

## Don't Let Go

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# **Don't Let Go**

by [nph\\_svu\\_ptx](#)

## Summary

Rafael Barba's boyfriend, Mitch Grassi, is attacked and raped on the streets on New York. Rafael and the rest of the band try to manage while Rafael attempts to hide his relationship with Mitch from the SVU squad. Meanwhile, the squad is dealing with frequent attacks on openly gay celebrities.

# Introduction

Mitch stared at his drink, contemplating the events of that afternoon. He didn't have the courage to go home. A tear slipped down his cheek at the thought of what he had done.

"Hey, Mitchy! What's up?" Asked a girl, sitting next to him and smiling.

"Nothing, Raina. How's Lizzy?"

"Oh, she's great. She's growing so fast, I can't believe it!"

"Well, that's what kids do." Mitch nodded to the bartender to give him another drink. As it was given to him, a thought struck him. "Oh, I have to get home. My boyfriend is waiting and I'm already in enough trouble as it is. Can't be late." Raina nodded and Mitch stood from the bar, quickly paying his tab. He wasn't drunk, but he was a little tipsy. He made his way to the door and started walking home. He pulled out his cellphone.

"Hey, honey...yeah, I'm heading home now...about 10 minutes...I'll see you soon, babe...love you too. Bye!" Mitch hung up and slipped to phone in his pocket. For the first time that day, he truly smiled, thinking about how lucky he was to have such an amazing partner. Understanding and sweet and-he was hit in the head with a blunt object. All he heard before he blacked out was

"This is what you get for being a fag."

# Chapter One

A disgruntled and panicked Rafael Barba sprinted into the 1-6 precinct's Special Victims Unit squad room. Ignoring the stares from the detectives, he ran straight into Olivia Benson's office.

"Oh, my god, Barba. What happened?" Olivia looked in complete shock at the man in front of her. He was shaking so hard it looked like he would fall apart at any moment and tears were streaming down his face, while he made no attempt to hold them back or hide them. He was pale, and looking as though he might throw up any second. Olivia quickly ran around her desk and guided him to a chair. He sat and buried his face in his hands, sobbing. Olivia could see that she needed some backup. "Wait here for a second, Rafael. I'm going to go get another detective to talk to you." Normally, Rafael would have refused, but he was too distraught to do anything. Olivia left the room.

"Sarge, what's up with him?" Asked Carisi.

"I...don't know. Rollins, can you come with me to talk to him?" Amanda nodded and walked into the office, only to stop in shock. He looked so fragile and weak, Amanda didn't know what to do. He looked so unlike the tough prosecutor she knew. She took a step forwards and put a hand on his shoulder.

"Barba, can you tell me what happened?" She asked gently. Rafael looked up at her and she pulled a chair around so she could sit with him face to face. For the first time, Rafael spoke.

"He-he never came home."

"Who never came home, Rafael?" Asked Olivia.

"Mitch. He never came home. He said he was going to be home in ten minutes but he never came home." Olivia and Amanda looked at each other, both wondering who this 'Mitch' was. They decided not to ask and to just focus on Barba.

"Barba, how long ago did he say he'd be home in 10 minutes?"

"A-about an hour. You have to find him! Please, please find him!"

"We'll find him, Rafael. Don't worry," Olivia said. "Do you know where he was coming from?"

"Yes, a bar downtown. It's called...um...The Apothecary, or something like that."

"I know that bar. Rollins, head down there with the rest of the squad. Look in alleys, you know the drill." Rollins nodded and headed out to the squad room. Olivia looked back at Barba, who was still looking like he had seen the scariest ghost on the planet. She decided to try to calm him down. "Rafael, why don't you tell me about Mitch? You seem to really care about him." Barba seemed to brighten a little and immediately started talking.

"He has the most beautiful voice I've ever heard. He's a countertenor and has this RIDICULOUSLY huge range, I mean, 5 octaves and 1 note? That's insane! And he's so sweet and kind, quite possibly one of the most amazing people I've ever met. He's REALLY sassy and funny and everyone loves him..." As Rafael kept ranting about this Mitch person, Olivia began to have some suspicions about who he was, at least in regard to his relationship with their protecting attorney. She zoned out a bit until-"OH MY GOD! Oh god, oh no."

"What, Barba?"

"I have to tell them!!"

"Who?"

"Avi and Kirstie and Kevin and Scott. Oh my god, how am I going to tell Scott?"

"Who are these people, Rafael? Mitch's friends?"

"Yes, and more! And he and Scott have been best friends since they were 8! How am I going to explain this?!"

"Listen, Rafael. Sit here and have some coffee. I'm going to go check on the progress. What's Mitch's last name?"

"Grassi. G-R-A-S-S-I." Rafael nodded and Olivia left the room. She saw that the squad had left, as usual, Carisi.

"Hey, Carisi!"

"Yeah, Sarge?"

"Search the name 'Mitch Grassi.

G-R-A-S-S-I.

"Got it." Carisi typed the name into the search bar and his eyes grew wide. "Um...Sarge?"

"What?"

"Look at this." Olivia walked behind Carisi and stared at the screen.

"Oh no." On the screen was the biography of a member of a famous a Capella group. And there was no mistaking that it was Barba's Mitch. Under his picture, it said "Countertenor".

"Oh god. What are we going to do? This is a high-profile case, we can't let the press get wind of this," Olivia said, pacing the room.

"Well, that's going to be hard, isn't it?" Said Carisi, looking just as panicked as Olivia. Suddenly, Olivia's phone vibrated. She grabbed it and answered.

"We found him. He's in a really bad shape, we called a bus and they're dealing with him now," said Amaro.

"Great. Now, do NOT let any press get wind of this, okay?"

"Press? Why would they be interested in this guy?"

"I'll explain later. In the meantime, who's riding with him?"

"I am."

"Okay, we'll meet you at the hospital."

"We?"

"Yeah, me, Carisi and Barba."

"Who is this guy to Barba anyways?"

"I don't know yet, but I have some suspicions. Alright, we'll see you at the hospital."

"Got it." Amaro hung up and Olivia went into her office. She came across an unexpected sight. Barba was crying again and holding a little box in his hands.

"Hey, Rafael. They found him." Rafael's head snapped up and he looked at her with hopeful eyes.

"How is he?"

"Not good, I'm afraid. But we're going to go to the hospital, okay?"

"Alright." Rafael stood and slipped the little box into his pocket. Olivia opened her mouth to ask about it, but decided against it. Instead, she took his hand and brought him out to the squad car. Carisi went in a different car, so she could ask Barba questions.

"So, we found out who Mitch is," she said. Barba nodded.

"Yeah, a member of a famous a capella group. Like I said, he has a beautiful voice."

"I'm sure he does. Now, I do have one question. What's your relationship with Mitch?" Barba paled and started shaking again. But he spoke.

"You can't tell anyone. Okay?" Olivia nodded.

"I'm dating him. I was going to propose to him this weekend, on his birthday. And now...oh my god, what if he dies? I can't-can't-I don't think I can live without him." Olivia stared at Rafael in wonder. Not only was he apparently gay, but he was saying that he couldn't live without this person. She put her hand on his shoulder and squeezed it gently.

"He'll be okay, Rafael. Don't worry." The rest of the drive was silent, save the quiet sobs from Rafael. Olivia kept rubbing his back, hoping beyond hope that Mitch and Rafael would get through this.

When they arrived at the hospital, Rafael all but bolted from the car and into the door. Olivia went after him, understanding his need to get in. When she entered the doors, she



encountered the entire squad huddled in a corner, with Rafael pacing back and forth.

"What's the news with Mitch?" Asked Olivia as Rafael sat down attempting to hold himself together. Fin stood and pulled her to the side.

"He's really not good. Internal bleeding, he was raped brutally and-there's an inscription on his chest. The perp carved it into his skin." Olivia immediately felt sick, but dared to ask.

