

Flowered Concrete Presents:

A short-story by Kevin Eleven

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“motown, BLUES”

Retirement has never felt so good. Every day I come into my auto shop called Sly's Motor Blues to service and repair automobiles for the proud West Grand community. Gone are the days where I had to chase youngin's just trying to make a living while wondering about getting a bullet capped in my ass. Gone are the days where I had to deal with petty crimes, crooks, domestic disputes and sometimes murder. Trust me, I've seen it all. Fast forward to the present and I'll be the first to tell you that I'm very happy with what I do. To the left of me, working on the 1996 Honda Civic is Royce Grant, a good friend of mine and an employee. I hired him five years ago when I got this joint established. To the right of me is Darry West. A young kid, 24, kind of a mouth flapper who at the moment is working on an Infiniti G37. We call him Red due to the color of hair that he inherited from his Irish mother. He's half black and half white. Say what you want about the kid, but there's one thing people in town know for sure...The kid knows his cars. And so, welcome to Detroit. Home to the once prestigious General Motors building. It's where many blues, funk and soul musicians got their start. It's the birthplace of the original Motown records. Rick James, The Jacksons, Gladys Knight and many more all reigned supreme here at one time. The Detroit Pistons even brought us a title here back in '04. It may not get as much love from the press like a New York, Chicago or Los Angeles, but to many of us, it is still home in 2012. And as for me, I go by the name of Silas Carr. Ironically, I'm actually from Chicago. I'm a 40 year old unmarried African-American man with blue eyes and curly brown hair. I'm 6'3", clean cut, well put together and my goatee always

remains intact on my light complexioned face. I'm not really into fashion unless you happen to be talking about the latest automobile that can be found on the streets. Also, I usually keep it simple by opting to go with blue jeans, baseball caps, t-shirts or sweaters (depending on weather conditions) and Nike Air Maxes. Last Monday happened to be a different day however. I got a call from a former college roommate asking for me to come out of retirement. Now I didn't plan on going for it, I just thought it would be fair to hear him out...

"It's 5 o'clock Sly. You still think that lawyer is coming?" asked Red.

"To be honest with you, I don't have the slightest clue," I said as I tuned up the Nissan Maxima that I had been working on.

"It's 2012, you know black folk are never on time anymore," said Royce as he poured transmission fluid into the Honda that currently had his attention.

"I mean, he is a lawyer, maybe he's got something better to do," said Red from under his hood.

"Either way, we're open from eight to six and when six o'clock arrives, I'll be locking up this ol' garage here and kicking you fellas out," I said playfully.

"Cheers," said Red as he profusely wiped the Castrol GTX oil from his hands with a dirty red rag.

"Well I'll be damned! How does one go from detective aspirations, majoring in criminal justice, to now working with motors in Motown?" said a man who had just walked into the shop.

I had abruptly stopped the work of my tune up. My former University of Michigan college roommate had just walked into Sly's Motor Blues and was now standing before me. He was a firm 6'2", with black thick skin and a thin constructed jaw that looked as if it was made out of glass. His suit, which was obviously tailor-made, glistened in the flickering sun with its navy blue texture that complemented him perfectly. There was no doubt that he was quite the lady's man.

"If it isn't Mr. Earl DeBarge himself; From University of Michigan to one of Detroit's finest corporate lawyers. I haven't seen you since college," I said as we gave each other a shake and a one armed hug.

"Thought you were back in the Chi all these years," he said in astonishment.

"Nah, Michigan's been too good to me. I just couldn't leave," I said as I wiped my sweaty forehead with a nearby handkerchief.

"Are you here to talk business?" I asked him in order to cut to the chase.

"Yes, can we talk somewhere in private?" he asked as he surveyed the filthy details of the shop.

"Sure, let's go into my office," I said as I ushered him to a little door at the end of the garage.

Royce and Red seemed disappointed that I had not introduced them to Earl, but from my perspective, it was better that way. I liked to keep all of my business lanes scattered and separate in everything that I did on a daily basis. That's just the way it's always worked for me.

As we entered my miniature office, I shut the door after Earl, as I made my way to the seat behind my desk.

"You can just grab a seat from wherever you like," I told him.

Earl took a seat from a shabby corner and dragged it so that it faced my desk in exact proximity. As he tried to make himself comfortable by playing around with the uncomfortable seat, I swiftly got to the point.

