

THE MENTALIST
"RED PROPAGATION"

Written by

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Address
Phone Number

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. BULLPEN. AUSTIN FIELD OFFICE - DAY

JANE sits on his couch, fiddling with his phone.

LISBON enters with a worried appearance. She approaches Jane.

JANE

Lisbon. Do you have signal? My phone is acting up but it says I have a voice mail.

LISBON

Jane, I need to talk to you.

Jane stands and starts pacing around, watching his phone screen. He moves the phone slowly back and forth through the air.

LISBON (CONT'D)

Jane.

JANE

Yeah, just a second. You don't think something could be wrong with the phones again? Like last time?

Lisbon looks surprised at Jane.

LISBON

When we had bugs? What? No --

Lisbon pulls out her phone and checks the screen quickly. She drops it back in her pocket after a second.

LISBON (CONT'D)

No, my phone is fine and bugs wouldn't cause that. Jane, we need to talk.

JANE

I know bugs wouldn't do this on their own but I always get signal here and can't now. I'll have to talk to Wylie and see --

LISBON

Jane! We have to talk. It's about Frye.

Jane stops shifting around. He holds his phone in front of him, suspended.

Jane turns to Lisbon.

JANE
Did something happen to Frye?

LISBON
Come on, Jane. Let's talk to
Abbott.

Lisbon leads the way out of the office.

INT. ABBOTT'S OFFICE. AUSTIN FIELD OFFICE - DAY

ABBOTT stands over his desk with a manila folder open in his hands.

Jane and Lisbon enter.

ABBOTT
(to Lisbon)
Did you tell him?

Lisbon shakes her head.

Jane appears cautious as he takes a seat. Lisbon stands next to the other seat in front of Abbott's desk.

JANE
No, she didn't. What's this about
Frye?

Lisbon looks at Abbott, who nods while Jane watches.

Lisbon opens her mouth but, before she can speak, Jane does.

JANE (CONT'D)
She's dead.

Jane looks at Abbott's desk with vacant eyes for a second before looking directly at Abbott's face.

JANE (CONT'D)
What happened?

ABBOTT
She was found outside Taos, New
Mexico. It's small but it's popular
with artists.
(MORE)

ABBOTT (CONT'D)

A group of mountain bikers in the hills near the town found her during a ride early this morning.

Jane sits quietly.

Lisbon looks at Jane before turning back to Abbott.

LISBON

Are we going to be able to investigate it?

ABBOTT

F.B.I. has jurisdiction since she was a victim in a crime that has not, officially, been solved. I've sent a request to the Albuquerque field office to let us in on it.

Lisbon looks sidelong at Jane as she speaks.

LISBON

Will they let us have it since --

JANE

Since I killed the man that kidnapped and broke her? Giving the case to us doesn't sound like something the F.B.I. would do.

Abbott frowns at Jane before answering.

ABBOTT

(To Lisbon)

She's part of the Red John case, yes. But it works in our favor on this. The Red John case was closed during the investigation of the C.B.I. so your team is still the last one to officially handle it.

(To Jane)

And you may have killed Red John illegally but you're also the only one to have identified him. If you can handle it....

JANE

I can handle it.

ABBOTT

Then I think I can get us the case.

A small BEEP comes from Jane's jacket. Jane reaches in and pulls out his phone which now has full signal and still has a voice mail indicated on its screen.

Jane stands and walks to the back of the room. He punches buttons on his phone and holds the device to his ear.

LISBON

When do you want to brief the team?
I'll put the word out.

Jane, still listening to the handset, shows a shocked expression. He turns his torso towards Abbott and Lisbon but then turns back with the phone pressed hard against his ear.

ABBOTT

Actually, I need to talk to the special agent in charge of the Albuquerque office. Can you give everyone the quick version? I'll give the full briefing before we go.

Jane turns back to Abbott and Lisbon

LISBON

Yes, sir. Do you --

JANE

Uh, guys?

ABBOTT

What is it, Jane?

JANE

I got that voice mail.

Abbott arches an eyebrow.

LISBON

Yeah? What is it?

JANE

Well, it was Frye actually. Frye called me last night.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BULLPEN. AUSTIN FIELD OFFICE - DAY

AGENTS are packing bags. WYLIE is checking electronics as he slides them into cases, CHO drops files into a bag. FISCHER walks up to him.

FISCHER

You were there when this whole thing started, right?

Cho zips his bag closed and turns to Fischer.

CHO

Frye? Yeah. I was on the team when we originally started working with Jane. Frye didn't enter the picture until later, a couple of years ago.

FISCHER

So, what's the deal? Bringing Jane to investigate the death of his ex-girlfriend violates a few protocols.

Cho rests his hands on the bag and mulls before speaking.

CHO

Jane and Frye never dated, not really. They just went out once or twice. And, he successfully investigated Red John, the guy who killed his wife and kid.

FISCHER

Yes, and he murdered McAllister.

CHO

No, he killed Red John, a serial killer who would still be out there if it weren't for Jane.

