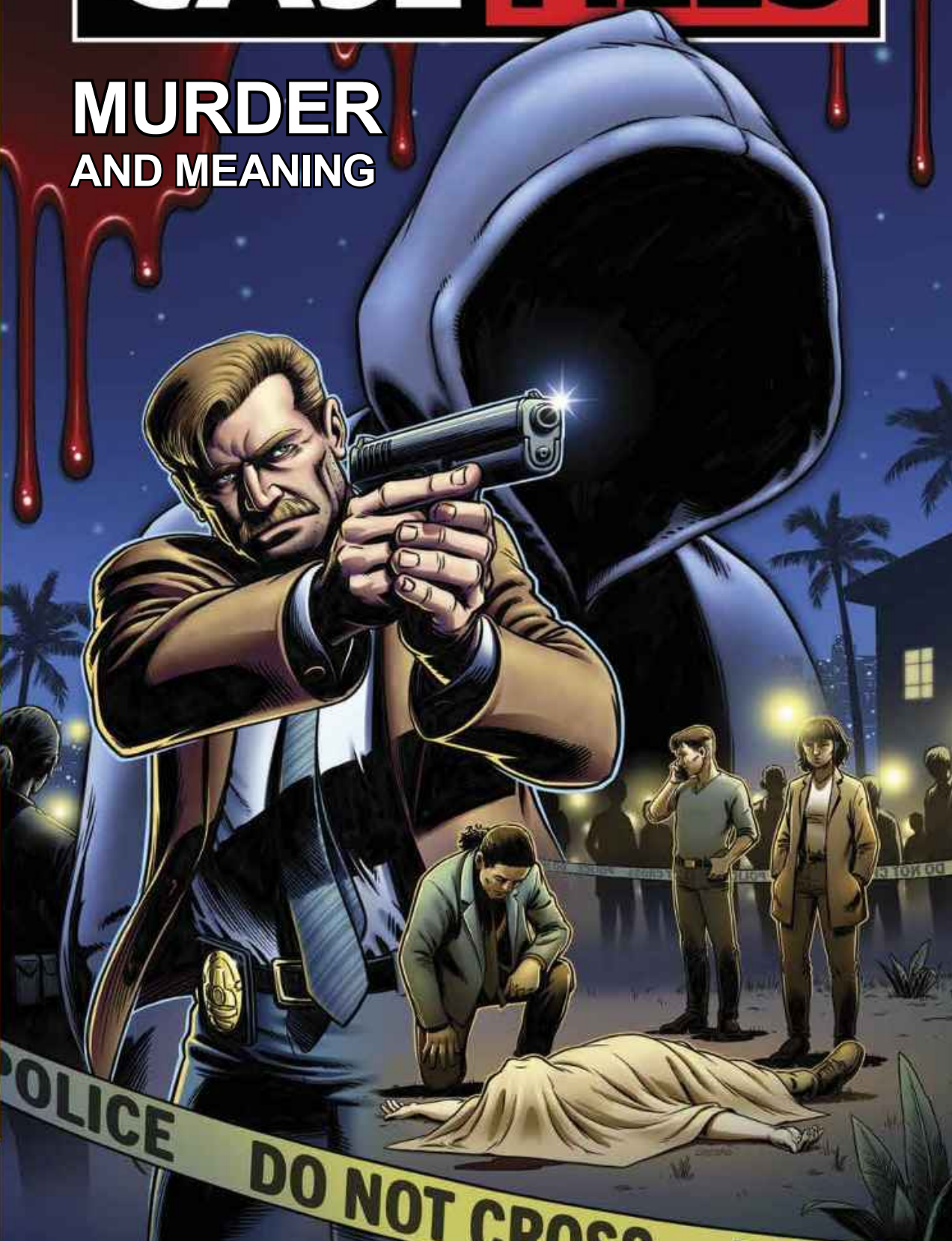


JIMMY WALLACE & J. WARNER WALLACE


CASE FILES™

**MURDER
AND MEANING**



CASE FILES

CHAPTER 01: THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE




SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA...


