

Killing Billy Blain

By D.T. Kelly

I stared out the window of the restaurant into the grayness of a Chicago January morning. The streets were clear of snow, but the sidewalks were dusted white and the curbs caked with black slush. I finished my coffee and motioned the waitress. "This is my last job." She didn't look at either of us as she refilled my cup. We waited for her to leave.

Frank took a bite of toast, "You told me that already."

"Well, I'm making sure you heard me." I creamed my coffee, "Eighteen years of this job is enough."

"I understand. Most people burn out after five." Frank took his cigarette from the table edge and took a drag, blowing the bluish cloud towards the ceiling.

"This job eats at your soul." I took another drink. "It's nothing but negativity day in and day out."

"Billy, I said I understand, quit preachin'."

"Sorry Frank. I've just hit the point where I can't take it anymore. So, who is it this time?"

"Right," the cigarette dangled from the corner of his mouth as he spoke. I've always wondered how smokers could do that without losing the cigarette. Frank slid a manila envelope across the table. "We'd like you to get it done this afternoon."

I put the envelope next to me, "You sure he's going to be home?"

"Yeah. Larry Spanos is sitting on him."

"Right. You sure Lar isn't banging that little broad of his in the back seat again?"

"Jonny Moon is with him."

"That's comforting. He's probably jerking off in the front seat." I shook my head. "Jonny Moon. Did that sick fuck ever tell you what he used to do when he worked in a sandwich joint?"

"I can't say that he did," Frank said, mildly interested.

"Well, he's someone I won't miss." I took a bite of bagel. "Fuckin' guy."

"So, this afternoon right?" Frank pinched his cigarette between his fingers and dropped the carcass to the floor.

"No problem Frank. It's a done deal."

"I can't say we're not going to miss you," Frank lit another cigarette and took a drag. "You're one of the most reliable guys I have."

"Oh let's not get sentimental," I said, popping the last piece of bagel into my mouth. "I tell you what, I'll let you pickup the tab this time."

"I always pick up the tab." He smiled, "It's my job."

I finished my coffee and stood up. "Take it easy Frank." We shook hands and I left.

When I got home I opened the envelope and took out its contents. I skimmed the papers and stopped at the picture. He was a small, portly man with more hair on his face than on his head. He had squinty eyes, reminded me of a mole. I tossed the picture onto the table and went to my filing cabinet. My gun cleaning kit was in the top drawer.

After cleaning and loading my Beretta, I slipped it to my inside coat pocket. I found that holsters are clumsy and bulky. Either one could get you killed.

I picked up the picture and studied it again. Mole Man wasn't looking happy. He wouldn't be happy when I got there, either.

It was snowing lightly when I parked my Ford pickup two houses down from the apartment complex. Normal protocol would be to park at least a block away to assure not being seen before the deed was done. I'm too tired for protocol.

I spotted Larry's Impala parked on the opposite side of the street with a full view of the apartment's only door. I'll be damned, Larry is doing his job.

Larry rolled the window down as I approached. "Hey, you're late."

"Fuck you."

"Touchy, ain't he Moony? You'd think this was the old man's last job or somethin'."

"I don't need this shit. Just tell me, is there anything I need to know?" I saw Jonny Moon slumped in the passenger side of the car. I couldn't tell if he was sleeping or drunk.

"New, you mean?" Larry wasn't smart.

"Yes, is there anything new?" I clarified, "New since this morning?"

"Nah. Moony and I have been sitting here since six a.m. No one has come in or gone out."

Next to him, Moony mumbled something I could not make out.

"Oh right," Larry turned back to me. "The little fat fuck came out to get his mail about an hour ago. He wasn't even dressed, came out in boxers and a robe hanging off his shoulders. Moony here got wood from it, right Moon?" He gave Jonny a backhanded slap in the arm. Moony grunted.

"Whatever," I said, turned and started walking away.

"Hey, you want us to come with you? Larry called out loudly, "To back you up?"

I stopped and turned back towards the car. I'd rather gouge my eyes out with a rusted straight razor than work with these guys more than I have to. "No, thanks."

"You sure? It being your last day and all. Hey, maybe Moony and I can do it for you? Whaddya say, aye Moony? You up for it?"

I could not hear Moon, but I'm sure he grunted. "No, really. I got it."

"Okay then."

Moon mumbled again, and again I had to wait for Larry. The first thing I do when I get to Florida is to see a doctor about my hearing.

"Hey, Moony wants to know if we can split."

"What?"

"You know, jet. Scram. Leave. This is a simple job anyway."

"Jesus Christ." I spun my head around in disgust. I noticed movement in the bushes next to the car. Moon spoke up, like he knew I saw something.

"Hey man, chill. I was just fuckin' with you. It's your last day, I couldn't let you go without a good fuckin' from Moony."

Larry laughed.

Moon continued, "Hey, word has it you're goin' to Florida, that true?"

“Yeah,” Larry added. “You’re going to go give it to Minnie up the ass aren’t ya?” Larry laughed, Moony grinned slightly.

“I’m glad to be getting away from you morons. Is your mind ever out of the gutter?”

“Not us, man,” Larry said turning his head for approval from Moony. “We think about sex all the time, ain’t that right Moony?”

“Damn skippy,” Moony turned his greasy head. “Hey, whatever happened to the tall brunette you were banging?”

“None of your fucking business,” I said.

