

**Mason Coleman**

Age: 14, Grade: 9

School Name: Altamont School, Birmingham, AL

Educator: Dan Carsen

Category: Short Story

---

## **Revenge, Not as Satisfying as it May Seem**

### **Revenge, not as satisfying as it may seem**

“Okay Luke, run me through what happened in the past six months again,” the officer said.

“Six months ago, my parents were killed by people named Karloff and Chen. They are part of a terrorist group.”

“What happened during those six months?”

“Before I tell you part of my life story, I want to know your name.”

“I don’t like to tell people my name. I only tell people I one-hundred-percent trust.”

“Ok, well I was at the store and heard an explosion. When I went home, I found both my parents dead. I felt like I died that day too. I moved here to try to run from the pain. When I found that you can not run from the pain, I took it upon myself to find the people that killed them. After the attack outside the concert hall, I investigated and found the address to a storage warehouse.”

“Which is where we found you. Who was the person in the shadows that almost killed you? Something about his voice sounded familiar.”

“Yes, and that is where I found lots of information about them and what their plan is.”

“We recovered that information, but we found strategies and previously attacked places. They are smarter than we thought They didn’t write where or when future attacks happen, and they are very lucrative.”

“I would like to join you and the police force to capture them.”

“No, this line of work can get you hurt or killed.”

“I’ve already come close to death. Remember the warehouse?”

“The answer is still no.”

I walked outside and saw a flyer on the window, and I had an idea.

“What are you doing back here kid?” the officer asked.

“I want to talk to the chief.”

“Why is that,” he said worryingly.

“I want to apply for a job.”

“You really don’t kid. Some things you see out here you cannot unsee.”

“I have already seen some of the worst things I can see in my lifetime. My dead parents and I was at the bank the day it was attacked.”

“Ok, but don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

I walked into the chief’s office.

“What can I do you for?” he asked.

“I wanted to apply for your CSI opening.”

Since I didn’t have a resume or any work experience, he wanted to determine if I have different skills. He put me through so deductive reasoning, observation, and overall IQ tests. About forty minutes later we walked out of the office.

“Say hello to the new CSI. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you that you will have a co-worker. She is very smart and you and her will work very well together.”

“So, you got the job,” The officer said.

“Yes, I did and now you cannot stop me from coming to investigate with you,” I said wittingly.

“Officer, show Luke around the station,” the chief said.

“Yes sir.”

He showed me around the building, and it was surprisingly impressive. There is a lot that you cannot see right away. Afterward, he showed me the break room. We stayed there for a while and he talked to me about the requirements for the job.

"We are going to be working together for a while and I want to establish trust with one another. Can you please tell me why you don't tell people your name?"

"Luke, I have always trusted my gut and my gut is telling me that you are trustworthy. When I first started working here about 2 years ago, I was living with my family. I had a wonderful wife and two kids. We were working on a very bad case. There was a psycho killer. Very stealthy and lucrative. When we were tracking him down and when we finally found him the chief warned us not to let any of our names slip, but one of the officers called my name. After a few days I left for work one morning and it was a normal day until I got a call from my wife. She said there was someone in the house and she and the kids were hiding. I told the chief and me and lots of units rushed to my house, but we were too late. When we arrived, I ran into the house and felt like my heart broke. I saw my wife dead on the floor and my two kids both dead tucked into their beds. We never found him, it is now my life journey to bring him to justice or die trying. After that, I didn't put my full trust in anyone to avoid putting my loved ones in danger. Since I trust you my name is Alan Smith."

"I am so sorry. I am now realizing that we have similar goals. We both want revenge for our families."

"Yes."

A weird sounding bell rung throughout the building.

"What is going on?" I asked.

"That alarm means the call operators got something."

We ran into the meeting area and the chief and a few units were already in there.

"What's wrong?" Officer Smith asked.

"There is another attack. At the uptown bank on thirty-second street. Move out."

"Let's go Luke."

"Alright."

