words gambling debts. Jim then added another line and box with the word stocks. He connected both of the stocks and gambling boxes to Fowler and then added a line from the stocks box to William Ellison.

Looking over the diagram, Jim considered the most likely suspect was Steven Ellison. William Ellison, for all his faults, was a business man and would probably just throw money at the situation. But could his brother really be a murderer? Jim had killed people in his life, but it had always been for the greater good - to save lives both in the army and the police force. He personally couldn't imagine taking a life for something as trivial as money, though he knew from experiences others did. But to have it happen in his own family.

Tossing down the pencil in disgust, Jim turned on the news and listened to events in and around Cascade deliberately tuning out speculation about Irwin's statement to the press. After the news, with no games on, he started cleaning the kitchen and was rearranging the cabinets, when his phone rang.

"Ellison," he answered succinctly.

"Hey, Jim, it's Blair. How are you doing, man?" he asked, concern clear in his voice.

"I'm fine, Sandburg," Jim answered, reaching to put spices back onto the rack. He liked them in alphabetical order.

"Cool, I was kind of hoping we could meet and talk about sentinel stuff. I wanted to run a couple of quick tests on your senses." Unsaid, but still heard by Jim, was "I don't want you to be alone."

Jim glanced around, he had already cleaned the kitchen and bathroom, he had little else to do unless he wanted to start stripping the floor. Eyeing the kitchen floor and debating, he shrugged. "What kind of tests?"

"Just some easy ones to see your range, can we meet?"

"Look, Sandburg-"

"If you want control," Blair cut in quickly, before Jim could say no, "we have to start figuring what you are capable of. And it's better than sitting around while waiting to be cleared of the Fowler mess," Blair wheedled.

Jim gave a sigh. He had to admit the kid was persistent and something about having Blair around felt right. "Alright, but nothing dangerous."

"Of course not," Blair sounded indignant, that is until he laughed.

"I guess you should come here," Jim rattled off his address.

Twenty minutes later, Blair arrived. Walking in, he looked around with interest. "Nice place," he offered. "Could use a few plants maybe. And maybe a few pieces of color, maybe something on the wall, but I'm sure you're still furnishing it."

"I've lived here five years," Jim answered raising an eyebrow and daring Blair to say something.

"Five years," Blair repeated, glancing out the balcony at the bay before turning with a forced smile and looking over Jim who stood by the kitchen island. "Minimalism, very functional," he agreed with an exaggerated nod before coming over and unslinging his backpack. "Okay, let's get started."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I've got five cups with minute amounts of common household flavors and I want to see if you can identify them."

"Household flavors?" Jim repeated suspiciously.

"Nothing bad," Blair answered pulling out a blindfold.

Seeing the blindfold, Jim looked about to balk but before he could complain the phone rang. Holding up a hand, he grabbed his phone.

"Ellison."

Blair listening to one side of the conversation, watched Jim straighten and nod.

"Right, I'll be there."

Jim hung up the phone and turned to Blair. "Tests have to wait, Chief. H and Rafe found Fowler's connection in the PD. It seems it was a relative of Fowler's who worked in the dispatch department. It took H and Rafe five minutes to get her to confess her role. Simon wants me to come in and talk with IA so I can be reinstated."

"That's great." Blair stopped for a moment considering the sterile apartment. "You know, I think I'll come with you. I want to get a closer look at the environment you work in."

"The environment?" Jim questioned grabbing his jacket.

"You would be amazed at the chemical hazards a sentinel can face in the workplace."

"Right," Jim answered, opening the door and ushering Blair out to his truck.

After parking in his usual spot, Jim and Blair entered the PD and made their way up to the 7th floor. H and Rafe were in the bullpen and Jim directed Blair to his desk before making his way over to the two detectives, shaking both their hands and receiving pats on the back. He was turning back towards Blair when Simon opened his door.

"Jim, we need to meet for a minute and we have an appointment with IA in ten."

"I'll be right there, sir." Jim turned to H and Rafe. "Listen guys," he waved Blair over. "This is Blair Sandburg." Jim quickly made introductions. "He's a professor at Rainier and is getting a ride-along pass to do some research. He's going to be traveling with me. If he has any questions, could you help him out?"