NICHOLAS KASHAK GREW UP HERE IN SAN PEDRO. HE HAD DREAMED HIS WHOLE LIFE OF GETTING OUT OF THE SMALL PORT NEIGHBORHOOD AT THE SOUTH END OF LOS ANGELES.



HE EVEN LEFT ONCE. MOVED TO LONG BEACH, GOT A JOB AT THE PORT. IT WAS HARD WORK AND THE HOURS WERE LONG.



THAT'S WHERE HE FIRST GOT INTRODUCED TO SPEED.



A CO-WORKER NOTICED NICHOLAS HAD BEEN STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP WITH HIS WORK AND OFFERED IT TO HELP HIM OUT.

WHEN HE WAS LIVING AT HOME, NICHOLAS WAS TOO SCARED OF GETTING CAUGHT BY HIS PARENTS TO THINK ABOUT GETTING HIGH.

BUT NOW HE WAS MORE WORRIED ABOUT BEING OUT OF A JOB.

THE DOPE HELPED NICHOLAS KEEP UP WITH WORK, BUT--AS IT TURNED OUT--HE COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH THE DOPE. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE HE WAS USING ON MORE THAN JUST HIS WORK DAYS.

NICHOLAS' DRIVE FOR WORK WAS OVERTAKEN BY A NEED TO GET HIGH. THE ADDICTION COST HIM HIS JOB AND FORCED HIM BACK HOME WITH HIS PARENTS.

BACK TO PEDRO.

NICHOLAS COULDN'T STAND TO SEE THE DISAPPOINTMENT ON HIS PARENTS' FACES. HE HAD TO LEAVE. BEFORE LONG, HE WAS OUT ON THE STREETS.

WITH HER. WITH AMANDA.

FIND ANYTHING GOOD TONIGHT?

NOT MUCH... YOU?

YES.

CRACK!

THREE DAYS LATER. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

DET. MICHAEL MURPHY HAD SPENT OVER FIFTEEN YEARS INVESTIGATING HOMICIDES. A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME, NO ONE KNEW MORE ABOUT CATCHING CRIMINALS.



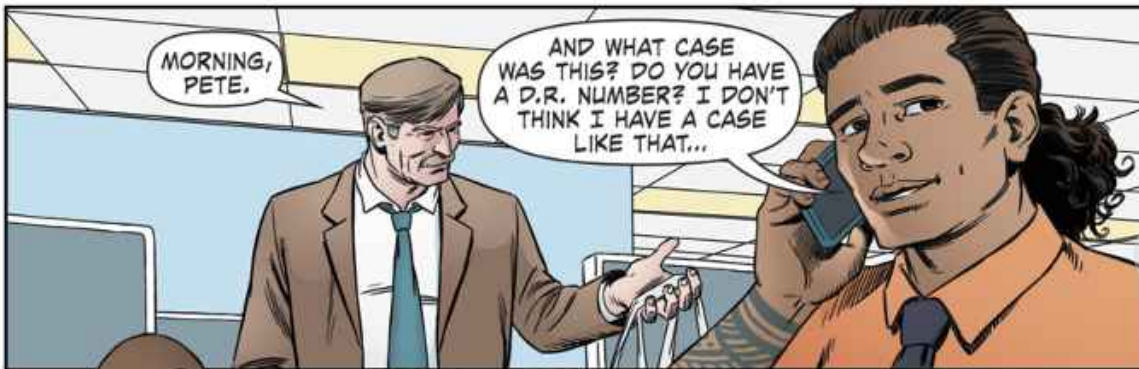
FOR MURPH THERE WAS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE JOB. HE LIVED, ATE, BREATHED DETECTIVE WORK.

MORNING, MURPH.



MORNING, PETE.