"So what is it that you need Earl?" I asked as I buried my face in a Nascar magazine while waiting for him to speak.

I turned each page casually as he carefully thought about what he would say. While he did this, I pretended to read the magazine but kept my ears open, listening intently.

"A favor," he finally said.

"Well?" I replied after he said nothing more.

"You've heard about that kid Gerald Isley?" he asked as simply as he could.

"Yeah, his story has only been on the news for over the past year," I said sarcastically.

"Yes," said Earl now more sternly. "As I'm sure you may know, the state has got it hot for the boy. Gerald's been on trial for the last nine months accused of –"

"Rape," I finished the sentence for him.

"Exactly," he said uneasily.

"Let me take a wild guess here Earl. You just so happen to be the boy's lawyer and you want me to help him get off," I said calmly.

"I don't think he did it," said Earl in a defensive tone.

"Then why has the case been active for the past nine months?" I asked.

"Look, I came to see if you could help me out or not. Truth is, I believe that the true culprit is still out there and I need to know whether you're willing to help out or what?"

I resumed looking at the magazine as I mulled over the thought on whether I was up to the task of taking the case or not. It was definitely an immense case. The police, as incompetent as they were, would never be able to solve a crime of that magnitude. And as much as I enjoyed retirement, work was a little slow in the shop and I had secretly been waiting for something that would propel me back into the world of crime. However, I hadn't pressed the streets in five years. What if the demographic or landscape of Detroit's crimes had changed? Nevertheless, there was only one way for me to find out...

"I'm in," I said as I placidly turned another page.

Earl DeBarge suddenly displayed a look of relief as he slumped back into his chair.

"Okay, we've got three days, so I need you to start right –"

"WHAT?" I barked in disbelief.

"Is everything all right in there boss?" yelled Red on the opposite side of the door.

"Yes, yes, everything is fine, get back to work," I ordered from within the door's interior.

I then proceeded to rub my temple with my left set of knuckles.

"Let me get this straight. You want me to find a rapist in three days? That's like saying Obama will be guaranteed a second term."

"Look Sly," he said.

"Silas," I told him as I could see he was wisely attempting to arrange his words.

"Silas, with all my heart I believe that this boy is innocent and I wouldn't bombard you with such a burden if I wasn't certain," he said in a now pleading manner.

"I'll give it a shot anyway but it's going to cost you some change."

"Name your price," he said with a tone of confidence.

"Since you've given me a damn near impossible task that requires three days of caffeine, I want \$1800 a day and if I end up catching this malefactor, I want another \$2400 as a bonus," I said with a smug look.

"Done," he said without even the slightest wince.

Earl then proceeded to pull out a stack of bills that had been sitting neatly folded from within one of his suit pockets. There was no doubt that he had come prepared.

"Here's the \$5400 that I owe you for the three days of work. And there'll be another \$2400 if you can find this scumbag," said Earl as he quickly got up.

"Looks like we have ourselves a deal," I said as I shook his hand.

As we both exited the cramped space of the room, Red and Royce were both pretending to kill invisible roaches outside of the office door.

"Stupid roach," said Red as he stared at the wall.

"I was just...yeah," said Royce as he went back to working on his car.

"If you need me Silas, I'll be down at the courtroom on West Grand over the next three days before the jury makes its decision," said Earl as he made strides to exit the shop.

I nodded my head to express my understanding.

"Hey Earl, how did you find me?" I yelled as he started up his 2010 blue Range Rover in the parking lot outside.

"Your mother gave me the address," he bellowed back as he waved and pulled off.

"The little shit," I muttered to myself as I went back into the shop.

"Listen up guys, I'll barely be here, if at all over the next three days. Royce, you're in charge till I get back. Take care of this place as if I were still here. And please, no questions," I commanded as I entered Detroit's beautiful sunlight in the month of June.

I was left with a job and my services had been compensated for. Temporarily, I was officially unretired.

The first place I went to was a gun shop. I had sold all of my weapons prior to opening the auto-shop back in 2007. But if a brother was going to cruise the harsh streets of Detroit in 2012, he most certainly had to have a gun. No exceptions. My next stop was Woodbridge. There was an abandoned project building not too far from Livernois avenue; and as I walked into the edifice, a horrendous smell that equated cat litter and rotten onions tickled my nose. The farther I went on each floor, the worse it had become until I reached the apartment that I had been searching for. I knocked hard on apartment door 685 and waited for a response. After about a moment or so, an old grizzly man with wispy white hair who resembled the wand-maker in Harry Potter finally opened the door.

