

We never Close

Season Three Reloaded

Von VampiresLady

Kapitel 4: Troubleshooting Part IV

Right before closing time, Horatio ordered everyone to meet in his office to exchange all the details on the case.

He reported to his colleagues what he and Ryan had experienced from the girls' parents and Sebastian Arnet. Derrick Corfield who was responsible for Julie's medication had agreed to meet members of the CSI the next morning, so Horatio passed the task on to Eric and Ryan. "Do me a favor and take a ride to his practice tomorrow morning. This has highest priority."

Calleigh had tested the bullet Eric had assured from the tree trunk and told all of them that it belonged to the weapon they found in Viviane's hand. The other four bullets belong to a similar 9mm weapon, but it had a different caliber.

Horatio looked up at Calleigh. "The two of us will be checking Arnet's alibi. Eric and Ryan, you go back to work, please."

Eric still had to analyze the contamination on the projectile, so Valera joined him in the DNA lab to help him finish the job before they knocked off work. Bending over the microscope, she pierced down on the genetic connections.

"There *is* blood on this bullet. Definitely male," she frowned, "You got something to compare it with?"

Eric nodded his head. "No, not yet!"

He heard a soft knocking on the door and the squeal of the door handle that followed.

"Valera? Could you..." Ryan asked, but his colleague stopped in midsentence and narrowed his eyes. "Oh, sorry, thought you guys were done."

Valera didn't turn her eyes from the sample under the microscope, but a smile tugged at her lips. "No problem, Ryan. How can I help?"

"Ehm, I got this saliva sample from Sebastian Arnet. I need the full program. Maybe we'll be able to find traces of his DNA somewhere it shouldn't be." Ryan explained and placed a small paperbag beside the microscope.

"Yeah, Okay, but I'll need time. Probably until tomorrow. Need to finish this examination first!" she said and glimpsed at the bag.

"First come, first served," Eric added.

"Yeah, sure," Ryan responded, his voice dripping with annoyance, "Well, don't bother 'bout me."

"We won't," Eric said flatly and turned his attention toward a screen that showed a detailed picture of the dark liquid under the microscope. He didn't notice how Ryan opened and closed his mouth several times, as if he wanted to say something and

decided afterwards that it would be best not to say anything at all.

The door slammed shut and Eric watched Ryan heading towards the elevator out of one corner of his eye. Ryan seemed to be far away - once again. But this time, he frowned as if he carried a heavy load weighting on his shoulders.

Eric sighed and received an inquiring look from Valera for it.

Checking the time quickly, he hoped she would drop the matter.

"Let's call it a day," he said. "See you tomorrow."

It's been a while since Timothy Speedle had last been to Miami. It felt unusual to be all by himself again without any doctor or nurse swaying around him, but he enjoyed the comforting silence that awaited him at his apartment.

After his parents had picked him up in North Dakota, his mother kept worrying herself sick about him. All of Monday and the first half of Tuesday, she'd help her son unpacking his clothes and personal belongings he had taken with him to the medical center. Almost dragging her out of the flat, his father had managed to give him a break from her mothering. Still, she called him three times the next day just to make sure, he was fine and even though he loved her dearly, everyone would think of that as annoying.

Between her worried calls, he used the time to make his purchases, clean the apartment – though his mother made sure it had been cleaned every fortnight since he' gone – and take a long shower. He watched his lines in the bathroom mirror and for the first time noticed that he'd grown a lot thinner. Touching his chest, he counted every single rib. Even his skin appeared sickly pale in the cool light of the bathroom. Fortunately, intensive physical workouts were a necessity in his job. Some training combined with an enormous extra dose of Miami's sun should help with this.

When he'd finally dressed himself and sat down on the sofa, he thought about supper. He didn't have much verve to cook something extensive, but he could perfectly picture his mother and doctor advising him to stick to a controlled nourishment instead of deep-frozen fast food.

The sudden ring of door bell interrupted his thoughts.

Who could this be?

He stood up and answered through the intercom: "Yes?"

"Speed? This is Horatio. Can I come in?"

The sound of Horatio's voice caught him like a kick in the stomach. The moment felt odd, somehow unreal and for the tiniest bit of a second he didn't know what to do. But still, he couldn't pretend he was not delighted to hear his voice.

He pushed the button and heard the humming that told him the door was open. Then he waited for Horatio to come up to the apartment.