"Sure, Jim," H answered as Rafe nodded. "You any good at typing?"

Blair nodded and Rafe smiled. "Would you mind typing this stuff into our report? You could use Jim's computer."

"No problem," Blair grabbed the paperwork and went back to Jim's desk as Jim disappeared into Simon's office.

Jim and Simon had sober expressions as they walked down to IA's office. Simon had suggested that Jim bring a PBA lawyer but Jim had vetoed the idea, asking that Simon accompany him.

Entering the office that for the most part resembled a classroom, Jim and Simon were given seats at a small table that faced a three man panel and the windows. The psychological effect was not lost on Jim but he smiled humorlessly and dialed down his sight so he could focus on the panel. Standing before the panel was Sheila Irwin.

"Detective, before we start, I want to state for the record that you are waiving counsel."

"Yeah," Jim answered.

Irwin crossed her arms. "We are investigating your connection to Fowler's death."

"There is no connection."

"So, you say, but your name was found in Fowler's book."

Jim sat back and glared at Irwin. "It's not my name. It might be my brother's."

"Your brother's," Irwin sneered. "And you expect us to believe that you have no connection."

"I haven't spoken to my brother in twenty years."

"Isn't that convenient."

"It's the truth," Jim shrugged, dismissively.

“And, of course, that can’t be proven or disproved.”

“Check my phone records from the point I left the army and returned to Cascade. You’ll find no calls to my brother or my father, ever. We haven’t been a family since I was fourteen.”

“Why?”

“That’s none of your business,” Jim bristled. “And since Major Crimes found the leak,” Jim didn’t say, but there was an unspoken statement that IA didn’t, “you know I didn’t have contact with Fowler.” Coldly, Jim looked at Irwin. “Did you even try to investigate someone besides me?”

“Our investigation is not under review here. You are, Detective.”

Simon, beside Jim, glanced at the panel. “Perhaps this investigation should be under review,” he suggested and the panel of three men who had been silent as Irwin questioned Jim, glanced at each other.

“Detective,” one of the panel addressed Jim, and Irwin turned in surprise. “I think you’ve answered our questions. Thank you. If you’ll wait outside, we’ll meet and give our recommendation. It shouldn’t take long.”

Sheila Irwin opened her mouth to complain but stopped short at the look the panel member gave her.

Nodding Jim and Simon stood and left the room taking seats outside IA’s office as the panel deliberated. Notching up his hearing, Jim could hear Irwin complaining that Jim was related to the murder suspect and one of the panel members answering that being related to a suspect did not make someone guilty.

Another panel member mentioned the phone calls. “I’m willing to bet,” he said to the assembled group, “that if we check, we will find that Detective Ellison hasn’t spoken with his family in years.”

“Well,” one of the members answered, “I think pending verification of the phone information we can close the investigation on Detective Ellison.”

“Lieutenant Irwin,” another voice continued, “this is the second time you brought unfounded accusations against this detective. Is there a personal issue with him that we should know about?”

“No, Sir,” she answered, but Jim sitting outside, could almost hear her gritting her teeth.

“Very well,” the voice continued, “but I will make a recommendation that should an investigation come up involving Detective Ellison, you will not be involved.”

“Sir, I can do my job.”

“Yes, you can, but I don’t want it to appear as if IA is on a witch hunt against a highly decorated officer.”

“Yes, sir,” Irwin replied and walked to the door, opening it, and gesturing Jim and Simon to enter.

Though Jim already knew what the IA was going to say, he schooled his face and entered taking a seat.

Leaning forward, one of the panel members began, as Irwin stood silent in a corner. “Detective Ellison, this will be sent out officially, but we thought you should know that pending a review of your phone

records, we are closing this investigation. We apologize for any discomfort this investigation has caused but you can understand that given your family's connection to Fowler it was necessary. Captain Banks," the man turned to the Captain of Major Crimes. "We will have a preliminary report to you this afternoon but we are reinstating Detective Ellison."

Simon nodded, standing. "Thank you," he said as he herded Jim out the door.

While Simon and Jim were waiting for IA's official recommendation, Blair was typing into a database a list of items found with Fowler. As he typed, he kept reviewing what the bodyguards had said. In the back of his mind, he kept thinking something was missing from the list. And then it came to him. There were no stocks listed in the inventory.

