

Humble

PI'

THE
BETTER
PART
OF
DISCRETION.

By A.R. FOOTE

© 1993

F

It was lunchtime. A beautiful clear day and I was sitting in my leather chair at the desk in my office, throwing paper balls into the wicker waste paper basket. There had been no calls for a couple of days and I was becoming irritable. I leaned forward, picking up the bacon & egg sandwich I'd had delivered; sniffing its warm inviting bouquet I took a bite. It tasted delicious, as only a slightly warm B & E sandwich can. There was a knock on the door.

"Linn" I said, loudly enough to be heard. The door opened. I spluttered, trying not to choke on the mouthful I was savouring.

A woman walked delicately in, swinging around to close the door & facing me, all in one smooth yet dainty motion.

"Hello," I said, spitting crumbs of white bread haplessly onto the table. "Bonne humeur, what can I do, hum hum (clearing my throat). For you."

"I see," she said looking at the few displaced crumbs on the desk "that I'm disturbing your lunch," she said "I'm sorry."

"No, ~~it~~ it'll keep," I said. "How can I help?"

"The name is 'Dora Finch'," she said stepping forward & holding out her hand. "Let me get straight down to business."

"Fine," I said, motioning to a seat. She sat down.

"I want you to follow my husband. You see he's been staying out nights, giving all kinds of phony excuses. Once or twice he's come home at 3 am and expected me not to notice. I'm no fool humeur. I can smell another woman at 500 paces. I think he's shacking up with some whore. I'd very much like to know. Can you help or not?" she asked.

"I have to warn you ma'am, I don't come cheap," I said.

"Cheap' is something I am not either. I know of your reputation for extreme discretion, I know your one the most expensive, and I know that your, shall we say extreme and unorthodox methods, always get results. There is a cleave," she said, signing and tearing it from the butt. "You fill in the amount, when I get the name and address of the bimbo there will be another Ten thousand in it for you."

I was surprised, this woman knew what she wanted and obviously meant to have it. "Fine, I'll do it," I said "But it may take time,"

"I want to know within the week," she said, putting down a large envelope on the desk. "There is all the information you'll need," she said authoritively. "Here is my contact telephone number." She put a white sealed envelope atop the large yellow one.

"Good day Mr Humble," she said, standing and walking quickly and elegantly to the door. With that quick flowing motion, she was gone. The curiosity to look in the envelopes was high; But I resisted and finished off the B & E sandwich, washing it down with a large scotch. I lit a cigarette and reached for the envelopes. The white one contained a phone number. It read "Nora Finch. 407 The Rose Courts. 573 5523" beneath the address a number on the card was "with absolute discretion". I understood that.

In the yellow envelope was a photograph of hubby on a cabin cruiser. The wife was there at his side; there were two pages, neatly type written, of his known hangouts, habits and routines. This guy would leave a trail a mile long if he was up to shenanigans with some broad. Earn Thomasino could handle

this one and he's no ace. For a moment, I wondered why me? A look at the signed, open cheque convinced me I didn't care. I told myself how much I hate these 'spy on hubby' jobs. They involve hours of watching, often for nothing. Many times the wife is simply paranoid and hubby is actually late at the office. The wife always complains when it comes time to pay the bill. Since hubby was doing nothing wrong, the wife thinks she shouldn't have to pay. Believe me, it's far better to get a result.

To cut things short a bit, I rang 'Finch Holdings', that was the company Jerry Finch owned.

"Finch Holdings, how may I help,"

"Is Jerry Finch in?" I enquired,

"No sir, he's out until 2.30pm,"

"Where can I reach him, it's urgent," I said.

"I'm sorry sir, he's unavailable, he is at lunch with a client and cannot be reached. Can I take a message,"

"No thanks, I'll call back." I said.

Mrs Finch had been quite helpful, amongst the list routines, was his luncheon restaurant, where he took all his clients. 'Romanov's', on Windemere Road.

