

LET'S BURY THE PAST

by
Snoopy

Robin arrived promptly at 8:30. The office didn't open until 9:00, but she wanted always to be the first one there, and have everything all ready for her bosses when they came. Robin was the Girl Friday for a small law office. She was the only full-time employee.

The first thing she did, after turning on the lights and locking the door after her was to go into the ladies' room and carefully inspect herself in the mirror, making sure that makeup and hair were perfect. She had done this before leaving home, but wanted the reassurance that everything was still perfect after the bus ride and walk.

Robin is a well cultured 30. Her appearance is absolutely stunning. By careful selection of clothes and hair style, she seems somewhat taller than she is, and dresses very carefully to produce exactly the impression she produces, calm confidence, poise, and above all, discretion. Her short black hair is perfectly styled so that it frames her face perfectly while looking very business-like. She spends a lot of money keeping it exactly that way.

Her clothes are a marvel of style without ostentation, quality without excessive price, and very, very neat and clean. This morning, as usual, she wore a white frilly blouse which accented her face and attracted no attention below it. Her black skirt hit exactly the point on the leg, neither too far up nor

too far down, that would be suitable in any board room in the civilized world. Her pumps were also black, and carefully selected to give the height she wanted without being the least unstable. She would not want to walk great distances in them, but they were comfortable enough so that she would not be required to remove them in the office either.

She wears very unobtrusive gold earrings and a watch. The watch, although small and elegant, is used for telling time. She wishes to be perceived as a business woman, and business women know what time it is. Her jewelry is the only remnant she has retained from her past.

Satisfied with her appearance, she went to her desk in the front office and cleared her desk for the day. Nothing, absolutely nothing, would be in sight that she was not actively working on. This was partly the discretion policy, and partly the professional look she wanted to convey to clients and employers alike. Her computer was to the side of her desk, she did not look over or around a screen to see a client. She was on display, all of the time. She knew this, desired it, and displayed the model employee all day long. She was quite proud of her ability to do this.

The first lawyer appeared at 9:00 and the third came through the lobby at 10:30, having "dropped by the courthouse on the way over." He certainly smelled like it, if the Courthouse was a bar. She smiled a wispy smile at him and gave him a rather subdued "Good Morning, Mr. Cummings." She didn't want to be absolutely rude, but she also didn't want to show any sort of approval for

his behavior, and during office hours, too! Robin was well known to have a very conservative viewpoint about things like that. Mr. Cummings grinned back a little sheepishly and disappeared into his office.

She spent the morning answering the phone, greeting a couple of clients and ushering them into the private offices of their respective lawyers and typing a brief from Mr. Adair's dictated notes. Mr. Adair was of the old school, and had never understood how dictation was done these days, so his voice paused for long intervals between sentences, presumably to allow her to catch up, she supposed. Did he think she was handwriting it all down? He had never caught on that she could stop the machine whenever she wanted to. But he was a very nice old guy, and he practiced law the old-fashioned way. Only his fees had kept up with the times.

Just about lunch time, which was from 12:30 until 1:30 for her, things turned distinctly abnormal. A rather good-looking middle-aged man walked in who looked distinctly familiar to her. She was trying to place his face when he placed hers.

"Hello, Robin," he said, "Long time no see."

Oh God, no! But it was him! She felt her heart fall into her stomach, with the horrible feeling that precedes fear. She remembered him too. Larry Morrell. Larry the Knife. She felt really, truly, sick.

With her face absolutely frozen she responded, "Hello, Larry," trying to put no inflection at all into her voice, and glancing quickly around to see if one of the partners was within hearing. Thankfully, she and Larry seemed to be alone.

"Well, hey, doll, what do you know? I got a little legal problem and thought I'd try out a new lawyer, and who do I run into but little Robin. Small world."

Entirely too small, she thought. Oh, God, why was this happening to her. Why this? She couldn't think this fast. Training kicked in to fill the void.

"I don't see your name on the appointment list for today Mr. Morrell. Do you have an appointment?"

"No, I just dropped over to check the place out. I thought if I liked the looks, I would make an appointment once I got here. You know how it is? A guy wants to look things over before he buys."

He was certainly looking her over while he was saying that, and looking a bit puzzled, too.

"Look, Larry, things are different now. I'm...", she hesitated, "I'm not in that world any more. I'm just a girl in an office now."

"Not to me you ain't, baby. And never will be. What do you say we get together sometime for some laughs like the old days, huh? We can forget all the troubles we had, that's all in the past."

