

# UNDER A RAGING MOON

A RIVER CITY CRIME NOVEL



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# ONE

Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1994

Graveyard Shift

2116 hours

*Crack!*

The flashlight clattered to the pavement. Thomas Chisolm looked up from his note pad to see his rookie, Maurice Payne, looking sheepish. Payne grabbed the light and checked it. Relief flooded his face when it still worked.

Chisolm struggled not to shake his head in disgust. Payne had already spent three times longer than he should have putting the police cruiser through its pre-flight check. To make matters worse, he'd managed to forget half the procedures.

*How in the hell did this kid make it through his first two Field Training Officers?*

Chisolm wondered. *Christ, how did he make it through the Police Academy?*

Payne finally settled into the seat and started the engine. He carefully turned on and off every emergency light, including the yelp and wail sirens. Satisfied, he started

to put the car into gear.

“Forget something?” Chisolm asked in as neutral a voice as he could muster.

Payne looked worried and confused.

*Jesus, this kid flusters easy,* Chisolm thought. He’d acted the same way earlier when Chisolm pointed out that he forgot to check the back seat.

Payne’s worried look grew almost frantic. He looked to Chisolm for the answer. The veteran put his hand on the shotgun, which sat right beside the radio, its barrel pointing upward.

“Oh.” Payne put the car in park and released the shotgun. He started to clear the weapon in the driver’s seat.

“Do it outside,” Chisolm instructed in an even voice. *For the fifteenth time,* he groused inwardly.

Payne stepped out of the car, banging the butt of the shotgun against the steering wheel along the way. Chisolm watched him unload the shotgun, clear it and then reload. His movements were clumsy and unsure. His attempt to complete the task faster than his abilities allowed only made it worse.

“Easy, son,” Chisolm told him. “Take your time and do it right.”

Payne finished awkwardly and replaced the shotgun in its rack. He picked up

the radio to check them into service. "Adam-112, log on."

"Go ahead," responded the dispatcher.

As Payne recited their badge numbers and vehicle assignment, Chisolm winced at the rookie's voice. It sounded weak and mush-mouth, carrying no authority at all.

Reflecting briefly, Chisolm knew why Payne had made it through two Field Training Officers. They'd gone on a few calls where compassion had been the order of the day. Chisolm had to admit the kid did a superb job. A rape victim is not an easy person to communicate with, especially for a male officer. Some victims demanded a female officer for that very reason, but Payne had been able to establish an excellent rapport with the victim, kept her emotions in check and took a good report.

Still, Chisolm knew that there was a lot more to the job than being compassionate. He had long ago learned to save his compassion for those who deserved it. A cop had to be strong enough to be gentle, but he had to remain strong.

Chisolm recalled the incident right before their days off, when a gang member had come close to assaulting Payne. Chisolm had seen it coming, but let Payne go with it as far as he safely could. He hoped the rookie learned that the nice-guy routine doesn't always work, especially when a street-wise gang banger is yelling, "Kiss my black ass, you white pig!"

A cop had to wear many hats, Chisolm knew: counselor, confessor, friend, philosopher, detective, hard-ass, just to name a few. Those who failed to understand this were weak officers, even if they excelled in one area. Like Payne. Or like James Kahn, who was a grouch almost all the time and got complaints by the trunk load.

“Let’s get some fuel,” Chisolm suggested. *And we’ll see if you can find the fuel station this time.*

“Yes, sir,” Payne replied, his voice meek.

Payne surprised Chisolm by finding the fuel station easily enough. The rookie filled the tank wordlessly and the two of them cruised out to tackle the calls that were holding.

The night passed slowly, giving Chisolm plenty of time for reflection. Payne took way too long to accomplish even the simplest of tasks. A traffic stop became a major ordeal for him, which Chisolm considered ridiculous this far into his training.

Even more unforgivable, Payne’s officer safety bordered on critically poor. He seemed completely oblivious to where his gun side was in relation to everyone around him. He took his eyes off people all the time, sometimes even turning his back to them. He wasn’t vigilant at all about having suspects keep their hands out of their pockets. Not only did all of this endanger Payne, but anyone who worked around him.

Chisolm pressed his lips together in disgust when Payne elected to make a traffic stop on a soccer mom in a mini-van. On graveyard shift, they operated in a target rich environment. There were plenty of shitheads out driving around, guilty of far worse infractions—much less actual crimes—than the failure to signal that Mrs. Middle Class just committed.

Payne fumbled through initiating his emergency lights and advising radio of his location. Chisolm wasn't sure which bothered him more—the weak sound of Payne's voice or the fact that the location he gave radio was a block off.

He clambered out of the passenger seat and stood safely behind the curtain of light at the front tire of the patrol car. Payne approached the car like a frightened cat. Chisolm noted that he carried his flashlight in his gun hand, another cardinal sin.

