

FIVE: A BLACK JACK STORY

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Based on SEVEN by Andrew Kevin Walker

Second Draft

FADE IN.

MONDAY

INT. DET. CONNOR'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Detectives CONNOR and JACK, well-dressed officers of the law, await their next lead. Det. Connor sits at his desk, pouring over case files. Det. Jack practices his nunchucks. A SULLY SULLIVAN "WANTED" poster is tacked next to the WHS CORE VALUES. The TIMBERWOLF school mascot costume hangs from a wall hook. Suddenly, the phone rings. Det. Connor picks up.

DET. CONNOR
Hello? ... History wing? We'll be
right there.

INT. HISTORY WING -- DAY

Connor and Jack strut down the hall, badges gleaming. Connor adjusts his tie and Jack holsters his nunchucks. MS. HOGAN approaches the detectives.

DET. JACK
Ms. Hogan!

MS. HOGAN
Detectives Connor and Jack! This
morning, I noticed a suspicious group
of students lined up at the storage
closet. I tried the door after they
left, but it was locked!

DET. CONNOR
Interesting. Let's take a look.

Connor presses his ear to the door and hears nothing. He whips out a formidable keyring and attempts several keys.

DET. CONNOR (CONT'D)
Nope. Nope. Nope.

Suddenly, a swift kick from Det. Jack opens the door!

DET. JACK
HIYAH!

DET. CONNOR
Watch out, Jack!

Connor cautiously flips the lightswitch.

DET. JACK
WHOA!

INT. STORAGE CLOSET -- DAY

Red florescent light illuminates a patchwork of pages pasted onto all four walls: test answers for every class at WHS. On a desk sits a moneybox overflowing with cash.

DET. JACK
He's selling answers to everything!

MS. HOGAN
APUSH quizzes... Math tests... Biology projects... is that the woodshop safety test? How many have leaked?

DET. CONNOR
We've got a seasoned con-man on our hands. I'll notify forensics to swab for prints. Jack, let's check the security footage.

INT. DET. CONNOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Jack fast-forwards through the tape.

DET. CONNOR
Early each morning, students queue up to buy their grades.

Jack reverses the tape, then pauses. A MASKED CROOK struts from the closet. He glances up at the camera.

DET. JACK
THERE'S OUR GUY!

INSERT -- TITLE CARD

TUESDAY

INT. ART HALLWAY -- MIDDAY

During class, Jack patrols the hallway. The TIMBERWOLF, WHS mascot, saunters towards him.

DET. JACK
TIMBY! Love you, man!

Jack gives the Timberwolf a giant fist-bump. The Timberwolf continues up the stairs. Just then, Two HALL-WALKERS round the corner, joking and laughing.

DET. JACK (CONT'D)
WHERE'S YOUR PASS?

HALL WALKER 1
Pass?! Pfft. Mind your own business.
We're just...

Jack whips out his nunchucks at lightning speed. CRACK! Hall Walker 1 takes a blow to the shin and crumples. Hall Walker 2 grabs their companion.

HALL WALKER 2
OKAY! Okay! We'll get a pass next
time, Jack!

DET. JACK
No funny business! A criminal's on the
loose!

As Hall Walker 2 drags their buddy back to class, MR. TOCIO pokes his head into the hallway.

MR. TOCIO
Jack! Just in time! I could use your
help.

Jack enters Mr. Tocio's classroom.

INT. MR. TOCIO'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

At the center of the room, a SLOTHFUL STUDENT dressed in pajamas slumps at their desk. Jack examines them as Mr. Tocio stands by, helpless.

MR. TOCIO
(exasperated)
They've been like this all morning.
Not a single movement, not a peep.

DET. JACK
HEY! YOU THERE! HELLO?!

Jack smacks the desk. The lethargic student remains unfazed. Jack circles them, arms crossed, considering his options.

DET. JACK (CONT'D)
It's time for... drastic measures.

Jack grabs a swiffer duster from the closet and swipes it under the student's nose.

SLOTHFUL STUDENT
AH... AHHH... ACHOOOO!

DET. JACK
AHA! Who are you?!

