

The Payoff +

“Lieutenant I need help, this big crazy fag is busting up the bar and the two of us can’t handle her. The only thing, I can do, is shoot her, and I don’t think that would be a good idea.”

“I’ll be right down. **K**Keep your distance, go outside and wait for me.”

A very large woman with her partner is accusing the bartender of calling the cops who is nervously pacing behind the counter.

“You son of a bitch you called the cops. I’m about ready to tear you a new ass.”

She throws a glass at him hitting the back mirror and shattering liquor bottles. Reaching over the bar she tries to grab the bartender, he runs out the back. She picks up a pool queue and smashes glass and anything the stick can reach.

“We need to leave before we get arrested,” said her partner.

“I’m not afraid of those chicken shit baster’s, you see how they run, nobody fucks' with Shirley.”

The front door swings open; Lieutenant Matson enters with Sergeant Dodge and two patrolmen following.

“Well, look who’s here, the big fuss. You want a queue stick across your brain? Be my guest asshole.”

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Matson approaches. She swings the stick; Matson backs away jumps forward and cold cocks her, she falls to the floor with a thump banging her head on the side of the pool table on the way down.

“You want to act like a man; then I’ll treat you like a man.”

The two patrolmen stare in disbelief.

“Damn Joe,” scratching his head,” “this is one for the book. I’m going to include this in the next training session,” said Dodge.

Three police pick the dazed woman up, handcuffs her and drag her to the police car and drive her to the police station.

Next day: Oakland Tribune. **Tough Cop Cold Cocks Lesbian.**

Seven Years later:

Nineteen sixty-nine. Oakland Police Department. Oakland, California. A large window covers the full east wall of the office with a view of Broadway Street. Captain Joe Matson is six foot two. A big tough cop, forty-four years old, slightly thinning black hair, blue eyes, light complexion, raspy voice with a tenor tone. Most mornings while sitting at his desk he angrily thinks of not being promoted to captain six years before. He passed the test with the highest score ever for captain and was passed over for another lieutenant by the name of Rowling. The Chief’s preference, who had a lower test score, costing Madson fifteen thousand dollars in lost pay. He expects everyone he does business with to make up for it, always letting others pay, receiving gifts and eating lunches at restaurants free. The restaurant owners knew that if they didn’t go along with the program they would not receive police protection. After he had bought thousands of dollars’ worth of materials for improving his house, he

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went bankrupt to avoid paying his bills. Matson never paid child support for his two children from his first marriage. Rowling was now Assistant Chief of Police, his boss.

Two o'clock. Sargent Whitey Dodge from the patrol division of the City of Oakland takes a call from the front desk. He rushes over to Captain Matson's office, and cracks open the door; the captain is talking on the phone. Matson looks up see's Dodge and recognizes something is wrong.

"I'll be home early honey," hangs up and glances at Dodge.

"Captain, I just got a call; there has been a homicide on Highland Avenue. Mrs. Margaret Holland and listen to this, the City of Oakland awarded housewife of the year!"

Sergeant Whitey Dodge was Matson's senior officer eighteen years before and had shown him the ropes, but could not seem to pass the test for lieutenant. He was a good cop; they were good friends, and Matson wanted him to make lieutenant, so he could assist him in running the traffic division. Dodge, pure white hair, a little overweight, five foot eight, blue eyes, a little bent over when he walks. He is very streetwise, watches the captain's back and knows police work in and out. He doesn't take orders from anybody but Matson. It has gotten him in trouble a few times, but Matson bails him out. They are good drinking friends. Both Dodge and Matson get drunk once in a while, especially Matson along with Detective Grayson.

"What the hell! Who's handling the call?"

"Middleton and Sinclair are on their way they were within two miles of the crime scene; they should be there about now."

"Who reported it?"

"Mrs. Holland's son. The medical team is already there, and Sergeant Ellis is somewhere in the vicinity, he has been notified."

