

NCIS

"Caught Red Handed"

Written by

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NCIS

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TEASER

FROM BLACK:

FLASH - BLACK-AND-WHITE OF FORNELL HOLDING HIS DAUGHTER, EMILY, WHILE SHE CRIES...

PHOOF TO BLACK:

FROM BLACK:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - WASHINGTON, DC - NIGHT

A narrow hallway. PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS NOLAN SOLAS (22), and PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS MITCHELL VERA (22), move excitedly down the hall, NAVY JACKETS pressed pristinely. Over each of their shoulders, straps for RIFE CASES weigh them down.

SOLAS

Man, I'm not ready for this to end,
the range was on fire.

Solas pats the side of his gun case. The RATTLE of steel echoes through the hall.

VERA

I know what you mean. Leave's never
easy to come off of.

The Officers arrive in front of ROOM 212. Solas unlocks the room with a KEY and steps inside. He Gasps.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - ROOM 212

The living room and kitchen is mutilated with BLOOD.

Leaning against the kitchen counter is the body of PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS JAMES RIDLEY, covered in slashes, with his right hand missing.

SOLAS

Call the police. I'll get the
Corporal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Solas rushes out of the room. Vera pulls out his PHONE and makes a call.

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - DAY

SPECIAL AGENT NICHOLAS "NICK" TORRES and SPECIAL AGENT TOMOTHY MCGEE sit across from each other at their desks. They toss crumpled pieces of paper into a BIN.

SPECIAL AGENT LEROY GETHRO GIBBS, intent on his paperwork, looks up irritably from his desk as a paper wad flies by his head.

GIBBS

If you two don't knock it off I
will personally make sure you're
stuck here for another week working
on these files.

MCGEE

Sorry boss.

McGee pulls the bin over to his desk and dumps the remaining pile into it.

Torres continues flinging paper around the room, aiming for various other TRASH BINS. He does not make any of his shots, but manages to hit several AGENTS.

GIBBS

Do you have nothing better to do
than disrupt the office while
everyone else is trying to work on
case files.

The Main Elevator opens, saving McGee and Torres from having to respond. Out walks SPECIAL AGENT ELEANOR "ELLIE" BISHOP. She's on the phone.

BISHOP

I'm sorry George, but today is
filing day. I don't want all these
reports getting pushed into the
rest of the week.

Bishop is handed a stack of paper by a SPECIAL AGENT (30), at the elevator door. Bishop, holding the phone and paper is unbalanced, struggling to hang on to everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TORRES

Geez. That's one of the worse one's I've seen today.

MCGEE

I didn't know NCIS had this many hard copy files.

TORRES

Why are we doing all this anyway? Most of these files are so outdated that No one could miss them.

MCGEE

Ducky. He's trying to organize and centralize all of the information.

TORRES

Well there's enough information in all these files to write several novels.

Bishop is so intent on her call that she walks into a passing SPECIAL AGENT. She drops her pile and the stack spreads across the floor.

GIBBS

Torres, go help her.

Torres leaps from his chair and strides towards Bishop.

Bishop holds her phone uncomfortably between her shoulder and ear as she gathers the paper.

BISHOP

If you guys try that, I will end you, especially John.

A beat.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Then go spend time with mom.

Torres kneels and helps Bishop gather the stack of paper. Bishop hangs her phone up on her brothers.

TORRES

What're your bother's trying to rope you into now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BISHOP

They haven't seen me in a while, so they're starting to miss me.

Bishop and Torres stand, each with a pile of paperwork, and make their way towards the desks.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

I was hoping to get into HQ hours ago to get ahead on this paperwork, but I forgot to set my alarm.

TORRES

Geez. I've got my home devices scheduled to wake me up.

Bishop and Torres sit at their desks. Bishop's pile of paperwork is massive in front of her. She takes a page off the top and begins reading.

BISHOP

Some of these are from before I even joined the team.

MCGEE

Gibbs shoed me a file from the seventies. Nothing but dust.

Gibbs opens up a file and dust explodes through the air. He coughs and slams the file back down.

GIBBS

Anyone have a damn air canister?

MCGEE

Probably one in the maintenance closet boss.

Gibbs rushes off, his clothing is coated in grey dust.

TORRES

Damn, Gibbs looks pissed.

BISHOP

I can relate.

Bishop takes another page from her pile. Her eyes unfocus as she reads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TORRES

That pile isn't too bad. Mine was
twice the size. The trick is
checking for--

Bishop's phone rings again. The display reads: GEORGE BISHOP.
She silences it, but the phone's buzzing persists.

BISHOP

Gah! They won't leave me alone!