Payne made contact with the driver, taking three times longer than necessary to acquire her documents. Back at the car, he quickly filled out the ticket, but agonized over whether to write the woman for no insurance since the card in her car had expired two weeks ago. He looked to Chisolm for help.

“You think she's got insurance?” Chisolm asked him.

“Uh...” Payne swallowed nervously. It seemed like he treated very question like a life or death final exam. “I guess not. I mean, the card's expired.”

Chisolm gave him an even stare, refusing to answer the rookie's question. "It's your call," he said, figuring the kid would learn something either way.

Payne nodded hesitantly, then returned to the ticket. He scratched out the charged for no insurance.

Chisolm struggled not to frown.

Back at the van, Payne patiently explained to the woman in the mini-van what constituted proof of insurance.

"But I have insurance," she protested. "My agent just sent me the new card. It's on my kitchen counter."

"It's supposed to be in your car."

"I know that," she said. "I just forgot."

Payne cleared his throat. "Well, uh, I suppose if you bring that into the judge, he could probably just—"

"Who's got time for court?" she snapped. "I have three kids and a house to take care of. Do you have any idea how time-consuming that is?"

"No," Payne squeaked.

She eyed him with contempt. "Just give me the ticket."

Payne handed it to her. She scrawled her signature and thrust it back at him. "I

hope you're happy," she said. "Because you're an asshole."

Chisom suppressed a smile.

Payne looked stricken. He tore out the driver's copy of the ticket and gave it to her, stammering out his prepared speech on how to take care of the ticket.

She interrupted him. "Can I go?"

Payne blinked. He looked back at Chisolm, then at the driver. "Uh, sure. I mean, if you understand how to respond to this infraction, you can—"

"I got it," she answered, dropping the van into gear and driving away.

Payne watched her go, then turned and trudged back to the car. Once there, he reached for the radio to clear when a shrill alert tone sounded.

*"Dispatch to all units. Receiving an armed robbery alarm at 1527 N. Birch, 7-11 store."*

The dispatcher's voice intoned. *"Hold-up alarm, 1527 N. Birch."*

"Go!" shouted Chisolm and grabbed the mike. He listened in frustration as several units attempted to answer at once, covering each other with a harsh buzz.

*"Coverage,"* stated the operator. *"Receiving further. Suspect is a single, white male wearing black jeans, white shirt with long dark hair. Also has a scar down the left side of his face. Suspect displayed a black revolver. Fled westbound on foot."*

"C'mon!" Chisolm yelled, excitement coursing through him.

*Same damn guy, the one everyone called Scarface.*

Payne approached the red light at Indiana and Post. His hand hovered over the emergency light controls as if he couldn't decide whether to use lights or both lights and siren.

"Just drive," Chisolm told him, punching the lights. At two-thirty in the morning on a Monday night, there wasn't much traffic to worry about.

*"Adam-116, I'm a couple off. I'll check westbound."*

Chisolm recognized Katie MacLeod's steady voice.

*"Baker-123, in the area to the south. Also."* Stefan Kopriva, another good troop, chimed in.

*"Go ahead, Baker-123."*

*"Do we have a K-9 working?"*

A pause. Then, *"Negative. Do you want us to call one out?"*

*"Affirm."*

*Good call, Chisolm thought. Maybe we'll catch the guy this time.*

Payne drove right past the turn on Monroe Street. He realized it half a block later and started to slow.

"No," Chisolm instructed him. "Go up to Ash, we'll back Katie."

*“Adam-113, on scene at the 7-11 for the report.”*

Chisolm shook his head. Adam-113, James Kahn, was only willing to take a report if it meant less work than the alternative. Or if there was a woman involved. Otherwise, forget it.

Ash was a one-way arterial southbound, but Payne still drove way too cautiously for Chisolm’s liking. At Maxwell, he directed him to turn right as soon as he saw Katie’s lights.

*“Baker-123, I’ll be mobile on Boone west of—”*

The buzz of radio transmission coverage cut him off.

*“Baker-123, copy,”* replied the dispatcher. *“Other unit?”*

Chisolm knew Katie was out of the car and running as soon as the transmission began.

*“Adam-116 . . . foot pursuit . . . south bound from my car. We’re going through . . . construction yard . . . ”*

Chisolm got on the air before the dispatcher could respond. *“Adam-112, her vehicle is parked at Maxwell and Cannon. We’ll swing around and come in from the southwest.”*

*“Copy.”*

*"Baker-123, coming in from the southeast."*

*"Copy."*

"Take Belt," Chisolm ordered sharply. He didn't care anymore about training at this point. Katie was running around in the dark with an armed robber. She needed backup. "And hurry up!"

