



I THE OLD MAN LAY DEAD ON A SCATTERED PILE of candy bars and bubble gum. Cracked tubes of soft drinks, power drinks, sports drinks spilled out of the smashed glass of their cooler in colorful rivers. Tattered bags of soy chips spread over the floor of the little market, crushed to pulp.

On the wall behind the counter hung a framed photo featuring a much younger version of the dead man and a woman Eve assumed was his widow standing arm-in-arm in front of the market. Their faces shone with pride and humor, and all the possibilities of the future.

That young, happy man's future had ended today, she thought, in a puddle of blood and snack foods.

In the middle of death and destruction, Lieutenant Eve Dallas stood studying the body while the first officer on scene filled her in.

"He's Charlie Ochi. He and his wife ran this market for damn near fifty years."

The muscle jumping in his jaw told Eve he'd known the victim.

“Mrs. Ochi’s in the back, got the MTs with her.” The muscle jumped again. “They smacked her around some on top of it.”

“They?”

“Three, she said. Three males, early twenties. She said one’s white, one’s black, and one’s Asian. They’ve come in before, got run off for shoplifting. They had some kind of homemade device, the best she can say. Jammed the security cam with it.”

He jerked his chin toward the camera. “Stoned senseless, she thinks, laughing like hyenas, stuffing candy bars in their pockets. Smacked her with some kind of sap when she tried to stop them. Then the old guy came out, they smacked him but he kept at them. One of them shoved the device into his chest. Mrs. Ochi said he dropped like a stone. They grabbed a bunch of shit—candy, chips, like that—laughing all the while, smashed the place up some and ran out.”

“She gave you a description?”

“Pretty good one, too. Better yet, we’ve got a wit saw them run out who recognized one of them. Bruster Lowe—goes by Skid. Said they took off south, on foot. Wit’s Yuri Drew. We’ve got him outside. He called it in.”

“Okay, stand by, Officer.” Eve turned to her partner. “How do you want to work it?” When Peabody blinked her dark eyes, Eve told her, “You take primary on this one. How do you want to work it?”

“Okay.” Peabody’s detective shield wasn’t spanking, but it was still pretty shiny. Eve let her take a moment, align her thoughts.

“Let’s run Lowe, get an address, a sheet if he’s got one. We might get known companions. We need to get the descriptions out now, add the names when and if. I want these assholes picked up quick and fast.”

Eve watched her former aide, and current partner, gain confidence as she went.

“We need the sweepers here. These dickheads probably left prints

and trace everywhere. We'll see what we've got on security before they jammed it, leave the rest to EDD."

Peabody, dark hair pulled back from her square face in a short, bouncy tail, looked down at the body. "Better do the numbers, confirm his ID."

"On that," Eve said and Peabody blinked again.

"Really?"

"You're primary." Long legs braced, Eve read off the screen of her PPC. "Lowe, Bruster, aka Skid, Caucasian, age twenty-three. No current address. Last known on Avenue B—his mother's place. Got a sheet, and an unsealed juvie record. Illegals possession, malicious mischief, shoplifting, destruction of private property, vehicle boosting, blah blah."

"Cross-reference for—"

"Done. You're not the only one who can work one of these things," Eve reminded her. "Cross-referencing arrests nets us Leon Slatter, aka Slash, mixed-race male, age twenty-two, and Jimmy K Rogan, aka Smash, black male, age twenty-three, as known companions most probable to be involved."

"That's really good. Addresses?"

"Slatter's got one, on West Fourth."

"Excellent. Officer, take the data from the lieutenant. I want these three individuals picked up. My partner and I will aid in the search when we're done here, but let's get this going."

"You got it."

"I'll take the wit," Peabody told Eve. "You take the wife. Okay?"

"You're—"

"Primary. Got it. Thanks, Dallas."

It was a hell of a thing to be thanked for passing on a dead body, Eve thought as she crouched to confirm the ID with her pad. But they were murder cops, after all.