MCGEE

Why not place it on airplane mode
or block your brothers?

BISHOP

I can't miss important calls and
blocking them is so rude.

Gibbs returns, phone to his ear and a new pep in his step.

GIBBS

Pack up everyone. We've got a case.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - ROOM 212 - CRIME SCENE - DAY

CLICK-FLASH! Officer Ridley's mutilated BODY.

CLICK-FLASH! His right arm, missing a hand.

CLICK-FLASH! A bloody KITCHEN KNIFE on the countertop.

Gibbs lowers the CAMERA.

GIBBS

What do you have Jimmy?

DR. JIMMY PALMER examines the body. He holds the severed
wrist in a gloved hand.

JIMMY

Time of death looks to be within
the past six to nine hours.

GIBBS

And the hand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Blood pooling suggests a post-mortem cut, but with such a recent murder, I'd need to make sure in the autopsy room.

Bishop, Torres, and McGee enter from the hallway.

GIBBS

What do you have for witness statements?

McGee reads from his phone.

MCGEE

Victim's name is Petty Officer 3rd Class James Ridley. He was getting ready to redeploy with his roommates tomorrow.

GIBBS

Witness statements please.

MCGEE

CO lives bellow, but didn't hear the commotion. At the time he was with a group playing poker.

TORRES

Roommates are Petty Officer 3rd Class Nolan Solas and Petty Officer 3rd Class Mitchell Vera.

BISHOP

They've been at a gun range all day. I called to confirm.

GIBBS

What about Ridley's day to day?

BISHOP

Ridley's roommates say he had a girlfriend. He spent most of his free time with her.

Jimmy begins bagging the body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIBBS

I want to find out who she is. If Officer Ridley had any enemies, she might know about them.

The door of the apartment bursts open. In walks EMILY FORNELL, followed by her father, TOBIAS FORNELL. Emily is frantic.

EMILY

Please tell me it's not true.
Where's James?

GIBBS

What are you two doing here? We're in the middle of investigating the scene.

Emily sees Ridley's body as it's being bagged up. She shrieks and wobbles where she stands. She lunges towards Ridley's body, but Fornell holds her back.

FORNELL

Gibbs, he was her boyfriend.

Gibbs' shoulders slump. He looks at Emily pityingly.

EMILY

No. No. No.

Emily Can't hold it together. She bursts into tears.

GIBBS

How about you both follow me. We'll use a bedroom to talk.

Fornell wraps an arm around his daughter. The pair walk through the apartment, following Gibbs.

The rest of the team look at the floor, shame and pity in their eyes.

Off OF FORNELL HOLDING HIS DAUGHTER, EMILY, WHILE SHE CRIES...

PHOOF TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FROM BLACK:

FLASH - BLACK-AND-WHITE OF GIBBS AND MCGEE OUTSIDE OF JACK'S
RETREAT...

PHOOF TO BLACK.

FROM BLACK:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - ROOM 212 - BEDROOM - DAY

Gibbs, Fornell, and Emily all enter. The bedroom is mostly barren, aside from sports posters and a NAVY ISSUE DUFFLE BAG. Gibbs offers the bed to Emily. She sits on its edge and Fornell sits beside her.

GIBBS

I'm so sorry Emily.

EMILY

He-he was so sweet.

Emily cries messily. Gibbs offers her a TISSUE BOX, set on the bedside table.

GIBBS

I hate having to press you Emily,
but I need to know about you and
Ridley.

EMILY

We met six months ago, while I was
in rehab.

GIBBS

What was Ridley doing at a rehab
facility?

EMILY

Sa-same as me.

Gibbs sits in a desk chair, leaned forward and intent on listening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIBBS

Ridley doesn't have a history of drug use as far as we're aware. You're saying he had a problem?

EMILY

He got add-addicted over leave. Early into it from what he'd told me.

GIBBS

Do you know of anyone who Ridley made enemies with, or anyone who might have held a grudge?

Emily stops crying so hard now. She concentrates and focuses on Gibbs to the best of her ability.

EMILY

He was the nicest person I know. I can't imagine him having enemies.

Gibbs takes a deep breath, then plunges on.

GIBBS

Could this have been drug related?

EMILY

He's been past that life for months. If he was worried about his past coming after him, he would have told me.

Gibbs stands, then offers a hand to Emily. She takes it and stands too. Fornell follows suit.

GIBBS

My team and I are going to do everything in our power to catch whoever did this.

Emily hugs Gibbs, but she isn't smiling.

FORNELL

Thanks Gibbs. I'll, um, see you around.

