

Chapter 19 Busted

Jeremy and Brad arrived at the station at almost the exact same time. They met each other in the parking lot and shook hands. They both wished each other good luck and acknowledged that they both wanted to catch the bad guys.

Jeremy broke the formality and asked an uncomfortable question, "Hey Brad, I want to ask you a direct question and please be straight with me on the answer."

"Sure Jeremy, what's up?" he responded.

Jeremy looked slightly away and asked, "I asked Tory directly to lead the raid on Chelsea's house and he said no right away, like he knew the answer already. Does he just not like me or is there something else going on?"

Brad looked directly at Jeremy and noticed the sincerity of the question and maybe even anguish in Jeremy's face. Brad responded, "Jeremy, there's something else going on. I'd worked a deal with Mac and Tory to let me work on the case behind the scenes. I've been doing investigations and gathering evidence for Mac. Mac's technically the lead on the case, but I've been doing most of the leg work."

Jeremy looked relieved, "Man, why didn't you tell me? It would have answered so many questions."

Brad replied, "Yeah, I should have, but I didn't want you to get jealous that I was able to work on this case in homicide. Tory is such a hard nose and I got lucky that Mac stepped in and asked for me."

Jeremy shook his head, "well, everything makes sense now and its not all about me. So, what have we got in store for us tonight? Any more info?"

They arrived at the briefing room just as Jeremy asked the question. "Lets tell it to everyone, so we're all up to speed", Brad offered as he grabbed the door for Jeremy and they walked into the room.

The six other officers recruited for the house raids had already arrived. They greeted each other and identified who was on each team. Then Brad went behind the podium in the front of the room and started to speak. "Hey folks, thanks for volunteering for this assignment. We actually have a third team that will coordinate with us that is also working with CBP, the customs guys. That team is led by Mac Nelson in homicide. I've been working on the case for a few weeks with him and I'll brief you on some of the details." Brad briefed them on the two anonymous tips, the interactions and evidence discovery at WhyRobot, and as Brad had been briefed on Mac's conversation with the DA, the need for more evidence to convict Frank Harding. They were also told about the boy and the robot, who likely will be asleep when the raid happens on the wife's house. They were to be careful about the robot as it was likely evidence as well.

Jeremy would take three officers and two would take the front of the house while the other two took the back. Jeremy passed out pictures of Charlie to his officers. Brad would lead the second three and do the same at Chelsea's house. Brad passed out pictures of Chelsea, Frank, Robbie, and Bigsby. They synchronized their watches and agreed that they wouldn't approach the house until 11pm after the go signal was given from the raids at the docks. They were all to use the same encrypted police channel so

no one would get tipped if they had a scanner going. The CBP would be using the same channel, so they would all be coordinated.

One officer spoke up, "Hey, I thought the use of encrypted channels in Washington was made illegal by the state supreme court last month. We've not been able to use them on the street for weeks now."

Jeremy looked at Brad and motioned in a way that expected Brad to answer the question. Brad and Mac had talked about the use earlier, "Well, you're right for state cases, but because this involves international smuggling, it's a federal case, so we can use encryption because its still legal on federal cases."

The officers looked at each other and then the original officer responded, "well, its your ass if your wrong, so I got no problems with it. I thought the ruling was stupid anyway, we basically have to broadcast that we're coming in for the bad guys now."

The other officers laughed. Brad decided to end the meeting, "Anything else guys? If not, then lets be careful out there and communicate." With that, the officers all rose together and left the room.

Another officer spoke up, "what about warrants? Are we just knocking on the door or can we go into the homes if we're not invited in?"

Brad pulled his phone from his pocket. He had gotten a text from Tory just before the conversation with Jeremy. Brad read for a second and then responded, "yep, they just came in. Tory did the leg work and said the warrants are on the printer. Jeremy and I will pick them up on the way out. Remember guys, Frank and Charlie are the bad guys, lets be careful with Chelsea, Robbie, and Bigsby the Robot."

Mac and another officer from the SPD homicide department meet Angela and her team at the Customs office near the port. Angela had printed out pictures of Frank and Charlie and encouraged the officers to beware that they were known to be dangerous. They were briefed on the simultaneous raids at 11pm and the expectations that all suspects would be in custody before midnight. They were all told to tune their radios to the same encrypted channel as the other teams so they would not be tipping the suspects off as they coordinated their raids. At 10:45, Mac requested that all teams do a radio check. Brad's team, called "Team Chelsea" went first and all four officers checked in. Jeremy's team, called "Team Charlie", went second with all officers checking in. Angela got on the radio and asked for the team assigned to the Taiwanese boat, nicknamed "Team Tie", to announce themselves. The three CBP and the SPD homicide officer all announced themselves. Angela announced "Team Sing" and asked for the other officers to check in. Mac went first, then the other two CBP offices followed.

Angela announced, "Its 10:52, we start to move in at 10:55 and we're all knocking on the door at 11pm. Good luck everyone."

