



The Many Challenges of Blair Sandburg

By PattRose

Trouble is Blair's Middle Name

There was a couple in Jim and Blair's building that Jim didn't care for. The woman allowed the man to abuse her, Jim could tell, and the abuser was an asshole. The man hated Jim and Blair because they were gay. But that's not why Jim didn't like him. He was the worst kind of bully and he seemed to be escalating. Jim just hoped it wasn't on his shift. He also hoped he would leave all of the other tenants out of it and just do something stupid like shoot himself. Jim had no patience for someone like that. And he never would. Blair on the other hand thought all people deserved a second chance.

Jim and Blair were having dinner by candlelight when the fighting upstairs started. Jim sighed and said, "I'm going to give them ten minutes and then I'm calling the police."

"You *are* the police, dude."

"Blair, this isn't my job. My job is wining and dining my lover before I have to go to Seattle."

"Oh... I like being wined and dined. I also like being sucked and fucked," Blair kidded.

"I love your bad, horny poetry. It fits my mood perfectly, Blair. Dinner was good wasn't it?"

"It was fantastic. Did you make dessert, too?" Blair wondered.

Jim smiled big time and said, "Oh you of little faith." He got up and brought back cheesecake with strawberries on top.

"Is this homemade?"

"Of course it's homemade, Chief. I had to do something today while you worked and I was off. Were you busy?" Jim asked as he sliced the dessert.

"I have to tell you, I love this new job. I never would have believed that Simon would get me a gig at the station. Being a police consultant for Major Crimes and Homicide was the best thing to ever happen to me. I especially love the paycheck. I helped solve a case today in Homicide. It was pretty darn exciting."

"You solved the case, Chief?"

"Not exactly, I mentioned something I thought they had forgotten to check. They went and checked it and wham the case was solved. I wasn't there, but it was my idea. So yes and no," Blair said, smiling.

"I'm really proud of you, Chief."

"Thanks, man."

"Will you be working in Major Crimes again tomorrow?" Jim asked.

"What difference does it make? You're leaving in the morning. Did you already forget?"

"How could I forget? I don't want to go at all. I hate seminars and Simon is just being an asshole sending me there for a week. I swear he loves splitting us up."

"Jim, Simon is a great boss. He would never do anything to hurt either of us. Let's clean up the kitchen and you can show me how much you're going to miss me," Blair suggested.

"Now you're talking..."

The next morning, they were having shower sex and Jim said, "If those neighbors fight while I'm gone, you call the police. Don't take care of it yourself. Understood?"

"I'm busy. You should be too," Blair teased. And just like that, Jim forgot about nagging.

Once Jim was dressed and had his luggage ready to go, Blair kissed him fiercely and hugged him until Jim couldn't breathe well. "I'm going to miss you too, Blair."

"I love you, man. More than you'll ever know."

"I'll call every single night. So if you're going to be working late, leave a message on my cell."

"I promise, I will. Bye, Jim."

"Goodbye, Blair."

As Blair shut the door, he was saddened by the thought of not having Jim around for a week. *Boring*

Jim was bored out of his mind and it was only the first day. God, these people teaching the seminars were just dumb. None of them had ever been out on the street or had any experience in any type of action. They just read about it and figured they knew what was best. Jim couldn't wait to get back to his room, order room service and then call Blair.

"Hey, Ellison, would you like to go with us to the bar in the hotel? They have pretty good food too," Mike Murphy asked.

Jim thought about it for a moment and said, "Yeah, what the hell?"

"Good, meet you there in about five minutes," he said.

Jim went down to the bar and sat there waiting for the guys. It wasn't long and they came dragging women with them. Mike had one for Jim and Jim wasn't too happy about it.

"No thank you, Murphy. I can get my own dates."

"Hey, Ellison, everyone will think you're pussy whipped."

"Hey, Murphy, I couldn't care less." Jim stood up and left the bar glaring at all of the idiots.

Arriving upstairs, he took a shower, ordered room service and called Blair. He didn't answer, but he knew he was probably busy on a case. He left a sweet message. He decided he would watch some news until Blair returned his call.

A little earlier that evening

Blair walked into the loft carrying take-out from the Thai restaurant. He was starving. He figured that Jim would be calling any minute. As soon as he sat down and started to eat, the couple above them started fighting again. Except it was worse this time. Much louder and things being broken. Suddenly, he heard the woman start screaming for help. Blair couldn't help it. He couldn't just sit there and wait for the police. Instead he opened the door, rushed out and said to the two neighbors that were listening in the hall, "Call 911 and tell them it's bad. Tell them it's an escalated domestic dispute."

Blair ran up the stairs and banged on the door. The man opened it and shoved a gun in Blair's face.

"Get in here, you nosy assed pansy. We hate having your kind around."

"I'm sure you do, but that is no reason to hit the lady," Blair answered and the man hit him on the side of his head with the butt of the gun. It made Blair see stars.

"She's no lady!"

The woman begged him to leave Blair alone. But Blair knew this was too far gone. *Why didn't I listen to Jim?*

"Do you think I didn't notice how your cop boyfriend looks at us like we aren't as good as he is? I hate him. I hate his kind. Cop and fag. And you always look at us like you want to help us. You're the worst kind of pansy. You think talking is going to help."

Blair decided, it couldn't hurt to try and talk him down. "Sometimes, your moods are just escalated and you need to talk to someone that is calm. I'm that person. I'm almost always calm. People tell me that I'm very understanding, also. What is the problem with you and your girlfriend or wife?"

The man let out a bark of laughter and said, "Like I would ever marry her. She's a stupid bitch and so are you. You think you can talk your way out of this? Think again. This is what you get for interfering, you fag."

The man didn't give any warning before he shot his girlfriend. Then he turned to Blair and hit him on the side of the head with the gun, again. Blair slid down to the floor and felt like he was going to pass out, when he saw the man aim the gun towards him. *Please let me live long enough to tell Jim he was right.*

But instead the man shot his girlfriend once more and Blair didn't see her moving any longer. Then he heard the police coming up the stairs and the idiot of a man decided to shoot the already damaged man lying on the floor. He shot Blair once in the stomach and once in the chest. When the police pushed their way in, the man tried to shoot them, so he was killed instantly.

Both cops checked on the woman first and found her dead. They moved over to Blair and both of them recognized him from the station. "Riley, this is Blair Sandburg from our station."

"I know, I'll call Captain Banks and tell him and you keep him alive. Ellison will kill us both if he doesn't make it," Parker said.

"Jim Ellison wouldn't kill us, he would just make our life miserable. Blair is losing a lot of blood. Are the paramedics coming? I'm going to try and stop the bleeding and keep him comfortable." Riley took his coat off and put it under Blair's head. Then he grabbed towels from the kitchen and tried to stop the bleeding in both places.

Parker looked around as he called Captain Banks and wondered why Blair was up there. Then he heard, "Banks."

"Captain Banks, this is Detective Parker from the station. I wanted to call and tell you that we got called out tonight to Jim Ellison's address and Blair Sandburg has been shot."

"What do you mean, he's been shot? I just saw him three hours ago and he was fine," Simon stated, as he started dressing while talking on the phone.

"I would guess he tried to break up a domestic abuse problem in the building. He's lost a lot of blood and it looks like he was hit with something on the head," Parker continued.

"Well, ask him what happened," Simon barked.

"He's unconscious sir."

“Are the paramedics on the way?” Simon asked

“Yes, sir, they just got here and are working on Blair right now. Let me ask them what they know.”

Simon heard dead silence for a while and then Parker said, “It’s not good sir. Two blows to the head and a bullet in the stomach and one in the chest. They’re taking him in right now. I think it’s time to get Detective Ellison. The scene will be protected, don’t worry about that either.”

“Thank you, Parker. I will contact Megan Connor to meet them at the hospital. I’ll have to go up to Seattle and get Jim Ellison. What a fucking mess.” Simon closed his cell and finished getting dressed. Then he called Megan Connor and woke her up. “Connor...”

“Connor, Blair has been beaten up and shot twice and they are taking him to Cascade General right now. I would like you to go up and sit with him while I go to Seattle and get Jim. I can’t tell him something like this over the phone.”

“Go! I’m dressing as we speak. I’ll take care of everything, sir. Drive carefully and bring Jim back fast,” Megan said, quickly.

Nascar Driver, Simon Banks

Jim was getting pissed off that Blair was so busy that he couldn’t answer his phone calls. He had called like seven times and left five messages. Some of them weren’t nice, either. He was supposed to call Jim and tell him when he had to work late and leave a message. Jim shut the TV off and decided to go to bed. Jim hated sleeping alone. Basically, he *was* pussy-whipped. He was lost without Blair by his side and lying next to him in bed. *I have to tell him how much he means to me when I get home.*

At 12:15 a.m., Jim woke up to the smell of Simon’s cigar and then heard the familiar heartbeat that went along with Simon. But why was it beating so fast? Jim jumped out of bed, put his pants on and flung the door of his hotel room open. There stood Simon and Jim knew it wasn’t good news.

“Jim, Blair was beaten up and shot twice tonight. Megan just called me and said he’s on life support right now. He’s not doing well. I didn’t want you to drive on your own. So get ready and I’ll drive you to see him. Grab your suitcase too, we can’t just leave it in the room. We’ll send Henri and Rafe up to get your truck later.”

Jim didn’t say a word, but got dressed very quickly, tied his shoes and grabbed his jacket, threw everything in his suitcase and walked out the door. Simon followed. When they got to Simon’s car, Jim said, “Hurry it up.”

Once they were on the interstate, it was no problem going faster and faster. He had his lights and siren on and was going faster than he had ever driven in his life.

Jim pulled out his phone and called Megan.

“Connor...”

“Megan, this is Jim, how is Blair doing?”

“Not well, Jim. He’s lost so much blood and the blows to the head caused swelling in his brain, not to mention the two bullet holes in his body. He still hasn’t woken up and he couldn’t breathe on his own, so they put him on life support until he’s breathing as he should be. Rafe and Brown are at your loft trying to find a number for Naomi so she could come. Do you happen to know where Blair keeps that?”

Jim was having a hard time controlling himself. On one hand he wanted to scream, on the other he knew he had to be strong. “It’s in his backpack. He keeps a log of where she is and how to reach her. We’ll be there soon, Megan. Thank you for sitting with him this entire time.”

Jim closed his cell and still didn’t say anything. Simon couldn’t take the silence any longer.

“You’re blaming me because I sent you to Seattle aren’t you?”

“Simon, I’m staying quiet because I’m on the verge of sobbing my heart out and I don’t want to do that. Especially with you here. I’m not blaming anyone for this except the man that did it. You haven’t said, but I think it was the neighbor.”

“Yes, it was the neighbor. Jim, if you wanted to cry, you can cry. I’m your friend before I’m your boss. I’m here for you.”

“I don’t want to lose it, Simon. Just keep driving, we’re almost there.”

The time flew by as quickly as the speed of the car and before Simon knew it, he was in front of Cascade General. He started to slow down and Jim jumped out of the car. He didn’t even wait for Simon to stop all the way. *He’s going to need his dad here too. I’d better call him.*

Simon pulled out his phone and called information to get William’s number. They dialed it for him and he was connected to William’s line.

“Ellison.”

“William, this is Simon Banks. Jim is at Cascade General with Blair. Blair has been shot twice and has a head injury. I thought he might need some family around him.”

“Of course, I like Blair very much. He’s a very good man. I’ll get dressed and be up in a little while.”

Simon was able to relax a little now. Jim would have some family support. Now to find a parking place...

Faith and Hope Needed

Jim rushed into the room he’d been told Blair was in and found a horrible sight before him. Blair’s face was all black and blue, swollen like Jim had never seen and he was on a respirator. Jim never wanted to see Blair in this situation. Megan saw Jim and got up and walked over and hugged him. It was almost Jim’s undoing.