"What do you want?" he asked in a voice that displayed annoyance.

"Mr. Whitman, it's me," I replied.

"Me, who?" he asked suspiciously.

"Silas Carr," I said casually as I knew it would take him a while before he remembered me.

"Sly?" he asked as he tried to put it all together.

"Yes, how are you Dean?" I asked with a smile.

"Sly, you young cat! It's been a while since I've last seen you! Come on in!" he said as his demeanor changed.

"I'd rather not," I said truthfully.

Dean wouldn't take no for an answer and with a forceful grab that compared to the strength of a giant, pulled me in. The reasons to why I didn't want to enter his apartment lied just behind the door. From his kitchen to his living room, lied people passed out from an apparent late-night to midday crack binge. The way that they were sprawled out upon the dank and dirty floor of the studio, one would have thought that at any moment they were due to rise up like the ghouls in Michael Jackson's thriller. As for Dean, he had done it all in the city. He was a former crook who stole, vandalized, fought, did drugs and anything that you could possibly think of. However, in the last ten years, citizens consisting of all the attributes that once comprised him used his apartment as a rest-stop and for those same reasons it smelled like one too.

"Can I offer you a drink or something to eat?" he said as he flashed a boisterous grin that displayed several rotten black teeth.

In reality, I was starving. The ham and cheese cutlet sandwich that I had eaten during my break in the afternoon seemed like a distant memory. But I would've rather made out with my half-sister before I took anything from Dean. I mean, the man just had no sense of good hygiene.

"Where have you been Sly?" he asked. "The last time I seen you was around thanksgiving of '07. I haven't heard from you since then."

"I retired Dean. Opened up my own auto shop on West Grand Boulevard near Cadillac Place. Been running it for the past five ever since," I said as I tried with all that I could muster not to inhale.

"Well good for you! That makes sense. So what brings you here?"

"I'm on a case. I took a job and I wanted to know if you could help me out."

"Have I ever failed you?" he asked with a smug gaze.

"No, that's why I'm here," I replied.

"What's on your mind?" he asked as I followed him into the kitchen.

It was hard even remembering what I had thought to ask him as the odor of his apartment got even worse.

"Okay, how can I put this?" I asked through tightened nostrils.

Dean simply stared at me as he went to the stove and poured himself some tea in an old and battered white chipped mug.

It was obvious that he was enjoying my company.

"You've been accused of rape, right Dean?"

Dean quickly spit out his tea into the crusty sink beside him.

"Yes, yes but I haven't thought about it in years and so I'd like to keep it that way," he said, obviously insulted by my inquiry.

"Cut to the chase Silas," he added as he cleaned the tea that had spilled onto his stove.

The fact that Dean had called me by my first name told me that I had struck a chord with him.

"Okay, I need you, as crazy as this may sound, to tell me where I could find or search for suspected Detroit rapists."

"Look, that was only one time, and the judge only gave me three years okay?" he said as he was apparently embarrassed by the subject.

He then started to push me towards the exit as I carefully tried to avoid all of the Detroit fiends who remained passed out on his floor.

“But—” I said as I attempted to defend my claim.

“Nuh-uh, if you’re looking for places to investigate, make sure you search Lapeer Park, Hemlock Park and Ramonowski Park between 10-2 am. And don’t bother coming back Sly, unless it’s a different topic of discussion,” he said adamantly.

Dean quickly shut the door with a loud slam as I was once again left with the smell of cat litter and onions. Dean Whitman had put me out because of the slight brush of subject matter. I had expected it but at least he gave me the scoop that I so desperately needed.

Later that night, I pulled up at Lapeer Park around half past ten. I then waited and waited to see if anything unusual would occur. Lapeer was a big park that stood near the end of West Grand’s thoroughfare. And so, each hour I moved to a different section in order to detect activity. The only thing I saw were some raccoons moving about the bushes and high school couples who walked the park during the time that they should have been home. A few times I stepped out of my Mercury to warn them of it being too late for a late night stroll. But overall, day one was a complete fail just as I had expected it to be.

