

Tyrell Williams

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## A Shot in the Dark

by Tyrell Williams

Tonight felt more frigid than usual, not in a literal sense either. What was usually a densely populated New York City was even more dead than usual, not to mention that there was now one less New Yorker who could waltz the streets. There had been more and more dead bodies popping up in alleyways, and I didn't understand why. Maybe this case would shed light on this godforsaken darkness.

The engine of my Cadillac sputtered as I parked near the crime scene. I put on my gear, turned my car off, and stepped out when I was ready. I approached the alley, where I saw my superior officer, Sergeant Smith, who shook my hand upon my arrival.

"Good evening, Detective Green."

"Likewise, Sergeant. What's the scene lookin' like?"

"Detective Blight got here before I did, quick bastard he is. I let him process the scene as he saw fit. Said he'd wait for you too."

I looked for Blight but couldn't make out much through the alleyway's darkness. I walked into it, seeing a large figure in the darkness, realizing it was Blight, who gestured me over to him as he stood over a corpse.

"You must be my comrade, right?" Blight asked.

"That's right, what do you got here?" I responded.

"War general from the looks of it."

I knelt to examine the body. A well-placed shot in the head, blood running down his face, staining his medals. I went to take out my notepad to make notes of the state of the body when Blight put a hefty amount of force on my shoulder.

"There is no need, I've already processed the entire alley and have the culprit in my car."

I stood up, only to still barely be eye-level with him. "Wait, you have the murderer already?"

He pointed to his car, where I could see a young man crying in the back. "I can bet a life that it's him."

"If it's okay with you, I'd like to have some time to investigate before we interrogate him."

"You're wasting your time, but do as you wish." He walked away before I could respond.

I went back to the body and took notes on what I observed. This was the fifth war general this month alone, and still, no killer. I stood up and looked around for other clues. I stumbled across a cigar on the ground. I grabbed it by the middle, being able to see that the brand was Nat Sherman. I bagged it up and wrote this information down on my notepad. Maybe forensics could match this with a known criminal. I paced around the rest of the alley looking for the murder weapon, but I had no luck finding it. I walked up to Blight and Smith, who were smoking together.

"Hey, have either of you seen the murder weapon? It would appear to be a firearm."

"The kid must've tossed it after shooting the victim," Smith said.

Blight took a hit of his cigar, blowing the smoke away from our faces, looking at the suspect in his car, while the smell of cinnamon filled the air. "I'll make him talk, do not worry."

"You better, I'm counting on you two to solve these murders, or it's our asses," Smith said as he then got in his car, "The coroner should arrive soon." He took off afterward.

I looked back at Blight, who made eye contact with me. "Do we have any witnesses?"

"They all said they didn't know where the shot came from, so I let them go."

"You did what? That isn't how we should be handling our investigation when we're dealing with a—"

He jammed his finger into my chest, cutting me off. "I'm the lead here, I know what I'm doing kid, stand down." He walked away, tossing his cigar, getting into his car with the suspect, taking off without a word.

I sighed, grabbing the cigar he tossed, and compared it to the one I found not too long ago. Same brand, but it could be a coincidence.

I looked around one last time before I went to the police station. In my searches, I stepped on a small shred of brown fabric on the ground, covered in black residue. I jotted this down in my notes and bagged up the fabric. I think I've gotten everything there is to see here. I got in my car, started the engine, and drove to the police station.

Detective Blight and I walked into the interrogation room, where the alleged culprit sat, arms shackled to the table like a dog on a leash. There was only one light bulb giving the entire room any sense of life around the cold brick walls, making everything feel much grimmer than I

could even realize at the time. We took our seats across the suspect, and I got out my notepad, ready to get this over with.

"Alright kid, my name's Blight, and this here is Green. You're gonna tell us why you shot the man in the alley," Blight said with conviction.

"Let's not get irrational here, we should start small, what is your name kid?" I said, hopefully being able to build rapport with the boy.

"I'm Walter, and I ain't no kid, I just turned eighteen."

Blight laughed as he took his coat off, hanging it over his chair, "Doesn't change the fact that you did it, so we should turn you in right now."

"But it wasn't me! I'm being framed, I swear I am."

"There's no proof."

The kid started shaking, unsure of how to plead his case.

"There was somebody else there...before me, he set me up I know it's him."

I wanted to quickly get this potential other subject found as soon as possible while his description of the other perpetrator was fresh on his mind. "Can you describe what they looked like, or what they wore?"