He pulled Megan away from his body and said, “Fill me in. What does the doctor say?”

Megan recognized a man that was about to lose it, so she just told him straight out. “The doctor said that the gunshot in the stomach was giving them a bit of trouble, but they think it is fixed now. The one in the upper chest went clear through, so it was a pretty clean shot. Blair has swelling on the brain from the beating he took to his head. This is the doctors’ biggest worry. They fear that Blair might not be fighting and has given up because he’s not waking up at all.”

Jim had tears on his face when Megan looked up and over at him. “I’m sorry, Jim. I wish I had better news. I haven’t left his side except to go to the bathroom and I’ve been talking to him non-stop.”

At that moment, Simon, Joel, Henri and Rafe came walking into the room. Jim hurriedly wiped his face off. They all took turns talking to Blair and Jim just gave them a moment with him. Once they had finished, Jim asked if he could have the room to himself for a little while. Of course they all left and Jim sat down in the chair next to the bed.

“Chief, I’m not even going to tell you, ‘I told you so’. Instead I’m going to tell you how much I love you and how much I need you. I need you to wake up.” He bent over and kissed Blair’s cheek and then his hand. Nothing changed. Blair didn’t know Jim was even there. Or at least that’s what Jim believed. Little did he know that Blair was inside his body, screaming to get out, but couldn’t quite make it.

The doctor came in and said, “My name is Dr. John Tyler. I’ve been taking care of Blair since he arrived. His brain activity is good, so this is a good thing to hear. He’ll probably be breathing on his own soon. But if he remains in this state, we’ll have to move him to a rehab hospital when his wounds are better. You’ll be able to visit with him there too. I’m sorry I don’t have better news. If you need me, please call my office or have me paged here.”

“Thank you, Dr. Tyler. He’ll get better, I promise. He’s a fighter, he just forgot that he is.”

The doctor patted Jim on the back and left the room.

William Ellison was the next person to walk into the room and Jim was shocked. “Dad, what are you doing here?”

“I’m here for moral support, Jimmy. I’m your dad. I need to be here. After all, we have to get this man better so he’ll still give me my Sunday night dinners.”

Jim hugged his dad and stayed in the hug for a while. “Thank you, dad. I wish Simon hadn’t called you in the middle of the night. Blair’s not fighting. He’s not trying to wake up at all.”

“Jimmy, give him more than seven hours. Let him rest and we’ll see what happens then. I don’t believe that God would let a good man like this die for no reason. He’s going to save him and make him well. You have to believe that.”

“I’ll try Dad. Thanks for coming up.”

“Like I said, it’s for an ulterior motive.” Both men smiled for a change.

Megan walked into the room and said, “Naomi is out of reach in India. So there is nothing we can do about that. I’ve called all the contact numbers on the list and they all said she was in the same place. Sorry, Jim.”

“I noticed you’re not calling me Jimbo.”

“There is a time and a place for that, Jim. And today isn’t either.” Megan hugged Jim close and whispered, “I’m going to leave for tonight but please call me if you need me or if there are any changes. Good or bad.”

“I will, Megan. Thanks for sitting with him.”

“Goodbye, William,” Megan said, sadly. She hated to leave.

“Goodbye, Megan. We’ll see you tomorrow,” William answered. “The visits have to continue so that he’ll get stronger and wake up.”

“Oh, we’ll all be here, William. We love Blair.”

Jim was a little scared because she was calling him Blair instead of Sandy. But he decided not to make a big deal out of it.

Both men waved to her as she left the room.

William talked to Blair for about an hour, telling him good Little Jimmy stories. Jim didn’t even mind if it helped bring Blair back to him.

All the guys came back in to say goodnight and Simon walked William down to his car. It was just Jim and Blair. Jim couldn’t fathom life without his beautiful lover. In fact without Blair life wouldn’t be worth living. Jim hoped it didn’t come to that.

Time to Wake Up

Three Weeks Later

Blair had been taken off the respirator after about five days in the hospital because he started breathing on his own. But for some reason he wouldn’t wake up. The hospital transferred him to the finest Rehabilitation Hospital in town. William insisted that he would pick up what Blair’s insurance didn’t pay. William came and visited mid morning or early afternoon every single day. Jim had gone back to work after one week and saw Blair every morning and every night. Even if it was late, he was there. The nurses all thought Jim was so sweet. He brought very snazzy looking pajamas in for Blair at least twice a week. Then he would take his other ones home and wash them himself. He didn’t want the hospital starching anything.

Everyone in Major Crimes and Homicide came to visit Blair. They would talk to him and make jokes but nothing seemed to work. Simon would order him to wake up and get better, but that didn’t work either.

The doctor in charge of Blair was Dr. Chad Hanley. He told Jim he didn’t know if Blair was ever going to wake up. Jim didn’t want to hear this news, it was his biggest fear. Jim decided he would have to shake things up. For the last four nights, Blair’s spirit animal was pacing in the bedroom. Jim had a feeling he could reach Blair sooner, rather than later.

Each morning the nurses told Jim they thought Blair was trying to wake up. They told Jim to have patience because he was trying as hard as he could. Patience, however, wasn't Jim's middle name.

Jim came on the fourth night and sat by Blair's bedside as he always did and decided to tell Blair a story. He grabbed Blair's hand and started the story. "Blair, I can't continue doing this without you fighting. In fact, someone asked me out today and I was tempted. So I realized that I'm not going to come every morning and every night like I usually do. Nope, I'm going to have a life and it's not going to have you in it anymore."

It didn't take long and his machines were going off like crazy. Sally, the evening nurse said, "If I didn't know better, I would say he's waking up for sure, or at least trying. Did you say something upsetting?"

Jim smiled evilly and replied, "I told I wasn't coming anymore and I was going to start dating."

Sally laughed and continued to work on Blair. Another nurse named Christina came in and helped with things. All of sudden, Blair opened his eyes.

"Blair, honey, my name is Sally, do you know where you are?"

Blair looked around and answered, "A hospital."

Jim was smiling from across the room and wanted to hug him in the worst way, but he wanted him to wake up fully before he made an appearance.

"Don't think you're fooling me, Jim Ellison. Get your sweet ass over here and let me see you."

Jim didn't think he could smile any larger, but he did. He put his hand near Blair's and said, "It's good to see you, Chief."

"Who are you interested in at work, you asshole?"

Jim laughed and said, "No one, I was trying to wake you up."

"I was waking up in my own way, Jim. You know I have to take my time. Besides you didn't have anything to do anyhow, did you?"

Jim leaned down and kissed Blair soundly.

"Oh gross, you just kissed a man that hasn't brushed his teeth in a year," Blair whined.

"It's hasn't been a year, Chief."

"Feels like it. And why are my legs so weak?" This question was for Sally.

She smiled at him and said, "Atrophy has set in, your muscles have gradually declined in effectiveness or vigor due to underuse. We're setting up physical therapy treatment as we speak. You've been lying around for three weeks here and two weeks at the hospital. It's going to be difficult. You're going to have to work really hard for us and yourself."

"Don't worry about me, I'm not a quitter. Ask Jim."

Both nurses looked at Jim and he said, "He's never been a quitter. Bring it on."

Happily Homebound

After an intense four months of therapy, Blair was finally going home. To his house. To his love. To his bed. Oh how he had missed that bed. In fact that's all he talked about or thought about since he started therapy.

"Climb the stairs, it'll be good for you," Jim said to Blair as he carried all Blair's things up the stairs. When Jim got up to the third floor he heard the elevator ding and Blair got off.

"Beat ya."

"You're supposed to be exercising those poor legs. The doctor said you're never going to get sex if you don't get better."

"Yeah, well... A lot he knows. You can do things without your legs you know," Blair kidded, but really wasn't kidding that much.

"Fine, tease all you want, but he was serious about no sex until you can get down on your knees and get back up again with no help," Jim was getting angry. Mostly because he wanted fucking sex. Damn that Blair anyhow. He wasn't taking it seriously.

They made dinner together and once they were done eating they did the dishes. Blair looked over and asked, "How would you like to make out on the sofa and maybe even do some groping?"

"Do you ever listen to what I say? The doctor said no to everything until you can do the exercise he asked you to do."

"Oh for God's sake, Jim. You're such an Eagle Scout. Watch..." Blair got down on his knees and didn't get up with ease, but still got up. "What? Cat got your tongue, Mr. Ellison?"

Blair didn't remember a truck being in the loft, but he was quite certain he just got hit by one. The truck was now lying on top of Blair on the sofa. "Jim, let's take this upstairs."

Jim grabbed him and pulled him up the stairs and he wasn't gentle at all. Oh yes, Jim was back in the game again. Blair couldn't wait.

Jim made love a lot like he looked, long, hard and sexy. Sex with him was never dull. And tonight had been no exception to the rule. He had been a little gentle to start with but as Blair had begged, Jim got more forceful. Yes, the boys were back in town.

As they lay next to each other, Blair said, "I don't want to make you feel bad or anything, but I think I missed our bed more than I missed you."

Jim threw back his head and let out a bark of laughter. Blair still had that great sense of humor.

"Would you like to get ready for bed? We can watch TV up here since I put a TV in our room. And you can rest your fucking fantastic body all night long."

“I’ll go get ready now,” Blair said as he walked down the stairs.

When he was done and back in the bed, Jim took his turn.

“I missed you so fucking much. I dreamed about you all the time. They had beds at the hospital, but they weren’t really beds, they were knock-offs of something that people tortured people on. And every day I would tell myself to get better so I could get back onto you. You were so worth the wait. Thank you for still being here. And thank you for keeping Jim company while I was gone. I promise to put clean sheets on you every two or three days. I’m going to treat you so well, you’re going to be grateful that I’m back.”

Jim was in the bathroom and heard every word and was snickering up a storm. Blair was talking sweet talk to the bed. Jim was so glad to have him home that he didn’t care if Blair talked to the lamps as long as they could have sex that great.

He got upstairs and Blair was lying sound asleep, across the entire bed, being a bed-hog. Jim moved his naked lover to the other side of the bed and then Jim got into the bed. He shut the light off and kissed Blair on the shoulder. “Night, Chief. I love you.”

And under Blair’s breath Jim heard, “We love you too.”

Jim smiled and realized he was afraid to be happy, but now he could do it. It was a good time to be happy and content. Life was good.

PTSD for Consultants

One week after getting home, the doctor released him to work at the station house. Blair was thrilled. Every day was like a holiday. And people kept giving him presents. Molly in records brought him coffee and donuts every morning for a week. No one else, just Blair. He loved it because they were all so jealous. He kept telling them, all they had to do was get shot twice and have someone pistol whip your head. That seemed to shut them all right up. Yes, Blair was having a wonderful first week back. He didn’t realize that his sense of humor wasn’t for everyone.

Simon called Jim into his office and shut the door.

“Anything wrong, Simon?”

“I think that doctor let Blair come back to work way too soon. Don’t you?”

“Simon, he’s doing really, really well. I think he’ll do all right. And he knows what to do if he doesn’t do all right. He’ll sit down at his desk and rest his head on the desk. If we see that a lot, then he might have come back to work too soon. I haven’t seen it yet.”

“No, I haven’t seen it either, but he seems to have a bizarre sense of humor since he came back.”

“Like what?” Jim asked.

"I asked Megan to get something from records and he said he could do it and I told him that I preferred Megan to do it and he got pissed off. He said, 'Do you think I'm going to bleed all over things after I'm healed up?'"

"Simon, that was terrible," Jim said.

"I know, that's what I thought too. Very morbid."

"No, Simon, I meant you were terrible. That was a crappy thing to say, especially in front of his best mate."

"I thought you were his best mate," Simon barked.

