

Drawn To The Light

A “Sweet Revenge” Missing Scene

By The Blintz

Images hovered in and out of the fringes of my mind. My memory was fuzzy, elusive, as I tried to figure out where I was and what was happening. Certain scenes played themselves out before me and I wondered at their significance. I saw a ping-pong table and the white ball bouncing back and forth while snatches of conversation drifted through the air.

“Don’t cry down my back, baby. You might rust my spurs.”

“If your phone don’t ring darlin’, you’ll know it’s me.”

“I’d rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy.”

“I don’t know, Cap, but I’m sure as hell gonna find out.”

I saw the police garage and heard gunshots, heard someone screaming my name over and over. I heard the wail of sirens and a lot of medical mumbo-jumbo spoken in voices I didn’t recognize.

“B/P is 85/40, pulse is 122 and thready, respirations...he’s stopped breathing!”

“Get that line established and bolus him with 1000 cc’s Lactated Ringers and get him in here....now!”

“Patient is still unresponsive, skin pale and diaphoretic. He’s going into shock.”

I couldn’t remember if these were my memories or not. I seemed to be far removed from them, as if they belonged to someone else in another place and time. The scenes changed so quickly it was hard to focus; hard to concentrate on one single image long enough to figure out what it meant.

Briefly I managed to swim to the brink of consciousness, but all that waited for me there was pain – harsh, intense, and cruel. I abandoned the effort it had taken to accomplish just that much and allowed the darkness to overtake me again.

But oblivion was not the comfort I thought it would be. Disjointed scenes from my life began flashing before me.

I was a kid in New York again, coming downstairs on Christmas morning to find my very first bicycle.

I was a young rebellious teen, stepping off the bus in Los Angeles to meet my Aunt Rosie and start my new life.

I saw myself in Vietnam, a scared kid trying to be a man and acting brave in front of the rest of the soldiers who were just as young and scared as I was.

It was my first day at the Academy, and I caught a glimpse of a tall, blond-haired man whom I instinctively knew would be my first real friend.

The images slowed imperceptibly and I saw snatches of my partnership with Hutch.

I saw him huddled on a bed in a small room, writhing in agony as I tried in vain to ease the excruciating pain of his withdrawals.

I saw myself, sweat rolling in torrents off my forehead, as I watched Hutch refuse to shoot a suspect because he was the only one who held the information that would save my life.

I watched myself beg, plead, and pray as Hutch lay dying on the other side of a glass wall, so close, and yet a million miles away.

I saw myself running toward his overturned car, panic turning to overwhelming gratitude as he slowly regained consciousness.

The images melted into a kaleidoscope of color swirling around me as pieces of conversation filtered through the ever changing hues.

“Here comes McCoy now.”

“You’re my pal, Hutch.”

“You wanna drive my car?”

“Huuuuuuuuuuuuuuuutch!”

“You know I love ya, Starsk...”

“If he needs me, you call me.”

“Never pick on a man’s partner.”

“If you prick us, doth we not bleed?”

“It’s who do we trust time.”

Suddenly, the tempo and tone changed and the blur of colors came into sharp focus. I was looking down on a roomful of people bent over the lone figure of a man in a hospital bed. I couldn't see his face, but I could see his naked torso covered only by a very wide swath of thick, white bandages. They had a bag attached to a tube in his mouth and someone was squeezing it over and over, the man's chest rising and falling in rhythm with the bag. A young intern had his hands clasped together and was pumping steadily on the man's chest. A nurse dressed all in white was cutting through some of the bandages and a doctor stood ready with two paddles to try to shock the man back into life.

Even with all the chaos below me, there was something else that drew my attention away from the man on the bed and I looked around to see what it could be. Somehow able to see through the ceiling above me, I found myself staring into a beautiful, clear white light high up past the corner of the room. I don't know how I knew, but I was certain that the light meant peace and love and an end to the persistent pain that filtered through even the thickest blackness. The light was calling, drawing me closer, and I allowed myself to drift toward it, embracing its promise of joy and happiness.

As I looked more closely, I could see people milling about on the fringes of the light. There was Terri, and Grandpa Starsky, and...POP! Joy engulfed me and I struggled to reach the light even faster. My father was waiting with outstretched arms and I longed to feel him hold me. I knew that as long as he was there, nothing bad could ever happen to me again. Just like a small child, I needed the comfort of his strong embrace and I couldn't wait for him to hug and protect me. Joy and gratitude overwhelmed me as I looked into his eyes and tried to speed up my journey. Finally, after all these years, my dad and I could make up for all the time that was stolen from us so long ago.

