

Justitia Omnibus

----- PART 1-----

July 4, 1996

Everything was dark. An incessant ringing echoed distantly in his ears. Struggling to awaken, he shifted his body on the cold metal floor, immediately regretting the motion as a wave of nausea and pain forced him to grit his teeth.

He needed to get out of there, and fast. It was imperative that he escape. Someone's life depended on it.

But...whose? And why? And from what could he be escaping? And where was he?

His watery eyes were slowly adjusting to the darkness. His breath hitched as he realized he wasn't alone: another groggy figure was moving around in the darkness. His heart pounded.

"Who are you?" His voice sounded strange in his ears, dulled by the constant ringing. "Are you all right?"

"Fine," came the ice-cold reply. "No broken bones, no torn muscles or ligaments... Though I suspect I've got a head injury." The other man paused in his train of thought, as if suddenly realizing something. "Who are *you*? And what the bloody hell just happened?"

"Language," he said reflexively before adding, "I don't know."

"Of course you don't," the other man muttered. "Well, at least introduce yourself, then."

"That's what I'm saying," he said. "*I don't know.*"

The other man froze again. "Are you serious?"

"I don't know why I wouldn't be at a time like this," he answered honestly.

"Then I'm afraid we're both in trouble," the other man said quietly. "You see, I have no idea who I am, either. Can't remember a thing beyond waking up here."
"What are the odds of that happening?"

"I don't know, and it doesn't really matter, I suppose. Against the odds or not, we're both trapped here with no memory. Check your pockets, then, see if you can find anything useful."

He nodded. "Right." As he searched through his pockets, the other man continued to speak.

"You sound like you've got a concussion. I suspect we both do. That would explain what's causing the retrograde amnesia. Something must have happened. Something big."

"I think you're right," he said slowly, "and I think it might've been an explosion."

"Do you remember something, then?" the other man asked with genuine curiosity.

He shook his head, wincing slightly. "No. It's just...something I just *know*. Something in the air, maybe."

"Hmm. " Something about the other man's voice---slightly raspy and distinctly British---was almost unsettling...but also somehow very, very familiar.

"It's too dark to see," he said to the other man.

"I seem to be carrying a lighter." He scoffed. "Among other things. Found it hidden up my sleeve."

In the low light of the flickering, dim flame, he saw the other man's face for the first time that he could remember. Sharp, angular...and familiar.

"I'm certain that I know you," he said quietly. "We know each other somehow." The other man said nothing, so he just continued to dig through his pockets, dumping the contents onto the steel floor. "Two paper clips, some gum wrappers, a little bit of twine... And this." He held up a folded slip of paper between two fingers.

"Go on and look at it," the other man urged, moving the lighter slightly. "See what it is."

"I think it's an old check stub. From something called a Phoenix Foundation. I guess that's where I work?" In the light of the flame, the other man frowned. "Disappointing. I'd hoped for something more useful. Does it have a name on it?"

"MacGyver." He shrugged. "I don't know about a first name. I have an A. I guess that's my initial."

The other man shrugged. "I suppose it doesn't really matter anyway."

"Do *you* have an ID? Or a name?"

The other man shrugged again. "Not that I can find. But I think I must be some kind of doctor."

"How do you know?"

"I don't know what else I could be. I seem to have a good grasp on anatomy and I started diagnosing problems with both of us almost as soon as I came to consciousness. I suppose I've got to be in the medical field somehow, or at least in biology."

"That makes sense," MacGyver replied thoughtfully. "MacGyver. I guess that name *sounds* right, at least. Now we still need to figure out who you are and how we both got here."

“And where exactly *here* is.”

“I think we're on a boat.”

“Why? Do you feel that in the air, too?” the other man sneered.

“I can feel it moving,” MacGyver said simply.

The other man fell still and quiet. After a moment, he said, “You may be right. I feel it, too.”

“We should try to get to the upper decks. Maybe we'll get a look at where we are, or at least find a map.”

The other man nodded and rose to his feet unsteadily, passing the flame of the lighter along each wall in search of a door. At last, the flame flickered and revealed a sturdy hatch.

“This looks like our ticket out,” the other man said. MacGyver nodded, grabbing the big, solid handle and starting to push it upward. The other man quickly joined him, combining their strength, and together they were able to force the door outward.

As soon as the hatch opened, MacGyver's jaw dropped. The door had been blocked by debris and ash, and the scents of sulfur and smoke stung Mac's watery brown eyes. Coughing, he motioned to the other man and stumbled toward a sturdy metal ladder attached to a bulkhead at the end of the corridor. They were still belowdecks, sealed in, and they needed to work their way up---and fast.

They shuffled up the ladder and pulled themselves to the top deck almost on autopilot, just struggling to get to some breathable air untainted by fumes.

When the both of them had emerged onto the top deck into the open air, the other man closed the hatch behind them.

In the fresh air abovedecks, MacGyver, smiling as a cold breeze ruffled the edges of his long hair, looked out at their surroundings. “We're on a river?”

"But *which* river?" the other man said, crossing the deck.

"The Potomac," MacGyver said breathlessly.

The other man whirled, black clothes fluttering. "You actually recognize this?"

