

Frank Midgette's Case Files

Handwritten notes on lined paper, including a red "CLASSIFIED" stamp and yellow highlights.



“The Dead Pan”
by Oliver Strong

**Frank Midgette's Case Files:
"The Dead Pan"**

By Oliver Strong

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Chapter One

“I Walk The Line”

‘The name’s Frank, Frank Midgette, and just so you know that’s pronounced Midg –ay, it’s French.

When I was a wide eyed kid I thought I’d protect and serve. Thirty five years later I’m a homicide Lieutenant working out of Precinct 17, the shittiest job in the shittiest Precinct in the shittiest city ... God bless America!

Why am I telling you this? Well since I’m all alone, unless you count Johnny Cash and a bottle of cheap ass bourbon, I guess someone has to hear my eulogy before I blow my brains out ... damn that just made me think, better leave a few dollars for the cleaning lady. I bet that bitch charges extra for brains.’

Frank pulled a leather wallet from his jacket and put three \$20 notes on the desk. He took another hit of bourbon as Johnny Cash sang “Cry, Cry, Cry” to a strumming guitar. The only object shining inside that gloomy room was his pistol lying beside a half finished bottle. Its silvery steel captured on-lookers attention (not that there were any), the largest handgun in production a Smith & Wesson model 500, its shells almost twice the size of a Magnum 44.

Frank loaded a single round in the cylinder, spun it, upon coming to a halt he inserted its barrel in his mouth and pulled the trigger ... nothing ... damn he’d always been unlucky!

Frank took another slug of bourbon then another spin of the barrel ... damn ... maybe Jesus was trying to tell him something? Maybe he didn’t like to see good booze go to waste, a sentiment Frank shared with the almighty.

Another shot of bourbon, if he kept going like this he’d finish the whole damn bottle, just the kind of shitty luck that plagued Frank for the last thirty five years, click ... damn, when the hell is this thing gonna work?

Frank’s mobile phone went off, damn annoying contraptions but being a Homicide Detective he was required to carry one. Frank pulled the barrel

out his mouth and fumbled through his jacket pockets until he got the mobile, 'Yeah, who the hell is it?'

'Good morning Lieutenant!' replied a female voice.

Frank made a grim sneer as he reached over and poured a drink, 'Morning Captain, this a business call, or your husband been caught picking up hookers again?'

'Funny Frank, finish your bourbon and report to me this morning, seven thirty sharp, you got it?'

'Sure, what's the occasion?'

'I've got a case that, well let's say it suits your special talents, see you in five hours.'

'Sure,' Frank turned off his police issue mobile took a momentary glance at his pistol, sighed and went for the booze whilst Johnny Cash sang the words to "Personal Jesus".

Eight thirty Frank pulled into Precinct 17 in his dirty Honda, slamming the door shut he stumbled inside.

'Morning Lieutenant,' called the staff Sergeant.

Frank shuffled over to him, 'You got a cigarette Pete?'

'I'm sorry sir, new regulations, we can't carry tobacco products you know that.'

'Don't give me that shit Pete I forgot mine.'

Pete looked around before taking out a packet of smokes and placing a few cigarettes into Frank's palm.

'Thanks.'

'No problem sir.'

Frank made his way upstairs, through offices, dressed in a crumpled grey suit he hadn't taken off in three days. At the far end someone pointed him out to a young lady, probably her first day; she trotted over and in a loud voice asked, 'Lieutenant Midget?'

The room went quiet and all eyes turned to the girl, 'That's Lieutenant Midg-ay ... it's French.'

'Oh I'm sorry.'

'What you want?'

'Captain Williams is waiting for you sir, it's very urgent.'

'Why, she got a pedicure booked in half an hour?'

The girl made an awkward expression, 'I erm, well.'

'Ah forget it kid.'

'Yes sir.'

Frank made his way to the back of the office floor and knocked the Captain's door, 'Come in.'

Frank stepped inside closing the door behind him.

Captain Jane Williams stood up, manicured hands pressed upon an oak desk, 'So you finally decided to make an appearance Lieutenant, I was wondering whether you or Michael Jackson would be the first to rise from his coffin ... you look like a bum that crawled out a whiskey bottle.'

Frank scratched his neck, straightened his collar then noticed a third person. A tall young Latino man, probably around thirty, dressed in a very dapper suit, 'Who the hell's this guy?'

'Lieutenant Manuel Montoya, meet Lieutenant Frank Midgette.'

Montoya offered his hand, 'Nice to meet you, sir.'

Frank laughed whilst shaking hands, 'Damn it son you smell like a whore house!'

Captain Williams smirked, 'Frank meet your new partner.'

Frank's demeanour changed rapidly as he withdrew his hand, 'Partner?'

'Why yes you've got a new case and Lieutenant Montoya here needs experience, you're going to teach him the trade.'

Frank shook his finger at Williams, 'Now listen here Captain I've taken a lot of shit but I ain't having Manolito as MY partner.'

Manuel's eyes widened.

'Calm down Frank, a new case a new partner it's exactly what you need to get back on your feet again.'

'Back on my feet? What the hell you talking about?'

'Come on Frank, it's hardly a secret you're on the edge.'

'On the edge of what?'

'Look at yourself, beggars in Commercial Park are classy compared to your sorry ass.'

'When was the last time you saw a beggar wearing a suit?' he pointed to his clothes.

'That isn't a suit it's a sleeping bag Frank.'

'Well maybe if I sucked my way up the ranks I'd be Captain of this Precinct and you'd be drinking bourbon alone every night!'

The Captain closed her eyes, gathering herself for a moment, 'Is that what you think Frank?'

'Damn right it is!'