AND WHAT CASE WAS THIS? DO YOU HAVE A D.R. NUMBER? I DON'T THINK I HAVE A CASE LIKE THAT...



CONGRATULATIONS, SIR. YOU HIT THE BIG ONE.

LUCKY ME...

ALL EMPLOYEES AT MURPH'S AGENCY WERE GIVEN A COMMEMORATIVE "CHALLENGE COIN" FOR EVERY FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE.

MURPH NEVER PUT MUCH STOCK IN THEM. AFTER ALL, YOU GOT THEM JUST FOR EXISTING.

25 YEARS OF SERVICE. HAD IT REALLY BEEN THAT LONG? AT 52 YEARS OLD, 25 YEARS MEANT ELIGIBILITY FOR RETIREMENT. MURPH WAS OFFICIALLY PAST HIS EXPIRATION DATE.



GREAT.

GOT SOMETHING ELSE FOR YOU TWO. SOME KIDS FOUND A BODY ON THE BEACH IN PEDRO. SOUNDS LIKE IT'S BEEN OUT THERE AWHILE. JUST THE CASE FOR AN OG DETECTIVE LIKE YOURSELF.

ANY IDEA ABOUT THE GUY WHO DIED?



CAN YOU GO OVER THIS ONE MORE TIME? WHAT WAS IT YOU WERE CALLING ABOUT?

OH, I GUESS IT'S SOME TRANSIENT. HE'D BEEN REPORTED MISSING BY A GIRLFRIEND OR SOMETHING.

HOMELESS GUY FOUND AT THE BOTTOM OF A CLIFF... THANKS, L.T. HOW DO WE KNOW HE DIDN'T JUST FALL IN SOME DRUNKEN STUPOR?

WELL, EITHER WAY, SOMEONE NEEDS TO LOOK INTO IT. I NEED YOU GUYS TO HEAD RIGHT OUT.

EVEN IF IT'S A MURDER, WHO'S LOOKING TO KILL A TRANSIENT?

ANOTHER HOMELESS PERSON? PROBABLY NO HUMANS INVOLVED.



WOW... THEY HUNG UP!

PETE, YOU HEARING THIS?

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT EITHER, MURPH.

YOU ASK SOMEONE A COUPLE SIMPLE QUESTIONS, YOU KNOW--TO INVESTIGATE.

THAT'S WHAT I DO, INVESTIGATE. AND THEY GO AND HANG UP ON YOU!

I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO TO IT.

NO, I'M TALKING ABOUT THIS NEW CASE. TRANSIENT DEAD IN SAN PEDRO.

LIEUTENANT CAMPBELL SAYS WE GOTTA LOOK AT IT AS A MURDER.

ALWAYS SAD TO SEE A PERSON TAKEN BEFORE THEIR TIME...

LET'S SEE THE FACTS BEFORE WE FEEL TOO SORRY FOR THE GUY.



WELL, PARTNER, YOU KNOW I ALWAYS TAKE A MID-MORNING COFFEE BREAK WITH THE GIRLS IN RECORDS. CAN'T MISS MY "BARNES AND DREW" RERUNS. BUT THEN I CAN HEAD DOWN.

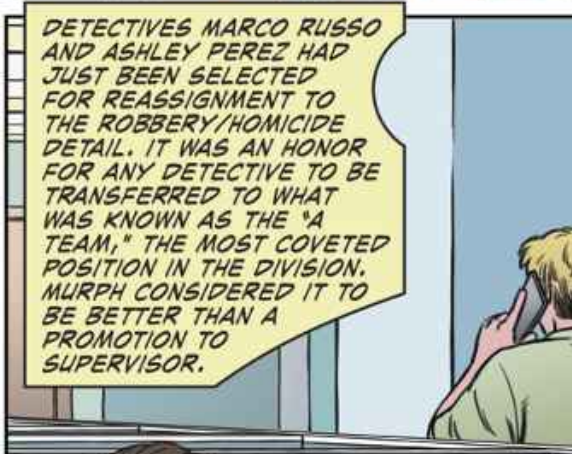
THE LIEUTENANT WANTS US OUT THERE ASAP. PROBABLY TIME FOR YOU TO INVEST IN SOME STREAMING SERVICES OR SOMETHING.