"I've been here before," MacGyver confirmed. "Not on a boat, but I still know this place somehow. Look!"

He pointed out a pink-hued granite statue of a human figure with outstretched arms, stone face gazing unseeing at the rest of the blue river winding behind them and at the bustle of activity on the nearby wharf. "That's the *Titanic* Memorial. So I guess technically, this is just the Washington Channel instead of the main river."

"Who cares? At least we know where we are."

"And there!" MacGyver blurted, cutting his companion off in delight. "Those two bridges in the distance. They take you to Arlington, Virginia. From the direction, we're in Washington DC right now."

The other man nodded. "So we know where we are and we know who *you* are. That's two mysteries down, which leaves two more to go: who I am, and how we both got here."

MacGyver frowned. "What are the odds that this is our boat?"

"Not very good, I'm afraid. I can already tell you that I don't care for boats at all. There's no way to escape, is there? We're trapped floating on a bobbing tin can."

"Then let's look around and see who it belongs to," MacGyver replied. "And maybe we can steer this close enough to the marina to get out. I think I can figure out how to drive this." "If you can't, then I can," the other man said. "I'll start searching for any kind of documents or identification."

“Can we give you a name?” MacGyver said suddenly. The other man froze in his tracks, staring stupefied at Mac, as if the thought had never crossed his mind. “*What?*”

At that reaction, Mac shifted slightly, uncomfortable beneath that harsh gaze. “You know... A nickname or something. So that I can call you something other than ‘hey you.’ It’s not really fair that I have a name and you don’t.”

Incredulous, the other man shook his head, brushing a spray of brackish water out of his face as the wind carried the droplets into the air. “I hardly think I need a nickname. You’re the only one who needs to know me, and that’s only because apparently I’m stuck with you. For all I know, I may not even *have* a real name.”

“I need to call you *something*,” MacGyver argued.

The other man rolled his eyes and resumed searching for any kind of useful papers. “Well, what do you suggest?” he drawled without bothering to disguise his disdain.

“Clark Kent?” Mac suggested.

He snorted. “A superhero alias? Spare me.”

“John Smith?”

“Pass.”

“John Wayne?” That one gave the other man pause, and when his eyes lit up, Mac thought for a second that he’d found a winner. But then the nameless man shook his head. “No.”

“...James Bond?”

“I’ve just found a very heavy wrench that I have no qualms about throwing at you, thank you very much.”

"Okay, okay! Um..." MacGyver frantically searched his brain for inspiration. "...Joe Elliott?"

"Finally, something that's actually tolerable!" Then the other man laughed. A long, low, almost deranged sound.

It was just an ordinary laugh---almost---but the sound of it set MacGyver's nerves on edge, and a prickling sensation covered his entire body. That was when he realized that his every hair, from the tops of his arms all the way up to the nape of his neck, was standing on end.

The other man stopped laughing and tilted his head in curiosity. "Now what's the matter with you, hm? You look as if you've seen a ghost."

"Maybe I have," MacGyver muttered, rubbing his arms self-consciously. "I don't know what came over me."

"Hm. Maybe we should just keep it simple then," the other man suggested. "Something easy. Like Eddy."

Mac wrinkled his nose, the creepy sensation forgotten. "Eddy? But it's so..."

"Forgettable?" 'Eddy' chuckled in his throat. "Exactly. Though I would still say it's a step above MacGyver."

"Yeah, right," Mac said with a shake of his head. "Found anything yet?"

"Nothing, so you'd better get us close enough to bail out. I don't want to be on this tin can for a moment longer than I have to."

"I think it's mostly fiberglass," Mac mused as he started to steer the boat along the channel. "I think I know a lot about boats. Maybe I fish." "Goody for you," Eddy said with an eyeroll. "Just drive the boat, will you? We only need to get close enough to shore to jump out."

"Jump?" MacGyver said, feeling just a hint of apprehension. "Won't that be a pretty long way down?"

"Hardly. It may not be a pretty landing, but it won't be nearly enough to injure."

MacGyver sighed. "If you say so. If you say so..."

----- PART 2 -----

Before long, as Eddy had directed, MacGyver pulled the boat as close as he could to the concrete edge of the channel. Eddy jumped onto land immediately, like a cat, bouncing on his feet. Then he beckoned for MacGyver, whose landing was decidedly not as graceful. Brushing grit off his blue jeans, Mac stepped onto the solid boardwalk of the marina and, startled, felt a memory flash into his brain. "This all feels so familiar. I think I live in a houseboat! Or at least I used to..."

"How lovely for you," Eddy said dryly, walking quickly past MacGyver and into the crowded street.

"Wait!" Mac called. "Where are you going?"

"Away from you!"

Protesting, MacGyver tried to catch up, but Eddy melded into a huddle of jaywalkers and vanished.

With a sigh, Mac decided to walk to the only place he could think of: the nearest police station. Since he was apparently an out-of-towner with nowhere else to go, the police seemed like the best option; if nothing else, maybe they could at least figure out who owned the boat.

A friendly passerby gave him directions, and thus---after a couple of wrong stops on the Metro and finding a map so he could get his bearings on his own---he found himself walking along Virginia Avenue into Foggy Bottom, searching for New Hampshire NW.

