

Cracking Up

A detective working an abduction case finds a break in the case, but is left with so many more questions.

“Quack...Quack...Quack”

“Detective! Over here, we found a cell phone” yells Officer Jones.

It’s almost one in the morning, we’ve been out in these woods for hours, running the by the book grid search that we run when looking for someone that is lost. And we just happen to find it, because it Quacks. Seriously, who uses a Quack as their ring-tone? Mine is that shrill sonar ping, it cuts through the night and can wake me out of the deepest sleep.

I reply “Is it ringing or is it a text message? Any idea if it belongs to our victim?”

“Text message, but it’s locked. We will have to get the nerds to unlock it before we know who it belongs to or what the message is.” Replies Officer Jones.

“Mark the location Jones, I’ll bag it and run it back to HQ, I need to check-in with the Lieutenant anyway.” I say with a sullen tone in my voice, as I feel like we aren’t getting anywhere with this case.

The tip came in about six hours, our victim’s name and a mile marker location off north I-75

I grab the phone, quickly placing it into an evidence bag. I don’t seal it just yet, I plan to see if I can guess the passcode before handing it over to the nerds back at HQ.

Once in my car, I start back to headquarters, I’m a good hour away. After a little bit of time on the road, I reach into the evidence bag, and grab the phone. The roads are empty this time of night, so futzing with this phone while the car is on cruise control, not my best idea, but not my worst.

Just as I pull the phone up and am about to enter a passcode, it unlocks.

Startled I slam on the brakes and drop the phone.

“Malaka!” I exclaim.

I scrounge around and finally grab the phone. This victim’s visage on the wallpaper means this is their phone, so how did my face unlock it.

I bring up the last message, it’s a video message, I play it.

It’s a dark bedroom. I hear murmuring, but I can’t make it out.

I turn up the sound.

I hear myself murmuring, “Daria, no...”, the video, it’s of me, having my reoccurring nightmare.

My first partner Daria, her death haunts me almost every night.

My heart is racing, the perp sent the video of me to me.

No, not to me, to the victim's phone.

I'm hyperventilating, 10 years on the force, why am I quacking up now.

Last thing I hear is Quack...Quack...Quack.

I wake up about 30 minutes later in the back of an ambulance, an EMT is taking my vitals and begins to ask me what my name is.

I ask for my phone, I check the last message, it says "You're welcome."

What the hell does that even mean?