

No Tears For Crying

by Kevin Michaels

It was a little after ten on a quiet night but Ice didn't care about the time. Ten o'clock or eleven o'clock didn't matter much either way. All he needed was a couple of hours to establish an alibi in case somebody showed up with questions and search warrants.

Ice had his Nine tucked inside a sweatshirt pocket and his hood pulled low over his head as he moved along the sidewalk. The street was quiet. A few heads poked out apartment windows, a couple of corner boys huddled together sharing cigarettes in the doorway of the Korean grocery store, and a hip-hop beat blasted from a radio perched on somebody's second story window ledge. A few blocks away a siren wailed but the sound faded as the car raced towards another street

None of that was important.

A neighborhood kid named Derrick who had been Ice's cellmate in county lock-up a few years back had been hit while he was standing on the corner talking to friends. Nobody saw it coming. A dark blue Honda Civic had rolled quietly down the street, pulling alongside Derrick. Two shooters with Glocks leaned out windows and opened fire before he could even turn around. They cut down Derrick before he made it halfway across the sidewalk, leaving him face down on the concrete in a pool of blood.

Nobody knew anything, but Ice was certain the guy behind it was a punk named Jayson.

Jayson and Derrick ran in a Pacific Avenue crew, slinging rock and pills to tourists and casino workers near Trump Plaza, across the street from Convention Hall. Somebody said Jayson got greedy and wanted a bigger share of the profits. There was no such thing as an amicable end to business partnerships in their neighborhood, and nobody walked away when somebody wanted you gone. Things got settled without handshakes and buyouts.

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Now Ice wanted him dead.

He was going to do it like a man though; not hire some thug when he could do the job himself. And not pump a clip full of bullets into his back while he was minding his own business on a street corner or talking to his crew, but do it calm and business-like without taking out innocents who weren't part of the deal. Look him in the eye when he squeezed the trigger. Old school, Ice was thinking. Eye for an eye.

The way things used to be done.

He popped a stick of Juicy Fruit into his mouth and moved silently across the street.

At the end of the block he saw Jayson talking to his old lady and a couple of friends, and Ice swallowed his grin. The guy was as regular as a Rolex; every night on that same corner, holding court like the mayor. It didn't matter what day it was or whether it was raining, cold or hot — he stood in that spot and acted like he ran the neighborhood. The sound of laughter carried down the street and Ice thought about how Jayson would never hear that sound again. Never share a laugh or smile, and never see another night on that corner.

Dead was dead.

Ice moved softly through the shadows and made himself small so no one could see him.

When he came up behind Jayson he had the gun extended, pointed low towards the center of his back. No head shots like the younger kids favored — old school, he kept thinking. The type that wouldn't miss.

Ice got right behind him and smiled the kind of satisfied grin revenge created.

"Jayson," he said.

Ice was already pulling the trigger and emptying the Nine's clip as Jayson turned around, holding his baby daughter against his chest.

The only sound Ice heard as he raced away was the pained, piercing scream of the baby's mother, shrieking as she cradled the dead bodies in her arms.

Her cries went on forever into his night.

