

POUND OF FLESH

Written by

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INSERT - THE LIBRARY BOOK

She fingers the shelf of books and stops on 'The Alligator Book' by C.C. Lockwood.

CUT TO:

INT. RAGUEL'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Raguel, 25-35, Afro-Latina, low ponytail/puff, all black form fitting outfit, types on her laptop at her desk and the IM beeps with replies from "lsthpe22" as she writes from the handle "lbofflsh4eva".

CHYRON of Raguel/lbofflsh4eva's text: "Keep 2 urself, n 1/2 moon's time it shall b ovr."

CHYRON of lsthpe22's reply: "how do i knw?"

CHYRON of Raguel/lbofflsh4eva's reply: "an angel offern peace will find a nest along your gldn walk.'

CHYRON of lsthpe22's reply: "n case this is the last time, thnk u Raguel, i dnt kno if i culd keep livn w/o ur help. Stay safe"

CHYRON of Raguel/lbofflsh4eva's reply: "u 2"

Raguel logs off and the IM RINGS through the room.

Raguel gets up from the desk and pulls a black duffle bag from under the bed.

Raguel pulls out brass knuckles, a pair of black gloves, a black ski mask, and places them on the bed one by one.

Raguel puts on the brass knuckles and pulls her gloves on over the knuckles.

Raguel puts the ski mask on the inside of her coat jacket.

Raguel pulls out an empty black purse, a vial, a handkerchief, a rope, duct tape, a taser, a dry cloth, mini toolbag and box cutter kit, and places them on the bed one by one.

Raguel packs the purse with the vial, handkerchief, rope, duct tape, box cutter kit, and taser.

Raguel walks out onto the dark street.

EXT. STREET ADJACENT TO TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

Raguel walks down the dimly lit street with her hands in her pockets and the purse on her shoulder.

A car slows down as it passes her and turns the street corner.

Raguel discreetly pulls out a paper with a license number from her pocket, reads the license plate, and repeats it to herself as it passes.

A second car comes around the corner with the same car trailing behind it at the same pace.

The repeat car speeds past the second car and turns in the opposite direction as the last time. The second car turns the same way.

Raguel walks closer to the train tracks and keeps her head focused forward.

The repeat car turns its lights off as it pulls back onto the same street and slows down to follow behind Raguel.

DAMIEN, 30-40, ski mask and gloves on, checks the rearview mirror with his right hand, left hand on the steering wheel as he pulls down the same street at the same pace. He swerves left to pull in front of Raguel, blocking her path to the train and jumps out of the driver seat.

Raguel turns around to run.

Damien grabs ahold of the back of her neck/hair and yanks.

Raguel holds his hand to her hair with her right hand, twists her body to the left and rotates her left arm out to break his hold.

Raguel catches Damien's face with a right hook and keeps jabbing his face until he slumps against the car.

Raguel opens the back passenger door, and lifts Damien halfway onto the backseat.

Raguel goes around the back of the car to check the license plate and slides Damien all the way onto the backseat with a pull.

Raguel pulls out the vial and handkerchief, pours the liquid on the handkerchief, and holds it against Damien's mouth.

Damien struggles a little and then promptly goes limp.

Raguel closes the passenger doors, pulls out the ski mask from her pocket and puts it on. She stuffs her hair into the inside of her jacket.

Raguel gets into the driver's seat, closes the drivers door and stares into the rearview mirror, both hands on the wheel.

A car drives past on the perpendicular street.

Raguel grips the steering wheel, leans her forehead against her hands, and lets out a sigh.

Raguel u-turns and drives off.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

DETECTIVE MARSHCALL LAW, Caucasian Male, 30-42, rulebook stickler, tech nerd, rushes into the department with a stack of files stuck underneath his arm.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Hey! Merino! I think I found that
break you were looking for.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO, Afro-Latina, 25-35, luddite-
prefers paper over computers, methodical ocd personality,
clean and crisp pants suits, looks up from typing her files
up on her computer.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Show me.

Detective Law slaps the files he had in his hands on
Detective Merino's desk, messing up the order of Detective
Merino's desk.

Detective Merino fixes the items on her desk, placing Law's
files in a uniform stack in the front center.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Can't help being so anal attentive,
can you?

Detective Merino rolls her eyes landing on the top file as
she opens it.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Can't help being up my ass about my
ocd habits, can you?

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Touché.

Detective Law folds his arms and leans against the desk.

Detective Merino looks through each file.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW (CONT'D)
Now, see this is what I was
specifically talking about.

Detective Law points to the online tag names in each file.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
I see what you're talking about.
You may be on to something and
actually not blowing smoke up my
ass just to talk.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
(sarcastic)
Who? Me? Blow smoke up your ass
with ulterior motives? Never.

Detective Merino rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
I hate to bust your bubble of
sarcastic satisfaction, but I think
one key point in your theory about
our man is wrong.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
What part do you think I got wrong?

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Our man is a woman.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
No fucking way. The way you've been
finding these guys has been too
gruesome for some lady to pull this
off. No offense.