"Heh, he's lying to save his skin."

"Can you bet a life on that, sir?" Walter asked, leaving us both slightly dumbfounded. Did he hear our conversation from earlier?

Walter thought long and hard, trying to give the most accurate description possible. "He was a big guy, with uh...a trench coat."

I wrote this in my notepad.

Blight mumbled to himself, staring daggers into Walter's eyes. "You know how many people out here got trench coats? Especially a brown one, that ain't enough to go on."

Something about this just feels...off.

"Look, kid, we don't have time to—"

"I'm not a kid, sir. I'm a grown man, who you need to stop pointing fingers at."

Walter would occasionally shoot glances at me, as if he was asking for my help, but I didn't have enough to go on to make any judgments just yet. "Is there anything else about what the man looked like or wore?"

"When I met him, he was leaning on the wall with a cigar, uhm, I couldn't tell the brand in the darkness."

It seemed like on pure instinct, Blight whipped out a cigar and lit it, smoking it, and blowing the smoke in Walter's face, who started coughing almost immediately.

"Blight, what's wrong with you? Smoke outside, not here," I told him sternly.

Blight shrugged and got up from his chair, cinnamon filled the air again, but I only knew this from him smoking earlier.

"That smell...the man from earlier smoked somethin' that smelled like that too," Walter yelled.

"Guy's got good taste in cigars, but that don't mean jack," Blight retorted.

"Okay so, how did the man end up dead? We couldn't find the murder weapon," I asked.

"Well, he asked me how to shoot this weird lookin' gun, to prove I wasn't a kid, but then he shot it anyway down the alley and ran away during all the panic, I couldn't even help the man before I got arrested."

I was writing this all down as Blight put his coat on; I glanced at him to see his right sleeve had a torn piece to it.

"Hey, Blight, what happened to your coat?"

He looks at it, also noticing the missing fabric. "Hmm, I must've snagged it on my way to catching this runt."

I felt like that fabric had more to tell me than Blight would ever be willing, but I didn't want to jump the gun.

"Regardless, unless someone else has the murder weapon, this boy is still guilty, and after my smoke, I'm booking him."

Walter started sobbing uncontrollably; he couldn't even wipe his tears. I started feeling bad, something deep within me said this boy was telling the truth. "Blight, I gotta be honest, I don't think he did this, or any of the murders.

"What? Are you drunk? He killed all of them war generals we've been finding."



"We don't know that when we don't even have the murder weapon."

I stood up to face Blight, who was at first towering over me, but now we were waging our own war just by the way we looked at each other. "I'm starting to suspect that you may have something to do with all of these crimes, and I think I have evidence to support my claim."

Blight buckled his face in, looking like he might explode from pure rage at any minute. "You better have a good claim to make, or otherwise, it's your badge!"

I rummaged through the evidence I collected, took the torn fabric from his sleeve, and showed it to him. "What do you make of all this black residue on your sleeve? Cause it ain't dirt."

He gave me a smug look and laughed. "If it's not dirt, then please, enlighten me."

I glanced at Walter, still sobbing to himself amid all this chaos. "Hey, Walter, show us your hands if you really are innocent."

He didn't even hesitate when he understood what I was asking. When I saw his hands, they were as spotless as a new car; there was no way he handled the murder weapon.

Blight's expression visibly changed with fear and anxiety. "That's impossible! I know he's the killer!"

"Face it, Blight, you wanted to frame this young man for murder; I don't know why but you must be the killer!"

Blight went into a fit of rage, kicking his chair away from the table, facing the wall as to not look at me or Walter.

"Jenson, I think it's safe to say you're under arrest."

He swiftly turned around and points an odd-shaped gun at me, the barrel in my face. "No, I don't think so."

Blight had me and Walter locked up in one of the jail cells, pacing back and forth, amused at our misery. We were the only three people in the entire police station; I had no clue where Smith, or anyone else was. Everything about this felt more ominous than I could even realize at the time.

Blight walked up to the cell, looking down at us with a sinister grin on his face. "You wouldn't be here if you would've kept your trap shut, but now I gotta kill you both for figuring me out."

I walked up to the cell bars, maintaining my stance against him. "You won't get away with this; someone is gonna walk in and see what you did to us."

"Unlikely, I made sure to deal with all of our...comrades."

Horror grew on my face; he killed them, all of them. Not just all those war generals, but our fellow officers. No feeling hit harder than that. I sat down feeling defeated and worthless.

