

Incident at 57th and 6th  
by  
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Incident at 57th and 6th  
An office at a city police station.  
Industrial desk covered with papers.  
SAMANTHA sits opposite the desk, facing  
the audience (who are in the position  
of whoever is conducting the  
investigation). SAMANTHA is a young  
African-American woman, well-dressed,  
pleasant – but something about her  
demeanor suggests the clothes and smile  
are a mask.

SAMANTHA

Did I do it on purpose?

No. Maybe.

I don't remember everything exactly.

I remember I was walking across town to meet a friend.

Running late – as usual.

Something's going on, some event. Roads blocked off. Cops on  
every corner telling people where to turn.

And people are honking their horns. Trying to turn left and  
the cop's telling them they gotta go straight. You can tell  
who checked the traffic report before they left and who  
didn't. Lotta people didn't.

Corner of 57th Street. I'm waiting for the light to change.

And this cop, boy! People are begging her to let them go  
left. And she goes:

"No, you got to go straight!"

She's short. Curly hair. Island woman. Reminds me of Patrice,  
the lady who works at the Haitian place on my block.

I remember thinking how glad I was walking and not driving.

I don't actually have a car ... anyway.

I'm looking at my phone. Thinking I'm going to be really  
late, my friend's going to kill me. And then I hear:

"SIR! YOU CANNOT TURN HERE!"

There's a black SUV. A white guy at the wheel. A woman, maybe  
his girlfriend or wife, in the passenger seat. Trying to go  
left. And there she is, the cop. Trying to tell him he can't.

He's saying something to her. I can't hear what it is. The  
cop shakes her head and I hear her tell him again, you know –

"You can't turn here."

The cop steps away from the car, and he –

He grabs the wheel, and just –

I mean, I can hear the tires screeching, he's actually trying

–

She just told him three times he can't –

He almost hits her! He's this close! She's right there, and

he almost –

She shouts at him. "What are you doing?" He shouts back. And they're going at each other, and I don't know what he's saying, but the cop - oh, man - Her face, I mean, we all know that look - She goes: "IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE! AND YOU WOULD KNOW BECAUSE YOU GOT ONE SITTING NEXT TO YOU!"

SAMANTHA laughs - short, a laugh of disbelief rather than humor.

SAMANTHA

Just like Patrice, the lady at the Haitian place. Is it an island thing?  
Fire back quick like that?  
When I was a kid, it was always "Hold it in." Like that made you better than they were.  
But when you hold it in  
hold in the thoughts, the anger, the rage  
it doesn't just dissolve.  
It goes all through your system  
and comes out in other ways:  
a clump of hair on your pillow  
a cut on your arm  
a bracelet or a stick of lipstick in your pocket  
that sets off the alarm as you leave the store  
and you don't know how they got there ...  
laughing too loud when nothing's funny  
or staring, silent  
and you can't figure out what's wrong -

The thoughts are taking SAMANTHA down a painful path. She catches herself, regains the mask.

SAMANTHA

Not Patrice. She always speaks up.  
always yelling at the kids, the guys on the corner  
the young girls:  
"Hey! Don't you dare come at me with that!"  
"Hey! Customers only, read the sign!"  
"Hey! Don't walk with your face in that phone! You think people going to step out the way for you?"  
I wonder what it was like in her family. And I wish mine had raised me like hers.  
Real  
instead of respectable  
Like the cop ...  
She's on to the next car now  
The next idiot that wants to go left.  
She's made her point. She's done.  
And the guy in the SUV -  
He's going straight, like she told him to.

She's the law after all.  
She doesn't need me to stand up for her.  
But I couldn't -

(SAMANTHA gestures "let it go")

The way he jerked the steering wheel, about to hit her  
and then shouted at her for doing her job and called her a  
nasty name  
And gets away with it. Gets to drive off.  
What would happen if it was the other way around?  
If the white guy was the cop and she was in the driver's seat  
and she did a Patrice on him?  
"Hey! Don't tell me go straight! I got to turn, Ima turn!"  
All the money  
All the respectability in the world wouldn't save her  
if the tables were turned.  
That's the last thing I remember.  
The next thing I know he's in front of me, screaming about  
the scratch on his car  
that goes all the way down the driver's side  
from the front end of one door to the back end of the other.  
The cop is standing between me and the man, her hand  
on my shoulder, talking into her radio.  
I look down and there they are:  
My keys.  
What am I doing with my keys in my hand?  
I don't even remember opening my purse.  
Did I do it intentionally?  
I don't think so.  
But if you want the truth  
I've done a lot of things  
I never meant to.

BLACKOUT.