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DIRT NAP RHAPSODY

PROLOGUE

CHAMBERS

First officer on the scene says it's a simple rear-ender, no fatalities or major injuries, but the force of the crash pops the front car's trunk open and, surprise surprise, also shakes up the fresh stiff they got hiding in there. The other driver is about to pull out his insurance information and beg the people he just hit to keep the cops out of it when he sees a human hand dangling out of the back of the car! He said it was even wearing some cheap costume jewelry that was reflecting the light off the street lamps and shining like the frickin' Star of Bethlehem! Everybody in a three mile radius could see it plain as day.

At this point you'd expect the perps in the first car to let a little bumper job slide under the circumstances and high-tail it out of there, but here's the best part: The perps almost hit the car in front of them, and the guy in that car got out to tell them watch it 'cause there's kids in his car. Man, I would have loved to see the look on his face when he found out what he was really dealing with. Well, to his credit he detained the perps while the rear-ender called the cops (who let him skate on the ticket by the way) and now here we are having happened upon one of the most open and shut cases in the history of the department. And I thought this was gonna' be just another dull Saturday night. Unbelievable.

So the perps are sitting on the side of the road all cuffed and ready to go when we get there. It's a husband and wife team, and Henderson's the first one to make a crack referring to them as Bonnie and Clyde. I'm sure one of the Uni's had made one before that, but they deferred to his seniority and laughed anyway. Bonnie looked cool as a cucumber, as if she hadn't been caught red-handed in a car with a corpse in the trunk. Clyde though, it was obvious he'd sing like a canary if we needed him to — he'd already sweat through his under-shirt by the time I first saw him.

He also kept feeding the lamest excuses to anyone around who would listen: The car had been stolen and they'd just gotten it back, they never look in the trunk, he thinks the mob may have somehow been involved. The mob? Like the mob would steal a car, leave a body in it, then just leave it out in the open in good working condition for anyone to find. We all had a good laugh at that one. Bonnie kept nudging him, trying to get him to stay quiet. It was clear that she was the brains of the operation.

After we finished up at the scene we brought Bonnie and Clyde back to the station and stashed them in separate interrogation rooms. Our case was pretty strong already but it couldn't hurt to make it stronger, so we wanted to see if we could leverage the body in the trunk and turn it into a confession. We figured Bonnie would take a lot longer to break so we wanted to start wearing her down first, so Henderson and I got into character and went in to take a run at her. She

greeted us with a warm smile. For a second I thought she might offer us coffee or something, but she just stared cheerfully. Alright then, I thought, let's see what this chick's made of.

"I don't know, Henderson, this one seems pretty open and shut."

"You got that right, Chambers. Talk about a run of bad luck."

"We got a fender bender with a stiff on its way to a dirt nap, body practically falls out of the trunk, dead only a few hours, caught red-handed, that about sum it up, Henderson?"

"It does for now, Chambers, but who knows what we'll find once we start digging."

"Hey, we could use the shovels we found in the trunk with the body!" I looked over at Henderson and we just busted out laughing.

Then Henderson got in on the fun, looking at Bonnie and asking, "Do you mind if we borrow 'em for a while?" I gotta admit, Henderson and I make a pretty good team.

"So the way I figure it, Henderson, there's two ways this can go."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah."

"What's the first way, Chambers?"

"The easy way."

"And what's the second way?"

"The hard way."

"Whoa, Chambers, that second way doesn't sound too pleasant."

"It's not, Henderson."

"I bet it's not, Chambers."

"Do you gentlemen want some privacy?" Bonnie interjected, "This seems like a personal matter." We both looked up at her in surprise. Aha! She speaks! But I think she was mocking us. Who does this lady think she is? She's the one facing 25 to life. No problem, stay cool, just keep her talking.

"What? No ma'am," I replied as politely as I could, "in fact it's quite the opposite, Henderson and I would love to hear your input on the matter."

"Well, okay then," she began, "I think that even though you may find the hard way less pleasant, in the long run you'll find it a much more worthwhile experience, because you didn't cut corners and you earned your achievements the old fashioned way: with good old blood, sweat, and tears... and a little bit of elbow grease thrown in for good measure." This lady, Jesus. Look at her smirking like she has the upper hand.

"See, but that's where you're wrong, Henderson and I love to cut corners. We don't feel slighted by it in the least."

"That's what I figured, but I don't want to be an enabler."

"An enabler, huh? An enabler of what?"

"Your chronic incompetence."

What did she just say to me? I tried to stay calm, "Is that right?"

"I'm sorry Detective, that was rude of me. Forget I said anything."

"No, please, speak, we're all friends here."

"Are you sure? I'm only trying to help."

"I think the lady's right, Chambers, we should move on and..."

"Uh-uh Henderson, I wanna hear what the lady has to say. Please, go on."

"Okay, well... I couldn't help but overhear you talking on the ride over about how unfair it is that this guy and that guy gets away with not doing this thing and that thing..."

"Okay..."

"And how you're the hardest working person here and nobody shows any appreciation for it..."

"And?"

"Then we get here and you spend about 45 minutes sipping coffee and shooting the breeze with the fellas before you process us in."

"Yeah?"

"Then you comment — out loud — about how many steps you're skipping in the report you're filing because they don't make any sense and you shouldn't have to do it..."

"So..."

"So, with respect, it seems to me like you're the dumbest one here."

Okay, that does it: "Listen you psychotic bi..."

"Chambers, Chambers, come on now, settle down."

"Don't you ever..."

"Chambers, cool it."

"I will cut you in two!"

"Chambers!"

Henderson had me in a bear hug. I'd lost my cool. He ushered me out of the room and told me to cool off, he'd take it from here. Dammit. Not only did she get me to lose my cool, but now she's got us playing good cop-bad cop — the ultimate interrogation cliché. I hate good cop-bad cop. It's predictable, it's boring, and it's old fashioned. And now Bonnie either thinks she got to me, or that I'm the type of cop who does good cop-bad cop. Shit, I don't know which one is worse.

Now Henderson, one of the only allies I have left at this point, thinks I'm a hothead. Great, what else can go wrong today?

"Chambers."

"You get anything, Henderson?"

"Nope, still playin' it cool."

"Listen Henderson, about before, I don't know what..."

"Hey, it's been a long day, don't worry about it, Chambers."

"No, you don't understand, that wasn't me in there, that's not how I operate."

"I know I know, we'll get 'em next time. Come on, let's go grab a beer, I'll buy."

"No thanks."

"What's this? You're turning down a free beer? *You?* Man, this chick really got to you, didn't she?"

"I think I want to take a run at the husband."

"Whoa whoa whoa Chambers, are you sure that's a good id..."

"I said I want to take a run at the husband."

"Okay okay, just be careful, I don't want to have to write any more reports tonight."

"I'll be careful." Yeah, I'll be careful alright.

I walked into Clyde's room and found him sitting there all peaceful and serene, like he just found out his mother got into heaven. Where was the nervous putz I met at the scene? He had to be in there somewhere, and all I had to do was find him: "So I gotta tell ya' buddy, it's not looking good for you and your Mrs. at the moment. I got a fender bender with a stiff on its way to a dirt nap, body practically falls out of the trunk, dead only a few hours, caught red-h..."

"I want to make a full confession," Clyde said. Excuse me? You what? "I did it. I did it all. By myself. No one else knew anything about it. And I'm not sorry. I'll tell you everything you need to know including how I did it, why, and where the others are buried. Now give me something to sign of my own free will."

Wow. Take that, Bonnie. Wait... did he say, "Others?"