

Chapter 6

Grissom was standing behind the two-way mirror as Brass brought in the suspect. The woman was young, mid-20s, long dark hair, good clothing. And she was nervous, that much was obvious.

Sara had called 5 minutes ago from toxicology, so he'd decided to wait for her to drop off the food supplements, and then come join him. He didn't want to aggravate her any more tonight.

Brass left the suspect after he got her a paper cup of coffee, and had an officer stationed inside the room. She nervously looked around, her gaze lingering at the mirror, and sipped the coffee.

"Looks nervous, hm?"

"Hmm." Grissom turned to Brass and nodded slightly as the police captain entered the room. "Did she object?"

"Well, I didn't tell her she was a suspect, just that we'd need to question her a bit closer. Get some background information, gain a perspective, you know the drill."

Grissom turned back towards the mirror, watching her again. "Janice Cole... Did you find anything at her office?"

"Yes, a bottle of food supplements. Gave it to tox." Brass smirked. He felt they were near to closing the case.

"Oh?" Grissom lifted an eyebrow. "I guess she has every right to be nervous then, see how she can explain that. Anything else?"

Brass nodded. "We took her computer. Archie is working on it. And - you're gonna love this." He grinned at Grissom, who turned towards him. "Guess whom she had a little fling with a couple of months ago?"

Grissom's other eyebrow went up at that. "That's certainly interesting" "That wouldn't be one Thomas Newman?"

"The one and only. Several of the other employees were able to confirm. Line, hook, and sinker!"

"Think he was hurt by her breaking up the relationship?"

"Wow, it isn't like you to spout theories. Who said she broke up with him." Brass regarded Grissom, and frowned. "He's the one who's dead."

At that moment Sara walked in, slightly flushed, saving Grissom from having to answer. "Good, you haven't started yet."

"I wanted to wait for you." Grissom stole a quick glance at her as she ran a hand through her hair.

"That's... nice," she said slightly surprised. "I got the supplements and gave them to tox. They're running the samples from them, after they're done with Brass' samples. Should get the results soon."

"Good. Let's go. Ms. Cole is waiting." With that, Grissom turned and headed for the interrogation room, Brass looking after him, still frowning.

Janice Cole was waiting nervously, still sipping her now tepid coffee. Grissom entered first and held the door open for Sara and Brass to proceed into the room in front of him.

Brass motioned for the officer to wait outside, and closed the door behind him. He turned to Janice Cole, as Sara sat down at the table. "Thank you for your cooperation, Ms. Cole."

She turned towards the police captain and then looked at the two investigators, smiling nervously. "No problem. I really don't see the need for any more questions, though."

Grissom walked around the table to stand in front of her, and held out his hand. "Ms. Cole, I'm Gil Grissom." He shook her hand, and then motioned towards Sara. "This is Sara Sidle, we're the two investigators assigned to this case. We just need to ask you a few more questions."

He sat down opposite her with Sara on his right.

'Let's dive in.' "Ms. Cole, we found food supplements in your office."

"You went through my office? Can you do that?" She rubbed her hands, and looked up at him.

"Well," Grissom cleared his throat. "It's standard procedure to search a victim's workplace. How do you explain the food supplements?"

"I..., well, I got Thomas his supplements. You see, it was covered by our medical insurance, and this way it was easier for me to clear it with our financial department. Less paperwork, you know?" She shifted in her seat, as if she was uncomfortable. "What does this have to do with Thomas' death?"

Grissom debated with himself whether to play this nicely, or go ahead and spill the beans. 'Here we go.'

"He died through poisoning."

"What?" She actually looked surprised, though Grissom wasn't sure if it was genuine or good acting. "Are... are you thinking that... that..."

"What I'm thinking is irrelevant. What the evidence says, is what counts. Who has access to your computer?"

Somewhat baffled by Grissom's sudden subject change, she frowned slightly. "Just me, of course. Why?"

"Is it password protected?"

"Yes. Why?"

