



The Choice

Written by PattRose Art by Ms.3

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It was the first day of the Morelli trial and Jim had to be there because they didn't know for sure when he would be called to testify. Jim wanted the big wig Morelli, but they couldn't seem to make anything stick, so when they caught his son dealing drugs, Jim was glad to take something away from Morelli after he had killed so many families and witnesses. It was time he had to pay something. Jim had a protection detail on him for the last month, they were sitting outside the courtroom, but nothing had come from it. He had to admit, old man Morelli was sure taking this well. Normally, Jim would be dead already.

Jim walked into the court room and Mr. Morelli was sitting across the row on the opposite side. There was no one else in there yet other than a bailiff up in the front of the courtroom, doing his own thing. Jim just sat down and minded his own business. Morelli got up and asked, "Where's your friend?"

Jim thought about ignoring him, but he knew the man would just keep bothering him. "What friend?" Jim replied.

"Don't play dumb with me, Detective. We both know who we're talking about. Have you seen him lately? Have you talked to him? Have you even bothered to check?"

Jim started to get up and Morelli whispered, "Ellison, it goes one of two ways. We're going to torture him while we hold him until you testify. Then we're going to kill him. You have one choice and that's to not testify. He doesn't know where he is or anything else. We will let him go, I give you my word. But each day you take to decide, he will suffer for it. We'll send pictures or call daily letting you know how he's doing. I would suggest you start thinking about an excuse."

The old man, who seemed more like a demon than a man, walked back over to the other side of the courtroom and sat down. Jim had sweat rolling down his

face because he knew what Morelli did to his victims. He knew how badly they would hurt Blair. Jim needed to find out if they really had Sandburg or not. *Like they would ever let him go when this was over. I trust him as far as I can throw him.*

Jim got up and left the courtroom. Once outside the room his detail followed him and he said, "I need to piss. I think I can do that in private."

They stood outside the restroom and waited for him for about ten minutes and finally went in looking for Jim. They were on the first floor, so Jim had made a quick escape out the window and was gone like the wind.

First thing Jim had to do was call the DA and tell him that he was being threatened and to get a continuance on the hearing. It was the only thing that would work. Jim knew he had to ditch his phone and buy a new one, so that's what he did next. He also stopped at the bank and got a lot of money out, so he wouldn't be using his card for anything. Only cash from this point on. Jim wasn't new to this type of thing. After all, he had worked in Vice for a number of years. Jim dialed Blair's number and a man answered, "It took you long enough, Ellison."

"Let me talk to Sandburg," Jim ordered as steadily as he could. He felt like he would fall apart at any moment.

"Jim?" a wounded sounding Blair asked.

"Blair, you were supposed to be in the safe house. What happened?"

"Fuck if I know. The cop that was watching me handed me over to them. Just like that and then they killed him," Blair said, quickly.

"Blair, they're going to hurt you before I find you. I'm so sorry."

"Jim, just come for me, okay?" Blair pleaded.

“I’ll be there as soon as possible. Talk to me while I listen to things,” Jim suggested.

Blair started ranting about his accommodations and Jim heard a train off in the distance. At this time in the morning, that narrowed it down to being in the business district. There were none at this time in subdivisions and suburbs. Jim was going to kill those fuckers.

“Blair, hang in there. I’m coming,” Jim whispered.

“Thank you, they have not been nice to me so far.”

“Blair, let me talk to the man again,” Jim said, as calmly as he could in this situation.

“What do you want, Ellison? We’re ditching the phone so you have to call 555-6091 to get a hold of us from now on. It can’t be traced.”

“How much does the old man love his son?”

The voice said, “He adores him, what difference does it make?”

Jim asked, “How much have you hurt Sandburg so far?”

“A black eye, a split lip, that’s about it. Oh, he just said his ribs are hurting. What a whiner. I don’t know how you stay with this pansy ass.”

“Tell your boss that this is the deal. I’m going to call in and say that I’m being watched. And I can’t come forward until next week. In the next week, if you hurt him anymore than you have already, I will order a hit on his son in jail. Do you know I mean business?”

“Yeah, I’ll give him the message. But he’ll be calling you.”

“I have a new number, he can call me there. The number is 555-2121. If I don’t pick up, it’s because I can’t. Leave a fucking message or I will order the hit on Jr. Understood?”

“Understood. Morelli’s not going to like this, Ellison. I’m going to warn you now.”

“If he takes it out on Sandburg, I **will** have his son killed. Then I’ll have his daughter killed. I’m not fucking around. I don’t have a badge anymore. They can’t tell me what to do.”

“I’ll give him the messages. You better lay low, Ellison.”

“Oh and if I die, so does his son. It’s already arranged. If I don’t check in, he’s dead,” Jim promised and then closed his cell. He threw that one in the trash and walked off wondering where in the hell he would start.

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“What do you mean the cop watching Sandburg is dead and Sandburg is nowhere to be found?” Simon bellowed.

“Hey, I’m just telling you what happened, Captain Banks,” the officer from Vice said. “We went to relieve him and found him dead.”

“Listen here Miller. If anything happens to Sandburg or Ellison, that Morelli kid is as good as dead.”

“Is that a threat, Captain Banks?” Miller asked.

“It’s a promise. Now I would suggest you go clean up your mess and find my men,” Simon barked as he shoved Miller out of his office. Simon hated having to deal with Vice. They were all idiots as far as he was concerned. But Simon also knew that having both Major Crimes and Vice looking for Jim and Blair would help a great deal.

Simon called down and had the techs put a trace on Blair's phone and Jim's phone. It couldn't hurt. Maybe they could catch a break.

As soon as he shut the door, his cell rang and he answered quickly, hoping it was news on the numbers already, "Banks..."

"Simon, don't say my name. I can't come in right now. They kidnapped Blair and are beating him up as we speak to keep me from testifying."

"You know that you have to testify, right?"

"He's my lover, Simon. I can't let them kill him. That means I have to find him and save him."

