

The Cop and the Lady

by Booton Herndon

"Me, I'm just a dumb cop, an' I been admittin' it for thirty years," O'Toole said. "Those other birds with their psychology and scientific crime-detectin' try to make it sound like a detective book. Imagination don't pay in this racket."

"I don't get you," I said. O'Toole and I were sitting in the dingy detective office. O'Toole was there on the late shift to answer the phone if it rang. That's what you do with a flatfoot who won't retire. I was there because I'd be the guy who'd go out and do the work if the phone did ring.

"Yeah, you're just like the rest of them guys," O'Toole said. "Nothin' makes sense unless they got it in college or high school and it's a big word. Minute they get on a case they begin thinkin' about thinkin'. Psychology and stuff. Character an' behavior patterns. They begin to talk about manias an' them things an' can't tell when you're just plain nuts."

He squinted at me over his nose. It was a strain because his nose was shaped to match his belly. "Got a cigar?"

"No," I said. "And if I did, I'd keep it. If you think your theories on psychology are worth a cigar to me, you're suffering from dementia tremendous."

"Just like all the rest of the guys," O'Toole said grumpily. "Can't talk plain English. Well, I'll tell you what I mean about bein' nuts."

"This guy Folkes was found all slashed up in his bedroom. We walked in after Mrs. Folkes called us, an' there he was, lookin' like ten dollars' worth of chopped steak. Mrs. Folkes was cool as the bottle of beer I'd like to be drinkin' right now." He looked up quizzically, but I shook my head. No beer. "Well," he said, sighing, "all the brainy boys said she was so cool because she was so well bred. They said she was a lady of quality an' wouldn't show emotion. As for cuttin' a guy into hash, they never dreamed of such a thing. So they went out lookin' for the murderer."

"They looked up the street an' down the street, but they didn't see no murderer. They read all their books over again, an' they finger-printed everything in the house. They questioned the servants an' the gardener, an' spouted theories all over the place. But they couldn't find who done it."

"Let me get this straight," I butted in. "Not that I care, but if I have to listen to this stuff I'd better try to understand it. Why weren't there any fingerprints? What did the servants say?"

"Somebody wiped the knife off, and the servants were all asleep. That suit your? Mrs. Folkes said she didn't know anything about it, she slept in her own room, and she found him that way when she went in to say good-mornin'. She let out a yelp, refined an' lady-like, of course, an' told the maid to call the cops."

"That's all there was to it, except that the guy hated animals. That's why Mrs. Folkes slept in the other room—she had this little dog that looked like a rat, an' she always kept him in the room with her, 'cause Folkes didn't like the mutt."

"I told the Cap'n that she probably sliced him up herself an' he says for me not to act dumb. Any poor fool could see, he says, that no lady who loved animals as much as this dame could dump off a guy, especially like that. He says that psychology shows that a lady of such refinement and love for dumb animals couldn't bear to harm any living thing, much less chop her hubby to pieces. He went on like that for a couple of weeks, an' finally he gave up an' they put me on the case 'cause I'm so dumb I was in their way everywhere else."

"Come on," I said. "I know how dumb you are. Let's get to the point."

O'Toole looked up and sighed.

"Since there wasn't nobody else around that night that I could find out about, I figured Mrs. Folkes killed him. That's the easiest thing to do, ain't it?"

I sneered, but O'Toole went right on.

"So I figured that maybe he slapped her dog or somethin'. Y'see, I'd been talkin' to one of the maids, an' I found out that she washes this shaggy pooch of hers in all kinds of fancy shampoos, an' powders the thing up, an' sprays it with perfume, an' buys clothes for the fool dog, an' treats it like a baby, an' Folkes hates it, so what else could I think?"

"I'm beginning to think you can't think."

"I've known that for years," he said. "Any rate, I decide that, since I can't get no proof on her, I'll have to get her to confess. So I pay a little call on her an' her dog, an' ask her does she kill this guy. She gives me a stuck-up look an' picks up her dog an' begins to stalk outa

the room. So I grabs the dog outa her arms an' I landed a kick on that mutt that shook a quart of perfume off its hide."

"I don't much see the point in that," I said. "Just because you're a disgruntled old flatfoot is no excuse to kick a little dog around."

"Well, I kinda hated to do it myself," O'Toole said, "especially with my achin' feet, but it worked. This dame makes a dive for me and begins to claw my eyes out. Just about the time she tells me she's gonna kill me, too, the other cop waitin' outside the door comes in and we take her to the bughouse. Y'see, I'm dumb enough to call a dame what's nutty nutty. An' that's all there is to it. Psychology? Humph."

O'Toole took his feet down off the desk, groaning with every motion of his three hundred pounds, and reached down under his chair. He came up with some gruesome looking object, like a half-starved marmoset with a wig on.

"My God, O'Toole," I said. "Is that . . . ?"

"Yeah," O'Toole said sheepishly, chucking the mutt under the ear.

"I'm just dumb enough to figure I oughta take care of it now."

Cop Maker

by Ronald Henderson

Barney Conroy hunched behind the wheel of his cab, still smarting from his most recent encounter with Detective-Sergeant Sullivan. The fact that Sullivan was admittedly riding him for a purpose proved small comfort to the youthful hack driver. His thoughts were as gloomy as the cold drizzle that had settled on the city earlier in the evening.

"Jump a light once more," Sullivan had said, "and I'll see that your hack license is revoked, even if I have to get a radio car to pull you in." His gray mustache fairly bristled and his dark eyes reflected an anger entirely out of keeping with the situation.

Barney knew that it wasn't his habit of jumping lights that had infuriated the old detective. Every hack driver in the city of New York did that. It was the knowledge that Jean, his daughter, was in love

with Barney and they were planning on getting married as soon as Barney received his appointment to the police force.

Everything else having failed to change Jean's mind, Sullivan had set about blocking Barney's appointment. He knew Barney would never ask Jean to share the uncertain future of a hackman's prospects.

Because of the unusually large number of young men who had passed the preliminary tests, the few chosen ones would have to be sifted by a process of elimination. And the revocation of a hack license would hardly be considered a recommendation.

Although there were times when Barney resented the old man bitterly, deep in his heart he felt sorry for him. He knew that it wasn't anything that Sullivan held against him, personally, that was the reason for his determined opposition. It was just that he couldn't reconcile the thoughts of his daughter being married to any man. In his mind there was no man living that was good enough for her. He had been father and mother to the girl ever since Jean's mother had died when she was a baby. In his hard-bitten way, he had lavished his affections on Jean until he was totally blinded to her own happiness. But why couldn't the old man see that he also worshipped Jean? Had worshipped her ever since they were kids in school together.

Barney's musings were interrupted by a man who jumped into his cab.

"Drive around the corner to Jay's Bar and Grill."

Without turning to look at his fare, Barney shifted gears and eased away from the curb. He turned the corner, pulled up in front of the bar, and braked to a stop.

His passenger said: "Be back in a minute." He dashed out of the cab, leaving the door open and ran into the bar.

Barney lit a cigarette and was letting his thoughts drift back to Jean and their future when he heard a shot from the barroom. He looked up quickly and saw a man backing out of the place, holding a gun in his right hand. It was his passenger. Before Barney could do anything, the man wheeled and ran to the cab. He jumped inside, slammed the door and held the gun on Barney.

"Get going," he gritted through clenched teeth.

In the brief moment when Barney had looked his passenger full in the face he had recognized him. His picture was in all the evening papers. "Bugs" Mayhew, the notorious killer who had slipped his guard at Grand Central while being taken to Sing Sing to die in the electric chair. Every cop in town was on the lookout for him with orders to take no chances but to shoot on sight.