We got in the car and followed some other units downtown to the bank. When we arrived, we saw four people get into a car and start to drive away. We chased them down the street. I felt like I was in an action movie. There was a bridge ahead and there were a few explosions that caused the buildings to fall right in front of our cars. Officer Smith and the rest of the force rushed over to the fallen building and completely forgot about the criminals. The dust and debris reminded my house after it was attacked. Thankfully, nobody died. After we helped injured people away and to the hospital we returned to the station.

"These people are smart," Officer Smith said.

"They have plans for their backup plans," I said.

"We are going to have to go to them. If we let them come to us, they will be ready. We have to catch them off guard."

"That means that we need to find out where they are."

"Well let's get to work."

We went back to the scene at the bank. When we arrived, there was another person there that was also searching the scene. We approached her.

"Luke this is the other CSI the chief was referring to," Officer Smith said.

"Hello, my name is Luke."

"Hi, I am Emily King. I guess you are the other CSI of the department."

"Well I will let you two do your jobs," Officer Smith said as he walked away.

"So, have you found anything while you were here?" I asked.

"Yes, I found some type of chemicals that they used to break into the vault," she said.

She handed me a beaker with a dark green liquid in it.

"Ok, I am going to look around the scene a little longer then I will go back to the lab to test this chemical."

"Sounds good."

After I looked around again and found nothing but destruction, I walked back over to Officer Smith.

"Can you take me back to the station?" I asked.

"You can't drive? Aren't you nineteen?" he asked.

"Yes, but I have been pretty busy lately. I need to test this chemical."

"Okay, I will take you back. Let's go."

When we arrived, we went straight to the lab.

"Do you know what it is yet?"

"We just got here. Give me a while. I still need to break down the compound to find out what it is."

"Ok, call me when you get it."

After about forty minutes I finally found it.

"Hey Officer Smith, come in here I got it."

"Here I am. Also please call me Smith."

“Where were you?”

“I was looking at another case. Apparently, a scientist was kidnapped 5 days ago and equipment was stolen from his lab.”

“That may be connected to this.”

“How?”

“Let me tell you. The chemical was fluoroantimonic acid. It is a combination of hydrofluoric acid and antimony pentafluoride.”

“What is your point?”

“These criminals may be smart with strategies and planning, but to make this type of chemical requires a chemistry mind. I don’t think they did this alone. I think they kidnapped the scientist to force him to help them. What was his Ph.D.?”

“His Ph.D. was Chemistry and Biotechnology.”

“Where do you think they could be hiding?”

“Our units are out there all day and they have been sent to check every place in this city except for the lab they took him from.”

“Maybe that is why they haven’t found them. They didn’t search the building they kidnapped them from. Aren’t there five sublevels in that building that only that scientist had access to?”

“You are right. Let’s tell the captain.”

“Wait, if we tell him they are going to go in unprepared and we may lose them. How about we go in first to see what we are up against, so we have the upper hand.”

“How are we going to get in?”

“In my experience, I have found that most things done in the sublevels of a lab are less than humane, so they always have an escape plan. Let us pull up the sewer schematics in this area.”

I pointed to one of the passageways.

“You see that one that goes directly underneath the lowest sublevel. That is our entry point. This means that we are going to have to wait until they attack again to ensure they are gone when we arrive.”

“Ok.”

Turns out we didn’t have to wait long. The alarms went off again about five hours later.

“Is it them?” I asked.

“yes, let’s move,” Smith said.

We drove to the sewer entry closest to the lab.

“Remember we have to be stealthy to keep them from running before the real operation,” I said.

We made our way through the sewer until we reached the entry into the lab. We lifted the cover and went in. We needed to leave quickly so we split up and investigated. We found that there were lots of heavily sealed doors and many cameras next to the proper entrance. There was also a side entrance that looked like it could be blown open and infiltrated quickly.

“Okay, we have everything we need. Let’s go,” I said.

As we were making our way back to the sewer, we heard voices outside.

“Go faster,” I said.

“Something about that voice is familiar,” he said.

“Just go, we can figure that out later.”

We barely made it into the sewer before they opened the door.