"Tell me what I can do," Simon offered.

"There's a package coming your way. It's got something for you, Joel, Megan, Brown and Rafe. We'll talk later. I'm sorry..."

Simon closed his cell because he knew that Jim wasn't there any longer. He wondered what Jim would have sent to the bullpen that was right out in the open.

Megan knocked on the door and said, "They just told me that Sandy has been kidnapped."

"Sit down and keep your wits about you. I need you to focus and not get all crazy on me."

"Sir, I'm not getting crazy, but if I get a hold of who took him, I'm not going to be responsible for what I do." She turned and walked out of his office and Simon felt sorry for the other side for a brief moment. Then he remembered what Morelli had done to his last victim. They had raped him, cut him up and beat him until he bled to death internally. Morelli wasn't a good man. Simon didn't see how this could possibly end well. They were dealing with Satan.

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Two hours later

A deliveryman knocked on Simon's door and said, "I have a delivery for Simon Banks, no one else can sign for it. You have to show me ID."

Simon took his wallet out and showed the man his license and the man had him sign for it, handed him the package and walked out without saying a word.

Simon shut his door and opened the package. Inside were five cell phones. On each cellphone was a name taped to it, so they knew which belonged to each person. Simon grabbed the box and walked into Interrogation room 1 and called all four of his team members into the room. They all came with no questions asked. Simon handed out the phones and said, "No one can know about these. Jim will contact you if he needs your help. Now, go back to work so if anyone is watching us they don't know that something is up."

They all put their phones away and left Simon alone to think. Simon hoped that Jim would call him soon. He just didn't want to know what they were doing to poor Blair.

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Jim was settled in down in the business district, hiding in an old building. He didn't need lights on or anything with his senses. Jim didn't know who to trust. Rafe and Brown were the only ones that knew where the safe house was other than the cop that was on duty that morning. But he had been taken there by Rafe. Was Rafe on the take? Jim hated to even think about believing that. But how else would they know? Rafe had brought over one of his friends who he said he could trust. It was time to call Morelli and see what they were up to. He would worry about Rafe in a little while.

Jim dialed Blair's new number and dreaded hearing his lover's sad voice. It had been more than sad, it was defeated. Blair knew he was going to die. Jim had heard it in his voice. Jim wasn't going to allow that to happen. There was just no fucking way.

Morelli answered, "It's about time, Ellison."

"I want to speak to Sandburg."

"You must have mistaken me for somebody that gives a crap about what you do or say. He's not able to talk. The boys got a little crazy with him tonight when they found out that the trial has been delayed for two weeks. It should have been canceled. That was the deal, Ellison. Now, he's been hurt and will continue to get hurt until he's dead. There's nothing I can do about that. I told you, I want my son walking out of that jail cell or I kill your lover. And a couple of the men are going to try him out for size. So you might want to hurry your ass up. And I know all about the cell phones you sent to the station house. Do you actually think I have no one inside?"

Jim was floored. Morelli already knew about the phones? That meant that he had someone on the inside for sure. But who? Jim had to figure that part out.

"Cat got your tongue, Ellison?"

And like that he hung up on Jim. Jim rocked holding on to himself to keep from punching the walls of the building he was in and tried to stay calm. It wasn't working. He picked up his phone and called Megan.

"Megan, I need something done and it would be totally against the law. You and I could both lose our job for this, not to mention getting arrested."

"Just tell me what you need, Jim. Do you need me to sneak in to see Morelli, Jr. and do something to him?"

“I find it scary that you’re so willing to hurt him. But for once, this works for both of us. I need you to slip him something that’s going to make him so sick, he’ll be puking his lungs out. I’m out of my league, Megan. They are hurting Blair and I can’t find him yet. I have to gain some control and get the upper hand.”

“I’ll find Dan Wolf and he’ll give me something from the lab. I’ll put it in something and take it to him right now. I’ll call you when it’s done.”

Jim was getting tired of getting hung up on. He didn’t really want to involve Megan, but at the same time he didn’t trust Rafe at this point. And with Rafe came Brown. Jim was torn about Brown. He knew that Simon, Megan and Joel were honest and trustworthy, but the other two he wasn’t sure about. And Jim didn’t even want to tell Megan about the phones.

Jim had some water and chips to eat for dinner and sat there waiting for the phone call. He was so lost and missed Blair so much. His senses were all over the place. Blair would help him stay grounded but right now, he didn’t have that luxury. And the pain that Jim was feeling for his lover being hurt was unbelievable. Jim did the same thing he had been doing all night. He listened on the street for anything and everything that could take him to where Blair was. He had to stay strong and focused so that he could find Blair. At that moment his spirit animal showed up and laid down on the floor next to Jim. Jim took comfort in this, realizing that the wolf was no doubt near Blair. Jim’s senses seemed to calm down and he felt stronger the longer he sat by his spirit animal. Jim had his first real ray of hope. The panther not only was company but he kept Jim warm.

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At midnight, Jim’s phone rang. Morelli was on the line. “What did you do to my son?”

“Whatever do you mean?” Jim asked, hatefully.

“How are you doing this shit? You must have people on the inside of the jail. My son almost died tonight. My inside man let me know about it ten minutes ago.”

"This will continue happening to him. I don't even care about the fucking trial anymore, Morelli. All I want is Sandburg free. And if you hurt him again, I will hurt your son again. Now, you know I mean it."

"You can talk to Sandburg tomorrow morning. But just remember that neither of you will ever be really safe."

"Same with you. You think you're the only badass? You're so wrong." And Jim hung up the phone. Jim never wanted to kill anyone as badly as he did Morelli.

His phone went off about ten minutes later and it was Megan. "I slipped into the kitchen at the jail and put the drug into the soup. I lucked out, the trays were already made up and the cell number was on each tray, so it was easy to put the drug into his food. Dan gave me enough that it would make him wish he was dead, but he wouldn't actually die. Have you heard Sandy's voice today?"

