

Without A Trace



Art by AnnieB
Story by PattRose

Blair had been missing for three and a half days. No one knew where he was or what had happened to him. Simon had exhausted everyone in the bullpen looking for him. Jim was beside himself.

Simon called Jim into his office, "Ellison..."

Jim walked in anxiously and asked, "Did you hear something?"

"No, I didn't hear anything. Sit down. Bad news, we have three other crimes to solve right now, so Blair is being put on the back burner. For all we know he's off visiting someone with his hippy mom."

Jim looked pained. "We just stop looking for him? Why can't I continue looking, sir?"

"Jim, you're exhausted. You haven't slept in three days. If you sleep tonight, I'll let you start looking for Blair in the morning. I'll assign you and Megan Connor."

“He didn’t just take off, Simon. Someone took him. His car is still at the university and one of his students saw him getting into a van with someone. They didn’t get a plate number because Blair didn’t seem upset when he left. That was the last time anyone saw him. He wouldn’t just leave me. We mean something to each other.”

“That’s my deal, Jim. If you sleep tonight, you can start looking with Megan in the morning.”

“I’ll sleep. We can’t just stop looking for him. He could be hurt.”

“After you sleep, you can look all you want,” Simon ordered.

“Deal. Thank you for not giving up on him, Simon.”

As Jim left, Simon grumbled to himself, “As if he would ever let this rest.”

Megan was sleeping in the loft that night. They were going to take off first thing in the morning and start looking for Blair again. She was sleeping on the sofa. Jim was upstairs thinking he was never going to sleep when he awoke to a dream like state. In the dream he saw a farmhouse sitting on a large piece of land, all by itself. The house wasn’t kept up on the outside. There were lot of weeds and trees that had been overgrown. It almost looked like a haunted house. Jim knew Blair was there. He felt him, he could honestly hear his voice if he listened hard enough and he was calling for Jim. Jim woke up when he heard his name called and Megan was standing over his bed.

“Jim, you were having a nightmare. There is no time for dreaming, it’s time to get up and find Sandy.”

“I need the sketch artist from the station. I know where he is, just not where.”

“That made no sense at all. What do you mean by that?” she was honestly confused.

“I know he’s in this house, I just don’t know where the house is. It’s a deserted farmhouse, so at least it’s somewhere to start, right?”

“Let’s go get the sketch artist busy while it’s still fresh in your mind. Come on, Sandy is waiting for us, Jimbo.”

Jim smiled. He knew that she was as worried as he was. Blair was her best friend.

“We’ll find him. Hopefully, today.”

They both showered and left the loft. Jim was driving a little fast and Megan had to remind him they couldn’t look for Blair if they were dead. Jim slowed down. It was amazing the control that Megan had over Jim sometimes. Jim felt like he was surrounded by Blair. Blair had taught her to Guide him well.

Blair woke up from being drugged and wondered what was going on. This man had said he had news about something that happened to Jim. And when Blair had gotten into the van, someone in the back had put a piece of cloth over his mouth with something on it, it knocked

him right out. Blair didn't even see who had done this to him. Blair was in a basement of an old house, he could see that. But there was a bathroom, thank goodness, so Blair was glad of that. He wasn't tied up or anything, just couldn't get out. There were boards on the outside of the windows and the door to the upstairs was locked and boarded up. Blair had tried to get out, but he got nowhere. They were also feeding him. Blair didn't recognize the man at all. But Blair could also hear a second person walking upstairs when the man was in the basement with Blair. Blair tried to talk to him, but all he did was hit Blair in the face. Blair learned to not talk to the man who seemed to be upset with him for some reason. Blair hoped that Jim was looking for him and would find him before these two killed him. This one was very strange. Blair wished he knew what they wanted.

After the sketch was drawn, they had copies made and circulated around the station. Jim and Megan went to a real estate company and asked if they had anything that looked like the drawing. The woman that was helping them said she had seen this house somewhere, she just needed to remember where. Jim and Megan both left their cards for her to call if and when she remembered. When they left there, Jim said, "I think we should start looking at some farm areas, first. How does that sound?"

"Jim, would you know if he's not alive?" Megan asked sadly.

"I don't know for sure. I think I wouldn't feel the things I do if he was dead. He called for me last night in my dream."

"But it might be just that, a dream. Something your heart wishes for."

"My heart wishes for?" Jim asked, looking at her like she was nuts.

"Do you think that no one knows about you and Sandy? We all know. We also know that his room is now the office, which is much cleaner than it used to be. We're detectives after all."

"Fine, my heart wishes that I'd find him. Happy?"

"Ecstatic. Keep driving-we'll find him, Jim, I just know it."

