

Prologue

LOCAL NEWS

Accused Double Homicide Suspect to Stand Trial

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EDMONTON – Yesterday in Alberta Criminal Court, Judge Fernadette Noseworthy ruled that there was enough evidence against double homicide suspect, Marcus Harper, to go ahead with a trial.

Immediately after the Judge's ruling, Harper lost control and not only threatened his lawyer but also the Prosecution team as well. "This is your fault," he yelled at them. "I will get out. And you will suffer as I did. All of you will suffer. You will know what it's like to have everything taken away!"

Harper, who had been brought into the courtroom in shackles and restrained to the defense table with handcuffs, sprang at his lawyer, knocking the table over, in an attempt to choke the man. It took the bailiff and three police officers to remove him from the lawyer, with the assistance of a taser to control him.

Harper was immediately removed from the courtroom and ordered back to the Maximum Security Prison, where he had been held in isolation since his arrest. Back when local TV stations broke the story last month, public outcry for revenge grew intense, due to the brutality of his crime. And his antics in the courtroom only seemed to confirm public concerns.

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On his way out of the courtroom, the threats he directed to Cheyenne McCarthy, the Chief-of-Police, William McCarthy's wife, were the most chilling: "I'll save you for last, Dr. Lady. This isn't the first time you've screwed with my life. You're gonna get what you deserve. And I'll enjoy hearing you scream for mercy."

Cheyenne McCarthy is the Forensic Psychologist who played a key role in bringing Harper down.

Harper is accused of gunning down two people, one, a young adult male currently known as a 'John Doe,' and a Hopinachi woman believed to have been in the later stages of pregnancy. Harper's detached demeanor and lack of remorse during his arrest and pretrial have sent angry ripples through the community, creating an even stronger public outcry for justice for the three lives he's accused of taking.

When police had arrived at the scene of the shooting, Marcus was found standing by the bodies smoking a cigarette—still holding the gun in his hand—seemingly with no acknowledgment for what he had done or remorse.

"The man is sick," one woman was quoted to have said outside of the courthouse, shortly after court adjourned. "It's about time this thing moved forward so that guy is put away for good."

Not all people are happy about the ruling, however. The leader of the Hopinachi Tribe, Chief Longfellow, along other tribe members who had witnessed the pretrial, felt that Harper would do better if he were returned to his people and punished in their own traditions.

"His family has suffered too much through all of this," Chief Longfellow said, as he was led to his car by two fellow Hopinachi members. "We all need to be at peace, including Marcus."

The Prosecution team is currently preparing a statement for later this afternoon.

Harper is without bail until his trial on the 15th of next month.

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A week had passed since the pretrial. Those involved with Marcus's trial spent much time looking over their shoulders taking his threats to heart. Even Cheyenne.

As per Judge Noseworthy's order, Marcus Harper was held in solitary confinement at the maximum security prison just outside of Edmonton until his trial. He was also ordered to attend the Anger and Emotions Management program, as requested by the Prosecuting team.

Even with the upcoming trial, and worries of Marcus' threats, Cheyenne had more important things on her mind.

The atmosphere was perfect: candles were lit, Michael Bublé crooned from the stereo, baked gnocchi bubbled in the oven and a fruity, non-alcohol wine rested in ice. Everything was ready, except William wasn't home yet.

She glanced at the time as she switched the plasma television on to catch the news. She didn't like listening to the news—it always upset her. But she kept it on just in case.

Even though she has a private psychology practice, her expertise in Forensic Psychology and forensic sciences have made her a highly sought-after expert for the District Attorney, especially on high profile cases. So watching the news helped prepare her for any upcoming job she'd be forced to take on.

6:45 p.m. *Where was William?*

He was one of those anally-prompt people who got ready, then waited for everyone else. Cheyenne and William had made a promise to one another—once the clock hit 6:00 p.m., they'd leave work at work and spend their evenings together—except when those high-profile cases screamed for their attention.

As she checked on the gnocchi—fearing it'd been in the oven too long—something caught her eye on the television. Perry, William's partner, was being interviewed by a local reporter. His face was white and expressionless as his lips moved. A shot of adrenaline sparked like a wildfire from her stomach out to her extremities. She reached for the remote to turn up the sound.

Perry's rich Irish accent filled the dining room. "...he didn't know what hit him."

What?

A reporter shoved her microphone in Perry's face. "There's speculation the shooter was Marcus Harper, a suspect in the double homicide at the convenience store earlier this month. Is that true, Detective?"

Perry rolled his eyes. "Darlin', it wasn't 'speculation.' It was Marcus."

Cheyenne felt nauseous. *Where was William?*

"And where is Marcus now, Detective?" Microphones and tape recorders surrounded Perry's head. "Is Harper back in custody?"

"Do ya see him around, darlin'?" Perry pushed the microphones out of his way and turned to walk back to a squad car when another question stopped him cold. "And what about Chief McCarthy? What is his current status? Did he survive the shooting?"

Cheyenne's blood froze. Perry spoke slowly, his back facing the crowd of reporters. "That information is private until family is contacted. You know how it works, lass. If his wife wants to make a statement after that, it's up to her. No more questions."

The scene switched back to the newscaster at the station. Her heart thudding, Cheyenne stared at the television.

Did he survive the shooting?

The words echoed in her head. A knock at the door caused her to drop the remote. She ran to the door and flung it open to see Perry's grim face. He said nothing—just held out his hand.

Finally he spoke. "You gotta come with me, love. Now."

Cheyenne shook her head, backing away. "I'm not going anywhere until you tell me what the hell is going on? Where's William?"

"Just come with me, Chey," Perry said. "I'll tell you everything on the way to the hospital."

Cheyenne had enough sense to shut the oven off, pull out the overcooked gnocchi and blow out the candles on the table. As she pulled her over-sized sweatshirt on, she turned back to her surprise dinner table. Her eyes welled with tears.

She left the positive pregnancy test in the middle of the table.

He'll be back home soon...he has to be.