"They beat him up earlier, so I wasn't able to talk to him. I have something to ask you. How well do you trust Brown and Rafe?"

"Henri is a good man, Rafe on the other hand was the only one that knew where to take that cop that got killed when they took Blair. I don't know if I trust him, but yet I don't know why I don't trust him."

There was complete silence for a moment and Jim said, "I want you to tell him that I'm in a building in the business district. I'll give you the address and I want to see if he tells Morelli."

"I think it's too risky, Jim. You don't have any backup."

"I'll let you know if I need help, okay?" Jim asked.

"I'll tell him that it's a secret and we can't tell anyone. Jesus, I hate this, Jim."

Jim rattled off the address and the time he wanted Megan to call Rafe and said, "Give him the message, Megan. But you have to give me about two hours to set things up first."

Jim had given the address across the street four doors down. It was an abandoned building, boards up and the city was getting ready to tear it down. Jim went down and booby-trapped the building, so that Morelli's men wouldn't get out of there without being hurt. No one would be killed, but they would remember this. So Jim went up to the roof and decided he would watch from there. He was focused on watching and listening at the same time so that he didn't zone. He heard the cars coming, very slowly. There were two of them, both sedans with five people in each. Jim figured that they came from the east and only took about five minutes, so that narrowed the search down somewhat. The wires he had set up were for low charge explosives. He was watching as the men walked into the building. He heard the small explosion and the screams and confusion from the people that were in there. One guy came out running and Jim watched him closely. He got into a sedan, drove straight to the corner, turned right at the stop sign and then his car stopped. They were close by. Thankfully, there were no fires to put out, just a lot of noise and confusion with Morelli's men. Jim went back inside so that it wasn't so noisy. Jim expected Morelli to call, but he heard nothing at this time. Jim heard the train and knew he was in the right place. For some reason only the business district had trains running in the early morning and quite late at night. Damn, he was close.

The police had been called and they arrived to find the men inside and took them into custody. Jim could hear them talking saying that there were no charges yet, because they didn't know what was going on. Jim hoped they would keep them busy for a while.

Jim called Rafe and Rafe sounded like he was sleeping. "Hello?"

"Why are you sleeping?" Jim wondered.

"I usually go to bed just after 10:00. What did you need, Jim?"

Jim could hear something in Rafe's voice. After all, being in bed was a very convenient excuse. He finally asked, "What's going on with Megan? She seemed off her game today?"

"I don't know, she called in sick this morning and no one has heard a word from her. Why?"

"Do you know if Dan Wolf was there tonight?"

"Dan's in Mexico on his honeymoon, remember?" Rafe asked.

"Oh shit... Rafe, I need you and Brown to help me."

"You thought I was with them didn't you?" Rafe asked, sounding hurt, but not fooling Jim one bit.

"Rafe, she made you sound like you were in on it. It must be her. Jesus. I don't know who I can trust." Jim made it sound like he was at the end of his rope so that Rafe would buy it.

"You can trust all of us. Well, except for Megan Connor. What's going on?"

Jim told Rafe that he had some ideas, but nothing he could share yet.

Rafe said, "Jim, you need to let us help you."

"I take it Morelli, Jr. never got sick tonight?"

"The last I heard he was fine. There has been no word that he's sick at all."

"I'll call you right back, Rafe."

Why had Morelli called him if his son hadn't indeed gotten sick? Why would he pretend to be so upset? Rafe was lying, Jim knew this much to be true, but he had to prove it.

Jim dialed Joel's number and asked, "Joel, who do you think I could trust at the station?"

"Honestly, Jim, I'm beginning to think there are a lot of people in Morelli's camp. I'm not sure you can trust Rafe. He's been very nosy about everything going on with you."

Jim felt like Joel was telling the truth. Jim didn't hear any differences in his heartbeat as he answered.

"Joel, did Megan call in sick today?" Jim asked.

"No, today was her day off. Rafe called in sick."

"Joel, I know that I can trust you, Megan and Simon, but I'm not sure about Rafe and Brown. I need help, but I've trusted two people and I think one has lied to me."

"Jim, let me call Simon. That's all the help you'll need. Then we'll come to where you are and we'll do whatever you want to get Blair safe."

"Let me call you in the morning. I'll talk to you later." Jim closed the cell and thought about different ways to kill Morelli. He dialed Dan Wolf's number at the station and Dan answered, "Medical Examiner, can I help you?"

"Dan, did you help Megan do something tonight?"

"Jim? I gave Megan the stuff needed to make the dude sick. So it went as planned. I talked to the doctor at the jail and he said that Morelli was sicker than a dog. That's what you wanted, right?"

"Did Megan seem all right to you?" Jim asked.

“She’s pissed off about Sandy, as she calls him. She said she wants to kill Morelli and hopes she gets the chance.”

“Do you trust her, Dan?”

“Well, yeah. We’ve been dating for about a month. I think I can trust her,” Dan said, snickering.

“Rafe told me that you got married and were on your honeymoon?”

“Seriously? Why would he say that? Does that mean... Do you think Rafe is on the take? What a lousy fucker. Let me tell Megan,” Dan said.

Jim blurted out, “No, not yet. Let me figure things out first. I’ll let Megan know what’s going on as soon as possible.”

Jim closed his cell, thought about things for a moment and remembered that Joel and Rafe both got new SUVs this month. Most of the cops couldn’t afford shit these days, but yet they both had new SUVs. *Damn them. They’re making me distrust everyone.* Then Jim remembered where Joel got his. *Of course!* Joel’s wife Mary had gone to Vegas the previous month with her sister for a short holiday. They’d planned to have one evening gambling, and given themselves a limit on how much they were prepared to lose. Only instead of losing, she’d landed really lucky. She’d won the SUV and when she got home she gave it to Joel because he needed a new car more than she did. *Joel is trustworthy. He likes Blair a lot, he wouldn’t have ever let them hurt him. Stop thinking it’s everyone involved.*

Jim decided he would sleep and think at the same time. He would make a decision and go with it tomorrow. *Like I could possibly sleep.*

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“Your boyfriend must not believe we’re serious,” Morelli said to an exhausted and beaten Blair Sandburg.

