

Rating: PG

Category: Slash (barely, but that's how I picture the guys)

Characters: J/B

Word Count: way over 500

Notes: Feedback is always welcome, but this time I'm especially looking for critical feedback. Thanks to Sen-Betas. Without their invaluable help, this thing wouldn't even exist. They're practically co-writers and it's a safe bet that the good parts come from them and the remaining mistakes are mine.

Drums

Von Pat

e-mail: guenther.krayer@t-online.de

Entering the observation room, Blair closed the door silently behind his back and gave a fleeting glance at the scenario on the other side of the one-way glass. Joining the solitary figure in front of it, he looked up at his partner. "And?"

Jim continued intently watching the haggard, disheveled suspect in the interrogation room, and shrugged. "He says it's the drums."

"What?"

"He says..."

"I heard you. What drums?"

"That's something we still have to clarify."

The exhausted voice caused Sandburg to take a closer look at his life-partner's face. He took in the drawn expression, the tension lines around Jim's eyes, and stopped himself just in time from involuntarily reaching out to Jim. The station was not the right place for that. Instead he confined himself to saying, "Ah. How long has he been in there now?"

"About four hours."

"I see. You've got a headache?"

Jim nodded without breaking his focus on the scene in front of them. "A little. It's been a long day."

Silently nodding, Blair took a half-step closer, bringing his arm inconspicuously into contact with Jim's. He watched, satisfied, as the lines smoothed away somewhat. It wasn't much, but it had to be enough until they got home.

His attention switched to the man being interrogated, who most likely was the indiscriminate killer they had been searching for for months. Gender, age, race - there hadn't been a pattern regarding the victims.

"Let's try that again, Mr. Micelli." Brown's voice sounded tinny through the speaker system. "We found you still on the scene. You resisted arrest. So don't tell us you had nothing to do with it. One last time - why did you attack Mrs. Bears?"

Blair snorted angrily. "Attack? Brown's got to be kidding. He tried to kill her. She was lucky to escape, or else we would have found her body this morning just like the others, strangled and left in the rain."

Micelli simply continued to rock forth and back, staring blankly at the floor.

With a frustrated sigh Jim pinched the bridge of his nose. "Yeah, this guy..."

Brown's slightly irritated voice interrupted him. "Mr. Micelli..."

"It wasn't me."

"Who else?"

Micelli looked up, helpless anger clearly written on his face. "It wasn't me! It was the drums! The drums! Don't you understand?" His face crumbled to an expression of utter despair and he looked back down at the ground. "Why don't you understand? It's the drums, always the drums. Can't hide from them."

Blair eyed the scene. "Man. I knew that he wasn't the sharpest knife in the kitchen drawer, but this sounds seriously crazy." He shook his head.

Jim shot his partner a quick look before he went back to watching Micelli pensively. "Yeah, crazy..."

"So the drums ordered you to kill people?" Rafe sounded vaguely annoyed.

"No, no, you don't understand!" Micelli's voice took on a defensive note. "They didn't want to help me." His rocking grew more agitated. "All they had to do was to make the drums go away." He started to breathe faster. "Why didn't they make the drums go away?" Panting, he continued to stare at the floor. "Why didn't they help me?" Eyes suddenly blazing in renewed anger, he looked back up to Rafe. "They should have helped me! Nothing would have happened! They should have helped me!" His voice broke at the last words and his upper body bent down, arms closing around himself in a protective hug.

Blair moved a little closer to Jim, unconsciously intensifying the touch of their arms.

"That's weird," Jim muttered softly, still scrutinizing their suspect.

"Absolutely. What does he mean by 'They should have helped me'?"

"I don't know. According to Mrs. Bears, he came up to her, begging her to make the drums go away. When she tried to run, he went from begging to violence and tried to force his hands under her raincoat."

"What?" The surprised question held a decidedly high-pitched note. "You mean, he tries to force sexual contact with his victims and when they fight him..."

"...he strangles them. Yes, that's what it looks like."

"Oh man... that explains the state of the other victims' clothes."

Jim turned his head, casting a thoughtful look at their touching arms before raising his eyes to his partner's face. "You're feeling uncomfortable, Chief." The statement sounded oddly confident, as if he had expected this.

