

B.O.D. - THE *ABDUCTION*

By: P.J. Kotton



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It was Sunday, Officer Bill Gannon and Sgt. Joe Friday were once again working the night watch in the Business Office Division. The day had been warm, and the heat lingered in the building, making it uncomfortable. It had been fairly busy so far, but mostly routine things. Citizens with questions, a group requesting a permit to hold a public rally, minor complaints against neighbors, and one stolen vehicle report. Joe was on the phone doing a follow up on a report of a rabid dog on the loose.

“Really? Are you sure? That figures. Okay, thanks. Guess that is better anyway. Well, we have to check it out, either way.” Joe shook his head and hung up the phone.

“What was that about?” Bill inquired from the desk where he was sitting.

“You know that report that was filed about an hour ago, the one with the rabid dog running around?” Joe asked as Bill nodded his head.

“Well, the Officer went there and found the ‘rabid’ dog. Turned out to be a miniature white poodle a little high strung. Seems the lady who filed the report hates dogs and her neighbor, so she decided to get both of them. She thought a cop would shoot the dog and eliminate the problem. We can’t really prove she didn’t know the dog was okay, but the Officer warned her about filing false reports for the future.”

“It takes all kinds, doesn’t Joe?”

“Yeah, and they all seem to wind up here.”

Bill returned to his paperwork as Joe left to check out what was happening at the front desk.

A very distraught woman approached the counter where he was standing.

“Can you help me, please?” she pleads as tears threatened to spill from her eyes.

“Yes Ma’am, I’m Sergeant Friday, what can I do for you?”

“It’s my boys, Sergeant, they’re missing. They haven’t come home.”

Joe turned around and motioned at Bill to join him at the counter. Bill joined him with his notebook open and ready.

“This is Officer Gannon, and your name is?” Joe pulled a report sheet from under the counter and started filling in the information as she began to give it to him.

“Stella Brockberg.” She gave him her address and phone number.

“Now tell us about the boys. How old are they and their names.”

“Jacob, he’s seven and his younger brother Jeremy, he’s five.”

“Now when did you notice they were missing? When was the last time you saw them.”

“On Friday afternoon, about three-thirty.”

Bill and Joe exchanged startled looks, before glancing back towards her.

“Your sons have been missing since Friday and you’re just reporting it now on Sunday?” Bill managed to hide how appalled he was.

Her tears are coming faster and she searches her pockets for a tissue. Joe reached under the counter and produced a box to set in front of her.

Taking one she dabbed at her eyes before continuing. “Thanks. No, you don’t understand. On Friday, their father picked them up for the weekend. We’re divorced, and he gets them every other weekend. He gets them on Friday and always has them home by Sunday by five. He’s always on time, never late.”

Joe gave Bill a knowing look. This typically was like many cases where Dad is a little late and right away Mom thinks he stole the kids. It happens, but usually they are running late, or had a flat. The kids are returned unharmed.

Joe explained this to Mrs. Brockberg in an effort to calm her.

“No, I don’t believe this is the case here. I’m getting remarried soon, and he believes a new Father will take his place. He’s been depressed about this and I am afraid he’s taken the kids and run off with them.”

“Did you try to contact him at his residence?” Joe queried her.

“No, went to his cabin up on Lake Silverwood, northeast of here about seventy five miles. There’s no phone there. He takes them to go fishing, they really enjoy that. He was a lousy husband, but he’s always been a good father.”

“OK Ma’am, can you give us the exact location of this cabin? We’ll get a report made to the local authorities and have ‘em check it out.”

She relays all this information to Joe for the report he is filling out.

“Officer Gannon will get this filed immediately. Now you should go home and wait for your boys. Maybe they are there already.” Joe smiled encouragingly towards her.

“Someone from here will contact you as soon as we have any information. Try not to worry, I’m sure they are fine. Perhaps the fish were biting today and they lost track of time. They are with their Dad, and are safe.”

“I don’t know, Sergeant, I have a terrible feeling about this. Something’s just not right.”

“Do you have a way home? I could have someone take you.”

“No, thanks, my boyfriend is waiting in the car. You’ll call as soon as you know, right?”

“Yes, Ma’am, we will.”

She grabbed a few more tissues before heading towards the door.

Bill returned to the counter having filed the report and made some phone calls.

“The local police said they would dispatch a unit out shortly. They know where the cabin is.”

Joe nodded. “Good. Thanks Bill, it’s going to be another case of being late, or taking a little extra time with the kids. Seems like we see more of this all the time. The adults break up their marriage, but the kids are caught in the middle.”

“Yeah,” Bill agreed. “You see fewer happy marriages these days, but you never see a happy divorce, especially where kids are involved. You want something to eat, Joe, or some coffee? I can get it if you do.”

“No, I’m not hungry, but coffee sounds good. Thanks. I’ll take on some of this paperwork while you do that.”

He sat down at the desk, but started nothing. He couldn’t shake the sensation that something wasn’t right. He wasn’t one for premonitions, that’s more Bill’s style, but something about this case was eating at him. He tried to shrug it off by tackling the work in front of him.

The last couple hours of the shift went by slowly. Finally the clock said it was quitting time. Bill and Joe grabbed their jackets and turn things over to the next shift. Just as they are about to leave, the phone on the desk rings.

“Let the new shift get it Joe,” Bill said. He was anxious to head home.

“Just a minute Bill,” Joe said as he reached for the phone.

“Business Office, Friday speaking,”

Bill watched as Joe listened to the caller. *What’s wrong?* he thought. *He’s not saying much, but is nodding his head.*

“Uh-huh, okay. You’re sure? How long ago? All of them? Yeah, I’ll take care of it on this end. Thanks, we appreciate your cooperation. Good bye”

He hangs up the receiver and leans over the desk, bracing himself with his arms.

“Joe? What’s wrong? Who was that?” Bill’s voice was heavy with apprehension. Joe rarely showed a reacted to anything. After a moment, he answered him in a barely audible voice that Bill could barely hear.

“That was the Lake Silverwood Police. They went to the cabin, the father and two boys were there. Double murder, suicide. Father shot his boys...then himself. The investigators think they have been dead for over twenty-four hours. Looks like he shot them in their sleep.”

“I’ll call the chaplain Joe. You want to do the notification?”

He knows Joe well enough to anticipate that.

“Call the chaplain and ask him to meet us in the garage.” His voice is a ghostly whisper that Bill can barely catch the words as they drifted by his ears.

Bill filled the chaplain in on the details and tells him to meet them at the car in ten minutes. He looks over and notices Joe hasn’t moved from where he’d been standing. He had an unlit cigarette in his hand, rolling it back and forth, not really aware it was even there. The anguished look on Joe’s face was something foreign to Bill. It was rare for anything affect Joe’s normally stony expression.

For a moment Joe thought may lose it. *It’s my job*, he’s thinks to himself, *to help people. How do I help here? There is nothing, absolutely nothing to make this better or easier for her.* He becomes aware of Bill standing to one side, waiting patiently for him to work through the horrors in his mind. Despite the warmth in the room, Joe felt chilled, right to the marrow of his bones. He lifts his head to meet Bill’s eyes.

“I told her they were probably okay, Bill. I told her they would be home soon. That they were safe with their father. How do I tell her this? They’re not safe! They’re not coming home! Not now, not ever! Nothing we say or do will change that.”

Joe tossed his unlit cigarette into the trash, turning abruptly on his heel, he heads to the garage where the chaplain waits for them, Bill following in his wake.

God, sometimes I hate this job!