She spent another few minutes examining the body—the bruising on the temple, the arms. She had no doubt the ME would confirm none of them had been fatal. But the homemade electronic jammer pushed into the chest had most likely given Ochi a jolt that had stopped his eighty-three-year-old heart.

She stood, took another look around at the useless destruction. They'd run a nice place from what she could see. The floors, the window, the counter sparkled clean under the spilled drinks, the spatter of blood. The stock that hadn't been dumped or smashed sat tidily shelved.

Fifty years, the first on scene had said, she thought, running a business, providing a service, living a life, until a trio of fuckheads decide to destroy it for a bunch of candy bars and soy chips.

After a dozen years as a cop, nothing human beings did to other human beings surprised her. But the waste and carelessness of it still pissed her off.

She walked into the back, into the small combination office and store-room. The medical tech was packing up his gear.

“You really should let us take you in, Mrs. Ochi.”

The woman shook her head. “My children, my grandchildren are coming. I'm waiting for my children.”

“After they get here, you need to go into the health center, get looked over.” His tone, kind and soft, matched the hand he laid gently on her arm. “Okay? I'm real sorry, ma'am.”

“Thank you.” She shifted her eyes, a blazing green in a face lined with time, marred by bruises, and met Eve's. “They killed Charlie,” she said simply.

“Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry for your loss.”

“Everyone is. The three who killed him, they'll be sorry, too. If I could, I'd make them sorry with my own hands.”

“We’ll take care of that for you. I’m Lieutenant Dallas. I need to ask you some questions.”

“I know you.” Mrs. Ochi lifted a hand, tapped a finger in the air. “I saw you on screen, on *Now*. I saw you with Nadine Furst. Charlie and I like to watch her show. We were going to read that book she wrote about you.”

“It’s really not about me.” But Eve let it go as there were more important things to talk about—and because it embarrassed her a little. “Why don’t you tell me what happened, Mrs. Ochi?”

“I told the other cop, and I’ll tell you. I was at the counter and Charlie was back here when they came in. We told them not to come in any more because they steal, they break things, they insult us and our customers. They’re trouble, these three. Punks. The white boy, he points the thing he had at the camera, and the monitor on the counter goes to static.”

Her voice chipped the words like a hammer on stone, and those eyes remained fierce and dry. No tears, Eve thought, not yet. Just the cold blaze of anger only a survivor really knew.

“They’re laughing,” Mrs. Ochi continued, “slapping each other’s backs, bumping fists, and the black one, he says, ‘What’re you going to do now, old bitch,’ and grabs a bunch of candy. I yelled at them to get out of my place, and the other one—Asian mix—he hits me with something. I saw stars, and I tried to get in the back, to Charlie, but he hit me again, and I fell down. They kept laughing. Stoned,” she said. “I know what stoned looks like. Charlie came out. The mix, he’s going to hit me again I think when I’m on the floor, but Charlie hits him, knocks him back. I tried to get up, to help, but . . .”

Her voice broke now, and some of the fierceness died in guilt.

“You were hurt, Mrs. Ochi.”

“The black one, he hit Charlie like the mix hit me, but Charlie didn’t

fall. He's not big, Charlie, not young like those *killers*, but he's strong. He was always strong."

She took a long breath, steadied herself a little. "He hit back. I tried to get up, and I tried to find something to hit them with. Then the white one, he said, 'Fuck you, you old fuck,' and he shoved the thing—the jammer or stunner, or whatever it was—into Charlie . . . here."

She laid a hand on her heart.

"It made a sound, an electrical sound—like the static, if you know what I mean. And it went snapping, and when it did, Charlie fell down. He pressed a hand to his heart, he said 'Kata,' he said my name." Her lips trembled, but she firmed them again. "He said, 'Kata,' then he fell. I crawled toward him. They kept laughing and yelling, breaking things, stomping on things. One of them, I don't know which, kicked me in the side, and they ran out."