"What does it say?" Fin looked over at Barba, to make sure he wasn't listening. Though he didn't know the nature of Barba's relationship with Mitch, he knew that Barba cared very much about him.

"It says 'Faggots deserve to die'." Olivia paled immediately. Not only was the squad dealing with Barba's soon-to-be fiancé, who happened to be famous, but it was also a hate crime. Damn it. Then she realized something.

"Barba!"

"Yeah, Liv?" Barba looked tired and worn-out.

"You need to call the rest of the band, remember?"

**"Oh yeah. Right." Barba got out his phone and dialed the first number.**

## Chapter 2

Scott was sitting with his boyfriend, watching TV, when his phone went off.

"Hey, Rafael. What's up?...oh my god. No. No, no, no. You can't be serious...oh my god. No. Okay, I'm heading to there now." Scott hung up and jumped from the couch. Alex, his boyfriend, jumped up as well.

"Scott, what did Rafael say? What's wrong?"

"Mitch is in the hospital. He was raped."

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Kirstie answered her phone distractedly, for she was trying to get her dog, Olaf, to do a trick.

"Hey, Rafi...WHAT?! Oh dear god, no! Okay, I'll be right there."

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Kevin and Avi were together when they got the call, practicing some beats and bass lines for the new album. Kevin got the call.

"Hey, Raf...What do you mean? Rafael, calm down...okay, we'll be right there." He hung up and looked at Avi. "We have to go."

\*\*\*\*\*

While Rafael was waiting for Pentatonix to get to the hospital, Olivia was briefing the team.

"The vic is Mitch Grassi, member of a world-famous a Capella group called Pentatonix. He is openly gay. The rest of the group is coming now, that's who Barba called." Olivia looked around the group and noticed that Amaro had a dawning look of comprehension on his face. "What, Amaro?"

"Oh, my daughter is just a HUGE fan of theirs especially the vic. They are very famous, now I get why you don't want this leaked to the press." Olivia nodded.

"Yes, that is very important. We may not be able to do it, but at least try to not notify the press of this." The squad nodded, and the door was flung open. A tall man with blonde hair and piercing blue eye ran in and headed immediately to Barba.

"Raf, where is he? Where is he? Oh my god. No, this can't be happening. Where is he?!"

The man sat, his eyes wide with fear and tears staining his cheeks. Olivia walked over to the two men.

"Hello, are you Scott?" She asked. The man nodded. "Your friend is in surgery right now. When he's out you'll see him." Scott looked up at her.

"Who are you?" He asked.

"I am Sergeant Olivia Benson of SVU. I work with Barba." Scott looked at Barba for confirmation, who nodded. He looked back.

"And who are they?" He asked, pointing to the rest of the squad.

"Detectives Amanda Rollins, Fin Tutuola, Nick Amaro and Dominick Carisi. He'll ask you to call him Sonny." Scott nodded, then looked at the door as two men came in, followed by a woman with short blonde hair. He jumped up and rushed over to them, explaining the situation. He dragged them over to Olivia and introduced them.

"This is Avi, Kevin and Kirstie." Olivia shook their hands and exchanged pleasantries. Suddenly, a nurse came out.

"The people here for Mitch Grassi?" She asked. Rafael darted over to her, followed by the rest of the band. "He's out of surgery, but we're still not sure if he'll survive. One person at a time can see him." Scott immediately pointed to Rafael.

"Raf, you go." The rest of the group nodded and Rafael went with the nurse to go see the love of his life. After he left, the members of Pentatonix sat down. Kirstie was silently crying, not able to comprehend what had happened. Kevin's arm was around her, and he was comforting her quietly. Avi stared straight ahead, in shock, while Scott shook with sobs. Olivia stared at the group, who was obviously very affected by the attack on their bandmate. Olivia suddenly had the urge to find out more about this band. Before she could ask, though, the group huddled to get her and nodded. They split apart and waited for a chance to go into the room.

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Rafael stared at the broken body in the hospital bed. His Mitch. Mitchy. He had tears streaming down his cheeks as he stared at the love of his life.

"Oh, Mitchy. I don't know what to say." He walked to the bed and put his hand on Mitch's and squeezed. "You have to get better, Mitch. Please. You have to get better." Rafael's eyes were heavy and he crawled into the bed, careful not to disturb any wires. He wrapped himself around his boyfriend, kissed his forehead and fell quickly asleep.

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"What's taking Barba so long in there? It's not like the guy is that important," Carisi said, bothered. Before Olivia could say anything, he stood and announced that he would go check on them. Olivia jumped up and stopped him, making up an excuse to check on them herself. She suspected that she would find something that the two didn't exactly want advertised to the world, and she was right. She walked into the room and looked at the two sleeping men. Barba was in a position curled around Mitch, his head on Mitch's shoulder. She never thought she would see the hard-hearted ADA in such a loving position, tears staining his cheeks as he slept. But she was glad that she had gone and not Carisi.

She headed back to the waiting room, while quickly thinking about what she could say to her detectives about what was happening in the room.

“Barba is sleeping in a chair. I don’t want to wake him, he’s had a long day. But the rest of the band can go see Mitch.” Kevin nodded and gestured for the rest of the group to come with him. They walked down the hall and Olivia sat in an empty seat. She put her head in her hands and groaned. She had no idea what she would do about this.

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Kirstie stared down at Mitch and Rafael, entwined together. She smiled softly to know that Mitch had someone who loved him so much. She had been unsure about Rafael at first, as he was about 8 years older than Mitch, and a prosecution attorney for the sex crimes bureau of the NYPD.

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*Mitch had met him about a week after the band had moved to New York. He, Scott and Kirstie had been exploring the city, when they had gotten hopelessly lost, regretting not taking Kevin’s advice to take a map. They had gone into a coffee shop to get some directions when Mitch had run into a man who immediately cussed at him, calling him a “little fag” and pushed him, walking away quickly. Mitch, being in a rather emotionally vulnerable state, as his mother had died just a month before, started crying softly, as Kirstie and Scott advanced on the man. Suddenly, Mitch was being led to a table by a sharply-dressed man in a very colorful tie. When Mitch had sat down, so had Rafael Barba, and started comforting the crying man.*

*“I know what it’s like,” he said.*

*“What?” asked Mitch, trying to stop crying.*

*“The disrespect. The disregard for your humanity. I know what it’s like.”*

*“Are you...?” Mitch trailed off, but Rafael knew what he had meant.*

*“Yes. I’m gay.” Mitch smiled a watery smile as Scott and Kirstie sat down. “Whats your name?”*

*“My name is Mitch Grassi. This is Scott Hoying and Kirstie Maldonado. What’s your name?”*

*“Rafael Barba. You guys look familiar. Do I know you from somewhere?” Mitch looked at his two bandmates and they nodded. He looked back at Rafael.*

*“We’re part of the a Capella band, Pentatonix.”*

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Kirstie snapped out of her reverie about Rafael and looked at her best friend and his boyfriend. She smiled and walked around the bed to hold Mitch’s hand.

“Mitchy, please get better. We love you. All of us. Me, Scott, Avi, Kevin, Alex, Rafi. We all love you so much and we don’t know what we would do without you. So please, please get better. We all need you.” She squeezed Mitch’s hand and kissed him on the forehead, making sure to not disturb either of the sleeping men. She looked back at the rest of the band and motioned for them to leave. They all walked out of the hospital room, subdued, but hopeful.

## Chapter 3

The next day, the SVU detectives were in the precinct, waiting for news about Mitch's condition and trying to figure out who was responsible. They were standing in front of the bulletin board, but were at a standstill, as they had no clues at all. The lab hadn't gotten back to them with the DNA, even though they had insisted that they put a rush on it. They were standing around, eating the pastries that Carisi had brought in and forced them to eat, when the phone rang. Amaro answered.