I drove over and parked across the street. I'd brought my 'Pontiac + zoom' in case evidence of indiscretion arose. From the supplied photograph of Finch, I recognised him sitting at a sidewalk table. He was alone. It seemed like he was waiting for someone judging by the tell-tale way he glanced at his watch every few minutes. I sat there, he sat there. About fifteen minutes later, he was joined by two men in suits, and a woman. The four of them went into Romanovs and sat at a table by the window. It was strictly business. Brief cases came out and papers exchanged hands, the meal was served. The four ate and chatted for over an hour. Handshakes all round, and they left. The three business

people were picked up by a limo. I recorded the licence number. NATHAN. Very personalised. Finch stayed inside for another fifteen minutes, I watched as he sorted some papers, and placed them in his brief case. He finished his coffee, paid the check and left. I watched him get into a cab and head North. Back towards his office. It wasn't a big city, and the streets were never jammed with traffic. I had no trouble following the cab. I wondered though why he hadn't taken his own car. Maybe it was in the shop or something. His Destination was Finch Holdings. The time 2:28pm. Very prompt. Sitting opposite the fifteen storey glass building for the rest of the afternoon was a real bummer. I kept constant watch on the doors and the underground garage. I'd seen the sign showing clients where to park off-street. According to Mrs Finch, Hubby would leave work at 5:30pm sharp. Much to my disdain, he did. At 5:30 and 25 seconds, I watched him leave the main doors and stand at the parking valet's kiosk while his car was brought to him. It was a sparkling white Rolls. Some people have all the luck. He got into the car, and drove out onto Hargood St, going West. Odd, since his home was East. He was obviously going somewhere else. I followed at a discreet distance; Eventually, Finch came to a halt outside Number 42 Rochdale Lane. I drove casually past, as he alighted the Rolls, locked it and went into the house. It struck me as odd; there was a very wealthy man, calling on a house in a very run down suburb. That Rolls stuck out like a sore thumb. I parked discreetly opposite, and took my camera from the glove compartment; Finch hadn't noticed me there, as he knocked on the door, passing a sweeping glance around to make sure he hadn't been

HP

seen coming in. Camera at the ready, the door opened. From inside came a lovely young woman. "Click--click--click", went the pentax, capturing the ensuing embrace. They went inside. So this was it? maybe. The girl looked only eighteen or nineteen. Finch was all of forty five. Some like em' young though. The girl was genuinely happy, no, thrilled to see Finch. As happy as some young girl would be to see her sugar daddy, especially a rich one. I waited again. And I waited. At 9:00pm, Finch came out, giving the girl a peck on the cheek. He'd been there for about three hours. The wife would be pleased. Deciding that this was not enough evidence to prove he was cheating on his wife, I followed him once more. My guess was that he'd be heading home to his wife. Wrong guess. As I followed, he made a left at Vine and headed down to Main. He took a right until he found the Downtown freeway, and headed back towards the city, the bright orange and yellow lights of ~~city~~ center were ablaze ahead. The traffic lights chopping and changing in sequence, easily visible by night. In the Commerce Road, Finch pulled up outside the 'Foreign Exchange' building. As I stopped a discreet distance behind & switched off the headlights, I watched him alight from, and lock the rolls. A car door opened, she walked briskly over to it and got in. It was parked in front of the rolls, and as it drove away, I caught sight of the licence plate. It was hard to make out from this distance, so I followed it. As I got closer, I saw that it was a large black stretched limo. I could make out the licence plate now. 'NATHAN'. It was the limo I'd seen earlier in the day. I'd followed it for four on five blocks

when it suddenly speed up. I thought I'd been tumbled, so instead of making a left into Fowler, I drove sedately, straight ahead. There was nothing to be gained in blowing my cover just yet. The limo driver saw that I'd gone ahead, and slowed down again. I'd seen his brake lights flick on just before I exited the intersection. Now though, I was curious. Who were these people? Why was Finch going with them. Who was the girl. It wasn't as straight forward as I'd thought. Since the 'Cornwall' diamond case, I'd picked up a cell phone. It saved messing about and miles if I needed anything. I picked it up from its wad. forty for recharging. I carried it with me when out of the car. I dialed Dan, in the hopes he would still be at work.

"Dan" I said

"Humble, how are you?" he replied.

"I need a favour"

"Another one?"

"Yeah, licence check," I said.

"Go for it," replied Dan.

"It's personalised," I said "NATHAN".