Mrs. Ochi closed her eyes for a moment. "They ran out, and then, soon—a minute? Maybe less, Yuri ran in. He tried to help Charlie, tried to start his heart. He's a good boy, Yuri—his daddy worked for us long ago—but he couldn't help Charlie. He called for the police and an ambulance, and he got ice from the freezer for my head. He sat with me, with me and Charlie until the police came."

She leaned forward now. "They're not important people. We're not important either, not the kind of important people you talk about on *Now* with Nadine Furst. But you won't let them get away with this?"

"You're important to the NYPSD, Mrs. Ochi. You and Mr. Ochi are important to me, to my partner, to every cop working this."

"I believe you when you say it, because you believe it."

"I know it. We're already looking for them, and we'll find them. It would help if I could have your surveillance disc. If they didn't jam it before they came in, we'll have them on record. And we have you, we have Yuri. They won't get away with it."

“There’s cash in the box under the counter. Not much—we don’t keep much, but they didn’t want money. Candy, soft drinks, chips. They didn’t really want those either. They just wanted to break and hurt and rip and tear. What turns boys into animals? Do you know?”

“No,” Eve said. “I don’t know.”

Eve watched Mrs. Ochi’s family load her in a car to take her to her doctor—and watched Mr. Ochi’s body loaded up for transport to the morgue.

The summer of 2060 had been a scorcher, and that didn’t appear to be changing any time soon. She stood in the heat, shoved a hand through her short crop of brown hair, wishing for a breeze. She had to check the impulse, a couple of times, to move Peabody along, to direct, to order.

Thorough was good, she reminded herself, and photos of the suspects were already making the rounds, cops were already knocking on doors.

Belatedly, she remembered her sunshades and was mildly surprised to find them actually in her pocket. She slid them on, cut the glare that had beamed into her whiskey-colored eyes, and continued to stand, long and lean in a tan jacket and dark pants, scuffed boots until Peabody crossed to her.

“Nobody home at either of the addresses we have, and Bruster’s mother says she hasn’t seen her son in weeks—and good riddance. But one of Slatter’s neighbors states he saw all three of them head out this morning. He says they’re all flopping there, have been for the past couple weeks.”

“They’re assholes,” Eve concluded. “They’ll go back to their hole.”

“I’ve got eyes on it—two men for now. The wit—Yuri Drew—was just crossing the street when he saw them run out. Recognized Bruster because they’d had a couple run-ins during pickup basketball games at

some hoops not far from here—and he'd been in the store once when our vic ran them off. Recognized all three of them, but only knew Bruster by name. Guy broke down, twice, giving me his statement," Peabody added. "His father used to—"

"Work for them," Eve finished. "I got that."

"He looked at pictures. I brought a sample up on my PPC, and he picked all three of them, no hesitation, out of the mix. He'll not only testify against them, he's eager to. Did you hand me this because it's a slam dunk?"

"The minute you think slam dunk is the minute you bounce the ball off the rim."

Now Peabody put on shades, and Eve found herself staring at her own reflection in the mirrored, rainbow-hued lenses. "How the hell do you see out of those? Does everything look like a freaking fairy tale?"

"You don't look through a rainbow—everybody else looks into one. Totally mag."

Completely uncoplike, in Eve's opinion, but she only shrugged. "What do you want to do now?"

"We should probably go talk to the mother, to neighbors, see if we can dig out any other known associates. But I thought we could do that by way of a ride-around. They were high, got the munchies, hit the store. Now they're riding on how hysterically funny it was to bash the place up and knock an old couple around. Maybe they know Ochi's dead, maybe they don't."

At least the shades didn't turn her brain into a rainbow, Eve decided. Peabody thought like a cop. "I'm betting don't, and that they're stupid enough to hang out, maybe try to score some more junk."

"I've got a handful of usual hangouts from the wit, from the mother. Plenty of cops looking for them, but—"

“So what’s two more? Who’s driving?”

“Seriously?” Now Peabody’s mouth dropped open.

“You’re primary.”

