

## **Some Kind of Justice**

**By Linda B.**

### ***Chapter Nine***

Hutch, slowly regaining consciousness, moved cautiously. His head ached, but he wanted to make sure everything else was functioning. He was lying on the ground on his side, with his hands tied behind his back. The view from the floor led him to believe he was in a small office. He could see the corner of what looked like an old metal army desk and a rollaway chair. Using his hands and shoulder for leverage, he pushed himself to a sitting position and then slid back to lean against the wall behind him. From there he could view the entire room. It was an old office that offered no clues to where he was or how he'd gotten there. He leaned his head back against the wall, and then winced as he rested it on the spot where he'd been hit. He listened for any voices or footsteps. At first he didn't hear anything, but found if he concentrated he could make out voices—voices that were too far away to distinguish what was being said.

Hutch shifted to his knees and stood, using the wall for support. Sweat broke out on his forehead and he felt dizzy, but he knew that couldn't deter him. Moving closer to the door, he hoped the voices would be clearer.

“Curly, why'd you bring him here?” a raspy voice, clearly worried, asked.

“Cause he was nosin' around,” Curly answered.

“But he's a cop.”

“Willie, quit whining. I know he's a cop. He didn't fool me. He's been sitting in that old piece of junk so we won't think he's a cop, but he's been watching Garfield's and the other liquor stores in the area for over two weeks now. He's interfering with our business, so when he pokes his nose where it ain't supposed to be, I'm takin' care of him.”

“But what are we going to do with him when he comes 'round?”

“We'll take him and drop him in the river. They'll be looking for him for a long time and in the wrong place.”

“What about his partner?”

“I've been watching this guy for the last two weeks, and he don't got no partner riding with him; seems he's always alone, which makes it a lot easier for us.”

*Starsky!* At the word “partner,” Hutch remembered Starsky sitting in the car waiting for him. He'd told his partner to stay put, but he knew if he hadn't returned within the agreed upon time period Starsky would have ignored his warning and come looking for

him instead. He knew his partner would never sit and wait if he thought Hutch was in any danger. There was no doubt in his mind that Starsky'd be looking for him. Starsky wasn't in any shape to help him, and he could be walking into a trap. What a fool he'd been, letting his partner talk him into coming along. Now, he'd put both their lives in jeopardy.

Hearing the voices move toward him, Hutch quickly returned to the spot where he'd been when he first regained consciousness and awkwardly laid back down. Hearing the door open, he closed his eyes until they were tiny slits. He wanted to be able to identify Curly and Willie when this was all over.

"He's still out, Curly. Why don't we just take him in the car and dump him in the desert? He'll never remember what happened to him."

"Now that he knows where we've been holed up for two months, he'll be back. And next time, it won't be alone. That means we've gotta move this operation somewhere else. Samuelson ain't gonna like that."

*Samuelson! How's he involved?* Listening to Curly expound on what Samuelson might do once he found out that the operation had to be moved, Hutch was positive that if Curly didn't report directly to Samuelson, then it was to one of the men high in his organization. Despite the fact that Samuelson was headed behind bars, he was still expanding his operations. Only now he was bringing in outsiders. *At least they don't seem to know that I was one of the arresting officers and just testified against Samuelson. They'd probably hand him my head on a silver platter. Samuelson would be positively thrilled to know that you're holding me and plan on killing me. He'd love nothing more than to see both Starsky and me dead. And he just may have his wish, if Starsky walks in here.*

Curly walked toward Hutch and, when he got close enough, kicked Hutch in the side, "Wake up there, copper. You've had enough beauty rest." After two other kicks of increasing intensity, Hutch decided it might be in his own best interest to appear to wake up, so he began moaning.

Opening his eyes, Hutch looked directly into Curly's face, and he understood why there weren't many people who would dare mess with him. His dark eyes bore a hole in Hutch's, and the scar on his right cheek added to his gaunt look. He was tall and thin, hunching over as if to discourage his true height, his black hair more wavy than curly.

"Okay, copper, it's time to rise and shine." Curly reached down and yanked Hutch to his feet. "We're going to leave this place in a few minutes, and I ain't carryin' you."