"If you see any houses off this highway, yell and I'll turn off and we can ask anyone that lives around here if they've ever seen the house."

Megan nodded her head in agreement and asked, "Why would anyone take Sandy? And why would he get into the back of their van willingly?"

"Both good questions, but I have no idea of the answers. If I did, we'd have him here with us."

The day was long and very upsetting to both of them because not one person at any of these farmhouses had ever seen a house that looked like that.

"Let's get a motel room and call it a day, Jim. We'll start first thing in the morning-I'm not going home without him."

“Glad to hear that, Megan. Thank you. Simon is really being quite a sport about us leaving the bullpen for days at a time.”

“Jim, Simon loves Blair. Blair’s been so good to Daryl and the rest of the gang that Simon sort of thinks of him as one of his kids, I think.”

“I’m glad you all like him. He loves every single one of you.”

They pulled up into a motel parking lot and Jim and Megan went inside to register. They were going to get separate rooms, but there was only one room left. It had two twin beds in it.

“That’s perfect,” Megan said.

Jim asked, “Is there anywhere to eat around here? We’re starving. And also, have you ever seen this farmhouse before?”

“There is a truck stop up the road a piece that is open all night long with food. It’s pretty darn good. And why are you asking about the Miller house?”

Jim’s attention perked up. “The Miller house? What is that? Where is that?”

“Josh Miller was killed by police about four years ago - something to do with a robbery and they shot him for some reason. The family sort of went nuts. Don’t know if there are any brothers or sisters, though.”

“Where could we find this Miller House?”

“I’m not sure. I’ve just seen pictures. You could get something in our library tomorrow about the incident. Maybe they would tell you about the house and where it is.”

Jim looked confused. “Then how did you know it’s the Miller house if you’ve never seen it?”

“I’ve seen pictures of it numerous times and I’ve heard tell that people stop by every now and then and the parents of Josh Miller shoot at them. I wouldn’t go walking up to their property if I was you.”

“Shane, you have been a huge help. Thank you. Now we need to get to our room to make some phone calls.”

“Dial 9 to get a line outside and you can make all the calls you want. I hope the Millers didn’t do anything to anyone.”

“We’ve got our cell phones. We won’t need a land line.”

“Well, if you do need a line, just dial 9.”

Megan smiled and said, “Thank you for everything. Oh, before I forget, do you have a computer? One that we could contact our police department with?”

“I have this one, I don’t know if it’ll be of any use to you or not.”

Megan walked around and went in the back with Shane and asked, "Do you mind if I try?"

"Sure, anything to help. While you're doing that, maybe your boyfriend could get you some dinner at the truck stop."

Jim went to say something but stopped when he saw the look on Megan's face. "That would be so nice if you got me dinner, dear. Anything on the menu is good for me."

Jim growled as he left the building.

Megan started looking for the Cascade PD and realized this computer was worthless. She couldn't get anywhere with it. All it did was print up bills and things like that. But she hoped to get more out of Shane, so she stuck around for a little while. After a while she realized he knew nothing more.

"Shane, I'm going to go to our room now, thank you for the use of your computer. It helped a great deal." She wanted to keep him out of their business and being nice was one of the best ways.

"I have a coke machine right down the hallway if you need anything to drink. I could give them to you for free," he offered.

He'd obviously realized that their questions about the Miller house involved something significant.

"No thank you. We'll pay our way. Thank you again for everything."

Megan got to their room and opened the door and Jim was sitting there with two dinners. He was on the phone with Simon.

"Yes, Simon, did I kill him?" He actually couldn't remember and he was fairly certain he would remember if he killed someone.

Simon went on to tell him everything he needed to hear. He knew he had to fill Megan in on all of it while they ate dinner.

Jim got off the phone and said, "Sit down and eat and I'll tell you what's going on."

"Oh this I can't wait to hear," Megan said.

"I was in charge of a robbery detail and this man was killed while taking a hostage. He was armed and dangerous. They may think it was us, but it was their son that did it. He killed the hostage and one of the officers brought him down."

"Well, I'm at a loss, here."

"There's more. Three other police officers were killed and they didn't link them to anyone or anything until now. One died from getting his brakes cut, one died from an explosion and one died from a poisoning. I'm the only one left. That's why they must have taken Blair. They couldn't get me in a normal fashion, so they went after someone I cared about."

Megan had an odd look on her face after hearing all this and asked, "Do you think it was weird that Shane knew all about Josh Miller, but didn't know where his house was? What if he calls them and tells them you're here?"

"We're not sleeping tonight. Let me call Simon back." He pulled out his cell phone.

"Simon, Megan believes that Shane, the motel owner, knows more than he's letting on. She thinks they're going to come for us tonight."