First, he only heard the quiet footsteps on the wooden floor, then he saw Horatio's tall figure appearing in the corridor. A smile spread across Horatio's face and he seemed to move a little faster when he saw Speed standing in the door-frame.

"So you are finally back?"

They stood there and watched each other for a moment that seemed to extend to a lifetime and Speed's heart missed a beat.

"It's good to see you healthy!" Horatio said at last with a heart-warming smile "You had us quite scared you know?"

Speed closed the door behind him.

"Yeah... I know," he admitted slowly and narrowed his eyes before he headed toward the kitchen to fetch to bottles of beer from the fridge.

Horatio stepped into the small living room and looked around carefully. He'd been to Speed's place once, but that was nearly five years ago.

The room looked like Speed had just moved in. Some of the framed paintings and posters that had stuck to the wall for years lay across the floor as if Speed wanted to exchange them. But besides that, everything was in order, but the apartment seemed more like an austere accommodation than a cozy home.

"But I'd expected the lot of you to be less scared and more upset on the circumstances of my... accident," Speed said when he returned from the kitchen and presented a bottle of beer to Horatio. They all had thought they would lose him, when he was carried to the hospital. Of course, they didn't want him to die, but he'd lost quite an amount of blood out there.

Speed popped his own bottle open and lifted it up to his lips to take a huge swallow. It had been more than a year since he had last tasted beer. And at the moment, Speed was thankful for the well-known effect of alcohol.

Horatio took a few sips from his beer, thinking about his answer before turning his full attention on Speed. "You know... we were upset, because it was the second time this happened. You promised us you would take better care... but you know... we can't turn back time and we are just glad you are still alive. It could have been a lot worse and you know it. Just a few millimeters south and the bullet would have been through your heart and... there would have been no chance to save your life..."

Though Horatio seemed calm and collected, Speed noticed the slight quiver in his voice, betraying the older man with his emotions. "We are all just... really glad... But you can expect us to be after you to clean your gun now... Wouldn't want something like this to happen again, would we?"

Speed felt the heat of shame and guilt coming up from somewhere deep down inside him. He had imagined this very moment ever since he had woken from the coma in the hospital and saw Horatio outside the room talking to the doctor in charge.

Horatio hadn't come to visit Speed after that and he thought he was just too busy - or maybe too worried or too upset with him. Speed had tried hard to prepare himself to face H again. He'd gone through the scenario over and over again in his head, but now that it came to it, he had to admit, he was not prepared at all. Horatio still had this fatherly attitude he deeply admired, but right now it made him feel ashamed and guilty for giving all of them such a hard time. Trying not to blush in front of Horatio, he just narrowed his eyes and took another swallow from his beer.

"No, you wouldn't" Speed agreed.

He lead Horatio to the kitchen table and sat down in front of him hoping his cheeks didn't look as hot as they suddenly felt.

"So, how are things going at CSI? Eric and Calleigh told me you got someone new in my place?"

Horatio smiled slightly at him and nodded.

"Yes.. Ryan Wolfe. He was a patrol officer before he joined CSI. Has to learn a few things but he's good at what he's doing. You will meet him when you come back to the lab. I think you might like him."

A sardonic smile came across Speed's face as he thought of what Eric had told him about Ryan Wolfe. And as far as he remembered, Eric didn't seem to happy to have Wolfe at the CSI. "We will see", Speed said cryptically.

Horatio raised an eyebrow at him and nodded. "Yes, we most likely will..."

It was later next day and Horatio was walking towards the layout room where he

would meet with everyone. It was time to collect what they knew about this case and get everything sorted out so that they hopefully could find the murderer rather soon. Eric was already in and watched Ryan arranging and rearranging the photos once again in deep thoughts. When Horatio walked in, Calleigh came over from the shooting stand and joined the session. Even Alexx found the time and passed by. Eric caught Horatio's expectant look and sighed deeply before he turned toward the others and started his explanation.

"Well, Ryan and me attended the doctor in charge of the medication of Julie McMiller. He told us that he'd diagnosed Julie's leukemia eight years ago, when she was an eight-year-old girl. She had been under his medical observation ever since. Nevertheless that didn't prevent various stays in hospital."

He paused and waited for Ryan to add something to his words, but he remained silent.

"He also confirmed Sebastian Arnet's statements. Viviane often insisted on accompanying her sister and help her to recover."

He placed a portfolio of the twin sisters' medical records on the table, so Horatio, Calleigh and Alexx could take a look at them.

