

Revision of *The Color Peace*

Evidently the darkness accompanied by the night came quicker than I'd imagined. Although the night doesn't necessarily come as a surprise, uneasiness tends to approach and slowly deteriorate my once calm demeanor. I sat in my tan 69 Camaro alongside Rico, awaiting for him to propose a reckless plan for another night in Los Angeles. We were parked a few blocks from the Santa Monica Pier, after spending the day loitering around the beach awaiting a call from our boss. While silence still controlled the air, I contemplated the relationship that I have maintained for quite some time with Rico. Although it was commenced through my initiation into the Original Blood Family (OBF), I looked upon Rico as innately human. This was an unusual perception to be had when looking upon a member of the gang. The actions of our group were often difficult to understand through human cognition. However, Rico's behavior was never concerned with the politics affiliated with gang life. It was concentrated around his juvenile desire to have fun. This often infuriated the others, especially when it interfered with the reputation and structure of the OBF. But this never perturbed Rico. Rico

was not stimulated by the concepts revolving around territory and dominance. Instead, he questioned the lack of harmony behind the methods of the leaders of the gang. He did this through constant reminders of the initial purpose for the construction of this group. The founders of the group formed the institution to protect their community from crime that local law enforcement refused to intervene in. It seemed at times that this purpose only remained through

“Any news from bossman”, Rico exclaimed, breaking the silence.

“Nope”, I replied, knowing Rico didn't expect any.

“Wilshire it is then”, decided Rico.

I agreed half willingly to avoid a conversation that will only result in the wishes of Rico. Wilshire was one of Rico's favorite streets in Downtown Los Angeles. Populated with various clubs, cheap drinks and food, Rico could not hide his love for this place. I placed my gun in the glove department and inserted the keys in the ignition. As Rico increased the volume of the radio station I grew weary thinking about another night out in the city.

I pulled onto the freeway and cursed at the ten million people that populated this city. Rico usually liked to joke how the brake lights on the rear of the cars were to show respect to our gang. However, this time he seemed eager to reach our destination.

Rico lowered the volume of the radio, “Damn, how long you think till we get there,” he said anxiously.

“At this rate I don't know if we will ever get there,” I replied sarcastically.

Rico wasn't pleased with my response and turned the radio back up to its prior volume. He remained quiet for the remainder of the ride.

I exited off the 5 freeway and onto Wilshire boulevard. The darkness brought upon by the night slowly diminished as we approached the bright lights that filled the city. I placed my foot on the brake at the sight of the red light and glanced over at Rico. The size of his eyes immediately revealed his obsession with this place.

“Let's get some food, I'm hungry as hell,” Rico finally spoke out.

“Taco’s?,” I exclaimed as Rico nodded in accordance.

A local street taco stand called Los tacos loco was a popular food truck on the boulevard. It was favored by a majority of our gang, and the OBF eventually established a nice relationship with the owner, Jose.

The light turned green and I headed towards our first stop of the night.

We approached the intersection where the food truck was established.

We began looking for parking which was often difficult in the City.

Finding parking that didn't cost more than a meal, was always a challenge.

Eventually, we found ourselves pulling into a public garage a few blocks away. A sign at the entrance read “4 OPEN SPOTS” with a older man standing next to it in a booth. As we were pulling in he handed us a ticket and fiddled with the computer as the sign switched to “3 OPEN SPOTS”.

I occupied a spot on the top floor and walked toward the staircase, locking the car twice. On the way down the stairs, I recalled that I had left my gun in the glove department. I shared this with Rico and let him

know that I'd meet him downstairs in a few moments. Rico, eager to embark on an adventure, ignored me and continued his fast pace walk down the stairs. I sprinted up the staircase I had just descended from and reached into my pocket for the keys to unlock my car. After recovering my gun from the glove department I repeated my earlier routine of locking the car twice. I raced down the stairs quickly to avoid Rico's frustrations. However, when I got to the bottom floor, Rico was not in sight.

"Damn bastard, can't even wait for me," I murmured to myself.

I tried dialing his mobile phone various times, but I was consistently relayed to his voice mail message. I imagined he had headed toward the taco shop antsy to eat and reconnect with Jose. I set my walk in that direction.

As I crossed from sidewalk to sidewalk, abandoning one and claiming the other, I became distracted by the various situations taking place all around me. Behind me, a woman in a torn blue jeans and a shredded white top was hysterically crying as she screamed out to a crowded

group of people who seemed to be ignoring her. After assessing the situation, my attention was quickly shifted to an altercation ahead of me that involved two larger men, one African American and the other Caucasian. The older white man was of a large figure and stood with his back toward his street shop. The black man had a similar figure but was about a foot shorter than his opponent. I contemplated the state of segregation and discrimination of our current society. As I attempted to decipher the details behind the quarrel in front of me, I noticed the sign advertising Los Tacos Locos in the background. I tried to identify Rico, but was overwhelmed by the distance and crowd. I headed towards the truck eager to find Rico.

“Jose!”, I shouted as I approached his shop.

“ Mi amigo! Cómo estás hermano?”, Jose always greeted me in his native language.

“Not much brotha! Tell me, how’s business?”

“Good enough my friend.” Jose replied with content.

“Glad to hear, have you seen Rico?” I urgently spoke out.

“No compadre, not since a few weeks ago when you two came by.” said Jose with hesitation.

I was suddenly filled with anxiety as my prior foolish thought had been shattered. I had no idea where Rico could be and I instantly assumed the worst. The Crips were our opposing gang and they scattered the streets of Los Angeles. I decided to head to his favorite club before alarming the boss that Rico is missing.

PULSE, Rico’s top rated club, was only a block away from the taco shop. I said my goodbyes to Jose and headed that way quickly.

On the way to the club I ignored the various stimuli that was previously so caught up in. I walked with a fast pace lightly shoving anyone in my way. When I saw the sign of the club I picked up my pace a little and barged through the front door. I noticed my frantic behavior attracted some attention since a few heads turned when I entered. I roamed around trying focus my attention on locating Rico. It was difficult to see since a majority of the lights were off, and those that were on were too bright to even look in that direction. I spent fifteen minutes circling the

club and at points walking diagonally to gain a better view. I figured I would head out to call the boss and discuss what I should do. I walked out towards the back door exiting the club. It opened up to an alleyway that seemed vacant. I walked out to take the phone call and noticed a mans sitting down behind the dumpster. I began to walk away from him when I realized it was Rico. He was sitting with a bullet straight through his head and there was fresh blood still dripping. I held myself back from tears and pulled out my gun to verify no one else was around. I sat down to Rico contemplating and losing track of time.

Some time later, two officers pulled through the alley and exited their vehicles with their guns drawn and pointed at me.