

***We Were all Dead Before the Ship Even Sank***

Mark Fenton

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## **Table of Contents**

[Title](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Bill's Bad Day](#)

[Rules of the Night](#)

[The Good Guys are Killing Me](#)

[Connect with Mark Fenton](#)

## **Bill's Bad Day**

The summer heat bore down on the city. The pavement reflecting the sun's heat made it feel like walking on a heated stove top. Bill, covered in sweat, lumbered into the museum dragging his feet the whole way. His dull badge pinned against his food stained dull grey uniform shirt. His uniform pants, at least a size too big, dragged over his shoes collecting samples from everywhere he had walked.

"You're late", said the frail old lady with the Coke bottle glasses behind the front desk.

"Fire me", Bill replied.

Bill continued past her toward the ancient time clock. He pulled his timecard from the shelf and slid it into the clock. The time clock's stamp bit down hard on the card like a starving dog on a piece of raw meat.

Bill began his tour of the museum in the lobby. The dimmed lighting played tricks on his eyes, shadows appeared as monsters cast upon the walls. He entered the bathroom, kicking the stall utilizing a crane technique that would make Mister Miyagi proud.

Bill walked out of the bathroom whistling as if he were one of the seven dwarves headed to the diamond mine. As he turned the corner, the first man in black appeared and electrical taped Bill's mouth shut. "Nothing personal, Mate. We just need you out of our way for a bit" the man in black whispered.

The man in black continued to wrap Bill's head in electrical tape, leaving only his mouth uncovered. The second man, wearing all grey, was standing beside his partner in black. "Keep your mask on in case the cameras are on" the man in grey stated.

They shoved Bill into a chair and taped his body to it. Bill gave up on any struggling that he had been doing as it was a lost cause.

“Stick to the plan, only take what we discussed, don’t get greedy” said the man in grey.

The masked men moved from room to room as if they had done this a million times before. They knew what they were here for and where to get it, each man armed with a box cutter and a flashlight.

“How hard would it be to move a stolen piece of art?” the man in black said to himself. “I could use the extra money and by the time anyone finds out I will be long gone” he continued.

The man in grey arrived at the first painting on his list and quickly cut it out of the frame. He couldn’t roll it because of its age and shape. “You, my friend, are my ticket to paradise” he said to the painting.

After collecting multiple paintings, the criminals met back where they had incapacitated Bill. “What time is our pickup arriving, Jesse?” the man in black questioned.

“Why did you have to go and do that!” shouted the man in grey. “We never use real names, you know that!” he exclaimed.

With that he reached into his jacket and pulled out a handgun. The man in grey fired two shots into Bill’s head. His body jerked back and forth in the chair before going limp. “This changes everything” the man in grey stated.

The man in black’s eyes widened as far as they could, he hadn’t signed on for murder. “I fucked up I admit it, but did you have to kill him? I didn’t sign on for murder.”

“You said my name. He knew my name” the man in grey exclaimed. “I’m not taking any chances.”.

The man in grey collected all of the art they had stolen and stacked it neatly in a pile. He then quickly turned toward the man the man in black, gun in hand.

He pointed the barrel of the gun tightly against the man in black's forehead. "Why couldn't you have just kept your mouth shut?" he asked. Everything after that seemed to be in slow motion. The hammer of the gun slowly moved back then went forward. The bullet sped through the barrel and into his forehead. Blood splattered everywhere, his eyes bulged from their sockets.

"He said my name, I had no choice" the man in grey said, walking out of the museum with the stolen paintings in his arms. "He said my name."

### **Rules of the Night**

Jeremy could not take his eyes off the clock, five o'clock could not come soon enough. Tonight, was the grand opening of the new night club, Calypso Bay. He and Phil had been planning this night for weeks.

The subway seemed to take forever and even longer to get to his stop. Jeremy rushed out of the subway doors before they were completely open. He sprinted home and jumped straight into the shower.

Steam fogged the bathroom mirror as Jeremy stepped from the shower. He wiped his hand across the mirror, leaving streaks down it. As he stood debating whether to shave or not his cell phone began to ring. "I'm getting ready, give me ten minutes" he said. With that he got dressed, brushed his hair, and showered in cologne.

Phil was standing at the entrance to the club as Jeremy walked up. There was a short line at the door full of women in short skirts, dudes in muscle shirts, and the smell of perfume in the air. "What names are we using tonight?" asked Phil. "Have we used Bo and Luke lately?" Jeremy said as he showed the bouncer his ID.

Phil and Jeremy made their way through the crowd towards the bar to get drinks and a better view of the women in the club. As they turned towards the bartender to order drinks they noticed two women at the corner of the bar by themselves. Like predators to prey they quickly moved towards the women with their drinks in hand.

Angie and Missy had decided to check out this new club as they had grown tired of the same crowds. They drank a bottle of wine before leaving their apartment to avoid spending money on drinks. Missy was a tall, slender blonde that had no problem getting a date. Angie almost as tall with short brown hair and just as attractive.

"So, what do you think of this place?" Phil asked as he slid in next to Missy. "Seems to be another meat market." Missy said as she slid further away. "I'm Bo and this is Luke." Phil quickly blurted out. "You're the Duke boys?" Angie said in between laughs.