"We'll be there shortly. We know where the house is now." Simon was good at his job.

"I'll tell Megan, Simon. Thank you for everything." Jim set the phone down and said, "They're coming in a short time and they know where the house is. We're almost there, Megan."

Jim shut off the lights to their room. They put pillows on the bed and covered them with the blanket so it looked like they were in bed. He and Megan sat in the dark without making a sound.

"Things are looking up. You may just get out of here alive, young man," the man said.

"Why?" Blair asked.

"Because your boyfriend is staying in town and doesn't know you're here. We're going to pay him a surprise visit."

"Why are you doing this?" Blair asked.

"He was in charge of all the men that killed my son, who was unarmed. He was robbing a bank, but that's no reason to kill him, right?"

"He was unarmed?" Blair asked.

The man hit Blair with a two by four and asked, "Weren't you listening? He had no gun. He wasn't going to hurt anyone. He just wanted some money for drugs. Drugs do bad things to you."

The man who was Mr. Miller saw Blair lying in a pool of blood on the floor. "Damn, I must have hit him harder than I wanted to. Ma, we have to get this boy cleaned up."

Blair woke up and saw a woman cleaning his face. His head was throbbing like crazy and his vision wasn't all it should be. "Where am I?"

"Pa, you hit him too hard with that board. How many times did I tell you that it hurts their brains? That's what happened with our Josh."

"I didn't cause this. Detective Jim Ellison caused this."

"Ma'am, could I get a cold rag for my head?" Blair asked.

"Don't give him nothing. Get away from him. He's going to die down here. Now, let's go and get the last man that killed our son."

Blair passed out and they just left him in the pool of blood that he had been in earlier.

Jim whispered to Megan, "They're here and they don't have Blair with them. But I hear sirens coming this way, too. So the cavalry is here too."

The door was unlocked and two people walked in and one of them shot at the mounds on the beds. Then he turned the light on. Jim and Megan jumped up and took his gun away first thing.

The man yelled, "I'm not alone. He'll go and kill your friend. So you're going to lose either way."

Mr. and Mrs. Miller were cuffed and their rights read to them, although Jim didn't think they were aware of any of it. They were totally nuts.

Mrs. Miller said, "He already killed him. He hit him too hard with a board. He used to hit our boy with boards too. I think it makes the brains scrambled after a while."

Jim was furious and wanted to kill Mr. Miller but Simon walked in at that moment, followed by Henri who was pushing a man in front of him and said, "We found this man trying to get away. Do you know him?"

"This is our helpful Shane and he was probably going to the house to take care of Sandy."

"Really, now? Well, let's cuff him, Henri and read him his rights."

"Simon, do you know where the house is? Blair is hurt. I can feel it," Jim asked.

"Follow us. Rafe and an ambulance are already there. We stopped to pick you up."

"Thank you, Simon." Jim followed him out and nodded a thank you to Megan Connor for being on top of things. They would have been killed if she hadn't been so aware of Shane.

Shane opened his big mouth right away, "Hey, they're my uncle and aunt. They wouldn't hurt anyone. It's not their fault that the police killed their unarmed son in a robbery. It's not fair."

Simon sighed and said, "Henri, explain to him what's going on. We'll see him back at the station."

Jim hopped in the car with Simon and they rushed to the place that they were told to go to. Jim saw the lights flashing as soon as they rounded the bend. "They're there, Simon."

"Good. Now, let's go get Blair from this nightmare of a week."

They drove up to find Blair was already in the back of the ambulance. "Jim... Jim... Jim..."

Jim rushed into the back of the vehicle and kissed his partner in front of everyone. He didn't care who was watching. When he saw all the blood, Jim started to panic.

"Calm down man, you know how bad head wounds bleed. It's just a gash in my head. I pretended that they killed me. But they still locked the damn door."

Jim pulled him close to him and said, "I saw the house and you in my dream."

"I was sending you messages. I hoped you got them," Blair swore.

"I love you, Chief."

"I love you back, Jim."

Simon came into the doorway of the vehicle and said, "Glad to see you're okay, Sandburg. He's been a mess without you."

"You say the nicest things, Simon." He and Simon both laughed but Jim didn't think it was that funny.

"How many days have I been gone, Jim?"

"Four. And it seems like weeks. Megan is going to be so glad to have you back. She missed you as much as I did."

Blair made a face at Jim. "I would hope you missed me a little more."

"Oh, I did. When you're better I'll show you how much I missed you," Jim kidded.

Simon was still in the doorway, "Too much information for my ears. I'll talk to you later, Jim. You still have to come in and file a report. Megan can stay with Blair."

Blair sat up straighter and said, "Blair can go with you."

Jim smiled. "Works for me."

The end