“Okay, yay. I’m driving.” Thrilled, Peabody plopped behind the wheel. “I’ve been wanting to do this ever since Roarke gave it to you. It looks like crap, but oh, baby, she is loaded squared.”

She was, Eve agreed. Her husband never missed a trick, plus he just loved giving her presents. One of his first, a tear-shaped diamond twice the size of her thumb, rode under her shirt.

It was beautiful, exquisite, and probably worth more than the gross national product of a small country. But if she’d had to choose between it and the crap-looking vehicle, the crap would win, hands down.

“I’ve got a sex bar, a game parlor, pizza joint, and the public ball court,” Peabody began. “I could plot a route into the navi that would take us by all of them in the most efficient time frame.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

“But? Come on. I give you input when you’re primary.”

“They ran out loaded with junk food, so why go to a pizza joint to hang out, especially when they’re juiced? Sex club, maybe, if they’re after a bang.”

“But?” Peabody repeated.

“They just knocked a couple of old people around. It’s unlikely they know they killed one of them. It’s all fun and games. They didn’t take any money, didn’t snatch the Ochis’ wedding rings, their wrist units, the DB’s wallet.”

“And a sex club costs,” Peabody concluded. “The bang costs more.”

“They scored junk food and proved how frosty they are. When you’re stoned, think you’re frosty, and having such a fucking good time, you want to brag, maybe smack a few more heads.”

“Game parlor or basketball. I get it. We’ll try those first. If we don’t hit, we’ll swing by the others.”

Eve nodded approval. “Better plan.”

Peabody keyed in the locations. “You really think they don’t know Ochi’s dead?”

“They’re stoned, they’re stupid, they’re major assholes. But none of them has a murder under his belt. They ran out laughing, high-fiving. Odds are if they’d known they’d done murder, they’d have finished the wife off, had a conversation, acknowledged the kill. They didn’t.”

They hit the game parlor first, found it packed. Cooler than outside, Eve thought, but the cacophony of bells, whistles, screams, roars, blasts, and the spinning, blinking, flashing lights made her wonder why anyone would want to spend a summer afternoon glued to a machine.

The pudgy, pasty-faced attendant near the entrance took a gander at the ID shots.

“Yeah, true. They game regular. Slash banged high score on Assassins couple days ago. Still standing. Gonna take it down personal when I got space ’cause he’s an asswipe.”

“Have they been in today?” Peabody asked him.

“Untrue. Night gamers mostly. Stone heads when they can get it.” He shrugged. “What do?”

“We need to talk to them.” Peabody pulled out a card. “If they come in, contact me. What’s riding top on Bust It?”

His attention focused. “You game?”

“Solid true G-bitch. Slayed the ace on Bust It.” She held up three fingers. “Triple.”

“Major ups,” he said with respect. “You wanna whirl?”

“On the move, but maybe back around.”

“Take you on,” he said with a grin.

“Set. Taking it out,” she added. “If they whirl, tag me.”

He swiped a finger over his heart and pocketed her card.

“What,” Eve demanded, “was that?”

“Maybe he’d tag us, but odds are against because he didn’t really give a shit, and I thought he might just toss the card. So I got his attention, his respect. Gamer-bop. It’s kind of stupid, but it worked.”

“True,” Eve said and made Peabody laugh.

They wound their way through traffic, past graffiti-laced prefabs tossed up after the Urban Wars where men with nothing better to do sat on crumbling stoops sucking brew and rotgut out of bottles wrapped in brown paper.

Street toughs stood in small packs, most of them in snug tanks to show off a range of tattoos and sweaty muscles.

Rusted fencing surrounded the cracked and faded blacktop court. Somebody had gone to the trouble to push or sweep the piles of litter to the fence line where broken glass glittered like lost diamonds.

A group of men—late teens to early twenties—were playing shirts and skins. And some of the skins were scraped and bruised. Onlookers leaned or sat against the fence, and except for the teenage couple currently attempting to reach each other’s navels from the inside with their tongues, they shouted at, insulted, and harangued the players.