“What did you expect him to do? He’s a cop, he wouldn’t do anything against the law. He’ll testify whether you kill me or not. So just finish me off. I don’t care. You’re all boring me to death. I somehow thought the mafia would be thrilling and exciting. It’s like a fucking soap opera. Being a cop is like a roller coaster ride and being with you is like being on a Ferris Wheel,” Blair ranted.

“A lot you know about your boyfriend. He made my son sick tonight after he told me he would. So he’s got pull somewhere. Maybe he just doesn’t care about you, did you ever think about that?”

“Morelli, we’re going over the same shit again. I’m bored, kill me already.” This time he said it very loudly and hoped Jim was within hearing distance. Blair glanced over in the corner and there sat his spirit animal. Blair knew that Jim was close now and that things would be all right.

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Jim got his phone out and called Simon. “I know where Blair is. Can we go and get him?”

“Let me get the gang first,” Simon stated.

“No, only you, Brown, Joel and Megan.”

“Jim, are you telling me that maybe you aren’t trusting Rafe?”

“That’s what I’m telling you. Now get over here as soon as possible. Bring lots of fire power and our vests. I’m in a building at the corner of 10th and Michigan Ave. Could you hurry, sir?”

“We’ll be right there. No lights, no sirens, just us and we’ll walk in and surprise them, how does that sound?”

"Sounds great. I can hear Blair ranting and yelling at them. He keeps telling them how boring they are. He said something about them being a poor excuse for mafia."

Simon laughed and said, "We'll be right there. Be careful, Jim."

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Jim's phone rang and Morelli said, "I'm tired of this game you're playing. You hurt nine of my men last night. I don't know how you're doing this shit, but we've had it. Your boyfriend is going to be killed and not quickly. You should have done what I said in the beginning. You could have saved his life."

"Morelli, can I talk to him one last time?"

"I'll put you on speaker phone so we can all hear you two love birds," he said.

"Chief?"

"Hey, Jim. What's new?"

Jim could hear the fear in his voice, but knew that Blair was putting up a good appearance of not caring about them one way or the other.

"Morelli said he is going to kill you, so I wanted to say how sorry I am that we didn't get to Simon's Point on the tenth like we planned. It would have been great. I'm so sorry, Blair."

"It's okay, Jim. I knew you had to do your job. Kill the fucker. Do it for me," Blair shouted.

Jim could hear them hitting Blair and Jim could see nothing but red. Honestly, Jim couldn't remember a time when he was angrier. "Morelli, I just wanted you to know that I'm not only going to testify, but I'm going to have your son killed in prison. Just a heads up. There is only one way to keep him alive and you aren't

giving me that. So you'd better go and say goodbye to your son today. I will call this afternoon to talk to Blair. If you don't let me speak with him, that's my plan and it will go exactly as I planned it."

"You're a fucking cop, Ellison. You can't go around killing people. I know you better than that," Morelli said, laughing.

"Laugh away, Morelli. I'll take care of my testifying today and your son is going down. In the ground. Better go visit him."

"I have to think, Ellison. I will give you one day to not testify and as long as you don't, I'll let Sandburg go. You have to make the choice."

"Okay, you win. I won't testify, but that can't be taken care of for two days. How do I know if I can trust you or not?" Jim wondered.

"Because I said so. Now call the DA. I don't want to hear bad news tomorrow and I mean it."

"Does this mean there is someone in the DA's office on the take too? You have someone everywhere don't you?"

"You have no idea, Ellison. Now, do what I said, or he dies tomorrow."

Jim closed his cell. He didn't say goodbye or anything to Blair.

Jim looked out the window and saw Simon, Megan, Joel and Brown. They were entering the building, carrying lots and lots of fire power and Jim was ready for them.

He went downstairs and filled them in on exactly what was happening. Jim told Simon about a person in the DA's office being on the take and Simon didn't think he could get any angrier about anything at that moment. How wrong he was.

“He’ll stop at nothing to get what he wants. We need to get Blair out of there and fast. We know that we can’t trust him,” Simon stated, as he put his Kevlar vest on.

They all followed suit, wearing the vests and getting enough fire power for ten people.

“Jim, how many people are over there?” Megan asked, not even thinking about hiding his senses.

“Six counting Blair.”

“Wow, the numbers have dwindled a lot haven’t they?” Joel asked, almost smiling.

“Are you ready?” Brown asked.

They started walking because there was no way they could sneak up on them with a car.

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“Your boyfriend is a wuss just like you, Sandburg. He gave in just like I knew he would. He’s not near as tough as he’d like people to believe he is. Now, I’ll be able to own his ass.”

“You want to own his ass? I’m a little jealous, Morelli.”

One of the men punched him and said, “Stupid fag.”

“Hey, I’m not stupid,” Blair answered.

One of the other guys started laughing as he realized that Blair said he wasn’t stupid but didn’t say he wasn’t a fag.

“What the fuck are you laughing at, you moron?” Morelli asked.

“You have to admit, he’s pretty tough, he has a sense of humor and he has a comeback to everything you say. That’s more than anyone else you’ve held captive, including the Mayor’s nephew before you killed him,” the moron said right before Morelli pulled his own gun out and shot him in the head.

“This is what happens to smart asses, Sandburg.”

“So you’re the one that kidnapped the Mayor’s nephew. Wow, that’s big news. You’re going to owe us big time for that.” Blair could see the wolf pacing from one side of the room to the other. *Jim is close.*

“What about me killing you instead?” Morelli said, sounding angrier than he should have been.

“So kill me already, you fucker,” Blair blurted out before he got hit so hard his chair knocked over.

“Just leave him on the floor. We’ve got to get this piece of shit out of the warehouse right now. Get a blanket for him,” Morelli ordered.