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Ellis! Shit! I put him out there in the quiet area to get rid of him. You better get over there quick and straighten the mess out that Ellis makes.

"I'm going to see if I can get Grayson to give us a hand."

"Good luck Sir. We'll probably need all the help we can get! I'm on my way."

Matson gets on the phone to Detective Grayson. Grayson's phone rings three times.

"Grayson."

"Grayson, I need you on a homicide, are you available?"

"Captain?"

"Yeah, it's me. I need your help."

"Yes sir! What's up?" Dick Grayson, forty-three years old, very smart, six foot one, very thick brown hair, long sideburns, brown eyes, thick eyebrows, loves being a detective. He has no desire to move up the ranks. He is well liked and considered the best cop on the force. Grayson would rather work cases than sleep or eat. He continually chews on a cigar while talking at the side of his mouth and lights up when he thinks about it. Sometimes he stores half chewed cigars in his top suit stained jacket pocket. His suit is always wrinkled it looks as if he has slept in it. Divorced, one kid.

"Woman of the year, Mrs. Margaret Holland was murdered. Just got the call about fifteen minutes ago. Middleton and Sinclair at the scene. Dodge just left."

"The woman in the paper three months ago?"

"You got it."

"I think I can squeeze it in. You need me now?"

"I would appreciate it."

"You're on."

"Good. You and Dodge work on this together. Dispatch will fill you in. I'll call Dodge he will be waiting for you".

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“I’m on my way.” Grayson loves big cases; he gets the information and scrambles out the door.

Two hours later. Captain Matson’s office.

Officer Middleton knocks on his half-opened door.

“Come in. Middleton. What you got?”

Middleton comes in a little shaky, with a flushed face and sweaty palms.]

“Sergeant Dodge told me to fill you in sir.” Middleton a young cop is slightly built, with red hair and freckles. While on foot patrol, he got his leg injured in a scuffle, was then assigned to a cruiser with senior patrolman, Arnold Sinclair.]

“Yeah so?”

“Sergeant Dodge and the detective Grayson are collecting evidence. Arnold is trying to calm down the son and husband. Two other officers arrived as well as an ambulance that took the body away.

“Give me a brief description of what you know. What was the cause of death? Do they have a suspect?”

“She was lying on the floor; It looked like she was strangled. I did not see any blood, she was twisted into a fetal position. There were broken dishes and glass on the floor. Sergeant Dodge said he would have a full report when he comes in.

“Don't talk to anyone, especially the press.”

“I won't sir.” Matson looks out the window of his third-floor office.

“I expect the press will be swarming in front of the police headquarters since the murdered woman was a celebrity. I don't want any information leaving this building until I say the word.”

“Yes sir.”

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“Take a break Middleton! Get some coffee or whatever. It looks like you need it. Eventually, you will get used to murder cases; there are a lot of them around here”.

“I’m OK Sir.”

“Stick around I may need you later.”

“Yes sir. Middleton leaves.”

A few hours later.

Front desk. Matson’s speaker. “Captain! Dodge called. He is on his way back”.

“Tell him I need a report of the homicide by ten a.m. tomorrow morning. I’m going home. If he needs me, he knows how to reach me.”

Front desk. “Will do Captain.”

Nine a.m. Next morning.

Matson’s office; speaker phone is buzzing.

“Captain, Paul, front desk. Chief Vernon is on the phone. Has been trying to reach you, says it is urgent sir.”

“OK, thanks.” Dials the chief.

“Christ! Joe, where have you been? Did you read the Tribune this morning? Front page news, Mrs. Margaret Holland woman of the year killed. Wife of Dr. Ralph Holland well-known physician. I hear your guys were on the scene, I need to know what’s going on. The Mayor is on my ass. The press is trying to reach me. They appeared in front of my house and have been following me everywhere. I have no goddamn answers. Holland is one of the Mayors best friends, and the doctor is one of our

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councilman's physicians. I need a report from you a.s.a.p. I am sitting here on a bomb, dumbfounded, and the shit is hitting the fan. Do you know who did this?