FISCHER

Still, the last time Jane was emotionally involved in a case, he forced a violent confrontation with the suspect and killed him. Something he did before as well.

Cho nods.

CHO

True, but the first time it was a man who confessed to killing Jane's wife and daughter and the second time it was the man who really did kill them. This is different.

FISCHER

You don't think there's a chance that Jane is too close to this case?

Cho looks past Fischer at something behind her.

CHO

Doesn't look like it.

Fischer turns around as Cho goes back to pulling items from his desk.

Jane exits an office and enters the bullpen with TWO AGENTS. He's all smiles as he shakes their hands. The two agents walk away from the bullpen laughing and gesturing back at Jane.

Jane walks to Wylie.

JANE

Hey, Wylie. Have you had a chance to look at the phone?

Wylie looks up from his cases.

WYLIE

Jane! Yeah, I've got it right here.

Wylie picks Jane's phone up from the desk, disconnecting a cable from it as he does so.

WYLIE (CONT'D)

I just finished resetting the PRL, Firmware and --

Jane looks at him with a bemused smile.

WYLIE (CONT'D)

-- and you have no idea what I'm saying. Basically, I reset the parts of the phone that could be to blame for your signal issues.

JANE

So, no chance it was bugs?

WYLIE

No, I checked for bugs, nothing. Your issues had to have come from either within the phone or at the cell tower it connected to. I reset your phone's connection software just in case but since your signal restored in Abbott's office, something was most likely wrong with the tower you were connected to.

JANE

Lisbon's phone wasn't having issues. She checked.

Wylie shrugs.

WYLIE

Different phones, different connections. But, your phone is safe. I'm certain of it.

Jane smiles.

JANE

Alright, thanks, man.

Jane gestures at the packed electronics.

JANE (CONT'D)

You have everything you need for Taos?

WYLIE

Taos? Is that the city? We've only gotten the quick heads up Lisbon that we're headed out to New Mexico.

Fischer walks up from behind Jane.

FISCHER

Yeah. Do you know something we don't, Jane?

Jane steps to the side and turns so he can speak to both Wylie and Fischer.

JANE

Not really. I heard the city from Jane and Abbott when they told me Frye was dead.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)
Speaking of which, do either of you
know where Lisbon is?

Fischer shakes her head.

FISCHER
No. I haven't seen --

WYLIE
Yeah, she's in Abbott's office.
They had a call with the team
leader from New Mexico.

Fischer turns on Wylie.

FISCHER
They're talking to the team leader
and she was called in instead of
me?

Wylie swallows.

WYLIE
I think they might have been
looking for you....

Fischer looks harshly at both Jane and Wylie before stalking
out of the room.

Jane gives an ironic eyebrow raise and smile to Wylie before
casually following her.

INT. ABBOTT'S OFFICE. AUSTIN FIELD OFFICE - DAY

Lisbon sits in a chair with a note pad and a pen while Abbott
is at his desk. He's leaning toward his phone.

ABBOTT
Alright, thanks Samantha. My team
will be there in a few hours.

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Great. I look forward --

Fischer flies into the room and looks at Lisbon with a frown.
She looks up at Abbott though and composes herself, smoothing
her clothes.

FISCHER
You were looking for me, sir?

SAMANTHA (V.O.)
Who's that?

ABBOTT

Sorry, Samantha. One of my agents just came in. Was there anything else?

SAMANTHA

No, we're all ready to receive you guys.

ABBOTT

Thanks. We're on our way.

Abbott pulls the handset off the cradle of the phone, pauses and sets it back in the cradle, hanging up.

FISCHER

Sir, as the senior agent I think I should have been the one present for this briefing.

Abbott arches his eyebrow and Fischer hesitates before comporting herself and pressing on.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

I would like to know why I was excluded from the call.

Abbott leans back and settles into his chair. Lisbon looks between Abbott and Fischer with an uncomfortable expression.

LISBON

I can brief her, sir.

Abbott looks at Lisbon and nods.

ABBOTT

You weren't excluded. Lisbon was just closer and is more familiar with the victim in the case. The Albuquerque office is officially transferring the case to us. Lisbon will brief the team and you will be up to speed.

A KNOCK comes from the door. Abbott looks at the door.

ABBOTT (CONT'D)

Come in.

Jane enters and quickly surveys the people in the room.

JANE

Cheery crowd, huh? Are we getting the case?

ABBOTT

Yes, just became official. Did we get anything else from the voice mail?

JANE

No. Wylie was looking at my phone and confirms it is from Frye. Beyond that, it's exactly what it sounded like. She wanted to meet and was trying to come here to do so.

LISBON

So, why stop in Taos? It's not exactly on the way.

JANE

You ever been there?

Lisbon shakes her head.

JANE (CONT'D)

It's only a couple of hours out of the way and it would appeal to her. It's very new age, spiritual. A former psychic and ghost would be at home there.

Abbott arches his eyebrows.

FISCHER

Ghost?

