

Man's Head Explodes in Barber's Chair

By Logan Gee

The cops don't believe me. They've taken my blood splattered apron and my testimony but they think I'm crazy. Sure I had a record, but that was twenty years ago. I'm cleaned up. I'm a barber. I help people freshen up. I never wanted to see blood again. John's head blew up. What was I to do? Right as I started trimming his sideburns... just... SPLAT! We were discussing his daughters' upcoming ballet performance. This week is the yearly rendition of The Nutcracker and his daughters are cast as the Rat King and the Nutcracker himself. I'm not that interested by ballet, but John was thrilled about it so we were both very cheerful. His family life sounds nice, although he sure is busy. John says the only time he gets to relax is during his weekly haircut. He's been a great customer all these years. Since the day he walked in barely a week has gone by without him getting a trim in my chair. I would even say he's my friend, not just a customer. Of course the cops don't believe it.

The tall officer who needs to shave just glares at me and says I'll get what I deserve. He keeps calling me a sick bastard. His partner, a shortish chubby fellow with a magnificent moustache, is just looking at me sadly. It's the exact same look Maggie used to give me when she was disappointed in me. Damn I miss her. I haven't thought of her in years. I still remember how her chocolate colored eyes seemed to smile back at me when she awoke each morning. But that was when I was young. Her sad gaze that last night still haunts me across two decades. Now a new cop walks in. She's an older woman, golden and silver hairs braided together. She studies me carefully while walking slowly to the table. Her cool blue eyes seem to be gazing into my very soul.

She apologized for the other officers' behavior, says that Simmons has always had a temper. That must be the taller fellow.

"It's been a long time since you've given us any trouble". I guess it has been. Last time I sat in this cold metal chair had been different. I was guilty then, and full of regret. An older gentleman had thanked me for my cooperation and informed me that I would be getting a deal. Not that I'd cared then. I thought my life was over.

"It says here that your information helped capture Giordano. You were done with crime. You looked like a broken man. What changed?" Now I remember those piercing blue eyes. She was in training back then. She was the assistant who helped get my testimony.

"I avoid trouble ma'am. I seen enough blood back then. You remember what happened. What I lost. I just want peace. Freshen people up. Give 'em a clean shave and a nice cut." Maggie had always said you can tell a man by how he was trimmed. She hated when I had a beard. Told me to clean up my face and my life. She'd been right in the end. But that didn't matter now. All that matters is what Officer Lawson is telling me.

"...don't trust you. They say you're still the man you were twenty years ago. But I'm their superior officer and in the end I decide if we charge you with a crime. Tell me again what happened to Mr. Honeywell." So I tell her again what I'd already told Scruffy and Chubby. I gave John a haircut every Saturday morning. Sometimes we talked about solving the world's problems, sometimes we told jokes. He always talked about his family. Even while telling her I have to wonder what my family could have been like. Maybe I'd have daughters in The Nutcracker this year. And I'd be a clean cut father, just what Maggie would've wanted. "...

just as I was leveling out his left side burn John yelled slightly and his head just... just exploded. I called nine one one right away.”

“Why did his head blow up Mr. Sommers?”

“I don’t know. My mind was elsewhere. It just blew up.”

“You really do miss her don’t you? Even after all these years?”

Those blue eyes stare into my soul. I can’t say anything. Just nod slightly. “She tried to come in and give us information you know? We were going to put her in witness protection, but she wanted to ask you to join her. I’m sorry. If you want to grab coffee later I can tell you more about the case.”

“It looks like I’m booked tonight, but that’s a kind offer.”

“You’re free to go Mr. Sommers. Maggie would have liked to know you cleaned up. And that you help others do the same.”