*"This is L-123. All other units set-up a perimeter, four blocks in each direction,"* Sgt. Miyamoto Shen said, his voice calm and authoritative.

No one answered, leaving the radio clear for Adam-116.

At the corner of Belt and Sinto, Chisolm directed Payne to turn left. The rookie did so, still way too slow for his liking.

"Hit all your lights. Everything. Light up that yard." He pointed at the construction yard to the northeast. An eight-foot fence ran all along the south side of the yard.

*Good,* thought Chisolm, already out of the car and scanning for movement. *That should slow him down a little.*

Payne scrambled out of the car, knocking his side-handle baton out of its holder. It clattered onto the pavement. Chisolm ignored him, continuing to scan from behind the curtain of light created by the patrol vehicle's spotlight, high beams and takedown

light located on the roof in the light bar.

Nothing.

Fifteen seconds of nothing on the air from Katie.

Then twenty.

Chisolm scowled. Radio should check on—

*“Adam-116, an update,”* came the dispatcher’s voice.

There was a terrible moment of silence. Chisolm’s drew his gun and held it at the low-ready position. He saw Payne in his peripheral vision and watched the rookie mimic his stance.

*“I got him, he’s running near the south fence.”* Katie’s voice was labored and tense.

*“Westbound.”*

*“Copy. Westbound near the south fence. Baker-123?”*

*“I’m almost there,”* Stefan Kopriva replied.

*Then where the hell were they?* Chisolm thought.

*There!*

He saw a figure, short and slender, running hard near the fence. The figure pulled up abruptly, probably noticing the lights. Chisolm drew a bead on the figure, trying to see his hands but unable to at this distance.

“Adam-112, I see him about mid-block,” Chisolm told radio.

There was a flash of light from the figure’s hand and a loud bang.

*“Shots fired!”* called Katie.

Chisolm carefully aimed at the figure, but held his fire. The danger of cross-fire was too great. He would give Katie and Stef a few seconds to take cover, at least.

The suspect climbed the fence. He went over it military style with almost no effort, climbed rapidly up one side, swung over the top and then dropped to the ground in two quick, controlled movements. He landed in a crouch and immediately fired in Chisolm’s direction.

Chisolm ducked next to the wheel well, using the engine block for cover. He heard the sound of shattering glass as the bullets struck the patrol car. He popped up and returned fire over the hood of the car, squeezing off three quick rounds. The muzzle flash took away his already minimal night vision. He scanned for movement but saw none.

“Adam-112 to -14, do you see him?” Chisolm keyed the mike with his left hand while keeping his pistol pointed where he’d last seen the suspect.

*“We’ve taken cover here in the yard. We lost visual on him as soon as he fired.”*

“Copy. -12 to radio, he may have fled southbound.”

*"Copy, southbound."*

Chisolm heard a moan from the driver's side and glanced over. Payne was nowhere in sight. The spotlight was dark. Chisolm ran around the back end of the car and saw Payne collapsed on the ground holding his face. He could see dark blood next to him and seeping through his hands.

"Adam-112, officer down," Chisolm spoke into his portable radio. "I need medics to my location."

Radio copied his transmission as he knelt next to Payne, still keeping his weapon trained on the threat area. "Payne?" He asked gently.

Payne moaned. "It hurts."

Chisolm pulled Payne's hand away from his cheek and saw the cut. It was two inches long and had probably been caused by flying glass after the spotlight had been hit.

"You'll be okay," he said through gritted teeth, then keyed the mike. "Adam-112, injuries are a facial laceration, not life-threatening."

*"Copy, I'll inform medics."*

Chisolm stood by with Payne as a dog handler arrived on scene and began a track. He remained alert but at Payne's side for twenty minutes during the track until it

was called off. The K-9 officer advised that it was likely that the suspect had gotten into a vehicle at Sharp and Elm.

Medics, who had been standing off until the area was declared secure, arrived and treated Payne, who seemed to be slipping into shock. Chisolm watched as they wiped the cut with iodine and put a gauze pad against it to stem the bleeding, which had slowed to a trickle. An ambulance transported Payne to Sacred Heart Hospital for stitches.

As the ambulance pulled away, Chisolm picked up Payne's gun and put it in his briefcase. The young officer had not asked about it once. Chisolm felt sorry for him. Not only because he'd been hurt but also because it was very apparent that he was shortly going to have to recommend that Payne be fired.

*What the hell, Chisolm thought. I was his teacher, his doctor and now I am going to be the axe-man. Bad night for us all.*

Thomas Chisolm, despite being a fourteen-year veteran of the police department and former Green Beret with two tours in Vietnam, could not shake the sinking feeling in his chest as he kicked the shards of glass from the spotlight to the curb of the street. He couldn't stop wondering how much worse it was going to get...

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