Holding the pages, he walked over to Rafe and H. "Hey guys," he greeted. "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure," Rafe looked up and H nodded.

"Were there any stocks found with Fowler?"

"No," H answered as Rafe shook his head.

"But," Blair paused and frowned. "The bodyguards said Steven Ellison gave Fowler Ellison Enterprise stock to pay off his gambling debts."

"They said that?" Rafe answered.

"When Jim spoke with them."

"What else did the bodyguard say?" H asked.

"They said that Fowler had called William Ellison to sell the stocks. That was the same night he died. So, whoever has the stocks, is probably the killer."

H and Rafe glanced at each other and then Rafe reached for the phone. "I'll call the DA. I think it's time we got a warrant to search Steven Ellison's place. What we've got is circumstantial, but there's a lot of evidence."

"Good job, Hairboy," H complimented. "I can see you're going to be an asset to Major Crimes. Thanks."

Blair smiled and went back to Jim's desk.

Jim and Simon were just returning from IA when H and Rafe got their warrant. Stopping hesitantly in the doorway, Rafe and H eyed each other and then asked to speak with Simon. "We want to update you," Rafe said quietly and Simon indicated his office. "Jim, you should hear this too. It's about your brother. We're going to execute a warrant at his condo," he said apologetically.

Jim glanced at the detectives and sighed, following them into the office. Sitting on the windowsill, he listened as H and Rafe mentioned the conversation with Blair and the missing stocks.

Simon interrupted them momentarily as he turned to Jim. "You interviewed the bodyguards?" he accused, "while you were suspended." Jim shrugged and Simon, after glaring at Jim, turned back to his other detectives.

"With his button found at the scene, the cologne Jim smelled, Steven Ellison's name in the book and the whole stocks thing, we got a warrant."

"I told you to treat him like any other suspect," Jim said, quietly. "Execute the warrant and see what you find."

H and Rafe looked at Simon and he indicated the door. Rising they left and Simon walked to his coffee pot, pouring two cups. "You took a risk interviewing the bodyguards. If Irwin knew she would have charged you with interfering with an ongoing investigation."

"Simon, if she could, she'd charge me with Jack the Ripper's crimes," Jim took the coffee. "If they bring Steven in, I want to watch the interview."

"I don't know if that's such a good idea."

"I don't want to be part of the interrogation. I just want to watch it."

"Okay, but only through a two way glass and only if I'm by your side." Jim nodded his agreement and went to his desk to fill Blair in.

Rafe and H entered Steven Ellison's luxury building, two uniform officers with them and walked over to the security desk brandishing the warrant. "We're here to execute a warrant," Rafe informed the guard. "We need access to Steven Ellison's apartment."

The guard glanced at the paper and then called the super. "Call Mr. Ellison, he should be at work. In the meantime, I'll take the officers up to his apartment," the super said as soon as he arrived. He then led H and Rafe to the elevator, taking it to the 23rd floor. "Can you tell me what this is about?" the super asked as he unlocked the door.

"It's part of an ongoing investigation," Rafe answered.

Donning gloves, the detectives walked in and looked around as the super stood in the doorway, watching. They quickly went through his desk looking for the stocks and then through the mail correspondence on the coffee table.

Going into the bedroom, H began looking through the night tables as Rafe opened the clothes closet and whistled. "Man, this guy has some good taste. Those suits cost thousands."

"Never mind the clothes," H answered. "Look for stocks."

"I am, I am, but I can't imagine our Jim related to this guy. This guy must be loaded."

"Not him, his father," H corrected. Finishing in the bedroom, H and Rafe returned to the living room looking around.

Noting the super still at the door, Rafe asked, "Do these apartments have wall safes?"

"Yes," the super pointed to a wall and H carefully removed a painting uncovering a safe.

"Do you have the combination?"

"No, only the owner has that," the super answered as the elevator dinged and Steven Ellison, his bodyguard, and William Ellison charged down the hall.

"What's going on?" William demanded as the uniformed officers blocked his entrance, Steven beside him.

"Sir, we are executing a search warrant," H handed over the warrant.

"What are you looking for?"