The next day, I went all over town asking women and people in general if they had heard of recent rapes of young teenage girls in the area. Needless to say, I looked weird whenever I asked the question. Rapists didn’t just suddenly appear in daylight, and so, with time to burn until I hit my next park of destination, I decided to check out the first of three final cases for Gerald Isley at Motown Hitsville Court.

The court house in general was huge. It was located on 2648 west on West Grand as well. It stood at about six stories high and had a nice shade of ceramic paint upon its exterior. As I looked at my Audemar watch, the clock itself said ten to the hour. The case of Gerald Isley would commence promptly at two, and so, I decided to go inside. After being screened for weapons inside the lobby, I walked until I eventually saw Earl DeBarge talking to a woman who seemed very important. The moment I caught his eye, he quickly made his way towards me. He had on a plaid blue polo dress shirt

with a dark red tie that complemented his striped black suit seamlessly. It wouldn't have surprised me if someone mistook him for a billionaire on the annual Forbes list. Simply put, he looked sharp.

"Silas! Nothing huh?" he asked as he held some filed papers in his right hand.

"Nope. Nothing at all," I replied as I watched people scurry past us.

"Well, time will reveal. But anyway, come on, the case is about to start!" he said.

He signaled for me to follow him as he led me into a court room on the second floor. The room had already been packed with city officials, citizens and cops. In that moment, the jury happened to make their way into the room and sat in seats that were reserved for them. As they sat down and stared at the chair to where the judge would surely be seated, it was obvious to me that they had been told just how to enter the court room. Although not guided by someone as compelling and impeccable as Jesus, it seemed apparent that they were the 2012 version of the twelve disciples.

"I saved a seat for you right by Todd Smith," said Earl as he showed me a portly little man in the farthest seat near the left wing.

"No, it's alright DeBarge, I'll stand right along in that little tunnel over there," I assured him.

"Just the way I left you Silas. Slick, smart and a loner as you've always been," he said admirably.

"That's me," I replied nonchalantly. "Keeping it simple as always."

"Well, I gotta head back out. The case is about to start and I'm going to be with Gerald as he comes in."

"Do your thing. Act as if I'm not even here," I told him.

The moment Earl left, a girl walked into the room escorted by two security guards, her lawyer, (the woman who I noticed speaking to Earl) and her parents. The girl was a pretty teenager with a very light complexion and who had faint features of being mixed descent. She had long flowing curly brown hair, big brown eyes and a tiny stature that made her look smaller in person. Judging by her looks, she couldn't be any less than fourteen but no more than sixteen. The closer I looked at her parents, it was obvious that her father was an African-American, but her mother was so light

that she could pass for white. Also beautiful as well, her mother's features showed her of being black and white.

The parents walked the girl to the plaintiff section as they found seats of their own. The next entrance into the court room was Gerald Isley. I could tell it was him because of his fearful look, shackled hands and feet, as well as the orange jumpsuit that rested upon his body. Earl then came behind him, flocked with what seemed like twenty cops. As I looked at the kid, he looked no more than seventeen. He possessed a very light mustache, and curly black hair. He was brown-skinned, probably 5'10" and built in slender fashion. The more I observed him, the more I thought that he couldn't hurt a fly. Just as the girl before, his parents trailed the scene not too far after. It was apparent that they were extremely miserable.

Once they were all seated and settled, the bailiff walked in and said with a booming voice that resembled Dr. King, "All rise! Court is now in session, the honorable Judge Rick Gordy is now presiding."

As the judge made his way to his high chair, I noticed that he was very round and plump. He also wore spectacled black-rimmed glasses and had an expressionless tired face. In a way, he kind of resembled former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall, but just without the good. My feel for him told me that there was no testing the man.

"You may now be seated," finished the bailiff.

"Day two hundred and eighty-eight in the trial of Teena Jackson versus Gerald Isley. Ms. Knight, would you like to call someone to the stand?" asked the judge.

"Yes, your honor. I'd like to call Mr. Isley to the stand," said Ms. Knight.

As I noticed with the judge, it was obvious that there was no messing around with the woman either. She was dark-skinned, had narrow brown eyes that resembled slits and had short spikey black hair. Also, her posture and demeanor exemplified serious business.

Once Gerald was sealed in the interrogation chair and swore on the bible, Ms. Knight asked, "Mr. Isley, why are the people in this court room here again today?"

