

Rain

A Connor Maxwell Mystery

By
Timothy Glass

Quote

A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble.

Charles Spurgeon

Hell is empty all the devils are here

William Shakespeare

Chapter 1

The .357 Magnum echoed through the alley, followed by another shot from a 9mm Glock that ricocheted like a pinball off the walls of the nearby buildings. Lakewood Police Officer Peter McKelly, married for thirteen years and father of three children, lay in a puddle of his own blood. The red liquid spread beneath his body and spilled out on the asphalt under his left arm.

“72, PD, officer down, shots fired, 933, ah ... Washington Street,” Officer Dan Walsh frantically yelled into his mic as he holstered his Glock and knelt next to his partner. Before the dispatcher could respond, every unit within close proximity of Washington Street switched on its sirens and lights, running code in the direction of the call’s location.

“Hang in there, buddy,” Walsh begged as tears began spilling from his eyes.

He grabbed a handkerchief from his back pocket and applied pressure to the wound in an attempt to stop the bleeding. The bullet had entered just below Pete's armpit but above where his bulletproof vest ended, leaving the officer unprotected.

"Don't do this to me, Pete, you got to hang in there ... for Amy and the kids," Dan said, hearing the approaching sirens.

Pete's eyelids flickered for a nanosecond as blood seeped from the corners of his mouth and his nose. The blood turned a deeper hue as the alley grew dim and shadows lengthened due to the setting sun in the western skies over Lakewood. The rise and fall of Pete's chest stopped.

"Dammit! Don't you do this to me!" Dan screamed as he began CPR.

Pete's open eyes stared blankly into the sky. Dan knew in his heart that Pete was gone, but he refused to stop until someone, he wasn't sure who, pulled him from Pete's body.

"Dan, he's gone," a voice said.

Dan refused to listen. He scrambled back to Pete. "No, he can't be." Dan fought to continue CPR.

"Dan." Detective Kate Stroup, a veteran of the Lakewood Police Department's Detective Division, pulled him over to the unmarked car. Dan looked up into the beautiful face of the detective. Any other time, he would have loved looking into that face, but not today.

“Connor and Sundae have gone after the perp.”

Dan knew that Connor was Kate’s partner and Sundae was the Lakewood Police Department’s K-9. He looked around at the crime scene that had unfolded before him. Minutes before, he and Pete had been dispatched to a possible break-in. Prior to the call, the most pressing things on their minds were where they would grab a bite for dinner and how Pete’s oldest daughter was spending too much time on social media. Now uniformed cops and flashing lights were everywhere. Dan felt as if he was watching all this on TV. That was until his eyes rested on the sheet-covered body of his partner, Pete McKelly. ‘Please let this just be a bad nightmare,’ he pleaded to himself.

“How can I ever explain this to Amy and the kids?” Dan asked. His legs no longer supported his weight and his body slid down next to the unmarked car. Rocking back and forth, he held his head, trying to hide the tears spilling down his cheeks.

Kate motioned for a female uniformed officer to come over. “Stay with him. I need to back up Connor and Sundae.”

“49, PD,” Kate said, “be advised I’m clearing the area to go back up Detective Maxwell and K-9 Sundae.”

Kate ran down the alley where she had last seen Connor and Sundae. “Also, be advised we’ll need the police chaplain dispatched.”

“10-4, 49, already done ... Kate, stay safe.” The dispatcher’s voice cracked as the radio transmission ended.

Kate knew that one of the uniformed officers must have relayed the message to the dispatcher, Sandy Curtis. Sandy had been with the department and had been head dispatcher since Kate had made a lateral transfer to Lakewood PD. Sandy was like a mother hen when it came to her officers. She knew all too well that a fallen officer cut to the very core of every man and woman in the department. Dispatchers were no exceptions. Nonetheless, they all had a job to do right now and that was to find the perp who had killed Pete.

It was at times like this that Kate regretted ever becoming a cop. She had excelled in math and science in high school. While she was at Purdue University, her father had wanted her to become a doctor like her mother or an attorney like him. Nevertheless, as with everything in life, a turn in life’s journey pointed her toward studying psychology, which then led her to study criminal justice at Purdue. The rest was history, as they say.

Kate felt they should all be allowed to stop what they were doing and go home to grieve, like employees would in any other workplace. However, their jobs did not allow that luxury, nor would they ever. As she ran down the alley, she couldn’t get the

vision of Pete's body or his blank stare out of her mind. She had investigated many homicides, but Pete was one of their own. She'd talked with him at the police department not more than an hour before. Her mind drifted to his wife, Amy, and their three kids. Sometimes she hated what she did for a living.

Still, she knew she had to focus on what she was doing. Up ahead, at the base of a dense forest area, she saw her partner, Detective Connor Maxwell. He was talking to a uniformed officer as K-9 Sundae sat by his left side. Connor turned as Kate approached. He looked at Kate. Without saying a word, she knew what he wanted to know.

"He didn't make it," Kate said. "I requested our crime scene team."

"Uniforms tell me Dan was the only witness. We need Dan to meet with Harper Huckabee," Connor said.

Harper was the Lakewood Police Department's sketch artist. Connor could hold his own in drawing but nothing like Harper. If a victim could give the details of the subject, Harper could truly bring him or her to life on the page. Kate wondered how much Dan would be able to help after witnessing his partner being gunned down.

"Can you have your radio cars start canvassing businesses in the area for cameras? The subject fled on foot, maybe to a nearby car. See if any of these businesses have someone running from

the scene. We really have nothing to go on until we get the sketch or a video,” Connor said.

“We’ll get right on it,” the uniformed officer said as Connor, Kate, and Sundae walked back to their unmarked car.

As they neared the body of Pete McKelly, Sundae separated from Connor and Kate. She went to the fallen officer, sat down beside him, and, with a gentle touch of her tongue, kissed his face before returning to the open back door of the car. Kate brushed a tear from her eye.