"After Julie's first hospitalization Catherine and George Carson feared their second daughter could have been affected by the disease as well. That fear was appropriate for the sisters are monozygotic twins, meaning they share the same set of genes. Corfield suggested that Viviane shall donate marrow to her sister, but first Viviane had to run through a couple of tests. They proofed to be negative - at least until six weeks ago!"

"So Viviane had leukemia as well? Damn, that's hard," Calleigh said in a concerned voice. "I really understand, if they could not live with that, but still they seemed to fight for they didn't kill themselves."

"That is probably true. Well, when Viviane had been tested negative, Corfiel scheduled a marrow transplantation twice, but both times, Julie's body did not accept the graft. So all he could do was prescribing pharmaceuticals that fight only the symptoms, not the germ of the disease," Eric shook his head and placed another folder on the table. "On to a different subject now. We found DNA on the bullet we got out of the tree at the crime scene. It was male, but whoever did this was not in the database nor from Sebastian Arnet. So, we still have nothing."

Calleigh sighed deeply and looked at everyone before she took over.

"Monroe and I went to the girls' school to see if we can get a few more information's about them, but it was not really helpful. They told us Viviane was very protective of Julie and that they were hardly seen separated... the only interesting thing was that everyone seemed to think that their 'new father' was creepy."

Tipping on his chin with two fingers, Eric stared on Calleigh's report.

"So, do we have any suspects? And what about Sebastian Arnet?"

"He's got an alibi. We checked it. He couldn't have done it. Besides... why would he give his gun to Viviane just to shoot her a few hours later?"

"Eric...", Horatio interfered, "did the doctor tell you if the twins had an appointment the afternoon they were killed? Arnet told me something about an appointment he heard about."

"Well, yes." Eric pointed at his notes. "Julie and Viviane gave Corfield an urgent call, walked into the doctor's practice and fetched up a new prescription for Julie's medication. We also checked on the nearest pharmacies and found a copy of the sales slip. The drugs had been paid with Mr. McMiller's credit card. Unfortunately, no one could tell us who actually purchased them. But from the time on the sales slip it could

have been the girls. The only confusing thing is that we found neither pharmaceuticals near their bodies *nor* their stepfather's credit card. So whoever killed them took both items with him. The only other logical consequence would be that someone else purchased the pharmaceuticals. But somehow, I'm not willing to believe that."

"And by the way I looked into Julie's diary and I'm actually rather surprised that they purchased anything with their step-fathers money. From what she wrote it was her mother who always gave them whatever money she got, so that they could buy the medicine. He wouldn't give them anything" Ryan threw in quietly.

"I'm beginning to ask myself, how many pharmaceuticals they purchased," Alexx interjected. She got up from her seat at the door and stepped up to Calleigh's side to look at the analysis of the stomach contents Eric and Valera had done the other day. "Julie McMiller had an unusual high concentration of drugs circulating in her bloodstream meaning she must have taken her daily dose."

Eric nodded at Alexx' objection. "Yeah, but Viviane was clean. No pharmaceuticals or other chemical material."

"So, she didn't start to take them?" Calleigh asked in surprise. "But why? If they found out that she had leukemia, she should have taken pharmaceuticals, didn't she? I mean from what we heard in school she was rather strict with Julie about taking her pills. This doesn't make sense. No one mentioned her having a disease or her taking pills or anything. But if Julie had known about it, she wouldn't make sure that Viviane also took them, wouldn't she? Something is so not right here..."

They all fell silent for a while, thinking about what Calleigh just said and everyone had to agree that something was definitely out of place here.

And then, suddenly, a dark thought came across Eric's mind.

"What if... what if Viviane had lost her will to live? What if she didn't take the drugs to boost her disease?" He looked at them intensively. "Think about it. Julie was about to die, even her doctor didn't have much hope she could survive! And if Julie was so dear to her, maybe she couldn't stand the thought of living without her sister?"

"That would be rather stupid..." muttered Ryan and received a few strange look for it. Eric snorted silently on Ryan's addressing. *What was he thinking?*

"Well... whatever made her not take her pills, we will have to find it out," Horatio said. "Everything: if they wanted to die, if they were giving up, where those pharmaceuticals are, who took them, which blood we found on the bullet... simply everything. So, let's go"

"And what are we going to do? Check the parents again?"

Eric stared at H, waiting for more detailed orders.

