

THE DETECTIVES OF THE 9TH PRECINCT

THE DOPPELGANGER

PART 1

“Steve you know what they say?”

“Who?”

“They.” Neal replies.

“Who are they?” Steve asks.

“They are everybody.”

“Everybody?” Steve repeats.

“Yeah and you know what they say?”

“We’re back to that again. No Neal what do they say?”

“That everybody has a twin!” Neal replies.

“Everybody has a twin?”

“Yeah and yours is right here!” Neal replies as he looks at the picture.

“Bah! I bet he doesn’t look anything like me!” Steve replies.

“Are you crazy!? You two guys could be twins!”

“Who is it anyway?” Steve asks.

“You know that guy from that band!!”

“Band? What band?” Steve asks.

“I don’t remember the name of it! Travel? Trip? Something like that. Jaunt! Jaunt? Damn it! It’s on the tip of my tongue! Ruby loves them. Anyway, it’s too bad that you don’t think that you look anything like him.”

“Why?” Steve asks suspiciously.

Steve scratches the back of his neck as he looks at the girl. "You have been belly aching for the past hour and a half about being hungry. You said you didn't care where we went just so long as we went somewhere. You told me to pick a place so I did. I didn't know it was a strip joint."

"This place is called 'The Pussy Pit' somehow that didn't mean anything to you?" Neal asks as he continues to look at the girl. "Why are we here again?"

"Actually I think it's called 'The Pussycat Pit' the word cat is out on the sign. Is it hot in here to you?" Steve asks. "Dinner."

"May....be! Oh shit! Did the rest of that sign happen to say 'All Nude'?"

"I didn't notice. " Steve replies.

"How can anybody eat with that going on?" Neal asks.

"Neal, we're grown men it's not like we haven't seen a naked woman before."

"Oh yeah sure. Speaking of eating where's the waitress? This place has lousy service." Neal replies as he looks around.

"Well, with that going on up there they probably thought nobody would notice. Oh look there's a waitress! I'll see if I can get her attention!" Steve waves his arm at her. "Oh Miss! Miss! Over here! Can we get two beers please?"

The lighting in this place is dim and as she is walking over to their table she is smiling at them.

"Oh yes of course I'm sorry...."

But when she gets closer she stops smiling.

"Did you say that you wanted a beer?" She asks Steve.

"Yes....actually two...."

But Steve doesn't get to finish because in mid-sentence the waitress takes the half full glass of beer that she is carrying on the tray and she pours it into Steve's lap. Which causes Steve to jump and yell.

"HOLY SHIT! Hey! What in the hell are you doing?" Steve yells as he looks up at her.

"You want a beer! There's your beer!"

Steve slides out of the booth and Neal follows him.

"I want to see the manager!" Steve yells.

"Steve! Do you know that chick?" Neal asks.

The waitress turns and walks off fast towards the bar "Robert! Robert!"

"No I've never seen her before in my life!" Steve replies.

In the next couple of seconds they see Robert approaching them and even though the lighting in this place is dim Neal thinks he sees Robert carrying a baseball bat.

Neal moves closer to Steve putting his hand on his arm.

"Steve?"

Robert points the baseball bat at Steve. "I told you last night not to come back here!!"

Steve looks around then he looks at Neal then he points to himself. "Who in the hell are you talking to?" Steve asks.

Neal moves closer to Robert with his hand up. "Hey man put that down before somebody gets hurt."

Robert points the bat at Neal. "I don't know who you think you are! Mind your own damn business! This is between me and him there! Last night I told you...."

"Look you moron!!" Steve replies as he gets closer and Neal puts his hand on his shoulder to stop him which Steve shrugs off. "I wasn't in here last night! I've never been in here before! Ever!"

"What happen? Did you suddenly get a case of amnesia? Nobody comes in here and roughs up the girls!! Hear me! They're dancers! Not hookers!" Robert replies as he gets closer with the baseball bat. "I told you if you came back in here I would kick your ass!"

"For the last time! I wasn't in here last night or any other night!!" Steve moves closer to him as he pushes the baseball bat out of the way. "You got the wrong guy!"

Robert pushes Steve back then he puts the baseball bat up against Steve's chest.

"Steve!" Neal replies.

"If you're going to point that at me you damn well better use it!" Steve replies.

Robert laughs. "I don't need this baseball bat to kick your skinny ass!"

"Prove it then...." Steve replies.

"Robert!" The waitress yells from behind the bar. "Want me to call the cops?"

"NO!" Neal replies.

"Yeah you don't need the cops because...." Steve replies as he makes a move for his back pocket where his badge case is kept but before he can get to it, Neal grabs his arm and he pulls him back.

“HEY!”

“No! No cops’ man! Look we’re sorry! My buddy is sorry!” Neal replies.

“Like hell! Sorry my ass! We didn’t do anything Neal!”

“Look we’re going okay. Don’t call the cops. No harm no foul? Catch what I’m saying?” Neal replies as he gets a stronger grip on Steve’s arm.

“Get out and don’t come back! Especially you! You long haired creep!” Robert replies as he points the baseball bat at him.

“Creep? You son-of-a-....” Before Steve can finish Neal opens the door and he drags Steve outside to the street.

“What in the hell was all that about?!” Neal asks.

“I....I don’t know! Holy shit! What just happened?” Steve asks as he paces back and forth.

“These were my good pants!” Steve replies. “Why did you stop me from...?”

“Because I didn’t think it was such a good idea for us to be flashing tin at that particular moment, that’s why! Steve?” Neal looks at him.

Steve stops with his hands on his hips looking at Neal then he walks right up to him.

“I know what you’re going to ask me and the answer is no! No! And no some more! I have never been in there! Not once! Not ever!” Steve replies as he points to the building.

“Whatever went down there last night I had nothing to do with it!!”

“Where were you last night?”

Steve stands straight up with his hands on his hips. “WHAT!! What in the hell....are you asking me as a cop or my friend Neal? Because if that is the cop talking this conversation ends now!”

“Steve calm down....”

“Holy....shit! Don’t tell me to calm down!!” Steve yells.

Neal grabs him by his arms. “Breath.”

Steve takes a deep breath as he looks at the ground.

“It was a legitimate question.” Neal replies.

“I know and I’m not mad at you.” Steve replies as he looks at him.

Then Neal draws him into a hug as he talks in his ear. “It was simply a case of mistaken identity. It’s over and done with. Guess what?”

“What?”

"You're really cute when you're pissed off like that." Neal replies. "Guess what else?"

Steve smiles. "What?"

"I'm still hungry!" Neal replies as he pats him on the back then he lets him go. "Feel better?"

"Yeah, you always make me feel better. Let's go by that pizza place then we go back to my place. I'll change out of these pants, and we can eat pizza and play Monopoly. How's that?" Steve replies.

"Okay but I get the dog this time!" Neal replies.

"No I want to be the dog. You can be the car."

"Ah damn it Steve! I always have to been that old car, can't I at least one time be the dog!"

Steve rubs his forehead. "Neal, sweetheart, don't whine it's so unbecoming."

"Sorry."

Steve laughs. "Yes you can be the dog." Steve replies as he gets in the car.

"Thank you." Neal replies as he gets in the driver seat.

"But only you can talk me out of being the dog."

"I'm honored." Neal replies.

"You should be."