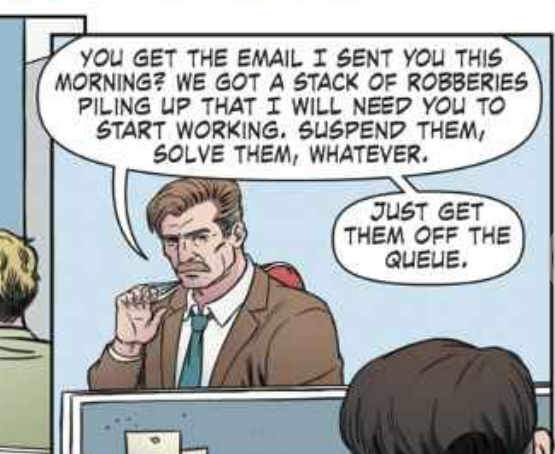
"BARNES AND DREW" IS A COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE, MURPH. YOU KNOW THAT.

THIS WILL BE A NICE CASE TO BREAK IN RUSSO AND PEREZ. AT LEAST THEY CAN GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS AND SEE HOW TO RUN A MURDER INVESTIGATION.

FRESH BLOOD.



DETECTIVES MARCO RUSSO AND ASHLEY PEREZ HAD JUST BEEN SELECTED FOR REASSIGNMENT TO THE ROBBERY/HOMICIDE DETAIL. IT WAS AN HONOR FOR ANY DETECTIVE TO BE TRANSFERRED TO WHAT WAS KNOWN AS THE "A TEAM," THE MOST COVETED POSITION IN THE DIVISION. MURPH CONSIDERED IT TO BE BETTER THAN A PROMOTION TO SUPERVISOR.



YOU GET THE EMAIL I SENT YOU THIS MORNING? WE GOT A STACK OF ROBBERIES PILING UP THAT I WILL NEED YOU TO START WORKING. SUSPEND THEM, SOLVE THEM, WHATEVER.

JUST GET THEM OFF THE QUEUE.



DO YOU HAVE ANY CHEATERS OR ANYTHING FOR FILINGS? I CAN NEVER FIGURE OUT HOW MANY COPIES OF EVERYTHING I NEED.

I GOT A CHECKLIST HERE SOMEWHERE... D.A.'S OFFICE CAN NEVER MAKE UP THEIR MINDS ANYWAYS. THEY ALWAYS WANT A DIFFERENT AMOUNT. I DON'T KNOW WHY WE CAN'T JUST DO EVERYTHING ELECTRONICALLY.



YOU GOT IT.

SOUNDS GOOD, SIR.



BUT ALL THAT IS GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT. FIRST, LET'S GO SEE A DEAD GUY.



IT WASN'T SURPRISING TO FIND SGT. LEWIS AT THE CRIME SCENE. SOME PEOPLE JUST HAD A WAY OF BEING AROUND WHEN ANYTHING BIG HAPPENED.

MURPH HAD WORKED MOST OF HIS CAREER WITH LEWIS. BUT WHERE MURPH HAD PURSUED DETECTIVE WORK, LEWIS NEVER LEFT THE FIELD.



MURPH DIDN'T PUT MUCH STOCK IN LEWIS'S INVESTIGATIVE ABILITY.

THE GUY HAD ONLY WORKED BASIC PATROL AND IN THE TRAFFIC DIVISION BEFORE PROMOTING.



WHAT DO YOU THINK, JOE? REALLY A MURDER OR JUST ANOTHER JUMPER?

BODY IS PRETTY BANGED UP... HARD TO TELL, BUT COULD BE.

