

BOXSTER

By

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INT-BAR-NIGHT

Officer MATT BIRKLEY is sitting at the bar with HIS drink. HE checks HIS watch and then looks over at the door as if HE is waiting for someone. HE is off duty and in HIS street clothes

Moments later, DETECTIVE JOHN WEST walks through the door of the bar. HE has just come from work and is still dressed in HIS work attire. HE walks over to BIRKLEY and sits down at the bar next to HIM. BIRKLEY notices HIM.

BIRKLEY

(sighing and shaking HIS head)

Last day on the job and they *still* have you working late?

WEST:

Well, clearing out my desk was a bigger task than I thought it would be. Why didn't you ever tell me that I was a pack rat?

BIRKLEY

(chuckling)

Oh, yeah, I, being a rookie, am going to go to an eleven year veteran detective and tell *him* what *he* needs to do to improve his organizational skills. Yeah, *that'll* go over really well.

WEST:

(laughing)

I'd probably have agreed with you whole-hearted-ly. So what's the big deal anyway? You said you had something you wanted to tell me about the Fenton case before I left?

BIRKLEY:

Yeah, I tied up the loose ends with the grandmother. She says Wilson's our guy, I already got a warrant request in to Judge Williams, I figure we'll probably be bringing the guy in on Monday, depending on how long it takes to get the request back.

WEST:

So that's it?

BIRKLEY:

Not quite.

BIRKLEY motions for the BARTENDER to come over.

BIRKLEY:

(to BARTENDER)

He'll take a gin and tonic, and I'll have a Jack n' Coke.

BARTENDER:

You got it.

The BARTENDER leaves to make the drinks.

BIRKLEY:

I figured you might like a drink on your last night of duty.

WEST:

Really? Is that what this is about?

BIRKLEY shrugs it off.

WEST:

Thank you MATT.

BIRKLEY:

Well, I figured with you goin' to the F.B.I. they're probably going to be watching your alcohol consumption, so why not get your kicks while you still can.

WEST:

Well, I don't think that they're *that* controlling, but you're probably right. I'm going to be working long hours, and I probably won't see the inside of a bar for months at a time.

BIRKLEY:

Yeesh, tough gig, my friend.

WEST:

Eh, the money's not bad.

The BARTENDER returns with the drinks. HE sets them down in front of BIRKLEY and WEST.

BARTENDER:

Do you wanna start a tab?

BIRKLEY looks at WEST as if to say "you want to stay?"

WEST:

(to BARTENDER)

Nah, I gotta be getting home to the wife and kids soon.

BIRKLEY:

(to BARTENDER)

Just the drinks already on the tab plus these two and close it.

The BARTENDER nods and leaves.

BIRKLEY:

So how are the wife and kids?

WEST:

They're alright, Liz just got promoted at her new job. Jason's thinking about going into Criminal Justice.

BIRKLEY:

You must be proud of him.

WEST:

I am, although I have mixed feelings about him wanting to be a cop.

BIRKLEY:

I think that's typical though. You worry about your kids taking bullets, but when someone points out that you do the same thing for a living, you brush it off like it's nothing.

WEST takes a sip of HIS drink.

WEST:

(Swallowing)

What about you? How's Cassie doing?

BIRKLEY:

She is doing very well, loves her job and all that.

WEST:

Good to hear.

Both MEN take a sip of THEIR drinks. BIRKLEY notices WEST'S tie is frayed at the bottom.

BIRKLEY:

What's with the tie? I have a feeling a gift card to one of these malls would have been a better gift so you can get some better clothes.

WEST:

(rolls HIS eyes)

What? So you'll criticize the fact that my tie is a little ripped at the bottom but you won't tell a guy when he's a pack rat?

BIRKLEY:

(chuckling)

It's the alcohol talking.

WEST:

(laughing)

Must be. No, I brought the Boxster tonight.

BIRKLEY:

I didn't know you owned a Porsche.

WEST:

I do. I am the proud owner of a 2009 Jet Black Porsche Boxster.

BIRKLEY:

(sarcastically)

Life must be tough.

WEST:

Oh shut up.

BIRKLEY:

(serious now)

No, that's really cool though. I wish I could afford a car that nice. You're living the good life.