"Hang on," he said as he checked the computer.

"You there Humble?" he asked.

"Yep."

"Black limo, Statesman, registered in the name of ~~Sabres~~ P. Nathan, of Nathan Machine Tools," he said "Whats up?"

"I don't really know yet. There's something damn fishy going on and that limo's part of it," I said

"Watch yourself Humble, there's an inquiry by Nathan's status on the computer. Special Services. You might be getting into something over your head," said Dan

"Well, I hope not. I'll take your advice though" I said. I didn't bother asking about Nathan. The inquiry was purely to do with Finch. He was my case, and if the special service boys were

tied up in this; I had no wish to get in their way. I drove back to the office and flicked on the answering machine, there were no messages. I turned on the tv and grabbed a whiskey. There was some left over chicken in the fridge. I grabbed that & sat in front of the tv. The eleven o'clock news came on. There was an item about a talking dog boat, a train crash up north somewhere, and suddenly.

"Mr Nathan had been fishing in his eight metre cabin cruiser when it exploded killing him instantly. Alan Crane will be taking over the directorship of Nathan machine tools Ltd. He will have a hard task ahead of him as a multi billion dollar middle east contract for the supply of machine tools to Iraq falters. The deal, that would have created hundreds of jobs was vetoed by Mr Nathan last week over differences of opinion between himself and other directors. His death however is seen as accidental, by law enforcement agencies, pending investigations by the marine department."

I almost choked on my chicken, that whole thing looked even sadder ~~as~~ than before. I was almost willing to bet that those three Finch met at lunch were directors of that company. But where did Finch fit in and who was the girl. I finished the chicken, and crashed on the couch.

Finch always got to his office ~~about~~ ^{at} 7:00 am sharp. I awoke the following morning at 5:30 am. That's what happens when you sleep on a five foot couch and you're six foot four. Too early for a shot of scotch, I left the office and drove back to where Finch had left the rolls. It was gone. I had a hunch. I doubted that ~~it~~ he'd gone home, although it was a maybe. So at 6 am, I pulled up opposite the house he'd gone to last evening. Bingo. The white rolls

was parked not on the road, but in the drive way. I waited until 6:35, when Finch left the house. The girl came out the door this time, but was pulled back inside by a large man in a black suit. The door was shut ~~and~~ and Finch went ~~to~~ the Rolls. As he reversed out of the drive I ducked down to avoid being seen, there was something very odd going on in there. Finch was decidedly unhappy. I waited until he'd driven away, then sat up, again watching the house. This reminded me of the many stakeouts I'd done when I was on the force. I know that Finch would show at work at the right time, he was extraordinarily prompt. I'd have thought that a man in his position could afford to come and go as he pleased. Obviously not. Nothing happened for half an hour or so, when a grey Camaro pulled into the driveway. I was left running, as the man in the black suit brought the girl out, and put her in the back. The Camaro then drove off. As it did, the tyres squealed. I took down the licence plate, H049. I saw the face of the girl in the rear window. She looked frightened. One thing was certain. She was no bimbo. There was something more to it than that. Finch was tied up in the money market. He owned and controlled Finch Holdings; A multi Billion dollar financing house. I couldn't help thinking that he was tied up with Nathan's, that Iraq deal, and the directors who were taking over. I felt myself being dragged into this deal and I didn't like it one bit. Who were the guys who took little nicks muffed away? Where did they figure in this. I decided to visit Hampton Marina. I wanted to have a look at the boat Nathan was killed in. I drove to the quay. On the way, I got hold.

of Janey. She often started early. I gave her the licence number, she gave me:-
 "Stolen Bruce; Two days ago from Gala Road," she said.
 "Where's that?" I asked
 "Runs alongside the marina," she said.
 "Thanks Doll,"
 "You welcome. Bye" she hung up.

That sent shivers down my spine. Something was fishy, Although police said that it was a build up of petrol fumes which led to the explosion. I was dubious. I arrived at the marina. There was an old man at the jetty, which had fuel pumps and a very small supply store.

"Gidday" I said as I approached him.

He returned the greeting.

"Did you see the explosion in the boat ~~the~~ ^{yester} ~~other~~ day?" I asked.