"My feet are killing me!" Neal exclaims as he drives off.

TWO DAYS LATER IN FRONT OF NEAL'S APARTMENT:

As Neal puts his two laundry baskets in the trunk of his car he vaguely wonders if any other single men are going over to their best friend place, on a Saturday, to do laundry. Somewhere, somehow he doubts it. Ever since his washing machine went on the fritz Steve was kind enough to let him use his. Again, Neal vaguely wonders if any other single men are going over to their best friend's place, on a Saturday, to do laundry as he puts down the lid of the trunk.

He needed to go back upstairs to get just one more thing and he was concentrating on doing just that when he collided with a young woman on the sidewalk. This collision causes her to drop her purse which Neal picks up for her.

"Oh I am so sorry I didn't see you there. Excuse me." Neal replies as he starts to go back up the stairs.

"You wouldn't by chance be Neal Schon would you?" Neal stops on one of the stairs and he turns back to look at her. She wasn't half bad looking he thinks. Long, blonde hair pulled back into a ponytail, a few tendrils escaping to frame her face. A short dress and high heel shoes. One foot tapping impatiently as she holds the purse on her shoulder that Neal had handed back to her. Chewing on a piece of bubble gum.

"Well? Are you or aren't you?" She asks as she brushes a strand of hair out of her eyes while at the same time blowing a bubble.

Neal comes back down the stairs to stand on the sidewalk in front of her as he scans the area. Cars are driving by on the street and people are walking by. It doesn't seem to be a set-up.

"I are...no...I mean I am. I'm Neal Schon. Do I know you? What's your name?"

"My name is Misty."

"Misty? Do I know you?" Neal asks again.

"No, no you don't but I know your partner."

"Steve? Oh you know Steve?" Neal looks her up and down again.

"Yeah and that's why I'm here. He told me to come and see you." Right then and there she puts her hand out, the other on her hip, as she blows a bubble. "You owe me forty dollars."

Neal just looks at her not sure he heard her right the first time. He puts his finger in his ear and he wiggles it around. "WHAT?"

Misty takes a deep breath with that hand on her hip as she looks at the sky then she looks back at Neal. "Are you deaf? I said you owe me forty dollars! Stevie said there wouldn't be any trouble in me getting it." She moves the fingers on her hand back and forth. "So give."

Neal takes his sunglasses off as he rubs his eyes. "Okay..."

"Misty. Misty Rains."

"Miss Rains? I don't understand what's going on? Steve sent you over here, for me, to give you forty dollars?" Neal replies as he points to himself.

"Yep that's right." Misty replies.

"You left out one part." Neal replies as he holds up one finger.

"What's that?" Misty asks him as she blows another bubble.

"What's the forty dollars for?" Neal asks.

"I would have thought that would have been pretty obvious by now." Misty replies.

"I guess Steve didn't tell you that I'm slow so...."

Misty blows another bubble. "I'm in public service."

Neal looks her up and down again then all of a sudden that light bulb goes off over his head as his eyes widen. "Oh shit....you're a...."

"Hooker!" They both say at the same time. Misty nods her head.

"Yeah." Misty reaches out and she pats Neal on the cheek. "Looks are important not brains sweetheart."

"Wait? What? No! Okay let's start over. Steve told you to come over here and get forty dollars from me?"

"Yeah." Misty replies as she twirls some hair around her finger.

Neal, in some ways he was afraid to ask this next question but then again in some other ways he was intrigued. "For what exactly?"

"He got laid now we want to get paid." Misty replies as she blows another bubble.

Neal starts to cough. "Did you say....we?"

"Yeah! There was me and my best girlfriend Josephine. She's waiting in the car." Misty points and waves at her as Neal looks back over his shoulder.

"There was two of you?" Neal asks as he looks back at Misty.

"Yeah it's called a twosome. You do know what that is....don't you? You're not a virgin are you?" Misty asks seriously.

"No."

"Gay?" Misty asks.

"No!" Neal replies.

"Celibate?" Misty asks.

"Most of the time but not by choice!" Neal replies. "Look! I still don't understand why you and your friend are hitting me up for forty bucks? I wasn't there! I didn't get any enjoyment out of it!"

"Because last night Stevie was a little short, I mean he was short in the money department. You know, Stevie was well hung." Then suddenly Misty was in Neal's space as she looked him up and down as she twirled her hair, chewing on her gum. Neal suddenly felt like a piece of meat hanging in the butcher shop's window. "He told me that you're Italian. I think he said

you're nickname was 'The Italian Stallion'? Is that you know, true?" Misty replies as she smiles at Neal.

Then Neal feels himself start to blush. "Well I you know...." Then Neal remembers who he is dealing with as he clears his throat.

"Stevie said that you would make it good." Misty then reaches out and she plays with a strand of Neal's hair. "You are going to make it good, aren't you, Ne....al?"

Neal swallows. "I...ah...just so there's no misunderstanding. We are talking about the same guy here, right? A guy with long, dark hair. My height and weight. Portuguese?"

"You left out sexy, well hung, and very attentive to a woman's needs and oh yeah, a cute little mole on his ass." Misty replies as she smacks her gum.

"Yeah damn it that sounds like Steve all right. Okay, well what happens if I don't pay you?" Neal asks.

"Oh well then you see we would have to send our collection agent to see you. You wouldn't want that." Misty replies.

"No?"

"His name is Bubba." Misty replies seriously.

"Bubba?" Neal repeats.

"He can bench press a Volkswagen."

Neal's eyes widen. "A Volkswagen? Really?"

Misty nods as Neal takes out his wallet and he gives her twenty dollars.

"I....I have some cash up in my apartment. Wait here and I'll go up and get it."

Neal turns, with some effort on his part, to go back up the stairs when Misty stops him.

"Neal." Misty replies sweetly.

Neal stops as he looks at the ground then he looks back at her. "Yes."

"On second thought better make that twenty-five dollars."

Neal straightens up with his hands on his hips turning around to look at her. "Twenty five dollars? What's the five dollars for?"

"A surcharge." Misty replies.

"A....A surcharge?"

"Yeah a girl's got to make a living you know." Misty replies as she smiles at him. "And oh, if you ever get lonely, I'll give you a discount. You and Steve. Two...for the price of one!" Misty replies as she blows a bubble.

Neal holds up two fingers as Misty nods at him and smiles. Neal then turns and finally goes back upstairs.

45 MINUTES LATER AT STEVE'S APARTMENT:

Neal knocks on Steve's front door then he opens it. "Are you decent?" Neal asks.

"Yeah, yeah I was making sandwiches. What took you so long I was getting worried?" Steve asks as he comes from the kitchen as he takes one of the laundry baskets from Neal.

"I was preoccupied." Neal replies as he carries the other laundry basket into the laundry room.

"Preoccupied? What was her name?" Steve asks. "You didn't sort this did you?" Steve asks.

"No I didn't I like being a rebel."

Steve turns on the machine and as it fills he adds the soap. "Go ahead put the sheets in." Steve instructs.

"You're closer." Neal replies.

"I'm not touching your sheets." Steve replies as he points to them.

"Why not? You touch my clothes. Why won't you touch my sheets?"

"I touch your clothes because I know what goes on in your clothes. I won't touch your sheets because I don't know what goes on in your sheets!" Steve replies.

