

Subject Matters

"Subject is on the move. I repeat, subject is on the move," he said into his watch. He pulled his fedora over his head to cover his face and proceeded to follow the subject into the bookstore. Knowing he would go to the Science Fiction section, Moore headed over to the Biographies, where he could easily watch the subject through the pages of George Washington leading the cavalry to victory.

He watched as the phone buzzed and he moved down to the "T" biographies so that he could get a closer look. Change of plans, he read a text off of the subject's phone. Meet at 2:30. The subject turned his head, looking to make sure no one was watching him. Same spot? he texted back. Then he put his phone in his back pocket, set aside *Fahrenheit 451*, and casually walked out the store, the bells jingling after him.

"Special Agent Moore," he heard in his ear. "Do you still have eyes on the target?" the voice asked.

"Negative." He replied. "He was lost in the crowd. But I do have information that he will be meeting someone at 2:30. Figure out who that text came from."

He cringed as static pierced his ears and he continued to scan the crowd for the subject. He looked at his watch, which flashed SIGNAL LOST. "I have now lost GPS signal on subject. I repeat, GPS signal is lost," he said as he hurriedly, but coolly walked back to his car. He slammed the sleek black door of his car a little too hard, rattling the beads hanging around the gearshift. The necklace, which was made of mismatched beads and was fraying in the middle, was a present his daughter had given him for his birthday twenty years ago. Of course, now she was twenty-six, and had a busy life in New York City. They rarely ever saw each other, except on the occasional holiday.

He pushed aside files on the subject, a few Big Mac wrappers, and a half-finished Dr. Pepper to pull out his laptop. The screen flickered to life and he waited for the satellite to regain a signal on the subject. The screen shifted and zoomed in on a tiny, moving red dot. "I have a location on the subject," he informed the voice in his ear.

“Good, now don’t lose sight of him and make sure to be at that 2:30 meeting,” the voice said back.

Back at the precinct, the Captain was updating the crew on the search. “We now have an I.D. on the subject and are working to track him down, but this man is a ghost. He’s good, he knows how to cover his tracks, but he’s bound to slip up at some point. This man is about six-foot-three with brown hair and brown eyes,” he said as he tacked up a sketch of him on the board. “He has a scar on his left cheek, no known tattoos. He is extremely dangerous, we don’t know how many weapons he owns or what he’s done in the past. He is also mentally unstable. He has schizophrenia and suffers from hallucinations, so exercise caution when dealing with him.”

He paused and paced, scanning the faces of the officers. “I want all eyes on the street looking for him: his expenses, phone records, everything should be monitored. I want sketches of him circulating around the area within the hour. Catch him before he kills again,” he ordered. “And one last thing, the FBI claim to have jurisdiction, but this is our case. Even though they refuse to share information, don’t let them walk all over you.”

The officers dissipated from the crowd with a series of murmurs and hushed conversations. Detective Hicks sighed as she collapsed in her chair, eyeing the clock. It had been a long day already, and this case was impossible. No leads and no evidence; she was tracking a ghost. All she had to go off of was a hazy sketch from a tipsy barista. She knew phone records were a bust; he bought a new burner phone every week. So she decided to try expenses. “Marshall, look for any large deposits or withdrawals made in banks within a hundred mile radius. Try to narrow them down to find his alias,” she said while tapping away at her computer.

No response. “Marshall?” She swung around to look at his desk. She rolled her eyes at the sight of her incompetent partner, fast asleep on his desk, his mouth gaping open and a puddle of drool smearing the letters of an incident report. But she was used to this. After her old partner Carmen was transferred to another department, she was stuck with a fire hazard on

legs. Last month, he burned his eyebrows off while chasing a suspect at a luau at the beach. There was a bonfire, tiki-torches... you know where this is going.

She stood up, smoothed the crease on her blazer and walked over to his desk, her curly hair bouncing and her stilettos clanking against the hard floors. "Mmhmm," she cleared her throat. A snore. "Mmhmm," she said louder, this time in his ear. Still nothing. She grabbed the hair from the back of his neck and pulled his head up, creating a long line of drool from his mouth the desk.

"OW!" he squealed, getting a few dirty looks from officers nearby. "What. Do. You. Want?" he seethed at me.

"A new partner," she replied. "But unfortunately there isn't anyone else in the department."

He rolled his eyes, wiping the saliva off his face with his sleeve. "What do you want me to do?" he rephrased the question.

"Look for his financials, try to find any large deposits of withdrawals made within a hundred mile radius, try to narrow it down to a few. And look at offshore accounts." She reiterated what she had previously said.