He was still a long way from the 2nd District precinct when an unmarked gray sedan flashed its blue lights and pulled up alongside.

MacGyver slowed his pace, hesitating on the sidewalk as the driver rolled the window down.

"MacGyver!" exclaimed the slightly younger, sandy-haired man. "I've been looking all over for you! Get in!"

With a shrug, MacGyver waited for a red and white Corvette to pass by and then crossed to the passenger side of the Police Interceptor. As he slid into the Ford and closed the door, he glanced over at the driver, a suited detective.

"I have amnesia," Mac said abruptly.

It was a good thing that the car was at a red light, because the driver turned to gawk at MacGyver. "What? Are you serious right now?"

"Yeah," Mac said, uncomfortable. "I know my name. That's about it." He paused. "And Eddy. I know Eddy."

The driver wrinkled his angular nose and returned his attention to Virginia Avenue. "Eddy? Who's that?"

"I don't really know. Who are you and how do I know you?"

"McAllister. Orlando McAllister. Detective. You were coming with me to help look for a missing tin coll---I mean, a missing person."

Mac frowned. "Why am I working with the Washington police if I'm from Los Angeles?"

McAllister shrugged. "Beats me. I just do what I'm told. I guess the Chief is afraid the city will look bad if we can't even find one of our own---even though I use that phrase loosely. He's putting pressure on our district commander to get this case wrapped up fast."

MacGyver shook his head. "You lost me. Could you slow down a little?"

McAllister sighed. "Look, you're not a cop, okay? You were helping with some kind of security conference or training---obstacle courses, something like that. And then one of the other presenters went missing, and you offered to help find her. And for whatever reason, the police chief took you up on it and stuck me with you. Got it so far?"

MacGyver couldn't resist quirking an eyebrow. "You don't sound too happy about that."

"Doesn't matter if I am or not. Now, how did you end up with amnesia? What happened?"

Mac shrugged. "I just woke up on a boat. I don't know how I got there and there wasn't any kind of registration that we could find."

"You need to go to the hospital or anything? You feel okay?"

"I'm fine as far as I know. I have scrapes and bruises---and a concussion---but apart from

the obvious, it's nothing serious. I think I'll be fine for now."

"Where's the boat now?"

After Mac gave the detective a brief description of the boat's location in the channel, McAllister nodded thoughtfully. "I thought I heard something on the scanner about a report of a strange disturbance near that area. They could be related. There's already another unit on the way to check it out. I'll make sure they know to keep an eye out for anything weird. Or for this Eddy guy. Was he just a random person, or someone you recognized?" "I know him," MacGyver said quickly. "I'm certain that I know him well, even. I just have no clue how." "That's at least something, but it still leaves a lot of loose ends... Not to mention that we're working against time on the MacGregor case. You couldn't have picked a worse time to get knocked on the head."

"MacGregor?" Mac echoed.

"Yeah. Sandra MacGregor. The kidnapped Internal Affairs officer. Remember her?"

"Not at all. Unless..." A suddenly vivid image of dark red hair swished into Mac's memory. "Does she have red hair?"

McAllister nodded. "So you do remember!"

"Not really... Just bits and pieces. I remember the hair, but I wouldn't be able to recognize her if I saw her. What exactly happened to her?"

But McAllister was already pulling into the parking lot. "Come inside. It'll be easier to explain when I show you the case file, and maybe a photograph or two will jog your memory."

Inside, the photographs strewn across McAllister's desk did help jog a few things for MacGyver. He pointed to a photo of a tall red-haired woman in a blue business outfit. "That's Sandra! I remember!"

"That's good, that's good!" McAllister encouraged. "Now, these are the notes our kidnapper left behind." He slid two clear plastic evidence bags, each containing a slip of white typing paper, across the table. "What do you remember about these?"

Frowning, MacGyver read off the words that had been typewritten across the slips: "Cut off the face, but the fangs still sting... How sharper than a serpent's tooth."

He shook his head. "I don't understand."

McAllister tucked the plastic bags back into a cardboard box from the evidence room and sighed. "Of course you don't. Well, since you still don't remember, let me try to get you up to speed. The first note, about cutting off the face? We found that in our PIO's car right after he was kidnapped---the driver's side window had been shattered and the paper was in the driver's seat."

"PIO?" Mac echoed. "Wait, let me try--- public information officer?" "Yeah," McAllister replied in surprise. "You actually remembered that?" Mac shrugged. "Not really. I overheard a phone call while I was waiting for you to check the box out of the evidence locker." "Hey, you're pretty sharp! Maybe you'll come in handy after all, huh?" MacGyver smiled. "Yeah, maybe. So, when did you find the second paper?" "We found that on the desk in Sandra's apartment. Someone on her floor saw that her door was wide open and reported it. Her place looked like it'd been hit by an earthquake, but the desk was perfect and that paper was lying right in the middle. Just like with Sherman's car."

"Someone is just kidnapping random officers and leaving notes behind? Have you gotten any ransom demands? Is there a connection between the two of them somehow?"