"Not yet sir! But I am right on top of it! I got a briefing from some of my officers yesterday. Sergeant Dodge and Detective Grayson are bringing me a complete report on the details at ten o'clock, and we will be discussing the case then. You are welcome to join us if you wish."

"I won't be available to attend. I need a written report today from you by eleven thirty. I'll see you personally at my office at 3pm." Hangs up.

[Ten o'clock, Captain Mason's office. Dodge knocks on the side of the opened door. Grayson puts his chewed cigar in his slightly stained suit jacket pocket.]

"Come in! Have a seat guys; all hell is breaking lose." Dodge hands Mason the report.]

"Here's the report captain."

"Give me a minute guys, have some coffee."

"We're fine. We have been drowning in the stuff since six o'clock this morning, said Dodge.

Buzzer rings; Matson pushes the button to the front desk.

"Tell him I'll talk to him later. Hold off the calls for a while, I'm in a meeting."

"You got a suspect?"

"No, said Dodge, but we have fingerprints manually all over the place. We took pictures and prints. I took them down to the lab for identification. She was strangled by someone with strong hands as I wrote in the report. The son was at school at the time of death. The father, a doctor, was with a patient during that time, it all checks out. Nobody was seen by the neighbors approaching the house at that time or before. The next door neighbor to the west was not home. We haven't talked to all the neighbors yet, either they were not home or not available."

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“How many neighbors did you contact approach?”

Dodge unfolds a map. I thought you would ask that question so I came prepared.

“Good.”

“This is a map of the whole area, I have marked out the houses that---

Matson gets up from his swivel chair.” Let’s go over to the table and spread the map out. He reaches for his glasses in the left pocket of his light blue shirt.

“Sure!” Dodge spreads the map out.

“As you can see, the area is very hilly and covered with trees. The home sites are from a quarter acre to one acre. The sixteen houses marked in yellow are the residents we were able to interview yesterday. The fifteen houses marked in red are the residents we are questioning today. The twenty houses marked in green are the ones we will be talking to next. Any family members we cannot contact during the day we will try to contact at their work or tonight at their homes. We will interview every person living in these houses, if necessary.

“How many officers are working on the case?”

“Two officers on site and two officers following up on information and interviewing people at work, school, or where ever it leads us.”

“Double up on your interviewing or triple up if you have to and hit the green area now!

Someone has seen something. Someone entered the murder scene and had to leave either by auto or foot. I’m going to put Lieutenant Connolly to oversee the interviews. He was a damn good detective before he made the rank of lieutenant. Dodge, this will relieve you of some of the pressure so you can concentrate on solving this case with Grayson. I still want you to be my go to guy, you need to keep me informed daily. I need a report to the Chief at eleven thirty, and I need results. If either of you get a suspect, call me immediately at the office at home, at lunch, at the club in the shitter or send a messenger and find me. Sorry guys, we're not finished, but this interview is over, see you at ten in the

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morning.”

Thursday morning ten a.m. Captain’s office. Dodge and Grayson seated.

“The Chief wants me to continue on the case. That means you, Grayson, are officially assigned to me. Captain Bradford, your boss at your beloved detective division, has been notified by the chief that your ass belongs to me until this case is resolved. Move your desk across from Whitey, I want you two geniuses to brainstorm this and be in each other's faces. I’m depending on you two. Soon I am going to need Lieutenant Connolly back here watching the patrol division. I have a feeling that we are going to be very busy.

“That's fine by me; I am already on It. Hell I don't need to explain the entire case to someone else, said Greyson.

Matson looks at Greyson. “I assume we have no suspect since I have not been notified.”

“We are hard on it.”

“We have a report from different people of cars that were seen coming and going from the crime scene. The problem is that people don’t pay much attention to the traffic. Everyone has a different description of what the cars looked like, but one car was noticed by a young man doing landscaping on the block. He said he saw a red fifty-seven Corvette convertible with a white top. He said it was his dream car, and he couldn't miss it. It's a long shot, but we are checking it out,” reported Dodge.