Neal grabs the sheets and he puts them in the washer then he puts down the lid.

"Misty." Neal replies.

"What?" Steve replies as he is busy sorting thru Neal's laundry and putting them in nice little piles.

"I said Misty. Does that name ring any bells?"

"The Clint Eastwood movie? Play Misty for Me?" Steve replies.

"No. Can I have something to drink?"

"Oh yeah sure. Do you want a coke?" Steve replies.

"How about a beer?" Neal asks.

Steve looks at his watch. "Neal it's an eleven in the morning and we're on call this weekend."

"It's just one beer and I know what time it is. Please."

Steve looks at him. "Okay but just one. Finish sorting this." Steve points at the laundry on the floor as he goes into the kitchen. Neal has finish sorting by the time Steve comes back with the beer and he hands it to him as he opens his bottle of coke.

"So you were late getting over here because you were preoccupied with a girl named Misty?" Steve asks.

"Yeah."

"That's why I didn't touch your sheets." Steve replies as he smiles at him drinking his coke.

Neal looks at the floor as he laughs. "I need a smoke can we talk outside?"

"Yeah let me grab an ashtray and I'll meet you out on the patio."

Steve sets about looking for an ashtray as Neal wanders out to the patio cleaning the sand off of the chairs so they can sit down. Steve comes outside as he sits the ashtray down at Neal's side then he sits in the chair next to him.

"I was preoccupied with Misty but not for the reason you think." Neal replies.

"No?"

"No." Neal repeats. "I was preoccupied with Misty because we were talking about you."

"Me?"

"How do you feel about twosomes?" Neal asks.

Steve laughs as he looks at Neal. "Twosomes? Are you asking for yourself because you want to have one with me or are planning ahead for my birthday?"

Neal laughs as he has another sip of beer. "Now you know why I need a beer."

"Awkward. Twosomes make me feel awkward. I never know what to do with my hands." Steve laughs as he holds his hands up which causes Neal to laugh even harder. "Let me see. Remember way back when before I became a cop and you arrested me?"

"Yeah."

"I was staying on and off with those two girls?"

"Yeah?"

"Well it seems they liked each other more than they liked me." Steve replies as he winks at Neal.

"No! You never told me that!"

"Oh it's true. One night I came home and I walked in on them."

"And?" Neal asks.

"They offered and I couldn't turn them down. It was a real turn on. So....why are you asking again?"

"Because Misty told me that you and her and her girlfriend Josephine had a twosome with you last night." Neal replies as he looks at Steve.

Steve just sits there for a few minutes silent as he looks at Neal with his mouth open.

Neal then leans over and he puts his hand on Steve's chin closing his mouth.

"WHAT?" Steve replies loudly.

"I said Misty told me that you and her and her girlfriend Josephine had a twosome with you last night!"

"I don't even know anybody named Misty! But if I did and I had why would she come to you and tell you?" Steve asks.

Neal pats himself on the chest. "Because I'm the first bank of Neal."

"I don't....hey where are you going?" Steve asks when Neal gets up out of the chair and he goes back into the apartment then a few minutes later he returns handing Steve a beer.

"What's this for?" Steve asks.

"Trust me you're going to need it. I first I thought she was an informant...." Neal says as he watches Steve as he looks up, tapping his finger on his chin, while his other hand was tapping on his leg.

"No....doesn't ring any bells."

"Steve, Misty is a hooker." Neal replies.

Steve looks at him. "A hooker? Neal just so you know I have never paid for sex. Not ever! Have you?" Steve asks as he points at Neal and in a way of an answer he faces front and drinks his beer. Steve jumps in his chair as he slaps Neal on his leg. "You have? Haven't you! You old dog! When? Oh! Oh! Tell me, tell me, tell me! Was it recent?"

"Stop it! You sound just like a teenage girl wanting to hear some gossip. No it wasn't recent! I was in College...."

“College? Oh I bet that was tough calling your mom for money so you could get laid!” Steve laughs.

“Just so you know I had a part time job.”

“Neal?”

Neal looks at him. “No! I wasn’t a virgin!”

“How did you know I was going to ask you that?” Steve asks.

“Because I would have asked you the same thing. I was 15 or so when that happened, I was just a horny college kid and at the time it seem to be a good idea.”

“Wow that had to be pretty expensive for a college kid.” Steve replies.

“Not as expensive as what Misty hit me up for.” Neal replies.

“How much was that?” Steve asks as he takes another sip of beer.

“Oh forty dollars.” Neal replies and at the mention of the forty dollars Steve spits out the beer.

“Hey!” Neal yells as he stands up.

“Sorry!” Steve wipes his chin.

“Actually it was forty five dollars.” Neal replies as he wipes his arms.

“FORTY-FIVE DOLLARS! Wow!”

“Yeah five of that was a surcharge.”

“A surcharge?” Steve replies.

“A girl’s got to make a living you know.”

Then Steve starts to laugh as he walks over and leans on the railing of the balcony. “Neal! She was hustling you! She was yanking your chain! It was a come on! You didn’t give her any money did you?”

“I really didn’t have any choice. She threaten me with the likes of Bubba.”

“Bubba?” Steve replies.

“Yeah Bubba. A big guy with arms the size of tree limbs. He can bench press a Volkswagen.”

“Neal! I can’t believe you! You fell for it! Like a big tree in the forest!” Steve replies as he shakes his head.

“Well you know any other time I probably wouldn’t have but....”

Steve just looks at him. "But...?" Steve replies as he takes another drink.

"She said you were well hung." Neal replies.

First Steve chokes then he starts to cough. Neal pats him on the back.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah." Steve pats himself on the chest. "It just went down the wrong way. She said that?"

"She's a pro Steve and she was quite impressed with you." Neal replies as he points at him.

"She was? I mean she was. What else did she say?"

"She said that you're sexy...."

Steve just smiles and shrugs as he looks at the ground.

"And that you were very attentive to her and Josephine's needs."

Steve puts his finger in Neal's chest. "See I told you Neal the woman always comes first!!"

"She also said that you told her about me." Neal replies as he points to himself.

"About you?" Steve replies. "What....what did she say that I said about you?"

"That you call me the 'Italian Stallion'." Neal replies.

"I....yeah...well you know I do call you that."

"But this last one is what really convinced me." Neal replies just as Steve bends over to put his beer bottle on the ground. "That cute little mole that's on your ass."

Steve puts his hand on the left side of his butt as he stands up.

"It's still there isn't it?" Neal asks him.

"The last time I looked, which was this morning but how do you....?"

"Steve have you forgotten that we have lived together?" Neal replies.

"No." Steve replies as he scratches the back of his head.

"The stuff I have walked in and the stuff I have heard! I'm surprised I'm not blind or deaf! And you have the nerve to ask me how I know it's there?"

"Sorry! I have apologized for all of that. But Neal that wasn't me! That wasn't me!" Steve replies.

"Then how does she know all of that stuff?"

"I don't know but she was right about a few things." Steve replies.

"Such as?" Neal asks.

"Well I am sexy, I am very attentive to women's needs and I am well hung."

At this Neal starts to laugh and Steve makes a face.

"What's so funny?"

"Steve have you forgotten that we have lived together?!" Neal replies as he laughs. "Okay if that wasn't you, where were you last night? And how does this person know so much about you? And me?"

Steve looks sheepishly at him. "I was on a date."