"Amaro...WHAT?!...Oh, god. That's not good...Okay, we'll be right there." He hung up, in shock.

"What?" Asked Olivia, expecting news about Mitch.

"Another gay-celebrity rape. But this time, much more high-scale."

"Who was it, Amaro? It seems bad."

"It is. The victim is Neil Patrick Harris." The entire precinct stood in shock for a moment.

"Where...where is it? And what condition is he in?"

"He's stable, but there is intense internal bleeding, apparently. And he's around the corner from his brownstone in Harlem."

"Oh, god. This is bad. Try to keep the press out of this. What family does he have that needs to be notified?"

"He has a husband, David Burtka, two children and family that lives in New Mexico," answered Amaro, his face white. Olivia motioned for him to sit down and began talking.

“Okay, Fin, Carisi, go to the hospital. I’ll notify the family. Go!” Fin and Carisi walked quickly out of the door. Olivia picked up the phone, looked up the number, took a deep breath and dialed.

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“Harper, stop messing with your brother! Gideon, no punching! Okay, you two. Sit down over there.” David pointed to the couch and his children ran to it and sat down. “Neil, where are you?” David whispered. He sat next to his children and they cuddled up to him. He was just getting comfortable when the phone rang. He got up to get it, leaving his children lying asleep on the couch.

“Hello?...Wait, who is this?...Okay, what?...No. No, no, no. This can’t be-NO! Please tell me this is a joke. Please, this can’t be happening!...Oh my god. Oh my god. NO! I have two children, what am I going to tell them? I can’t tell them what actually happened. What’s his condition?...Oh...Oh my god. Oh, no. Okay, I’ll be at the hospital soon.” David hung up, his face white as snow, shaking. He set down the phone slowly, stumbling backwards and shaking his head. He picked up the phone again to call a babysitter.

“Hi, Nora...Yeah, can you come in to look after the kids? I need to go to the hospital. Neil got attacked...Please don’t tell the kids...Yeah, I know it’s horrible. Can you be here in 5 minutes?...Great. Thanks, Nora. Bye.” When Nora got to the house, David thanked her again and called a cab to the hospital.

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Rafael woke up in the hospital bed, curled around his terribly injured boyfriend and kissed Mitch’s head.

"I love you, Mitchie." He climbed out of the bed and settled himself into the chair beside it, hoping none of his colleagues, except Olivia, had seen him in bed with Mitch. He took his boyfriend's hand. "Mitch, please, please, please get better. I can't live without you. I can't do this. I love you so much. I don't care that that man kissed you. You didn't want it and it isn't your fault. I love you." He kissed Mitch's hand and sat, holding it, waiting for a sign of life from the amazing countertenor.



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David ran into the hospital, his mind racing. His husband, the love of his life, the father of one of his children, had been brutally raped. He had internal bleeding, but was probably going to live. He entered the waiting room to ask about Neil.

"Hey, I'm here about Neil Patrick Harris. I'm his husband," he said quietly, not wanting to bring attention to himself. The receptionist nodded.

"You can see him in about 20 minutes. He's conscious, which is good. He's finishing up the rape exam." David felt tears well in his eyes. To hear that Neil was having a rape exam was making the situation that much more real. He thanked the receptionist and turned away to look at the rest of the room. The only other people there was a group of 5. A woman with short blonde hair, a tall blonde man, who was sitting with another man, who looked as though he was consoling him. There was an African-American man who was sitting with a short man with brown hair. They all looked as though they had stayed up all night in this waiting room. He decided to make conversation.

"Hello." The group looked up, and the woman spoke.

"Hey. What's your name?" David briefly considered lying, but ultimately decided it wasn't worth it.

"David Burtka." He inspected the faces to see which ones registered who he was. Only the two tall blonde men seemed to notice, leaning in slightly, their eyes widening. "Yours?"

"I'm Kirstie Maldonado," said the girl.

"Scott Hoying, and this is my boyfriend, Alex Kirk," said the first tall blonde.

"I'm Kevin Olusola," said the African-American man.

"Avi Kaplan," said the short brunette, in a surprisingly deep voice. "What happened?"

David took a deep breath and prepared himself. "My husband was brutally raped." Everyone's faces went pale.

"So was our bandmate, Mitch. He's gay as well. His boyfriend, Rafael, is in his room with him, but he hasn't woken up yet," said Kirstie. David felt sick. At least Neil was awake. And well. He looked at Scott and Alex. Scott was shaking, tears streaming down his pale face, as Alex held him and whispered in his ear, trying to comfort him. Kirstie saw what David was looking at and pulled him aside.

"Scott and Mitch have been best friends since they were 8. Fans-sorry, people, even ship them together. This is really hard on Scott, since Mitch might not recover." David nodded, then remembered something else that Kirstie had said.

"What about his boyfriend?"

"What about him?"

"How is he holding up?"

"Badly. See, he's an ADA for the sex crimes unit of the NYPD, and he doesn't want his colleagues to know about his relationship with Mitch, and Mitch doesn't want fans to know about him and Rafael yet. But they love each other. They really do." David nodded, and then realized something.

"Why do you keep saying 'fans'?"

"Oh, sorry. We are in an a Capella group called Pentatonix."

"Oh my god, you guys are Pentatonix? My family loves you!"

"Oh, thank you."

"And Mitch got raped? I am so sorry."

"Thank you. What's your husband's name?" Before David could answer, Scott blurted it out.

"Neil." Everyone looked at Scott.

"How did you know that?" Asked Kevin.

"Because this is David Burtka, who is married to Neil Patrick Harris."

"Oh my god. You guys are fans of our music?!" Asked Kirstie, awestruck.

"Yes. Harper especially loves you guys. We were introduced to your music by our nanny, Nora."

"Well, we are honored. But oh my god. Neil got attacked?"

"Yes, but he's awake. I don't know anything else about his condition."

"I'm so sorry-" Kirstie started to say, but was interrupted by a nurse coming out of the hallway.

"David Burtka?" David stood up, as Kirstie patted his arm supportively. He walked to the nurse, who guided him to a room that's window was covered with a curtain. He walked in.



## Chapter 4

Rafael had fallen asleep in his chair when he was woken by a sound.

"Rafi?" He sat up, and looked to the side, to see Mitch's eyes open, looking at him.

"Mitchy, oh my god!" He pressed a button to call a nurse. "Mitch, how are you feeling?"

"Well, pretty damn crappy, considering what-" And Mitch started crying. Sobbing, unable to stop. Rafael grabbed his hand and held it close.

"Listen, sunshine. My only, my love. I am here. I love you and you are safe now. No one will ever hurt you again. I promise. I will protect you. I will never leave." Mitch sat up and buried his head in Rafael's shoulder. Rafael wrapped his arm around his boyfriend and let him cry, whispering consolations in his ear. After about 30 minutes, Mitch calmed down enough to lie back down.

"Raf? Will you get the rest of the group?"

"Of course, my love. I'll be right back, okay?" Mitch nodded and Rafael stood. He squeezed Mitch's hand and exited the room.

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David entered the room of his brutalized husband, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"David?" Neil asked from the bed.

"I'm here, Neil. I'm here." David walked to the side of the bed and sat down in a chair, looking at his husband. He grasped his hand. "I'm so sorry." Neil looked up at him with fear-

filled eyes, tears welling up, threatening to spill over.

"He said I deserved it. For being a-a-no. I can't say it!" Neil burst out, starting to cry.

"Oh, honey. Oh, Neil. Neil, you didn't deserve it. No one deserves that. Honey, I'm here. I love you, I'll never let you go. Trust me. I married you, didn't I? I love you so much, more than words can express, and I'll help you through this. Just cry. It'll be okay. Just let yourself cry." David held his husband close, letting him sob into his shoulder.