She saw an opportunity to at least put him off for a while, giving her time to think. She knew exactly what he wanted from her, and she wanted nothing to do with him, or anything he was connected with. She was over that, for good.

"Sure, Larry, call me up sometime next week and we'll plan something."

It was all she could think of to say. She would have said anything to get him out of that office before one of the partners caught her chatting with a small time mobster. She couldn't imagine what any of the partners would be willing to help him with, but she went on with the regular drill.

"Which attorney would you like to make an appointment with, Larry?" she asked.

"Doesn't matter to me, doll, which one do you think I'd like?"

"Mr. Cummings is accepting new clients now and can meet with you tomorrow afternoon. Can you come at 3:00?"

"Yes, I think that might just be arranged," Larry played along, "and when might we, meaning you and I, meet, fair Robin?"

She could say she was busy, but not for the rest of her life. Saturday was two days off. Could she think of something in two days? She had to tell him something.

"Why don't you come over on Saturday night? We can talk about the old days, even if I don't want to relive them with you."

Thank God. Larry the Louse accepted the terms. She had been wise to give him a definite date. He asked her where she lived and, reluctantly, she told him. Then, blessedly, he left after once more telling her how happy he was to run into her again and how much he was looking forward to seeing a lot more of her on Saturday.

"There went 5 years," she said to herself after he slithered out the door. She thought she was clear once and for all of that

life. She had enjoyed the easy money that came with being an escort for the mob. Then she had gotten into drugs, and the job became necessary. Then protection became necessary and Larry the Knife had shown up. He provided drugs and protection in return for her favors on an anytime basis. She hadn't liked it, but had to have it until she got off the drugs. She had disappeared from view after a year with Larry the Lounge Lizard, fought her way back to a drug-free existence and with great difficulty entered the straight world. She had been smart and observant. She had learned to speak carefully and act correctly in social circumstances. She had learned on purpose all the things that the more stable levels of society learn while simply growing up.

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She had done well, and now she had a simple life that she could pay for from her salary. She was a trusted employee of a law firm, known for discretion. She had almost cried the day they gave her the keys to the office. She could be quite charming, but did not show that very often. Charming led too easily to something beyond charming, and she wanted nothing whatever of that. She did not date the partners, and she did not date the clients. In fact, she seldom went out at all. The memory of dating creeps professionally was still too vivid.

On Friday after work she went to the Goodwill store and bought some old clothes suitable for grubbing around on the streets. It wasn't that she didn't have any such clothes of her own, but she knew she would have to throw away whatever clothes she used, and she was used to her gardening clothes. She

certainly didn't intend to use the clothes again.

Properly dressed for the excursion, she went into the streets later that night to go shopping in her past world.

Saturday night came much too soon. But she thought she was ready. She had on a lets-go-dancing outfit that she hoped would keep Larry's thoughts along predictable lines until she had accomplished her mission.

"Why did he want to see her?" she wondered. Did he really think she was going to go back into the life with him?

He was prompt and she invited him into the kitchen and brought out the first toy of the evening, a bottle of the very expensive liquor he preferred exactly because it was very expensive. She put the bottle on the table and got two whiskey glasses with two cubes each in them.

Larry stopped checking her out long enough to casually check the seal on the bottle and then matter of factly exchange the glasses from the way she had put them down. Just habit, he explained. For good luck.

She poured. He drank. She didn't.

"You know, doll, we got a lot of things to talk about, you and I. As I remember it we were doing just swell when you disappeared. And the funny thing is, you never even said goodbye or nothing. You know? You can hurt a guy's feelings that way? Why did you do that?"

"I couldn't take the life anymore. I couldn't do the drugs, I couldn't stand your friends. I just couldn't do it any more. So I ran."

He took another sip of the whiskey for taste, then a larger one. Then he thought of something. His face closed up and he starred into her eyes, possibly for the first time that evening.

"Why now? You run out on me and now suddenly you want to go out with me. What gives, doll-face?"

But he was too late. He cursed and leaped up out of the chair. He was a real tough guy. He made it all the way out of the chair, then fell heavily to the floor. His head bounced when it hit the floor. He never even felt the impact.

Things got very still. Robin could hear the cars passing on the street outside, but only very faintly. Her cat came into the doorway, curled his tail around him and sat down looking at her. She waited several minutes, gathering her thoughts. If she had ever had a choice, it was gone now. Now she had to go through with the rest of the plan. Her life was at stake. Larry had friends. Not good friends, but in a business situation like this they would come for her and kill her just as a matter of course.