McAllister shrugged his lanky shoulders. "No ransom so far. Nothing beyond what I've already showed you. As for a connection---if there's a link between MacGregor and Sherman, I sure don't know about it. They're as different as night and day, and they work in completely different areas. MacGregor stays out of the spotlight and works purely as an investigator, and since Sherman handles all the public relations for the 2nd District, he's always in front of the press. I don't even think they knew each other apart from work."

"What you're saying is that you don't have any leads, then," MacGyver said with a frown. "How did anyone expect me to fix this?"

"Apparently you're very good at what you do---whatever that might be. And I guess it's gotta be true, because yesterday you called me to say that you'd figured something out, but you hung up before you could tell me what. And then you went missing, so without your memory, you know what I know. Which is nothing."

MacGyver ran a hand through his disheveled hair. "Wow. That's a lot to take in. Is there any way that we could retrace my steps from yesterday? Maybe that would help me remember something else. Do you know where I called from?"

"We could try the convention center over on H Street, I guess. That's where you've spent most of your time, from what you said before."

"Let's start there," Mac said. "Maybe something will look familiar."

"Great," said McAllister, grabbing his jacket. "Let's roll."

Standing in front of the convention center wasn't bringing back as many insights as MacGyver had hoped. Looking up at the off-white stones of the multi-story building and the glass double doors wasn't ringing any bells.

"Nothing?" McAllister asked, sensing Mac's frustration.

"Nope," MacGyver replied. "I don't have a clue." "That makes two of us. I guess while we're here, we could take a look at the security footage again, but there's not much to see. Just a figure in black. Can't see the face, and he's not in the frame very long."

"Let's watch it anyway," MacGyver said. "Even if I don't recognize anything, it can't hurt to see the tape with fresh eyes."

The convention center's security office was a small alcove, and the staff, already familiar with both men, waved them through without much notice. MacGyver was glad that no one had decided to stop for a chat; it would've been difficult to explain the amnesia thing when he wasn't even sure what happened himself.

McAllister took a seat in the lone office chair and popped the tape into the player on the desk, switching on the tiny CCTV screen. He pointed as two figures came into view on the sidewalk near the front door. "There's MacGregor there."

"I see her hair," MacGyver commented, brow furrowing as a figure in black approached her, just as McAllister said. "Wait, why is he coming up to her in front? Wouldn't a kidnapper try to sneak up from behind? Use the element of surprise?"

McAllister shrugged. "I don't know, but look. There they go. He grabs her and drags her out of sight."

"Why isn't she resisting? Why wouldn't she put up more of a fight?"

"Maybe she was scared," McAllister suggested. "Taken by surprise."

"Or maybe it was someone she knew."

"Could be, I guess. But his face is covered. So there's no way to know."

MacGyver paced the tiny room. "She could've recognized the voice."

"I guess. But that's pure conjecture."

MacGyver shook his head. "That's all we have right now, especially since I barely remember anything. Does she have any enemies? Anyone with motive?"

McAllister rolled his eyes. "Hey, she's Internal Affairs, okay? She's a tin collector. Everybody hates her automatically, just on principle."

"That doesn't seem fair."

"Of course you would think so." MacGyver frowned, defensive for reasons he couldn't explain. He didn't like something in McAllister's voice. Could it be a memory hiding dormant? Or was it just his natural reaction to unfairness? "I'm sure that everything she does is for her job---and Internal Affairs is there to make the police better, aren't they?" Yo o McAllister shook his head. "IA is there to spook people and appease the powers-that-be. They love money and making themselves look good. They don't care about justice and they don't care about any of us."

"I think you're wrong," MacGyver said vehemently. "You can't judge everyone across the board just because of their job title. For all you know, Sandra MacGregor could be a great person. You could easily be misjudging her."

"Maybe I am, maybe I'm not, but it doesn't matter. Regardless of whether MacGregor is good or bad, right or wrong, the fact remains that she has more enemies than the devil himself. She's good at her job, and she's gotten a lot of people put away or fired. There are too many people with motive."

"What about the other person who was kidnapped? The public information officer. Who would have a motive to kidnap him?"

"Nobody, as far as I know. He's honestly one of the best people I know, both personally and professionally. I can't even imagine someone with an axe to grind against him."

"Then we'll have to go back to the drawing board and hope we find a connection along the way. Let's start with some of Sandra's most recent cases, or at least the ones involving people that she'd recognize," MacGyver said. "We know that she knew her kidnapper, and we know that the people

with motive are the ones that she investigated and helped convict. We should start there."

McAllister spread his hands wide. "We did. That was the first thing we did, not that you'd remember. We didn't come up with anything. Or at least, I didn't."

Mac frowned. "But maybe I did, so let's check again, if for no other reason than to keep retracing my steps. Eventually, I'll have to remember what I wanted to tell you."

"Yeah..." McAllister said quietly. "I just hope we don't find out too late."

----- PART 3 -----

As they emerged from the convention center, McAllister was taken by surprise when MacGyver abruptly dashed away down the sidewalk.

"Hey, wait!" the detective called, jogging after the troubleshooter. "Where are you going?"

MacGyver was, in fact, heading for a figure in the crowd that he recognized beyond all doubt. "Eddy!"

