

NAN:
THE TRIFLING TIMES OF NATHAN JONES
AS TOLD TO MOSES MILLER

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BETRAYAL: CHAPTER ONE

The only light illuminating the front of the three-story brick apartment building on Albany Avenue, emanated from the half moon that was clearly visible in the darkened sky. A black van had been discretely parked outside of the building for the past hour, as the occupants patiently waited for the right time to make their exit. They were hardly in a rush. A thick cloud of smoke filled the van's interior, the by-product of the Sergeant's Newport addiction. He had quickly puffed his way through a pack and a half in the last hour alone, only putting down his cigarette to take a swig from his metal whiskey flask. Without much thought, he flicked his shrunken cigarette butt to the van's floor and stomped it out with the sole of his rundown leather loafer.

Being six-foot tall, the Sergeant had to bend down awkwardly as he paced back and forth inside the cargo van. Digangi and Dickson sat in the back leaning uncomfortably against the van's metal wall, resting their tired eyes. On the other side of the van, Rodriguez, the only female amongst the crew, rested her head up against the cold steel wheel well.

She clutched her black 9-milimeter in the palm of her right hand as she stared at the picture of her two sons, which adorned the heart shaped gold charm that she always wore around her neck. The youngest was only two, and his brother was four. She had left them with their father, who was in a deep sleep, when she quietly exited their apartment in Bensonhurst a couple of hours ago.

She tried to rest her eyes, but she couldn't get them off of her mind. Her husband, Jose wasn't exactly *Mr. Mom*. He was more like the absent-minded professor. She had

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purposely written down a list that intricately laid out everything he had to do for the boys in her absence, but she knew that he would still forget something.

“Rodriguez,” the Sergeant yelled out in his gruff voice, just loud enough to startle her.

“Aye, Vie,” Rodriguez responded, as she sat up and wiped her eyes.

“You should have gotten yourself some rest. I’m a need you completely focused when you go up there, Lisa,” the Sergeant said. He was now kneeling down whispering, his face within two inches of hers. She squinted her watery eyes and held her breath as he spoke, putting up her best defense against the thick vapor he expelled from his mouth, which reeked of cigarettes and the undeniable stench of whiskey.

The Sergeant was what could best be described as a bubble invader. Whether it was a method of intimidation, or just the way he was comfortable communicating with others, he always conversed in very close quarters. He leaned his massive frame towards Rodriguez, and whispered quietly in her ear.

“Don’t worry about a thing Lisa. You’ll be home hugging those two little sluggers before you know it.”

“I know, it’s just Jose. He—”

Sarge interrupted her mid-sentence. “Shh!!! Think about that shit later. You need to focus on what you can impact now...anything else will get you killed out there.”

She nodded her head in acknowledgment. She knew he was telling her the truth. “You’re right Sarge. I’m a get focused. . . I won’t let you down.”

In an apartment a few stories above, Nan softly licked his girlfriend Leslie’s bellybutton, before slowly working his way up her caramel complexioned body, only stopping once he reached her inviting breasts. She willingly opened her legs, moaning slightly as she felt his manhood enter inside of her. As he stroked, she moved her body in unison, letting him in deeper and deeper. He penetrated her wet insides, working the walls of her vagina in smooth motions.

“Oh, Nan...oh, baby you got some good stuff...oh, my god,” she moaned passionately.

Her soft hands tightly gripped his back, pulling him into her as she panted in a soft whisper. Sensing her desire, he pushed himself deeper inside of her, feeling the warmth of her wet juices as his penis rubbed against her vagina walls. Her body shivered ever so slightly in his arms.

“I’m coming Nathan,” she yelled out seductively. Nan got up on his knees as she moaned, arching his back as he began to stroke harder, but refraining from being overly aggressive with her. Still stroking, he held her legs over his shoulders as he began to climax as well. The rhythmic rocking motion of the queen-sized bed slowly came to a halt, as Nan laid his sweaty body down on Leslie’s exposed breasts.

“Are you all right? You don’t have any pains right?” Nan asked in a concerned manner.

“You’re so funny. You ask the same question every time we make love. You don’t have to worry, the baby is all right Nathan,” she said, as she stroked her hand through his short hair. “The baby can’t feel anything that you be doing down there.”