The student jerks awake with a look of panic.

SLOTHFUL STUDENT
(frantically)
Some guy promised me muffins from the
Muffin House if I sat here all day
long. He wanted a lazy student: a
sloth! I have no idea what's going on.
Don't hurt me!

DET. JACK
(to Mr. Tocio)
This goes deeper than we thought.

The student slinks away as Jack turns to notice an irregularity on the wall: a POSTER of Detective Blackjack, slightly crooked. He straightens it to reveal the word "DRIVE" scrawled beneath.

Jack clutches his walkie-talkie.

DET. JACK (CONT'D)
(into walkie-talkie)
Connor, we've got a lead.

INT. HISTORY WING -- DAY

Connor and Jack push through a crowded passing-time hallway.

DET. CONNOR
Writing on walls? Hiding messages
behind posters? This guy must be
losing his marbles. I wonder what
forensics uncovered from the storage
closet bust.

Suddenly, an offscreen phone camera snaps a flash photo of the two detectives.

DET. JACK
HEY! NO PAPARAZZI!

DET. CONNOR
What a tool. We've got a case to
solve.

The detectives approach the closet. The area is now roped off with caution tape. Head forensic scientist MS. HARRIS stands in the closet doorway, deep in thought.

DET. JACK
Ms. Harris!

MS. HARRIS
You need to see this.

INT. STORAGE CLOSET -- DAY

New work-lights dot the walls. Pages are dusted for fingerprints. The moneybox sits in an evidence bag.

MS. HARRIS
Right here.

Ms Harris dusts a gap in the wall of answer keys to reveal a letter "I" constructed with the perpetrator's intentional fingerprints. Connor and Jack tear down the tests. With a swipe of the brush, Ms. Harris reveals the word "INTEGRITY".

DET. JACK
Det. Connor, have you seen anything like it?

DET. CONNOR
Certainly not in my time. I think some research is in order.

INT. WHS MEDIA CENTER -- NIGHT

Despite the pitch black exterior, Walpole HS remains open as Connor searches for clues. The janitor, MR. WOOD, unlocks the media center for a briefcase-carrying Connor.

MR. WOOD
It's all yours, Ed.

DET. CONNOR
Thank you, David.

Connor paces, scanning the shelves. Classical music hums in the background. He pulls several old WHS yearbooks.

Connor sets his volumes on a table and sits. He removes a notepad and pen from his briefcase, then flips through a recent yearbook.

Connor's finger scans over yearbook photos.

DET. CONNOR (CONT'D)
He's hiding right under our noses.

Connor swaps to study an old yearbook. He ruffles through to a picture of the Timberwolf, the beloved school mascot. Around the Timberwolf lays a ring of CORE VALUES: POSITIVITY, RESPECT, INTEGRITY, DRIVE, ACCEPTANCE.

Connor recoils with surprise and quickly jots the values down.

WEDNESDAY

INT. DET. CONNOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Connor and Jack sit with Imbusch. Connor's desk displays a photocopy of the core values, photos from each crime scene, and a newspaper clipping: "DRIVE: ANOTHER VALUE STRUCK DOWN". Connor holds the INTEGRITY and DRIVE photos.

DET. CONNOR
There are five core values:
positivity, respect, integrity, drive,
and acceptance. Five.

IMBUSCH
Why core values?

DET. CONNOR
This guy's preaching. He wants to
prove Walpole doesn't stand by its
core values anymore.

DET. JACK
This is only the beginning.

IMBUSCH
Really? It's only two...

Suddenly, a scream reverberates from the other end of the language wing. Connor and Jack sprint from their office.

INT. WHS HALLWAYS -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS

In the LANGUAGE WING, the RAK PRESIDENT stands outside Mme. Frattasio's classroom, distraught. A MASKED CROOK turns the corner.

DET. CONNOR
GO, JACK!

Jack jumps into hot pursuit. He trails the crook into the ART WING.

DET. JACK
STOP, IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!

Suddenly, Jack trips at the top of the ramp. The crook approaches ominously, then stares at Jack from overhead. The crook darts away and exits WHS through the BACK STAIRWELL.