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Rafael ran into the waiting room to see his boyfriend's bandmates sitting in chairs, Scott sobbing into Alex's shoulder, Kirstie sitting and looking at her phone, obviously trying not to cry, and Avi and Kevin staring blankly ahead.

"Guys, Mitch woke up. He wants to see you," Rafael said, startling everyone. Scott jumped out of his seat, closely followed by the rest of the group. Rafael led them to the room. He stopped outside and spoke to them.

"You all know to be gentle with him, right? He's very emotionally fragile right now." The group nodded. Rafael opened the door.

"Mitchy?" Scott asked cautiously, stepping over the threshold into the room. Mitch looked up and Scott walked quickly towards him, mentally asking him if it was okay to hug him. Mitch gave a look of understanding and Scott enveloped Mitch in his long arms, attempting to protect Mitch from the horrors of the world, and reverse what had happened. Mitch reciprocated the hug.

"Scott. I missed you."

"I missed you, too, Mitch." Rafael watched, but there was no jealousy. Rafael knew that Mitch and Scott's relationship was nothing but platonic, even with them flirting in every Sup3rfruit episode. He walked to the other side of the bed and Mitch reached for his hand as Scott let go. Rafael held Mitch's hand tightly as the rest of Pentatonix checked in on Mitch.

As that was happening, Rafael remembered that he had to call Olivia and let her know that Mitch was awake. He was about to get out his phone when the band started singing.

"A light in the room, it was you who was standing there..." As they sang Run to You, Mitch looked up at them, tears welling in his eyes, looking up at the people who cared about him so much. As the band finished the song, they each gave Mitch one last hug and exited.

"Mitchy, I need to get Olivia to send a detective over to interview you, okay?"

"Okay. Will you stay with me?"

"Yes, of course! I'm not allowed to prosecute this case, so I will stay with you every step of the way. Get a little sleep, okay? You'll need strength." Mitch nodded and lay back on the pillow. Rafael kissed his forehead and left the room to make his call.

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Olivia's phone rang just as she was getting ready to take Noah to the doctor's office.

"Benson...Oh, hello, Barba. How is Mitch?...Oh, that's great!...Okay, I'll send in Amaro and Rollins. Are you staying with him?...Well, then you know that you'll have to disclose your relationship...No, they don't suspect it...Because you're staying in the room with him and not prosecuting the case! They'll wonder why, and there is no lie that will work!...Yes, you have to...Just-bye, Barba. Good luck." She sighed, worried about Mitch and Barba. "Hey, Noah! Guess what!" She said to her son. "Uncle Rafi is in a big pickle and I don't know how to help him!" She sighed again before calling Rollins and Amaro to interview Mitch.

## Chapter 5

Rafael brought the phone slowly from his ear and sighed. He knew there was no way to hide this from his colleagues any longer, so he mentally prepared himself and went into the room.

"Mitchy, wake up! The detectives will be here soon." Mitch opened his eyes and sat up in the bed.

"I couldn't fall asleep. I'm sorry."

"Don't apologize, Mitch. You're fine. But I'll have to tell the detectives about us." Mitch nodded, knowing that Rafael was really just saying that to remind himself, as Mitch had no problem with telling them. Rafael sat in the chair next to him and wrapped his arm protectively around Mitch, laying a kiss on his temple and waiting for the detectives to walk in.

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"Barba must have been tired last night. I feel bad for him," said Detective Amanda Rollins, walking alongside Nick. Nick nodded. Neither of them had any sort of suspicion of the true nature of Barba and Mitch's relationship. They walked into the hospital, and immediately ran into a crowd of paparazzi.

"What are they doing here? Pentatonix is big, but not this big," said Nick.

"They must have heard about Neil Patrick Harris," answered Amanda. The entire group turned to look at her and immediately began peppering her with questions.

"Is it true? Was Neil Patrick Harris raped?"

"Tell us everything!"



"Who are you? Do you know inside details?"

Nick grabbed Amanda's arm and pulled her through the crowd. Stopping at the other end, he turned around and spoke to the group.

"We are from Manhattan Special Victims Unit and we are investigating this case. Please leave the celebrities that have been attacked alone." Before the press could ask who else had been attacked, the detective turned and entered the private part of the hospital. They spoke to the receptionist to find out where Mitch was and started towards his room.

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There was a knock on the door of Mitch's hospital room and Rafael got up to open it.

"Hey, you guys. Come in." Amanda and Nick stepped in, looking curiously at Rafael, wondering why he was there. Amanda walked to one side of the bed and Nick stood at the end. Rafael walked back to his previous spot.

"Mitch, we need to talk to Barba. We'll be right back," said Amanda. Mitch shook his head frantically.

"Don't worry, Mitch. We'll be right back," said Nick. Mitch looked and felt sick, not wanting to be left alone. Rafael stepped forward.

"I'm not leaving. Whatever you guys need, we will discuss it in this room." Amanda and Nick looked surprised, but complied.

"Why are you here, Barba?" Asked Nick, getting right to the point. Barba took a deep breath.

"Do you expect me to leave my boyfriend alone while he's being interviewed? He's gone through enough trauma already and I will be here with him until the end." Nick and Amanda

were in complete shock.

"Wait, you two are dating? For how long?" Asked Amanda, recovering first.

"About, what, 6 years? Is that right, Rafi?" Said Mitch.

"Yeah. Our 7 year anniversary is next month, love." Rafael sat down and kissed Mitch on the head. "You ready, Mitch?"

"Yeah. But they don't seem like they are," said Mitch, looking up at the two detectives, who were looking at each other with shock written all over their faces. Mitch and Rafael laughed. Rafael's heart warmed when he heard the beautiful sound of his boyfriend's laugh. The sound of Rafael Barba laughing made the detectives go into shock even more.

"Uh...um...Mitch. Uh...oh my god, Barba is dating a guy and has been for almost 7 years. Uh...okay. This is a shock. Um...Mitch. You...are you ready?" Asked Amaro. Mitch nodded, the light disappearing as quickly as it came from his eyes. Rafael sat down in a chair and held his hand, squeezing it slightly.

"Don't worry, queen. Don't worry. It'll all be fine. You'll be okay. I'm here. I promise," Rafael whispered in his ear, as Mitch looked at him with wide eyes, fear-filled eyes that broke Rafael's heart. He rubbed his thumb against the side of Mitch's hand and nodded at the detectives to begin. Rollins leaned forwards and began.

After the interview, Mitch's face was covered in tears, and Rafael was holding them back, trying to be strong for his boyfriend. But he was shocked. He had never expected that someone he cared about would be the subject of one of the cases he was so used to prosecuting. Mitch was shaking, the details of the case flooding his mind.

I was walking home. I had just talked to Rafi and when I hung up he came up behind me and attacked me. He said...he said "that's what you get for being a f-fag." And then he hit me with something and knocked me out. When I woke up, he had dragged me into an alley and had pulled my pants and underwear down and had taken my shirt off and was r-raping me with a metal thing. It was sort of sharp and it hurt so bad. And then he turned me around and

said "I want you to watch and see how sinful it is to be a faggot." And he started touching...it and-and-I can't say it!

Mitch, it's okay. Nothing bad will happen. Said Amanda.

But he'll be mad at me!

Who, Mitch? Asked Rafael.

You!

I won't be mad. None of this was your fault. I promise.

Okay. I guess. So, he touched me down there, and-and I didn't want it! I promise I didn't want it, but-but it happened! And I wish so much that it hadn't happened, but it did and I'm so sorry, Rafael, I'm sorry!

Mitch, you experienced orgasm? Said Nick.

Yes! And I didn't want it, and I tried to make it not happen, but it did!

Mitch, you don't need to be sorry! It was a purely physical response to a stimulation. I promise, I'm not angry. You didn't want it, you didn't do anything wrong. I promise I'm not angry.