Detective Law gets up from the desk and looks over Detective
Merino's shoulder with one hand on the desk and the other on
the back of her chair.

Detective Merino shrinks from any physical contact.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Look at this language, it has to be
a woman.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Show me what it is you think you
see.

Detective Merino points to the printed dialogues.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Although the language is playing at
crude cyberslang, see how
descriptive these instructions are?

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
So?

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Full offense -

Detective Merino gives Detective Law a pointed look.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO (CONT'D)
- men aren't descriptive, detailed,
or anticipatory when they give
directions. There's no way a man
would be the writer of any of these
messages.

Detective Merino flips through the rest of the files fast.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO (CONT'D)
Actually, neither our woman or her
clients are male.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Clients? Is that what we're calling
the proprietors of this hit-woman's
services now? If we can even call
our man a woman.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Trust me, we can.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
I'll believe it when I see it.

Detective Merino rolls her eyes.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Why not? From my research, it looks
like she's handing out just
punishment to men that have made
millions off of being able to
destroy lives and were *clients* to
the right lie-awyers.

Detective Law huffs.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Here you go.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Yes, here I go. While you were
finding these message boards, did
you also happen to follow the
electronic trails of the so called
victims like I asked?

Detective Merino uses her fingers to signal air quotes for
the word 'victims'.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
I haven't gotten around to it yet.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
That's fine. I did. I figured it
wouldn't be a priority to you.

Detective Merino pulls out a noticeably bigger stack of files
from her bottom desk drawer and plops them on top of Law's
pile.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
What's that?

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
A list of every charge brought
against each victim leading up to
their deaths.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Why is it so big?

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Well, your victims all were in a
position of power one way or
another. All of them had more than
one case file.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
So?

Detective Merino exaggerates opening her files.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
So, every single one of the charges
that were brought against them were
either dropped due to victims
rescinding their testimonies, going
MIA, or settling out of court.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
And? They still operated within the
law, did they not.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
(exasperated, quick)
And at least half of their victims
that I've been able to track down
so far disappeared, died under
mysterious circumstances, killed
themselves, or was committed.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
And?

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
(frustrated)
And? Don't you find that the least
bit suspicious!

Detective Law shrugs his shoulders.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Eh.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
Ya know what? Thank you for what
you did find. You can scurry back
to your electronic lair now.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Well I was thinking-

Detective Merino holds her hand up in his face.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
We're not doing this right now. I
have work to do. Please go.

Detective Law holds his hands up as he walks backwards.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
Have it your way Merino.

Detective Merino keeps her eyes trained on the files as she
writes in her notebook.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO
I always do Law.

Detective Law looks back at Detective Merino and covers a
subtle grin.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW
(to self)
Not always.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DUSK

The sun filters into the warehouse onto Damien's face.

Damien blinks his eyes open, groans, and looks around.

Damien looks down at his butt naked body and wiggles his tied arms and hands behind his back. He is secured to a support beam with more rope and duct tape.

Damien tugs at his restraints.

DAMIEN
(panicked)
Help! Someone help me! I'm in here!

Damien struggles against his restraints with more panic.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
Please! Anybody! Help!

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Raguel, purse on shoulder, walks in and let's the door slam.

Damien jumps and freezes. He clenches his hands into fists and releases multiple times.

Raguel paces behind Damien and watches his reactions.

Damien struggles to keep still.

Raguel drags a single chair and slams it down in front of Damien, back facing him.

Raguel throws a leg over the seat and sits facing him, sitting backwards in the chair.

Raguel stares blankly at him.

DAMIEN
Please, I'll give you whatever you
want, no need to do anything we'll
both regret.

Raguel raises a single eyebrow and lets her purse drop into her lap.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
(nervous stutter)
I have money, I can pay you.

RAGUEL
(jovial sarcastic)
Do you now?

DAMIEN
Yeah. I'm loaded man and I can pay
you whatever you want for any
damage I've caused you or anybody
you love.

Raguel tilts her head.

RAGUEL
You assume I'm here on behalf of
someone else?

DAMIEN
Gotta be, right?

Damien lets out a nervous chuckle.

RAGUEL
Hmm. Maybe, maybe not.

DAMIEN
Well you seem awfully prepared is
all I'm saying.

Raguel leans back to prop her purse open in her lap and look
into it.

RAGUEL
You know what Damien? I am.

Raguel looks between Damien and the inside of her purse.

DAMIEN
I'm so sorry. Please don't kill me.
I'm sorry.

Raguel picks out the pliers from her mini toolbox. Looks at
Damien for a beat, laughs, and puts it back.

Damien starts to cry, snot covers his face.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
Please. Please! I'm sorry, please.

Raguel exaggerates looking through the bag.

RAGUEL
What are you sorry for Dame? Huh?
What'd you do?

DAMIEN
I won't do it again, I'll stick to
my day job.

Raguel takes the taser out of the bag, stands up and plops
the bag on the chair.

Damien tugs on his restraints harder.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
I'll leave the state. Anything,
just please don't kill me.

Raguel walks up to Damien and places the taser over his
heart.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
Please!