"We don't even know who he is, we can't find his bank," he said, offering up a pretext to get out of doing his work.

"Then find his alias." she walked back to her desk, irritated and ready for the day to be over. But she still had a long day ahead of her; it was only 2:30.

Agent Moore had been following the subject down what seemed to be a never ending one lane dirt road. In the distance, he could see a blue sign. BEAR PEAK. 5 MILES AHEAD it read. Finally, he understood. Bear Peak was the place where all the young couples went for romantic dates. It was perfect for an evening under the stars, a summer picnic, or a proposal in front of the sunset. It was romantic because it was secluded; it was cut off from society. You had to drive thirty miles to the nearest sign of civilization. It was the perfect place to meet another culprit. No witnesses, no cameras, no risk of being seen or caught.

"We got him!" Hicks yelled.

"Where?" Marshall turned around, disoriented and clueless like always.

"We got an I.D. too, Lloyd Hunt. Four years ago he went completely psycho. Someone saw our perp get into a car and we have the plates. We caught the car on traffic cams; we think it's headed to Bear Peak," she hurriedly spit out, hastily putting on her coat and shoving her gun in its holster.

"Cool," Marshall said, leaning back on his chair.

"Are you coming?" she narrowed her eyes at him.

"Oh," he stumbled to sit up, clumsily taking his feet and a few files off the desk. "Am I supposed to come?"

"It is *our* case." she was too tired and annoyed to deal with Marshall's obnoxious child-like behavior. "I'm leaving now, before he gets away. If you're going to come, then come *now*." She explained it to him slowly so that maybe something would get through to him.

Five minutes and two stern messages from the Captain later, Marshall waddled into the passenger seat and they sped off onto the highway, lights flashing and sirens blaring, just the way Marshall liked it (it made him feel like he was in an action movie). She glanced over and watched Marshall tapping on his knee to what she was sure was some punk rock beat in his head.

Agent Moore pulled into the almost empty parking lot and bolted out of the car, making sure he didn't lose sight of the subject. He dashed to the narrow dirt path leading to one of the picnic sites, keeping the subject's red shirt in sight. After being slapped in the face by several branches and getting poked in the ribs by trees, he saw the subject stop. Moore pushed aside a branch to get a better view of the subject, who was now sitting on a picnic table with his phone out. Moore cocked his gun and held it up in front of him, emerging from the trees, gun first.

"FBI, Agent Moore. Put your hands up!"

"What's going on?" The subject's eyes widened with fear.

"Where is she?" Moore asked.

"Where is who?" he asked bewilderedly.

"Put your hands up!" Moore howled.

"What's going on?"

"Stop playing games! I SAID, WHERE IS SHE?" Enraged, Moore came closer, the gun now inches away from his head.

"Please, I don't know what you're talking about!" he pleaded.

"I don't have time for this! Where is she?" Moore moved closer with every word. Finally, the cool steel of the gun rested on the subject's head.

"Clock is ticking," Moore threatened. "Just tell me where she is!"

"I don't know what you're talking about! You have the wrong guy!"

"Three..." Moore gave him one more chance. "Two..."

"Please, I don't know what you're talking about! I didn't do anything!"

"One..."

"Boston Police Department, freeze!" Hicks shrieked, running in with her gun aimed straight ahead with Marshall at her heels. "Put the gun down." She commanded coolly.

"Agent Moore of the FBI, *you* put *your* gun down," he replied.

"Sir, step away from him," Marshall warned.

Moore pulled out his badge. "I can handle this, FBI."

"It's clearly plastic," Hicks whispered to Marshall. "He's unstable; I think he's having a psychotic break."

"Sir, please, step away and put the gun down," Marshall said coming closer.

Moore was shaking, his gun now pointed at Marshall. Hicks looked into his eyes, she knew that look. That look was fatal. "Now!" she screamed. Marshall knocked the gun out of Moore's hand and loosened his grip on the innocent man waiting on his date, now caught up in the middle of this.

Hicks pushed the poor man aside and grabbed Moore's arms, wriggling a pair of handcuffs around his hands. "Stop!" Moore begged. "He's going to get away!"

"You're under arrest," Marshall said.

"He has my daughter! Don't let him get away!"

"He doesn't have your daughter, he's just an innocent man."

"The FBI has been communicating with me!" Moore tried to wiggle the earpiece out of his ear using his shoulder. "He's going to hurt my daughter!"

"This man doesn't have your daughter; he's never seen you before."

"Then I want to see my daughter, I want to know she's safe, I have to protect her."

"Sir," Marshall looked Moore in the eye. "Your daughter died four years ago in a car crash, you have to let her go."