Gerald looked at her hesitantly before he replied, "Because I'm on trial for a rape that I haven't committed," he finally said.

"Oh, give up Mr. Isley, and quit wasting our time. We've been here almost ten months already. Save us two more days of this and admit your faults. I'm still waiting. In fact, we're all waiting," she replied in a vexed tone.

"Your honor," said Earl in an objective manner.

"Sustained!" said Judge Gordy as he struck down his gavel.

"Mr DeBarge, let Ms. Knight finish with the suspect," he added.

Ms. Knight, with a toothy smile, then continued with her accusation.

"C'mon Isley, we've been through this a countless number of times. You were on your way to a party on the fourth of July with a group of friends when you caught a glimpse of Miss Teena Jackson and as a result, raped her on her way home."

"No, I didn't!" he retorted with retaliation.

"Oh yes you did. You raped my client at some undisclosed park and traumatized her so badly that her memory became jumbled as a result."

"Your honor! We've heard all of this before," interrupted Earl.

The judge then struck down his gavel into the heart of its centerpiece. Mr. DeBarge, this is your last warning, I dare you to try me again," said Judge Gordy in his most stern of voices.

"Put yourself in my place," said Gerald.

"It's the fourth of July, a nice day with a summer's breeze, and I'm going to a party with a few of my friends that you've already questioned."

"And?" asked Knight in disgust.

"I was going to a *party*. Why would I go to a party where there would be a ton of girls present just to rape one out of pleasure while on my way home?" he asked in a rhetorical manner.

"I don't know, I'm still waiting for you to tell me," she said as she rolled the cufflinks of her shirt. Diana Knight then looked at the judge and said "Your honor, I rest my case for today," before heading back to her seat.

"Mr. DeBarge, it is now that you may defend your client," said the judge as he looked at Earl intensely.

"Thank you your honor. I'd like to call miss Teena Jackson to the stand."

The girl named Teena had now approached the bench as she followed the same procedures that Gerald did.

"Miss Jackson, take a good look at this boy," said Earl.

"He's put me through enough," she said as she looked down at the laces of her pink sneakers.

"Did he rape you?" asked Earl bluntly.

There was no doubt that he had asked this question a countless number of times before.

"Of course he did. That's why we've been here the last ten months," snapped Teena as she clenched her stomach as if she was sick.

"Did you happen to know him before the debacle?" asked DeBarge.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean, did you notice him from the neighborhood? Recreational facilities? Did the both of you attend the same high school?"

"No, it was dark and I couldn't see," she responded.

"Exactly, it was dark. Dark nonetheless, you would've been able to recall something," he insisted.

"I just don't remember," she said in a tone that directly noted that she no longer wanted to be interrogated.

"So, you're telling me that you blacked out once you were grabbed from behind and then he proceeded to rape you," said Earl plainly as he checked the roots of his fingernails.

"Yes, that's what I recall," she said adamantly.

It was obvious that she was getting annoyed.

"It must be magic," he said sarcastically.

"Yes, indeed," she replied, now more and more confused than she had been before.

"Let me ask you something. Since the day of the incident, how has it made you feel?"

Teena then began to tear as she struggled to find the right words.

"I can't love anymore," she said in the midst of streaming waterworks.

"Every little bit hurts. It's like seeing irons in the fire."

"Miss Jackson, I'm deeply sorry for your discomfort but you would be sending an innocent boy here to prison if you're not certain. Did my client rape you?" asked Earl as he gave her one hard final look.

"I don't know," she said as she buried her hands within her face.

"Your honor, I rest my case," said Earl as he marched back to the desk where Gerald sat blank faced.

"Court is now dismissed! We will reconvene tomorrow at fourteen hundred hours before we make a final decision the following day on Mr. Gerald Isley's eighteenth birthday," said Judge Gordy in finality.

As quickly as he had said it, many people filed out of the court room. I then watched Gerald Isley say a few words to his parents before the twenty cops that had brought him in hauled him off, most likely returning him to his cell.

"Silas, Silas! What did you think?" asked a panting Earl, the moment he had caught up to me in the court's hallway.

"Just don't say it's over," I told him.

"We've gotta catch this culprit and I mean fast!" he said in a rare worried voice.

"I know, I know," I replied urgently.