“Well, I don’t know. I mean, you know I’m packing a little sumthin’ sumthin’.”

She mused his head and said, “You are so silly.”

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Leslie was shapely and well proportioned. She was only two months into her pregnancy, 130 pounds and not even showing yet. As a matter of fact, only her close friends even knew that she was pregnant. Nan rested his chiseled frame back on top of her busty chest. She willingly obliged, letting him lay on her for a good five minutes before she had had enough.

“You gotta get up Boo,” she said as she nudged his shoulder. “You’re gonna be late for work...besides, you’re smothering me and the baby.”

Nan laughed to himself, kissing her on her forehead as he rolled over, preparing to get out of the bed.

“Oh, now I’m hurting the baby? How convenient,” he said laughing out loud again.

He stared at the peeling paint on the bedroom wall, trying to will himself to get up and take a shower. Finally, he leaned over towards Leslie and kissed her softly on her neck, before whispering, “I love you,” in her ear.

“I love you too, Nathan,” she replied softly.

Sitting there, he looked Leslie directly in her light brown eyes. She always called him by his government name, and he didn’t mind it. She was so beautiful to him...the second most beautiful girl he had ever laid his eyes on.

Leslie was a triage nurse at Beth Israel Medical Center. As fate would have it, she just happened to work a double shift the night that Nan had been wheeled into the emergency room on a gurney, bleeding profusely from gaping gunshot wounds to his chest and shoulder. Barely breathing, she held his bloody hand tightly as he fought for his life.

“Don’t give up. You have to fight,” she whispered over and over to him. Her voice sounded angelic. As he slipped in and out of consciousness, the touch of her hand clenching his own, gave him strength and lifted his spirits.

After Nan’s successful surgery, she visited him several times while he was recovering. Nan was a lot more “street” than Leslie, but his enchanting personality and the fact that he was well versed on so many different subjects, made them connect immediately. They could easily talk for hours about anything, never growing bored of one another.

Everyday after Nan was released from the hospital, he sent roses to Leslie. Shy and reclusive, she purposely avoided his advances. But, within a few weeks they were dating...and three months later they were in love and living together. Leslie’s friends teased her, because she was dating someone four years younger than her, but she didn’t care. Nan was her soul mate, and she loved him with her complete heart.

Nan sat up in the bed, and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes with his right hand, before getting up and walking out into the hallway and entering the bathroom. He flicked the light switch on, and slowly closed the door behind him, its hinges making a creaking noise as it slammed shut. As he turned the knobs in the shower, hot water shot out of the metallic showerhead, spraying the green mildewed tile and the shower curtain with a light mist. He stepped into the shower, feeling immediately relaxed as the hot water beads slammed against his sweaty body.

It was approximately 1:45am. Nan had plenty of time to stop at the bodega and pick up a juice and something to snack on, before heading in to work. Less than a month

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ago, he had started working at a loading dock down by the Brooklyn Naval Yard. The hours were awkward and the gig only paid \$7 an hour, but Nan wasn't complaining.

This was actually the first time in his life that he held down a legal gig, and this was by far the most fulfilling job he had ever done. It wasn't much money, but at work he didn't have to look over his shoulder, or fear for his life. He was making an honest day's pay, for an honest day's work. Not the type of paper he was used to making, but he still felt as if he could definitely get used to this.

He rubbed soap all over his chest, making a nice soapy lather. The steady stream that shot out of the hot showerhead caused a thick steamy fog to form in the bathroom. Nan closed his eyelids, feeling fully invigorated in his relaxing surroundings.

"Let's go people, it's time to roll," Sarge yelled out in his deep baritone voice. Without much thought, Digangi and Dickson popped open the van's back door and the cold air from the wintry night immediately began to seep inside.

"You know the routine people, short and sweet. In and out. Plant the evidence, take out the perp...no witnesses"

Digangi, Dickson, and Rodriguez quickly exited through the rear of the van. They discreetly entered the small apartment house vestibule, and quietly made their way up to the third floor via the steps. It was fairly quiet inside. They faintly heard the sounds of minor commotion as they made their way upstairs. Reaching the third floor landing, they pulled their guns out, slowly walking down the dimly lit narrow hallway.