At 10:55pm, Jeremy announced, "Team Charlie moving in, going into radio silence until we have him."

Brad followed suit, "Team Chelsea moving in".

Team Tie's leader went next, "Team Tie moving in, going into radio silence."

Angela announced, "Team Sing, lets roll. Turn your radios down." All four teams advanced into their agreed upon places.

Team Charlie had been looking at a very dark house. They wondered if anybody was at home, but they still were very cautious as they approached the house in darkness from both the front and the back. Jeremy approached the front door with the other officer in a cover position in case something happens. Jeremy rang the doorbell and knocked hard on the door. Silence engulfs the house as they wait for any response. "Break it in", Jeremy says to the other officer. Jeremy stands back holding his gun in a ready position. The other officer picks up the enforcer battering ram and opens the door with one strike. Jeremy runs in and announces, "Police department, come out with your hands up." The house was dark so Jeremy flipped on the lights. No movement happened and the house remained silent. Jeremy and his partner fanned out through the house checking all the rooms. The two other officers remained outside and watched the back side of the house but they saw nothing. Jeremy broke radio silence, "Team Charlie is a bust, there's no one here at the house". The two officers in the back relaxed their weapons. Jeremy and his partner continued to check the house, but nothing was found. Mac, Brad, and Angela all had earpieces in and were listening. They knew that Charlie had not been found yet.

Team Chelsea had a completely different situation. The house was well lit inside and out. Chelsea was visible in the kitchen and the team approaching the back broke radio silence and quietly identified that Chelsea was visible from the back yard and no other movement was seen. Brad and his partner approached from the front, with their weapons still hidden. Brad rang the doorbell and stepped back a bit. Chelsea moved through the living room to the front door and peered through the window at the front. She saw that they were police and she hesitated for a bit, but then walked to the door and answered it. "Good evening, officers, how can I help you", Chelsea said with a cheery voice.

"Mam, are you Chelsea Wilks?" Brad said in an authoritative voice.

"Yes, I am. What seems to be the problem officer?" Chelsea said with a slight quiver in her voice.

"Is there anyone else here at the house, mam?" Brad responded quickly.

Chelsea hesitated and then raised her voice, "No, officer, there is no one else at the house except my son who is asleep in his room."

"Mam, why are you raising your voice? Is there anyone else in the house besides your son?" Brad said with an even louder and with slight anger in his voice.

Chelsea started to cry. "Why are you here?" Chelsea raised her voice even higher. "I haven't done anything wrong!" She yelled.

Charlie had heard the "No, officer" from the bathroom. He was finished and just about to walk out the bathroom door when he heard the words. He entered the hallway slowly and looked to see if the police were in the house yet. Then it dawned on him, and he thought to himself, "that damn robot finally reported me. I'm going to kill that thing once and for all." He slowly opened the door to Robbie's room and grabbed Bigsby.

Bigsby had already been awake and active at the ring of the doorbell, despite his appearance of being in sleep mode. Bigsby had parsed the fact that police were at the front door and Chelsea had elevated her voice and yelled several things. Bigsby now saw Charlie coming towards him and was doing fast simulations on how to respond to the situation. "Why are you picking me up, Charlie?" Bigsby said in a very loud voice. Charlie instinctively covered Bigsby's mouth but Bigsby had more speakers than that.

"Charlie, why are you picking me up?" Bigsby broadcast in an even louder volume through his body speakers. Charlie yelled, "Shut up!" and threw Bigsby to the floor, landing very hard on his head and back. Bigsby's body broke in two, one arm flung off, his legs were broken and his head separated from this torso. Bigsby's lights went out.

At the same time that Uncle Charlie had said, "Shut up", Robbie had gained consciousness from his sleep. He watched as Bigsby hit the floor and simultaneously screamed at the top of his lungs. "Why are you hurting him?" yelled Robbie as he threw his covers off and dove to the floor near Bigsby's broken body. Charlie did not wait around or answer, he ran out the door into the next bedroom and headed for the windows. He opened one quickly and started to put his leg through.

Brad, his partner, and Chelsea had all heard Charlie's yell, "Shut up!" It was followed by a loud crash and Chelsea screamed. "My baby!" she yelled out and put her hand over her mouth. Brad and his partner did not hesitate. They entered the house and started running for the hallway in the back in the direction of the sound. Just then, Brad's earpiece gave him a message, "we have movement in the house, its in the back room. The window just opened, and it looks like someone is trying to crawl out. We've got him," and the radio goes silent.

Through the house you could hear the shouts, "Police, freeze!" Then the sound of struggle and then silence again. Brad and his partner ran through the hallway and by Robbie's room where Robbie was kneeling next to Bigsby and sobbing. Brad motioned his partner to check on the boy as he passed the room into the next where Charlie had opened the window. Brad approached the window with his gun drawn but the two officers outside had Charlie face down, subdued, and already handcuffed. They had just started to read Charlie his Miranda rights.