It took Morelli and all three of the bad guys to move the stupid one. Blair was able to loosen his ties because of the way he landed when the chair tipped over. He finally got his hands out and undid his feet and took off. He could hear them coming back up the stairs, so he hid around the corner of the room. He grabbed a baseball bat on the way. It was one that they had used on him. He was so nervous, but yet, knew that Jim was coming in five more minutes. Soon it would be 10:00 and Jim and Simon would be there to save him. With any luck the rest of the gang would be there too.

Morelli walked into the room and said, “I don’t believe it. The fag got away? He didn’t come down, so he must have gone up. You three check the roof and I’ll stay here to be sure he doesn’t come back this way.”

“Yes, sir.” All three of the men called out at exactly the same time.

As soon as they shut the door, Morelli went towards where Blair was hiding to get a cold drink out of the fridge. As he came around the bend, Blair hit him as hard as he could in the legs with the bat. Blair heard the bones breaking and it almost made him sick. Keyword, almost. As Morelli went down, Blair grabbed both of Morelli’s guns and waited for his Major Crime posse to show up.

“You little fucker. This will be the sorriest day of your life.”

“You big fucker, I don’t care,” Blair shouted and hit him in the arm that time. Hearing the bones break that time didn’t bother him as much.

Morelli was screaming in pain and Blair could hear the bad guys coming down the stairs. But he also heard, “Cascade Police, put your guns down or we’ll shoot.”

They didn’t put them down, so Simon, Joel, Megan and Brown shot them all. Jim was busy trying to find Blair and opened the door, smiling knowing he had the right room. He was happy he had found him until he saw Blair’s face. Those lousy fuckers had smashed his nose over to the left side of his face. Blair’s perfect nose was no more. His eyes were swollen and black and blue. Then there was his jaw. He was so swollen that no one would recognize him for a month. Jim was ready to kill Morelli. He walked over and leaned down to Morelli and said, “Chief, what happened to him?”

“He tried to kill me, so I hit him with a baseball bat,” Blair answered as Megan, Joel, Brown and Simon walked in.

“Chief, he looks like he has a break or two.” Jim said.

“Well, so do I. Seemed only right, man,” Blair said as he still hung on to the bat for dear life. Morelli’s guns were in Blair’s pockets. Jim made sure there were no other guns and saw all the breaks the man had in his arms and legs. Jim had to force himself to keep from smiling. Smiling now wouldn’t be professional. *Oh fuck*

professional. Jim smiled like crazy. Then he took the guns from Blair and handed them to Simon.

Morelli, was so pissed off and said, "I knew I couldn't trust Rafe to take care of things like I asked him to. If he had done what I asked, most of you would be dead already."

Megan walked up to him and said, "Wow, good job, Sandy. You've done a great job showing a mobster what it's going to be like in prison." She hugged Blair as softly as she could.

Brown was next to hug Blair. "There are paramedics on the way. For you and Morelli. The ones outside don't need one."

Not to be outdone by anyone else, Joel hugged him gently and mussed his hair up, just a little bit.

Suddenly Blair slid down the wall and landed on his butt on the cold floor. Jim knew he was in shock. He could sense it and knew that Morelli was in shock also. The only difference was Jim didn't give a shit about Morelli. Jim took Blair into his arms and held him as gently as he could.

"I think they broke my ribs, man."

Jim touched Blair as softly as he could and said, "They sure did. Two of them, Chief. The ambulance will be here soon."

Blair leaned into Jim and whispered, "I knew you would find me. Thank you."

"I'm glad one of us was sure. He gave me a run for my money. Stupid, low-life fucker."

"I don't think that Jim is angry or anything," Simon stated simply, not joking a bit.

Henri looked troubled and said, "So what's going to happen to Rafe now?"

“He’ll go down. It’s a shame that one of our finest became one of our worst members on the force,” Simon ranted.

“One of the finest?” Morelli, laughed. “He’s worthless, I paid him to take care of things and he didn’t even warn me in time.”

“And when we find out who is in the DA’s office, that will be another strike against you, Morelli. Things aren’t looking good at all,” Simon promised.

Jim started to help Blair up. “The ambulance is here, everyone. Someone might want to see to Morelli,” Jim said sarcastically. It wasn’t like the man could move anywhere without screaming in pain.

The EMT’s came walking into the room and went to Blair first, the second set went to Morelli.

“I’m telling my lawyer that he got preferential treatment over me,” Morelli yelled as they put Blair on a gurney.

The EMT looked at Morelli with hate and said, “His vitals are low. We have to help him first.”

“Bullshit...His vitals are fine. The little fucker can take all kinds of shit.”

“Oh by the way, Jim, he killed the Mayor’s nephew. They told me because they thought I was a walking dead man. You might be able to learn from someone where they buried him. For the Mayor’s closure and all,” Blair said right before they put the oxygen mask on his face and he stopped talking.

“Chief, I’ll be up to the hospital as soon as I can. I have to file reports. There will be cops on you the entire time you’re up there.”

“He’ll never be safe again, Ellison. Don’t think things will end because I’m in prison, they’ll just get fucking worse.”

As the EMTs lifted him, one of them pretended to drop him, so his already broken arm and leg got hurt even more. "Oh my God, stop wiggling."

"I didn't wiggle once, you fucker. I'm going to sue the city. You're all witnesses. You saw him drop me on purpose," Morelli screamed at the top of his lungs.

"I saw you wiggling, causing him to lose control of the stretcher after he told you not to move," Megan said, very seriously.

"You're all going to be investigated when I'm done singing. Just you wait and see."

"Who do you think they're going to believe, Morelli? You or a bunch of good cops?" Jim asked.

"Good cops my ass. You're all a bunch of losers," Morelli continued to scream at them.

"Wait a minute everyone, we're not going to jail, so that makes us the winners, right?" Simon asked.

Jim stood above him and said, "You wait and see how people feel about you giving up your men for your own life and telling us about the Mayor's nephew. You're singing like a canary. You're the one that should be scared. The guys that were arrested across the street tonight will be happy to get their hands on you."