Are you sure?

Yes, queen. Yes, my love. I promise I am not angry. Now, tell the detectives what else happened. Alright?

Okay. There wasn't much else. After...it happened, he turned me over again and pulled down his own pants and forced himself inside me until he came inside of me. Then, he pulled out a knife and he-he started cutting my chest. I-I couldn't see what he was writing. Do you guys know?

Yes. But I don't think you want to know. Said Nick.

It's on my body. I'll find out at some point.

Alright, if you're sure. The inscription says "Faggots deserve to die". I'm sorry. Said Amanda.

It-oh my god. No. No, no, no. That's on my BODY?! No! It can't-no, no, no, NO!

Mitch began to sob, as Rafael quickly wrapped his arms around him, whispering in his ear, trying to calm him down.

Shh, honey. Shh, shh. You're okay. I'm here. I know this sucks, but you'll get better, I promise. We can get the scars removed, if you want. But let's not think about that right now. You're fine, he's not here, I am. I am here, my love. And I'm never leaving your side, I swear. Okay? Okay. Now, is there anything else?

Well, after he c-cut me, h-he brought my clothes into a pile and-and he rubbed himself until he came again, onto me. Then he wiped himself off with my clothes and then he pulled his pants up and he kicked me in the groin. He was about to keep raping me with the metal thing, but he heard sirens and hit me in the head with it instead and knocked me out.

Rafael had his arms wrapped around Mitch, who was again sobbing into his shoulder.

"Rafi, it hurt so bad."

"I know, Mitchy. I know. I'm so sorry. I'll protect you. No one will ever hurt you again."

"Promise?"

"Yes, I promise, my love. I promise. Go to sleep, Mitchy. I need to go talk to the detectives. May as well come out to the rest of them. I'll be back, okay?" Mitch nodded and he quickly fell asleep. Rafael kissed him on the head and exited the room. He walked out and saw that the rest of Pentatonix had gone home after seeing Mitch. He was relieved. He didn't want them to hurt themselves. He was about to walk out of the doors when he ran straight into a man with brown hair that he immediately recognized.

"David? What are you doing here?"

"Oh my god, Rafi?"

"Yeah. It's been awhile, hasn't it."

"It has! How are you?"

"Got promoted to ADA for the Special Victims Unit. And I know what's been going on for you. Congratulations to you and Neil!"

"Thank you. Unfortunately, though, Neil is why I'm here. He was raped for being gay. The bastard even carved 'Faggots deserve to die' on his chest. But I'm sure you would've found that out. You'll be prosecuting that, won't you?" Rafael immediately recognized the pattern.

"No, actually. I can't."

"Why?"

“That happened to my boyfriend as well. That exact thing.” David stared at Rafael in shock. He had known that he was gay, but not that he was dating. And then he remembered something.

“Wait, you’re the ADA that Mitch is dating?”

“How do you know who my boyfriend is?”

“I ran into the rest on Pentatonix in the waiting room. I didn’t know that it was you that Mitch was dating! But I love their music. Especially his.”

“I’m sure he would freak out if he knew that. Once Neil and Mitch are out of the hospital and once all of this is over, we should have you over! Mitch would LOVE to meet you guys. He saw Neil in Hedwig 5 times. And he saw It Shoulda Been You, before you left the cast, about 7 times. He loves you guys.”

“Well, trust me. We love PTX. But not as much as our nanny, Nora. She’s completely obsessed. I’ll introduce you and PTX to her sometime. How long have you and Mitch been dating?”

“Almost 7 years. I was going to propose this coming weekend, on his birthday.”

“Well, when you do get to propose, best of luck to you.”

“Thanks. I need to get to the precinct. I’ll see you later!”

“Alright.” David reentered his husband's room and Rafael walked out of the hospital. He got to the parking lot and realized that he had no way to get to the precinct. He had come to the hospital in Olivia's police car.

"Shit." Rafael pulled out his phone. "Hey, Liv."



## Chapter 6

"Hey, Barba," Olivia answered, leaving the doctor's office with Noah. "Oh, crap! That's right. Noah and I will be right there. Do you want to go to the precinct?...Okay, we'll be right there. See you soon." Olivia hung up and finished strapping Noah into his car seat. She got into the driver's seat and drove to the hospital.

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Rafael thanked Olivia and sat on a bench outside the hospital. He began to prepare himself to tell the rest of the detectives about him and Mitch. He couldn't believe that this had happened to the love of his life. He also was surprised that he had run into David. They had met at a party 5 years earlier, and immediately became friends. He had met Neil at the same time, and heard about them having kids before the press knew. They had stayed friends, but hadn't actually seen them in a while. He looked up when a car horn honked and he saw Olivia's car. He got up and got into the front seat.

"Hey, Liv. Hi, Noah."

"Hey, Barba. How'd the interview go?"

"Rollins and Amaro's reactions to me and Mitch dating were extremely funny. Also, they heard me laugh. Their reaction to that was also very hilarious. But, oh my god. Mitch was hurt so badly."

"I know. But you guys will get through this, okay?"

"Alright. Hey, Noah, how was your doctor's appointment?" The little boy giggled and Rafael found himself grinning at the little boy. He had grown to really care about his best friend's son. He felt lucky that he had someone to stand by him during this, while he stood by Mitch. He looked at Olivia and sighed, trying not to lose it in front of Noah. Instead, he talked to Olivia.

"So, I ran into a friend in there. His husband, Neil, got attacked for being gay."



“Wait, Neil Patrick Harris? You’re friends with his husband?”

“Yeah. I met him about 4 years ago, at a party. We’ve been friends ever since.”

“Oh, wow. And, yeah. He’s not as bad off as Mitch, though. Who do you have left to tell?”

“Uh, let’s see. Carisi, Munch, Fin, and I think that’s it.”

“Fin and Munch will probably be okay with it. I don’t know about Carisi, though.”

“Dios mio. Well, okay. We’re here. May as well get it over with.” Rafael and Olivia climbed out of the car. Olivia, whose hands were full of paperwork, motioned to Rafael to get Noah, so he got Noah from the backseat and settled him comfortably on his hip. He looked at Noah’s face and smiled. It felt so natural to be holding his little body. He knew that Mitch had always wanted kids, and hadn’t known if he did. Now, holding Noah’s little body, he knew that he did. Once Mitch got better, he would propose. He loved Mitch with all of his heart and he knew that he wanted to be with him forever.

Olivia looked at Rafael, who was smiling sadly, and sighed. She wanted Rafael to be happy. She had always seen that there was actually a person underneath the snark and sass, and she was seeing it more and more now that she knew about Mitch. She didn’t know Mitch, but thanked him inwardly anyways. Anyone that makes Rafael Barba care this much must be amazing.

“Back to Earth, Barba. You don’t want them to know right away, do you?” Rafael jumped a bit and nodded. He worried his lip as they walked into the precinct. How would he tell them? He determined that he would just go out and tell them. It didn’t quite go to plan.

“Hey, guys. Barba has to tell you something,” said Olivia, motioning to Fin, Munch and Carisi. They walked over and Rafael took a deep breath.

“No puedo mantener este secreto mucho más tiempo, como él está en el hospital y todo lo guardo secreto es municiones para la defensa. Tengo que contarles a ustedes esto. Soy gay y en una relación con Mitch . Hemos estado saliendo desde hace siete años y yo voy a proponer a él pronto,” said Rafael, quickly. Fin and Carisi looked at him blankly. Munch, however, knowing some Spanish, raised his eyebrows at the Cuban.

“Really, Barba? You’re not screwing with us?”

“No, no estoy jodiendo con usted. Te lo prometo, amigo mío.”

“Why are you speaking in Spanish, Barba? You must clarify your big news to the rest to these children.”

“No lo sé. Simplemente no puedo parar. Estoy nervioso, supongo.”

