

Deleted Scene from *Deadly Enterprise*

Author's Note:

Greetings, Mike Stoneman fans! As a special treat, below is a scene from *Deadly Enterprise* that ended up on the cutting room floor. It's difficult to delete text from a manuscript, especially when I really like the scene, but sometimes it just doesn't work in the story. But, this is my chance to share it, even though it didn't make it into the finished book.

To set the scene, Mike and Jason are having trouble finding any leads into Christine Barker's death, and they have been prevented from rooting around in the jurisdiction of the vice task force that is (in theory) investigating the prostitution rings operated by the Gallata crime family. But, Mike bumps into a friend of his, Assistant District Attorney Keith Harris, at the Hero's Ball. Harris says that Mike should talk to one of his colleagues about a case that might be connected to the same operation.

Here's the sequence of events from the second draft of the book:

- Assistant District Attorney Zimmerman tells Mike and Jason about a woman who was arrested for solicitation and then lashed out with a knife at the arresting officer, so she was also charged with disorderly conduct and assault on a police officer. When she was questioned, she said that she had information on the "bosses" and she wanted to make a deal. She said the bosses told the girls that they would be arrested and sent to jail if they got out of line, tried to run away, or tried to rat out the operation. She said the bosses did not seem at all afraid of the cops.
- But, the arresting officer insisted that she should do hard time for her "attempted murder," and the detectives working on the vice task force said that she was too unreliable to be used as an undercover operative, so they didn't want to work with her. As much as Zimmerman wanted to use her as an informant, his hands were tied. The woman, Elizabeth Petrofsky, later plead guilty to slightly reduced charges.
- Zimmerman tells Mike and Jason that Petrofsky is doing her time in an upstate women's only prison – Bedford. Mike and Jason agree with Zimmerman that it's a good idea to talk to her to see if she recognizes any of the girls who they have now identified as potential murder victims, including Christine Barker. They also want to know what she can really tell them about the "bosses" who may be involved.

- Zimmerman says that he alerted Internal Affairs about the whole situation when it was happening, but they didn't seem very interested. Mike tells Zimmerman that he knows someone at Internal Affairs who might be very interested now. (That would be agent Luis Gomez, who is working with Mike and Jason on their investigation.)

So, Mike and Jason trek off to Bedford to meet with Elizabeth Petrofsky.

Chapter 24 – Information Behind Bars

Captain Sullivan was not happy when Mike and Jason informed him that they were going on a road trip to visit a prisoner. They explained that it was at the request of Internal Affairs, which got Sully to back off. Nobody likes dealing with IA, but everyone knows not to do anything to obstruct one of their investigations. It wasn't like they were the Nazi SS. They were more like the IRS. Even if you haven't done anything wrong, you really don't want them digging into your activities. Gomez had agreed that talking to the girl was a good idea and recorded her as a "person of interest" in his official IA report, which gave them all cover in case anyone asked why they were talking to her. Gomez did not come along. He was digging into the officers assigned to the vice operation in Queens, while Mike and Jason went to talk to Ms. Petrofsky.

The girl had been sent to the Bedford Hills Correctional Center in Bedford, New York, in Westchester county, just north of New York City. The name sounded like a country club, but the facility was the only maximum security prison for women operated by the New York Corrections department. It was odd that a young woman with no prior criminal history would be sent to a max facility, although the assault on a police officer conviction could plausibly explain why she had to be in a high security prison. Both Mike and Jason were skeptical, however, and figured that if somebody was trying to put a gag on her, sending Petrofsky off Bedford would be a good idea.

On the drive north, as they crawled along the Cross-Bronx Expressway, Mike and Jason had a chance to review the case and brainstorm ideas. The problem, of course, was that all they had was speculation. The more they tossed out ideas, the more implausible they got. By the time they pulled into the Bedford Hills parking lot, Jason was seriously talking about the girl being an under-cover police officer who had infiltrated the prostitution ring and was now doing time as part of her deep cover. Mike thought that theory was unlikely.

"Do we have any nineteen-year-old officers who could undertake that kind of under-cover operation?" Mike asked without a trace of humor or sarcasm.

"Not likely," Jason conceded. "An officer would need to be older, and to have the experience to be entrusted with that kind of under-cover work, there's no way. But, she might look really young and be able to pass with a fake ID."

Mike shrugged as he climbed out of the car, stretching his back and groaning under his breath.

As they made their way past security, they happily discovered that Gomez had greased the wheels for them by calling ahead and talking to the assistant warden. Mike and Jason breezed past a group of rumpled-looking lawyers and haggard relatives occupying a dingy waiting room and were escorted directly to an interview room. They waited only a few minutes before the door clanged loudly. A thin, gaunt young woman sauntered in with a suspicious expression, followed by a burly guard. The woman wore the standard orange jump suit and was not handcuffed. She cast a puzzled look at Mike and Jason, whom she had never seen, as she sat down on the opposite side of a metal table. Mike told the guard they did not need him to stay.