"You're getting off the subject. Treat him like you used to. And things will be just fine around here."

"Get back to work," Simon said, smiling.

Jim walked out and Simon yelled, "Sandburg, my office please?"

Blair walked up and said, "Yes, sir."

"Cut the sir, shit, Blair. Could you do something for me? I'm out of coffee and I know you know the kinds I like for my office. At lunch could you get them for me?"

Blair sighed and said, "That's not exactly what Jim probably told you to do. I don't want to grocery shop for you, Simon. I want to just do my job."

"Do you think you could get the coffee before you do your job?" Simon asked very seriously.

Blair couldn't help laughing. "Would you like a cup of coffee from the breakroom?"

"God, no. That sludge is horrible. I don't know how you all stand it."

"Give me all your money so I can buy your fine coffee," Blair kidded.

"Thanks, Blair. I haven't had a cup in over an hour. I'm dying here."

Blair laughed all the way out of Simon's office. Blair stopped in front of Jim's desk and asked, "Would you like anything from the store? I'm now shopping for Simon."

Jim sighed and said, "I never told him to do that. I said get back to normal."

"This is normal. I always bought his coffee, he trusts no one else to get the good brands that he likes. His cousin used to send him coffee, but they all tasted like Maxwell House."

"As long as you're out, you could get me a Butterfinger. The machine is out of them. Damn thing."

Blair walked over to his new desk in Major Crimes, opened the top drawer and pulled out a Butterfinger.

"Play your cards right and you'll get one every day for the rest of the week."

Jim never wanted to kiss anyone as much as he did right then. Blair could tell and smiled at him.

Blair waved as he got on the elevator.

An hour later, Simon came out of his office and said, "With me, Ellison."

Jim knew it was Blair. He just knew it.

"What's wrong?" Jim asked once they were in the elevator.

"Blair is at the store. Some kid came in with a squirt gun that looked real and pointed it at Blair and he had a PTSD episode. The manager has him in his office, but he said he's on the floor and curled up in a fetal position. He knows Blair from here, so he called me."

"Just get me there, and I'll handle it, Simon. It's not the end of the world."

"Jim, he's curled up in the grocery store office. How is that good?" Simon asked.

"I agree that it's not good, but it's to be expected. Service people go through this all the time. So does anyone else at the department that's been held at gunpoint. Hell, Joel to this day hates to have a gun pointed at him. Give him some time, Simon. He'll come out of it. In the meantime, I'll see to it that he sees someone for it. Okay?"

"Yes, I can deal with that. Now, let's go in here and save the day," Simon said, trying to smile.

Jim walked into the office of the manager and said, "Chief, it's me. Would you like to get up?"

"Jim? Thank God, there was a kid with a gun."

"He had a squirt gun that looked pretty real, I've heard. But come on, we'll get this all under control, Blair."

"We? Do I see you on the floor? I think not. There is still something wrong with me isn't there?" Blair looked on the verge of tears.

"You probably have PTSD. A lot of cops have it, Chief and they have to go to therapy for it. Are you willing to do that?"

Simon walked in at this point.

"Yes, as long as I can still work." Blair looked over at Simon, hopefully.

"Blair, I want you to see a therapist first for two weeks or however long it takes before you come back. You don't want to do that at the station, do you?" Simon asked.

"No. Okay, two weeks with a therapist. You must think you have a miracle worker in mind."

"I do know of someone that's really good. You're going to love her. She's excellent. I took Daryl to see her for a month after he was held hostage. He couldn't sleep. In one month's time, she worked wonders."

"Shit, I didn't even know he went to see anyone. I didn't know he had troubles," Blair said.

"Come back to the office and I'll give you her number and you'll call today."

“Why don’t we get your coffee since we’re here?” Blair was trying to be thoughtful and also sound normal.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’ll be just fine, Simon. I believe I will be now. Thank you for telling me about Daryl. Now, let’s get that coffee and that therapy.”

Love Notes

Five weeks after Blair started seeing Dr. Sarah Martin, he was ready to face the world again. Jim was packing lunches and Blair asked, “Why are we brown bagging it? Did I miss too much work and they’re docking my pay?”

Jim laughed. “I get sick of leaving and not knowing where the food won’t suck. At least this way our sandwiches are great and our salads are even better. I packed you a salad, Chief.”

“Thank you, Jim.”

Once they got to work, both men were busy as could be. Blair didn’t even get to take a lunch break until 1:00 that day. Jim was nowhere to be found, so Blair decided to go to the breakroom and eat his sack lunch. He opened it up and there was an envelope in it. He opened that up and inside was a note from Jim.

Dear Blair

I don’t tell you often enough how much you mean to me, so I’m going to try and tell you whenever I can. I know I’m going to be busy working the Danelli Case, so I figured I would pack this in your lunch. I love you so much, that sometimes it actually hurts. I’m glad you’re back to work, but I’m also glad that you’re taking one day at a time. Know that I’m always here for you, my love. You are forever mine.

Your love slave, Jim

Blair was torn between tears and laughing. The love slave line was over the top, but still great. Blair folded the note and put it in his wallet. He felt like the luckiest man on earth at that moment.

Jim walked into the room and asked, “Mind if I join you?”

Blair smiled and said, “As if you need to ask, man.”

They ate their lunch and talked a bit before they had to go back to the grind. Blair couldn’t get over how much Dr. Martin had helped him and he was also thankful for how much Jim loved him. Blair knew he was lucky and intended to be sure to be grateful every day.

No one was around so Blair whispered, “I loved your note. I love you so much.”

Jim leaned in like he was going to kiss him and whispered, “I wish I could kiss you.”

“You can when we get home, man.”

Jim knew there would be much more than that.

Needing a Break

Blair was at the loft when Jim came through the front door wearing a huge smile. Blair knew he was in for something good.

“Hi, Jim. How was your day?”

“It was great and guess what?”

“What?”

“We’re going to Seattle for four nights and five days. I have to go to some meetings at a seminar, because I missed most of the last one, but the nights will belong to you. Simon gave us both the time off. I will be your love slave.”

Blair laughed. It was a nice laugh and Jim was thrilled to hear it in the loft once again.

“When are we leaving?” Blair asked.

“Tomorrow morning. We’ll have the entire day and night before I have to start the stupid seminars. I hate them, you know?”

“You? I can hardly believe that.”

“Tease all you want, but it’s true. I can’t wait to have time to do things with just you. Like order room service, watch pay TV and anything from the mini-bar that we want.”

“So basically, we’re going to stay in our room all night long? That doesn’t sound like that much fun,” Blair answered.

“Well, what did you plan on doing? And since when doesn’t making love all night not sound like fun?”

“Jim, you go, I’ll stay here. I have tons of work to catch up on. I didn’t say it didn’t sound fun, what I meant was we can do that here.”

Jim pulled him into his arms and said, “I’ll do anything you want to do at night if you go with me.”

“Anything? Even sightseeing?”

Jim frowned, but said, “Yes, even sightseeing.”

“Okay, let’s go and pack. At least it’s a good time of year to go, right?” Blair asked.

“I have no idea, Chief. They’re only about two hours away, so I would guess pretty close to the same temps that we have here.”

“I’m going to look up some awesome art galleries while we are there. Don’t give me that look. You said anything I wanted to do.”

“Whatever works, Chief, but promise me we’ll have at least one night at the hotel, for just us.”

“You’re such a whiner, Jim. Yes, we’ll have at least one night to lounge in the hotel room. Now, let’s pack.”

They packed for hot and cold since neither of them knew what to expect. The weather man said it was going to be fair. But did fair mean warm, or fair cold? That was the question.

In Seattle

While Jim was at a seminar, Blair went out and walked around. He loved Seattle. There was so much to do and see. As he walked he saw an art studio that was having an opening that night. Blair walked in and was instantly hit with nothing but nude males, of course in all shapes and sizes. As Blair stood there he became more interested in taking Jim to see this place. The manager walked over and asked, “Is this your first time here?”

“In the gallery, yes, in Seattle, no.”

“Do you see anything that interests you? My name is Ricardo Medina. I hope you found something you like. I have lay-a-way and I also take Visa or Mastercard. Now, is there anything you might like?”

“I love them all, but I wish I could afford to have you photograph my boyfriend in the nude. He’s gorgeous and I would love to have a part of Jim on the bedroom wall.”

“How much can you afford?” Ricardo asked.

“I can’t insult you like that. But I am going to bring my boyfriend tonight to your grand opening.”

“We will see you tonight,” Ricardo called out as Blair left. Ricardo realized that it was true, all the good guys were taken.

Blair set Jim’s suit out for the evening and when Jim got home he frowned at what was on the bed. “I didn’t even know you packed our suits.”

“I thought perhaps we might see an art gallery while we were here. I found one within walking distance and the artist is fantastic. He does painting, sketches and photography. I told him we were coming back. Honestly, I think you’re going to love it. Super nice place.”

Jim didn’t even ask what type of place it was, he just went along with whatever Blair said because he had promised to do it.

When they arrived at the art gallery, it was packed. They walked in and Jim’s mouth fell agape and he started blushing. Blair got close to him and said, “It’s only penises, Jim.”

They walked around and looked at all of the different styles of art that were there. Some of it wasn't Ricardo's. But most of it was.

They had champagne, lots of appetizers and before long Jim realized these people really were good. Or was it the champagne? Ricardo came up and shook Blair's hand. "Hello, again. I see you did as you said you were going to do. You have brought your lovely man with you. I'm Ricardo and you are?"

"Jim Ellison, from Cascade. This is a wonderful art show. At first it was embarrassing, but then you look at it like art and it becomes so much better. Thank you for all of the food and drink."

"Well, Jim Ellison from Cascade, I would like to talk to you and your mate in private. Could we do that?"

"Are you hitting on us?" Jim asked.

Blair wondered about it too. What could Ricardo need to talk to them about?

"No, I am not trying to pick anyone up. I have an offer to make both of you. Please follow me."

The weirdest thing happened, both of the men followed him into his office. Once inside, Ricardo closed the door.

"Sit down, I have a proposition to make. I would like to photograph you both as a couple in the nude. I know you think I'm nuts but I don't often see couples in love, so this is almost unique."

Blair said, "I'm so honored but I don't think Jim would be interested."

Jim smiled. "Could you possibly do it for just us?"

Blair looked at Jim like he had grown a second head.

"Yes, I can do it for just you. I can get some wonderful shots taken. Would you like to do it tonight?" Ricardo asked.

Jim smiled. "We'd better. Before I lose my nerve."

Again, Blair just looked at him oddly. He whispered, "Jim, I don't want people seeing my scars."

Jim looked at Ricardo and asked, "Do you think you could touch up the two places on his body that have scars and the umpteen places I have scars?"

"I would be pleased to do this. When I am done, I will keep one in my loft to remind me of true love and the other will go directly to you and Blair. Is that fine with you both?"

They both shook their head yes and Blair asked, "Why did you choose us?"

"Because you're in love. It's so rare these days. I want to capture that on film. And in two weeks you'll receive the framed piece. Now let me lock my door and we'll get started."

He walked over to another door and opened it and said, "This way, please."

Jim and Blair were in awe. It was a huge studio set up for nothing but photographing. He had beautiful backdrops for the pictures.

Jim and Blair posed for about 50 different shots, by the end of the evening they were exhausted. They had no idea posing would be hard work. One thing that never changed in the shots was Jim and Blair looking at each other with love in their eyes.

When finished, Ricardo got their address for mailing the artwork and their phone number in case he needed it.

Jim and Blair walked back to the hotel and went up to their room. Jim headed straight for the mini-bar.

“Would you like a drink, Blair?”

“I wouldn’t turn down a rum and coke. Besides I want to have you sit down and tell me what prompted you to pose in the nude.”