“Ah, yes. Well, that’s understandable, but you have to tell them!”

“No puedo!”

“Yes, you can.”

“No puedo encontrar la manera de volver a empezar hablando Inglés. Estoy muy asustada.”

“You can do it. Now, snap out of it. Go!” Rafael took a deep breath and Munch patted him on the back supportively.

“I have to tell you guys something, because I can’t keep it secret anymore. If I do, the defense will just use it as ammunition. Oh, dios mio. Well, okay. I’m gay. And I’ve been dating Mitch for almost seven years and I’m planning to propose to him.” Munch smiled. Fin looked shocked for a moment and then grinned at Rafael.

“Hey, Barba, that was brave. I’m glad you told us.” Fin smiled. Barba was about to cry. Tears filled his eyes, struggling to get out. He was glad that his coworkers were accepting but he didn’t know what to do about Mitch. He wanted to make Mitch smile and laugh and be the sassy queen that he was. But now, Mitch wasn’t ever going to be the same. He might never get that light back into his eyes, the glimmer that Rafael had fallen in love with. He looked at Carisi, who had a sour look on his face.

"Fag," he said, then stormed away. Rafael stumbled back, as though Carisi had struck him. He saw now that he had judged his colleague's acceptance too quickly. He felt the tears already welling in his eyes start to slip out, so he turned away from the squad room. He walked briskly towards the nearest bathroom and, when he got there, sunk to the ground. He buried his face in his hands, not even attempting to stop the tears from streaming down his cheeks. He couldn't believe that Carisi felt that way. Well, he could. But it still came as a blow to him. He sobbed.

## Chapter 7

Munch and Fin stared after the two men, one walking down the hall, to a bathroom, the other walking to the interrogation rooms.

"I'll get Carisi. You get Barba," said Fin. He headed off to where Carisi had gone, while Munch walked as quickly as he could to the bathrooms. He opened the door of the bathroom to see a sobbing Rafael Barba. He stared down at the crying man, pity filling his heart.

"Barba?" The man looked up, his eyes red.

"What, Munch? I'm fine," Rafael said, his voice shaking.

"You're obviously not fine. That was awful, what Carisi did back there. I'm sorry." And with that, Rafael stopped trying to hide his tears from Munch. He again buried his head in his hands. Munch stood there for a second.

"Barba, I'm going to take you to the break room and I'll send in Olivia, okay?" Rafael nodded. He let Munch lead him to the break room, where he sat down on one of the beds and waited for Olivia.

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Fin was steaming, unable to believe that Carisi had been that insensitive. He strode into the interrogation room. Carisi turned to face him.

"It's his fault. He chose it," said Carisi. Fin shook his head.

"No, Carisi! It's not a choice! For god's sake, I thought you'd be more accepting! Just because you think it's a fucking sin, that doesn't mean that you have to be insensitive and hurt someone who is obviously already hurting! Come on, Carisi! The love of his life is in the hospital, recovering from a brutal rape! He's planning on proposing to this guy! And you go

on and insult him?! Really? What were you thinking?!" Fin ranted, getting angrier by the moment.

"I was thinking that being gay is disgusting and wrong! I can deal with it in victims, because they're traumatized! But Barba?!"

"Barba is traumatized, Carisi! Did you not hear anything I just said?! His boyfriend, whom he obviously loves more than anything, is in the hospital. He just woke up and Barba had to hear everything that had happened to Mitch. He is probably feeling guilty, because he feels like he should have protected him. Barba is definitely traumatized." Carisi stared at him, shaking his head.

"I can't believe you're defending that faggot," he said, and stormed off. Fin looked after him as he left. He shook his head and sat down.

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Olivia walked quickly to the break room, having heard what happened from Munch. Carisi was going to have to wait, however, as she had seen him storm out of the building. She needed to deal with Rafael.

"Hey, Barba?" She said, slowly opening the door. She walked in to see Barba looking at her with fear-filled eyes. She looked closely at him and saw that he was hyperventilating and that his hand was shaking violently. She recognized the signs at once. He was having a panic attack. She walked to him quickly and sat down beside him, pulling him in gently, allowing him to lean against her. His whole body was shaking as if he were alone in the Arctic, wearing a t-shirt and shorts. She rubbed his back gently.

"Shh, shh. It's alright, Rafael. You're alright." He shifted closer to her and she kept rubbing his back, whispering consolations in his ear, attempting to calm him down. She sensed that all of his emotions were getting to him at once and he couldn't handle it. This was the first time he had really let himself be anything but strong since the night it had happened. Then, there was a knock on the door, and Rafael squeaked and curled up even more.

"I'll be right back, Rafael. Okay?" He nodded and she went out the door, closing it behind her to protect Rafael. It was Amanda.

“Sarge, what happened? Amaro and I just got back and Munch and Fin are talking in a corner and they seem upset. And I don’t know where Carisi is. And where’s Barba?”

“Okay, get Amaro and I’ll explain. But not in the breakroom. Okay?” Amanda nodded and ran off to get Nick. She came back with him in tow, and Olivia started explaining.

“Barba told Fin, Munch and Carisi about him being gay and dating Mitch. Well, he technically told Munch first, because for some reason he said it in Spanish. I think he was panicking. Anyways, Munch and Fin reacted well, of course. But Carisi called him the f-word and stormed off. Barba went to the bathrooms. Fin confronted Carisi and Munch got Barba to the break room, where he is currently having a severe panic attack.” When she finished speaking, Rollins looked shocked and Amaro looked absolutely livid.

“Carisi did what, exactly?” He said, in a dangerously quiet voice. Rollins looked just as angry now.

“Is Barba okay?” She asked, quietly.

“This is the first time he’s let himself really be upset during this whole ordeal. I’m guessing the emotions were too much. Plus, Carisi couldn’t have helped. He’s in there, shaking like a leaf in the wind and hyperventilating. And his eyes. They’re haunting. There’s something going on here that I don’t know about. He looks petrified.” Amaro and Rollins looked at each other.

“We’re going to go interview Neil Patrick Harris,” said Rollins. Olivia nodded. Amaro and Rollins walked briskly away. Olivia reentered the break room. She walked back to the bed and let Rafael regain his position curled up next to her. She remembered the first time she had dealt with one of his panic attacks.

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"Barba, we really need this warrant. Come on, you know this guy is guilty!"

"Yes, I do. And, yes, this disgusts me. It's awful. But you haven't gotten me enough proof." Rafael was acting, weird, talking quietly, with no real conviction. "Go get me something against him and I'll give you the warrant." He looked like he was struggling to remain calm. Olivia was worried. She approached his desk.

"Barba, are you okay?" He nodded, quickly. She didn't believe him for a second. "What's happening?" His breath got quicker and he shook his head. His eyes were wide and he was shaking a bit. "Are you sick?" He shook his head and clenched the edge of his desk. He dug his fingers into his arm. She walked quickly around his desk. "No, no, no, Barba. Don't do that." She got his hand in hers and everything clicked. He was having a panic attack. She pulled him up gently and led him to the couch in his office. She sat down with him and wrapped her arms around him. She didn't care that if someone walked in, it would be an awkward situation. She needed to help Barba. She rubbed his back as he shook against her, hyperventilating. "Breathe. In, out. In, out." She rubbed his back as she felt him calming down. "Barba, do you know what triggered this?" She asked, still holding him close to her.

"This-this case. It reminds me of something that happened to a person who is very close to me when he was younger." He whispered, beginning to breath quickly again.

"No, no, no, Barba. Stop. Breathe." He breathed slowly and looked up at her.

"I'm sorry." He whispered, almost imperceptibly.

"For what, Barba?"

"Being a burden." Olivia was shocked. This was the first time she had ever heard Rafael Barba apologize. In any other circumstance, she would have gloated. But in this case? Barba obviously had self-confidence and self-worth issues that she hadn't known about.