Like an uncoiling snake, Eddy unwound himself from the huddle waiting for the street crossing. His smile was tight as he watched MacGyver and the trailing detective approach. "MacGyver."

"Where did you go?" MacGyver demanded. Eddy's steely eyes didn't waver. "That's not really any of your business, now is it, MacGyver?" Mac frowned. "I guess not. Did you find out anything about your identity? Or what happened to us on that boat?" "I'm afraid I still have no idea how we ended up on that boat. That part's still rather foggy. But... Several other things are coming back to me."

Crossing his arms, eyes darting from one man to the other, McAllister couldn't resist butting into the conversation. "Like what? Why are you here?"

Slowly, Eddy flashed a big smile and draped one arm across MacGyver's shoulders as he drawled, "Why, I'm here to help my dear old friend MacGyver, of course."

McAllister's lip twitched. "I didn't hear your name mentioned anywhere, and you weren't on any of the lists of presenters..."

"I'm not a presenter," Eddy said simply. "I prefer to take a more...backstage role. I'm more of a consultant, really."

"It would make sense to have a medical consultant around if I build crazy obstacle courses and investigate things for a living," MacGyver said slowly.

"I guess," McAllister grunted. "But until and unless I get specific orders to let you tag along, Eddy or whatever your name is, you're not going anywhere near my case."

Unhurried and slow as molasses, a wide and pearly grin oozed across Eddy's face. "Have it your way. But in the interest of full disclosure, I distinctly remember being present for a phone call that MacGyver made to you..."

That caught McAllister's attention. "You were? Do you know what he was going to tell me?" "Yes, I believe so," Eddy said smugly. "Well?" MacGyver said. "C'mon, Eddy, what is it?" "I thought I wasn't on the case," he replied with a look of false innocence. McAllister rolled his eyes in frustration. "Yeah, sure, you can tag along. Now talk." "Of course. I'm always happy to cooperate," Eddy said. "If I recall, MacGyver was going to tell you that he'd discovered a connection between your two victims... Something in their past, I believe. Oh, and there was something else, too. Now what was it? Ah, I remember! He was going to tell you that he was being hunted by a trained assassin."

"What?!" MacGyver and McAllister blurted out in unison as Eddy looked on with a shrug.

"What exactly do I do for a living?!" MacGyver said. "Why would an assassin be after me, of all people?"

"Apparently he holds some sort of grudge towards you. How am I supposed to know?" Eddy answered with another shrug of his slight shoulders.

McAllister groaned. "We don't have time for this! The clock is ticking, and if we don't find MacGregor and Sherman soon, they could be killed---if they haven't been already. Who is this assassin guy anyway? Who do we look for?"

Eddy crossed his arms with a worried glance at MacGyver. "I'm afraid I can't tell you much about him, but I do know this: they say he goes by Murdoc."

MacGyver took an unconscious step backwards. "I know that name. I'm certain of it." "Do you remember, then?" Eddy asked, sounding almost hopeful. "No," MacGyver said finally. "No, I don't."

At that moment, the two-way radio clipped to McAllister's belt crackled to life in a burst of static, and he quickly stepped away to answer the dispatch.

Eddy's eyes traced the officer's path before flicking back to MacGyver. "Pity. I was hoping that hearing the name would have reminded you. After all, this situation could be very dangerous."

MacGyver ran a hand through his long hair. "I agree. But Detective McAllister is right. We have to find this kidnapper first. Helping these two police officers is the priority. Chasing down this assassin can come later."

"Just be careful, MacGyver," Eddy warned. "You might find that this assassin fellow is actually chasing you."

McAllister returned with a grim expression on his face. "Bad news. Get into my cruiser. We have to move fast."

"What's going on?" MacGyver asked as he took shotgun. Eddy slipped into the back.

"Things just went from bad to worse," McAllister replied as he buckled his seatbelt. "One of the assistant DAs has been kidnapped. And apparently there's another note. We need to get to that crime scene on the double."

McAllister, nodding to the uniforms, entered the crime scene while MacGyver and Eddy watched from behind yellow police tape. Just as with Sandra MacGregor's apartment, the ADA's home had been ransacked. This time, the mysterious note had been nailed to a mirror.

McAllister returned to the two of them, stepping over the crime scene tape, with the slip of paper sealed inside a clear plastic evidence bag. He handed it to MacGyver.

"Time is the fire in which we burn," Mac read aloud slowly.

"I'm convinced more than ever that our kidnapper is planning to kill them," McAllister said. "If ever there were a time for you to remember something helpful about this case, now would be it."

"Time," MacGyver echoed softly.

"Come again?" McAllister said, puzzled.

MacGyver's head snapped up and he held up the note. "Time. Eddy already gave us the answer. We were looking at all the recent cases that these people could have been connected to. But that was the wrong place to start. This kidnapper isn't someone who's just now gotten started. It's someone who's been planning and holding a grudge for a long time."

"So we need to look at older records! From before Cole went to the district attorney's office and before Sherman started working in public relations!"

"Exactly!" MacGyver said. "All of these people are connected by one case that they all worked on years ago, before going their separate ways. It may have even been something small, something that nobody would have given a second thought except---"

"Except the person who was found guilty!" McAllister finished.