'Captain of the shittiest Precinct in America along with a pension that probably won't be there on retirement, listening to your stinking ass bitch every day is poor compensation for sucking off the ugliest old men in the State.'

Manuel began to chuckle, distracting both Frank and the Captain from their bust up.

'Here's the case,' she held it out until he opened it.

Williams sat down to ogle her plaque, Captain Jane Williams Precinct 17 Detroit.

Frank spoke in an incredulous tone, 'You cannot be serious.'

'Is there a problem Lieutenant?'

'Some guy gets his nuts ripped off while taking a shit and you want me to investigate? I'm Homicide!'

Williams interlocked her fingers, 'He died, possibly murdered.'

'Oh please, he probably got his balls caught on the seat and stood up too fast.'

'The moment this case hit my desk it cried Frank Midgette, I just couldn't think of anyone who might have spent more time with their head down a public toilet.'

Manuel burst out laughing, Frank gave him a cold stare then turned to Williams, 'So why do I get to babysit Manolito?'

'His name is Lieutenant Manuel Montoya, I expect a preliminary report by tomorrow, you may leave now Lieutenant,' she motioned shooing him away.

As he opened the door several workmates scrambled back to their desks, having spent the last minutes with their ears against the Captain's door.

Frank slammed the door shut displaying a dark look as he strode to the stairs. After Frank had left the young lady asked an old detective, 'Does everyone speak to the Captain like that?'

'Only Frank,' replied an old guy with a hefty beer gut.

'How come he gets away with it?'

'Frank doesn't speak nice to anyone but he brings the perps in ... usually dead.'

‘Oh.’

Manuel sat in the passenger seat of Frank’s Honda, there was an awkward silence. Frank had the window down, one arm resting on the door, puffing smoke while Johnny Cash sang on his stereo.

‘You know you don’t have to call me Lieutenant.’

Frank grunted concentrating on the road ahead.

‘You always so polite with the Captain?’

Frank gave another grunt then took a drag on his cigarette.

‘You don’t talk much ... Lieutenant Midget.’

Frank braked hard in the middle of the road and glared at his partner,

‘Now you listen to me spic, my name is Midg-ay, understood?’

‘And my name is Manuel, understood?’

Road users tooted horns and shouted profanities whilst they exchanged gnarly looks.

‘Fine,’ said Frank.

‘Fine,’ replied Manuel.

Frank started his engine but before he could release the brake a car pulled up alongside with four black youths. A kid in the passenger seat shouted, ‘Hey cracker! You put a dent on ma homeboy’s new Benz, you gonna pay for it!’

Frank compared the class of vehicle to its occupants and came to a swift conclusion, ‘You niggers steal a white man’s car and want me to pay? You gotta be crazy!’

The youth produced a Mac 10 automatic weapon and replied in an angry voice, ‘You gonna give me everything you got white boy!’

Feigning fear Frank’s hands shook as he spoke in a shaky voice, ‘Let me get my wallet, I’ve got four hundred in cash.’

‘Quick cracker, before the cops get outta Dunkin Doughnuts.’

Frank moved a trembling hand inside his wrinkled jacket to producing a Smith & Wesson model 500. An expression of shock hit the youth moments before a titanic boom rang out causing the perp’s head to explode. A bullet passed through the passenger’s skull and into the driver’s killing both, inside windows stained dark ruby red as thick blood sloshed in all directions re-painting its interior, rear passengers bailed drenched in gore and brains.

Frank opened his door jumped out and levelled his pistol, 'HALT!'

The youths turned to raise weapons, a pair of massive booms filled everyone's ears, when smoke cleared blood spattered over backed up traffic three cars down. Women screamed in terror, men lay in foetal positions praying to whatever deity they believed in today.

Frank called his partner, 'Hey,' he didn't respond, Frank shouted 'HEY!'

The young man was sitting in shock, his first day after being transferred from a good neighbourhood, never having fired a shot in anger or self-defence ... one thing was sure ... the price of laxatives were already rising in Manuel's neighbourhood.

'Hey, make yourself useful, call it in!'

As if in a trance his partner took the police radio, '10-52, four perps down, request assistance.'

Five minutes later three police cars appeared, sirens blaring, Frank stood on the pavement after purchasing a packet of cigarettes and a lighter from the local store. Whilst he puffed away Manuel remained ridged, not having moved an inch.

Regular police began taking witness statements, a senior police officer approached Lieutenant Midgette, 'Started early today Frank.'

'These damn niggers are getting more brazen, even Dracula was too frightened to come out in the day.'

'I guess so sir. I have to take your statement all the same, procedure.'

'Sure.'

After the Sergeant had taken Frank's statement an ambulance moved the bodies.

'So who's the guy with rigor mortis in your car?'

'My new partner.'

'Any good?'

'He called it in.'

'Four perps with three bullets, must be some sort of record.'

'The Captain's always bitching about efficiency, now she's got something to brag about the next time she has dinner with the Mayor,' Frank loaded three fresh rounds into the cylinder as the Sergeant raised his eyebrows.

Frank started his engine and began rolling down the road. Manuel didn't speak a word.

'You feeling hungry?' inquired Frank

Manuel said nothing.

'I could eat a horse, what you say we take a detour before investigating this stupid case?'

Manuel remained silent, staring ahead into nothingness.

Frank took a drag on his cigarette, 'You know I'm starting to like you ... Manuel.'

They pulled into the parking lot behind Annie's Diner, Frank coaxed Manuel inside. The pair sat down at the counter, a woman in her fifties approached, 'Morning Frank, anything new?'

'Nah, same old same old.'

'What you having?'

'Coffee and a hotdog with fries.'

'Your buddy?'

Frank prodded Manuel, 'What you having?'

He didn't say anything.

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