"You cops?" the woman said, not really as a question. She had dark brown hair that was clipped short and ragged, leaving points of bangs hanging down her forehead. Piercings dotted her ears, eyebrows, and one nostril. Mike and Jason knew from her file that she claimed to be from the Ukraine, although she never produced a passport. How she got into the U.S. as a teenager was not clear, but her accent was consistent. Mike thought she sounded a little like Natasha, the Russian spy from the Bullwinkle cartoons.

The woman's eyes were sunken into their sockets. Without any makeup, her pale skin looked macabre. The jumpsuit fit her loosely and mostly hid her figure from view, but even through the prison garb it was obvious that she had large breasts, which was always the great equalizer for otherwise plain women. Mike tried to imagine how she might look with the right clothing and makeup. It wasn't easy to envision her as attractive. Before they walked in, Mike had decided to let Jason take the lead in the interrogation, figuring that Jason had more charm and sex appeal.

"My name is detective Jason Dickson. This is my partner, detective Mike Stoneman. We're with the Manhattan homicide division and we're investigating the drowning death of a young woman named Christine Barker." Jason slid a photo of Christine across the table and waited for some reaction. He got nothing. Elizabeth looked passively at the photo, without picking it up from the table, and after ten seconds shook her head slightly.

"Don't know her."

Jason left the photo and pressed forward. "We believe that Christine was working as a hooker in Brooklyn in an operation run by some guys who are connected to the Gallata crime family. We think she went there voluntarily for a while, but then she decided she wanted out and the dudes running the show knocked her off and tried to make it look like an overdose. Any of that sound familiar?" Jason was freelancing a bit, speculating about what they thought was a likely scenario and hoping that the girl would be able to help them fill in the blanks. She slumped in her chair and stared at Jason, sizing him up, but saying nothing.

"We know you told the D.A. that there was something suspicious about the bosses running that sex operation. At the time, the cops running the investigation were not interested in listening to you. We're interested."

For the first time, Jason saw a spark of attention in Petrofsky's eyes. She shifted slightly in her chair, but still didn't say anything. "We know that you got hosed here, going down for assaulting an officer and getting 5 to 7, when all you did was solicit an undercover cop. We're wondering if you'd be interested in knocking some time off your sentence."

Now, Petrofsky was definitely interested. "You have authority for this?" She stared at Jason as if daring him to give her some bullshit answer so she could slap him down.

"We have authority to negotiate a deal if you have useful information."

"So, I give you what you want first, before I get anything? I don't think so. It not work that way with the Johns and not for you. If tell you about the bosses, you get me out so I can disappear. I'm not safe in here once they find out I talked." Elizabeth Petrofsky crossed her arms underneath her breasts, pushing them up and out against the orange fabric, making Mike notice her posture. She stared defiantly at Jason.

"You've done less than a year, Elizabeth," Jason said.

"Liz," she interrupted.

"What?"

"You call me Liz."

"OK, Liz, the way I see it, even with good behavior, which we know you have not had much of, you aren't even eligible for parole for another eighteen months. You think what you have is worth an immediate release?"

"Yes," the girl responded, nodding once before returning to her level stare.

"What if we get you transferred, to a minimum security facility in Connecticut or Jersey. We don't tell anyone and we put a blackout on the orders so nobody knows where you went. That would be pretty sweet for you, wouldn't it?"

Liz licked her lips quickly before returning to her poker face. "There is nowhere safe for me. Inside, they will find me. Jersey? Ha! I will be dead. The only reason I am alive is I keep my mouth shut. I get out when I am twenty-six so no problem. I have lot of good years left. I prefer to spend them alive."

“What would you do if you got out now?”

“I would fly away far from here. Maybe California or Mexico. I disappear and never come back, but it only works if I am out. Inside, I am dead.”

Jason glanced at Mike and shrugged. Mike nodded. “OK, Liz, what if we told you that if you provide information that leads to the conviction of any one of the bosses, we can get you sprung free and clear.”

Liz twitched, then sat forward in her steel chair, resting her elbows on the table. “Are you fucking with me?”

“No. Straight up.”

“I have to testify?”

Jason hesitated. The girl was smart. “I can’t say that for sure one way or another. Maybe not. It depends on what other evidence comes to light. If you have to testify, then we will protect you and we can try to get you into the witness protection program, but we’ll need to get approval for that from our friends at the FBI.”

“You get me a paper. I do not testify. You get me out. I give you information. No conviction. I do not wait. You get me out or I don’t talk.”

Jason paused and looked at Mike. “We might be able to do that, but you have to give us something now. You need to convince us that you have something that’s worth it for us to go drag the D.A. out of bed to sign off on a release agreement. Make us believe you’re worth it. Come on, you’re good at making men think you’re giving them what they want.”