"You with the cops?" he asked.

"Better with em' than agin em, eh?" I laughed.

"Yeah I saw. Wasn't no accident though," he said.

"How do you figure that?" I asked.

"Easy. Like I told the cops, that boat couldn't have blown up with fumes," he said squinting at the sun which was very bright now.

"It couldn't," I replied.

"Nah!" he retorted "Damndest thing, she was running a Volvo Penta. Five cylinders of diesel power. What a waste," he said sadly. "That damned diesel slich, messy!"

"Diesel?" I queried

"Yep, Diesel" he replied. I thanked him and went back to the car. I ~~know~~ ^{thought} that for that boat to explode it must have been a device of some kind. A spark won't ignite diesel and the fumes alone won't catch fire unless under pressure. It also explains the old man's mention of a diesel slich on the water. It had been bombed, probably by the joes in the stolen Camaro. I called Dan at home.

"Humble, you just caught me," said Dave.

"Dave, you've got a homicide on your hands,"

"Homicide?"

"Yeah. Nathans boat, you know anything about it?" I asked.

"Yeah actually. It was humes ignited when he tried to start it."

"No, it can't have been. It was running a diesel motor," I said.

"You sure?" he asked.

"Positive. I spoke to the carvice guy at the marina. I'm still here actually,"

"Why have you got an interest in this?" asked Dan.

"It ties up with a case I'm working on at the moment. Can't say what though. Ethics." I said.

"Who's this guy you spoke to?" Dan asked.

"Dunno his name, runs the little store & gas pumps at the jetty. Says he told the cops about the diesel though. How did that get missed? It's the difference between an accident and a homicide," I said.

"Well, I'd better get onto it I suppose" said Dan.

"See you later," I replied.

I was worried. If this guy had given that information to the police, why hadn't they smelled a rat straight away. Something was badly wrong. I guessed too that if wind of this old mans evidence got out, he could wind up in the harbour; I drove back to Finch's office. It was well after 7.am, so I knew he'd be in. I decided it was time to take the direct approach, I was concerned for the girl who I'd seen bundled into the stolen Camaro. I looked at the board by the elevators. Finch Holdings was on the 15th floor. I got into the elevator and pressed 15. I rose. It was a very fast elevator. I held my stomach as it stopped at 15. Finchs office was straight aheads I walked in. An office girl

sat at her desk.

"Morning" I said.

"Yes it is" she replied.

"I've come to see Mr Finch."

"He's on a call", she said.

"I need to see him now!". I insisted. "Bruce Humber PI"

She picked up the phone & pressed a button.

"A private detective to see you sir. Bruce Humber!".

She put down the phone.

"He can't see you", she said "try later".

I'd been this road before. So I walked in through the office door; the secretary following behind objecting.

"I told him you were busy sir!", she said.

"What do you want Humber?", he asked.

"I know what's going on Finch. We need to talk." I said.

Finch motioned for the secretary to leave.

Finch looked like a man with a big problem. His hands cradled his head, elbows on the desk. He looked up.

"And what is going on Humber?", he asked.

"I was hoping you could tell me something Mr Finch," I said, outlining ~~the~~ the events and people I had observed in the past 48 hours.

"I know it's big Finch, I know it involves you, a young woman who I saw bundled into a stolen car this morning, after you'd left her place, an exploding boat which was no accident, a banker with control over billions of bucks, Nathan Machine tools and a halting deal with Iraq. Care to elucidate Mr Finch?" I said.

"Yes, yes I would. Keep your nose out of my business or it will blow off. You don't know who you're dealing with," he said nervously.

"I think I'm dealing with the new directors of Nathans, a kidnapped woman, a lightreed banker, and possibly a pent cop," I said.

Finch looked surprised. It was possible that

he knew nothing about the cop, but he sure as hell knew about all the rest of it.

"Who's the girl Finch?", I asked. He said nothing. It was clear it wasn't his girl friend, getting rid of a bimbo would be the best thing for a man in his position right now.

"Is she your daughter Mr Finch?", I asked.

He nodded, "They've taken her?", said Finch.

"I'm afraid so," I replied. "I want to help."