Walter comforted me, which I appreciated a lot. But soon turned his attention to Blight. "Why? Why did you kill all those innocent men, trying to protect their country and people?"

"I am a German spy, sent to kill Americans with power. We will never forgive you for what you did during World War Two, and one day we will strike again..." He started laughing as he walked away, and I thought this was the moment where me and Walter being left to rot in the jail cell to rot was confirmed as Blight left our field of view.

A couple of moments went by; I glanced over at Walter, who looked like he'd given up all hope. I turned to him with a smile, placing my hand on his shoulder. "Walter, no matter what happens from here on out, I want you to know that you're a man, and you could one day make a great detective.

He looked at me with a look of hope. "You really think so, sir?"

"Yeah, I do. You can just call me Green; I respect you a lot after tonight."

He gave me a big smile, which in turn made me smile; we shook hands to solidify the respect we had for each other.

A loud series of gunshots popped off in the distance; we couldn't tell where from exactly, but all I could speculate was that Blight was possibly murdering another innocent person. It definitely sounded like more than one gun was going off, so maybe whoever he was trying to kill was able to defend themselves from him. But then, silence, louder than the actual shooting we just heard. "Hello? Blight? Anybody?" I got no answer, which made me wonder what was going on.

A bloody and wounded Sergeant Smith crept from out the blind spot of the cell; he approached Blight's body looking for the key.

"Sergeant, you okay?"

He grabbed the keys from the body and limped to the cell door. "The bastard blind-sided me after we both got into the station, wiped out everyone else in here. He fumbled with the key as he tried putting it in the lock. He struggled for a little bit but was able to twist the key, unlocking the cell. He fell back on the closest wall, slouched over.

I opened the door as fast as I could, rushing to Smith. "It's gonna be okay, Sergeant; I'll go get an ambulance!"

"Don't bother, Blight may come back to finish the job; you gotta get the boy out of here, he's killed everyone else here. He started coughing up blood.

"We got proof that he is the killer, no matter what, I will make sure he's brought to justice.

He looked at Walter, who was terrified at the sight of seeing what to him is practically the second dead body this evening. "Don't be scared...this is what it means to protect your country."

His head slouched down after he said that; his whole body limp; he never moved again after that.

I silently prayed he went to heaven before getting up and retrieving my gear Blight took from me earlier. I had my gun at the ready as I walked to Walter. "Hey, I need you to be strong; it's just us for now, but we can't let Blight get away with any of this."

"I'm just a victim in all of this; there isn't anything I can do to help you."

I placed my arms on his shoulders and looked at him directly in the eye. "Walter, you're my only companion left in this police station; I can't do this without you!"

It took him a moment to process what I told him, but he gave me a nod after a few seconds, which told me we were on the same page.

"Alright, good. Take the sergeant's gun and protect yourself in case Blight, or any other spy comes after you. America isn't safe."

"What about you?"

I stood upright, looking in the direction of where I last saw Blight go. "I got a crime to solve, and I don't intend on dying." I walked to the door that led from outside the cell rooms into a hallway; I went to open it to let us out, as Blight busted inside, screaming, and hollering things I couldn't understand. He pushed me away from the door and tackled me to the ground; I dropped my gun as I hit my head on the solid ground. Blight dropped his to make it easier to pin me down. We wrestled each other, preventing the other person from getting the gun.

Walter watched terrified, the gun still in his trembling hands.

"Walter, shoot him!" I yelled, hoping if he did, Blight would get hit and finally stop.

"Go on little man, just try it," Blight said tauntingly.

We continued to wrestle around; I tried to overpower him, but his larger frame made it too difficult.

Walter raised the gun towards me and Blight, aiming it at us both; I couldn't imagine how heavy his arms felt in the moment.

"Walter, this is your chance to prove to Blight you are a man! Take the shot!"

Blight must've got annoyed with me pushing Walter because I felt a large fist swing across my face, blurring my vision.

Blight got up, making it feel like an anvil was lifted from me. He must've walked up towards Walter as he moved past my body. "Come...here...boy."

All I heard after that was a gunshot, followed by a loud thud, then something hitting the ground. I finally regained my vision and saw Blight was dead; Walter shot him. "You...saved me."

"I did; he had it comin'," he replied with a firm expression on his face.

The murders were done; the killings would stop; there would be no more dead bodies to be found in alleyways after tonight...or that's what I hoped would be the case.