As I looked under his eyes, I saw that he had bags that were dark and black. It was obvious that he hadn't slept in days.

"Say Earl, you think I could possibly talk to the boy for a few minutes tomorrow? Maybe ask him a few questions of my own?"

"Sure, I'll have that setup before the case resumes midday," he said as he tried to suppress a yawn.

"Good, well then, I'll talk to you later," I said as I headed out of the courthouse.

Later that night, I continued my cruising of Detroit as I scanned and scoured parks for signs of anything suspicious. As I cruised down territories such as Briggs and Wayne State, I saw nothing out of the ordinary that would've sprung me into action. Even as I ventured downtown Detroit, all I saw were women in booty shorts, shiny bras, and high heels soliciting their bodies to passing cars for sex. No, it wasn't legal, but at the same time, it definitely wasn't my speed. In that same night, I made it an obligation to visit several parks which consisted of Romanowski, Elmwood and Hemlock. Good thing Earl had given me half of my money upfront because I had most certainly covered at least one hundred of the one hundred and forty-three square miles of Detroit. Motown wasn't a city that was big on sexual assaults. In fact, there had only been three reports of rape in the year alone.

And so, the following morning I made my way back to Motown Hitsville. It was now ten a.m. and I was scheduled to meet with the boy Gerald. Out of the seventy two hours given to me, thirty-nine hours had elapsed, which meant that only thirty-three were left at my disposal. I had already used a little more than half of my time, there was no doubt that I had to work fast...

I was escorted into a little room within the basement of the courthouse as I waited patiently for Gerald to reach. A few moments later, Earl arrived, followed by Gerald shortly after.

"How ya hangin' Silas?" asked Earl.

"Not too bad," I said as I shook his hand. "Yourself?" I then asked.

"I'm alright," he said. He then added, "As for the case, we need to turn the page. I would say only time can tell, but we're quickly running out of that."

"Yeah, I know," I told him, making sure that I was aware of us being pressed for time.

"Do you want me to stick around?" asked Earl as he patted his hair in nervousness.

"Naw, I think I got it from here," I said firmly.

"Okay, then I'll see the two of you later," he said before exiting the room.

"Sit down boy," I demanded.

Gerald immediately sat down in a plump chair across from where I was seated.

"Do you know who I am?" I asked him.

He nodded to express that he knew.

“Okay, I’m going to keep this short and sweet. What did you do the minute you left that party a year ago?”

“Me and my friends were riding around in his blue sedan between Mack avenue and McDougal street,” he said rapidly as if he was expecting the death penalty at any given moment.

“Where was the party exactly?” I then asked.

“In North End, just off of Woodward avenue.”

“So after that you guys just went cruising around?”

“Yeah, I mean, it was July fourth, my parents knew that I was going to be out for a certain amount of time. We were just having fun.”

“Where did your night end specifically?”

“It ended just on the outskirts of St. Aubin Street by the Rivertown Warehouse District.”

“And so, what exactly happened during that time?” I asked as I played with my goatee and stared at him grippingly.

“Me and my friends were laughing, you know, just strolling around the park when we heard the scream of the girl.”

“And what did you guys do?”

“Shit, we all started running, but as we were, I saw a guy who had just fled from the direction that the screams came from.”

“What did you do from there?” I asked curiously.

“I ran to go help her,” said Gerald.

“Ms. Teena Jackson, you mean?” I asked to be sure.

“Yes,” he said calmly but in a tone of regret.

“What happened to your boys?” I then asked.

They got a little scared and so, they left me,” he said in a slightly vexed tone.

"How was the girl?"

"She was unconscious when I found her and her pants down."

"Did you stay with her until she regained consciousness?"

"Yes, I did."

"And then?"

"People started coming my way and as they carefully took in what they saw, many assumed that I had been the one who raped her," he said.

"And that was it huh?" I finally asked.

"That was it," he said as he realized that my prior question had been the end of the line.

We then both sat in complete silence; it was a moment before either of us spoke.

"I'm innocent," he said with wide and fearful eyes.

"I know," I responded as both of my fists sat upon the table.

"My future, my education, it's all over," he said.

"I wouldn't say that just yet. We've still got one more day," I tried to assure him.

"And who says it won't be like the last two hundred and eighty-nine?" asked Gerald hopelessly.