She put the rest of the plan into action. First make sure he really was dead, or well on his way into that state. She injected the rest of the barbiturate into a vein in his wrist. She had paid \$200 for this stuff and wasn't about to waste it. His breathing, already slow, stopped almost at once.

From force of habit she searched the body. This hadn't been the first time she had slipped someone a mickey and then rolled him.

She found about \$600 in his wallet which she put carefully into her purse. It would pay expenses. This operation was

costing her a lot more than she could afford on her straight salary, and she was hoping that Larry would end up paying for at least some of it. She left the credit cards, driver's license, and other stuff alone. She wanted the party to end for good tonight. No follow-up.

In the special pocket he had sewn into all of his pants she found Larry's knife. She wondered if he had been planning to use it on her later in the evening. It would be in character for him. He wouldn't take kindly to her walking out on him like that. Maybe he had been concentrating so much on how to kill her that he had not thought of her killing him. Then she thought that maybe it was the dress. It wasn't the sort of dress she was likely to wear to the office.

Whatever Larry's plan had been, it hadn't happened, and now she had to return to her own plan. The next next item on the list was to get him out of the house, and into the back seat of her car, and that wasn't going to be easy.

The garage was connected to the house and nobody could see her struggles with the inert mass that had been, until very recently, Larry. If only she could have lured him into the car before she put him down. But she hadn't been able to think of a reliable way to do that. So now she had a body on the kitchen floor and it had to move 30 feet out the door to the garage and into the back seat of her small sedan.

Moving a dead body is incredibly difficult. Larry wasn't a big man, but he weighed a lot more than she did. It went by inches, but as the minutes passed, it went. She ended up rolling

him beside the car using an old skateboard. He didn't look very comfortable with the skateboard poking him, but she told herself that he wasn't feeling anything anymore, and if she could only be the same way, things would go better.

The back of his head hit the cement very hard on each step down into the garage. She wondered what the forensics guys would make of that, and then she remembered that they weren't supposed to ever find the body.

Once old Larry was next to the open back door of the sedan, she propped him up to a sitting position and with a length of ski rope hauled him face down very slowly onto the back seat, first the head and torso, then the hips and legs. He slid in reluctantly and clumsily, an inch at a time. But Robin never gave up. She had done more difficult things than this before. She wasn't going to give up, and that meant that the body would eventually be in the car.

Once the body was finally there she took a break. She even thought about smoking a cigarette. Was her entire old life going to be back now? She certainly hoped not. She had a great deal to lose if it did.

She covered good old Larry with a blanket. Wouldn't want him to get cold, or for anyone to see that she had a rather strange package in the back seat, and drove off into the countryside.

It was dark. In fact, it was raining. And cold. All the better, she thought, people don't see much in the rain. She went to where she had gone yesterday night, a very lonely spot, deep

in the trees. She pulled to a stop with the back door of the car next to the open grave.

Sorry, buddy, but there's no gravestone. In fact, it would suit me if nobody ever finds your last remains. She rolled him out of the car and into the hole. There was a slight splash as he hit the puddle of water in the bottom of the hole. Then she covered it up and carefully replaced the turf. It would grow back quickly, she hoped. The soil looked pretty healthy. Should be even healthier now that it had fresh fertilizer under it. Rest in peace, you miserable son-of-a-bitch!

She worried about the tire tracks in the mud ruts, but not much. Why would anyone go down this pair of ruts leading to a dead end?

It was 3 AM when she arrived back home and there remained the problem of Larry's pimpmobile. It was still parked in front of her house. But she had thought of that too. She drove it to one of his favorite hangouts, a whorehouse on 17th street. There she parked it in the parking lot behind the building, in the dark. Places like that have to be careful about the clients' cars being visible. Just the thing for her. She hoped it would be a day or so before anyone realized that nobody was going to come out of the house to drive away in the car. She wondered what would happen when they did. They wouldn't call the cops, that's for sure. They would probably move the car again themselves. They wouldn't want anyone to know that someone had gone missing from their club. Things like that give a place a bad reputation. Scares off the clients. Maybe someone would do

her a big favor and steal the car.

It was a six-mile walk home in the rain, and Robin enjoyed every step of it. When she got home she was wet through, her black hair was plastered to her scalp, her feet squished in her shoes, but she was free. Another problem solved. She was coping. She would have the rest of Sunday to rest, clean up the house, dispose of the syringe and the whisky bottle and the party dress and the old clothes she had used for her temporary re-entry into "the life", and prepare herself for her job on Monday morning. The most pleasant part would be a bath. A long, hot, bubble bath. Nothing better for a girl's soul.

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