"Uh huh!" Neal replies.

"Not that kind of date! A real date. Her name is Amy."

"Amy? Amy? That name doesn't sound familiar. Is she new?" Neal asks.

"Yes she's new. Neal honestly I don't know why she said all those things to you. And I don't know who this guy is and I don't know how he knows all this stuff about me and you."

"Steve you know I don't care about your sex life and I don't care who you have sex with..."

"What about your cousin Samantha and Ruby?" Steve asks.

"Well, in that case maybe I do care just a little. I just can't figure out why, whoever that was last night, told Misty to come to me for the money?" Neal replies.

"Because they knew that you were good for it." Steve replies.

"That is exactly what Misty said. That I was good for it." Neal replies as he scratches his chin.

"I'll be right back!" Steve replies as he runs into the apartment then he comes back a few minutes later.

"Here Neal take this twenty." Steve replies as he hands it to Neal.

"Oh Steve I couldn't." Neal replies as he hands it back to Steve.

"Yes Neal you can. I feel bad. Go ahead and take it. On Monday I'll go to the bank and get the other twenty."

Neal takes the twenty from Steve. "Thanks and it's twenty-five." Neal replies as he puts it in his pocket.

"Damn! That had to be an expensive blow job." Steve replies.

"I'm pretty sure that was the premium package. Drinks included."

"You're still not convinced that it wasn't me, are you?"

Neal just looks at him.

"What can I do to convince you?" Steve asks.

"Okay, this going to sound silly, but I want you to swear on something that means more to you than anything."

Steve thinks about this for a minute then he puts his hand on Neal's chest. "I swear to you Neal, last night, that wasn't...me."

Neal smiles as Steve pats him on the chest. "Okay." Neal replies.

"Oh you know I do remember how you saw that mole!" Steve replies.

"How?" Neal asks.

"We used to take baths together! Remember!" Steve replies happily.

"Steve we were six years old! And for some strange reason, only known by our mothers, they like to put us in situations they thought were cute so they could take pictures. Like that bath and they even dressed us alike."

Steve and Neal look at each because they are both wearing the same t-shirt and pants.

Neal scratches his head. "Well maybe that wasn't all them."

"Neal!! I have a great idea!!" Steve replies as he slaps Neal on the shoulder.

"No! Steve! I have seen that look before! Down boy!!"

"Oh come on! We've been talking about it and it's been so long!! Please! I want to do it!! Neal please!"

"Oh alright!"

Steve jumps up and down as he runs into the apartment. "Just stay right there!" Steve yells from the apartment.

"Don't we need the table?" Neal asks.

"No we can use your lap!" Steve replies as Neal sits down in the chair.

"Bring a towel while you're at it!" Neal yells.

A few minutes later Steve comes back as he drapes the towel over Neal's head.

"Hey! This is my towel!" Neal replies.

"Of course! You don't think you're going to use one of my towels do you?" Steve replies as he drops the photo album down onto Neal's lap.

"Owww shit!" Neal replies as he yanks the towel off of his head. "You could at least warn me you were going to do that!"

"Sorry!" Steve replies laughing as he sits down.

Neal uses the towel to wipe his arms as Steve opens the photo album.

"Look it's the one in the bathtub!" Steve replies. "Look how cute we were!"

"Look how little we were!! Oh yeah I almost forgot to mention one other thing that Misty told me."

"What's that?"

"She said she would give us a discount. You and me and her...two...for the price of one." Neal replies as he holds up one finger.

"Really?" Steve replies. "Two for the price of one?"

"Yeah."

"That sure would beat the hell out of getting socks for my birthday!" Steve replies as they laugh. "Oh look at this one!!" Steve replies as he points to another picture.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON AT THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF OCEANVIEW:

"Damn I wish Monica had been there." Steve replies as they leave the bank. "We should have come yesterday."

"We were too busy yesterday. You really like her don't you?" Neal asks.

"Yeah. She has the most beautiful eyes I have ever seen."

Neal smiles. "I think you got it bad for her."

"Oh look! Here she comes! "Hey Monica!" Steve replies as he waves at her.

Monica is crossing the street with a few other people on her way back to the bank when she looks up to see who is calling her. And when she sees its Steve that's when she tries to avoid him.

"Hey Monica! Over here!"

She runs across the rest of the street and she heads toward the back of the bank but Steve beats her there.

"Hey Monica. Didn't you hear me calling you?" He replies as he puts his hand on her arm.

"Don't touch me!" She snaps back at him.

Steve puts his hands up. "Okay. I'm sorry is there something wrong?"

"Yes. I was wrong in thinking that you were a gentlemen!" Monica then raises her hand and slaps Steve hard across the face.

"Owww! Hey what was that for!" Steve replies as his hand goes to his cheek watching her as she walks away.

"Don't ever speak to me again!!"

"But..."

"Wow that was some slap. Are you okay?" Neal asks.

"I'm not sure. I think she might have loosen a few fillings." Steve replies as he rubs his cheek.

"Here open, let me see."

Steve opens his mouth as Neal looks in it and after a few seconds Steve says something.

"What?" Neal asks.

"I said people are staring at us."

"When haven't they stared at us?" Neal replies. "All your fillings seem to be intact."

"Thank you Doctor Welby how much do I owe you?" Steve asks as they walk back to the car.

"How about my twenty-five dollars?" Neal replies.

Steve hands him the money. "Here."

"Thank you."

They both get in the car and sit there while Neal puts the money in his wallet.

"I would ask what all of that was about but I think I already know the answer. Three times isn't a coincidence. In police vernacular that is called a pattern. " Neal replies.

"Damn it!! Now I'm pissed!!" Steve replies.

"You mean you weren't pissed before?" Neal asks.

"No! Damn it! I really liked Monica and now some low life, who thinks he's me, probably ruined all my chances with her! I've been trying for weeks to get her to go out with me!"

"Is she playing hard to get?" Neal asks.

"No I don't think so. She told me she can't date bank customers at least that is what she told me. I like to think that's the reason anyway."

"What other reason would there be?" Neal asks.

Steve shrugs. "Oh I don't know. She doesn't like me or she doesn't think I'm attractive!"

"Steve I don't know any women that don't think you're attractive. You're a good looking guy."

Steve looks at Neal. "Thanks Neal I know you love me but its Monica I'm not too sure about!"

Neal laughs. "Okay well maybe if you explain it to her...."

"You heard her I can't speak to her ever again! What am I supposed to do now when I go to the bank and her window is the only one that is open? Besides how can I explain it to her when I don't even know what in the hell is going on?!"

"Well this guy hasn't done anything criminal he's just being a royal pain in the ass. He would have to follow you to find out where you bank and to find out where I live. Have you noticed anybody following you?" Neal asks.

"No and don't you think I would have noticed somebody following me that looks like me!?" Steve replies as he points to himself.

"Well what if he doesn't look like you when he's following you? What if he looks like somebody else when he's following you?" Neal replies.

Steve sits there for a few minutes looking at him. "What! What in the hell did you just say?"

"I meant maybe he's wearing a disguise."

"And then he finds a phone booth to change into his Steve Super Suit when he needs to be me? Oh god I have a headache!" Steve replies as he puts his head in his hands. "I need some aspirin."

"I don't think there is a bottle of aspirin big enough to fix this mess. What time does Monica get off of work?" Neal asks.