Hutch leaned back against the wall, watching Curly and Willie. It was obvious that Curly ran the show and Willie took the orders. In fact, Willie stayed a respectful distance from Curly, which led him to believe Willie had already had one too many encounters with his supposed partner.

“Let’s go, Willie. We’ll take him down the back stairs to the loading docks. Samuelson had his men store a car in there for our disposal. Nice of him, wasn’t it?” Turning toward Hutch he moved the gun, indicating he should move forward into the hall. Hutch moved forward slowly, trying to think of a way out of his situation. He was trying to stall for time—time for Starsky or the back-up he was supposed to order, to show up. But Curly wasn’t allowing it, and he brought the gun barrel down hard on Hutch’s shoulder, causing Hutch to trip and bang into the doorframe. If it hadn’t been there, he would have fallen hard onto the floor.

“Not a good idea, Blondie. I suggest you choose to keep moving, or I’ll just bring the butt of this gun down on the back of that head of yours again and drag you down them two flights of stairs.”

Balancing himself, Hutch exited into the hallway a few feet behind Willie, fully aware that Curly was close on his heels.



Starsky slowly climbed the back stairs, following the drag marks up the stairs. The dust that had accumulated after the building had been abandoned left a clear trail. Again, he reached for his gun and angrily withdrew his hand when he remembered he didn’t have it with him. *Damn, why didn’t I ask the patrolmen for one of their guns? Hutch is only going to say I rushed off again without thinking. Truth is, buddy, you were the only thing on my mind. Let’s hope we can come up with some brilliant idea other than guns when the time comes. I’ll be pretty useless in a shootout, especially when I can pretty much bet that the only people carrying any guns will be the bad guys.*

Starsky had reached the second floor and was ready to enter the door, when he heard a noise coming from above. Hesitating, he looked up the stairs toward the third floor, pausing to see if anyone was coming near. When no one came, he decided to go up. He slowly and cautiously climbed the stairs. His body was feeling heavier by the minute, his right arm hanging almost useless at his side. It had been hours since he’d last taken his pain medication, and his body was angrily reminding him. Using the railing for leverage he headed up the stairs, uncertain what he’d do when he reached the top. He only knew that if there were noises, then chances were good that Hutch was part of that noise, whether it was willingly or not.

Pulling himself to the top step, he paused to catch his breath, and then slightly cracked open the hallway door in order to hear better. He heard voices, but didn’t recognize any of them. “We’ll take him down the back stairs to the loading dock.”

Starsky knew they’d be coming in his direction, and he looked around for a place to hide, but being at the top of a flight of stairs offered little protection and no place to go. He backtracked down the steps to the second floor and tried to figure out where the loading docks would be located. Afraid that they’d enter the steps at any moment and spot him,

he entered the second floor hallway, praying he could find another set of stairs that would take him to the docks and that he could get there before they did.



Hutch followed Willie onto the landing and then started down the stairs. Stopping suddenly, he felt the gun Curly held in his hand hit him in the back. He braced for something to happen, but Curly yelled instead. “What’s the matter? You want me to send you down these steps head first?”

“I can’t walk too close to Willie, or we’ll both be going down head first. With my hands behind my back, I can’t hang onto the railings and I’m feeling dizzy. We’ve got a lot of steps to go, and looking down makes me dizzier. Uncuff me and I’ll be able to hang on.”

Curly studied Hutch, and then reached into his pocket for the key. “I’ll unlock these only because I don’t want to have to carry you again. Try anything and you’ll be givin’ me the perfect excuse to try out this Magnum of yours. I’ve been admiring it ever since I picked it up off the floor.”

Hutch rubbed his wrists, trying to regain some circulation. He grabbed hold of the railing before continuing down the stairs, not only because he’d told Curly that was the reason he needed his hands free, but because he was, in fact, feeling nauseous and dizzy. He hoped it would pass before they reached the loading dock. It was there he knew he had to make his move, if he was going to make any at all.