Jack, shaken, dusts himself off and returns to the crime scene empty-handed.

INT. MME. FRATTASIO'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Connor and Jack explore the classroom. The RAK President sits by the door, refusing to acknowledge the scene. The whiteboard reads "POSITIVITY" in bold letters.

DET. JACK
I almost had him! He's too fast!

Jack and Connor scan the desks.

DET. CONNOR
What happened here?

RAK PRESIDENT

I stopped by to prepare for our Random Acts of Kindness club meeting. We tape nice notes to all the desks to add a little positivity to every student's day.

DET. JACK

Mm-hmm.

RAK PRESIDENT

At first, I thought one of my clubbmates arrived early.

She gestures towards the whiteboard.

RAK PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

That is, until I saw all our notes were replaced by... just see for yourselves.

She points to a pile of notes on Mme. Frattasio's desk. Connor picks up the notes.

DET. CONNOR

(reading)

You're COOKED. Go back to Kindergarden, buddy! Have a BAD day. You're not the sharpest tool in the shed.

The RAK President winces at each negative comment.

DET. CONNOR (CONT'D)

Add them to evidence.

DET. JACK (O.S.)

What's this?

Jack lifts an envelope from Mme. Frattasio's desk. It reads: "TO: DETECTIVES". Jack unfolds the letter.

MASKED CROOK (V.O.)

I admire your efforts. You've been hot on my trail. All will be revealed. I wish I could tell you more, but I don't want to ruin the surprise!
SIGNED: -S

A photograph tumbles from the page and floats to the floor. It depicts Connor and Jack walking down the history wing.

DET. CONNOR

HE took that picture?! He was just inches away!

DET. JACK

UGHHH!

THURSDAY

INT. TV STUDIO -- MIDDAY

Jack holds a press conference. PAPARAZZI with cameras snap photos and REPORTERS with notebooks yell for his attention.

REPORTERS
JACK! JACK!

REPORTER 1
Jack. This criminal's on a hot streak.
3 crimes in 3 days! How should
students feel about the current
lawlessness at Walpole HS?

DET. JACK
It's under control.

REPORTER 1
Under control? Jack! He's 3 for 3!
Rumor has it he'll evade arrest until
his whole criminal agenda is complete.

REPORTER 2
Jack. Recently students have reported
a lack of core values at Walpole HS.
What's your response?

DET. JACK
Everything's fine!

REPORTER 1
Jack. One more. What's your take on
the criminal's cryptic message? WHS
students have been unable to decipher
it.

DET. JACK
A MESSAGE? WHERE?

REPORTER 1
Haven't you seen it? He sent an
anonymous ad to The Searchlight this
morning. It reads:
"TOMMORROW---LUNCH." Any ideas?

DET. JACK
Oh no.

FRIDAY

INT. CAFETERIA INTERSECTION -- MIDDAY

Connor and Jack stand, arms crossed, on lunch duty.

DET. JACK
Who's our guy?

DET. CONNOR
I don't know, Jack. He could be
anyone. See that kid at the far table?

Connor points to a GOOFY STUDENT chatting and laughing with his
friends in the corner.

DET. CONNOR (CONT'D)
He could be plotting the next crime.

DET. JACK
No, not him. That guy!

Jack points to a HUNGRY STUDENT munching a muffin.

DET. JACK (CONT'D)
Muffin House? Was he bribed too? I'll
go interrogate him!

DET. CONNOR
No, Jack! He's probably just hungry.
Those muffins are pretty good...

Connor and Jack discuss suspects as the MASKED CROOK, SULLY
SULLIVAN, slowly approaches the unaware detectives from behind.

SULLY SULLIVAN (O.S.)
Detectives! Detectives...

Connor and Jack turn on a dime. Sully wears a bright orange
jumpsuit. He stands nonchalant, arms raised above his head.

DET. JACK
SULLY SULLIVAN! IT WAS YOU!

Sully simply shrugs.

DET. JACK (CONT'D)
Down on the floor! Hands behind your
back!

Sully obeys and lays down. With a smug grin, Sully places his hands
behind his back. Jack binds Sully's wrists tightly with handcuffs.

