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When the murders were reported the next day, the papers were sure to note that the victims were “known to police,” so that normal people wouldn’t be too worried or care too much. To be known in this way implied an intimacy greater than the biblical sense of the word; for Brody Miller and Wayson Tam, the two Da Silva Brothers associates gunned down outside the Ramen Lion in Kamloops in the harsh dry sunshine of a summer afternoon, to be known to police was to be hived off from the rest of humanity, to be marked as the kind of easy-money scumbags who refused to work for a living like the rest of us. Anybody who expected an immediate seventy- or eighty-percent return on any investment, besides a house, probably deserved whatever they had coming.

The criminal enterprises of the Da Silva Brothers had deeply divided Vancouver’s racist community: those who primarily saw news about them on television considered them to be emblematic of the Punjabi gangs threatening the safety of Lower Mainland taxpayers, while those who primarily heard about them on the radio considered them to represent the nightmare of Latino criminal predation. That they were neither Punjabi nor Latino perhaps got at the underlying set of circumstances that had allowed the two siblings to navigate the Vancouver underworld with such success. Born in Canada to Catholic parents from Goa, the Da Silva boys had found themselves uniquely equipped for life and death in the mosaic of organized crime on the West Coast. Vincenzo “Zio” De Angelis had been present at the first communion of Danny Da Silva’s daughter, Epiphany; Nicky Da Silva had been photographed on all three days of Manpreet “Goodnite” Singh’s wedding. Almost preternaturally, the Da Silva boys had developed a talent for talking with the very select groups of people whom they could not terrify or, eventually, extinguish. Like early Cold War Americans, they combined hard and soft power expertly, viewing big guns and diplomacy not as mutually exclusive alternatives but as handmaidens; like early Cold War

Americans, they prioritized talent above tribal loyalties, recruiting brains and muscle in all hues. There would be some newspaper readers who, in taking in the news of Miller and Tam's shooting, wouldn't be able to help but be oddly moved that a boy christened Brody Terrence and a boy christened Wayson Ji Yu could be members of the same gang, gunned down by the same people. It marked a certain kind of progress.

But closer observers of the city's gangland conflagrations would know that any biting at the fringes of the Da Silva organization meant that the careful equilibrium that had held the peace for several years now was starting to unravel. It had been a long time since the Da Silvas had had to prove anything, or since anyone had tried to prove anything by them. The uneasy detente between their lively multicultural ranks and those of their more homogeneously pallid, leather-vested rivals, the Underground Riders, had been hard-won, but for it to be lost didn't require malice or stupidity on anyone's part. That there were now armed men stationed inside and outside the Da Silva home in the deep suburbs of Surrey—that Epiphany and her siblings, her cousins, her mother, and her aunt had been evacuated to a suite in a soaring hotel better suited to a raucous bachelor party—didn't have to be anybody's fault; though, of course, it always could be. Peace could come apart through stupidity or entropy: a handful of arrests, retirements, malignant blood cells, or new babies; the wrong collision of personalities or resentments or misunderstandings—any of it could upset the delicate chemical balance that had, until the deaths of Brody Miller and Wayson Tam, two men known to police, kept the physics from flying through the air.



From the elliptical trainer, you could see through the half-windows above ground and onto the property that belonged to the biker. The biker was gone now, and long-dried button-down shirts on wire hangers were draped from the exercise machine.

The biker had been a charismatic curiosity for neighbours looped around the whole of Driftwood Crescent, and neither Scott nor Michelle had been exceptions. There was the baldness, neither clearly voluntary nor clearly involuntary, when usually that was so obvious; and there were tattoos somehow both inscrutable and uninteresting, like a graduate thesis, stamped across a knot of arm, neck, and back muscles the width of a ping-pong table. Whenever he was outside, in view of the neighbours, the biker seemed to keep all of his muscles in motion, stretching and rotating and loosening and tightening his body with a lack of stillness that would only have looked like weakness in a much smaller man. The impossible swollen strength of him had been a running joke between Scott and Michelle—that Michelle might actually find it very sexy, that she wanted to be held by him, to hold on to him from behind as he rode off on the giant, black and silver roar of bike that he usually kept underneath a thick cover in the garage, leaving his Escalade on the street, its windows darkened.

Scott had assumed, of course, that they were jokes—it had never occurred to him to ask. Now he'd never know.

One night, in the middle of a home-renovation show, the growl of several other bikes arriving in their neighbour's driveway had drawn their attention through the blinds behind the couch. It had been a T-shirt ride, a summer evening excursion unencumbered by safety considerations, and Scott could read the back of one of the shirts as the half-dozen loud, large men had entered through the side gate of their neighbour's yard: "If You Can Read This, The Bitch Fell Off." Scott did something acid and unpleasant with his throat, half scoffing and half tsking.