The EMT put the mask over his mouth and all everyone could hear was fucker, fucker, fucker mumbled. As they left the building the rest of Major Crimes laughed for a quick moment. Then Simon called and told IA to arrest Rafe. It was such a shame, but it had to be done. He knew all along where Blair was and didn't care. He had to pay for it.

Then Simon informed them that they had an informant in the DA's office. IA was thrilled. They hadn't had a good case in a while. Simon knew they wouldn't rest until they found out who it was.

After that, Simon called for cops to be put on Blair's room until they got up there. Everything was arranged and going smoothly. Dan Wolf was at the scene hugging Jim, telling him that he was so glad he was all right, as well as Blair. Maybe Blair might be hurt, but he was alive.

It was only 2:00 in the afternoon by the time they were done being questioned, but all of them felt like it was two in the morning, instead. Jim and Megan had filled out all reports that needed to be filed.

"Jim, can I go with you to the hospital and take a turn keeping an eye on Sandy?"

"If Simon can spare you that would be great. That way each of us could take a quick nap before tonight. It's going to be a long night."

Simon smiled at all of them and said, "Jim and Megan on first watch. Henri and I on second watch. We'll take over tomorrow morning."

"Thank you, Simon," Jim said as he got his things ready to go.

Joel looked left out. "I would like to have a shift helping."

Jim smiled and patted Joel on the back. "If we're still at the hospital, you're welcome to come up tomorrow. If not, you can come to our place."

"Thanks, Jim," Joel replied, happily.

"And by the way, Jim, I was really proud of you for not killing Morelli," Simon pointed out.

"I wanted to, Simon, but I knew it would take away from all that Blair had done to stay alive. It wouldn't have been fair to Blair."

“Oh, you’re a poet and didn’t know it,” Megan chirped.

“Keep her the hell away from Sandburg if he’s awake,” Simon joked.

They all laughed and Jim and Megan left for the day.

*

At the hospital, Blair was having quite the time of it. They wrapped his ribs after the MRI had taken place and made sure nothing else was broken other than his nose and ribs. He was very lucky that his ribs had not punctured his lung. The doctor was very pleased about that. One thing the doctor wasn’t pleased about was the worry of a blood clot in his brain. Blair had taken quite a beating and everyone was concerned with how he was acting. What they didn’t realize was that Blair hadn’t slept in three days. He was exhausted and needed some sleep.

“Doctor Norris, could I get something to help me sleep through this pain?” Blair asked.

“We’re afraid to let you go to sleep until we make sure everything is all right in your head. We seldom have swelling without problems. Are you tired?”

“Doc, I haven’t slept in three days. They were holding me hostage, they were beating me non-stop and I never got to sleep. One of them would see me start to close my eyes and the beatings would begin again.”

The doctor patted Blair’s hand and said, “Let me go and have your MRI read immediately. If there is no swelling, we’ll let you rest.”

“Thank you, man. I can’t wait for you to get back.”

“Wow, that’s something a doctor rarely hears.” He laughed as he started out of the room.

There were two cops watching Blair. One inside the room and one outside the room. They were taking no chances. Once the nurses left the room, Blair looked over at Bill Night and asked, "So how bad do I look, Bill?"

"I've seen worse, Blair. The worst part is your nose because you usually have that small nose in the middle of your face. Now you have a huge one over to the left side of your face. Give it a week and you'll have the look of a bruiser. You'll get more dates that way."

"I'm already taken, Bill. I thought you knew."

"Someone I know?" Bill asked.

"You'll probably get pissed but it's Jim Ellison. We've been a couple for almost a year now."

"I'll be damned. I'm not pissed, just surprised. I'm not one to listen to what people say behind people's back, so I never believed it when I heard you might be a couple. I figured it was just nonsense."

"I'm glad you're not making a run for it, Bill."

"Besides, you're pretty damn tough for one of those fairy nice guys," Bill said, laughing.

Jim walked into the room and asked, "Did you just call him a fairy?"

"Sort of. We were joking around about him being a tough fairy nice guy," Bill said, trying not to piss Jim off.

"Well, that was fairy nice of you, Bill," Jim teased.

Bill relaxed when he realized that Jim must have heard the entire thing from outside the room.

Then Jim said, "But the guy out in the hall isn't too happy about us being a couple. I think he's calling in for a replacement."

"You've got to be kidding?" Bill stormed out of the room and left Jim alone with Blair for a second.

"Hey, Chief." Jim kissed his forehead. It was about the only place that wasn't beat-up or swollen.

"Did I tell you thank you for saving my life?" Blair asked.

Jim smiled. "You did and I have to thank you for kicking his ass so well, so that I didn't have to kill him when I saw him. You kept me out of prison, Blair."

"Oh goody. We make a good team, don't we?"

Jim leaned down and kissed his forehead again. "The best."

Blair held Jim's hands in his and just soaked up the love he could feel coming off Jim.

Megan came walking into the room and said, "Oh my God, Sandy. What have they done to your nose?"

"You saw me before, what's wrong with it?" Blair wondered.

"Chief, they had to set it and it's pretty swollen. Thank you for pointing that out, Megan," Jim said, sarcastically.

"You still look beautiful. When are they going to let us wash the blood out of those wonderful curls?" Megan asked.

Jim looked at her like she had no sense whatsoever. "Again, thanks, Megan."

"I get to wash it when it's time, Sandy."

“Jim, it’s okay that I’m not doing that well. Stop protecting me. I have cops that will do that. Oh, well maybe just one.”

“What are you talking about Sandy?”

Before Blair could answer, Bill walked in and said, “Ryan Tyler just walked out on his shift. So I’m the only one. Could one of you stay up here with me until I can get someone? Captain Banks said two officers at all times.”

“Ryan Tyler is going to get his ass kicked when I see him next,” Megan said, filled with hate. “I’ll be your partner for the rest of the night.”