"There's nothing you can do Mr Humble. Please leave!"

he said. Pain was obvious on his face.

I would get nothing else out of him if I persisted, so I left. As I turned to walk out of the office, he said "Don't go to the police."

"No, I won't. I don't know that they can be trusted at this stage," I said.

I got into the lift. Halfway down, my cell phone rang.

"Humble," it was Dan.

"Look Humble, I went down to the manor, that old bloke you told me about?" he said.

"Yeah!" I replied.

"Dead, bullet in the back of the head," said Dan.

"Oh shit. Look Dan, there's a bent cop involved in this. Stay on do nothing until I arrive," I said.

"Right," he said & hung up.

I left Finch Holdings and arrived at the police station about twenty minutes later. As I walked up to the front doors, I felt something horribly wrong. It was a feeling of impending disaster. The closer I got, the worse it became. I was aware of two police officers approaching quickly from behind. They caught up to me and I stopped instinctively.

"Bruce Humble?" one asked.

"Yeah, what do you want?" I replied.

"You're under arrest," he said.

"Arrest my ass, what charge?" I asked.

"Murder sir," said the officer, pulling out his cuffs.

"I'll take more than two of you fellas to put

those on me!" I exclaimed "I go without em, or I don't go: Simple!" I snapped.

"My orders --"

"To hell with your orders sonny. I'll come with you,"

Both officers pulled their guns. It took only a second or two before I had them in my hand.

"You're pissing me off buddy," I said. "let's go."

I was directed to the processing room. The police commissioner stood there expectantly. As I handed the guns back to the officers, Dan smiled. The commissioner said "Book him: Murder one," and left.

"What's going on Dan?" I asked. As if I didn't know.

"You have the right to remain silent — do you understand these rights?" he said. The whole Miranda. Jesus, what a load of shit this was. Dan was standing where

the other officers couldn't see. He winked. The

guard took me downstairs and Dan followed. I

was stoned in a cell. I knew straight away what had happened. The bent cop, whoever he

was, had pulled in very high places. I had come too close and there was a hell of a lot of

money at stake. I suspected the commissioner although I never said. The guard left the

cell and went back to his post by the monitor.

Dan came over.

"You're right thumble. Something stinks real bad.

Look, I can't talk to you again for a while,

we'll work something out down the line. What've you got that can help me?"

I recounted all events, names, places etc. and

Dan went back upstairs. I knew it would be a

while. He'd need to find out which officer

spoke to the old man at the jetty. That

could be pretty hard work since the old man was dead & the chances are that the investigator

reports would be phoney. I remembered Dan

saying that there had been a 'special service'

inquiry attached to Nathans computer lib.

that could be significant in some way. I tried to piece it all together. The conclusion I reached after an hour and a half was that the 'new directors' of Nathan machine tools had bumped off Nathan, because he vetoed the deal that would earn several billion dollars, millions of it probably in backhanders, for some reason, they'd kidnapped Finch's daughter, either because he was their means of financing the deal, or some other reason I hadn't been able to fathom yet. But I was sure it would surface at some time or other. It was, I was certain connected with the reason he was in the limo last night. Whatever he has that they want, they took his daughter to make sure that they got it. Only one thing really puzzled me about Finch. His wife provided an up to the minute resumé on him. Even her name was in there. I didn't see any mention of a daughter. Maybe, just maybe this daughter is the result of some former liason either before or after he ~~they~~ got married to Nora Finch. The Finchs had been married for eighteen years. Finch's daughter was about that age. He either found out about her recently, or simply, was caught up by time. Either way, the directors found out about her somehow. and now she was being held over his head like an axe. The other thing I thought of was why, and by whom the old man was killed. It was obvious that he knew something, because he told me that he'd spoken to police and told them of the inconsistencies as relates to some explosions and diesel engines. Only the police the old man spoke to, and I know about the diesel. My guess was that the ones who stole the Camaro, killed the old man after I'd spoken to him. They must have laid in wait until I'd gone. Dan would have certainly gone straight there. Did he find the old man alive or dead. My guess. Dead!