Liz burst out into a belly laugh and sat back in her rickety chair. “OK, OK, I see. You want a little foreplay, eh? A little preview, yes?” She got a sultry look in her eyes, parted her lips slightly, brought one hand up to her chin, and slowly started unzipping her jumpsuit. She pulled the zipper down until Mike and Jason could see the mounds of her impressive cleavage and the fringe of a black bra.

“That’s not what I had in mind,” Jason said, holding up a hand.

“Oh, I know that, mister detective, but I like to get myself in the mood before I get FUCKED!” Liz spat out the last word while she zipped her orange jumper back up angrily.

Mike decided it was the appropriate time to try being the voice of authority. “Ms. Petrofsky, we’re not here to screw you. We think you can help us, and we’re willing to help you. No bullshit. But, before we stick our necks out for you, we do need some show of faith. Tell us

one thing that will let us know that you're worth the effort." Jason paused and reached into the folder he had on the table, withdrawing a photo of Darren Curran. "Before you got hooked up with the bosses, did you talk to a cop named Darren Curran?"

Liz looked interested, but didn't say anything. Jason pushed the photo of Curran across the table. Liz picked up the photo and the look of interest vanished from her face. She stared at the picture for a few seconds, and then bunched up her mouth in a pout and shook her head slightly. "No. This is not the guy."

Jason took back the picture. "You have to give us something."

"Fine. You want something? I tell you. The man who runs hotel – the big boss – he liked me, so one day he brought me to his office and had me suck him off. Then his creepy man named Eddie came in with a bag of shit to give the girls. They give us ice and blow to keep us happy. Eddie is the guy who gave out the candy. I see the bag and it had a sticker on it like they put on shit in the police station."

"An evidence tag?" Mike asked.

"Whatever you say. It was a white sticker with a red border all around and some numbers written on it. No drug dealer have shit in a bag like that."

"Are you saying that the boss and this guy, Eddie, were giving out drugs they got from the police?" Jason jumped back into the discussion.

"I don't know. I am just telling you what I saw." Liz sat back and folded her arms across her chest. "I see much more than that, but I say no more until I have my paper."

"Could you pick out the boss and Eddie from a lineup of pictures?" Mike asked.

"Yes."

"OK. We'll come back with an agreement for you," Mike said, getting up from his chair and buttoning his jacket. "You sit tight and we'll be back in a day or two."

"Where would I go?" Liz replied with her hands open on the table.

"True," Mike said as he knocked on the door and motioned for the guard to let them out. He and Jason exited and walked back down the hall without looking back at Liz Petrofsky. During the car ride home, they debated whether Liz really had useful information and whether it was worth their time to get the DA to issue a sentence commutation agreement for her. They talked about whether they would need to move her to a different location after they made their deal, but before her information bore enough fruit to trigger a release. They speculated

about what it might mean that “Eddie” had an evidence bag filled with drugs. There were a few obvious possibilities, assuming that the prostitute’s information wasn’t just bullshit. In the end, they figured that since they came to offer her a deal to get her information because Zimmerman said he thought she was credible, they were pretty much committed. Mike called from the car to Zimmerman to get the ball rolling. Zimmerman broke the news that the District Attorney, who had to approve the deal, had just left for a fundraiser in Washington, D.C. and would not be back until the weekend.

“Well, get the papers ready and we’ll get him to sign off as soon as we can,” Mike said with a shrug and then terminated the call. Mike explained the situation to Jason, who sighed.

“Whatever. It’s not like Liz is going anywhere.”

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Comments from the Author:

In the story, as told in the second draft of the book, there is a delay in finalizing a deal with Elizabeth Petrofsky because the DA wanted to get verification of her information first. She slashed a cop, so he wasn't going to cut her loose so easily. By the time they convinced the DA to sign the deal, and before Mike and Jason could go back to Bedford to get her signature on the papers, Elizabeth is killed inside the prison. She was in the shower and was jumped by four other inmates. She hit her head (they say) when she fell, and died. Their witness was gone. Another lead in the case evaporated. Another coincidence. Who could have alerted the criminals involved about what they were planning? Only other cops, it seemed.

Unfortunately, as I worked through the story, it just didn't seem plausible that T. Warren Magnan and his little posse of cops who were running the prostitution and drug distribution operation in Brooklyn would have the kind of far-reaching connections necessary to stage the hit on Elizabeth up at Bedford. Even if I tried to link in the Gallata crime organization, it just seemed too unlikely. So, I rewrote the story to have the potential witness go to Riker's Island and get killed there, long before a deal could be made. I cut the scene with Mike and Jason interviewing the young woman because it was unnecessary to the story, no matter how much fun it was.

But, now you got to read it, so I'm happy about that! Perhaps when I write the screenplay, I'll find a way to put her back in, but for now – you are the only ones who know.

Thanks for reading, and I hope you enjoyed *Deadly Enterprise*. Or, if you haven't read it yet – I hope that this little excerpt will get you interested. I hope to see you again!

Kevin G. Chapman