Jeremy could feel the beads of sweat starting to build on his forehead, it was time to bail. Why was Phil still trying to pick these girls up?

"Ok you got me, I'm Phil and this is Jeremy." Phil said feeling embarrassed. Jeremy's face lit up like a Christmas tree. He made eye contact with Phil and nodded towards the bathroom. "Don't run off ladies, we will be right back." Phil said through a half open mouth.



As they entered the bathroom Jeremy turned towards Phil, his face buried in a scowl.

“Why did you have to go and do that?” “We never use real names.”

“Jesus, you would think I killed someone with the way you are acting.” Phil said. “The number one rule, the one thing we never tell them, and you go and do it.” “I don’t want some one-night affair knowing more about me than they need to.” “Rule number one no real names, rule number two take them home to their place.” “I have a career to protect, you dumb ass!” Jeremy screamed.

Jeremy stormed out of the bathroom and went immediately out of the bar into the night. Phil wandered back to the bar to find that Missy and Angie were long gone.

“Didn’t follow the rules huh?” “How about a shot to get you back in the game.” Asked the bartender.

## **The Good Guys are Killing Me**

It was a crisp, windy fall day in Ithaca, NY. The air had a bite to it hinting that snow would be on the way soon. Jimmy sat in his car outside of the local bank. The parked car's ignition was turned to aux so that the radio could soothe Jimmy's mind and keep him focused.

On the seat beside Jimmy sat a gun and a pig mask. "I'm not a bad person, I'm just in a bad situation." He repeats to himself. After repeating it multiple times he tucks the mask into the crotch of his pants, pulling his untucked shirt out to cover the bulge. As he exits the car, he slips the gun into the back waist of his pants.

In the sky above a blue blur can be seen streaking through the clouds.

As Jimmy enters the local bank, he has sweat stains in the arm pits of his shirt and a huge wet spot on his back. He looks around immediately upon entering the bank, there is one customer talking to the teller. To his right, the bank manager sits in his office with the door half open.

"We will be right with you." The manager partially yells without getting up from his desk. This startles Jimmy, the less interactions with people the better it would be for

him. He quickly walks past the manager's door and pulls out the pig mask. As he quickly makes his way to the teller, he slips the mask on before the customer or teller notice him.

"You get the fuck on the ground on your stomach!" Jimmy screamed at the customer. "You start filling bags." He said with his gun pointed in the teller's face. The manager came out of his office once he heard all the commotion. "Get down on your belly!" Jimmy screamed at the manager and fired a shot in the air.

The teller was dropping cash all over as she tried to fill bags as quickly as she could. "I have a family please don't kill me." She said as she hands Jimmy two bags full of cash. "I have a family as well that needs this money more than your bank does right now." He said as he grabbed the bags. "No alarms and come out here and get on your belly with these two." He said as he turned towards the exit.

As soon as she was on her stomach on the floor Jimmy made a mad dash for the doors. He didn't bother taking off the mask or hiding the gun. He knew his car was mere feet from the bank entrance.

Steps away from his car and suddenly Jimmy feels a tug at his collar and his feet come off from the ground. Terrified he looks up to see the Blue Bomber pulling him up into the afternoon sky. Jimmy quickly pulls his arm up and fires at the Bomber. "Want to see if you survive a drop from seven stories high? I didn't think so and I'm bulletproof F.Y.I." Said the Bomber in a pissed off tone.

Once they were above the bank the Bomber threw Jimmy onto the bank rooftop. As his body hit the rooftop Jimmy dropped his gun and the bags of money. The Bomber gently lands on his feet next to Jimmy.

"I'm not a bad person or a criminal even. I need this money for my family and the bank is insured." Jimmy said as he cried.

“Well here is the problem. I need that money myself for my family.” The Bomber said in a calm tone. “I don’t get paid to be a hero. So here is what’s going to happen.” The Bomber said as he collects the bags of money.

“I’m going to go back to the bank and let the police know that you got away. You pulled your gun without me noticing and that was enough distraction for you to flee.” The Bomber explained.

“In reality, I am going to kill you and dispose of your body. I guess you picked the wrong day and wrong bank, huh?” the Bomber said as he walked towards Jimmy.

“Just take the money, I won’t say anything to anyone.” Jimmy cried out. “I can’t take that risk with my reputation and all.” Replied the Bomber.

With that the Bomber grabbed Jimmy’s shoulder with one hand and punched him directly in the face with the other. Jimmy’s head and neck went back as far as it could before snapping forwards. Blood gushed from his nose and mouth through the pig mask. Jimmy’s head filled with thoughts and images of his two-year old son, the one he couldn’t support with his retail job. The one that he was going to use the stolen money to support. After two punches Jimmy lost consciousness. The Bomber threw Jimmy’s lifeless body into the nearby lake.

As the Bomber flew into the clouds and out of sight with the bags of money his cell phone began to buzz. He reached into his costume grabbing his phone to see he had a new text message. “It’s the end of the month and child support is due.” was the message on the phone. The sender name was The Bitch.

**About the Author:**

Mark Fenton is the writer of *DOWN*, *SPACECOOLER*, and *THE CHOSEN* comic books. He attends Full Sail University in pursuit of a Creative Writing degree.

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