"Yes." Blair's voice was merely a whisper now, his eyes glued to Micelli. "This guy somehow gives me the creeps."

The sudden clatter of a chair being knocked over drew Jim's attention back to the interrogation room.

Micelli had jumped up and was shouting. "Can't you hear them?" He looked around, wild eyes frantically searching. "Can't you hear them? The drums! They're here again! Those damn drums are here again!" He backed into a corner and slid down the wall, cuffed arms protectively raised over his head.

Jim's eyes narrowed and he nodded slowly, feeling at the same time how Blair stirred uneasily at his side.

Micelli's cries softened to desperate whimpers. "Please help me, please... Make the drums go away." He started to bang the back of his head against the wall, causing Rafe to hastily shove a jacket between the wall and Micelli's head. "Mr. Micelli, stop that! Mr. Micelli, can you hear me?"

Beneath the sound of the speaker, Jim heard the acceleration of Blair's breathing.

"Help! I need help! You have to help me..." demanded Micelli as his hands shot forward, frantically grabbing Rafe's shirt and pushing it up.

"Let GO of me!" Rafe tried to grab Micelli's hands and Brown bolted to his side, but the agitated man was hard to stop. A second later the two detectives were staring into the muzzle of Rafe's gun. Micelli's eyes glinted crazily, going back and forth between the two men as he held the gun aimed towards them. "Help me! Now!" Tears started to stream down his face.

Blair gulped and took an involuntary step closer to the window, resting his palm flat against the glass. For a moment, Jim looked at him intently. Closing his eyes briefly, Ellison made his decision. "Go in."

"What?" Blair turned around. "You're joking!"

"Go on in!"

Their eyes locked, Jim's calm in acceptance, Blair's wide with denial.

"Don't fight it, Chief."

Blair's shoulders sagged and he closed his eyes. Breathing in deeply, he firmed his posture, his mouth set in a grim line. One sharp nod at Jim, and he exited the room.

Jim took a deep breath and watched as Blair, with a gentle knock, slowly opened the door to the interrogation room and stopped there. "Mr. Micelli?"

Micelli's head snapped around. He snarled.

Appalled, Rafe and Brown watched Blair fixing his eyes on Micelli. "Sandburg, you'd better..."

"Shhhhh." A slight wave of Blair's hand sent them retreating hesitantly from Micelli, who remained in his corner, rocking but still following their motions with the gun.

Blair stretched his hands out, palms up. "I'll help you."

The gun turned in his direction. Deep mistrust colored Micelli's whole pose.

Sweat beading his forehead, Blair took one slow step forward. "Do you hear me? I will help you."

Micelli's rocking motions stopped, a glimmer of fearful hope flickering over his face.

Blair took another two cautious steps, heart pounding in his throat.

Micelli stared at him, his mouth forming silent words but he still kept the gun pointed at Blair's chest.

Jim, I seriously hope you're right here.

A last step and Blair squatted down, arms outstretched to the killer.

The gun wavered. Micelli's eyes passed from Blair's face to his arms, and back.

"Come on," mouthed Blair, his eyes locked with Micelli's.

The gun clattered to the floor, and with a choked sob Micelli threw himself into Blair's arms, clutching at his shirt with both fists. Tremors run through his shoulders as his hands started to crawl greedily under Blair's T-shirt, insistently going for the bare skin on Blair's back.

Blair shuddered. This wasn't the familiar, intimate touch he was used to. This was the creepy touch of a man desperate enough to not care for consent, willing to take by force what wasn't given freely.

It felt absolutely wrong. He wanted to push Micelli away, but the man's tears soaked his shirt and his teeth dug a desperate bite, softened through the fabric, into Blair's flesh; and so, in the end, Blair simply let it happen. "Yes, yes, it's all right now, it's all right now." He closed his arms around Micelli firmly and, turning his head, faced his own reflection on the screen as he softly murmured, "How did you know, Jim?"

On the other side of the glass, Jim closed his eyes in utter relief.

He bent his head slowly, silently listening to the rain beating down.

"Because I hear the drums too, Chief," he whispered. "I hear the drums too."

e-Mail-Adresse: guenther.krayer@t-online.de

Homepage: www.mishale.net (Sentinel-Guide)