Gibbs nods, then follows Fornell and Emily out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - ROOM 212 - CRIME SCENE - DAY

Gibbs, Fornell, and Emily reenter the main room. Ridley's body is gone. Emily and Fornell leave, but not before Emily looks back at where the body used to be.

Jimmy, Bishop, Torres, and McGee gather around Gibbs.

GIBBS

Wheels up in 10 everyone.
Debriefing once we get back to HQ.

Jimmy steps up.

JIMMY

Gibbs, I think we haven't canvased the area well enough, to look for the and. Don't you think we should keep a few people behind? There's some dumpsters out back--

Gibbs gives Jimmy an irritated look.

GIBBS

Torres, you and Palmer are going dumpster diving.

TORRES

Sure thing boss.

Torres brushes past Jimmy and sends him a dirty look. The pair exit.

Bishop's phone loudly rings, startling her and McGee. She silences the phone, but the BUZZ of the call echoes loudly.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DUMPSTER - DAY

Torres and Palmer stand in the dumpster, shoving around garbage. Torres picks up a rotten BANANA PEEL and gags.

TORRES

Jimmy, I will get you back for this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Torres tosses the banana peel back into the dumpster.

JIMMY

I didn't think he'd ask any of us
to do it.

TORRES

It's Gibbs bro. What else did you
expect?

Jimmy picks up an ACTION FIGURE and plays with its arm
briefly, before throwing it back inside.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - ROOM 212 - CRIME SCENE - DAY

Torres and Jimmy rejoin the team. Their pants legs are now
mysteriously damp half way up their shins. Bishop gags at the
sight of them.

BISHOP

Holy crap. Y'all need to shower.

Torres rolls his eyes.

GIBBS

You boys find anything?

TORRES

No, but I slipped on a banana peel
trying to climb out of the
dumpster.

Bishop and McGee snicker.

GIBBS

Time to go everyone.

INT. NCIS SQUAD ROOM - DAY

A NAVY PHOTO of Officer Ridley sits on the plasma. A bright
smile on his face.

MCGEE

So, our victim had a history of
drug use?

GIBBS

According to Emily, yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BISHOP
(relating)
God, she must be feeling terrible
right now.

Torres looks at Bishop with concern.

GIBBS
Fornell's keeping me updated on
her. She's not eating.

MCGEE
Does Emily know where the drugs
were purchased?

GIBBS
No--

TORRES
One of the other officers, Nolan
Solas, who Bishop and I questioned.
He mentioned a club.

BISHOP
Yeah. The officers overheard Emily.
I don't think either of them knew
about his drug problem.

GIBBS
Must have been working hard to keep
it under the radar.

TORRES
The place is called Jack's Retreat.

MCGEE
Gibbs, how about we go check out
the club?

Bishop's phone BUZZES loudly. Gibbs holds out his hand.

GIBBS
Over here Bishop.

Bishop gives up her phone.

GIBBS (CONT'D)
This is how you deal with that
problem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gibbs opens up the lid of an empty coffee cup and closes the phone inside. The buzzing is gone.

GIBBS

McGee, you drive. I'm going to call
Fornell on the way.

EXT. JACK'S RETREAT - PARKING LOT - DAY

McGee pull into the driveway in his SILVER PORSCHE BOXSTER.
Gibbs rides shotgun. Gibbs is on the phone.

They step out of the vehicle.

GIBBS

Fornell, just give her some air.
Trust me, you'll push her away if
you try too hard.

Gibbs hangs up.

MCGEE

That didn't sound good.

GIBBS

Fornell wants to help her, but he's
trying too hard. The man won't quit
until he fixes her problem.

They turn towards Jack's Retreat.

MCGEE

Here we are.

Jack's Retreat is run down on the outside. A cheap place for
entertainment.

GIBBS

Don't think this place gets very
many visitors.

MCGEE

Their website says they don't open
for another hour, but we'll
probably find Jack inside, getting
the place ready for the shift.

Gibbs opens the door for McGee and they walk inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INT. JACK'S RETREAT - DINNING ROOM - DAY

At the host stand a WAITRESS does her makeup, holding a BRUSH and POCKET MIRROR. She looks up at Gibbs and McGee.

WAITRESS

I'm sorry. We don't open for another hour.

Gibbs pulls out his badge, dangling it in front of the waitress.

GIBBS

NCIS. I'm Special Agent Gibbs. This is my partner, Special Agent McGee. We're looking for Jack.

WAITRESS

Oh my god. Is he in trouble?

MCGEE

No ma'am. We just have some questions about a homicide.

WAITRESS

I'll take you right to him.

They walk towards the back of the restaurant, through the kitchen, and into the back office.