"Ellison stocks," Rafe answered, indicating the safe. "Could you open this, please?" he asked Steven.

"Of course he has Ellison stock, he's an Ellison," William snarled from his position at the door as Rafe, ignoring William, indicated the safe.

"Sir, if you don't open it, we will be forced to break it open."

"Go on and open it, Steven," William answered, "and end this nonsense."

Steven glanced over at his father. "I shouldn't have to," he whined.

"Steven," William said sternly. "If you don't open it, they will break in. So, open it. I'll let my lawyers deal with the rest of this nonsense."

Steven glanced at his father and then at the safe. Straightening his back, he walked over and opened the safe, stepping back, as Rafe came forward and pulled out papers, Rolex watches, and Ellison stock. Bagging it, Rafe nodded to H who turned and, pulling out a Miranda Card, began reading Steven his rights as one of the uniforms cuffed him.

An hour later, Jim looked through the two way glass as H and Rafe took seats across from Steven. In the next interview room, William (who insisted on coming to the PD) was seated at a table, fuming, as he awaited the arrival of the family lawyer.

Standing on Jim's left was Simon watching the proceedings and on his right (a hand pressed lightly on Jim's shoulder in support) was Blair. Both men were concerned for Jim, but Jim stood tall and silent, a jaw muscle twitching, the only sign that he was upset.

"Mr. Ellison," Rafe said. "We are investigating the death of Larry Fowler. We understand from witnesses that you went to visit him the night he died and brought him the stocks we found in your safe."

"I knew him but I didn't bring him any stocks," Steven answered. "I was...was looking to buy some property from him."

"He's lying," Jim stated. "His respiration and heart rate just jumped."

Simon glanced over at Jim. "You can hear his heart?"

"If I concentrate."

Simon shook his head in wonder and turned back to the interview.

"Sir," H answered leaning closer. "What property were you looking to buy?"

"The warehouse. I wanted to expand Ellison Enterprises."

"I see. What time did you arrive and what time did you leave?" H continued as Rafe sat back, watching Steven.

"I'm not sure but he was alive when I left."

"And you didn't owe him money from gambling?"

"No, I don't gamble."

"We will be looking into your financials; are you sure you want to claim no gambling debts?"

"I like to play the ponies, so what? That doesn't mean I have gambling debts or that I killed Fowler," Steven's voice rose in anger. "And you have no right to look into anything of mine."

"Our court order says differently," H pointed out.

"We'll see about that when my lawyer gets here," Steven sniped, sitting back.

"We can't help you if you lawyer up," Rafe said softly. "I mean I'm sure you went there to resolve issues with Fowler and things got out of hand. A confession might make the DA go easier."

Steven glared at Rafe. "I've nothing more to say," he spat out contemptuously.

"Tell H and Rafe to inform Steven that Fowler's fingerprints were found on the stocks," Jim turned and glanced at Simon.

"We don't know that yet."

"There's a good chance they will be. And get a warrant to check his car. You're looking for a gun." Jim answered in a flat voice. "Tell Steven you're going to search his car for the gun." Jim turned back to the tableau.

"Jim?" Simon turned his voice reflecting concern.

"As a kid, Steven used to like to keep things he grabbed from my father's study in easy reach. I'm willing to bet he didn't get rid of the gun."

Simon didn't answer but looked over at Blair, his eyes showing concern. He saw the same concern reflected in Blair's eyes. There was nothing Simon could say that would make this situation any easier, so, he lifted a clipboard and walked to the interrogation room door.

Jim and Blair watched as Simon entered and handed the clipboard to Rafe. "We've had some results from forensics. Mr. Ellison, would you care to explain how Larry Fowler's fingerprints ended up on the stocks in your apartment?"

Steven looked up his eyes wide in surprise and then, like a popped balloon, he sagged. "And I should tell you, we are getting a warrant to search your car. We are looking for a gun."

"That caused a reaction," Jim whispered softly, more to himself than to Blair.

"You think his gun is in his car?"

Jim glanced over at Blair and nodded. "Yeah, I doubt he ever thought anyone would accuse him of murdering a loan shark."

Simon walked back out as Rafe and H leaned forward. "Would you like to reconsider your statement?" H asked.

"I think you'll find the gun in his car. Everything spiked when you said you'd search his car."