ONE OF THE PATROL GUYS FOUND WHAT HE THINKS IS SOME DRIED BLOOD OVER BY THAT TRASH CAN.



WELL, I'M GLAD THESE YOUNGSTERS ARE LOOKING AROUND. SOME OF THE PATROL GUYS CAN'T BE BOTHERED...



LATER, BACK AT THE STATION...

ASHLEY PEREZ WASN'T SURPRISED THAT MARCO HAD A LEAD TO FOLLOW. THINGS ALWAYS SEEMED TO COME EASY FOR HIM.

ASHLEY HAD ALWAYS GIVEN 110% TO HER WORK. NO ONE WAS MORE METICULOUS, AND YET MARCO, THE MOST RECKLESS COP SHE KNEW, SOMEHOW HAD A LEAD.

IT WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WONDER IF HE REALLY GOT HIS INTEL ON THE UP-AND-UP.

IT WASN'T AS THOUGH ASHLEY HAD NOT FOUND SUCCESS. SHE HAD JUST SPENT THE LAST FOUR YEARS WORKING IN THE DEPARTMENT'S ELITE UNDERCOVER DIVISION.

"THE PLAINCLOTHES BOYS"

THEY KEPT THEIR NAME EVEN WHEN ASHLEY WAS ON THE TEAM.

WHY CHANGE TRADITION JUST BECAUSE THEY FINALLY LET A FEMALE ON THE TEAM?

MAYBE SHE WAS JUST FEELING OFF BECAUSE SHE'D SPENT SO MUCH TIME ON BABY LEAVE. IT HAD BEEN A HARDER TRANSITION COMING BACK TO WORK THAN SHE EXPECTED.

WHAT'S UP, BIG BROTHER? FIRST ONE-EIGHTY SEVEN?
WHAT'S UP, LAURA? NOTHING TOO EXCITING HERE. JUST SOME GUY TWEAKED OUT AND PROBABLY WALKED TOO CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF A CLIFF.
OR GOT PUSHED.

HOW DO YOU KNOW HE WAS A NARCO USER?
I HAD A CASE WITH HIM BEFORE. THE DUMMY WAS BREAKING INTO PHARMACIES ON BASICALLY A DAILY BASIS, BUT HE'D ONLY EVER TAKE LIKE A SINGLE BOTTLE.

EVERY TIME? NOT MUCH OF A PLANNER...
NOT MUCH OF AN ANYTHING. I'VE STILL GOT TO WORK HIM UP, BUT I THINK MOST OF HIS PRIORS WERE ALL PETTY STUFF LIKE THAT. I KNOW HE HAD A GIRLFRIEND, I'M TRYING TO ID HER.

DO YOU KNOW IF HE HAD ANY SOCIAL MEDIA?
PROBABLY. WHO KNOWS?



ASHLEY LIKED LAURA. IT WAS HARD NOT TO LIKE HER, BUT IT WAS ALSO HARD FOR ASHLEY NOT TO FEEL A LITTLE JEALOUS OF HER, TOO.

TEXT ME HIS INFO, AND A GOOD PICTURE SO I CAN SEE WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.

MURPH! HEARD WE ALREADY HAVE A LEAD ON YOUR PEDRO CASE.

SO YOUR BROTHER SAYS.

LAURA WAS JUST SO COMFORTABLE. CONFIDENT. LIKE SHE KNEW SHE BELONGED AT THE DEPARTMENT.