WEST:

You'll get there some day.

BIRKLEY:

(chuckling)

Please, don't disillusion me. I'm a fucking cop, I'll be riding around in a sub-compact for the rest of my

life.

PAUSE. WEST takes a sip of HIS drink. BIRKLEY follows suit.

WEST:
You know, MATT, I was a "fucking
cop" too once.

This catches BIRKLEY'S attention.

BIRKLEY:
What?

WEST:
That car was an investment. I've
worked my entire life to be able to
afford that Porsche. And you and I
both know it's one of the low end
Porsche's. In fact, it's the
cheapest one they've got on their
lot.

BIRKLEY:
(apologetically)
Forget it man, I didn't mean to
offend you.

WEST:
You didn't offend me, buddy. I'm
just worried about you.

BIRKLEY:
(with a quizzical
expression)
Why?

WEST:
I think you've got the wrong
impression of the difference in the
quality of life in this city.

BIRKLEY:
What do you mean?

WEST:
Let me show you something.

WEST lays HIS hands out flat on the bar, revealing one hand that is scarred at the knuckles, and the other one with multiple medical bandages covering paper-cut sized abrasions.

BIRKLEY:
Ouch, what happened to you?

WEST:
(pointing to the scars on
his knuckles)
I've had these for eight years.

BIRKLEY'S eyes grow wide at this. HE cannot believe HE has never noticed the scars.

BIRKLEY:
How did you?--

BIRKLEY'S train of thought trails off.

WEST:
Eight years ago, I was assigned my first rookie partner. I was a detective two years removed from getting my brass, and it was the first time I was tapped to be a training officer. And the guy who I was assigned to train wasn't as smart, brave, or as competent as you are.

BIRKLEY nods in appreciation. HE takes a drink from HIS glass.

WEST:
Anyway, the one evening, it was around seven o'clock at night, and we were checking out this guy who was suspected of murdering a local coke dealer for his product. The guy had his girlfriend in the passenger seat, and out of the blue, while he's on the Washington Bridge, he veers right and goes off the side of the bridge and into the river.

WEST takes a sip of HIS drink.

WEST:
(swallowing)
So me and my partner, we get out of our car. I see the suspect heading for the shore, so I tell my partner to dive into the river and take care of the girlfriend. I go and run after the suspect, but I don't get to him in time, because behind me,

my partner was yelling something that I couldn't understand. The bigger issue was that he was scared stiff, still looking down at the river from the bridge. So I let the suspect get away, realizing that the life of his girlfriend was more important. So I dove into the water and swam over to the car. It was filling up with water pretty fast, and I needed to get the girl out. The door was jammed, so I did the only logical thing that I could and smashed out the window with my fist. I dragged the lady out and did CPR. Ended up saving her life that day. Afterwards all my partner could do was apologize.

BIRKLEY:

Wow, I had no idea.

WEST:

Don't beat yourself up too bad. It's not really a story a share.

BIRKLEY:

Why not?

WEST:

Well, you know me, I've never been one to toot my own horn.

BIRKLEY:

This is true.

WEST:

But I guess I never really told anyone because people like that suspect always made me doubt the good in humanity. Like, think about it for a second. The guy's girlfriend is drowning in his car, and he still runs to save his own skin.

BIRKLEY:

Well, the suspect isn't as much of an upstanding citizen like yourself. Fear of jail-time can do that to a man.

WEST:

I suppose you're right.

BIRKLEY:

(gesturing with HIS drink
to the scars on WEST'S
other hand)

What about those?

WEST:

Oh, these have been accrued over the years. Bar room fights, angry dogs, the wrong ends of knives catching my skin. The whole deal.

BIRKLEY:

They still bleed?

WEST:

From time to time. Scabs fall off and open old wounds, or the same thing happens twice to certain wounds.

WEST points to one of the paper-cut like wounds.

WEST:

Like this one. Just last week, I had to bring a guy in from the bar. Did I ever tell you how much I hate doing that?

BIRKLEY:

No, not really.

WEST:

The alcohol makes some suspects dig themselves into a hole that they will never get out of. This guy took a swing at me with his pocket knife. I was bringing him in for simple assault charge, now he's got an aggravated against a police officer. He just tacked on what amounts to half his lifetime in prison.