Jim made them both a rum and coke and walked over to the bed and sat next to Blair. “I can’t help it. I love us together, dressed or naked and I saw some of those pictures and Ricardo was right. None of them were in love. They were just models. I love your body, Blair and I know you love mine, so I paid Ricardo for the shots.”

Blair pulled Jim in for a kiss and said, “I was a little worried about people looking at us while we are naked and was glad to learn he would only keep one in his loft and nowhere else.”

“At least they are natural, you know? Thank you for making me do something new in Seattle. I’m thrilled with that photo shoot and can’t wait to get the end result. Just thinking of how gorgeous you looked naked is making me hard.”

“Now, speaking of hard, let’s take care of some of this business,” Blair suggested.

“I couldn’t agree more. Get those clothes off, Chief.”

Danger, Will Robinson, Danger

In the bullpen, Jim glanced over and saw Blair sweating while sitting at his desk. Jim got up immediately and had to investigate.

“Chief, are you feeling all right?”

“I’m having pains in my stomach, man. I wonder if they left something in there that shouldn’t be there. It really hurts.”

Megan came over and said, “Sandy, you look dreadful. Go home. Tell Simon you don’t feel well and rest up for tomorrow. You’re giving that lecture in Homicide, remember?”

“Yes, my lecture is all done, I just have a lot of pain.”

Jim turned and walked over to Simon’s office. He knocked and waited for the grump to answer. “Come in, Ellison. This better be good.”

“Something’s wrong with Blair. He has a high fever that he’s not even aware of yet and he has pain in his stomach. I need to take him to the emergency room.”

“Take Megan with you to keep you calm,” Simon suggested.

“Thank you, Simon.” Jim walked out and went back over to where Megan was wiping the sweat off Blair’s face.

“What are you doing, Jim? Please tell me you didn’t go in and tell the boss I’m sick. He’s going to think I’m a wuss.”

“Megan, you’re supposed to go to the emergency room with me and Blair. We need to leave now. Blair, your fever is up to about 103. Let’s go now.”

Blair didn’t even argue, he just followed Megan and Jim and got on the elevator.

Jim helped Blair get into the truck and put his seatbelt on him. Blair laughed. “Jim, I’m having a stomach ache not dying.”

“Just relax, Chief. Buckle in, Megan.”

“I am buckled.” She patted Blair’s hand gently.

“Geeze, you two. I’m not dying.”

Jim pulled out into traffic and turned his siren on and put his lights on top. He was speeding like a crazy person and Blair wondered if he was worse than he thought. They arrived in ten minutes going light speed and Jim almost wanted to carry him in, but Blair gave him the look and Jim listened.

Jim filled out all the papers for Blair and Megan kept Blair company while Jim yelled at the help for being so slow.

“He’s so mature,” Blair whispered.

“You know he can hear you, Sandy.”

“That makes it even more fun,” Blair teased.

They finally called for Blair and Jim tried to go with him. The nurse said, “Detective Ellison, I’ll call you back after the doctor sees Blair. Now go and sit down until I call you.”

Jim didn’t argue with her because she had that Blair look that Jim always obeyed. He went and sat down by Megan and said, “They should have let me go back there.”

Megan and Jim talked shop while they waited. Both Jim and Megan were stumped with the latest case, so they tried to get a handle on it while they had time to think about it.

“What if the wife really did do it, Jim?”

“But she has that fucking alibi that is bothering me.”

“Maybe she had someone that looked like her go to the restaurant and pretend she was her,” Megan pointed out.

“Did we talk to all her family?” Jim asked.

“She has a sister that is supposedly out of the country. Maybe she’s a twin. Maybe we need to look deeper into this. What do you think, Jim?”

Jim opened his cell phone and called Rafe. “Would you please check and see if the Miller woman has a twin or a sister that looks like her? Ms. Miller said that her sister was out of the country, but how do we know? You can check with the airport and passports and see if she’s left the country any time this week.”

“I’ll do it right now, Jim. I didn’t even think about the sister that’s out of the country. Good catch, Jim.”

“It wasn’t me, it was Megan that caught it. Let me know if you find anything.”

About ten minutes later Rafe called Jim. “Ellison...”

“Megan was right. She came into town two nights before the husband was killed. She’s still here somewhere. I’ll put out an APB and a warrant for her arrest and see if we can’t find her. I’ll also stop by and tell the wife we know what she did. She’ll probably confess. Hey, how is Blair doing?” Rafe asked.

“They are just coming out the door. Talk you later. Good luck with the Miller mess,” Jim said as he stood up to go.

“Blair is going into surgery, it’s his appendix. So just stay here and we’ll come and get you when he’s in his room.”

She left the room and Jim asked, “He can’t catch a break, can he?”

“He’ll be fine, Jim,” Megan said as she held Jim’s hand, more for her sake than Jim’s. And Jim wasn’t complaining, so he must have needed it also.

Jim and Megan walked into the room and saw Blair sleeping soundly. He looked so peaceful. You would never know he just had surgery.

“He looks like an angel when he sleeps, doesn’t he?” Megan asked as she brushed some of his hair off his face.

“I wish this angel would wake up. I’m nervous about him being put under after the last time.”

“Geeze, it’s hard to get any sleep with you two yapping at my bedside,” Blair kidded.

Jim knocked Megan out of his way and kissed Blair. “Hey Chief, it’s good to see you awake and kidding around already.”

“Man, this is nothing after that other surgery. He said I could go home today.”

Megan couldn’t believe it. “Today? Doesn’t he think that’s too soon?”

The doctor walked in at that moment. "Hello, I'm Dr. Snyder. Blair will be able to go home once he gets up by himself and uses the restroom with ease. So all of your paperwork is ready at the desk, you just call a nurse and tell her when you have collected your urine specimen in the restroom. There is a cup with your name on it and everything. How are you feeling, Blair?"

"Like I could get up right now and go to the bathroom."

Blair started to get up and Jim said, "Let me help you up."

Dr. Snyder said, "Don't help him-he has to do it for himself."

Blair got up and went in the bathroom and after about two minutes he came out smiling. "The specimen is ready."

"His clothes are in the drawer right over there and you can help him dress if you'd like. Bending is hard."

"Thank you, Doctor for everything you did," Jim said.

"Just be sure he doesn't overdo. He'll be cleared for desk duty in one week. Full duty in three weeks."

"Woo Hoo!" Blair shouted.

Everybody started laughing. Megan walked out with the doctor so Jim could help Blair get dressed. Life was going to get back to normal again.

Big Changes Ahead

Three weeks later.

Blair had healed up beautifully and was back to work once more. When he and Jim arrived home, Jim started cooking something for dinner right away.

Blair sat down at the table and said, "I have something to talk to you about and it's sort of serious."

Jim shut the burners off and went and sat down at the table with Blair. "Okay. You have my attention. What's going on?" Jim was trying to think of what he had done to piss Blair off.

Blair smiled as Jim sat down. He could see Jim was nervous about their talk and that made him smile even more. "Stop worrying, Jim. I just want to know one thing and then you can go back to cooking."

Jim looked less worried. "Shoot. I'm listening."

"How would you feel about moving?" Blair asked.

"From the state or what? Break this down a little bit for me."

"Jim, I have a job here, you have a job here, of course it's not in another state. Just a different area of town. I was thinking a house. A large bedroom for us with a bathroom off it, a spare room for the guys when they drink too much on poker night and an office. A real office with a library. I've been thinking

about it since before I got shot, but that took my mind off of things and I have it back on again. What about a house, Jim? I want to move.”

Jim got up from his chair, wiping his hand across his face and said, “Well, if you’re not happy here anymore we had better start looking.”

Blair knew that Jim didn’t like the idea. “Jim, I love the loft. I was just thinking that a house with a garden would be nice. But I’m happy here. Always have been. Don’t worry about this. Now, what are we having for dinner?”

Jim was happy changing the subject. He felt he had won that battle. For now. “We’re having chicken and dumplings. I know you love them.”

“I do love them, Jim. Do I have time for a shower?”

Jim looked at him oddly and said, “If you wait a moment, we can shower together.”

“Nah, I just wanted to do it now. You finish our dinner. I’ll be out in a flash.” Blair got his robe and boxers and walked into the bathroom and stripped. *I can’t believe how fast he shot down my idea for a house. I can’t believe he’s not even willing to think about it. Do I tell him how unhappy I am right now? Or do I just pretend that everything is fine?*

Blair got into the shower and started washing his hair. He heard the door open and Jim getting undressed. Jim slipped into the shower and kissed Blair.

“It’s not shower sex, Chief. I wanted to tell you how much I love you and I’ll show you by looking at houses this weekend. You set it up. But we need to get prequalified at the bank first. We can go tomorrow during our lunch break. Sound good?”

“What changed your mind, Jim?”

“I saw the look on your face and decided that staying in the loft because I was comfortable wasn’t worth making you unhappy. You know how I hate changes. Give me time, Blair.”

“I love you so much, Jim. Thank you for giving this more than one minute of thought. And yes, I think we should go at break tomorrow. I can’t wait.”

“Do you know any real estate agents?” Jim wondered.

“If you are willing to try her out, your dad told me about a woman that he uses for different things. Her office is four doors down from the main branch of our bank. You dad also said that she’s very reliable.”

Jim smiled and then leaned down and kissed his lover. “Dinner’s done if you want to hurry.”

“I’m starving. Get moving, buster,” Blair instructed and Jim followed those instructions. Before long they were both sitting at the table having a wonderful home cooked meal.

“Blair, when did you talk to my dad about a house?”

“That last time you had to work all night long and your dad came for his usual Sunday night meal. I told him how I felt but hadn’t talked to you yet and we discussed it. I hope you don’t mind that I told him how I felt.”

“I think it’s great that you get on so well with my dad. Eat up and we’ll watch some TV together.”

“Sounds good to me, Jim.”

Three months later

Jim and Blair had found themselves a new home and Megan Connor was now renting their loft. She was happy as a clam having her own place with lots and lots of room. The guys had found a four bedroom house that was beautiful. It was a two story craftsman home. Jim and Blair had spent a lot of nights working on it to get it looking so perfect. Every room was painted, the kitchen was wonderful and gorgeous after Jim had redone it. The bathrooms had to be redone, so Jim did it all by himself. He found out that he really liked having a house with a garden. Blair was busy furnishing the entire place so they could get ready for open house poker night. They had the house for three months and people were going to be surprised. Jim did a fantastic job on the kitchen re-do and the bathrooms. The office was one wall of nothing but books. It looked like a real library. And it was large enough for two desks, so both of them loved that room to death. Blair did a fantastic job on making the house look like a home. Now, they could look forward to having everyone over for poker night.

Poker Night

Simon was the first one to arrive, carrying beer and wine. “Simon, you didn’t have to bring all this,” Blair said as he guided Simon in the front door.

“Wow, the place looks really nice. You boys have done a great job with this house. You remember, I saw it before you started work on it.”

Jim walked over and hugged his boss and friend. “Isn’t the house great? Blair and I worked our asses off, but I think it shows.”

Simon nodded in agreement. “It looks like a new house.”

Blair had barely put the beer and wine in the fridge when the doorbell rang and he let Rafe, Henri, Megan, Joel and Dan Wolf in. Everyone went through the house with Blair showing them everything they had done to it.

Megan asked, “What are you going to do with two spare bedrooms, mate?”

Blair smiled. “They are for our friends when they drink too much on poker night. That’s why one room has a queen sized bed and the other has two twin beds. Plenty of room for everyone.”

Megan smelled the air and asked, “Do I smell lasagna?”

Jim laughed. “Yes, Missy, you do smell it. We’re all going to have dinner before we play poker.”

Joel said, “Boy, am I glad I came tonight. I almost didn’t. I was tired. Fuck tired. I could have missed lasagna.”