"That's a beginning. Find out why everyone thinks their stepfather is creepy. Check his financial records, history..."

Horatio stopped dead as he saw two patrol officers guiding Jeffrey McMiller down the hall and into an investigation room. Seconds later Monroe knocked on the door and busted in without waiting for an invitation.

"Lieutenant Caine? My men found McMiller speeding on the highway. He had drugs in his car. And as I know he is involved in your current investigation I thought you might want to talk to him."

Horatio nodded and thanked him. "Just hang on for a second." With a serious expression on his face he waited for Monroe to leave and wait outside the room. A new, strange silence covered the room while everyone expected Horatio to say something. Finally, he sighed deeply, collected the folders and turned his attention back on his team. "Mr. Wolfe, you come with me. And you two," he pointed at Eric and

Calleigh, "Check him and his car, let's see what we find."

Monroe lead Lieutenant Caine and his colleague Wolfe into the interrogation room and stood aside Caine's chair, always an eye on Jeffrey McMiller. The detective handed the CSI a report on Jeffrey's mad race.

"So, shall we start, Lieutenant?"

Caine nodded slightly watching Jeffrey intently. "So... Mr. McMiller... I believe you know why you are here. How come we found a rather high amount of cocaine in your car? Would you like to explain that?"

Jeffrey shifted nervously in his chair and watched the lieutenant.

"That must have been a mistake! I never had anything to do with drugs. I was just driving around because of the girls. Had to clear my thoughts, you know?"

He did everything he could to be convincing, but the twinkle in Caine's eyes made it clear that he didn't believe a word he said.

"Yeah, right!" Monroe said ironically, "That's what they all say, when we catch'em."

The detective opened a pack of chewing gum and plugged one gum into his mouth.

"Mr. Wolfe?" Caine said with a threatening undertone, not turning his gaze from Jeffrey. "Do me a favor and take a sample of his DNA and bring it to Valera – I'm rather curious where else we might find his *contaminations*."

Wolfe who had kept to himself suddenly roused from his thoughts and grabbed his toolcase to take the DNA-sample and fingerprints from Jeffrey. The young CSI could see it in his face that he was not very happy about this.

Lieutenant Caine watched as Ryan took the samples from the twins' step-father, then raised a hand and tapped the young man's shoulder. Wolfe bend down and the lieutenant began to speak into his ear. But what both of them did not know about Jeffrey McMiller: He was exceedingly good at eavesdropping. As a matter of fact, eavesdropping had earned him a lot more money than any honorable and upright job. Jeffrey narrowed his eyes and tried to focus on the faint sounds and moving lips. "I want you... Eric's results... find... must be... more to this man than the eye can see." Wolfe nodded in silent agreement, straightened up and left the room in a slow walk. The lieutenant leaned his elbows against the table. Jeffrey gulped down his edginess and tried to read Caine's mind by the indefinite sparkle in his eyes.

"I think, we both know you are lying," Caine told him flatly. "Of course, it could have been that someone wants us to believe you did something wrong, but if you didn't, you won't mind explaining why you weren't telling the truth - or at least not all of it - about your step-daughters, Jeff."

He paused and let his words effect on Jeffrey. "Neither you, nor your wife told us for example that Viviane had leukemia too. Another very interesting point I would love to understand is the fact that the girls thought they had to secure themselves with a weapon."

"I don't even know what you are talking about! *I've done nothing wrong!*" Jeffrey shouted, hot under his collar this time. "Why should they be afraid of me?"

Jeffrey jumped to his feet and the metallic chair slid several meters away from the table and crushed against the wall of glass. Monroe's hand quickly flipped to the holster at his belt. "Ey! You sit down!" he shouted ready to pull his gun.

Seconds passed by in a hurry as Jeffrey looked daggers at the detective. And then, unwillingly, he grabbed the chair and moved it back into position before he said down again.

Caine had just raised an eyebrow at him. He was still calm and collected, but this time

the odd sparkle in his eyes struck Jeffrey like a thunderbolt. "Well, we'll see about that. But for the time being, you're going to stay here, Jeff, until I give you the permission to leave this building *personally*. And if I find out that you are related to the twins' murder *in any way*, I'm gonna have your everything for it!"

Caine saw no need to ask his suspect if he'd understood him. His words were as clear as daylight. "Good."

With that the lieutenant got out of his chair and left Jeffrey and Monroe alone.

Boy, how am I going to get me out this time? Jeffrey asked himself.

He never received an answer.