MacGyver nodded. "And I don't have any idea which case I was looking at, but more memories are starting to come back to me---and I distinctly remember looking through the public record. We can go back through those records and find the one I checked last---the one I was going to call and tell you about!"

McAllister nodded. "Then what are we standing around for? Let's go!"

Tracking down MacGyver's missing file turned out to be a simple task once they knew what to look for, and McAllister carefully spread the papers and photographs in the file across his desk. Eddy hovered unobtrusively in the background while the two of them pored over the contents.

"Okay, MacGyver, this is the last file you requested yesterday. Is any of this ringing a bell?"

"Yes," MacGyver said breathlessly. "Look at this. One of Sandra MacGregor's first cases. She was investigating an officer for use of excessive force on a suspected arsonist. Look---Cole might be with the district attorney now, but this was early in his career, too. He was the defense."

McAllister snapped his fingers. "And the guy in the hot seat must have blamed Cole for not winning the case. What's the name on that thing?"

"Lawrence Hawke," MacGyver read. "According to this transcript, he wasn't brought up on any criminal charges, but the prosecution---Sandra MacGregor---produced enough evidence that the allegation was sustained and Hawke was removed from the force on grounds of instability."

"One thing I don't get," McAllister said. "Where does Sherman fit into all this? He wasn't assigned to this investigation that I can see."

MacGyver reached into the folder and produced another sheet of paper. "Look whose name is on this press release. It must've been the first one he ever gave."

McAllister whistled low. "So all three of them converged right there on that one case... And now this ex-cop maniac is getting his revenge. We need to figure out where he's holding the three of them, and fast. I'll start checking credit cards, phone records, anything I can find on this guy."

"That's a good idea," MacGyver started, but then bits and pieces of memories floated into his mind, like grainy frames in a reeled movie tape. "...But actually, I think I may know where they are."

----- PART 4 -----

The tires of McAllister's police car screeched as the Crown Victoria barreled down K Street, lurching as McAllister swung onto Wisconsin Avenue at high speed.

"I sure hope your memories are right," McAllister said, white knuckles gripping the steering wheel.

"I'm almost completely recovered," MacGyver replied. "I'm certain that I found the right place---because it's the same location where the incident that ruined Hawke's career took place. I was about to tell you during that telephone call. Before I was cut off."

"Why exactly did you get cut off, MacGyver?" McAllister asked curiously.

"I still don't remember," MacGyver said casually...but a furtive glance in the rearview mirror revealed 'Eddy's' dark eyes glittering in the fading daylight. Clearing his throat, he added, "I wish we had a better idea of what to expect. We still have no idea what this Hawke guy is actually planning to do with his three victims."

"It's rather obvious, isn't it?" Eddy said from where he was lounging in the backseat.

"Huh?" McAllister said. It was a sentiment that MacGyver, at the moment, agreed with.

Eddy leaned forward slightly, the gray seatbelt straining against his shoulder. "The note you found said 'time is the fire in which we burn.' Therefore, your kidnapper is quite clearly planning to set the three kidnappees on fire."

"This is the 4th of July," MacGyver said with an icy pit sinking deep inside him. "As soon as the sun goes all the way down, the fireworks will start..."

"Oh my God," McAllister muttered, pressing harder against the gas pedal.

The warehouse was a big, 3-story brick building with a red metal roof. It looked like the sort of space that could have once been used by artists and the studio-loft crowd if it hadn't been so dilapidated. As soon as McAllister stalled the car, MacGyver bailed out and took off down the sidewalk.

The big wooden door opened far too easily, without even a creak. With his memories and experience flooding back in droves, MacGyver knew that the ease of getting into the building could only mean one of two things: either Hawke was arrogant enough to believe that no one would interrupt him, or he was just smart enough to plan for that very thing.

Mac quickly checked the rooms on the first floor, but all of them were bare. He'd just finished his check when McAllister burst through the door, shining a powerful flashlight beam that made MacGyver wince.

"This floor's clear," MacGyver whispered. "You take the second floor and I'll check the top. If we're careful, we may be able to take this guy by surprise."

After a moment of deliberation, McAllister nodded. "All right. It's a plan. I radioed for backup and they're on the way. Let's take care of this before Hawke can go any further."

MacGyver nodded and the two of them darted up the stairs in different directions.

Mac flattened himself against the chipped-painted wall as he rounded the corner onto the third floor landing. He distinctly heard a male voice in the adjacent room.

"---These three usurpers built their careers on the ashes of mine! No regard for the law! Or for loyalty! Taking care of our own! That's why I'm doing this on camera... I'm making this tape so that, when all four of us are dead, there will still be some record of the injustice that has taken place in this very city! They'll brand me as a sociopath, as a maniac, but let me assure you, I am perfectly sane... And after I take back these lives in exchange for the life and the reputation and the badge that I lost, you're going to see---"

MacGyver had been creeping up slowly to the door while Hawke, clearly unstable and fallen from grace, had been doing his ranting to a tripod camera. At last, he was close enough to peek through the open door frame. The three kidnapping victims were tied to wooden chairs on the far side of the room---and a myriad of fireworks were strategically tied to the bottoms and legs of each chair. Even with them being gagged, MacGyver could see that the two men, Sherman and Cole, were looking on at their kidnapper with a mixture of terror, disgust, and pity. The outlier was Sandra MacGregor---cool, collected, and calculated.