"Five. Why? What idea is forming in that curly head of yours?" Steve asks.

"Well we're cops so I'm going to do what cops do." Neal replies.

"What do cops do?" Steve asks.

"Investigate. I'm going to talk to Monica and see what she can tell me about this cat. And I might even go and talk to Robert and maybe even...." Neal replies.

"Maybe even....what?" Steve looks at him. "Neal? You wouldn't do that? You couldn't do that? I mean could you? Neal! I can't believe you would even entertain the thought...."

"Steve I'm having a dry spell." Neal replies.

"Well yeah but not with Misty!!"

"Why not? I mean she really liked me! That 'Italian Stallion' thing had her lit up like a 200 watt light bulb!" Neal replies as he pats himself on the chest.

"Neal! She likes everybody!" Steve replies as he spreads out his arms. "It's her job!"

"Well that's nice!!"

"I didn't mean it THAT WAY and you know it!" Steve replies.

"She told me if I ever got lonely and Steve I'm lonely. Besides she told me she would give me a discount."

"I thought that discount was for both of us?" You know two..." Steve holds up two fingers.

"...for the price of one? Wait! You aren't thinking of....?"

"What? Oh no! Besides you and me we could never do that. It just wouldn't work out." Neal replies.

"Why do you say that?" Steve asks.

"Because we would argue over who goes first, not to mention who goes where and then we would argue over what position would be better, that's why! And no woman wants to wait while we play two out of four games of Rock, Paper, and Scissors!"

"Doggy...."

"Missionary...." Neal replies.

"That's boring." Steve replies quickly.

"See I told you!!!"

"What was the point of this conversation again?" Steve asks.

"Talking to the people your twin has visited."

"Don't call him that." Steve replies. "He's ruining my reputation."

"Exactly. We should tell the Captain about this. Just in case he playing cops and robbers. Impersonating a cop. Now that's a crime." Neal replies.

"I still need some aspirin."

"Okay we're stop at the drug store on the way back to the Precinct." Neal replies.

"Missionary?"

"Don't start with me." Neal replies. "Don't do it!"

LATER THAT DAY AT THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF OCEANVIEW:

Neal leans on his car smoking a cigarette as he waits for Monica to come out of the bank. He looks at his watch. Five after six. Neal wonders what could be keeping her. Maybe she left early. Just as Neal puts out his cigarette he saw her come out of the bank.

"Hey Monica."

Monica stops. "Oh it's you. You're his friend aren't you?"

"Yes I'm Steve's friend." Neal replies.

"I bet he sent you here to make excuses for him, didn't he?" Monica replies.

"No, no he didn't. I'm here for explanations."

Monica looks at him. "I don't understand."

"How about a cup of coffee? This is going to take a lot of explanations." Neal replies.

"I guess it'll be alright."

"There's a coffee shop right across the street." Neal takes her arm as they walk across the street.

THE NEXT MORNING AT THE PRECINCT LOCKER ROOM:

"Hey." Neal replies.

"Hey yourself." Steve replies as he looks thru some magazines that were in his locker.

"I tried to find you yesterday but when I got back you were already gone. Cleaning out your locker?"

"Yes and no. I'm trying to find my blue jean jacket. Have you seen it?" Steve asks.

"No it isn't at your apartment?" Neal asks.

"No and it isn't in my car. Could it be at your place or in your car?" Steve asks.

"I don't think so. You do have some clothes at my place but I'm not sure, I'll have to check. Well I have some good news."

"Really? About what?" Steve asks.

"Monica."

"Oh how did that go? I know she doesn't want anything to do with me, right?" Steve asks.

"Wrong." Neal replies.

"Wrong?" Steve repeats.

"Yes wrong. See I explained to her that you have a twin..."

Steve makes a face at this as he stands with his hands on his hips.

"...Some guy..." Neal replies as he gestures.

"That's better."

"Is going around pretending to be you. After I explained it to her she then realized he did seem a little off."

"Off?" Steve repeats.

"Yes off. First he sounded like he had a head cold, he needed a shave, and he was all hands. It seems he groped her in his car."

"He has a car?" Steve replies.

"Yeah don't get too excited. Monica doesn't know anything about cars, all she knows it was dark, had two doors and it was dirty but she did noticed the badge on the front seat."

"Badge?"

"Yeah she said he even apologized for it being on the front seat. He stashed it in the glove box."

"Was it a police badge?" Steve asks.

Neal shrugs. "I asked her that. She hasn't had many badges flashed at her but she said it looked like a police badge to her. Also, I told her that it definitely wasn't you. Want to hear what else I told her?"

Steve looks at the floor as he moves some dirt around with the toe of his shoe as he shrugs.

"Yeah, I guess."

"I told her that you are great guy and that you are a gentleman. You're very neat and tidy and that you're a handsome devil to boot." Neal leans in closer to him. "Know what else I told her?"

"No." Steve replies.

"That you deserve a second chance since you didn't even get a first chance. She agreed. She wants to go out with you."

Steve looks at him. "Neal! Really?"

"Yes really. You're going to hug me now, aren't you?"

"Yes! Come here you big lug!!" Steve replies as he closes his locker door and he grabs Neal and hugs him. "I love you!"

"I love you too and you know she does have beautiful eyes."

"Told you!" Steve replies as he pats him on the back then they let each other go.

"Yeah and you are even welcomed to go thru her line at the Bank."

"Thanks Neal."

"Anytime partner. So you're going to stick around here today?"

"Yeah you know after that meeting with the Captain yesterday he thought it would be better if you checked on this guy by yourself. And since it's slow I need to get caught up on our paperwork. It's time to start a new log book...so. While I'm at it I'll clean out our desks too. I don't like paperwork." Steve replies as he wrinkles his nose.

Neal laughs. "I don't know too many cops that do. I would love to get a handle on this guy." Neal replies.

"You would? How do you think I feel? But I don't know how we're going to do it. We can't show anybody a picture because it would be a picture of me!" Steve replies as he points to himself.

Neal laughs as he looks at the clock. "Okay it's eight a.m. Robert will be probably be at the Pussy Pit..."

"The Pussycat Pit." Steve corrects him.

"Yeah. Just make a note of it in the log book." Neal replies. "Also can I borrow your police I.D. card?"

"Yeah I guess just don't lose it." Steve replies as he takes his badge case out of his back pocket and he opens it and he takes out the I.D. and he hands it to Neal. "Watch out! Robert's baseball bat might be loaded." Steve replies.

Neal laughs. "Don't eat anything to spoil your appetite because I'll come back to collect you for lunch."

"Are you actually going to come up here and get me or are you going to make me wait down on the curb. Because the last time you did that people thought I was soliciting!! And I don't mean selling magazines!"

Neal covers his mouth as he tries not to laugh. "I...ah...will come up here and get you. How's that?"

"Fine. It's not funny." Steve replies.

"Oh yes it is." Neal replies as he walks off.

"ISN'T!" Steve replies.

"IS!" Neal replies as Steve follows after him.

THE PUSSYCAT PIT 1800 OCEANVIEW HIGHWAY:

Neal rolled up to the strip club just as Robert was taking the trash out to the curb. Now looking at this place in the broad daylight Neal wonders why they even came here. The place was old, raunchy and the parking lot strewn with trash. The dark can hide a lot of flaws Neal thinks to himself.