"Don't apologize for anything, Barba. This isn't your fault. You're okay. nothing bad is happening to you." She kept murmuring in his ear for another 15 minutes until he calmed down. Afterwards, she said she would be there if he needed her and left the office, determined to find out what caused his insecurity.





## Chapter 8

Olivia looked down at Rafael, shaking in her arms. She had never figured out what caused his insecurities, but she was realizing that the person that the case had reminded Barba of was Mitch. Now there was another thing they had to find out. But right now, Rafael was her first priority. This was the worst panic attack he had ever had with her. She pulled him a little bit closer.

“Breathe. In, out. In, out.” She breathed with him as he struggled to calm down. He breathed along. He curled up, if possible, even tighter, as if trying to make himself disappear. She looked at his hand and saw that it was gripping his wrinkled suit jacket, trying to create pain for himself. “No, no, no, Rafael. No. Don’t do that. It won’t help.” She gently pulled his hand off of his arm and held it. He squeezed it tightly, and she felt tears seeping into her jacket. He was crying his eyes out, holding onto her jacket tightly. She rubbed his back softly.

“I’m so sorry. I am really so sorry,” Rafael whimpered, looking up at her. She shook her head.

“What have I told you, Rafael? You have nothing to be sorry for. You’re not a burden, none of this is your fault, I promise. Carisi was awful to you and he’ll be dealt with later. But I promise, you have absolutely nothing to be sorry for.” Rafael, sighing, sat up, his eyes rimmed with red. He detached himself from Olivia, but she held his hand tightly, preventing him from digging his fingernails into his arm. He looked at her, about to protest, but she gave him a stern look and he gave up.

“I have to tell you something. But I think you may need another detective. Can you get Rollins? I trust you two most.” Olivia nodded.

“I’ll bring you to my office and you can wait there. She and Amaro are talking to Neil right now.” Rafael nodded and Olivia pulled him up. She let go of his hand and put her hand on his shoulder instead. She opened the door and led him to her office. She set him on the couch and put his hand firmly beside him. He nodded. She pulled out her phone to call Rollins.

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Nick was the one mainly taking the statement, and she was standing by the door. Neil Patrick Harris, a person she had admired for years, was lying in a hospital bed, telling them almost the exact same thing that Mitch had. He was crying and his husband was holding his hand, stroking it a little bit. Rollins' phone vibrated. Nick nodded at her and she slipped out of the room and answered the phone.

"Rollins...Hey, Liv, how's Barba...Oh, good...Why does he want me?...Well, okay. I'll be right there...Bye." She put her phone in her pocket and stuck her head into the room.

"I have to go help Liv. You okay here?" Nick nodded and she left.

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Liv sat with Rafael, wondering what it was that he had to tell her in the form of a witness interview. He was shaking slightly.

"You okay, Barba?"

"Yeah, just...nervous." Olivia nodded. She held his shoulder gently. Rollins knocked on the door.

"Come in," Olivia said and Rollins walked in. She sat behind the coffee table, and Olivia moved to the side of the table, not too far away from Barba.

"Okay, Barba. What do you need to tell us?" Barba took a deep breath and started to speak.

"Before I met Mitch, about...8 years ago, I was...raped. And...he carved the same thing on my chest as Neil and Mitch. I didn't report it. Afterwards, I-I sank into a depression. It was bad." Rafael rolled up his sleeve. The two female detectives could see cuts on his wrist, obviously from a razor. Olivia didn't look too closely, but she had a suspicion that not all of them were from 8 years ago. Then, Rafael continued speaking.

"I attempted suicide twice. Once, I tried to jump off a building, and another time, I tried to overdose. These were both after I met Mitch. I love him so much, but I kept flashing back to-

to that night. He stopped me both times. He was my rock. And...to tell the complete truth, I'm still depressed. I had been clean for about 3 years. But I cut earlier today." Rafael finished speaking and curled into himself, as if every bit of strength he still had had been drained out of him. Olivia stepped over to the couch and rubbed his shoulder, while also inspecting the cuts like a worried mother. Amanda looked at the ADA, slightly bewildered.

"How?" She asked, cautiously. "How do you manage prosecuting the cases we bring you? What you went through, that's traumatizing enough, without having to...see that on your chest. And...oh my god, that's why Mitch reacted so badly, isn't it! Because he knew you went through the same thing, and he wants to help you!" Amanda was thinking out loud, but Barba was nodding along with everything she said. Olivia looked confused.

"What did Mitch react badly to?"

"When we told him about the cuts on his chest. He reacted much worse than Neil did, and it must be because he doesn't want Barba to relive his trauma whenever he sees his chest. Also, he's afraid that HE will relive his trauma whenever he sees Barba's chest," Amanda said, trying not to visualize the circumstances in which Mitch and Barba would be shirtless in front of each other. That was not an image of the ADA that she needed in her mind. She shook her head quickly and looked back at Olivia and Barba. Olivia was obviously trying to hold herself together for Rafael, who had pulled down his sleeves and was resisting her efforts to pull them back up.

"No, Liv! For god's sake! I slipped, and that's to be expected! My boyfriend got raped, most likely by the same man who raped me!" He was saying, shaking her off. Then, Amanda realized something.

"Wait. This guy is only attacking gay celebrities. How do you fit into the pattern?" Rafael nodded.

"My father used to force me to go to conversion therapy when I was in my late 20s and had just come out to them. I went because I was afraid he'd beat my mom if I didn't. I stayed in it for a while after he died, but about 10 years ago I dropped out, because I had decided that enough was enough. It was a traumatic experience. Once I dropped out, my therapist told me that I would go to hell and that I would pay for being, you know, gay. He told me "fags deserve to die" when I dropped out. I think it might have been him doing all of these rapes. Mitch went to the same therapist, but he admitted himself, because he had been bullied so

much as a kid and his career in music was taking off. He dropped out after the Sing-Off, which was a TV show that he and Pentatonix competed in and won. I would try to find out if Neil went to him and then go interview him. His name was Joseph Robalt.” Rafael was back to being his normal, quick-talking self. Amanda nodded. Rafael stood up. “If you’ll excuse me, I have to go back to the hospital.” He walked out and Olivia and Amanda looked at each other. Finally, Olivia breathed a sigh of relief.

“He’s back,” she said, smiling.

“Yep, good old Barba as we know him. I’ll go interview Neil about the therapist.” Olivia nodded and Amanda walked out, just as Nick was getting back. The phone rang and Fin answered it. Once he hung up, he called out to the rest of the squad.

“Bad news. We’ve got another gay celebrity rape. A guy named Zachary Quinto. You guys heard of him?” Everyone but Nick shook their heads. Nick looked incredulous.

“You guys don’t know Zachary Quinto? Really?” Again, the squad shook their heads. “The new Star Trek reboots? Oh, come on you guys!” He rolled his eyes and shook his head, mentally noting that he would have to have them over to watch the reboots. But he had to focus on the task at hand. All the details were the same as the two previous cases, and they were probably looking at a serial rapist, unless three different rapists had the exact same MO. He got up quickly and grabbed his coat. Fin followed closely behind him, while Nick looked over his shoulder at the squadroom, calling behind him. “Movie night at my place this Friday!”

## Chapter 9

Neil and David were sitting in the hospital room. Neil had calmed down.

“David, are the kids with Nora?” He asked. David nodded, and then remembered something.

“Guess who I ran into in the hallway!”

“Oh, I don’t know, just tell me,” said Neil.

“Well, first I ran into Pentatonix.”

“Why are they here?”

“Well...Mitch got raped. The same way as you.” Neil gaped at him.

“Are you kidding me?!”

“No. And guess who I ran into out in the hall a couple minutes ago.”

“Who?”

“Rafael Barba.”

“Why is he here?”