I didn't answer him as I was busy contemplating my next move. It was then that footsteps started to ascend just beyond the door. And before we knew it, a menacing cop who resembled the likes of a mid to late 1990's Ving Rhames looked at the both of us before grabbing Gerald.

"Times up, let's go!" he said as he dragged him out of the room.

"Please, Mr. Carr! Mr. Carr! You're my only—"

The door was slammed shut before he could finish his sentence.

"Hope," I said as I grabbed my hat and walked out of the room.

After closing the door behind me, I looked down the corridor and saw Gerald repetitively twist and shout as he struggled in the man's clutches. The two of them

went back and forth a little while longer before finally turning the corner. In that precise moment, I promised myself that I would not attend Gerald's ruling without the truth in my hands.

I decided to skip the second-to-last court appearance as I calmly walked the streets of Detroit envisioning my subsequent move. I had never given much attention to kids in my entire life, but any time I thought of Gerald, I most certainly felt a shade of the blues. The more I walked across West Grand's thoroughfare, all I saw was its color as everything upon my vision began to lose its transparency. Before it was all over, I decided to go visit Dean one last time...

The moment I reached Dean's crack-circus of an apartment, I rapidly knocked upon his entrance. Before long, Dean appeared as he slightly poked his head out.

"Nuh-uh," he said as he made a gesture to shut the door.

"Dean wait!" I replied.

"What do you want now?" he asked me through beady eyes.

It was obvious that Dean was still sour about the rapist accusations.

"What can you tell me about St. Aubin Street and Rivertown-Warehouse District?" I said as I held his apartment's exterior door knob.

I was afraid that Dean would shut the door if I didn't have a grip.

"Well that's Elmwood park. The biggest park in West Grand's thoroughfare," he said curiously.

"Do people often go into that park after dark?" I asked.

"Yes, but one would be a fool to stay out that late near there. There's always some kind of violence or commotion going on."

"Especially since there's a warehouse over there right? Makes perfect sense!" I said to myself more than to him.

"Thanks Dean, see ya!" I said as I ran down the hall.

"Wait, come back, I wanna apologize for last time," he yelled after me.

"Maybe in another five years! By the way, your house smells!" I yelled back at him.

If everything panned out just how I thought it would, there'd be no reason for me to head back to the court room alone the next day. Around midnight I quietly parked my car at the Far East end of St. Aubin Street by the Rivertown-Warehouse District. For two hours, I just sat in my car as I waited and waited and waited. I was in the midst of listening to Big Sean's Finally Famous album when a young man with a taser suddenly surfaced as he walked the sidewalk suspiciously. I gave a blocks distance between him and myself before I smoothly tailed him down the park. He later broke out into a run as he spotted a female not too far ahead of him. As fast as I could, I jumped out of my blue 66' Mercury Cougar and ran towards them as he noiselessly tracked her down. The girl, who couldn't have been any more than nineteen or twenty, screamed at the top of her lungs as she tried to pry him off.

"My, my, my," he said with a crazed look as he pinned her to the ground. "Shhh, shhh, I got you. Just relax, it'll be quick," he tried to assure her.

"I'm going to wrap my body tight around you," he then said with a twisted smile.

As he lifted the taser and thought where to strike, I promptly advanced upon them at the curb when I yelled out, "Hey!"

Before he could make a full three-sixty, I immediately caught him with a powerful blow. I pistol whipped him so hard with one hit of my .22 that he had been knocked out cold. Blood from his mouth splattered onto the pavement as the blow of my pistol left him in a daze.

"Go!" I said to the girl as she fearfully ran in the other direction.

"Yeah, I got your ass," I said as I took out my handcuffs and cuffed both of his hands as he lied there unconscious.

The blood from his mouth oozed profusely as his jaw then swelled up to the size of a purple baby balloon.

It wasn't until two in the morning when he finally came around. I had decided to take him to *my* park. Campus Martius to be exact. The boy was stripped down to his boxers, tied up at the hands and feet, and blindfolded fifty stories high at the good old Michigan Soldiers and Sailor's Monument.

"Do you know where you are?" I asked him as I played with my gun.

"Help, help!" he screamed.

"That's what you had your victims saying," I told him.

"Please, let me go! Please!" pleaded the pervert.

"What's your name kid?" I then asked.

He was silent and determined in not giving me a name.

