

7pm rolls around. Up pulls Sez and Tank together. Then the second car pulls up with the gang. The second car empties for the bench. Tank walks Sez up to my front door. I opened and of course I forgot everything I wanted to say to him. I give Sez a big hug. Tank says "delivered on time and in one piece." We all laugh. "Maybe now you can work on bringing him around more often." I reply with an attitude. Tank just bowed out "and on that note...I'm out!" Sez walks in "let's watch Godfather tonight. It's long but it's good." I say ok. "First, call for the pizza." Said Sez as he pulls out his wallet and hands me a \$100 bill. "Order 4 pizzas tho. One for us and three for them out there." I grab my phone with a smile on my face "You like bossing me around, huh?" He replies with a smirk "you like me telling you what to do." Phone up to my ear, I wink "I do." I ordered the pizza and hung up the phone. I look over at the tv. "Ain't that the cop that tried to arrest you??" I say as I unmute the tv. Sez turns his attention to the screen as well. It was a press conference with New Orleans PD talking about the murders and fires in recent news. The police chief said "homicide detective Patrick (?) and myself have been working closely on this investigation. This quite possibly could be tied into the Mexican drug cartels. Some evidence has led us in that direction but it's all still speculation at this point." I look at Sez out of the corner of my eye. But Sez doesn't say anything. He just sat on the couch and relaxed. "Press play, momma." I have so many questions I want to ask right now about the news and that night but I figured the less I know the better.

Watching the movie and eating the pizza with Sez was nice to just chill together. The Godfather really had me confused for real! But Sez explained every move for me and it all became so clear. The Godfather was so smart just like Sez. Making big moves before anyone sees it coming. But while I'm thinking Sez is like them, Sez starts to tell me how these are real gangsters. He explains they are the Italian mafia and how he thinks they are the best at organized crime. Sez told me that the Genovese mafia family was one of the biggest in New York. I'm sure I'm not related to any of those guys though. My biological mom is Italian but she's always just been a local junkie whore. Sad to say but true. I know Orlando always calls Ethan "the Italian Stallion" but I never put much thought into it. There's so much I didn't know about Italians. Only gangstas I ever heard of were local D-boys and rappers. Sez told me how I should be proud of my Italian heritage. He said he likes the way Italians have strong family values. Which kinda surprised me a bit. It made me happy. It made me happy that he actually thinks about me and who I am.

When seven rolled around, Sez and Tank pulled up together. Then, a second car pulled up with the gang. The second car emptied out, and they all headed for the Bench. Tank walked Sez up to my front door. I opened it, determined to speak my mind, but of course, I forgot everything I had wanted to say to him as soon as I laid eyes on him. I gave Sez a big hug.

"Delivered on time and in one piece," Tank said. We all laughed.

"Maybe now you can work on bringing him around more often," I replied with an attitude.

Tank just bowed. "And on that note... I'm out!" he laughed.

Sez laughed and walked in. "Let's watch *The Godfather* tonight. It's long, but it's good," Sez said. I said alright. "First, call for the pizza," he said as he pulled out his wallet and handed me a \$100 bill. "Order four pizzas, though. One for us and three for them out there." I nodded and grabbed my phone with a smile on my face.

"You like bossing me around, huh?" I sassed.

He replied with a smirk, "You like me telling you what to do."

With my phone up to my ear, I winked. "I do." I ordered the pizzas and hung up the phone. I looked over at the TV, where the news was playing. "Ain't that the cop that tried to arrest you?" I asked as I unmuted the TV. Sez turned his attention to the screen, as well. It was a press conference with the New Orleans PD talking about all the murders and fires in recent news.

The police chief was standing in front of a podium. "Homicide Detective Patrick Healy and myself have been working closely on this investigation. This quite possibly could be tied into the Mexican drug cartels. Some evidence has led us in that direction, but it's all still speculation at this point." I looked at Sez out of the corner of my eye, but Sez didn't say anything; he just sat on the couch and relaxed.

"Press play, mamma," he said, tossing me the remote. I had so many questions I wanted to ask him about what the news meant, but I figured the less I knew, the better.

It was nice to just chill with Sez as we watched the movie and ate pizza together. *The Godfather* really had me confused, but Sez explained every move for me until it all became so clear. The Godfather was so smart, just like Sez: making big moves before anyone saw it coming. But while I was thinking Sez was like them, Sez started to tell me how they were real gangsters. He explained they were part of the Italian mafia, and Sez thought they were the best at organized crime. Sez told me that the Genovese mafia family was one of the biggest in New York. I was sure I was not related to any of those guys, though. My biological mom was Italian, but she was always just a local, junkie whore. Sad to say, but true. I knew Lando always called Ethan "the Italian Stallion", but I never put much thought into it. There was so much I didn't know about Italians. The only gangsters I had ever heard of were the local D-boys and rappers. Sez told me I should be proud of my Italian heritage and said he liked the way Italians have

Nikki by Richard Jackson III

EDITED Excerpt

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