I glanced downward to satisfy my curiosity about the people gathered around the man on the bed. Suddenly, one of the nurses changed position and I got a good look at the man's face.

It was me.

For just a moment I was completely stunned. Me? How could I be looking at myself, watching what was happening to my body with such detachment? I could see everything they were doing, but I couldn't feel a thing. The pain was completely gone and I felt whole, full of life and energy. Somehow, I knew that this was the promise of the light that beckoned so strongly.

As anxious as I was to be with my father and all those who waited for me, I took one last look at the crowd gathered around my body. For the first time I noticed there were people standing outside the room, looking in on the scene through a glass window. I saw Huggy and Captain Dobey, their faces unreadable as they watched what was happening. Huggy had his hand on Dobey's shoulder as the older man stood immobile, stiff, as he wordlessly looked on. There were four or five other officers there too, all staring wide-

eyed and apprehensive as the hospital crew tried valiantly to bring my broken body back to life.

It was then that I realized I had a choice to make. I could still go back – back to the bullet holes and scars and pain that would be mine if I chose to re-occupy the body on the bed. Back to months of healing, rehabilitation and physical therapy. Back to the continuous frustration of a body that would refuse to do what I wanted it to do. Or I could proceed on my journey and head for the light to know joy, peace and unspeakable happiness. To never know pain and fear again.

Looking at Huggy and Dobey, I knew that, as much as I genuinely cared about them, that caring would never be enough to keep me from embracing the light. I knew they would grieve, but time heals all wounds and I also knew they would go on. I was sure they would miss me for a while, but eventually I would be nothing more than a dim memory, dredged up every now and then on the anniversary of my death or in an alcohol induced fog after a particularly bad day at work. I knew they would want me to be happy and, in the end, they'd understand and forgive me for leaving them.

As I continued to watch, I had this nagging feeling that there was something missing, but I couldn't quite figure out what it was. The light that beckoned me was so all-consuming that I was having trouble focusing on any one thought. But, as distracted as I was, I knew that something wasn't complete. I tried hard to concentrate, attempting to put all the pieces together, but it was no use. The light was calling and I had to answer.

It was settled. My mind was made up and I continued my journey toward the light. Just as I was about to cross that threshold, however, something else began competing for my attention. Confused, I looked around, searching for whatever it was that could have changed my focus. I sensed rather than saw that it was not in the room yet, but was headed my way at a furious pace. Sure of my decision and destination, I chose to wait a few seconds more to see what on the earth below me could possibly compare to the light from above.

Suddenly, the double doors at the end of the hallway were violently smashed open and Hutch barreled into the corridor. And just as suddenly, all the pieces came together. I could see the anguish and grief on his face and felt him willing me to just hold on and not leave him. Though I had never really noticed it before, Hutch had a light of his own, certainly not as bright or as pure as that other light, but for me it was even more compelling. Dobey and Huggy would forgive me for leaving, but for Hutch, I would never become a dim memory. Fate had brought us together at a time when we needed each other and, for reasons I didn't understand, Hutch had pledged his friendship to me from the beginning. We both took that pledge very seriously, and I knew that Hutch would never forget me or allow my memory to fade away. He would grieve for me every day for the rest of his life.

All at once, my course changed. With absolutely no regret, I felt myself going back to my body. I realized that Hutch's light, that beautiful light that had drawn me to stay, was

only magnified and made brighter when we were together. Had I gone on alone, that light would have gone out, and there was still so much for us to accomplish. Hutch and I had made a difference in our brief time on this earth, but there was still so much to do. And we could only do it together, as one. Even as I settled back into that broken, bleeding body, I had nothing but peace in my heart. The road would be long, of that I was sure, but I would not travel it alone. Of that I was also sure.

The heavenly light had drawn me, but for now, it could not keep me. That light would still be waiting with its eternal happiness and contentment when my time on this earth was over. But Hutch could not wait. We would have each other only briefly on this earth, and we had to make the most of it. Someday, the light of glory would call again, and I would have no choice but to answer. It would lead me to an eternal place of happiness, love, joy, and peace. For now, I would stay on this earth and fulfill whatever destiny it was that held me here to walk side-by-side with my partner.

My future is uncertain, and I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I know that I can face it with Hutch by my side. And I know he'll be there, a pillar of strength, comfort and encouragement as we continue our journey. The road may be rocky and our destination unknown, but through it all we'll stand to face whatever may come. And, when our time on this earth is really over, we'll go to our final resting place knowing that we have fulfilled our destiny.

The End