"So you're the silent type huh? I see how it is. Well then, let's get the mood right. You hear that noise below you? That's outgoing and incoming Detroit traffic moving along at an average speed of forty-five miles per hour. Feel this right here on your johnson? That's my .22, now if I pull this trigger, I'm going to pull it twice. Once, to blow your eggrolls apart and twice, to cut you loose so that you'll end up accompanying someone for a peaceful ride home this evening. Don't believe me? Okay, have it your way...let's see..."

As I pressed the .22 on his private area, I clicked the cap of the gun's back piece to unlock its safety.

"Gill, Gill! My name's Gill Weaver!" he yelled desperately.

"Nice to meet you Mr. Weaver. Can you tell me anything about a rape in Elmwood Park on the fourth of July back in 2011?" I asked him in a sly, composed tone.

"Yes, yes, it was me! I did it. The girl was walking along and I caught her in the back of the head with my taser. After that, I rolled her over as she was unconscious and—"

"That's enough!" I said as I surveyed him in disgust.

Later that morning, I brought Gill to Motown Hitsville in cuffs. I would've brought him to the precinct myself, but those dirty Detroit pigs would've taken all the credit for something that they obviously couldn't have handled. It turned out that Weaver's fingerprints matched the ones that had been all over Teena's shirt the night that she had been raped. However, the police at the time thought it was fitting to put the wrap on Gerald since he was the only one present at the scene of the crime.

A week later, I was back at my auto-shop working on an old black 96' Chrysler that needed painting. I was in the midst of swirling my paint bucket when Red, who happened to be amazed at my other life said, "You were like the Dark Night of your time huh Sly?"

"I mean, if Gotham was under attack, there you were just in time to save the day!" he said in awe.

"C'mon Red, Sly was more than that. I'd call him the Blade of his era," added Royce as he put a new tire on a 2009 Mercedes Benz.

"Fellas, fellas, fellas, it was cool and all, but to be honest, I don't even think about it. I enjoy being here with you joe's. Wouldn't trade it for the world," I said with a grin.

"Here, here," said Red as he came out from under a blue Pontiac hood.

"Good evening gentleman."

We all turned our heads as Earl walked into the shop accompanied by a much happier and liberated Gerald Isley.

"Earl, Gerald, good to see you two," I said as I advanced forward to shake the both of their hands.

"Mr. Carr, you were my only hope," said Gerald as he sought words amongst the wrenches, plyers, and bolts scattered around the shop.

"And, and, I guess what I'm trying to say is—"

"Don't even worry about it kid," I assured him as I clasped him on the back with a warm smile.

Gerald, beaming, returned me the look with a renewed sense of purpose, pride and confidence.

"Hey, Silas, can you spare a sec?" asked Earl.

"Royce, Red, keep Gerald company for a minute," I ordered as I ushered Earl once again to my tightly cramped office.

As we entered my headquarters and Earl shut the door behind him, he quickly pulled out a nice fold of cash.

"Here's the \$2400 bonus I owe you," he said casually.

"Keep it," I told him.

"Don't be a fool. You've solved a case of irrational proportions. I would be stupid not to give—"

"Listen, I won't take your money, but here's what I want you to do. I want you to take that loot and advance it towards Gerald's school tuition. He's going to have to make up for lost time," I said with a smile.

"You're a class act, Silas. They don't make em' like you anymore," said Earl as he tucked and rolled the cheese back into his suit jacket.

"That's Sly to you and yeah, well, I'm just glad the kid is alright," I told him honestly.

"So what are you gonna do now?" asked Earl.

"Keep doing what I've been doing. Who knows? If something else garners my attention, it doesn't hurt coming back like the old 2-3," I said with a smirk.

"Sure doesn't. Catch you around then Sly."

And without another word, Earl DeBarge promptly departed and left me in silence. After a minute or two, I decided to peel back the office blinds as I looked out of the window. All was quiet and calm. As I listened to the sound of birds and smelled the scent of propane from cars rumbling in the distance, I had decided that the only way I would take on a case was if an ingredient had been added to the pot that I hadn't tasted before. If not, I was definitely satisfied with my daily diet. It consisted of cars, auto-transmissions, wrenches, nuts, tires, oil changes and bolts. I called it Sly's Motor Blues and if anyone was ever looking for a taste, they were more than welcome to try it in Motown.

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