"Robert." Neal calls to him as he walks across the parking lot.

Robert looks up after he places the trash cans out on the curb. "Yeah?"

"Remember me from the other night?"

"Yeah. You're that's creep friend. What do you want, I'm busy." Robert replies.

"Actually I'm here about him." Neal shows him his badge.

"I know who you are. You're from Vice. Hey I have to clean up the parking lot. Wanna walk with me?"

"Yeah sure. Vice?" Neal replies.

Robert goes back inside then a few minutes later he comes back carrying a bucket and a wooden handle spear.

"If you want to talk to me you have to help. Here you carry the bucket." Robert thrusts the bucket at him and Neal takes it as they start off across the parking lot.

"Yeah Vice. You'll don't know what department you work for?" Robert asks him. "He came here to check up on me and the business."

"How so?" Neal asks as he watches Robert spear some trash then put it in the bucket.

"He wanted to see my liquor license and he wanted to make sure the girls were legal. He wanted to make sure there was no hanky panky going on. I told him the girls were dancers not hookers. The customers weren't allow to touch them. But that didn't stop him from coming back."

"When did he come back?" Neal asks.

"You two are partners and you don't talk to each other?" Robert asks as he leans on the spear.

"How do you know we are partners?" Neal asks him.

"How do you think? He told me. He came back twice. He wanted to talk to the girls. Something about somebody impersonating a cop. The second time is when he got touchy feely. He roughed a couple of them up. He told me he was just trying to see what they would do if they were attacked! Can you believe that?"

"No, no I can't. Why didn't you go to the Precinct and file a complaint?" Neal asks.

"Would it have done any good? I know how cops stick together. They protect their own."

"Not in this case. Okay Robert I want to show you something." Neal puts the bucket down then he takes his badge case out of his back pocket. "Did his badge look like this one?" Neal asks as he shows it to Robert.

"Well yeah I mean he flashed it but yeah."

Neal then shows him Steve's I.D. card. "Was this the guy Robert? Take your time."

"Well."

"Well what?" Neal asks.

"Is this an old picture?" Robert asks.

"Why?" Neal asks.

"Well." Robert scratches his head. "This guy in the picture he looks well-scrubbed if you know what I mean. But the guy that came here he was scruffy and it's dim inside the club. But yeah that's him."

"Robert did you happen to see what kind of car he was driving?"

Robert thinks a minute. "I chased him out into the parking lot and he got into a dark, two door car." Robert snaps his fingers. "It was a Chevelle."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive. Cars are my hobby." Robert replies.

"Okay Robert I'm going to explain something to you. That guy that came to see you IS NOT the same guy that was here with me that night."

"What?"

"I said there are TWO different guys! Understand! The guy that came here and roughed up the girls is impersonating a cop! The guy who was with me that night is a real cop! The guy in this picture...." Neal replies as he holds up Steve's I.D. "...Is the real deal!!"

"You're screwy you know that?" Robert replies.

"Yeah no shit I've been told that before!" Neal replies.

"What was the whole point of this conversation again?" Robert asks.

"I need to find out who this guy really is!"

"He told me he was Detective Perry." Robert replies.

"He said that!" Neal asks loudly.

"Yes he did. Now if you don't mind, I have a lot of work to do. Was there anything else?"

Neal scratches his head as he takes a deep breath. "No I guess not. Look I'm going to leave you my card. Just in case he shows up again or something." Neal replies as he hands him his card and Robert looks at it.

"Sure. See you later."

"Yeah later."

LATER THAT MORNING 1420 BLOOMFIELD RD APT 4C:

Neal looks at the address on the sheet of paper then he looks up at the apartment building. Nice neighborhood. Nice apartment building. Nicer than what he expected.

"Boy Neal you really are jaded." Neal says out loud to nobody but himself. Then he spies a man sweeping the sidewalk in front so he goes over to him.

"Excuse me?"

"Yeah?" The man replies.

"Does a Misty Rain live here?" Neal asks.

"Yeah. Is there a problem?" The man asks.

"No, no I just wanted to make sure I had the right address." Neal replies.

"Up there on the fourth floor. See where the balcony doors are open?" The man replies as he points up.

"Oh yeah thanks. Does this building have an elevator?" Neal asks.

"Yeah. Why?"

"I was just....does it work?" Neal asks.

"What do you mean does it work? Of course it works."

"Just checking." Neal replies as he goes into the building. Now once in the lobby Neal is really befuddled. The lobby is nice and clean. A table by the mailboxes has fresh flowers. Everything sparkly. Neal scratches his head as he gets in the elevator pushing the button for the fourth floor. Once on the fourth floor he goes down a hallway that is spacious, with landscapes hanging on the wall until he gets to Apartment 4C. He uses the knocker on the door.

"Just a minute!"

Neal waits then a few minutes later Misty opens the door and he sees her talking on the phone. "Yes dad. No it's going to be alright. Yes I'll keep the balcony doors open. Okay bye."

Misty hangs up the phone. "Neal? Dad told me there was a strange man downstairs looking for me."

Neal looks at her and this time she's freshly scrubbed, wearing shorts and a tank top, her long hair pulled back into a pony tail.

"That was your dad?"

"Yeah. Do you want to come in or do you want to stay out there?" She asks as she smiles.

"Oh sure I'll come in thanks."

Neal comes in and as he does so he looks around then she closes the door behind him.

"Is everything okay? You seem confused?" Misty asks.

"Well I....okay this might sound bad but I'm going to say it anyway. This place is pretty nice for a hooker. I mean...."

Misty laughs. "I'm not a hooker."

Neal looks at her his eyes wide. "You're not!"

"No I was just playing a part! I'm an actress!! So I fooled you huh?"

Neal laughs. "An actress? Yeah, you did. You really had me going! So you're not a hooker!?"

Misty shakes her head. Then there is a knock on the door and she opens it and a guy twice as big as Neal stands there. He crosses his arms over his chest as he looks at Neal.

"Everything okay sis?"

"Yes Bubba everything is fine. This is Neal."

Neal waves at him. "Hi Bubba."

"Hey is that a gun?" Bubba asks as he points at Neal.

Neal looks down to his right side then he reaches behind him and he takes out his badge and he shows him. "Yeah I'm a cop."

"Homicide? Who's dead?" Bubba asks.

"Nobody that I know of."

Bubba shakes his head. "First vice now homicide. Boy sis you can really attract some weird clients. If you need anything let me know."

"Okay." Misty replies as she shuts the door behind him.

"So there is really a Bubba?" Neal asks.

"Yeah. Why don't you take off your jacket and relax. Do you want a coke?"

"Yeah sure. This is a nice pad." Neal replies as he looks around.

"Thank you. My dad owns the building and I'm the apartment manager, among other things." Misty replies as she hands him the coke.

"Did he say clients?"

"Yes he did."

"Well what kind of clients?" Neal asks.

"I'm a masseuse."

Neal starts to laugh.

"What's so funny?"

"I have never seen a legit massage business, ever! It's usually a front for prostitution." Neal replies.

"Has anybody ever told you that you're jaded?" Misty replies.

"Yeah me. Look I'm sorry but that has been my experience. Where's your business?"

"Well for now here." Misty replies.

"Here?" Neal replies as he points to the floor.