Everyone laughed. Joel didn't joke around when it came to food.

Henri said, "I love the nude portrait of you guys in your bedroom." He wasn't teasing, he really did like it.

Jim had the decency to blush. "It was a crazy moment for us, but I love it and that's what counts."

Simon smiled. "Actually, I think it is done in really good taste."

"I agree, Simon," Blair chimed in.

"Who's ready to have some dinner?" Jim asked.

They all raised their hands and walked towards the kitchen. It was going to be a wonderful night with their friends.

Blair looked around as they all marched into the kitchen and thought to himself, *This was one of your best ideas. A house was perfect for us.*

Out in the Cold

Homicide called Simon and told him they needed Blair for a two day stakeout. Simon got off the phone and knew that Jim wasn't going to like it. But tough shit. This was Blair's job. Blair seemed to be popular in Homicide. He almost always helped them close their cases.

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

Blair walked in and said, "Yes, sir?"

"What's with the sir crap?" Simon asked.

"I thought I would try it out today and see how it felt. What do you think?" Blair joked.

"I think you're nuts. I also have news from Homicide and you're not going to like it."

"Oh man, another stakeout? I hate those fucking things. When and where?" Blair was a team player if nothing else.

"Tonight, and you'll be stuck in a van with three other guys for up to two days. I'm sorry, Blair. Now, are you going to tell Jim, or are you going to make me tell him?"

Blair burst out laughing. "I'll tell him, Simon. This is my job, I sometimes have to go on a stakeout, whether he likes it or not."

"You're going to meet with Homicide in an hour, so you better tell him. He's not going to like it. Do you want back-up? I could get Megan to back you up," Simon teased.

Blair walked out of Simon's office laughing so Jim had no clue as to what was coming his way. Blair looked happy, why would he drop a bomb shell on Jim's world?

"Jim, I need to talk to you in the break room."

Jim followed Blair wondering what was going on. "I just wanted to let you know that I'm going home to pack a small bag for a stakeout with Homicide. They need my input on a case they are surveilling. Don't go getting crazy, okay? It's just a night or two. I'll be home before you know it and maybe Simon will give us both some time off when I get back."

Blair noticed Jim wasn't getting crazy. *How weird is this?*

"Blair, I know you have two jobs here and I understand. Be safe and I'll see if I can't get us some time off."

Blair shut the door and said, "Do I at least get a hug?"

Jim smiled and hugged him really hard and then he kissed him. "I love you, Chief. Be careful and come back to me safe and sound."

"I will. I promise. See you in two days, Jim."

The entire way home, Blair was trying to figure out why Jim wasn't getting pissed off or anything. His normal Jim would be ranting or raving and trying to get Blair out of it. *What is going on? Maybe Jim is growing up.* This thought made Blair laugh to himself.

Blair wore his super warm coat, because it wasn't as if they could turn on the heat or anything. Then he also grabbed a throw and pillow. He didn't care if the dudes laughed at him, he was going to be comfortable. Once he was ready, he took off for the station and went to Homicide. They were all just getting ready to roll and there were three of them. Bill Watson, Sam Fields and Haley Morris were all happy to see him. Especially Haley. Blair was a little uncomfortable with Haley. But this was two days and they weren't alone. Blair walked up and said, "I have all of my things ready." They all glanced at his duffle bag and smiled.

Bill Watson was the first one to clap Blair on the back and say, "Come on champ, let's get this show on the road. We've got to stop at the 24-hour grocery and get junk to eat. Get the lead out, all of you."

They all jumped in the van and Haley of course sat by Blair. She rubbed his leg and said, "It's so good to work with you again."

"Get your fucking hand off my leg, Haley." Blair wasn't even being nice about it. The two other men were slightly uncomfortable. They didn't know what to do or say. They were never taught this in cop school.

Blair was pissed off already and it was only ten minutes into the stakeout.

They got to the store and Blair tried to buy healthy choices, but the guys were giving him a hard time. So he finally broke down and bought some junk. Blair wasn't looking forward to this at all. Suddenly, he wished Jim had thrown a fit. It was going to take him a week to get this bad food out of his system.

They all climbed into the van again but this time, Blair grabbed the front passenger seat. The guys again didn't know how to handle all this, but they would make sure and keep watch. Blair Sandburg had been a huge help to them, they sure didn't want to lose him.

They got to where they wanted to be and had the tapes going so they could all listen. Blair didn't say a word, just listened to what was going on. As far as he could tell, the woman must have been wearing a

wire. She was getting the man to say all sorts of things that he wouldn't say to the police. Each time he would bury himself with something stupid, Sam Fields would hoot and holler like it was a party. Blair finally asked, "Aren't we supposed to be quiet in here?"

Fields said, "It's our way of unwinding. This has been a long case. We need to see what you think of the situation."

Blair listened a little longer and sighed. "I think he's burying himself. I don't know why you thought you needed me."

Fields said, "We just wanted a fresh set of ears, so to speak."

At that moment the guy must have seen the wire on the girl and asked, "Have you sold me out? Are you working with the cops? Then he proceeded to beat the shit out of her. Watson and Fields went in to rescue her and arrest the man in question. Blair was listening and Haley shoved him to the floor and said, "You think you're so much better than me don't you, little pansy ass. Well, let's see how you feel about this?" She pressed her lips on Blair and Blair pulled his head back, then forward and head-butted her. He got out from underneath her and said, "You're done, Morris."

Blair got on the radio and called for a paramedic for the woman inside the house. He figured Morris might need one too, but he wasn't going to worry about her right then.

Watson and Fields opened up the back of the van and found a bleeding Morris sitting there. Watson handcuffed the perp to the side of the interior of the van and looked at Morris. "Morris, what happened to you?"

"For no reason, Sandburg punched me."

Blair rolled his eyes and said, "And if you believe that, I've got some swampland to sell you pretty cheap."

Fields look at the gash on her head and said, "This looks pretty serious, Bill. We need to find out what's going on."

Bill asked, "What happened, Sandburg?"

"She jumped on top of me and started kissing me. I didn't want her to, so I head-butted her. Simple as that."

Haley said, "Just get me back to the station so I can press charges."

Bill said, "You might want to reconsider, Morris. Sandburg has been a great asset to our team. I'd hate to lose him because you can't keep your hands and lips to yourself." Blair couldn't believe that they believed him.

Blair finally asked, "Where is the woman that he was hitting?"

"She's sitting on her sofa waiting for the paramedics. I think he broke her nose," Watson said.

"I called on the radio for them too," Blair advised.

"They said they had already rolled. Good call, Sandburg," Watson said.

Without any more said, Blair got his duffle bag and started out of the van.

“Where are you going, Sandburg? We need to get your statement,” Fields said.

“I’ll give you my statement when I get there. I’m going to call Jim to come and pick me up. I don’t want to be in the van with her one moment longer than I have to,” Blair said, slamming the van door behind him.

It wasn’t like either of them blamed him. Morris asked, “Are you going to believe a fucking fag over a co-worker?”

“We’re considering it, Morris,” Bill answered. “Sit down and shut your mouth. We have a suspect to take care of here.”

“So it’s just fuck me over night?” she asked, angrily.

“Read him his rights, damn it,” Watson said.

She perked up and said, “Sandburg?”

“No, you moron. The man in the van. The suspect we’ve been watching for two weeks,” Fields said.

Blair went over to the bus stop and sat down and called Jim.

“What are you doing? You’re not supposed to make phone calls on stakeout.”

“Well, you’re also not supposed to get attacked by a woman cop and have to think about being stuck in the van with her all the way back to the station. She’s going to try and bring charges against me for head-butting her when she shoved me on the ground and started kissing me.”

“Where are you Chief? I’ll come pick you up.”

“I’m at the corner of 33rd and Kolb. Could you hurry?”

“I’ll be right there, Blair. Stay calm.”

Jim called Simon as he was driving. “Banks...”

“Simon, get a lawyer for Blair please, and have him waiting at the station. Haley Morris tried to attack Blair sexually tonight. Blair didn’t like it, he head-butted her and she’s going to press charges.”

“Is that the bitch that keeps making passes at him? Hasn’t he filed charges against her since day one?”

“Yes, Simon, that’s the one. But they don’t take it seriously when it’s a guy being attacked by a woman.”

“I’ll meet you there. We’re going to make her fucking life miserable,” Simon barked.

“See you soon, sir.” Jim wished they would give classes on how to handle these types of situations because then more cops would be understanding.

Jim raced across town to see Bill Watson talking to Blair outside the stakeout van. An ambulance was just pulling away. Jim wondered what he had missed.

Jim got out of his truck and said, “Problem here?”

“Haley Morris is going to press charges against Sandburg for head butting her. Sandburg told us about it and we’re behind him all the way. But at the same time, we were inside the house, so we didn’t witness it.”

“He’ll ride in with me, Watson. You know damn well that there are 32 incidents filed against Haley Morris. Not just from Sandburg, either.”

“You mean to tell me that other people have filed complaints against Morris?”

Blair rolled his eyes and said, “DUH.”

“Fine, take Sandburg with you, and we’ll see you at the station house. In the meantime, I’ll get Morris to change her mind.”

“Whatever works,” Jim said and grabbed Blair’s duffle and pulled Blair alongside him.

When they got in the truck, Jim said, “We’re filing a complaint against her first thing tonight.”

“Sounds good to me, Jim. If she had her way she would have raped me. I saw no other way out, man.”

“You don’t have to explain to me. She’s been doing this shit for the last 8 months. It’s time for her to go. Fuck Homicide.”

“Jim, Fields and Watson were basically on my side. They didn’t witness it. But I think they believed me.”

“We’ll see what happens at the station house.”

“Thanks for coming and getting me, man.”

“No problem, Chief. Before I forget, was someone hurt tonight? I saw the ambulance pull away as I pulled up.”

“Yes, the suspect beat up our informant. So they took her to the hospital. And then of course the paramedic also had to put a Band-Aid on Haley’s stupid forehead. They pressed an ice pack on mine while telling me I did a good job. Nobody likes her, Jim.”

“Good to know, Blair.”

They filed a report with IA and with the HR department right away. They were covering their asses. Now they just needed to get a statement from the two men in the van. Blair had told IA and the HR department that she had fondled his leg and they witnessed that. At least it was something to go on.

Once that was all done, they sat and waited for Watson, Fields and Morris to get back to the station. Morris didn't have time to file charges against Blair. IA grabbed her as soon as she came in and HR went along for the ride.

Watson walked over to Blair and said, "She was going to let it go, Sandburg."

Blair said, "But I wasn't. And the next guy might not be as lucky as I was to get away from her."

Watson nodded his head in agreement. "That's true. It's a shame. She used to be a good cop."

Simon growled. "Well, she isn't any longer. The sooner they get rid of her the better. Otherwise, Sandburg will just be working in Major Crimes."

Fields said, "I hope this works out, because we all like Sandburg very much. I hope we don't have to wait too long." Then he turned and walked away.

IA and HR came out and told Blair he had nothing to worry about. She was suspended and she might never be able to come back to work. Blair finally was able to breathe a sigh of relief.

On the drive home, Blair was really quiet. "Chief, you did the right thing. It's not your fault."

"Oh, I know, but everyone in Homicide might not agree with you. What if they don't like Major Crimes after this?"

"Chief, we already dislike each other. The only reason we stay civil is because you work there. Believe me, this isn't a bad thing."

"I'm really surprised to hear this. But at the same time, it makes me happy."

"Simon was quite proud of you tonight."

"Really? Jim are you serious?"

"As a heart attack. Simon is thrilled that you stuck up for yourself and defended yourself. This made Simon's night."

"All right, I won't worry about everything then. Thanks for believing me, man."

"I believe in you all the time, Chief. Now, let's go home and get some sleep."

"Now you're talking my language, Jim."