“Thank you. I’ll let Captain Banks know. I’ll be in the hall if you need me for anything,” Bill said, as he left the room.

“Thanks, Bill,” Jim called out after him. Making Bill smile big time.

Jim looked over at Blair and smiled. “Chief, I’ll be right back.” And out the door Jim walked.

“Where did he go, Sandy?”

“I would guess he went to kick Ryan Tyler’s ass. He’s been dying to kick the shit out of someone all day and night. He wants to be the hero. I can live with that. I wish we had it on video,” Blair said.

“I hope he doesn’t get in trouble,” Megan said.

“He won’t hurt him bad, he’ll just let him know that we’re no pansy assed dudes. We’re rough and tough dudes,” Blair joked.

About twenty minutes later, Jim walked into the room looking better and fairly happy.

“Jimbo, did you leave a body somewhere?”

“No, Megan, I didn’t. I was a good boy and only hit him once. I told him that he was a weasel and a pussy. When I left him he was almost crying. He is a pussy.”

Blair started laughing and said, “Give me hug, big man.”

Jim hugged him quite gently and Blair asked, “Do you feel better now, Jim?”

“As a matter of fact, I do, Chief.”

Doctor Norris walked into the room and said, “If you’ll excuse me, I have to discuss things with my patient.”

“Doc, this is my better half that saved my life tonight. Jim Ellison, meet Doctor Norris. And this lovely Aussie is Inspector Megan Connor. She’s friends with Doctor Dan Wolf, the Chief Medical Examiner. You might know him. I would like both of them to stay.”

Doctor Norris shook hands with both of them and said, “Sit. First of all, Blair, you are safe to sleep. No blood clots and no swelling could be seen. You’re very lucky. We want to observe you for three days to be sure you’re all right and then you can go home. How does this sound?”

“Jim was a medic in the Army Rangers, could he possibly watch me at home? I don’t want to stay here any longer than I have to,” Blair whined.

“Jim, would you be able to get off for the next three to five days? I want him watched like a hawk. I’ll give you a list of things to watch for and you bring him back if one of those things show up. Do we have a deal?”

“Let me check with my boss to be sure I can get off,” Jim said as he pulled his cell phone out.

Blair looked at it and asked, “Where did you get that new cell phone?”

"I'll tell you later, babe."

Megan snickered and knew they would be having a huge discussion soon. She loved these men so much. Hopefully, Simon would grant Jim the time off.

Jim closed the cell and said to the doctor. "I have a week off. So whenever he's ready, we'll take him home."

"I'll get his paperwork done. Remember, Blair, you follow his orders. No sex this week either, as far as that goes. I'm not going to release you for work any sooner than that either."

Megan burst out laughing at the look on both men's faces. "I love you blokes. You're what keep me happy most of the time."

"I hear it might be Dan Wolf that's keeping you happy," Jim said.

"Him too. Can we have him over for poker from now on?" Megan asked.

"Wow, you get kidnapped and all these things happen in your life. When did you start seeing Dan? I knew you were having friendly lunches, but didn't know it went further than that."

Megan laughed. "For a while. Stop worrying about that, Sandy. I'll fill you in when I come to visit this week. I'll bring Dan along with me."

"Doctor Norris, do you have some scrubs that Blair could wear home? Otherwise, I've got to go home and get him something. He'll whine again."

"Is it understood about no sex?" Doctor Norris asked, once again.

Jim shook his head yes and answered, "I might not like it, but I understand."

“Good, I’ll get his paperwork ready, he can jump in the shower and put the scrubs on. I’ll send them right down. Jim, make sure he doesn’t get dizzy while he’s in the shower, please?” Doctor Norris asked.

“I will gladly watch him naked in the shower.”

Everyone burst out laughing. Including Simon who had just walked in the door.

“Hi Simon,” Blair said, happily.

“Someone must be getting discharged already. I myself think it’s too soon, but what do I know. I missed that day at med school.” Simon just smiled and waited for a comeback from someone, but he didn’t get one.

“Everyone sit and I’ll tell you what’s going on. We got a warrant for Morelli’s house and we found a body of a male in the basement, buried pretty deep. Not deep enough for the new machine that Dan got from the feds that finds dead bodies. Dan is doing tests right now to see if the body is the Mayor’s nephew. We should know soon. Anyhow, we also found tons of drugs, and his daughter was in charge of watching a man that Morelli thought was stealing from him. So she’ll be tried for kidnapping and assault. She’s as abusive as her dad is. We’ve kept Morelli away from Jr. so that they can’t get together. In fact, the DA is trying to get him sent to another jail while awaiting trial. They won’t be in the same building at all. And then the DA is asking for Jr. to be sent to California for his stay in prison, to one of the toughest prisons there is. They will be housing Jr. for the next ten years at least. Jim, we still need you to testify. And we have spread the word that Morelli left his men to be killed instead of himself, so no one is coming around. I don’t think you’ll be bothered at all. The best part is their assets have all been seized by the Feds. They have no money to pay a high priced lawyer and if they try to get money from an offshore account, we’ll catch them doing it. Even his lawyer has deserted him. I have an update on the men that we arrested across the street from where Jim was. They are all turning state’s evidence for a lighter sentence in kidnapping, assault and attempted murder. And last but not least, IA already found the mole in the DA’s office. It was Marsha Michaels, the new DA

they just hired. She's also turning state's evidence. That about wraps it up for all of us."

Blair looked really thoughtful for a moment and said, "Simon, tell the feds that the lawyer and bookkeeper have all the money. I heard him telling his daughter on the phone. She wanted some and he couldn't get to it until he talked to them. They may have more money once they arrest those two."

"Thank you, Blair. The feds were pretty disgusted that there wasn't more money. They'll be very happy to hear this," Simon said.

"I can't imagine anyone better than Morelli for this to happen to. Maybe we can buy his house at a reduced rate," Blair teased.