"I'll get on it," Simon agreed as a man came rushing down the hall.

"I'm Steven Ellison's lawyer," he stated. "I understand my client is here."

Simon indicated the room.

"Are you charging him with anything?" the lawyer asked. "If not, I want him released right now."

As the lawyer said this, Serena walked up and handed Simon a forensics report. Glancing over it quickly, he noted Fowler's fingerprints were indeed on the stocks. "We're charging your client with first-degree murder."

"I would like to confer with my client?"

"Just as soon as we finish booking him," Simon answered and opened the door. "Mr. Ellison, your lawyer is here. You'll have time to confer with him as soon as we finish booking you on murder in the first degree."

Eyes wide, pale and shaking, Steven stared at Simon in shock as H and Rafe came and practically lifted him before escorting him out of the room.

"We need to interview your father," Simon said as Steven passed them, not even realizing that his brother was watching him. "I'll have Joel do it."

Jim nodded and Blair, watching Jim, said softly, "His father was contacted by Fowler on the night Fowler died. Fowler offered to sell him the stocks."

"Thanks, Sandburg. I'll make sure that Joel knows that." He turned and looked at his lead detective. "Jim, why don't you head home? We'll finish up here and I'll stop by and let you know how things turn out. This has been a long, hard day."

About to protest, Jim heard Blair answer for him. "That's a good idea, Captain. I'll take Jim home."

Simon nodded. What could he say in a situation like this? There was no comforting Jim. The best he could do was make sure everything was done by the book. He gripped Jim's shoulder in support and then went to get a warrant to search Steven Ellison's car.

After Simon left, Blair gently pushed Jim towards the elevators and led him down to the garage. As Jim pulled out his keys, Blair confiscated them and drove the silent detective home, going up to Jim's apartment and making some herbal tea that he carried in his book bag. Handing Jim a cup, he sat on the sofa beside Jim. "I'm sorry," he whispered.

"It's not something you expect in your own family," Jim stated, leaning back and closing his eyes against a headache that was taking hold. "I guess we each had our flaws. Mine was that I was a freak and Steven that he was a crook."

"Don't you dare say that," Blair snarled. Jim opened one eye at the tone to look at Blair. "You're not a freak. You're a sentinel, a tribal protector. You're here to protect Cascade from people like your brother."

"Maybe if I didn't have these senses I could have-"

"Could have what? Your father took away any chance you had of helping him. You want to lay blame, put it where it belongs - at your father and brother's feet," Blair answered, jumping up and pacing, his hands gesticulating wildly. Stopping, and looking at Jim, Blair sighed. "Don't do this to yourself, Jim. You don't deserve this."

"It's okay," Jim answered, closing his eyes. "They haven't been family for years. It's just unexpected. I could have gone through the rest of my life without this."

Blair didn't know how to answer that, what to say so he sat back down and placed a hand on Jim's arm. "My mother would say they were not your family. It takes more than blood and the same name to be a family."

"Yeah, I know," Jim pinched the bridge of his nose. God, but his head hurt.

"I'm going to close the curtains and put something cool on your head. I'll get you some aspirin too. Then, I'm going to see what I can scramble up for dinner. I'm a pretty good cook."

Jim waved a hand and Blair went to the kitchen to examine what was in the fridge and cabinets. Truthfully, there wasn't much but, finding some vegetables, he began working on a vegetarian stir fry dinner.

His was tossing everything into the pan when Jim got up and opened the door. Simon stood there, about to knock.

"Hi Jim," Simon walked in and glanced at Blair with approval. He didn't like the idea of Jim being alone after what had happened today. And though the professor was new to Jim, for some reason Simon trusted him and knew Jim did too. Somehow, Simon felt that they belonged together.

"Chief, is there enough for three?"

"More than enough."

"Join us," Jim asked pulling out three beers and handing one to his captain and one to the cook before setting the table.

"If you're sure there's enough." Simon glanced at the pan. "It smells good."

"Thank my mom. Naomi is vegetarian and I learned to cook some really interesting vegetarian meals when she visited." Bringing the pan to the table and putting it on a towel, Blair served up three large portions before taking a seat.

"How did things go today?" Jim asked.