"Oh by the way, did I tell you that Simon is giving us four days off. We can go somewhere or we can stay at home. It's up to you, Blair."

"Staying home and snuggling with my boyfriend, sounds super good to me."

"Then it's a date. Kissing, groping, snuggling, sucking and fucking, oh my."

Blair laughed all the way home.

The Naomi Confrontation

Jim and Blair were sitting on the sofa, making out when the house phone rang. Blair stopped Jim from getting up and said, "Let the machine get it."

"Okay..."

The recording went off and it was Naomi's voice on the machine. Blair jumped up and grabbed it. "Hi Mom, it's me."

"Hi sweetie, how are you doing?"

"You've been gone for about ten months, I left numerous messages and you ask how I'm doing?" Blair sounded angry.

"Why are you so angry, Blair? I think you need a trip to India. I'm so relaxed and happy you wouldn't believe."

"Mom, did you get any of Jim's messages?"

"Of course I did, but they were all too negative and I'm into the positive life now, so I didn't call him back."

"But Mom, they were about me. I almost died. I've been having a time of it this year and you didn't even call back? Why do I sound surprised? You never cared as much about me as you did about traveling and your friends. I don't know why you bothered to call tonight..."

"Jim has made you so negative. Working at the police station has almost gotten you killed and you're mad at me?"

"I didn't almost get killed at the police station. I was in my apartment building and went to help a neighbor out when her boyfriend tried to kill her. It had nothing to do with my job or Jim. Jim has been by my side through thick and thin. He's not only proved to be a wonderful lover, but a fantastic best friend. While you on the other hand, ignored my phone calls, my messages and Jim's messages. I think Captain Banks even left one for you. You ignored them all. So that's why I'm mad, Mom."

"You know, Blair, not everything revolves around you," Naomi said as calmly as she could.

"I don't fucking believe you just said that to me. I never revolved around anything in your life. Let's face facts, your friends brought me up while you traveled, you left me at school for years without checking on me. You gave my thesis to someone without my permission and you believe that I think the world revolves around me?" Blair let out a bark of laughter.

"Blair Sandburg, don't you dare speak to me like this. You had no right to say all of that. You're talking to me as if I'm a no-body. I'm your mother and I wish to be talked to with respect."

"Respect? You're kidding, right? You never even called to see if I made it out of Intensive Care when I was shot. I don't even belong in your life."

“I’m going to give you some time to think about all this, Blair. I’ll expect an apology when I call back,” Naomi said, angrily.

“Then don’t call back, Mom. I’m never going to apologize to you. Don’t call again.” And just like that, Blair hung up the phone.

Jim stood there with his arms open waiting for his lover, who was heartbroken and whose face was full of tears. Blair gladly went into those arms and hugged Jim back just as hard as Jim was hugging him.

What hurts the most is the fact that Naomi has not tried to call me back right now. No, maybe what hurts the most is that she has never called in all those months. She didn’t care about me at all. She always said she did, but she didn’t.

“Things will get better, Chief. She’ll come to her senses and probably fly home to see her son.”

“Maybe I don’t want her to,” Blair answered.

“Or maybe you do,” Jim replied.

Blair held on even tighter because Jim was right. He did want her to come home. He wanted her to say she loved him. He wanted her to say she was sorry about everything. But Blair knew what was going to happen and what wouldn’t. She wasn’t coming. It was just another challenge that Blair had to jump over. And he knew he would be able to do it. But right then it hurt.

Jim’s Boyfriend’s Birthday

Jim knew that Blair was still upset about the fight with his mother and could think of nothing better than to plan a surprise birthday party. Jim had already talked to William and they were going to have the party at William’s house. Jim had wanted to have it at their new house, but it wouldn’t be a surprise party then.

Jim stopped by William’s almost every morning for the planning stages of the party. It worked out perfectly because Blair was doing some extra computer work for Simon, so had to leave early and drove his own car. William was hiring a caterer, a bartender for an open bar, non-alcoholic drinks for those that wanted them and a gorgeous cake. They had William’s house decorated already, even though the party wasn’t for another week. Both men were excited about it and William especially wanted it to be perfect after Blair’s phone call with his mother.

“Jimmy, what did you get Blair for his birthday?”

“I got him a necklace that looks like a military dog tag and it says ‘Best Boyfriend’ and on the back it says, ‘forever yours, Jim’.”

“Anything else on the dog tag?” William was thinking about it now.

“There are diamonds surrounding the ‘Best Boyfriend’ in the shape of a heart. It’s in your office, if you would like to see it,” Jim offered.

“Yes, I would love to see it.”

Jim went and got the fancy box and brought it out to show William. William opened the box and said, “It’s much prettier than you described it. It’s gorgeous. Blair is going to love this so much.”

“I sure hope so because it cost a fortune. What did you get him, Dad?”

“Do you remember his old Volvo? I had it completely refurbished, inside and out, had a new engine put in and it’s like a new car now. I know how much he missed it once he sold it to that mechanic who was selling it for parts. I couldn’t stand by and let that happen. I’ve been waiting for the right moment. It took four months to redo it, but it’s done now. He’s going to love it. This will be the perfect time.”

“Dad, that’s way too much. Now it makes my gift look really cheap,” Jim confessed.

“Well, you know you could get him a bracelet to match it, right?” William smiled when he saw Jim’s mind working that out.

“I have to get to work. I’m going to have a hard time finding time to get the things I need. Could you do it for me, Dad?”

“No, Jim. Do it tonight. Tell Blair I called and wanted you to come over to meet a new friend of mine. He’ll never question it.”

“I can’t say that because he would never let me meet a new friend of yours without him in tow. I’ll think of something.”

“Just tell him that I needed one on one time with my son.”

“Okay, I’ll do it.” Jim put the necklace back in the office and shut the door.

When Jim got home that night, he said, “I have to run and pick up my dad. I won’t be long, Blair. He just needs a little one-on-one with me.”

“Tell him I said hello, man.”

“I will. Talk to you soon. I think I’ll take him for a sandwich afterwards, so why don’t you have a nice salad,” Jim asked.

Blair waved out the front window of the house and then grabbed his cell phone.

“Connor...”

“Hi, Megan. Jim just left for a silly reason and I think he actually might have remembered I have a birthday coming up. I wonder what he got me. It’s not in this house because I’ve looked everywhere. Maybe that’s where he is right now. What do you think he’s getting me?”

“Oh you are so bad, Sandy. I bet he’s getting you something fabulous. I can’t wait to see what it is.”

"I've got to go and heat some leftovers up for dinner or make a salad. My birthday is next week, do you want to come over and spend the evening with me? That way you can see first-hand what Jim gets me."

"Sure, what time?" Connor agreed, even knowing that she'd be at William's house.

"After work, would be good. Maybe Jim will buy us all dinner since it's my birthday and all," Blair hoped.

"Perfect, Sandy. See you at work tomorrow."

William and Jim took Blair's necklace to four jewelry stores. No one had had anything that would go with that beautiful necklace. That was until the fifth place. Jim saw a bracelet with a tag like you wear for identifications on your wrist and instead it had a place for engraving and diamonds surrounding it. It would match perfectly with the necklace. Jim asked the jeweler to see if it looked like a set and both he and William agreed, it was perfect. Jim asked how much it was and the jeweler didn't even pause before he said, "A thousand dollars."

"A thousand dollars? Wow, Dad, I wasn't expecting to spend that much." It's not that Jim didn't think Blair was worth it, but they had just bought the house and funds were low.

William smiled and gave the jeweler his credit card and said, "It's on me, Jimmy. Don't argue."

Jim didn't, at least not in front of a stranger. "Thanks, Dad. I really love it and I think Blair will too."

The jeweler asked Jim, "Did you want this engraved? I have my engraver in the back. He could do it right now."

"That would be great."

"What did you want on it?" he asked.

"Forever yours, Jim on the back and Blair on the front."

"I like it. It's short, to the point and romantic at the same time." The jeweler took it back and came back out front. "You can sit in the chairs over there and wait until he's done."

Jim and William sat while they waited for the engraving. It wasn't long and the man walked out of the back room and handed the item over to the jeweler.

"Mr. Ellison, it's finished. Take a look to be sure it's just what you wanted."

Jim looked it over and said, "Just like I asked. Thank you so much."

"Thank you both for shopping with us. I'm sure Blair will love it."

The jeweler put it in a gorgeous box and then put it in a bag for Jim. After saying their goodbyes, Jim and William headed to William's house to put away the present and drop William off.

"I have Blair's Volvo in my garage. Would you like to see it?"

"Nope, I'm going to wait until you show it to him. I'll be surprised too."

When they got to the house, Jim put his gift with the other and said, "I have to go or he's going to know something is up."

"Goodnight, Jimmy."

"Night, Dad. Thanks again for the loan."

"It's not a loan. It's part of your inheritance. Now get out of here."

Jim drove as quickly as he could. He didn't want to ruin this at all. This surprise party would be just what Blair needed.

It was 8:00 when Jim got home. Blair was sleeping in front of the television. Jim took off his jacket, hung it up and walked over to Blair. He kissed him on top of the head and waited for a reaction.

"Finally, I was getting bored. Feel like having some fun?" Blair asked, wiggling his eyebrows up and down.

"I always feel like having fun with you."

"Oh goody, a lovey-dovey Jim is my lover tonight. Follow me."

Who could argue with this man? Jim followed him into the bedroom and had a wonderful night of fun, romance and love.

The Big Day

In the bullpen, everyone said happy birthday to Blair, but something was missing. No one brought him a donut to eat. Sighing, he just finished his work, so he could get home early.

Simon came out of his office and said, "Sandburg, since it's your birthday, why don't you go ahead and take Jim and have the rest of the day off. Live it up. Go see a movie. Go do something."

"Thank you, Simon. I'll take you up on that. Here are the reports you needed to have filled out. I finished all my work today. It's been a good day."

"Happy Birthday again, Blair."

"Thank you, Simon."

Blair went and got Jim and they went out to lunch and went to a movie of Blair's choice. All in all, Blair thought it was a perfect day, other than the fact that he wished his mom could have been there or at least called.

The Party

Megan had still not showed up at the loft and wasn't answering Blair's calls. He finally said, "She said she'd be here for dinner. I hope she's all right."

"Chief, maybe something came up at work. I hope you don't mind, I told my dad that we would take him to dinner with us tonight."

"Oh sure, that's fine. I love your dad. When are we going?"

"Right now. He's probably waiting for us already. You know how he is."

"I'm ready, let's get out of here," Blair suggested.

"Come on, Birthday Boy, let's shake a leg."

They mostly talked about work driving over to William's house. Everyone had done as Jim asked, they weren't parked around William's house. When they drove up, Jim said, "Why don't we go in and have a celebratory drink?"

"That would be nice. Thank you, my love." Blair pulled Jim in for a kiss and then they got out and walked up to William's door and rang the doorbell.

William opened the door, hugged Blair first thing and said, "Happy Birthday to the finest son-in-law I could ever hope to have."

Blair hugged him back and said, "Thank you so much, William. You're going to need a jacket, it's sort of chilly outside tonight."

"Come on inside while I do something really quick." William flipped the light switch to the living room on and everyone yelled, "Surprise!"

Blair almost jumped out of his skin. He jumped a foot off the floor. He looked at Jim with tears in his eyes and asked, "This was your idea, right?"

"Yeah, sorta," Jim answered as he drew Blair into his strong arms and held him close. "I just wanted to let you know how much I love you."

"Can I blow my nose on your shirt, man?"

Jim jumped away from him and Blair burst out laughing. "Gotcha."

The food was served, the drinks were going like crazy and everyone was having a great time. William walked over to Blair and smiled. "I wanted you to know that we all love you as much as Jim does."

"Man, if I ever had doubts, I don't anymore. Thank you for helping Jim do this for me."