Rodriguez gripped the barrel of her Mossberg shotgun, the stock handle concealed perfectly under her armpit. Her 9mm was holstered on her waist. There were three apartments on this floor, but they were looking specifically for 3B, which was located at the far end of the hall. Dickson holstered his glock, and pulled out a solid steel battering ram that he had hidden in an oversized black duffel bag he carried on his back.

As he grasped the ram tightly in his black hands, he looked over his shoulder at Rodriguez and Digangi.

"On three," he whispered, just loud enough for only them to hear. Sweat beads were visibly forming on both of their foreheads, as they anxiously stood behind Dickson with their guns drawn.

"One," Dickson mouthed, as Rodriguez used her free hand to bring the gold charm that hung from her neck, up to her lips in order to kiss it.

"Two." As the word left Dickson's mouth, Digangi the only white cop in the group, used the back of his shaky hand to wipe the sweat off of his brow. In order to muster up some saliva, he tried to swallow, but the inside of his mouth was bone dry from anxiety.

"Th...three," he whispered as he swung the battering ram swiftly, sending it forward with all his might. It smashed into the door, making a loud crashing noise upon impact. Wooden shards from the doorframe splintered into the air, as the metal door swung forward. Digangi and Rodriguez quickly entered into the one bedroom apartment, each of them heading in opposite directions as they surveyed the surroundings with their guns drawn. Dickson pulled out his gun, and stood guard by the front door, which he closed behind him.

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The blissful sleep that Leslie had drifted into after the lovemaking session with Nan, was broken by the loud bang that reverberated throughout the apartment. Concerned, she yelled out his name. She waited a few seconds, but received no response. Hesitantly, she pulled the comforter and wrapped it around her body, concealing her nakedness as she got up off of the bed. Nan never left for work without kissing her goodbye. This concerned her greatly.

"Nathan," she yelled out again, as she opened the door and stepped out into the hallway. Nervous, her voice cracked as it echoed throughout the apartment. The hallway was pitch black, but hearing the sound of the shower running, she immediately felt relieved. She ran her hand along the plaster wall, searching for the light switch, just as a flashing yellow spark emanating from Rodriguez's shotgun, illuminated the hallway. A deafening blast rang out as the powerful shotgun's deadly shells whizzed through the air.

Leslie let out a faint scream, as the shells violently blasted through her back, sending chunks of her lungs and heart flying out of her chest plate. The comforter fell to the floor, as her naked body flailed forward crashing grotesquely into the dining room's glass table, which shattered into a thousand pieces under the weight of her lifeless body.

The sound of the shotgun had startled Nan, who was now standing outside of the shower, drying his body off with a towel. He quickly flipped the light switch off, scrambling to put his boxers on as he opened the closet door where the linen was stored. His heart was beating so fast, that he thought it would explode out of his chest.

He knelt down on the bathroom's cold ceramic tile, and began scrounging through unopened toilet paper and maxi pad boxes that were scattered about. He ran his hand around the back of the closet floor until he felt the cold steel of the 9mm semi-automatic he had stored there. He never told Leslie about the gun, and had purposely placed it way in the back so she wouldn't find it. Still fishing around, he finally came across the full clip that he stored separately.

Rodriguez noticed the light go out from a small crack under the bathroom door, and immediately started walking in its direction. She peered down the hall and noticed Digangi standing in the dining room, hovering over Leslie's body. Her body lay still, contorted from the fall and unsuspected blast. Digangi got down on one knee, checked for a pulse, confirming that she was dead. With a nod to Rodriguez, he completed a sweep of the kitchen area.

Rodriguez continued down the narrow hallway, stopping mid-stride before placing her back up against the wall just outside of the bathroom. She could hear Nan frantically fumbling about behind the door. She gripped her shotgun tightly in anticipation, and taunted, "Nan, just come out of the room, Poppi. We just want to talk to you." She waited for a reply, but received no

response. Silence fell between her and the door, causing her anger to elevate sharply.

Her mock announcement alerted Digangi, who silently settled in on the other side of the doorframe. He positioned himself in preparation for an ambush. Grasping his glock in his hand, he looked at Rodriguez for direction. She pointed towards the door. Nodding her head, she held two fingers up, ordering their attack on the count of two. Digangi nodded intently, patiently waiting for the moment to pounce. Invigorated, Rodriguez began her rant once again.

"Nan, we gotta talk baby. It don't gotta go down like this Poppi." This time she squealed a more condescending tone, overlapping her vile accent.

Nan sat on the bathroom floor, listening attentively to the voice on the other side of the door. He knew it very well. He also heard the other set of footsteps that crept across the hallway floor, before settling somewhere between the kitchen and the bathroom. He didn't know how many pigs were out there, but he knew that by the sound of things, Rodriguez brought a death squad with her. His mind drifted to Leslie. "What the hell had they done to her?" He heard her scream earlier, and the thought of anything happening to her made him sick to his stomach.

"The money's under the kitchen sink. Just take it all...don't fuckin' shoot!" Nan frantically yelled out in desperation. He was holed up in the bathroom with nowhere to go. The one window in the bathroom was too small for him to squeeze out of. Besides, it had steel bars on the outside of it, like the rest of the windows in the apartment.

Digangi looked over at Rodriguez, who whispered, "We gotta finish him."

Unknown to them, Nan was holding his breath, listening intently as he knelt down right next to the door. Even though Rodriguez whispered, he was able to hear her chilling words clearly through the thin wood door. Nervousness dissipated, as Nan began to realize that his fate had already been decided. The hot flow of adrenaline rushed through his body, as he squeezed the trigger on his 9mm multiple times sending four bullets ripping through the plaster wall and the right side of the bathroom door.

"Ah, shit! I'm hit. I'm hit," Rodriguez yelled, as two of Nan's bullets ripped through her spine. Her body crumbled to the floor, as she continued to yell out in sheer anguish. "He's fuckin' shooting! That motherfucker's shooting through the door!"

Digangi kicked the bathroom door open, catching Nan by surprise as the impact sent him reeling backwards. In the confusion, Digangi emptied his clip into the dark bathroom. He was aiming high, not knowing that Nan had been kneeling down by the floor. One of the hot slugs grazed the top of Nan's temple as he fell backwards, but the rest of the bullets sailed wildly over his head. As Nan fell backwards, yellow sparks lit up the room.

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In response, he squeezed the trigger of his glock twice. Bullets ripped through Digangi's upper chest and violently exploded out the back of his neck. Bloody mist splattered the wall behind him, as he dropped his gun, desperately using his hands in an attempt to stop the thick foamy blood that was streaming out of the gaping hole in his chest.

Nan felt his head with his free hand. The bullet had left a slight gash that barely broke skin, but cut deep enough to cause a small amount of blood to flow down his forehead. His heart was beating quickly, as he began to walk towards the door. Anxiety almost overcame him, as he struggled to make sense of the unknown. He didn't know how many police officers were in the apartment, or where they were positioned. But, he knew that he was a sitting duck inside the small bathroom.

He opened the door slowly and looked down at the hallway floor, glancing over his handiwork. Rodriguez was lying in a pool of blood barely moving, and Digangi was unconscious, expelling red foam from his nostrils as he breathed in and out shallowly.

"Leslie...Lez," he yelled out hysterically. There was no response. His emotions overcame him, causing his body to shake uncontrollably. "Leslie, I'm coming babe...I'm coming for you."

Nan peeked his head out into the hallway slightly, and glanced towards the apartment's front door. A minuscule ray of light shined into the apartment through a small crack in the door's frame, exposing a shadowy figure that was partially hidden in the darkness. Nan noticed him leaning against the wall in stealth mode. Slowly, he leaned back into the bathroom unnoticed, kneeling down by the doorway. He wrapped his gun hand around the wall and out into the hallway. As he unmercifully squeezed down on the trigger, the dead calm that had briefly overtaken the apartment, was broken by the sound of the four gunshots that echoed throughout the hallway.

"Ah, fuck! You motherfucker!" Dickson painfully yelled out, as one of the hot slugs slammed into his lower abdomen.

Groaning, he opened the door and lurched out into the apartment house hallway crawling on his hands and knees at a turtle's pace. With the door ajar, bright light from the hallway seeped inside of the apartment. Nan peeked out of the bathroom, to the left and then slowly glanced down the hallway to his right, before tensely walking out towards the kitchen.

Leslie's body lay in the middle of the dining room floor, surrounded by a puddle of thick red blood and shattered glass shards. Nan dropped to his knees when he saw her. Her lifeless eyes were still wide open, as they blankly stared upwards toward the ceiling.

Nan's voice cracked as he painfully whispered, "Come on Lez, let's go...I'm a make it better. Please just let me make it better, Lez. *I need you.* Don't

leave me." He didn't know what to say or do. Inside he felt completely shallow, and outside his body grew numb.

"Why god? Why didn't you take me? Why, didn't you take me?" He asked emotionally, as he shivered uncontrollably. He was unable to concentrate. His mind was completely flooded with thoughts of her...thoughts of their child inside of her.

The sound of police car sirens nosily blared outside, breaking the peaceful silence on the streets. The loud disturbance forced Nan to regain his focus. He leaned over and kissed Leslie softly on her forehead, before closing her eyelids shut.

"I love you, Lez...I love you. You didn't deserve this. I'm a get all those motherfuckers back for this shit. I promise you...I promise you."

Nan heard the tires of another squad car come to a screeching halt in front of the building. He slowly stood up off the floor, and covered Leslie's naked body with the comforter, before frantically running into the bedroom. He scooped a black hoodie and blue jeans off of the night table, and quickly put them on. His forehead broke out in a cold sweat as he sat on the bed, and slid his feet into his Timbaland boots, lacing them up tightly. He tucked the black 9mm into the back of his pants, securing it in his waistband, before throwing on his black leather goose.

Nan ran back into the apartment's hallway, and glanced down at Rodriguez.

"I...I can't feel my arms and legs," Rodriguez said in a painful whisper.

"Good, then you won't need this then bitch," Nan responded coldly, as he grabbed her shotgun off of the floor, and tucked it beneath his black leather bomber.

He heard shuffling in the apartment house hallway. Instantly, he moved to the doorway and peered out slowly. Diagonally across the hallway he noticed his neighbor Ms. Cooper's door slightly opened. Through the crack, he saw her staring into the hallway. Her young grandson, D.J. stood behind her, nosily looking over her shoulder as they both stared in horror at the chaos around them.

As Nan walked out into the hallway, his eyes met Ms. Cooper's. The eeriness compelled her to speak.

"Nathan...Nathan, what's going on? Please, tell me what's happening?" She shuddered in amazement, cupping her mouth, as she stood paralyzed. D.J., who was also gripped by terror, gazed at Nan wide eyed as he noticed the 9mm clutched tightly in his hand.

A feeling of tenseness immediately overtook the hallway, as Ms. Cooper slowly started to close her door ever so cautiously. She was doing her best to avoid any unnecessary attention. Nan struggled to get his thoughts together. His mind raced frantically, and soon afterward a makeshift plan washed over him.

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His movements were guided almost subconsciously, as he pushed Ms. Cooper and D.J. into their apartment and slammed the door behind them.

"Omigosh, Nathan. Please, baby. Whatchu doing to us? Please...what's going on? Where's Leslie? Please tell me you didn't hurt that girl," she started to cry out loudly. She was distraught. Nan didn't want to hurt them, but he needed her to be silent. There was mayhem all around him...he just needed time to think.

"They killed her, Ms. Cooper. They killed her," he repeated as he unconsciously shook his gun at them. He paced back and forth in the living room, waving the glock as he tried to regain his composure. His actions immediately hushed Ms. Cooper's questions while she mentally prayed for her well being.

Nan glanced over at D.J., who stood just inches away from him. Nan saw himself in D.J. The innocence was there. He tried to gather his thoughts, but the blaring sirens and lights outside hindered his ability to focus. Ms. Cooper decided to take a chance. She decided that she would approach Nan and attempt to rationalize with him.

She couldn't believe that the kind young man who lived directly across the hall was standing in her apartment drenched in sweat, brandishing a gun. Wasn't he the same gentleman that helped her with her groceries every now and then? Didn't Leslie joyfully tell her about the baby that they anticipated? Nothing made sense, but her heart beckoned her to coach him out of his insanity.

"Nathan. Whatever is going on, God can provide an answer. God can take care of it baby. I promise I won't let nothing happen to you. Please just tell me what you need," she pleaded.

Nan just shook his head. "I ain't trying to hurt you Ms. Cooper," he said apologetically.

"I know baby. What do you need from me? Is it money...anything?" She reached out and gripped his hand. Her frail fingers shook, as she held onto him, still in mental prayer. Nan's eyes quickly scanned the room, noticing a window, just in the master bedroom. To his luck, no protective bars were present.

"I need to get outta here. I need to go...from there," he pointed in the direction of the bedroom window. Ms. Cooper was bewildered by his suggestion, but keeping her promise to help him out, she escorted Nan through the bedroom as quickly as her old legs allowed.

Ms. Cooper rested her hand on his back as a coddling tactic. It was subconscious, but needed nonetheless. Her touch soothed him for the moment, as he opened the window and inspected the alley below. Before he slid through the window's frame, Ms. Cooper embraced him angelically, another subconscious action that her heart compelled her to perform. In her mind, she recited another mental prayer. This time she prayed for Nan's well being, just as

he propped himself on top of her twin sized bed, and slowly worked his body backwards until he was holding onto the window ledge by the tips of his fingers.

Nan's legs dangled freely in the air beneath him. Flashing lights blared frequently, but surprisingly, there was no police presence. Apparently, no one had the foresight to stakeout the alley. After a half a minute or so passed, he let go of the ledge, landing securely on his feet after making the twenty-foot drop. His body jerked from impact, as the shotgun slammed against his thigh, bruising him slightly.

Concealed in the darkness of the alleyway, he leaned his back up against the wall as he plotted out his next move. Cold wind blew in his face, filling his nostrils with the disgusting stench of stale urine. The police cruisers were less than forty feet away from him to his left, and there was a fence that led to a lot down the far end of the alley, which was off to his right. He was just about to start walking towards the fence, when a light that he saw in his peripheral vision startled him.

To his left, a figure had entered the alleyway and sparked a lighter in order to light his cigarette. Puzzled, Nan stayed still, patiently studying the individual's movements closely before deciding his next move. Even in the coldness of the night, sweat slowly trickled down his chest.

The man's back was facing towards Nan, but he undoubtedly knew who it was. Nan's instincts told him to start heading towards the fence. He had time...he could disappear unnoticed. But, he gave into his heart and conflicting emotions.

Slowly and stealthily he walked towards the street, using the dark shadows of the alley as concealment. Perspiration slicked his face, as he lessened the distance between himself and the street. He was so angry, so engulfed and overtaken by hate, that he didn't notice the discarded Pepsi can lying directly in his path. When he was within ten feet of the street, his foot kicked the can. It wasn't a hard kick, but it was enough of a disturbance to get the Sergeant's attention.

Startled, he dropped his cigarette, turning to look into the darkened alley. He immediately saw Nan as he crept through the shadows. The Sergeant recognized his face as he looked into his cold bloodshot eyes, and immediately went for his gun. Nan hesitated to raise his shotgun, only reacting after a bullet sailed past him closely.

Nan refocused his attention, reacting to his opponent's attack by squeezing down on the shotgun's trigger. The shotgun blast rang out loudly, lifting the Sergeant clearly off of his feet. He yelled out in a painful shriek as he landed on his back, and his head slammed onto the hard concrete in a pool of blood.

As Nan prepared to retreat, a young white uniformed policeman ran around the corner with his gun drawn. "Freeze motherfucker!" He yelled.

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Nan thought about trying to turn the gun on the cop, but it would have been to his own detriment. The police officer had the drop on him. He had caught him by surprise. Nan threw the shotgun down in front of him, and raised his hands over his head.

“Get down on your fuckin’ knees motherfucker!”

Reluctantly, Nan followed the officer’s orders. He had no choice.

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*Before you judge me for what I became,
I only ask that you take the time,
to fully understand what I was forced to become...*

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