RAGUEL
Shhh shhh shhh. Everything is gonna
be okay now.

Damien starts to have a panic attack and hyperventilates.

Raguel lets the hand with the taser rest at her side.

DAMIEN
(squeaks)
Please. I-

Raguel places the hand without the taser on his chest.

RAGUEL
It's alright. Breathe.

Raguel coaches Raguel through deep breathing.

Damien struggles to take a full deep breathe.

RAGUEL (CONT'D)
Eyes on mine. That's it, Dame.

Raguel continues to take deep breathes until Damien relaxes
all the way and can follow her breathes.

Raguel subtly brings the taser up to his lower abs near his
boxer line, not letting it touch his skin.

RAGUEL (CONT'D)
See? Much better, right?

Damien sniffles and nods his head.

Raguel pats his chest and tasers him for few long seconds.

Damien screams and cries.

Raguel leans back and watches Damien get through the shocks with her left hand in the crook of her right elbow, arm across her body in a half folded arms position with the hand resting against her face with the taser in it.

Raguel plays with the taser on her cheek and bottom lip as she watches Damien.

DAMIEN

Please. I swear, whatever I did.
I'm sorry.

RAGUEL

Oh, I'm sure you are.

Raguel strokes the side of Damien's face with the back of her left hand.

RAGUEL (CONT'D)

Especially now.

Raguel pushes a stray lock back from Damien's face and strokes his face.

DAMIEN

Please.

Damien whimpers.

RAGUEL

Shh shh shh. I'm going to make
everything alright. Gonna balance
it all out.

Raguel cackles.

EXT. TENT CITY - NIGHT

The local population shuffles to and fro, pushing carts, checking their box homes, buying and selling drugs.

Raguel pulls under a bridge and turns the car off.

Raguel wipes down the entire car with a dry cloth as they get out.

Raguel closes the last door, stuffs her hands in her pockets, and walks off with her head down.

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN, sickly skinny, just showing signs of pregnancy, rushes up to Raguel.

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN
Spare any cash miss?

RAGUEL
No, I'm sorry.

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN
Bet your not as sorry as this
bastard's bastard daddy.

RAGUEL
Huh?

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN
You can do a lil somethin', come
on. Hook me up lady.

RAGUEL
I can't ma'am.

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN
Ma'am? Didn't think I'd ever gain
the respect of such a title.

RAGUEL
Ma'am?

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN
That's what happens when you give
the devil your trust.

RAGUEL
I don't carry cash, I'm sorry.

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN
Aren't we all.

Pregnant Homeless Woman rushes off just as quickly.

PREGNANT HOMELESS WOMAN (CONT'D)
(to self)
So sorry, all sorry, always sorry.
Sorry excuse for humans. Look what
we've done to life. Gotta figure
out what to do with this life.

Raguel looks over her shoulder 3 times, twice over the right,
once over the left.

Raguel raise her head and looks around as she stops in front
of an empty storefront.

Raguel stares at her reflection.

The local population sounds are DROWNED out and DETECTIVE MERINO SCREAMS ECHO.

The mirrored image of Raguel shifts to an image of Detective Merino and back to Raguel's reflection.

Raguel's ears RINGS and she looks away from the glass.

EXT. STREET NEAR BUS DEPOT - USPS BLUE BOX - DAY

A WOMAN, 18-24, exits the bus depot and walks across the street and stops at the USPS blue box.

FLORIST, prepares bouquets nearby.

Woman looks around and fingers a chalk drawing of a dove with an olive branch on the side of the USPS blue box.

Woman swipes at her teary eyes and walks up to the flower kiosk.

FLORIST
Your usual?

WOMAN
Yes, please.

Florist prepares a bouquet of light pink roses, baby's breaths, pink lilies, and peonies.

Florist glances at Woman.

FLORIST
Everything alright dear?

WOMAN
Oh. Yes. Couldn't be better.

Woman snuffles and swipes at her stray tears.

FLORIST
Good news?

WOMAN
Yes ma'am/sir, best news I've gotten in a long time.

FLORIST
Oh? That's amazing, you deserve it.
Congrats!

Florist hands Woman bouquet.

WOMAN

Thanks, it was definitely much needed.

Woman hands Florist money.

FLORIST

I bet. See you next time?

WOMAN

Same as always.

Woman walks off and turns into the cemetery.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Crime Scene tape surrounds the warehouse and the streets leading to it.

A crowd mills nearby.

POLICE OFFICERS AND CSIs, look distraught as they come out of the building to breathe and throw up.

Detectives Merino and Law pull through crime scene tape checkpoints and park at the entrance.

Detective Law gets out first and walks ahead of Detective Merino.

Merino gets out and closes the door. She stares at her reflection in the window.

The local population sounds are DROWNED out and DAMIEN'S SCREAMS ECHO.

The mirrored image of Detective Merino shifts to an image of Raguel and back to Detective Merino's reflection.

DETECTIVE MARSCHALL LAW

Merino! You coming?

Merino's ears RINGS and she looks away from the glass and up at Law.

DETECTIVE SHERIDAN MERINO

Coming.