Chelsea had run after the officers through the hallway to Robbie's room. She found the other officer consoling Robbie and she fell to her knees crying. She embraced Robbie and he fell into her lap. "He killed Bigsby!" Robbie sobbed. "He killed Bigsby, why would he do that?" Robbie asked in desperation.

"I don't know honey, I don't know", and the two continued to embrace each other.

The two officers brought Charlie into the front door and sat him handcuffed on the living room couch. They stood on either side of him and looked like sentries protecting a treasure. Just then, Chelsea and Robbie emerged from the hallway to see Charlie sitting on the couch. Chelsea yelled at him, "You bastard, why would you do that to Bigsby and scare Robbie like that! You bastard!" Charlie just looked at her and shook his head, "You wouldn't understand."

Brad emerged from the hallway and said, "its not his first time. He ran over the thing once before and had it restored at WhyRobot. He thought that he restored it back in time before the robot had found out about the murder. He thought he could fool the technology but the technology fooled him!"

Chelsea looked at Brad and then back at Charlie, "what murder? What murder are you talking about?" Brad looked at Chelsea and Robbie and realized he had said too much. "Are you sure you want to do this in front of the boy?" Brad asked. Chelsea paused for a second and then said, "Robbie has a right to know about what kind of man his Uncle is. What murder?" Chelsea was clearly angry now despite the tears on her face.

"Charlie and Frank murdered your husband, Robbie's real dad, Sam Wilks", said Brad in a direct almost robotic tone.

Chelsea stared at Brad for a moment and then turned her gaze to Charlie who was still on the couch. Robbie started to cry. Chelsea broke her hold on Robbie and started to run towards Charlie, "You killed Sam! I loved Sam!" she yelled as she ran with her fists in the air wanting to attack Charlie. The two officers standing guard moved in front of Charlie and stopped her. She started crying again and hit the bullet proof vests of the officers in anguish. She fell to her knees and sobbed. "All this time, you kept this lie. You and Frank, both of you lied to me and played me for the fool", Chelsea said through her tears. Robbie slowly walked over to Chelsea and embraced her. "I'm sorry baby, I didn't know", Chelsea said with a quivering voice.

"I know, mommy," Robbie responded, "I know."

Brad had gone back to Robbie's room and grabbed a plastic bin that was full of toys. He emptied it on the bed and picked up all the pieces of Bigsby. He came out into the living room where all the intensity was winding down. "Boys, lets get everyone downtown. We still have work to do. Chelsea, are you going to behave if we don't put cuffs on you?" Chelsea nodded her head as she remained embraced with Robbie. Brad suddenly remembered his radio and activated it, "Team Chelsea here. We have Charlie and Chelsea in custody. The boy is ok, but the robot didn't make it."

Team Tie was the next to break radio silence, "Team Tie here, there's nothing here. It's all plastics stuff from Taiwan. Typical import stuff, no computer chips and no identifiable suspects in the crew or in the building. It all looks legit."

Angela was the next to break silence. She responded in a quiet, hushed voice "the unloading was delayed so we held back until the product is in the warehouse. Team Tie, why don't you start to move over to this dock in case we need you." Just then, Mac motioned to Angela. She looked in the direction that Mac was pointing and there he was, Frank Harding. Angela gave Mac a thumbs up and then flattened her hand out to signal hold to Mac and the other officers.

Frank grabbed a crowbar and moved over to a crate that had come off the ship. He slipped it under the lid and started to pry in multiple places. Finally, the lid popped, and he motioned for a few of the crew to take the lid off. They obliged and set the lid on its side, with nail side pointing towards the box. Frank started to dig through packing material and then lifted a plastic tray full of hundreds of computer chips.

"Freeze", Frank heard a woman's voice from behind him. He moved slowly and looked over his shoulder. "Customs and Border Patrol. You're under arrest Frank Harding. None of the rest of you move. Put down the computer chips now and put your hands on your head", Angela said in a strong and assertive voice. Frank followed the instructions and put his hands on the top of his head. As he was doing it, Mac moved in with his cuffs pulled and slapped the first onto his right wrist. He pulled both hands behind his back and cuffed the left hand as well. He turned Frank around to face Angela. Angela read Frank his Miranda rights and then said, "Frank, you're going away for a long time for illegal trafficking of stolen computer chips."

Mac jumped in, "and you are also under arrest for the murder of Sam Wilks."

Frank looked back at Mac and said, "I didn't kill Sam Wilks! It was all Charlie's idea. He's the one who hated Sam. I thought he was an asshole, but it wasn't my idea to kill him. Charlie did the deed!"

Mac responded, "You may not have pulled the trigger, but you certainly conspired with the person who did and that's enough to put you away for a long time! Thanks for the confession. Anything you say, can and will be used against you in a court of law. Remember?"

Mac smiled as he watched Angela drag Frank away. The DA had warned them that they likely needed more evidence to convict Frank and he had just offered it up on silver platter with several witnesses around. Mac thought to himself, "sometimes, things do go right and the bad guys get put away."