That brings me back to the reason I found myself behind bars. Whoever the inside man is in the cops, knew I'd spoken to the old man. He had to be in the office with Dan. It was Dan's habit to flick on the 'hands free' mode on the telephone to activate the speaker. I would ask him that later. Whoever was in the office was either the leak, or part of it. The commissioner took a dim view of me when I came in, then he always did. And if there was a bent cop or two, what would their part in all this be? Lastly, what, and by whom, was the meaning of the enquiry on the computer. I was surprised that no lawyer had shown up yet. That was very extraordinary. My prints hadn't been taken and I hadn't been questioned that made me very nervous. "Dan must know what's going on" I thought to myself. I called to the guard. He came over and asked what I wanted. I asked for a lawyer to see what would happen. He turned to walk away.

"What about a cup of coffee?" I said.

He nodded and brought me one back. I said "Thanks" he said nothing.

About three hours later, Dan came down.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"They're pinning the murder of the old man on you," he said.

"They're what?" I snapped "It wasn't me, but I know, or at least I think I know who's behind it."

"Yeah yeah humbly, just relay. I know it wasn't you. He wasn't dead when I got there. I watched you leave as I approached. I'm willing to bet it was the two guys in the Camaro. There was a girl with them. She looked scared to death, he was just about to talk, and he got his head blown off right in front of me. They didn't see me, but I saw them. The store was between us. I didn't see them actually shoot him, but the car was moving on but slow. Like I said, the store was in

the way. I took cover. But I did see the girl in the back. To all intents and purposes, no one but you knows I was there. I told the commissioner he was dead when I arrived. "I'll clear it up later. but for now. Just shut your mouth for Christ's sake", he said.

"Dan, who was in your office when I called you. This morning?", I asked.

"Reeves, why", said Don.

"He's the inside man, try and find out who he saw after he left your office".

"I already know. He went over to see the Mayor", said Don.

"Shit, that's a high level conspiracy. Tread carefully", I told Don.

Don left the cell; A few moments later, two detectives from another station came in. The cell door was unlocked and I was handcuffed. I put up a fight, but it did no good. They were very big, and very mean.

"What's going on?", I asked.

"Your being transferred", said one of them.

"Where to?" I asked. They said nothing. Just led me up the stairs and out back where an unmarked car was parked. I was unceremoniously

shut in the back and we drove away. As we drove, I had the feeling I wasn't going to any

police station, neither were these two policemen. One turned his head to the other and muttered something. The other said "Yeah" and laughed to himself. I managed to get my hands under me

and around my feet so that my hands were now in front. From my pants cuff, I took out the tungsten wire I used to open locks. I'd used it on cuffs many times before. The cuffs come under easily.

The car stopped for lights at Manchester & Kyle and I spun around onto my back and kicked the shit out of the door. I'd swung open and I jumped out, running and fast. The two men gave chase, leaving the car in the

middle of the road. It was clear I knew the back streets and alleys much better than they did although it took twenty minutes to lose them. Things had gone from bad to worse, Not only did I have those guys on my tail, I also had the whole police force looking for me. I had to get to the bottom of this once & for all. My ass was squarely on the line. However on the bright side the good Mrs Finch was paying the tab. I had ended up only two blocks from where I started. Finch's building. I went in and up the elevator. I didn't say anything to his secretary, just barged right in. There was no one else with him. Luckily he'd stayed in rather than lunch out or I'd have to wait until he got back. This time the secretary didn't follow me in. Finch looked up.

"You'll tell me now Finch. What is going on, who's involved and how. I've been dragged into this and it's the death penalty for me, if I make it to court. Now spit it out!!"

"Alright Humble, I'll tell you." he said. He told me everything. I discovered that the board of Nathan's directors could only sit with four members. Finch was the fourth, having been moved in to take Nathan's place. Since he owned the controlling interest in Nathan's machine tools Ltd. The 'big deal' with Iraq, was the supply of military components, under Government conventions, no one was permitted to provide anything military to Iraq but Nathan's seized on the opportunity to avoid certain bankruptcy. Powers, Johansson and Mary Tyne, the three directors had Nathan killed because he became an obstacle in the deal that was worth 6 Billion dollars. It would make the directors 2.5 million dollars each in backhanders, and save the company from inevitable doom. I wouldn't go along with the deal, so the directors put their men in my daughter's house, threatening to kill her if I didn't comply. I was to do everything to

a specific timetable so they knew where I'd be at any time. They'd call 5 minutes after the times I was to be somewhere and if I didn't answer, they were to kill my daughter, the mayor was tied up in it because he'd invested 13 million dollars of his own money in Nathans and stood to lose it all. His contact in the police is Reeves. He was on hand to question the old man, and found out that he knew too much since he could point out that the boat was not blown apart by natural causes, and Reeves had made out the report to say it had to cover for the murder of Nathan; Philips and Taylor killed the old man."