"Presents are up next. Get over to the present table. Jim is chomping at the bit for you to open his two. I've got one for you, but I'll bring it tomorrow."

"Thank you, William. You're the best," Blair admitted, easily.

Blair walked over and started opening presents on the other side of Jim totally ignoring his two boxes. It was making Jim nuttier than he already was. Almost everyone got him a gag gift of some sort and Blair

loved them all. There was nothing but laughter and smiling all over the place. He finally got down to Jim's boxes and said, "Are these from you?"

"It's about damn time. Open them up already."

"Jim, patience is not your middle name," Blair said laughing along with everyone else.

Blair opened the necklace first and was shocked at how nice it was. He loved the engraving. It was absolutely perfect. He was heading to Jim to hug him when Jim said, "Open the other one, they're a set."

Blair opened the second box to find the beautiful bracelet with his name on it and then went into Jim's arms. "Thank you, Jim, you are the best man in the world. I love them." Blair pulled the necklace out and put it over his head and watched everyone's eyes light up. Blair knew they thought it was almost as gorgeous as he did. Next, he put on the bracelet and asked, "Did someone say cake?"

William had the caterers get the cake cut and served after they all sang Happy Birthday to Blair. Blair knew he would have to ask who did the cake. It was the best he had ever had. When he was done, he called out, "Did someone say Karaoke?"

Jim groaned but followed Blair to the machine. The party was still hopping at 2:00 in the morning. Thankfully, William had gone to bed and could sleep through anything. As everyone left, Jim and Blair hugged them all. Once the door was shut after Simon left, the two men decided to clean up the house. They had just started when William came to the head of the stairs. "Jim and Blair, there is a team coming in tomorrow to clean it up. Leave, go home and celebrate alone."

"Thank you for everything, William," Blair called out softly.

"Yeah, Dad, you're the best. We'll see you on Sunday. Oh, this is Sunday. We'll see you later today. We love you."

"I love you both too. Drive carefully," William said and then walked to his bedroom.

During the drive home, Blair kept holding up his bracelet and then his necklace. "Jim, these are the most amazing things in the world. And to top it off, William said he's bringing another gift over tomorrow, I mean today. I can't wait to see what kind of jewelry he bought. He reminds me of a jewelry person, doesn't he you?"

Jim smiled at the thought of the look on Blair's face when he saw the Volvo. But he didn't want to spoil it at all. "I'm not telling you what it is. You have to wait. It was a great party, wasn't it?"

"The best, babe, the best." And the next thing Jim knew Blair was sleeping next to him.

Jim couldn't help but smile. A perfect night for a perfect person.

Excessive, Expensive but Most Excellent

Later that day William called and said he was coming over early for a visit. Jim told Blair, but didn't tell him why. Jim knew that William would be bringing the car over.

Blair was making something wonderful for lunch and Jim kept watch out the front window of the house. William drove up and he had been correct about it looking like a new car. It was beautiful. The color was different, but Jim had a feeling it wouldn't make any difference to Blair. Jim walked into the dining room and said, "My dad just pulled up. Can I do anything to help?"

"No, I made kick-ass chef salads for us. I can't wait to thank William again for the wonderful party."

The doorbell rang and Blair answered it. "Hi William, I made fresh salad for lunch. Come on in."

"First I need you to come outside and see your present from me..."

"Okay..." Blair and Jim followed. Blair couldn't imagine why he didn't just bring it in unless the box was too heavy. *Maybe a Karaoke machine. I'd love one of those.*

Once on the sidewalk, William stopped and asked, "Where do you think your present is?"

Blair looked around and said, "I don't see your car?"

"Guess which car I drove?" William teased.

Blair looked around and saw the Volvo in a beautiful shade of royal blue. He looked at William and asked, "The Volvo?"

William hugged the poor, confused man. "Yes, it's the Volvo. But it's not mine, it's yours. It used to be yours ages ago, but I had it entirely rebuilt. The engine is completely new, the interior is new and the exterior was done to match the old one except for the color. I thought you needed something a little more like you. This blue calls out your name. I hope you like it. Here are the keys."

Blair took the keys and then hugged William like he had never been hugged before. Blair stepped back and said, "Thank you so much, William. I love it. I thought maybe it was a Karaoke Machine. Can I drive it around the block before lunch?"

William laughed and said, "No, not a Karaoke Machine at all. Yes, let's all get in for a ride."

Jim made a mental note to himself that a Karaoke Machine would be the next thing he bought for Blair.

Jim sat in the back seat and let his dad have the passenger seat in the front. Jim was cramped but didn't want to ruin William's moment. Blair took off and said, "Oh my God, it's just like my old one. It still drives like it. I love the leather interior, William. That was a very nice choice to make. Jim, isn't this great?"

Jim had his knees up almost to his chest but answered, "Yeah, this is super great, Chief."

They drove around for about a half-hour and then Blair asked, "Who's ready for lunch?"

"I am," Jim shouted out, excited about getting out of the back seat.

"I am too," William added.

Blair drove home talking the entire time about his new car. Jim was very pleased that Blair was so happy. It had been a long year and it was time for something good.

Once they arrived home, they were going to have lunch together. Blair just kept thanking William for the wonderful car.

"What are you going to do with the old car you have now?" Jim asked.

"I might give it to Daryl. He's riding the bus right now. I'll see what Simon thinks of the idea. He might not be able to afford insurance and gas. We'll have to put some thought into it," Blair said.

"Now the Volvo can be kept in the garage and will have a longer life for the interior and the exterior," William explained, happily.

Jim said, "After lunch, we'll take Daryl's car out to the street and put yours in the garage. How does that sound, Chief?"

"Perfect, now let's all wash up for lunch," Blair suggested and they all did just that.

Jim walked over to Blair and asked, "Karaoke Machine? Really? This is something you'd want?"

"Oh shut up. I love the damn singing. You know I can't help it. So shoot me."

"No, instead I'll make a mental note to pick one up for you next year."

Blair smiled, knowing that Jim wouldn't remember this conversation in two weeks let alone a year. But it was the thought that counted.

Taking Care of Business

Almost twice a week at lunch, Blair was making up some excuse to be gone. He would always bring lunch back for Jim, but Jim always smelled the same woman on Blair. The reason that Jim didn't go crazy about it was because Jim could smell no sex scents at all. Blair was seeing a woman for something else. Jim was just going to have to be patient and let Blair come to him.

Blair watched Jim that afternoon and noticed Jim had been unusually quiet for about two weeks. He realized it was the same time that he started seeing a therapist. He was still having nightmares and wanted to take care of it on his own. But maybe Jim didn't like that Blair was doing this.

The next day at lunch, Blair took off and Jim followed him, which wasn't hard to do with the Royal Blue car and saw he was seeing a therapist. *Why couldn't he have told me that?*

That night, Blair was making dinner and Jim sat down and said, "I have something to tell you and it's not good."

Blair walked over to the table and sat across from his serious lover and asked, "What?"

"I followed you today. I just want you to know that I was worried and I won't ask questions about it. I'm so sorry."

"It's okay, Jim. I was going to tell you tonight after dinner. I've been having dreams again and I want them under control. I don't have PTSD right now, it's just nightmares. Please don't worry about me."

"I'm really glad you're taking care of business. That's the most important thing. It's been a long road for you to travel, Blair, but you have done it with strength. You're a good man and to think I almost lost you close to a year ago is unreal. You take as long as you need to get better. I'm here for you any time you need me," Jim said.

"Let me shut dinner off and you can show me how much you're here for me," Blair said, wiggling his eye brows up and down.

And Jim did just that.

Dinners with Dad

Jim had had to work for the last four Sundays but Blair continued to have William over for dinner and they would eat and watch the football game.

It was only one o'clock and there was a knock at the door. Blair opened it to William and smiled. "Hello, William, how are you doing today?"

"I'm well, Blair. I thought maybe you would like to go shopping or something. I know it must be boring to have me over every Sunday without Jim here."

"Actually, I need to go to the grocery store, if you feel like going along. I would like the company. Do you need any at your house?" Blair asked.

William smiled and said, "I do need groceries. I would love to join you. I was bored out of my mind."

"When we get back we'll play a game of 5000 Rummy. It's fun and it'll kill time before the game starts."

"Honestly, I couldn't care less about this afternoon's game or tonight's game. It's two teams I don't like, for both games. So I might not stay for them."

Blair started laughing and admitted, "I just got done telling Jim I really didn't feel like watching the game this afternoon. So we'll play games until the grump gets home."

"Has he been really grumpy?" William wondered.

"Yes... He doesn't like that we're both off on Sundays and Simon keeps asking him to work. He promised he was taking off next Sunday if it killed him. I think he misses seeing you too."

William smiled with happiness at the thought of Jim missing him. "I miss seeing him too. But I have to say, he couldn't have picked a better life mate than you. I tell all my friends about how nice you are to

me. They don't quite understand how I could be so accepting of something so odd and different, but I just keep telling them things so they'll get more used to it. Marilyn asked the other day at bridge how you and Jimmy were. So it's working."

"One day at a time, William. They'll either understand or not."

"And the not ones, can go to hell."

Blair laughed and said, "That's the attitude to have, William."

"I've changed a lot of my ways in the last two years. Thankfully so."

"You ready to go to the grocery store? We'll go to the one by you first and then drop all your food off and then start at mine. Sound like a plan?"

"Sounds like a wonderful plan, Blair. Thank you for doing this with me. I'm lost without Sally in town. She went to see her sister for a few weeks."

"You are most welcome and I'm glad that Sally got to get away."

One of the best things about spending time with William without Jim along was that William told him Jimmy stories. Stories that Blair would never hear from Jim. He heard all about how close Rucker and Jim were, what they did every summer and why Jim loved camping so much. Once they were done with William's groceries, dropped them off and put them away, they went to do Blair's. It was turning out to be a wonderful day for the two men. William truly did enjoy hanging out with Blair, even Blair could tell. And Blair really loved William. He was like a more laid back version of Jim. Sure, they had their bad times when Jim was younger, but they'd moved past that and got along just fine now. When they were done with Jim and Blair's groceries, Blair pulled the Volvo into the garage and saw Jim's truck there.

"I didn't expect him home so soon," Blair said. "I guess it's a little later than I thought. We've been gone for three hours, William."

"We were having a good time."

Blair smiled. "We sure were."

"Jim can help carry groceries in," William said. And the next thing they knew, Jim was standing by the trunk of the car.

"Hello, Jimmy, we were shopping and just spending time together." William pointed out.

"I see that, Dad. So both of you bailed on the game today?" Jim asked.

Blair smiled. "We had places to go, things to do and people to see. Sorry we're so late."

Jim hugged his dad and then walked over and hugged Blair and kissed him.

"I don't even know what I'm going to make for dinner. Give me a few to whip something up."

"Already done, Blair. You're not the only one that knows how to cook, you know?"

Blair smiled even more. "William and I will do the dishes then."

“That sounds good to me,” William said.

“Dad, you’re not doing dishes at my house. Instead, you can watch whatever you want on television and then we’ll all play some games when Blair and I finish the kitchen. Sound good?”

William beamed with happiness. “That sounds fantastic, Jimmy. I’m sorry I took Blair away today. You could have had some alone time on your day off.”

“Blair loves spending time with you. He gets those stories about little Jimmy that I hate so much. He lives for this shit, Dad.”

William threw back his head and laughed. He was so happy to be in his son’s life again. And thankfully Blair liked him a lot.

Jim and Blair put all the groceries away and William sat in the recliner in the living room and snoozed for a short time. Jim pulled Blair into his arms and said, “Thank you for being so good to and with my dad. He loves spending time with one or both of us.”