“Good.”

“The coroner has the time of death down to one hour, between ten thirty and eleven thirty and that car fits in that period, as well as a few others. We have four cars ninety percent positively identified and nine more between forty percent and eighty percent identified. Our auto search and investigation

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will cover from one hour to the estimated time of death to a half hour after the homicide was committed. That puts the homicide between nine-thirty a: m and twelve o'clock noon. We want to check every car and driver within two streets in every direction that match any close description of those identified automobiles," said Greyson.

"With your OK we will pull over and check the identity of any car close to the description of those cars seen," said Dodge

"Get started! I'll clear it with the chief unless you hear otherwise. We have to keep rolling, this thing is in my pocket, and the whole city wants results. While the daylight shines, keep checking the automobiles until I give you the word otherwise. Keep at it boys.

"Yes sir, we will get our man!"

"You bet," said Dodge. They leave.

The following Tuesday

[Dodge and Grayson talking, their desks have been moved right across from each other.]

Dick I have three suspects, two men identified in their vehicles and one neighbor two blocks away that were seen in the vicinity at the time of the homicide. They are scheduled for fingerprinting tomorrow. They were a little reluctant, but they have all volunteered to come down to the police station to clear their names.

"We're lucky the victim was such an excellent housekeeper, we only found three sets of fingerprints and the killer is surely one of them."

"We better go tell the captain about the fingerprinting," said Dodge.

"Got to keep him happy."

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Thursday: Back in the Captain's office.

“I am sorry sir; we couldn't find a match. We checked out everyone on the list; we no longer have any suspects.”

“Damn it! Sergeant Dodge. We have been together for a long time. You were once my senior and I know you can find whoever did this. Detective Grayson you are the best detective we have. That’s why I put you on this case. So let's put our heads together and figure out what we need to do to solve this case.”

“We have the killer's fingerprints from the house; I'm sure. I just need a suspect,” said Grayson.

“Shit! Where is this guy? Find him! That’s all we need.”

“You know, we haven't seen that red Vette, quoted Dodge scratching his head.”

“What red Vette?”

“The one in the report the one that kid doing the landscaping identified at the time of the homicide.”

“Christ, that car could be anywhere! There are hundreds out there,” and besides the car could be just passing through, said Grayson.

“Not red fifty-seven Corvettes. We need to check every clue including this one. Get hold of dispatch and see if they can get DMV to search for a fifty-seven red Chevy Corvettes in the area. If we find one, then we can go to the judge and ask for a search warrant. Those cars are not driven that often and could be sitting in someone's garage. Then if that fails we start asking new and used car dealers and if that doesn't work, we keep looking. I can't let this thing die, and Whitey keep pushing your men I need results.”

“My hunch is if a red fifty-seven Vette is in the neighborhood most people would know who owns it. If we ask the question first and find it, we will save a lot of time, said Greyson.”

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“Now we're talking. Let's move on it!”

Next day, Grayson and Dodge at their desks. Grayson leaning back in his chair chewing on his cigar.

“Holy mother! Why didn't we think of this before?”

“I don't know; it was a long shot. Who would believe that a red car passing by and parked next door could be the killer's car, it's just too easy? It generally doesn't work that way. We better call the captain; he is not in his office, so we need to track him down.”

“Where is he?”

“He is not home I just called. He is not answering his radio. I notified all the officers on duty, they always know where he is. They will find him, said Dodge

“I can guess why.”

Twenty minutes later. “Damn it! Whitey, this better be good! A man can't even have a private moment.”

“Uh, Captain, I think we got our guy.”

“What! We had nothing yesterday; this better be good!”

“The man, who owns a red fifty-seven Corvette, lives next door to the crime scene. We have a matched fingerprint. We need to pick him up for questioning. We need a warrant, for a search.”