"On who's say so?"; I asked.

"The mayor. He said he'd fix it," said Finch.

"Fix it!?" He blamed it on me. How did he know I - --. Finch, you told him, you bastard!" I shouted.

"I - had - to. Don't you see my daughter?" Finch cried.

"You've got to let me help Finch, your daughter, and my ass depend on it." I said to the distressed Finch. He nodded.

I used the office phone to call Don. He answered and I told him not to use the speaker on the phone. I told him to bring the commissioner and meet me at Finch's office. He was to bring 10 officers who would wait outside for orders. Reeves would come as well, in a separate car with two others. The commissioner and Don did come, and do as I required. Don had made sure that Reeves would not be able to get out of the car. He was in the back section, with no handles & no way to get out. since Persper sealed off the front of the cars from the back.

Don & the commissioner listened as Finch repeated his story. The Commissioner ordered Reeves to be taken to the station and locked in the cells. to be questioned. that was executed with relish. Nobody likes a bent cop. Especially a straight one.

Another car was despatched to pick up Mayor Hadley, which was also done. Hadley and Reeves were put in the same cell at central. Both cars then rejoined the commissioner, Don & I at Nathans No 4 warehouse in Durham Street. Finch knew of its existence, he knew that's where secret meetings had taken place, and special materials for the military hardware to be made and shipped to IRAQ were stored. Finch came along for security reasons and was told to stay in the car. It was a good bet to hit this warehouse. As 12 of us surrounded the building, Don threw me my gun, (he'd taken it from the 'evidence' room and loaded it) and half a dozen 'speed loaders'. Inside the warehouse, was the black limo. There was also a white one, the three directors, with Philips and Taylor standing strong arm (I could see Finchs' daughter in the black limo) were there, along with four Arabs. There was two brief cases open on the hood of the white limo.

"Money" said Don quietly "Heaps of it".

I nodded. It was very good timing indeed. The proof was in those two brief cases on the hood. There was only one way out. We had to get in there without causing a hostage situation. Four men were sent to the large front doors. Four to the side door, only a small one, two up the fire escape and one to open the front doors for the others. The reasons for that approach is to avoid any police getting caught in the crossfire. The Commissioner gave the word.

"Go!" he shouted. The side door was kicked in and the top door. Myself, Don & the commissioner ran in stooped low through the side door, as the men upstairs roared in shouting "Freeze!". Philips made a grab for his gun. Don took him out with a shot to the chest. Taylor tried to grab the gun, but sled locked the doors

and he couldn't open them, he took out his gun as I reached the switch for the door. I opened, more men ran in Taylor went to take a shot, but decided better of it, as 13 guns bore down on him. He dropped his weapon, and put his hands in the air, as did the directors and the Arabs. All went suddenly quiet, as several other police cars, leaving that slots were fired, converged on the warehouses. All the men were taken into custody. Finch was fearful as he was reunited with his daughter. The Arabs were later released through diplomatic immunity and the directors, the mayor, Reeves (after a duffing up in the cells, which no one saw), Taylor and Philips were indicted and received twenty years a piece. I was cleared & finally got my phone back. Finch and his daughter had a hard time explaining things to his wife. But I called in later in that day to return her check.

"What are you doing Kumbh?" she said.

"Giving back your check," I replied.

She took it and tore it up. She smiled, handing me another. It was made out to 25,000 dollars for services rendered. The woman was happy to know her husband had no mistress & she'd gained a daughter.

"What's the check for?" enquired Finch.

I looked at her, she looked at me.

"Absolute discretion!" she said to me with a wink. Finch was none the wiser.

The End

F