"Yes this is a three bedroom apartment. I have a massage table set up in one of the bedrooms. Do you want a tour?"

Neal shrugs. "Sure why not."

Neal replies as he follows her out of the living room and into one of the back bedrooms where it was all set up as a massage room.

"Wow." Neal replies.

Misty points at one of the walls that held plaques and diplomas. "See here is my business license, my operating license, a license from the city health department. And I got this after I complete my training in Sweden."

"Sweden? You've been to Sweden?" Neal replies as he looks at it Misty placing her hand on his shoulder.

"Wow you're tense. Would you like a massage?" Misty asks him.

"Oh no I don't think so." Neal replies. "I almost forgot why I came here."

Misty smiles at him. "I know why you came here."

"Oh why is that?" Neal asks just a little suspiciously.

"Because you were going to take, Misty the Hooker, up on her offer!"

"Oh no, no, no! Nothing like that ever crossed my mind! No never." Neal replies.

"Liar." Misty replies as she smiles.

"It's that obvious huh?" Neal replies.

"You're a man." Misty replies as she shrugs.

"And you are a damn good actress! You are!" Neal replies. "Actually I came here to talk about my partner."

"What about him?"

"How did you meet him?" Neal asks.

"Well I told you I'm an actress and I'm in a play. I play a hooker. One night I was walking home after a show and the next thing I know this car pulls up next to me. He gets out of the car and he tells me he's Detective Perry with Vice."

"He said that to you?"

"Yeah. He shows me his badge. And I explain to him that I am not a hooker that I am an actress. He didn't believe me at first. He gave me a ride home...."

"You got in the car with him?" Neal asks.

Well yes he's a cop right?" Misty replies.

"Go ahead." Neal replies.

"Well...." She looks at Neal funny. "...He followed me up to my apartment and I showed him around."

"And?"

"And nothing he left. Then a couple of days later he came back. He wanted to make sure this was a real massage place. So I gave him a massage."

"Okay but what about that little act you pulled?" Neal asks.

"Oh that! He told me that you were partners and that you were always playing jokes on each other. He thought it would be funny to pull a trick on you. So I didn't see any harm in it. He said it's what you two do." Misty sees that look on Neal's face. "I get the feeling that I did something wrong? Did I do something wrong? It is what you two do, isn't it? I think he called it a guy thing?"

Neal covers his eyes.

"Did I break a law....or something?"

"No Misty it wasn't you. I have to tell you something but I don't want you to wig out on me, okay?"

"Well that depends...."

"That guy that was here....he's not a cop. He's an imposter." Neal replies seriously as he looks at her.

"WHAT?! You mean I got in his car and he was here....in my apartment...and he's not even...not...a....COP!!!"

Neal grabs her by her arms. "Misty. I need for you to look at a picture, okay?"

"Sure I guess."

Neal shows her Steve's I.D. card. "Have you seen him before?"

"Is this an old picture?"

Neal is startled by the same question that Robert had asked him. "Why do you ask that?"

"Well because he looked different. He wasn't clean shaven. He looked rough. In this picture he looks well...sweet. Is he sweet?"

"Yeah he's a sweetheart of a guy. How did you know where I lived?"

"He told me. He gave me your address and everything. Neal?"

"Yeah."

"I think you owe me the truth." Misty replies. "Is he dangerous?"

"Damn it! I don't know."

"You don't know?! How could you not know that?" Misty asks.

"Because we don't. That's why I'm here talking to you. This guy is ruining my partner's reputation and he has the potential to ruin his career! That is why I'm tense! Among other things. So...this massage is a real, legal massage?"

Misty smiles at him. "What's a real, legal massage?"

"Oh you know no HJ or BJ?" Neal replies.

Misty shakes her head. "I'm not sure what you mean?"

"Oh shit!" Neal replies as he covers his mouth.

Misty laughs.

"That means no hand jobs or blow jobs?" Neal replies just a little embarrassed.

"What? Oh no. You sound just a little disappointed." Misty replies as she pushes him.

Neal takes a deep breath. "I...no. How much is a massage?"

"Twenty dollars."

"Okay well you know since I'm here and all." Neal replies as he takes off his jacket then Misty hands him a towel.

"What's this for?"

"How do you think I knew that your partner, or the guy I thought was your partner, had a mole on his ass?" Misty asks.

"Well I haven't thought much about it. I just thought....Oh!" Neal replies.

"There's a bathroom right there. After you take your clothes off wrap the towel around yourself and come back out." Misty replies.

"So I guess I have to be naked?" Neal replies.

"Well you'll have the towel over you."

Neal walks across the room to the bathroom then he goes in but before he shuts the door he says, "So what are you going to be doing while I'm undressing?"

"Preparing my equipment and such. And oh yeah I need to go and get Bubba."

"Wait! What! Bubba? He's not going to give me a massage, is he?"

Misty laughs. "No of course not. He's going to chaperone. Go ahead get undressed."

HOUR AND A HALF LATER HENRY'S GAS STATION 963 FIELD DR:

After Neal finishes putting gas in his car he goes inside to pay. Whistling he stops at the coke machine and he buys a coke then he walks up to the counter and Henry, the owner, gives him a strange look.

"What?" Neal asks.

"You're whistling." Henry points out.

"So? Haven't you ever seen somebody whistling before?" Neal asks.

"Yeah just not you. You seem different."

Neal points to himself. "I seem different? How so?"

"More relaxed maybe." Henry shrugs. "Anyway. You want a couple of packs of smokes?"

"Yeah."

"Okay. That's two pack of cigarettes and gas. That will be fifteen dollars." Henry replies.

Neal had just taken a swig of coke and when he heard that he swallowed wrong and he started to cough. He coughed so much his eyes begin to water.

"Neal are you alright?"

"Wh...at? Wh...at" Neal coughs again. "Fifteen dollars? What in the Sam Hill are you doing Henry? Is this some kind of racket?" Neal asks as he coughs.

"I like you Neal so I'll ignore that remark. Your partner...."

“Steve?” Neal replies.

“Do you have another partner?” Henry asks.

“What about him?”

“He was in here yesterday and he filled up his car and he bought a few other things. He was a little short so he told me the next time you came you would take care of it. He said you were good for it. So....” Henry replies as he taps his fingers on the counter.

Neal reluctantly takes out his wallet and hands him twenty dollars. “What was he driving Henry?”

Henry opens the cash register and he makes change and he hands it to Neal. “The same thing he always drives. The Chevelle. But you know it was odd.”

Neal already knew the answer but he asked the question anyway as he rubbed his forehead. “What seemed odd?”

“His car. It was dirty. You know he’s very particular about his car and his appearance too. He looked scruffy. Not put together if you know what I mean? Also Betty was working yesterday.” Henry looks at him knowingly.

“Betty? You mean the one with the...” Neal uses his hands to gesture.

“Yeah that’s her. Steve is on her like ducks on a June bug! Remember one time he got so distracted he let thirty cents worth of gas run out onto the ground.”

“Yeah I do remember that. And yesterday....?”

“Ignored her. Couldn’t care less if she was there or not. Is he sick Neal?”

“No, no it’s nothing like that.” Neal replies.

Henry puts his cigarettes in a bag then he hands them to Neal. “Well I hope he gets over whatever is eating at him. He’s a man running from something.”

“Thanks Henry see you later.”