BIRKLEY nods. HE takes a swig of HIS glass, finishing HIS drink.

WEST:

Do you understand why I'm telling you this story now, MATT?

BIRKLEY gives a quizzical look, but still nods slowly.

WEST:

It's because these scars are representative. Every time I drive my Porsche, I drive it with either one hand at twelve o'clock, or the classic two hands on ten and two. Either way, MATT, these scars are never out of my sight, and I'm not one of those self-indulgent pricks who wears driving gloves. No, I always keep these scars in my sight, do you know why?

BIRKLEY:

To remind you that the good life comes with a price?

WEST:

Exactly Matt. And I think what you're missing is that the good life comes with a price for all of us. We live in a community filled with the rich and powerful. Believe me, I can see how you feel jaded and that life is not fair. But the reality is that only about 1% of the rich in this town inherit their money. The other 99% work their fingers to the bone for it. And that's why I believe you'll get to own a Porsche, or maybe even a Ferrari one day.

BIRKLEY:

Yeesh, you've got high expectations for me.

WEST:

(chuckling)

I do. But I think what you need now is some perspective. Think about it, man. You are living the good life right now. You're fresh from the academy, and you were assigned to the Homicide Unit right out of the gate. And what's more important is that you're *good* at what you do, and you work hard at it. Let me tell you something, those two qualities, of hard work, mixed with a little bit of talent. That will

get you places. Like behind the wheel of your dream car, parked in the garage of your dream home. But MATT, as I've said before, you are living the good life, and patience, as always, is a virtue. So my advice is to enjoy the life you've got right now. Go home in your sub-compact and make love to your wife. Raise a family and enjoy watching your kids grow up. Because I don't want you to make the same mistake that I made.

BIRKLEY:

What mistake was that?

WEST:

Not realizing that I was living the good life at your age. I kept working, and working, and working towards my goal of one day owning a Porsche. I was there for my kids, and I watched them grow up, but MATT, there were countless nights where I felt so disconnected to the rest of my family. I would never wish that on you, and I don't think I'd even wish it on my own worst enemy.

PAUSE. WEST takes one final swig of HIS drink and sets it down on the bar. The BARTENDER brings BIRKLEY the bill, and BIRKLEY digs out some cash from HIS wallet. BIRKLEY and WEST exit the bar.

EXT-BAR-NIGHT

BIRKLEY and WEST stand outside the bar.

BIRKLEY:

So what's next for you, I mean immediately, as in, Monday morning.

WEST:

Well, I've been doing the F.B.I's night training program for the past two weeks, so I'm already up to speed on the nitty gritty of being a field agent. My first case crosses my desk tomorrow morning.

BIRKLEY:

Good luck with it.

WEST:
What about you? What's next?

BIRKLEY:
I'm going to go home and make love
to my wife tonight.

WEST:
(smiles)
You might want to let the alcohol
wear off bud. I don't know how many
drinks you had before I got there,
but I do know that a drunk fuck,
even with your wife, doesn't mean as
much.

BIRKLEY:
(jokingly)
What? I only had two...or eight...

WEST:
(laughing)
Yeah, my point exactly buddy. Hey
hold up for a second though. I got
something for you.

BIRKLEY:
Oh?

WEST reaches into HIS inner coat pocket and takes out a
bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue Label Scotch.

WEST:
(tossing BIRKLEY the
bottle)
To living the good life. Anyway
that we can.

BIRKLEY:
I'll drink to that.

WEST:
I know you're a worker MATT. I'll
put in a good word.

BIRKLEY:
With the feds? Thanks.

WEST:
You're welcome. I'll see you
around.

BIRKLEY and WEST slap hands and share a man hug. They release from their embrace.

BIRKLEY:
Good luck to you.

WEST:
Same to you.

BIRKLEY and WEST go their separate ways. WEST calls to BIRKLEY without turning around.

WEST:
Remember to sober up first, MATT!

BIRKLEY:
Yeah, yeah.

WEST:
I mean it!

BIRKLEY
I will, don't worry. Have a good night.

WEST:
Live the good life.

BIRKLEY:
Everyday man. Everyday.

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

THE END.