“He’s dating Mitch.”

“WHAT?! Rafi is dating Mitch?!”

“Yeah, and planning on proposing to him this weekend, but that obviously can’t happen now. Mitch is apparently really bad off. Like, worse off than you, even.”

“Oh, god. Um...I want to see him,” said Neil, conviction setting over his face. David stared at him, disbelieving.

“You what?”

“I want to go see Mitch. I want him to know that he isn’t alone. Please, David. I need to do this,” said Neil. David sighed. He couldn’t say no to his husband right now.

“Alright, fine. But what do you want to do about the kids?”

“I want to see them too. Don’t tell them too much, just that I got hurt. Please bring them here,” Neil said. David nodded.

“I’ll be back in a little bit, alright? I love you.”

“I love you too.” David took one last look at Neil’s beaten face and exited the room. He let out a breath he didn’t know he was holding, a long exhale. For a moment, he slumped against the wall, letting all of his emotions hit him like a brick wall, making his gut clench. He collected himself and stood up, walking briskly out the door to the car. He got in and slammed the door. He started the car and pulled out of the hospital parking lot, subconsciously turning on the music, and starting out of his reverie when he heard the words to Take Me Home by Pentatonix come from the speakers. The lyrics made him start crying, letting himself be something other than strong for a moment. Then, he pulled up to his house. He got out of the car and walked in the front door, to be met with two little blonde rockets running for his legs.

“Daddy, Daddy!” They yelled, as Nora ran behind them, glancing at David sympathetically.

“Hey, you guys, let’s let Daddy catch his breath, alright?” Said Nora. David looked at her gratefully, as he sat down on the nearest chair, not bothering to take his coat off.

“Harper, Gideon, can you come here please?” Asked David. His children ran up to him and jumped on to his lap, one on each leg. They looked up, waiting for him to speak. “Well, um, Papa got hurt. He’s in the hospital and he wants us to go and see him.”

Harper and Gideon looked at each other, and then up at their father. They may have only been five years old, but they could understand that something bad had happened and that their father was upset.

“I’m sorry, Daddy. It’ll be okay,” said Harper, hugging David tightly, closely followed by Gideon. Tears sprang into David’s eyes at his children’s thoughtfulness. He hugged them as well.

“Now, let’s go to the hospital, alright? Get your coats.” Gideon and Harper jumped up and ran to the coat rack. David took that time to talk to Nora.

“Hey, Nor?”

“Yeah, David? I’m really sorry about Neil.”

“I am, too. But there’s something else I think I need to tell you before you find it out on the news. Just don’t tell anyone else, alright?”

“Of course!”

“Well, Mitch Grassi has also been attacked. By the same person who attacked Neil.” Nora gasped. “I’m going to ask my friend if you can go see him, because I think there’s something

you can do for him. Sing, alright? You're a great singer, and he needs to see that he has a fan who really cares. Come with us to see Neil, then I'll bring you and Neil to see Mitch if Rafael says it's alright. He may want to be in the room, by the way."

"That's totally fine! Oh, my god, I hope Mitch will be okay. What should I sing?"

"What's that song you really like, that lullabye?"

"This Little World, that's a great idea!" Nora said, and started humming the song to herself. Gideon and Harper had their coats on and were ready to go. David opened the door, and they exited. He got in the car, Nora got in the passenger side, and the kids jumped in the back. They started driving and David called Rafael.

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Rafael's phone was ringing as he began driving back to the hospital, still shaking slightly. He answered, not looking at the caller ID.

"ADA Barba...hey, David, what's up?...oh, really? Neil wants to see him?...And-I'm sorry, what's her name again? I don't remember...Nora, alright, that sounds like something Mitch would love. She won't be weird around him, right?...No fangirling?...Alright, then. I'll actually be there in about 5 minutes. You?...Oh, alright then, I'll meet you guys in the parking lot. I'm excited to see Harper and Gideon, it's been so long!...Alright, see you there...bye." Rafael hung up, sighing. He felt bad for David, especially having two little kids. But he resolved to become better friends with David and Neil. He could sense that they needed each other to get through this. He pulled into the hospital parking lot and parked. He got out of his car and looked around for David. He saw a car pull into the parking lot. A young woman got out of the passenger seat. He couldn't see her very well from a distance, but he could see that she had a blue streak of hair. She rounded the car and opened the door, lifting a little blonde kid out. He started walking towards the car. By the time he got close enough to tell, David was out of the car, and had lifted out another blonde child. Rafael raised his hand and David saw him, gesturing for him to come over. Rafael walked quickly over.

"Hey, Harper, Gideon, this is my friend Rafael. Say hi!" Said David. The two kids looked up at him.



“Hi, Rafel!” They said, missing the i sound.

“Hi! It’s really nice to meet you!” Rafael kneeled down. “How old are you two?” The twins held up five fingers each. “Five? Wow, you guys are so old!” Gideon looked away, shy, and Harper giggled.

“Kids, we’re going to go see Papa, okay?” The kids nodded and began walking away with David. Rafael walked beside Nora.

“So, I hear you’re a great singer,” said Rafael. Nora nodded.

“I guess. That’s what Neil and David say, at least.”

“How long have you been babysitting Harper and Gideon?”

“Since they were three. They’re great kids to babysit,” Nora said, smiling. “I love that family.” Rafael tilted his head. He wondered how Nora had gotten this job, which had probably been tried out for by tons of nannies and babysitters. As if reading his mind, Nora said, “Two years ago, I was in Central Park, busking. I was actually pretty poor for a while after I moved here, but, anyways, I was busking on a bridge of a stream, and Harper ran to the side and almost fell over. I ran over and stopped her from falling, then Neil ran up. To tell the truth, I didn’t actually recognize him at first. I was more worried about Harper. I was singing to her to make her calm down. Neil came up behind me and asked me my name. I told him, and I still didn’t recognize him until he told me his name. It all clicked. To tell the truth, I was a little star struck at first, but then David literally ran up to me, put down Gideon and hugged me. He thanked me for saving Harper, and then offered me the job. I accepted, of course, and here I am now,” Nora explained. Rafael nodded. They walked in silence the rest of the way to the hospital and to Neil’s room.

“Harper, Gideon, Papa isn’t feeling well, so just be gentle, okay?” David said. The kids nodded, and then they entered the room.

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Notes

Sorry this is super short, and that I haven't updated in a while. My quarter just ended and I haven't had much time to write stuff other than school papers. In other news, who here is absolutely OBSESSED with Hamilton??? There may be a Hamilton fic on the way, you guys. Just you wait.

Mitch's eyes fluttered open, a headache pounding at his temples, disoriented. His throat was burning and he reached out his hand blindly, feeling for water, when his hand was grabbed tightly. Every muscle in his body tensed, his hand lashed out and grabbed something hard, which he then used to swing at whoever was grabbing him. His heart was pounding in his ears and his breath was coming quickly. Whatever he was holding hit the person's hand and the person left away, swearing loudly in Spanish.

"Dios maldita sea! Que demonios?! Meirda! Ow! Mitch, what was that?!" As Mitch's vision swam into focus, he looked to the side and saw Lucia Barba standing next to him.

"Oh, Lucia, I'm so sorry! I just...I freaked out. I'm sorry!"

"Oh, Mitchy. It's fine. Are you alright?" Mitch nodded.

"Lucia, you didn't have to visit."

"Yes, I did. You're practically my son-in-law by now, and you make Rafi happy, so of course I came to see you." Tears sprang into Mitch's eyes at those words.

"Thank you so much," he said. Lucia smiled and kissed him on the head.

“Where’s Rafael?” Lucia asked. “I thought he’d be by your side every moment of the day.”

“He went to come out to his squad,” Mitch said, his voice betraying worry for the love of his life. Lucia’s eyes widened, fear filling them to the bursting point.

“Oh, god.”

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