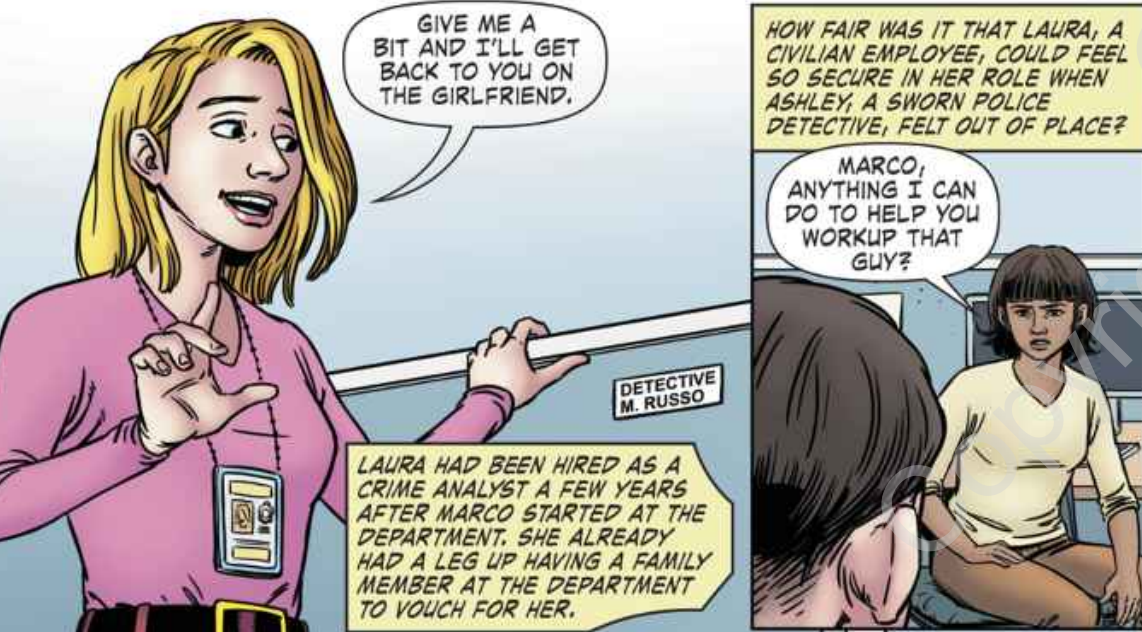
GIVE ME A BIT AND I'LL GET BACK TO YOU ON THE GIRLFRIEND.

HOW FAIR WAS IT THAT LAURA, A CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE, COULD FEEL SO SECURE IN HER ROLE WHEN ASHLEY, A SWORN POLICE DETECTIVE, FELT OUT OF PLACE?

MARCO, ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP YOU WORKUP THAT GUY?

LAURA HAD BEEN HIRED AS A CRIME ANALYST A FEW YEARS AFTER MARCO STARTED AT THE DEPARTMENT. SHE ALREADY HAD A LEG UP HAVING A FAMILY MEMBER AT THE DEPARTMENT TO VOUCH FOR HER.

DETECTIVE M. RUSSO



DO YOU MIND PULLING HIS BOOKING PHOTOS? I NEED TO SEND ONE TO LAURA TO LOOK AT.

ASHLEY COMFORTED HERSELF IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SHE COULD NOT BE OUTWORKED. SHE WOULD THROW HERSELF INTO THE CASE, AS SHE HAD DONE SO MANY TIMES IN THE PAST.

NO ONE WAS MORE DILIGENT. SHE WOULD PROVE HERSELF ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.



GEEZ. HE WAS IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE...

TALK ABOUT FACES OF METH!

NAME	KASHAK, NICHOLAS		
ALIASES	NICHOLAS, NICKY		
GENDER	M	CITIZEN	YES
HEIGHT	5' 10"	WEIGHT	163 LBS
EYE COLOR	BROWN	HAIR COLOR	LT BROWN
DOB	11/15/1995		
ARREST & SENTENCING			
DATE	OFFENSE		



THIS GUY HAS A GIRLFRIEND, AND HERE I CAN'T GET A SECOND DATE WITH ANY OF THESE TINDER CHICKS.

SOUNDS LIKE A PERSONAL PROBLEM, MARCO.



HEY, IT'S NOT JUST ME. KIM HAS THE SAME ISSUE, OKAY? NO ONE WILL GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY ON THESE APPS.

KIM? SO HE AND DREA AREN'T...?