And soon MacGyver understood why. In the middle of Hawke's rant, MacGregor stealthily caught MacGyver's eye...and held up her hands. Somehow, she had managed to free herself from the ropes!

Mac had to think fast. He gestured to himself and then pointed at Hawke at roughly eye level, mouthing high. Then he pointed to her and pointed again, closer to the hardwood floor, and mouthed low.

She nodded once, and the two of them began to sneak towards the ill-fated kidnapper.

As MacGyver got close, Hawke suddenly turned, and Mac lunged, catching the rogue ex-cop square in the cheek with a punch. At the same time, MacGregor swept low with a kick, knocking Hawke's feet out from under him.

With an enraged roar, Hawke scrambled to his feet, tugging a dingy-looking pistol from his belt. "How dare you! This is justice!"

Before MacGyver could move, a shout came from the doorway: "Drop your weapon!"

Hawke froze, staring at Detective McAllister, who edged closer into the room, police-issued sidearm aimed at Hawke's head.

"Drop your weapon," McAllister commanded again. "And keep your hands where I can see them!"

With a wrenching sob, Hawke shook his head. "You don't understand. They took my life. I did only what that brute deserved!"

As if in slow motion, Hawke swung around and the barrel of the gun faced MacGyver head-on.

And as if in slow motion, there was a sharp bang, and Hawke slumped to the ground, a perfect circle of red pooling at the center of his forehead.

MacGyver twisted to stare at McAllister---but the detective was frozen, eyes wide with fright.

McAllister hadn't been the one to fire.

From the shadows around the doorway behind the detective, a wiry and lean---and familiar---figure stepped into the light, holding a smoking gun and wearing a skeletal smile.

"Sorry, but I couldn't just let him kill you, now could I, MacGyver?" 'Eddy' said coldly. "After all... That's my job."

McAllister whirled around, and MacGyver reached out a hand to stop him.

"He's already gone," MacGyver said quietly. "And besides, there's been more than enough gunfire for one day anyway."

"Gone like a ghost," McAllister said, visibly shaken. "How did he do that?"

MacGyver shook his head. "I don't know. But I do know this: it's me he's after." Then he turned to flash a worried look at Sandra MacGregor and the other two captives. "Come on, let's get them somewhere safe before we think about anything else."

Hands shaking, obviously just as disturbed by the proceedings as everyone else, MacGregor unwound the scarf from her neck, wrapping it around her hands as a makeshift glove. She popped

open the back of the camera and nestled the film securely in the cloth.

"This would have been the evidence I needed to get Hawke committed for psychological help," she said calmly. "I guess I don't need it now."

MacGyver crossed his arms. "Are you trying to say that you let yourself get kidnapped on purpose?"

MacGregor shrugged. "How else was I going to find out what had happened to Shermie?"

McAllister whistled low. "What a lady. MacGyver, go ahead and untie them. I'll check in with our backup. I hear the sirens rolling in now."

MacGyver nodded. "Let's get out of here."

MacGregor smiled sadly. "That's the best idea I've heard all day."

Back at the police station, MacGyver and McAllister fell into a pair of desk chairs.

McAllister rubbed the back of his neck gingerly, groaning. "This was a heck of a case. Not to mention a paperwork nightmare..."

MacGyver shrugged. "Hey, at least we got all three kidnapping victims out of that situation in one piece."

McAllister nodded. "True. And hey! You were pretty great out there, Hoss. I guess I misjudged you at first... Just like I misjudged Sandra."

"It's never too late to change your mind," MacGyver said with a smile.

"Yeah... But there's one thing that still bothers me. That friend of yours, Eddy. He just stuck around with us and vanished when we went into that building? Then he showed up again and killed our suspect? And now he's nowhere to be found? What gives?"

MacGyver's face settled into a deep frown. "Now's probably the time to tell you that I got all of my memories back quite a while ago. And I know more than a few things about what's been going on."

"Huh? You do? What is it, then?"

"There isn't any Eddy. He's Murdoc."

"Huh?"

"Murdoc, the assassin. He's the reason I had to hang up on you. I had just figured out the connection to Lawrence Hawke, and I found out that he'd been living on his boat. Apparently it was all he had. I was down at the marina to do a little investigating to make sure I was right. When I was certain that Hawke had to be our kidnapper, I went to call immediately, but Murdoc stopped me and chased me onto the boat. Hawke found us fighting there and set loose some of his pyrotechnics, so Murdoc and I were both forced to take shelter from the blast. I guess we both got knocked around enough to get concussions. And you know the rest of the story."

McAllister shook his head in wonder. "And he got his memories back first, so he knew you before you knew him."

"Only at first," MacGyver explained. "I remembered my life a little sooner than I let on... The last time I faced up against Murdoc with a case of amnesia, he was obsessed with making me remember exactly who he was and what history we had before he killed me. So when he found me again, I knew that my best chance of staying alive would be to play along with the amnesia act until I could find a way to stop him."