Starsky hurried, as silently as possible, down the second floor hall. The building was dark, the silence eerie, and he could hear the movement of tiny feet scurrying away as he intruded on the rats’ domain. There were several large offices, which he ignored and hurried toward the center of the hall, hoping to find another stairway. He gasped and nearly fell when he hit his right arm on a large filing cabinet standing in the middle of the hallway. *Damn! Why’d they put you here?* He held onto his arm, waiting for the throbbing to stop and to regain his bearings, when he realized he was standing next to what used to be a freight elevator. Betting that stairs had to be nearby and that the elevator would open near the loading docks, Starsky started opening every door nearby, but they all opened into blackness. Starsky turned the corner and stopped. Above his head, he could faintly make out the white letters I and T—the only portion remaining of a broken, plastic sign. He opened the door and exhaled in relief when he stepped out onto the stairway landing and saw the moonlight breaking through the broken window directly ahead. Racing down the steps, he prayed he would get there in time.



Hutch followed Willie down the long hallway. Willie carried a flashlight, and it was obvious he knew exactly where he was headed. Hutch felt tingling in his fingers as the

circulation came back. He flexed his fingers and made fists, trying to help the blood flow faster. Willie turned right down a corridor, and Hutch glanced back to see Curly's location. Curly was about three feet behind him, the Magnum in his hand but not aimed directly at him. Hutch tried to search ahead for a location where he could make a break. But the darkness of the building prevented him from seeing far enough ahead. The flashlight threw shadows in every direction. It reminded Hutch of walking in the woods with a flashlight. You could only see immediately around you, everything beyond was a black abyss.

As they turned to go down the next corridor, Hutch could finally see light at the end. Two large doors indicated they'd reached the docks, an area used long ago for loading and unloading cargo. Two smaller doors—one leading into an office, the other outside—were on the right wall. Sitting inside at one of the docks was a tan cargo van.

Curly pushed the Magnum into Hutch's side and urged him to move. He moved forward, searching around for anything to use as a weapon. A shadow behind the door of the office gave him hope. Starsky was nearby. He sensed it. Turning so that his back and Curly's were away from the door, Hutch knew he had to get closer. The distance between them and the door would make Starsky a sitting duck. There was nothing to provide him coverage.

Hutch walked toward the right. Willie had moved ahead, but only a few feet away. Hutch walked past the office door, his body tense, waiting. *Now, Starsky, now.*

But as he passed the door to the office, with Curly right on his heels, Starsky didn't rush out. And for a moment, Hutch thought he'd been wrong, that the moonlight had played tricks on him and he was truly alone.



Starsky watched the three men enter the dock area, the flashlight signaling their approach. They would soon reach the van sitting at the dock, and Starsky knew he couldn't let them put Hutch inside. Taking both men on by himself was an impossibility. He moved behind a skid piled high with crates and boxes, long forgotten when the business was abandoned. He crouched there waiting for Hutch and the men to move closer. They had to pass him to get to the van.

He let the first man go past, and then Hutch. As the third man moved past, Starsky grabbed the nearest crate and hurled it at the man's back. The weight of it was more than he had expected, and he gasped as pain shot through his shoulder and arm. Ignoring it, Starsky threw himself off the skid and onto the black-haired man momentarily stunned on the floor, wrestling with him for the gun.

A second before Starsky had actually thrown the crate, Hutch had sensed his partner's presence. Throwing himself forward, he tackled Willie from behind. Surprised, Willie went down hard, the flashlight rolling away. Hutch was bigger and stronger than Willie,

and his weight had the momentum to throw Willie against the van, where he hit his head and went down to the ground. Finding Willie unconscious, Hutch turned toward the two men wrestling on the ground. In the darkness it was difficult to make out who was who. Hutch grabbed the flashlight from the floor and shone it on the two bodies rolling across the floor—two hands clasping the gun, aiming it in the air.

Hutch looked around frantically, searching for anything that could serve as a weapon, anything to help Starsky in his fight with Curly. Spotting a two-by-four leaning against the wall, Hutch rushed over to grab it. It was something he could swing; something that he might be able to use to distract Curly. Now, it was a matter of sorting out the arms, legs and bodies rolling and twisting on the floor—and waiting for the opportune time. Hutch waited for what seemed like hours, but he knew in reality it was only seconds. In the dim light of the flashlight, Hutch could make out Starsky on the bottom, with Curly rising above him, both their hands gripping the gun, waving it in the air. Suddenly, Starsky's arms seemed to weaken as Curly pinned him to the floor. Desperate, Hutch grabbed the board and swung as hard as he could at the man positioned above his partner. The gun blasted at the moment of impact.



*End of Chapter Nine*