"I wouldn't want to put a foot into his house. I would feel dirty. The man is getting exactly what he deserves," Jim said.

Megan said, "I can't believe how fast they found the mole in the DA's office. Thank God for that."

A nurse came into the room carrying a pair of scrubs, top and bottom. Blair still had his shoes, so he was set. "Come on, Jim. You can watch me shower."

Jim got up and moved his eyebrows up and down and Megan laughed.

When Blair came out, he looked like a new person. Okay, his face didn't, but his hair was all clean and shiny. He looked very studly in the scrubs.

"Hey Chief, I sort of like the look of you in scrubs. Maybe we could get some extras," Jim kidded.

"Let me buzz the nurse and ask," Blair teased back.

Simon said, "Blair, I'm so happy that you're here to laugh about things today. It could have gone the other way and then Jim wouldn't have been a very happy camper."

*

For the next week, Jim watched Blair like a hawk as promised. Blair was bored and horny. But Jim wasn't giving in for anything.

Blair couldn't wait to go back to work. He loved his new job of paid consultant to Major Crimes and Homicide. He missed being at work and doing what he seemed to do best. But he really needed to listen to the doctor or he would be in big trouble.

*

After a week, Jim and Blair knew they would have to go back to work again. Jim hated the idea of sharing Blair with anyone else. They sat on the sofa, making out and groping.

"God, I missed this," Jim said.

"How many times have I asked you not to call me God?"

Jim snickered and pinched Blair on the ass. "Would you like to go upstairs and talk about something? Or possibly do something. Our week is up," Jim said, smiling.

"I could use some of that fine Sentinel love. Come on, babe, show me who's boss," Blair said, happily.

They made quiet, gentle love because Jim still thought they needed to go slow so they didn't hurt Blair.

Once they were done, they lay in each other's arms and snuggled big time. It was so nice to get back to normal.

*

They went back to work the following day and Jim found out when the trial was. He found himself looking forward to it for a change. It was a little anticlimactic though. When he was called to the stand, they asked questions and Jim answered briefly and very quickly. It was as if the other side knew their goose was cooked and didn't even try. Jim had hoped that he could say many more things about Morelli Jr., but they didn't ask.

When it was all said and done, they were sending Morelli Jr. to the prison in California that Simon spoke of. Jim was never so happy in his life. The jury found him guilty in record time. The judge sentenced him to 18 years because it was his second offense. Again, Jim could not have been happier. Blair was thrilled too.

The trial was coming up for the other Morelli and also his daughter. Wasn't looking good for either of them. And the lawyer and bookkeeper in charge of all Morelli's money both folded as soon as they were questioned. The FBI was thrilled that they found all the off shore accounts and the accounts in the US too. Things were looking up. The only bad part was that Blair had to testify to what had happened to him. He hated reliving the entire thing in court every day.

The jury didn't take long to come back for Morelli and his daughter. She was going away for ten years and Morelli got life in prison. This was indeed one of the happiest days of all people in Major Crimes.

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Simon opened his door and said, "Sandburg, my office."

Blair walked in and stood before Simon's desk and said, "Yes, Simon?"

"Homicide would like to have you on one of their cases. Are you up to it yet?"

“Man, am I ever. Jim is driving me nuts with all this babying me bullshit.”

Simon thought about it for a moment, walked to the doorway and said, “Ellison, my office.”

“Simon, please don’t let him choose for me,” Blair pleaded.

Jim popped his head in and said, “You called?”

Simon chewed on his unlit cigar and said, “I wanted to let you know that Blair is going to be working Homicide for about a week or so. There will be no mother-henning him and no babying him in the bullpen. He’s a paid consultant, let him consult.”

Jim smiled over at Blair and said, “Just be careful, Chief.”

“That’s it? No lecture or anything?” Blair was shocked.

This time Jim threw back his head and laughed. “You took very good care of yourself on the Morelli case, so I’m not going to worry about you so much anymore. Okay, I’ll worry, but it’s not going to show on the outside.”

Simon laughed too. “Now that’s the Jim Ellison I know and love. Get back to work, I have things to discuss with Sandburg.”

Jim winked at Blair and walked over to his desk and sat down. Jim didn’t like the idea of being separated from Blair at all, even at work. But he had to make a choice. Jim thought he might have made the right one.

Jim was sitting at his desk when his phone rang and it was the jail saying Morelli wanted to see him. Jim said he would be there in about twenty minutes.

Jim waited for Blair to leave and went and told Simon where he was going. He told Simon he’d tell him about it when he got back.

When he arrived at the jail they took him back to see Morelli. They were sitting opposite each other, divided by a glass partition and a phone hanging on the wall. Jim picked up the phone and asked, "What in the world do you think you have to say to me, Morelli?"

"I still have friends on the outside and your little fuck buddy won't be safe ever again. I just wanted to tell you that."

Jim smiled and said, "You just admitted to hurting Blair Sandburg on tape. You just added another ten years at least to your sentence. I'll have our lawyer get with your lawyer. Oh yeah, you don't have one right now, do you?"

"You think you're really funny, Ellison, but I'm going to get the last laugh."

"You're not getting out, Morelli. You're going to die in prison. And with any luck it might be sooner than you expect."

"Are you threatening me?"

"Of course, I'm not. This is a recorded call. I'm just saying, things happen in prison that you don't expect. I hope your son and daughter do better than you might."

"Why wouldn't I do well, Ellison?"

"One word, Morelli. Saccony."

"What about him?" Morelli was actually sweating at this time.

"He's going to be there with you. He'll be so pleased to see you after all these years."

"Ellison, I need to be put in protective custody."

“I can’t do that. Neither can you. The judge would have been the one to ask. But the trial is over with. Sorry about that. Have a good life, Morelli.”

Jim hung up the phone and started walking towards the door. He could hear Morelli screaming his name. Jim found it odd that Morelli never once thought about Saccony. Morelli had killed Saccony’s son. There was not going to be any friendship there. Jim smiled all the way back to the bullpen.

The end