Peabody pulled in behind the husk of a stripped-down compact.

Someone had painted *FUCK U* on the dented trunk.

“What does it say about the literacy rate when you can’t even spell *fuck*. It’s sad,” Eve decided.

“Bruster,” Peabody said, lifting her chin toward the court.

“Yeah, I saw him, and his asshole companions.”

“I’ll call for backup.”

“Uh-huh.”

Eve watched a moment. They'd come in as shirts, and those shirts were glued to their torsos with sweat. Jimmy K had rolled his baggy pants above his knobby knees, and from his rhythm, his moves, Eve judged he had a little game in him. Maybe he'd have more if he wasn't currently coming down from a high and sweating like a pig in the heat.

Bruster's face was lobster red and dripping, and from the fury on it, she expected the skins were kicking ass. Leon panted like a dog as he ran cross-court. Even with the distance she could see his chest heave in and out.

"They're cooked," Eve said. "Bottoming out, winded. They couldn't outrun a one-legged toddler."

"Backup, four minutes." When Eve only nodded, Peabody shifted in her seat. "Okay, let's take these assholes."

"Looking forward to it."

Eve stepped out of the car. A few of the fence sitters made them as cops halfway across the street. Some sneered, some looked nervous, others tried the blank look she assumed meant an attempt to be invisible.

On court Bruster stole the ball by ramming his elbow into his opponent's gut. The short, vicious war that broke out gave Eve and Peabody time to cross the street, ease through the gate of the fence.

Eve kicked the navel ticklers lightly with her foot. "Beat it." She tapped the weapon under her jacket to add incentive. They scrambled up and out, and clear, she thought, of any potential harm.

She ignored the others who suddenly decided they had better places to be and sidled out of the gate. She focused on Bruster, but took the opportunity to plant her boot on Slatter's chest where he lay wheezing and bleeding on the ground.

"Stay down. Get up, try to run, I'll stun you enough to drop you, enough so you piss your pants." To emphasize the point, she drew her weapon and watched Peabody try to avoid jabbing elbows and flying

fists from the combatants still on the ground and reach through to grab Bruster.

Jimmy K sat on the ground nursing a busted lip. “We ain’t done nothing. Little white bastard in there punched me.”

“Yeah?” He’d forgotten, she concluded, all about the Ochis, the market. The lives he’d broken into jagged bits. “Sit, stay,” she told him.

But Bruster hadn’t forgotten. She saw his eyes fire when Peabody hauled him off the kid he was currently pounding. She dodged the swing, avoided the kick, all while trying to identify herself as a police officer.

Slatter tried to roll out from under her boot. Eve merely increased the pressure. “I can crack a couple ribs,” she told him, “and say it happened during the game. Think about it.”

Instead of drawing her weapon, Peabody blocked a punch. Some of it got through, glanced off her shoulder, and the follow-up connected, fairly solidly in Eve’s judgment, with her ear.

The rainbow shades slid, cocked crookedly on her face.

Peabody managed a half-assed jab that had Eve shaking her head.

Heavy on her feet, she noted, telegraphing her moves.

When Bruster grabbed the jammer out of his pocket, Eve lifted her weapon, prepared to fire. And Peabody said, “Oh, fuck this!” and kicked him in the balls.

The jammer spurted out of his hand as he dropped, retching. Eve gave Peabody reflex points for managing to catch it on the fly.

“You are so completely under arrest.” Peabody dropped down, rolled Bruster over, and slapped on restraints. “You want some of that?” she shouted as Jimmy K started crab-walking backward.

He froze. “Uh-uh. Come on, man. Just a b-ball game. No deal.”

“Bet your ass no deal.” She pulled herself up, glanced over as Eve cuffed Slatter. “On your face,” she ordered, and finished the job with Jimmy K as their backup screamed in.