JANE

Oh, yeah. It's in the file. After her abduction by Red John, she was certain that she was a ghost. Anyway, Taos would probably have been a safe haven on her drive to her.

FISCHER

Turned out well.

Jane shrugs.

JANE

Guess not.

ABBOTT

Are you taking your Airstream? You would get there well after the team if you do.

JANE

But still solve it first. No, I'd get in Taos just in time to start driving to Denver. Oh, by the way, we should make plane reservations to head to Denver. We'll need about twelve to twenty-four hours in Taos before we fly out though.

FISCHER

Why are we going to Denver?

JANE

You'll know when you read the file.

LISBON

Umm, I've read the file. She lived in Denver but was killed in Taos. What makes you so sure we'll only need a day in Taos.

JANE

I'm not sure we'll need a day. That's why I said twelve to twenty-four.

Fischer and Lisbon both look at Jane with a bit of frustration showing. Abbott stays leaned back in his chair and interlaces his fingers over his stomach.

Jane looks between all three of them.

JANE (CONT'D)

No worries, you'll figure it out.

Jane walks out of the office.

FISCHER

We need to stop him withholding information from the team. He can't keep doing this.

ABBOTT

I don't always love his methods either. But, he is usually right and he's given us one of the best clearance records in the agency.

FISCHER

That clearance record is a result of this team's work.

Abbott nods.

ABBOTT

Yes. This team is handpicked and extraordinary. I built it. I chose everyone here, including Jane.

(to Lisbon)

Gather the team for the briefing. I want everyone to have a general idea and packets before they get on the plane.

Lisbon gets up and Fischer turns to the door.

ABBOTT (CONT'D)

Wait up, Fischer.

Lisbon slides past Fischer and exits. Fischer turns to Abbott.

ABBOTT (CONT'D)

What's going on between you and Jane?

FISCHER

Sir, it just seems that we've become more and more indulgent of his whims and fantasies. He thinks someone is an abductor, so Lisbon forces her way into the man's house. He wants to play act, so we host a sting operation for art thieves. He planned, and we went along with, luring armed men out of Mexico.

ABBOTT

Those examples come from two operations. One brought down a team of violent art thieves. The other brought down a human trafficking ring.

FISCHER

There has to be a line with Jane that we won't cross. A point where the procedures and rules trump his whims.

Abbott sighs and looks at Fischer.

ABBOTT

Jane does things in an... unconventional manner.

(MORE)

ABBOTT (CONT'D)

And he clears cases because of it but, you are right, there's a point where the risk is too high, either to himself or to the team. Keep an eye on him but don't force him into the F.B.I. mold.

FISCHER

Are you at all worried that this case centers around the only woman he's been out with since his wife died?

ABBOTT

If I was worried about Jane's love life interfering with his cases, I wouldn't have brought Lisbon on the team.

Fischer stands.

ABBOTT (CONT'D)

See you in Taos.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Two black vehicles cuts through the desert.

INT. BLACK CAR - DAY

Lisbon drives while Jane sits in the passenger seat, staring out the window. In the rear seats, Wylie and Cho wear headphones and stare at a laptop.

Lisbon looks in the rearview mirror.

Wylie and Cho are paying attention to the screen.

LISBON

Jane?

Jane turns and looks at Lisbon.

JANE

Yes?

LISBON

How are you doing?

JANE

With what?

LISBON
With Frye, with her death.

JANE
Oh. Yeah. No problem.

Lisbon glances from the road at Jane. She does it again.

LISBON
Jane, I know when you're lying.

JANE
You do not. We've been over this before.

LISBON
We have, and I knew when you were lying and I've only gotten better since.

JANE
I'm not lying and I'm not bothered by Frye. I just want to find out what happened.

Lisbon frowns but slows the vehicle as they arrive at the crime scene.

EXT. DESERT CRIME SCENE - DAY

F.B.I. CRIME SCENE TECHNICIANS bustle around a crime scene marked off with yellow tape. SPECIAL AGENT ERIN BERSLEY, she's young for an agent and dressed simply with everything in place, stands amidst the chaos.

The black vehicles with the Austin team pull up to the site.

Bersley walks towards them.

The vehicles stop and the Austin team climbs from their vehicles. Bersley nears them and holds her hand out to Lisbon.

BERSLEY
You must be the Austin team. I'm Special Agent Bersley.

Lisbon takes hold of Bersley's hand.

LISBON
Special Agent Lisbon.

Fischer shifts her shoulders.

Lisbon points to the others as she introduces them.

LISBON (CONT'D)
Special Agents Fischer, Cho and
Wylie.

Bersley shakes the hands of each person in turn.

LISBON (CONT'D)
And our consultant, Patrick Jane.

Bersley extends her hand to Jane who is already surveying the scene.

BERSLEY
It's nice to meet all of you. I was
especially interested in --

JANE
Shame we won't be in New Mexico
long. Body was over here?

Jane begins walking even before he finishes the question.
Bersley, flustered