“Aw c’mon, you’re leaving anyway.” Moony took a cigar out of the glove box and bit the plastic wrapper off. “I won’t hurt her, just want to bang her for a while.”

“She’s at least twice your age.” I had enough and started walking away.

Larry called out after me, “Aw hey c’mon, he’s just fucking with you, right Moony?”

“I’d rather be fucking her,” Moony retorted. They both laughed again. I crossed the street towards the apartment complex. I pretended not to notice the petite woman scurry from the bushes to Larry’s car.

The apartment complex was a simple layout, four units on the first floor, four units up top, stairs at both sides. It sat sideways on the property, opening up to a duplicate layout across a small courtyard. I pulled the papers out of my back pocket. I was looking for apartment 2D. I saw the numbers on the door closest to me, 1D. This was going to be easier than I thought. I studied the door marked 2D. This one was different than the rest in that it was missing its screen door. Even better, one less barrier to get through.

I slipped the papers into my coat pocket with my gun and walked carefully up the sides of the metal stairs to make as little noise as possible. Age still had nothing on my agility. It was snowing harder now, turning into a classic Chicago snowstorm. When I got to the door, I stood to the side to collect myself.

A noise from the street startled me - Larry’s stereo. The bass was incredibly loud, rattling the metal railing of the stairwell. That fuck is going to get me killed. So much for collecting myself, I couldn’t think straight with his radio boom-booming through the neighborhood.

I decided to go with the ‘lost old man’ routine. I hated doing it, it made me feel dirty, whorish. But when the game’s on the line, you’ve got to play your ace.

I blew on my hands to keep them nimble and knocked on the door. “Hello?” I called out sheepishly, almost drunk-like. “I’m lost and I need help, is anyone there?” I waited.

“Whattya want,” a hoarse voice seeped through the door.

“I’m lost sir, please help me?”

“Go ask someone else, I’m busy,” the voice was annoyed.

“Sir, please. I have been wandering around here since morning. I’m looking for my sister’s house and I have no idea where I am. Please help me.”

There was silence, then the voice came through the door, louder, “Go away old timer, I don’t have the time for this.”

“Please sir,” I poured it on thick. “No one else is home here to help me.”

I heard something crash and him swear. The door opened and Mole Man was standing before me, still wearing his robe and worn boxers.

“All right, what do you need?” He was shorter than I and his pockmarked cheeks were covered with five-day stubble. I saw a broken bowl on the floor of the doorway and macaroni scattered. A cat was licking at the cheese.

“Sir, thank you,” I hammed it up. “I’ve been looking for my sister’s house for-”

“Yeah yeah, get on with it.”

“I have her address right here, but I can’t seem to read it. My eyes aren’t what they used to be.” I reached my hand into my coat; my fingers close around the handle of my gun briefly. I grabbed the papers and pulled them out. “It’s right here. What does that say?” I slapped the papers on his chest a little too hard for my persona.

“What th-”

Then came the line I had relished saying time and again in years past. That day, the passion was gone and I uttered them for the final time. “Consider yourself served.”

He took a step backwards and squinted to read what he held. “That fucking cunt! I swear to God I’m going to fucking kill her!”

I was already on the stairs. My footprints were nearly covered now, the snow coming down fast and with a passion not seen in years.

“You motherfucker! I hope you rot in hell!”

I cleared the last stair and walked towards Larry’s car. Serving papers was not what I had always done with my life, but when I retired from the Chicago Police department I needed something to keep me active. Serving seemed a natural progression.

I was nearly behind Larry’s car before I realized that it was moving. I’m going to have to get my eyes checked too. The Impala’s shocks squeaked loudly, Larry and his girl were in the back seat. Music pounded through the enclosed car and pulsed off my eardrums. I didn’t look long, but Moony was watching the action from the front seat.

“Billy Blain?”

I turned around. A tall thin man wearing a black sweatshirt and blue sweatpants was standing in front of me. I recognized him as a man I served papers two years ago. I remembered him because he cried like a whiny little girl afterwards. It takes balls to break down like that in front of another man and I envied him for it.

In fact, a lot of them cried. Some got angry, and that was what the gun was for, but most of them just cried like little babies. The sawed-off shotgun in this guy’s hands told me he wasn’t a baby anymore.

“You ruined my life, motherfucker.”

I didn’t know what to say. My insides screamed to pull out my gun, but his barrel persuaded me not to.

“I’ve been waiting for this for a long time.”

I wanted to say I’m sorry. I wanted to plead for my life. But I saw it in his eyes. I was a dead man.

He fired.

I felt the searing heat explode in my gut and I fell backwards. The pain was close behind and I nearly passed out. I looked up; I could clearly see Moony in the front seat. If he looked a millimeter to his left, he would see me and my killer. His eyes never left Larry’s bitch.

I screamed, but spurts of hot blood were all that left my lips. It streaked down my cheeks and crept over my ear. I could see the circle of crimson grow around me. I heard him reload, the spent casing bounced around my left ear. I felt warm metal slip between my lips. He was standing over me now, his face accentuated by falling snow. There was a white haze creeping into my field of vision, making him glow like some askew angel.

He twisted the shotgun in my mouth back and forth nervously. He regained his composure and stiffened. "Consider yourself served."

A loud thunderclap resonated down on the empty street. It was swallowed quickly by the blizzard.

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