INT. JACK'S RETREAT - OFFICE - DAY

The office is a room the size of a janitor's closet. JACK BLITHE sits at his desk, typing an email.

GIBBS

Mr. Blithe, my partner and I need to have a quick word with you.

Blithe looks up, red faced. He looks past Gibbs, at the waitress.

BLITHE

Jenny, who the hell are these clowns?

Gibbs blocks Blithe's view of Jenny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIBBS

NCIS Special Agents, Gibbs and McGee. We believe a drug dealer linked to your--

BLITHE

I'm gonna stop you right there, Agent Gibbs. My club is as clean as a whistle. I don't tolerate that garbage in here. Follow me.

Blithe stands from his desk. He's a short, fat man. He bulldozes past them.

BLITHE (CONT'D)

Jenny, go back to the front of the house.

McGee gives Gibbs a, "Get a load of this guy," look. Gibbs rolls his eyes.

Blithe leads Gibbs and McGee through a side door in his office, with a sign marked: LOUNGE.

INT. JACK'S RETREAT - LOUNGE

The Lounge is dimly lit by blue and pink lamps. Semi-circle booths face a central runway, which leads towards a curtained wall. Two SHOWGIRLS talk quietly in the corner.

BLITHE

I've been building this club towards greatness--

Gibbs takes out a NAVY PHOTO of JAMES RIDLEY.

GIBBS

Listen Jack, we're investigating the murder of Petty Officer James Ridley. We believe--

Blithe faces Gibbs, defiant.

BLITHE

I know what you believe, but drugs have nothing to do with my establishment. I keep this club under careful watch while it's open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gibbs, visibly frustrated, shoves the photo of Ridley in Blithe's face.

GIBBS
Do you recognize this Officer,
Blithe?

Blithe is taken aback by Gibbs fury.

BLITHE
N-no.

Blithe recomposes himself.

BLITHE (CONT'D)
No. I've got hundreds of people
coming into my club every night.
Some random kid isn't gonna stick
around up here.

Blithe points to his head.

BLITHE (CONT'D)
I'm busy running a business.

A confrontation is coming. McGee steps between Gibbs and Blithe.

MCGEE
Maybe we could take a look at your
security cameras? I see you've got
plenty of them around the building.

BLITHE
Sure. How far back we talkin'?

MCGEE
Someone close to Ridley said they
met six months ago, so maybe six
months to a year?

BLITHE
The footage is in the security room
archives.

One of the two showgirls approach the group.

SHOWGIRL 1
That photo, can I see it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gibbs hands her the photo of Ridley. Both girls gasp.

SHOWGIRL 2
What happened to James?

GIBBS
He was found murdered in his
apartment earlier today.

MCGEE
You ladies recognize him?

Showgirl 1 tears up.

SHOWGIRL 1
He was a regular. Started coming in
a year ago, but four months later
he stopped.

SHOWGIRL 2
He was a real sweetheart to us. He--

Blithe shoots the showgirls a look, silencing them. It's not missed by Gibbs.

GIBBS
Blithe, how about you look for
those security tapes?

Blithe wilts under Gibbs' glare.

BLITHE
You girls behave.

Blithe leaves the Lounge.

GIBBS
You were saying?

SHOWGIRL 2
Well, James came in a lot for about
four months. First few times was
with his Navy friends, then other's
came too.

MCGEE
What did they do when they came in?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHOWGIRL 2

They drank and Paid us pretty well
whenever they came in.

GIBBS

Was there ever anyone that didn't
look like an officer?

SHOWGIRL 1

Just one. He kept to himself
though.

MCGEE

Does he still come by with anyone
else?

SHOWGIRL 1

Yeah. He and the other officers
still come. Ridley was the only one
who stopped showing.

Gibbs gives Showgirl 1 a business card.

GIBBS

We need to track down that man. If
you don't mind helping us identify
him, we could use your help.

Showgirl 1 accepts the card.

SHOWGIRL 1

Blithe might have something to say
about that.

MCGEE

Don't worry. We can handle him.

EXT. JACK'S RETREAT - PARKING LOT

Gibbs and McGee exit the club.

MCGEE

Blithe is a piece of--

GIBBS

A piece of work. At least he's
cooperating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MCGEE

I think the idea of a drug dealer
in his club scared him.

The arrive at McGee's car and open the doors.

GIBBS

Call ahead to the team. Make sure
everyone is ready for a briefing
when we arrive.

McGee pulls out his phone and makes a call.

OFF GIBBS AND MCGEE OUTSIDE OF JACK'S RETREAT...

PHOOF TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE