

PROTECT AND SERVE

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carol Johnson (71), black female, stands by the window. The lights are off and the curtains are drawn back slightly. She stares through the narrow gap at the world below. She looks at her watch. She waits. Content she moves away.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Officer Sarah Sullivan (29) pulls her car up by the curb. She climbs out of the police cruiser and radios in.

SARAH
Officer Sullivan responding to the
B&E at Jackson Heights.

She waits. Silence. She bangs the radio with the palm of her hand. It crackles into life.

HEADQUARTERS
Received. Proceed with caution
Officer Sullivan.

Sarah replaces the radio and looks up at the sea of darkened windows.

SARAH
I always do.

Her hand grips the pistol holstered at her hip. Reflexively she tugs on it, moving toward the battered looking apartment complex as she does.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carol paces around the small room. She opens drawers and cupboards without taking anything out, closing them almost immediately. She plays with the hem of her dressing gown. A pot of coffee slowly fills. She takes a mug off the drainer but a knock at the door startles her. She drops it.

EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sarah knocks on a door, 416. There is no response. She knocks again. Looking up and down the hallway she raises her hand a third time. The door opens. Carol is on the other side. She has left the security chain on. The two stare at each other.

SARAH
Evening Ma'am, I'm responding to reports of a break in at this address.

Carol stares at Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)
416 Jackson Heights. You wouldn't happen to know anything about that, would you?

Carol remain silent. Sarah grows impatient.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Someone called and said a crime was happening at this address. Do you know anything about that? Do you understand me Ma'am?

CAROL
I understand you just fine. Does it look or sound like anything is wrong here?

SARAH
Would you mind if I came in and checked?

CAROL
You don't need to come in, there's nothing going on here.

SARAH
Even so?

Carol hesitates. She continues to stare at Sarah and mutters under her breath. Her eyes glance left and right before she sighs. She closes the door. There is the sound of a chain unfastening. In the hallway Sarah exhales and removes her hand from its resting place on her pistol grip. The door opens and she enters.

INT. APARTMENT LOUNGE/DINER - NIGHT

The two women stand together.

SARAH
You made a wise choice, Ma'am. This is a pretty rough neighborhood. It's always best to be safe and take these things seriously.

CAROL

Oh I don't doubt that. Well, now that you're inside do you see anything going on?

Sarah scans what she can see of the apartment. It is small, cramped, claustrophobic. The walls are bare, there's not even so much as a potted plant to liven the place up. The place is clean but sterile.

SARAH

You hear alone, Ma'am?

CAROL

Every night.

SARAH

No husband?

CAROL

That's what alone means.

Sarah continues her scan. She moves toward one of the closed doors.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Just what is it you're looking for, Officer?

SARAH

We received a call. It said there was a break in at this address. Cries were heard, the sounds of a confrontation. We took it seriously. Like I said, the Heights are rough.

CAROL

Well unless I've been falling out with myself I don't know what you're talking about.

SARAH

Can I take a look around?

CAROL

Can I stop you?

Carol shrugs. Sarah picks her way past the aged furniture.