“Call for a bus,” Peabody ordered the first officer to reach them. “A couple of these guys need medical attention. Get names,” she added. “We’ll add assault on these bleeders to the mix. And get a wagon for these three.”

“Yes, sir.”

Peabody glanced at Eve, grinned. She mouthed, “He called me ‘sir.’” Then cleared her throat. “Lieutenant, will you inform these jerkwads of the charges and read them their rights?”

“Absolutely. Bruster Lowe, Leon Slatter, Jimmy K Rogan, you’re under arrest for murder—”

“We done no murder!” Jimmy K nearly screamed it as a couple of uniforms hauled him up. “You got the wrong dudes, man. We playing b-ball.”

“Additional charges include attempted murder, assault, destruction of property, theft, and in Bruster’s case resisting arrest and assault on a police officer. We may be able to bump that one up, just for fun, to attempted murder of a police officer.”

When it was done, and the three men were loaded in the wagon, Peabody swiped her hands over her face. “That was good, good work. But *ow!*” She patted her hand on her ear.

“You’re heavy on your feet.”

“Hey, no fat comments while I’m primary.”

“Not your weight, Peabody—except you keep too much of it on your feet. And you hesitate. Good reflexes, but your moves are slow. You need to polish up your hand-to-hand.”

“Since my ear’s still ringing I can’t argue. I’ll work on it.”

“But you took him down, so yeah, that’s good work.” Eve swung around at the high-pitched scream of her vehicle alarm.

She watched the hopeful booster land on his ass in the street as the warning charge engaged. His lock popper rolled into the gutter.

“It works. Good to know.”

She strolled back, letting the booster limp off—considering it a valuable lesson learned.

“I’m thirsty. I want a fizzy.” Peabody slid a glance at Eve. “I’m stopping on the way to Central for a fizzy. I want to give them a little time to sweat anyhow. I told the uniforms to keep them separate, and to book the interview rooms. Jimmy K’s the weak link, right? I thought we’d take him first.”

“Works for me.”

“I want to be bad cop.”

Eve shifted to look at her partner—the cop with rainbows in her eyes. “I worry about you, Peabody.”

“I never get to be bad cop. I want to be the über-bitch, and you be the sympathetic one. He was blubbering when they loaded him. I don’t even have to be that bad. Besides,” she muttered, “I’m primary.”

“Fine.” Eve settled back. “You pay for the drinks.”

Jimmy K was still blubbering when they walked into Interview. Peabody scowled at him. “Peabody, Detective Delia, and Dallas, Lieutenant Eve, in Interview with Rogan, Jimmy K, on the matter of the murder of Ochi, Charlie, and connected charges.”

“I didn’t kill nobody!” Jimmy K wailed it.

“Oh, shut the fuck up.” Peabody slapped the file on the table, took out the still of the dead, slapped that down on top. “See that, Rogan? That’s what you and your friends did.”

“Did not. Did not.”

“And this.” She laid out the photos of Mrs. Ochi, the close-ups of her bleeding head, her black eye, swollen jaw. “I guess you like beating up on grandmothers, you asswit punk.”

“I didn’t.”

Peabody started to lunge out of her chair.

“Hold on, hold on.” Playing her part, Eve laid a hand on her partner’s shoulder. “Give him a chance, okay? He looks pretty shaky. I brought you a cold drink, Jimmy K. You want a tube of Coke?”

“Yeah man, yeah.” He took it from her, gulped it down. “I didn’t kill nobody, no way.”

“We got witnesses, you fuckhead.”

“Uh-uh.” Jimmy K shook his head at Peabody. “Nobody was in there when we went in, and Skid, he zapped the cam. So you don’t.”

God, Eve thought, what a moron. “You were in Ochi’s Market today?” she asked him. “With Bruster Lowe—Skid, and Leon Slatter—Slash?”

“Okay, yeah. We wanted some munch, you know? So we go in to get some.”

“You always zap the cam when you go for some munch?” Peabody demanded.

“We’re just playing around, see?”