"Nice," he said impotently. "Jesus, that's gross."

Michelle had smirked. "I want a shirt that says on the front, 'If You Can Read This—Who's Driving The Bike?!'"

Scott took the shirts off the exercise machine, bunching them in his hand. He would have to start using the elliptical again, regularly. His stomach and chest, chin, and cheeks had once again become insulated with a

layer of soft—an insulation from which he had thought that he himself had been insulated by a wedding band, by inertia. But just over a year ago, without even any great acrimony, Michelle had taken her jokes and her lips and was gone. And then, just a few months later, the biker too left the cul-de-sac, never putting the house up for sale but disappearing with his bike and Escalade, replaced by the kind of young family Scott had told Michelle he wasn't ready for. Now all he had was her father as a sort of business partner, and that would also have to end soon, whether he could afford it or not. They had an agreement.

Driftwood Crescent was the only place Scott had ever lived, and the prospect of having to leave terrified him. The term “nestled” is applied loosely in the vocabulary of real estate sales, but Driftwood Crescent really was, halfway down a steep hillside in the suburb of Coquitlam. Coquitlam was where the Vancouver suburbs began in earnest; Burnaby, the first municipality east of the medium-big city, huddled close to Vancouver like someone trying to get a better view at a show. But no part of Coquitlam touched Vancouver proper; the weather was different there, snowy during the coastal winter rains; garbage couldn't be put to the curb too early lest it attract bears. As soon as they could drive, teenagers in Burnaby spent their evenings and weekends in downtown Vancouver, but by the time you got to Coquitlam, the kids were just as likely to break further east, learning to drink in bars playing country music.

Scott and his friends had been among those breaking west, uninterested in the hick, big-wheel kitsch of the deep suburbs. Throughout high school, Scott had been part of a superlatively multi-ethnic crew, anathema to the prevailing vibe next to the mechanical bulls. Josiah Kim was himself the product of a mixed marriage, a Korean father and Chinese mother, meaning that whenever people guessed at Josiah's ethnicity—as they invariably did—they were always a little right and always a little wrong. Josiah's father, Ha-Chang, had taken the boys hunting as a graduation present; he had learned himself from Josiah's grandfather, who had kept his

young children alive with game during a long trek from North to South toward the end of the war. Pardeep Dhaliwal's family had been in British Columbia longer than anyone else's, including Scott's, and so whenever Pardeep was asked where he was from, he would name someplace extravagantly and obscurely European, claiming alternately Estonian or Basque origins just to confound the inquisitor. Contributing to the confusion was the fact that Pardeep's parents, Gurdeep and Manjot, ran a popular Greek restaurant called Polis. Adnan abd-Husseini had been born in Cairo, then lived in Waterloo, Ontario, through the final years of elementary school before his father's interests in a men's fashion franchise brought the family west. Though Adnan moved to England for university and stayed, gradually leaving his suburban pals entirely behind—even disappearing offline in an idiosyncratic rejection of social media—his presence was immortalized by the nickname he had given the crew: the Non-Aligned Movement, named for the project helmed by Colonel Nasser, Jawarharlal Nehru, Kwame Nkrumah, and Marshal Tito, to keep the majority of the world's peoples out of obeisance to either the American or Soviet empires during the twentieth century. Adnan had explained that the Non-Aligned Movement was particularly appropriate since the white people involved were Yugoslavs, and though the name "Scott Clark" slotted the wearer into an invisible Scottishness that practically counted as ethnic wallpaper in British Columbia, it belied the Serbian contributions of his very beautiful and winningly sarcastic Balkan mother, Bojana.

The four boys, graduating high school with seventy-five-percent statistical virginity, had each saluted the Non-Aligned Movement in their year-book quotes, though they had argued over whether it was cooler to use the initials themselves or the numerical placements of the letters, in the style of prison gangs and Kabbalists. In the end, they were split down the middle: "14-1-13 4 life," (Josiah); "14/1/13 Zindabad!" (Pardeep); "NAM forever baby" (Adnan); "NAM till I Die" (Scott). And on the sidewalk right in front of the house on Driftwood Crescent—a house that Scott was barely

clinging on to through a business partnership with a man who was no longer his father-in-law—the letters N-A-M had been carved forever into concrete that had once been wet.

Scott hung the shirts in the closet where his own father's clothes had formerly hung, even though Scott still preferred to sleep in what had always been his own room.