“You don’t have to thank me, Jim. I truly enjoy his company and he enjoys mine. So it works. But we both missed you today. It’s not the same when you’re not here. I’m glad you got off early. And to come home to a nice beef stew is super nice. Would you like me to make some baking powder biscuits to go with dinner?” Blair asked, sweetly.

“That would be great. I’ll get dad up so he can come in here and help set the table. I like that we don’t have to sit in the formal dining room when we eat. Instead we sit in the dinette area in the kitchen. Have I mentioned lately how much I love this house?” Jim teased.

Blair pulled him down for one more kiss and said, “Go and get your dad.”

And that’s what Jim did. William was thrilled to help set the table and put the dishes on. Jim knew he liked to be a part of things, so he was going to let him do things from now on.

“Jimmy, after dinner, would you like to play 5000 Rummy with us?” William asked.

“I would be thrilled, Dad. I love that game. And I love getting my pants beat off every single hand.”

“You just like to have Blair beat your pants off, Jimmy. Maybe I should go home.” That line was followed with a huge laugh and Blair joined in.

Things were good with the three of them. Blair and Jim sure couldn’t complain. Dinner with William was a joy these days. Such a nice change of pace from the past. That’s what’s nice about changing your life.

The Perfect Fucking Case

Jim was driving back to the station when Blair said, “Jim, do you believe that we already have the person who killed Mr. and Mrs. Samson’s son? It’s so good to be back, man.”

“Yeah, I do believe it because we were together when we found out. Remember?” Jim kidded.

“I never dreamed it would be that simple or happen that easily. I still don’t understand how a mother could kill her own son. It’s just weird, don’t you agree?”

“I do agree, Blair. It seems almost too perfect, doesn’t it? Do you think we might have been wrong all along?”

“I just might agree with you, Jim. It *is* too perfect. What did we find out about their daughter?”

“She’s got some mental disorders and isn’t totally normal. Or at least that’s what they led us to believe. What if it was their daughter that did it? I realize she’s only ten, but her brother was only six. She could have easily overpowered him and smothered him. It isn’t a fucking perfect case at all. Why would the mother do that? Why would she take the blame? Why was she so devastated if she did it?”

“Maybe her husband asked her to. Or maybe she was feeling guilty,” Blair suggested.

“When we get upstairs, we’re going to question both of the parents all over again, except this time with different questions. We’ll see what they do when they realize we know the truth,” Jim said as he parked the truck. They got out and walked to the elevator.

Once on it, Blair said, “It still could be the perfect case, Jim. We just need to make it work.”

“They might not fold, Chief. And if they don’t we have no proof that their daughter did it at all.”

They walked off the elevator and Blair asked Rafe, “Where did they take Mr. and Mrs. Samson?”

“They are in interrogation room one and room two. Why are you guys back already? I thought that the mother confessed,” Rafe said, nosily.

“We think it was the ten year old that did it and the mother is covering for her. That’s why the mother is so heart-broken, but yet said she did it. If she had really done it, she wouldn’t be nearly as upset,” Jim answered.

“Holy shit, a totally new look at what happened. Where is the ten year old?” Rafe wondered.

“Somewhere with Mr. Samson’s family. I pray they don’t have kids. We’ll have to find out right away,” Blair replied.

Jim looked concerned. “Chief, that never occurred to me. Good call. Let’s get in there and find out what’s going on and where the daughter is placed right now.”

An hour later

Simon walked over to Joel and Megan and said, “Those two did it again. We had it all wrapped up and they came in and solved the crime differently. I honestly think Blair has been the best addition to our team. He makes Jim think more, if you ask me.”

Connor smiled. "I couldn't agree more. Oh, we went and picked the ten year old daughter up and placed her in the right hands. The parents were assured that she would go to a mental institution. That was the only way they would change their story."

Joel said, "This is such a sad, sad case. I bet Jim and Blair aren't feeling that great about it."

"They should be out in a few minutes to file their reports. They did their job, so we can be proud of their choices. Some would just let the mother take the fall. But Blair thought about that ten year old hurting another child and Jim was right on board with him," Simon stated.

"What if we take Jim and Blair out for drinks tonight?" Joel asked.

Rafe walked by and said, "That would be great. We could all celebrate the perfect case being solved. This one was unique enough to fit the bill as a perfect case."

Henri came over and smiled at everyone. "Did I hear we're going out after work?"

Megan answered, "I honestly don't think they'll feel like celebrating at all. Why don't we leave them alone?"

Simon frowned, but said, "If you think that would be best, that's what we'll do."

"Here they come. Leave them be so they can get their reports filed and go home," Megan said.

Jim walked over to the gang and said, "We would love to go out with all of you tonight. But not to celebrate but instead to mourn the loss of that little six year old boy. Troy Samson deserves a few good words said about him. His mother told us all about his short little life."

Simon patted Jim on the back and said, "We'll be there. Brad's, right?"

Jim smiled. "Where else. We always go to Brad's. We'll meet there at six tonight."

"See you all later," Joel said as he headed for his office. Then everyone else went back to what they were doing.

Another hour later

Blair walked over to Jim and said, "I'm almost done with my report, do you need help?"

"I always need help," Jim said, seriously.

Blair pulled up a chair and the two of them had their heads side by side doing the report and Blair doing the typing. When they were done, Blair hit print and save but they needed to take all of the copies into Simon's office.

Jim knocked on Simon's door. "Come in, Jim and Blair."

Blair said, "We have all the paperwork done for the Samson murder. I just wanted to let you know we were done and maybe get one of your fantastic cups of coffee."

“Sit down, I’ll get your cups and fill them up,” Simon said, smiling. Jim and Blair had their mugs on his shelf for special occasions. “Thank you for doing it so quickly. We need to have all of that paperwork ready for the D.A.’s office first thing in the morning.”

Jim and Blair both sat down and were treated to a cup of some wonderful mocha blend. Jim felt like his day was getting better.

Blair was acting like he was in love with his coffee cup, making both Jim and Simon laugh.

“What? What are you two laughing at?” Blair asked.

Simon smiled. “It looks like you would like to make love to that coffee cup.”

This made Jim laugh even harder.

“Oh that’s great. Make fun of a man when he’s down,” Blair said, quietly.

“I’m sorry, Chief.”

“Gotcha!” Blair shouted and walked out the door.

“Do you ever get tired of being one step behind him all the time?” Simon wondered.

“No, it keeps things exciting.”

“Get out of here and we’ll see you tonight,” Simon ordered. He slammed the door shut after Jim walked out.

Jim went over to Blair’s desk and asked, “Are you okay? I mean, really okay?”

“I think we did a fine job, Jim. And if we can say that at the end of the day, then by God, it *was* a perfect fucking case.”

“Good, because I agree.”

And both of them knew there would be many other perfect cases to come. Thankfully, they would be solving them together-as a perfect team.

The Surprise

Jim looked over at Blair and said, “I’ll meet you at Brad’s. Please ride with Megan. I forgot I had something to do and it’s a surprise.”

“Hot damn, I love surprises. I wish I could kiss you goodbye. Instead, I’ll think about the kiss I’ll get later,” Blair whispered.

“You’re a demon. I’ll see you at Brad’s.” Jim walked to the elevator.

Megan walked over and asked, “Where is Jimbo going? I thought we were going out for drinks.”

“He’s going to meet us there and asked if I could ride with you. I told him you would be pleased as punch.”

Megan socked Blair in the arm and smiled. “You Americans and your sayings.”

“I’m ready whenever you are. We could have a head start on everyone else. I’m dying for a Peach Bellini. I love them,” Blair said, licking his lips.

“Like we don’t all know that already, Sandy.” Megan grabbed her jacket and Blair’s too and they were off.

Everyone was at Brad’s waiting for Jim. Blair had already had two Peach Bellini’s.

Simon was tired of waiting and said, “So where is this man with your surprise. You already had your birthday surprise, so what could it be?”

“I don’t know, Simon. That’s why it’s called a surprise.” Blair burst out laughing.

The door to the bar section of Brads opened and in walked Jim carrying two very large boxes. They were wrapped, so no one could guess.

Blair met Jim half-way and carried one of the boxes. “Man, this is heavy. What in the world did you get me?”

“You’ll see. Set it on the table, let me get a drink and you can open both of them.”

“All right, if I have to,” Blair teased as Jim went up to get a drink.

He walked back to the table carrying a large beer. When he sat down next to Blair, he said, “Now you can open this.”

Blair was so excited. He opened the bigger box and found two large speakers. He glanced at Jim and smiled. “You got me a Karaoke Machine?”

“Finish opening before you ask questions.”

Blair opened up the other box and saw it was the best Karaoke Machine on the market. Blair had wanted this one so bad. But they were too expensive. Blair turned around, sat on Jim’s lap and kissed him over and over again. When he was done kissing Jim, he jumped up to examine his new prize.

Jim cleared his throat and said, “Brad told me that if you get it all hooked up, you’re welcome to use it tonight in the bar.”

Everyone helped get it out of the box, including Simon, which surprised Jim. He got up and whispered in Simon’s ear, “Why are you acting excited about the machine?”

Simon stood back and answered in a whisper, “He’s had a hard year. It’s nice to see him happy and having fun. I like this Blair. I want to keep him happy. If that includes you and me singing a song off key, so be it.”

“What do you want to sing tonight, Simon?”

“I’ll do a duet with you. We’ll sing ‘Bad to the Bone’. I think we might be able to pull that off,” Simon replied.

They got everything set up and ready to go. Blair got to go first since it was his surprise. He chose a song to sing to Jim. He sang, ‘You Are So Beautiful’ making everyone tear up as they kissed at the end of it.

Everyone chose a song that they liked and sang it. It was a wonderful night filled with joy and excitement, but Jim was ready to go home.

Jim walked over and whispered something in Blair’s ear and Blair said, “Okay, everyone. Time to close up shop. I’ve got to get home for even more surprises that you won’t ever hear about.”

Jim blushed and everyone laughed. Everyone helped put the machine back in the boxes and then they helped load it in Jim’s truck. They all said goodbye to each other and left for the night.

During the drive home, Blair asked, “Why in the world did you decide to get me a Karaoke Machine tonight?”

“Because you ask for very little and I knew this would make you very happy. And I know it’ll be used a lot at our house. I like having everyone over to our house sometimes. So basically, I just wanted to make you happy and know that you’re loved.”

Blair reached across, grabbed Jim’s right hand and kissed it. “I love you so much, Jim. Do you mind if I call my mom and leave a message?”

“Not at all, babe.” Jim smiled over at his lover.

Blair pulled out his phone and dialed the number he had for Colorado. He hoped he could leave a message there. It rang twice and Naomi answered.

“Blair?”

“Hi, Mom. I just wanted to call and tell you how well I’m doing at my job and how happy I am with my life. Jim and I are both fine as well as all of our friends. I’m just so happy tonight and wanted to leave a positive message on your phone. You’re in Colorado?”

“Marion asked me to come for a visit and I’m here with her now. I’m glad to hear that you’re feeling well, happy and seem content. This is very good for a mother to hear.”

“That’s all I wanted to tell you, Mom. You have a good visit with Marion and I’ll see you someday.”

“Blair, you’re being overly dramatic as usual. Of course I’ll see you again. I just don’t know when.”

“I have to go. Talk to you some other time. Bye.” Blair closed his cell and had a tear slide down his cheek.

He wiped it off and cleared his throat. He turned to Jim and said, “It was still a perfect night. When we get home I’d like to remember that.”

Jim smiled at him and said, "You'll remember a lot of things, Blair. And they will all be positive. I love you."

"I love you too, Jim. Thank you for the machine. Now hurry up and get us home."

Jim put his sirens on and lights on top of his truck. He was going to make Blair's night as wonderful as he could. In fact, he would probably make it the best night ever. As it should be. No more challenges for either of them. Life was good.

The end