“Now we can go tell the chief,” I said.

We went back to the station and told the chief. We told him about everything we learned and everything we can use to get into the sublevel quickly before they can react. The chief accepted it.

“Ok so when should we make our move?” the chief asked.

“Right now, while they are still recuperating from the attack.”

“Ok, let’s move out.”

We made our way to the lab and stopped about three hundred feet from the lab, so we didn’t draw attention. When we arrived, we planted the bombs on the wall and got ready. They used signs to coordinate when to detonate the bombs and they did. Everybody went in. The chief said shoot only when necessary. The units restrained Karloff, Chen, and another man I didn’t know. Then I saw the dark shadow that almost killed me in the warehouse. He was trying to run away.

“I got him,” said Smith.

He ran over to him and grabbed him and took off his mask. It looked like Smith was frozen in fear or shock.

“Hello Alan Smith,” the shadow said.

He escaped because Smith was unresponsive. Another unit tried to chase him down, but they didn’t come back. The

chief sent another unit to see what happened. They said that they were all dead.

"What, how?" the chief asked.

"Whoever that had killed them all," the squad leader said sadly.

We started to make our way back to the station and Smith was still not talking.

When we got there, I helped him to a seat.

"Stay with him Luke," said the chief.

"yes sir."

After about 30 minutes he started to respond to me.

"Are you okay?" I asked.

He sat there for a second then started talking.

"It was him."

"Who?"

"Eric Thompson."

"Who is that?"

"The person who murdered my family. I can't believe I froze when I had an opportunity to get revenge for my family."

"You just have to give it time. I want to take him to jail too. He almost killed me."

"I don't want to take him to jail. I want to take from him what he took from my family."

"You want to kill him."

"Yes, he killed my family without batting an eye. Why can't I do the same?"

"Because you have moral values and you don't want to break them. If you kill him, you will go to jail. Do you think your wife would have wanted that? Killing a person is a heavy burden to bear. Especially for people that have never done it. Think about that for a while. I will be back to check on you in a little while."

I left him lying on the couch.

*I need to look at that video footage.*

I watched the security camera footage we took from the lab and I found a perfect image of Eric's face.

*If I can code an algorithm to run facial recognition through all the cameras in the city we should find him.*

I finished in about an hour and started running it throughout the city's cameras. Then I went to check on Smith.

"How are you doing?" I asked.

"You were right Luke. Killing is never the answer and all I need to do is put him behind bars to get revenge for my family."

"I have spent the last 6 months trying to find and arrest the people that killed my parents and now I did it and I realize that it is not as satisfying as I thought it was going to be. After my parents died, I felt like I would only be whole when I get revenge, but that wasn't the case. What I needed to be whole was more friends and people to look after me. I will still help you lock him up if you want to, but we must be safe. I ran a program to do facial recognition throughout the city and it should make a ping when it found him. I found that when you are fixated on something important sometimes you forget about self-care which I did a couple of months ago and am now doing again so I am going to get food. I will get you something too.

I left the room and walked down the street to where most of the restaurants are located.

*I forgot how late it was. Well, at least wheely shack is open all day.*

I got us some burgers and fries and made my way back to the station. When I arrived at the station Smith was gone and the program was beeping continuously.

*Oh no.*

I looked at the location and he was at the airport.

*He is trying to leave the city.*

I ran to the captain and told him that Smith is going after Eric by himself. We tried to go as fast as we could to make it to the airport before Smith did something he would regret. When we arrived, people were screaming so we followed them. They led us to Smith. He had a gun against Eric's head.

"Smith!" I screamed.

"You are going to have taken from you what you took from them," he said.

"This isn't you. Remember what your wife would want. If you kill him you may get revenge, but you are going to suffer from the sentence he should suffer from You will lose everything you still have."

He stood there for a minute shaking with anger. He lowered his gun. Eric smirked at him and Smith knocked him out.

"That felt good," he said.

Smith and I may have gotten the revenge we were looking for in the end, but that is not what made us whole. It was what we made out of our lives after our loved ones were gone that made us whole again.