“Playing?” Peabody roared it, shoved Ochi’s photo in Jimmy K’s face. “Is this playing around?”

“No, man, no, sir. I never did that.”

“Relax, Jimmy K,” Eve told him and made sure he saw her shoot Peabody a disapproving look. “You know jammers are illegal—even homemade ones.”

“Yeah.” He sighed it out. “But see, I was just experimenting, like. Sometimes I pick up some scratch working in an e-store, and you learn shit. Educational shit. I told the dudes I could make up a jammer from some of the shit we got around, and they’re all, ‘Bullshit you can, motherfucker,’ like that. So I showed them. I worked on it for, like,

hours, man. We got a buzz going. You know how it be when you're hanging."

"Yeah." Eve nodded. "Sure."

"We tried it out, and it fucked Slash's comp good. That's some funny shit, man. Skid and I busted gut. Slash was a little pissed, and so he starts to grab it from me, and I try to hold it, and I, like, hit the control. Zapped him. Jesus, shoulda seen him jump. Laughed our asses to the *ground*. We just fooled around, zapped each other a few times, did more Ups. And you know, we got hungry, and we decided, hell, we'd go hit Ochi's, get our munch, play with the zipzap. That's what we called it. Zipzap. I made it myself."

He said that with no little pride, and Eve could see Peabody felt sorry for him.

"That's a real talent, Jimmy K," Eve said, and gave Peabody a kick under the table.

"You asshole." Peabody toughened her face. "You went to Ochi's Market to steal from them, to bust their place up, to bust them up carrying an illegal device that jammed security and emitted an electronic charge? Carrying saps?"

"Okay, listen, okay, just listen." He patted the air down with his hands. "We were buzzing, had the munch on. Ochi has good munch, and that old man, he's always running us off, even had the cops go to Skid's old lady's place once just because we knocked a few things over. We just wanted the munch, and to show them not to keep messing with us. Just spook them up, get me?"

"So it was just going to be a robbery," Eve said, picking up the rhythm. "The three of you took your zipzap, the saps, and went in intending to steal, to intimidate, maybe, if they gave you grief, rough them up a little, break a few things."

“Yeah, that’s it. We were buzzing, man. We had a really good buzz going. Skid had the zipzap. It was his turn, and hey, the old guy called the cops on him and all that. Zapped the cam good, too. The old lady, she got all, you know, so Slash clipped her some.”

“Leon Slatter—Slash—hit her with the sap,” Eve encouraged, “because she was yelling at you to stop.”

“That’s it. She was yelling and bossing, so Slash sapped her a little to shut her up. Me, I got some candy and chips and shit, and the old man comes out half crazy. He’s, like, attacking me, so I just defended myself and gave him a knock. And he’s going after Skid, and he’s screaming, like, *insane* shit, so Skid, he gave him a zap. We were buzzing and all so we broke the place up, then we left. See? We didn’t kill nobody.”

Peabody pulled a paper out of the file. “This is the autopsy report on Ochi. Do you know what an autopsy is, you asshole?”

He licked his lips. “It’s like when they cut up dead people. Sucks, man.”

“And when they cut up this dead person, it turns out he died of coronary arrest. His heart stopped.”

“See, like I said, we didn’t kill him.”

“It stopped due to an electric shock, which also left electrical burns on his chest. Your fucking zipzap’s the murder weapon.”

Jimmy K’s eyes bulged. “No. Shit, no.”

“Shit, yes.”

“It was an accident, man. An accident, right?” he said, pleading, to Eve.

She was tired of good cop. “You went into Ochi’s Market, intending to rob, to destroy property, to cause intimidation and physical harm to the Ochis and whoever else might have been present. You went in car-

rying an illegal device you knew caused physical harm, and weighted bags fashioned into saps. You indeed did rob, did destroy property, and did cause physical harm by your own admission. Here's what happens when a death incurs as a result of a crime or during the course of committing a crime. It bumps it up to murder."

"Can't be."

"Oh," Eve assured him, "it be."