DET. CONNOR
(muttering)
I can't believe it. He's turning
himself in?

SULLY SULLIVAN
(to Connor)
Hello, detective.

DET. JACK
You're coming with us, Sully!

Jack forcefully lifts Sully by the scruff of his neck.

DET. CONNOR
Careful, Jack!

DET. JACK
Get moving, Sully! You're going to the
can!

Jack directs Sully down the gym hallway by the arm. Connor follows
close behind.

INT. GYM HALLWAY -- DAY

Sully and the detectives traverse the gym hallway.

DET. CONNOR
Sully. You used to be the pre-bell
skipper. Now, you're messing with
innocent WHS students! Why?

SULLY SULLIVAN
Innocent? Students dishonestly bought
my test answers. A kid even sacrificed
his drive for some muffins! People
only show Kindness when it's part of a
club. Every day, we watch people break
the core values. And we tolerate it:
7:25-2:05, 180 days a year. Not
anymore.

DET. JACK
You're lost. Cuckoo.

SULLY SULLIVAN
Really, you should thank me.

DET. CONNOR
Well, you certainly won't finish the
job. There are 5 core values.

SULLY SULLIVAN
Oh, just you wait. It's not over. I'm
only here because I want to be.

DET. JACK
We would have caught you eventually.

SULLY SULLIVAN
HHMMM. You'd let three crimes go
unpunished, THEN go out and finally
haul me in? SURE. Your chase was just
a little exercise, EH?

DET. JACK
SHUT UP!

The trio reaches the main lobby.

INT. WHS MAIN LOBBY -- DAY

Before Sully can be hauled through out the front door, a DELIVERYMAN approaches.

DET. CONNOR
STOP! What is it?

DELIVERYMAN
Hey, man! I'm just delivering a package for this guy... Jack. Detective Blackjack.

Sully's grin widens. He chuckles to himself.

DET. JACK
What? For me?

DET. CONNOR
Drop it right there! I'll take a look.

The deliveryman drops the box and scurries back out the door. Connor carefully treads toward the package.

SULLY SULLIVAN
(to Jack)
No core values, no school spirit, no nothing. I have no RESPECT for this school, Jack.

Connor tears open the box lid, picks it up, and cautiously peers inside. His eyes echo pure terror.

DET. CONNOR
NO NO NO NO NO!!! Jack, don't listen to Sully! He has the upper hand!

SULLY SULLIVAN
Detective Blackjack, are you listening? I'm trying to tell you how much I hate WHS. I wanted to tell you earlier. I visited your office this morning, but you weren't there. Thankfully, someone else was.

DET. JACK
Who was there?!

Jack draws his nunchucks.

DET. CONNOR
JACK! WALK AWAY!

SULLY SULLIVAN
I thought I'd take a little souvenir from your mascot.

DET. CONNOR
JACK, LISTEN TO ME!

Jack gestures violently with his nunchucks.

DET. JACK
What's in the box? WHAT'S IN THE BOX?!
WHAT'S IN THE BOX?!

Connor approaches cautiously, attempting to diffuse the situation before Jack lashes out. In doing so, he loses grip on the box. THE TIMBERWOLF HEAD TUMBLES ONTO THE FLOOR!!!

DET. JACK (CONT'D)
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Jack falls to his knees, defeated. His visage shifts between despair and fury.

SULLY SULLIVAN
You're supposed to RESPECT the mascot,
but I guess I didn't.

DET. JACK
YOU'LL PAY!

SULLY SULLIVAN
Break ACCEPTANCE, Jack. You can't
accept this, can you? Your values are
destroyed. Your mascot is
disrespected.

DET. CONNOR
Don't do this, Jack. Please. If you
attack, he wins! We'll lock him up for
good. You have to ACCEPT IT!

Jack glances at Sully, at Connor, at Sully, at Connor. Finally, he smacks Sully with his nunchucks.

Connor winces, shaking his head.

Jack looms over Sully, who is splayed out on the lobby floor. Sully musters a weak smile as sirens wail outside.

FADE OUT.