"We found the gun in Steven Ellison's car and your...William Ellison admitted Fowler had called him offering to sell stocks. I doubt he would have said anything if he knew we were charging his son with murder.

"He was arraigned this afternoon and since he's been charged with first degree murder, he was denied bail."

"I'm sure he has a great lawyer, my father would only get the best."

"Yeah, he does. Smythe and West are representing him. The DA offered to plead him out with second degree murder and a chance at parole in 25 years. Considering the evidence, I think he might take it."

"I'm sure the lawyers will pull up some excuse for his behavior," Jim sounded weary.

"It's not going to work," Simon answered. "He had to have planned the murder. It's not a crime of passion, it's greed."

Jim shook his head. "I wonder what Irwin will say about my brother being the murderer. Do you think she'll release that to the press?"

"I don't think she'll be saying very much. IA isn't too happy with how she handled this case and the Commissioner isn't too happy with her smear campaign. To quote him, 'The public needs to have faith in their police force. To accuse a dedicated officer without evidence undermines that faith.' I think she's going to be under review for some time to come and you already know she will not be allowed to investigate you again."

"So things are back to normal, for Jim?" Blair asked.

"Tomorrow's Friday. Why don't you take the weekend to relax and I'll see both of you on Monday. Oh and Sandburg, you can start riding along with Jim on Monday. We'll still be waiting for you to finish vetting, but I've been given a preliminary okay," Simon stood and gathered his things. "I'll call and let you know what happens with Steven Ellison."

"Thanks, Simon," Jim stood and walked him to the door and then turned back to Blair.

"You okay, Jim?"

"Yeah," Jim answered watching Blair. "I'll be fine. Thank God this is over." Jim hesitated. "I want to thank you too, for your help with this, and your help with the sentinel thing."

"It's my honor."

"There's something I should tell you about that," Jim answered. "When I was in Peru I worked with Incacha, the shaman of the Chopec. He told me the spirits showed him that I would return to the Great City, and that beside me would stand, not just a guide, but a shaman. Incacha said I would know him. You're it. The sentinel in me knew at Wonderburger that you were meant to be my guide. There's a bond forming between us, I can sense it."

"Wow," Blair whispered and then smiled. "Man, I so want to help you, I guess it's part of the bond, but I've got to tell you, I don't know anything about being a shaman. I mean I'd been told I have the ability by a shaman when I visited the Yakama tribe, but I haven't done any spiritual walks or anything."

"Then I suspect it's something you'll learn on the job," Jim answered with a smile. "Maybe, you were waiting for your sentinel."

"Maybe," Blair agreed, his smile widening. "And I can't wait to see where this bond takes us," Blair added, mentally reviewing his conversation with Naomi. Maybe, just maybe, he might have a special relationship with Jim someday.

EPILOG

THREE MONTHS LATER

William Ellison looked at the retirement forms on his desk. After the incident with Steven, he knew he would have to step down from Ellison Enterprises. He still had controlling interest, but he felt it would be best for the company if he retired.

He had waited until Steven had been sentenced on the chance that his company could help in some way but, on the advice of counsel, Steven had pleaded to second degree murder and would serve 25 years to life. His attorneys had pointed out that if the case went to trial, Steven would be charged with first degree murder and would have no chance of parole and, might have faced the death penalty. So, Steven would be at least 60 before he was free.

Looking over his papers, William reread his updated will. He hadn't spoken to Jimmy since that one morning at the PD but Jimmy was his son and, though Jimmy didn't know it, he would be William's heir.

He wasn't trying to buy Jim's affection; William knew there was no amount of money that would do that. But somehow giving it to Steven after all that Steven had squandered and done, was just wrong.

William would make sure Steven was cared for. There would be an annuity and trust fund that would cover his basic needs when he got out of prison and, William would leave him the small house Jimmy had lived in with the Romers but, the bulk of William's estate and, the large family home, would go to Jimmy.

Lifting his brandy, William sipped it, looking around the empty room. He had lost two sons; one because he didn't give enough love and the other because he gave too much love. And this was his punishment. Putting down the glass, he wiped at his eyes, pretending he didn't notice the moisture there, and, then stood and straightening, walked into the kitchen to get his dinner. A lonely, old man.