“I'll be there in half an hour. You and Grayson go directly to my office and wait for me there.”

“Right on sir!” Hangs up.

Grayson pacing the floor in the captain's office. Dodge is sitting down going over his notes.]

“Damn it! We need more fingerprints. I want to get this over with,” said Grayson.

Captain come's flying through the door. “Ok Guys, clue me in. I want complete details!”

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“The Holland kid.”

“What?”

“The Holland kid knows about the red Vette, says Grayson.

“How? Where? What?”

While Dodge's men were asking questions in the neighborhood, I had a hunch that if there was a red fifty-seven Vette around the neighborhood the Holland kid might know, so I asked him and bingo! He did.”

“He did!”

“The Holland kid said the guy next door has a 1957 Vette.

“Where?”

“In his garage. I went around the side of the house and looked in through the window of the side door and there it was, just like the kid said. We need to pick up the suspect for questioning.”

“I need more evidence for an arrest. Seeing the red Vette going down the street around the time of the homicide doesn't put him at the scene of the crime. What's his name?”

“Leland Farland, thirty-seven years old, five foot eleven. Brown hair, blue eyes, husky, around two hundred twenty pounds. Works for his father, Richard Farland, a prominent contractor. Divorced, two kids, lives alone. The house, he lives in, is owned by his father. I have a fingerprint from a dusted door knob to the side door of Farland's house that we took a picture of. It matches one of the prints in the Holland house and his government fingerprints.”

“I don't want to hear about how you got the print from the Farland residence but are you one hundred percent sure?”

“About ninety percent. The lab is taking a more detailed second look.

“Let's take that second look and keep looking for more evidence. I need to make a case to the judge for a warrant.”

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“If I can get him in here, I can get a confession, I’m sure of it.”

I am sure you can, Dick; you are the best we got. You know I need more evidence to go before a judge and get that warrant. I know you are anxious to solve this case, let's give it a little time and get it right, besides the fingerprint on the wall doesn't mean he killed her.”

“You're right sir, but I know if I get him in here and he is guilty, I will get a confession out of him.

“I’m sure, but we have to follow procedure.”

“Sorry to call you in without enough evidence,” said Dodge.

“We are all in this together; you did the right thing, I just need more evidence.”

Next day Matson walks by Dodge's desk.

“Any more info, on the Holland case?”

Typing looks up.” Oh, captain! I didn't see you.”

“How we doing, on the Holland case?”

“I was just going to call you. Grayson will be here this afternoon; he has been hanging around the Farland construction office asking questions. I think we have enough information to bring him in for an interview. It looks like Farland wasn't at the office during the time of the crime.”

“That doesn't prove he was on the crime scene.”

“Yes, but we have more, the fingerprint match came in, ninety-nine percent.”

“Wow! Great work! But we need more evidence. As soon as Grayson gets in call me, I will be in my office. Or better yet, call Grayson and tell him to come direct to the office after he finishes, I will be waiting.”

“Yes sir.”

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Matson is on the phone.

The captain's door is left open. Dodge sticks his head in the doorway, Matson motions with his hand to come and sit down. Matson continues on the phone.]

"Yes, we need to arrest those assholes. Double up on patrol, call Sergeant Luck and tell him, I said to bring his whole squad over. Good." Hangs up. He looks at Dodge and Grayson.

"Those bastards are shooting at cops."

"I heard," Dodge replies.

"Spill the beans, Dick."

"As Whitey told you, I have been hanging around the Farland offices asking questions. The father threatened to throw me out and challenged my authority. I told him if he felt that way, I would get search warrant and drag them all down to the station.

"That always works."

"He calmed down and agreed for limited questioning. I told him I was not accusing his son of anything; I just need information to solve this case, and I was there to eliminate suspects. I asked the senior Farland if his son had been at the office the day of the murder and he said yes. I asked him if his son was present during the time of the homicide between ten thirty and eleven-thirty, and he said he thought so, but was not his son's babysitter. At that moment, he said he needed to talk to his attorney before any other questions were asked."

