

Should Have Known
Missing scene from "The Snitch"
Linda B.

“Damn it!”

I should have seen it coming, but I didn't. And now all the door slamming, paper throwing, swearing, and regrets aren't going to change a thing.

I'm sure every officer in the squadroom, maybe in the entire building, has heard my bellow. The only one brave enough to stick her head in the door was Minnie. And I've managed to bite it off, as well. Does that stop her?

No. Inside those brown eyes of hers, I can read the disbelief and shock. And beyond that there is sympathy and concern for me.

It all happened about an hour ago. Starsky and Hutchinson walked into my office. There was none of their usual kidding around. Not that I expected it. After all, it had been their job to protect Lionel, an informant they'd been forced to identify. And they had failed. They never took failure well. I think Starsky was taking it the hardest. He'd seen his best friend and partner practically blown-up before his eyes. His love and commitment to Hutch won out over his duty to protect Lionel. And now Lionel was dead.

Forgivable?

Not to the department heads.

Understandable?

To every officer in this building and out on the street watching their partner's back—without a doubt.

I looked at their faces—grim, even a little pale—as they entered, and still I didn't see it coming. Should I have known? In retrospect, yes.

“Have a seat, boys,” I offered.

They looked at each other and, with a signal only they seemed to understand, Starsky said, “No thanks, Cap'n,” and Hutch shook his head.

They reached into their pockets simultaneously and each withdrew a piece of paper. They extended them to me. With my heart sinking, I asked the obvious. “What's this?”

Starsky swallowed and Hutch answered. Quietly, defeated. “Our resignations.”

Then they laid their guns on my desk. I think Starsky’s hand was trembling, but he withdrew it quickly and shoved it into his pocket.

“What...do you mean?” I think I was in such shock I was at a loss for words. Finally, I managed to get past the lump in my throat. “I know you’re both hurting. You think the system let you down, let Lionel down. But this isn’t the answer.”

They both hung their heads, preferring to look at their shoes rather than in my eyes.

Hutch was the first to speak. “Sorry we can’t return our badges, Cap’n, but they’re out to sea.” This didn’t make any sense to me, but a small grin tweaked at the corners of Starsky’s mouth and then instantly disappeared.

“I won’t accept them.”

“Doesn’t matter, Captain. We’ve prepared duplicate copies and they’re already on the commissioner’s desk waiting to be opened.”

Starsky finally looked at me. I could see his Adam’s apple bob up and down several times before he managed to say, “Yours, we had to deliver in person.”

“We’ll only be a few minutes cleaning out our desks,” Hutch added.

“Starsky...Hutch.” Something told me I wouldn’t be able to change their minds this time.

Suddenly, they snapped to attention and saluted.

I returned the salute and watched them walk out the door.

Now, an hour later, I stand here still in shock, but realizing deep down I should have known—should have expected it. Resignation had been a consideration for one or the other in the past, but their dedication and love for the job—and each other—had prevented it. Now that both wanted out, there was no stopping them.

As I look out at the city going about its business, I pray one day they will change their minds and rejoin the force.

Until then, I have an office to run, regardless of the fact I’m losing my two best officers—two good friends.

The city will miss them. When word hits the street, crooks, murderers, junkies, will come out of their holes, believing it will be safer for them to operate.

The precinct, specifically this squadroom, will certainly miss them. Rookies never knew how to take them; senior officers admired, and probably envied, their record. Their antics, and disregard for following rules when it meant getting the felon, often got them in trouble, but no one has ever doubted their dedication and devotion to duty—and each other.

But they will never be missed more than in my heart.

I look down at the resignations still in my hand. “Minnie!”

“Yes, Captain.” Minnie peeked around the door, eyes red.

“Get the commissioner on the phone. I need to speak to him. NOW!”

The End