BACK AT THE 9TH PRECINCT SQUAD ROOM:

“Hey there you are. What’s in the bag?” Steve asks.

“Oh cigarettes. Write down these numbers.”

Steve grabs a piece of paper. “Go ahead.”

"45 and 15. Now add them up."

Steve does so. "60?"

"Make that sixty dollars! That's how much your twin..."

Steve looks at him.

"...Your imposter owes me! Sixty smackers!"

"What happened now?"

"I stopped by Henry's to get some gas and he told me that you were in there yesterday." Neal waves his hands. "I mean it wasn't you! It was the other you! You put gas in your car! I mean the other you put gas in your other car! It cost me a total of fifteen dollars."

"What's wrong?" Steve asks.

"You mean besides the obvious? I don't know, but somehow I'm having a bad case of Déjà vu. When he tells people 'I'm good for it' I know I've heard that somewhere before. But shit if I can remember where or when!" Neal takes off his jacket then he sits down at his desk.

Steve twirls a pencil around between his fingers. "Neal?"

"What?"

"Where have you been all this time?" Steve asks him.

Neal points at him. "You know you say that just like my ex-wife used to. By the way that's why she's my ex-wife."

Steve leans across the desk. "Neal did you go and see Misty?"

"Yes! But not in the way you think!"

"Neal?"

"What?"

"Have you looked at yourself in the mirror? Your eyes are all lit like a boy on Christmas who sees all of his presents underneath the tree for the first time. Neal..."

"Steve don't say it....!"

"You're...."

"Don't do it!!" Neal replies.

"...Happy!!"

Neal gasps as he grabs his chest. "That's a horrible thing to say to anybody."

Steve leans in closer. "You got laid didn't you? I mean you look relaxed! Relaxed and happy!"

"Just for your information I didn't. Now that you bring up Misty that is a funny thing in itself."

"Funny strange or funny ha-ha?" Steve asks.

"Misty, she's not really a hooker she just plays one...."

"Oh I see. Like I'm not really a doctor I just play one on TV? That sort of thing?"

"Are you going to let me finish?"

"Sorry. Go ahead." Steve replies.

Neal takes a deep breath. "She's not a hooker she's an actress playing a part of a hooker in a play. She's actually a Masseuse. She owns a Swedish Massage Parlor. I mean she wants to open up a business, right now she's working out of her apartment. She gave me a massage."

Steve sits back in his chair and he after he throws his pencil across the desk he starts to laugh.

"She's a Masseuse? Neal you know as well as I do that Massage Parlors are just fronts for prostitution!!"

"Has anyone ever told you that you're jaded?" Neal asks. "Not this one!" Neal replies as he points his finger up in the air. "This was a legit massage!! No hanky panky! No HJ and no BJ. She even put these hot rocks on my back! She gave me a few business cards so I can hand them out. Here take one."

Steve takes it. "So you're sure this is legit? On the up and up and all of that?"

"Yeah. I'm positive. I have never felt so relaxed in my life. I even asked her out. I mean when all this crazy stuff is over."

"You did? What did she say?"

"She said she would fix me dinner."

"Wow! I'm impressed. A home cooked meal the first time up to bat! I think I'm jealous partner! So did you find out anything at all new about my doppelgänger?"

"New about you're what? Doppel....what?" Neal asks.

"You don't know what that is do you?" Steve asks.

"If I did would I ask you what it was. What is it? Something tells me you're very happy about the fact that I don't know what it is?"

Steve smiles. "I'm just happy that I know something that you don't. A doppelgänger is a double or a look-a-like. In this case he looks like me. Usually when they show up that means something bad is going to happen."

"You mean something else bad, other than what has already happened? Bad?"

"Probably yes." Steve replies.

"Well he drives a car like yours and he was flashing a badge. He said he was from Vice."

That causes Steve to sit up. "Not my baby! My Chevelle? Vice?"

"Yeah well it's not exactly like yours. His car is dirty and he's not just like you either."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well in the first place he's disrespectful to women and in the second place he's blind."

Steve makes a face. "You've lost me."

"When he was at Henry's he completely ignored Betty."

"You're kidding?! How is that possible?" Steve replies.

"Don't know and everybody I talked to says he seems off."

"Off? Off how? Maybe's he's a hype?" Steve replies.

"Na. Not that kind of off. He's just scruffy. Not a well groomed specimen such as yourself. Did you find your blue jean jacket?"

"No but it'll turn up. I've been waiting around here all day for you to come back and take me to lunch and to think you were having some chick but hot rocks on your back. While I was dodging paper cuts. Sometimes life just isn't fair." Steve replies as he stands up.

"Well I hate to tell you this but life just got a lot unfairier?" Neal replies as he makes a face.

"How so?"

"Well after I spent twenty dollars on the massage and another fifteen at the gas station I shot my whole allowance for the week. I'm broke."

"That's alright I'm buying."

"Okay but no strip joints." Neal replies.

"You're a real party pooper you know that Neal?" Steve says as they go out of the door together.

TWO DAYS LATER IN LOS ANGELES WHOLESAL LIQUORS:

He parked the car in the darkest part of the lot then he watched and he waited. He waited until all the customers had left and at this time of night, fifteen minutes until closing, he knew the only people left in the place would be employees.

He looked at himself in the rearview mirror of the car as he places the hat on his head, he checks his gun then he puts the blue jean jacket on. Now at ten minutes to closing he gets out of the car and tucks the gun in his waistband behind his jacket as he walks to the liquor store.

As he goes into the store the bell above the door announces his arrival and once inside, which only takes a second, he turns the OPEN sign over to CLOSE.

"We close in ten minutes." The stock boy says to him as the man blows passed the counter.

A few minutes later he comes back and he sits a bottle of Vodka on the counter. The owner looks at it then he punches the price of it into the cash register.

"Anything else for you tonight?" He asks as he looks up and he finds himself looking into the barrel of a gun.

"Yeah everything you have in that cash register! Now!" Then he sees the stock boy slowing moving his hand below the counter.

"You! Move away from that button! Stand on the other side of him!" He watches as the stock boy moves over to the other side of the owner. "I said give me the money in the cash register. And after that I want what you have in the safe."

"We...we don't have a safe." The owner replies.

"Don't lie to me!" The man throws a sack at them. "Put the money in there. You open the safe! Nobody gets hurt!" The man replies as he watches the owner put the money in the sack. "Good boy! Now you make quick work with that safe!"

"I told you we don't have a safe!" The owner replies and in response the man fires a bullet into the floor which causes the owner to grab his chest. "It's behind there!" Then he points the gun back at them.

"Pop!" The stock boy yells as he grabs him. "He has a bad heart!"

"Open it now or the next one goes in your head!" He replies as he points the gun at the stock boy.

"Do it son. Give him what he wants."

The stock boy then turns around and he takes down the panel hiding the safe then using the combination he opens it. He then reaches in and he takes out the money and he puts it in the sack. Then he looks him in the face as he hands him the sack full of money. And standing there was Steve.

“I’ve seen you before! Your picture! Your picture was in the paper! “You’re a....cop!”

Steve smiles at him as he holds up the paper sack. “If you want this back, just ask for Neal...Neal Schon. He’s good for it.”

Then he bolts for the door and as he does so the store owner collapses to the floor.

TO BE CONTINUED....