"Who was the attorney?"

"Guy Gilmore, from San Francisco."

"Yeah, I have seen him around. Does high profile defense cases. This guy must be as guilty as hell to have an attorney like that, go on."

"Well, Farland then called his lawyer and after the call asked me if I would come back at one thirty today when his attorney was present. I agreed. When I returned, the attorney was there as well as

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the senior Farland and his son.

”Gilmore?”

“Yeah, I talked to his son first, and he said he was at the office all day except for lunch. I asked him what time he went to lunch, and he said he did not remember. I then asked him if he knew approximately what time. He looked at his father and said he was very busy that day and it could be somewhere between twelve and one o’clock. I asked him if anyone was with him, and he said no. I talked to a few other employees and they did not know if he was there or not. But the receptionist was another story. She was a temp and had been working there for three weeks and this is where I got lucky. She said she did not see Leland that day. I asked her if she was sure, and she said yes because people were calling for him all day, and she told them he was not there. At that moment, I saw the senior Farland's face turns red. The receptionist looked at her boss and said, quote, “I did not take this job to lie to the police and incriminate myself. I quit!” The receptionist then picked up her purse a few personal items and left the office. At that moment, the senior Farland said, “this meeting is over.” He, his son and his attorney left the room.

“Wow! I think you got your reason for an arrest warrant, let's move forward.”

Next morning ten o’clock. Chief calls Matson.

“Good morning, sir.”

“Joe I hate to tell you this, you’re doing a good job on the Holland case but the pressure is building up from the mayor, the media, the council and others. I am taking over the case as of now!”

“This guy looks guilty as hell; we have a handle on it. It won't take long to resolve this case.”

“I am taking the case over,” said the chief. “I need you for other tasks. Why don’t you and your wife come over to my house for dinner Saturday night? I have a good bottle of bourbon waiting; my wife's a hell of a cook! Let me know. Hangs up. Matson is stunned.

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Mumbles. Something isn't right. Slumping in his chair, he calls Dodge.

“Whitey, stop everything on the Holland case.”

“I just got the Farland arrest warrant. I am on my way out the door with it in my hand.

“I need you and Dick in my office right now!”

Dodge knocks and enters. Grayson follows.

“You need to sit down guys; I have bad news. Pauses. We are all off the Holland case.”

Grayson moves forward in his chair. “Did I hear you right captain?”

“You heard me right; the chief is taking over the case.”

“We have this case ninety percent locked up! Waves the warrant. “Who is going to investigate it?”

“I don't know? The chief is in charge. There is nothing I can do.”

“Hell, I got the guy! I'll bag this guy by this afternoon,” said Grayson.

“It's out of our hands.”

“We bust our asses for what?”

“Shit! I don't know Dick! Let's go to an early lunch and get drunk, the first round of drinks are on me!”

Matson and Dodge, three weeks later in Matson's office.

“Whitey, how about you and a few of your trusted men keeping a close watch on the chief and see what he is up to. There is nothing going on with the Holland case and keep it quiet.”

“Be glad to sir. Weird, nobody here is working on it. It's as if the case never existed. We were so close.”

“I sure would like to have that one back.”

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“A damned shame, Captain.”

Six months later.

Dodge sees Matson walking to his office. “Captain I got to talk to you right away.”

“What about?”

“It’s very private sir.”

“Follow me. They enter Captain Matson’s office.

“Do you mind if I shut the door, Captain.”

“This must be very private.”

“The Chief is having a new house built.”

“Oh yeah?”

“And guess who is building it?”

“Do I think I know what you are going to say?”

“Farland! The Chief was seen there by my officers, a sign on one of the trucks said Farland Construction. So I checked with the building department, and it was the chief’s house all right and old man Farland is the builder.”

“You got to be kidding! He made a deal with the devil!”

“I got five months to go on my retirement and I am out of here!!”

“He traded a life for a house.”