McAllister chuckled in disbelief. "Wow. I have to say, I'm---impressed. You have a crazy life, MacGyver. Keep in touch." He offered Mac a handshake that was quickly taken.

MacGyver grinned. "I noticed that application for the LAPD on your desk earlier, so maybe keeping in touch won't be too hard after all."

McAllister's cheeks tinged red as he flashed a grin of his own. "Fingers crossed!"

July 5, 1996

MacGyver stared up at the Washington Monument bright and early in the morning, craning his neck to take in the full impact of the sight. This was his last day in DC, and he wanted to cross this off his bucket list before he left...even if he did have to spend the entire day looking over his shoulder.

He stepped inside to give his ticket to the park ranger, and she waved him on through to the elevator. The place was deserted except for him, a contrast to the bustling sidewalks and impromptu soccer games on the grass outside. Mac didn't mind. He needed a second to himself to think...and decide what to do about Murdoc.

The elevator chugged up to the top of the Monument, making grinding noises every inch of the way. By the time he reached the top, he was glad to hurry out of it, especially when he noticed that the doors refused to close behind him.

The park ranger at the top seemed glad to see him too. "That's it!" the woman said. "We've got to have someone in maintenance check the elevator. It shouldn't be making those noises, and what's

with the stuck doors?" She shook her head apologetically. "It's been on the fritz all week. The battle is neverending."

"I understand," MacGyver said, suddenly wondering why he'd ever wanted to be up there in the first place.

The park ranger chewed her lip. "Tell you what. I need to go down there and call for a repairman---and help Ranger Jessica close down the Monument for the day. If you don't mind skipping my lovely commentary on the view from up here, you can go down the stairs when you're done here. I'll leave the staff door unlocked for you when I go down."

"That would be great," Mac said, relieved. "Thank you."

She nodded and disappeared behind the stairwell door. A short while later, the diseased elevator chugged to life again, sending the elevator car back down to the bottom of the Monument for maintenance, leaving MacGyver completely alone.

He sighed and leaned forward, looking into the glass. The view out the window was astounding, and the beauty made the vertigo worth it. Mostly.

Then he caught a glimpse of a reflection in the glass: something moving behind him. A shadow.

He whirled. "Murdoc."

Murdoc's lips peeled back in a grin. "About time you remembered me, MacGyver. Your memory is such a slippery thing, isn't it? But you had to know you couldn't escape me forever."

MacGyver tensed; he had to find a way to keep Murdoc talking until he could come up with a good escape plan. Running down all those flights of stairs with Murdoc behind him could easily be a disaster. "Why'd you come find me here, Murdoc?"

Murdoc scoffed. "I've been following you from the very first minute. I'm a professional, remember?"

"No," MacGyver said, trying not to overtly glance at the stairwell door. "I mean, why follow me to Washington DC?"

"Perhaps I wanted a change of scenery," Murdoc replied, letting the sarcasm drip heavily. "Does it really matter? I came here to kill you, not to have a friendly chat."

"Last time we met, we worked together. We could do that again."

"Last time, I also told you that we were even. There's nothing to stop me from hunting you, MacGyver. Nothing at all."

"It doesn't have to be this way." As he spoke, MacGyver inched, slowly, almost painfully slowly, towards the stairwell door.

"It's far too late for that," Murdoc said, gripping his favorite knife and freeing it from his belt. His lip curled. "Don't think I don't see you trying to escape, MacGyver. You can't!"

As Murdoc flung himself at MacGyver, blade slashing, MacGyver dodged and jumped across the small space. His heart was pounding.

"Give it up, Murdoc! You're not really just going to stab me to death, are ya? I thought you had a little more pride."

Another lunge, another dodge.

"This goes well beyond pride, MacGyver. I'm tired of your existence, and I'm willing to end you by any means necessary." Murdoc placed around the edge of the cramped space like a cougar, his figure blocking out the light streaming from the window. "Even if it is a little ugly."

Across from him, MacGyver hunched in front of the empty elevator shaft, the doors still stuck from earlier, wide open.

He knew he would have only one chance to get this right.

Nimble as ever, Murdoc darted in towards MacGyver's left, then feinted right, slashing again with the jagged edge of the hunting knife.

Wincing as the steel cut into his arm, MacGyver grabbed Murdoc and twisted, scrambling back towards the window and pushing out at the same time.

Murdoc's own momentum and MacGyver's motion propelled him across the floor---and he slid straight down into the elevator shaft.

His voice reverberated off the walls as he fell straight down:

"MACGYVER!"

MacGyver didn't waste a single second. He slammed through the Staff Only door and raced down the stairs, half tripping and skidding as he struggled to get down to the bottom as soon as possible.

Breathlessly, he warned the park rangers that a man---a criminal, but still a man---had fallen into the elevator shaft.

By the time the emergency personnel and maintenance crew arrived and gained access to the elevator shaft, everything was empty.

MacGyver stared up at one of the nation's tributes to freedom and felt more shackled than ever, knowing that above everything else, shadowing over yesterday's victory, there was always that one chilling universal truth: Murdoc was not dead. And eventually, he'd be coming back.

MacGyver sighed and ran a hand through his hair as he walked away.

"Here we go again..."

The End