Grissom didn't react to her questions, but drove on. "I understand you have access to your employee's hospital records?"

"Yes. They're my responsibility. Where are you going with this?"

"You knew of Mr. Newman's condition?"

Janice Cole shook her head, now truly baffled. "Condition? What condition? I don't know what you're talking about!"

Grissom tilted his head slightly to his left. "You got him the food supplements for it."

"I didn't know about any condition! Was he sick?"

Grissom considered Janice for a moment, narrowing his eyes slightly. "What did you get the supplements for, then?"

"It was covered by our med insurance."

'This is going in circles.' Grissom decided to go try another route, but he sensed Sara leaning forward slightly, so he let her go.

"Ms. Cole. I checked the books." She looked at a sheet of paper in front of her. "Mr. Newman wasn't the only one, who got food supplements. But he was the only one for whom you got them." Sara looked up again and directly at Janice. "Why the preferential treatment?"

"Thomas was one of our senior partners. There are certain perks that come with this." She looked steadily at Sara now.

"Like poisoning his supplements?" Brass snorted.

Janice Cole swiveled around. "I did NOT poison him! What are you implying?"

Shooting Brass an angry glance, Grissom focused on the woman again, and decided for yet another quick subject change. "Ms. Cole. Did you have a relationship with Mr. Newman?"

Her eyes grew big, and she quickly looked down, nervously twiddling her fingers. "I already answered that question when Mr. Brass asked."

"Yes. And he didn't believe you, so I'm asking again."

She swallowed nervously, still not giving a direct answer.

Sara looked over at Grissom, and then at Janice. "You know, your lying about this doesn't exactly make us believe anything else you say. We talked with some of the other employees."

"Okay, okay!" Janice sighed. "We had... a short romance. Nothing serious."

"Nothing serious." Sara laced her fingers on the table. "Did Mr. Newman agree with that, too?"

"It was nothing, only a week or so. I had broken up with my boyfriend, so Thomas was sort of a.. consolation, you know?" She shrugged.

Brass walked up to the table besides Grissom. "And why didn't you tell me that right away?"

"Because I'm back together with my boyfriend. He..., he didn't know about this." She looked imploringly at Sara. "I didn't want him to find out."

A loud knock at the door kept Sara from further questions. She shot an annoyed glance at Greg as he poked his head inside the room.

"Grissom? Sara? You're gonna need to see this! Like, right now!"

Sara frowned at Grissom, then got up. "We'll be right back, Ms. Cole."

Brass sat down in the chair Grissom had just gotten up from. "I'll keep her company."

Closing the door behind him and Sara, Grissom turned to Greg. "This better be good. Real good."

Greg nodded his head vigorously. "Yes, I know. Sorry to interrupt the interrogation, but this couldn't wait. I got the results back from tox. The supplements Brass brought in?"

"Yes?" Sara asked, hope evident in her voice. "We got her!"

"They're cleared. No Ethylene Glycol in them."

"Damn!" Sara hissed. "I really thought we had her." She looked towards the interrogation room and bit her lower lip angrily, then turned to Greg. "Could she have covered her tracks?"

"Well, the bottle was bought five days before Newman's death – date on it proves that. Sorry."

Grissom hadn't shown any reaction throughout the exchange, but nodded slightly at Greg. "Thank you. Good work."

Greg smiled happily, and turned to walk back to his lab.

"Dammit." Sara was still cursing. "I really thought she did it. I mean, she seemed so nervous, and she had a connection to the victim. Damn..."

"Sara. One clue didn't fit in. Happens. We'll have to wait and see if Archie turns something up." He took her by the elbow and led her to the side of the hallway, so that she was standing with her back to the wall. Grissom looked at her closely "Stay focused. Don't let this throw you back."

"I know that, Grissom, dammit." She sighed, and shrugged off his hand on her elbow. "Okay, I'll tell her she's free to go. You go and get on Archie's nerves."

She walked into the interrogation room before Grissom could respond, so he was left with raising an eyebrow at thin air.

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