

Norbert's Law

Bait

Trish Mooney was from the Met, Section SI3; the dirty washing squad that sought to clean up UK police forces. Her 'cover', at least the one that the rest of her colleagues had been fed, was that she was to be a croupier called Marion Bolan, working the Chinese scene in Birmingham, trying to snag a cabal of cops who had been suckered into a triad web and were on the take, big time. It was a good story, just the wrong one.

In fact Trish was acting out the role of a high-class hooker and madam called Jeanie Currie, a hard-faced bitch who was demanding and ruthless. Only three people in SI3 knew of this project. Had her other colleagues known the truth, they would have split their sides. Trish was a goer, always turning up at cop nights-out ready for adventure, ready to bed the next new guy, or any guy.

ooOoo

Mooney had grown up in the notorious St Mary's housing scheme in Dundee. Her mother, Sandra (Sandi) had been on the game well past retirement age, until the drink took her. At sixteen, already on the pill and well experienced with older boys, Trish saw only one way to escape. She joined her mother's enterprise and set her face to 'smile'. She did only hand jobs at first but then, if they offered enough, she did whatever they wanted, everything except anal and oral.

Now earning, saving hard, Trish devised a plan. For the first time in her life she made an effort at school. The young science teacher with the posh Edinburgh accent was a push-over, and soon she was frequenting his bed-sit for 'evening study lessons'. Iain Mackintosh was bright and cheery, the first man she had actually liked. Between his clean crisp bedsheets and at his study desk she learned enough to get four O-levels and two Highers a B-grade.

At eighteen with £5,000 in cash accrued, Trish moved to Glasgow to start her course at the college of nursing near to Baird Street Police station. She lived on her earnings from the Laptop and Pole-dancing circuit. Late one night, waiting outside a club at a bus stop in a downpour, Inspector Ritchie Renton offered a lift. Ritchie, a rising star and schemer paid handsomely for her expertise. Trish moved in with his 'sister' Mrs Lizzie Denholm, who ran a high class knocking shop. Four years later, armed with her nursing degree, she applied to Strathclyde Police but failed the background checks with her past in St Mary's counting against her.

Norbert's Law

Trish made a phone call. Her granny was happy to help. Trish changed the details her application form, claiming she had been reared with her grandparents in Montrose. Second time around her application was successful. The unglamorous MOD Police trained Trish as a dog handler, a title which always made her smile. At RNAD Coulport she guarded nuclear silos from CND protesters, living alone in a trailer home. For the first time in her life she tried to go straight, going through the motions with serial boyfriends. Boredom, ambition and war stories of bold excitement in the 'Smoke' lured her into applying for the big time in the Met. PC Patricia Mooney (MOD Police) twenty-five years old, mixed race, female and with a 'perfect record', was a godsend for Met recruiters desperate to make their monthly targets, fill their quotas.

ooOoo

On Saturday 30th June 2007, Trish kissed her two dogs goodbye at the kennels, said her last 'farewell' to her boss in the portacabin with the shutters down, his fifth and final instalment as 'payment' for her 'perfect record' reference. She flew to Stansted the next day.

A week later, on Saturday 7th July, she was riding a London underground train when it exploded. Trish came round slowly and knew enough from her nursing days to remain motionless as she checked out her body, sector by sector, to be sure she was intact. In the dim light she could hear screams and groans, see bits of bodies, smell blood, urine and faeces.

It transpired that off-duty PC Trish Mooney was one of many unsung heroes that morning and her bravery and toughness under duress was noted in her record. Visiting the Incident Control caravan was the newly promoted ACC Norbert Walsh, a man who had flourished in the violence of Belfast. Walsh spotted the young Trish and soon they were meeting regularly, on an extra-marital basis. He learned about her past, which mirrored his own. To facilitate their affair, he drew her into his recently formed SI3 squad, one of only three women in the tight-knit group of fourteen hand-picked by Walsh.

Norbert's mission was to keep the Met and other UK forces clean. Walsh and his SI3 team operated in secret, under the radar, from an anonymous address in North London, funded and protected by the Home Office. Once you joined SI3 there was no going back. The rules were loose; almost anything was permissible, provided Norbert approved in advance.

This approach was commonly known as *Norbert's law*.

Norbert's Law

Game On

Trish was sent back to Glasgow, seven years older, wiser and hardened. During what would become a careful six months slog, operating alone and undercover, she built up a steady clientele for herself and her girls, all Bulgarians, all pleased to be rescued from the Romanians.

At first Trish enjoyed the freedom and the pleasures the 'old' life but soon settled to her role as their madam. As Jeanie Currie she was the filter, the chooser, the provider. If she did not like the look of a punter he was refused. If he gave trouble she could be vicious, using her police training to disable and punish him or her without leaving a permanent injury. Word seeped into the seedy underworld scene. Her reputation improved and with it, the quality of her clients. Her girls were clean, friendly, experienced and drug and drink free. They were all saving hard, planning to open a tanning salon, a cleaning agency, a café or whatever.

In her third month she moved them up-market to Waterfront Court, and expanded from three girls to six, now working shifts. This large penthouse flat was owned by one of her punters, Kevin McKinlay, an ex-professional boxer who had been forced to leave town suddenly, because of gambling debts. Now her bookings were made by telephone, her clients arriving in executive cars or anonymous taxis.

It was a waiting game, as Norbet had explained. Eventually the rogue copper would show himself, want a piece of her action, then she would 'do' him herself, get him on video, ask the right questions, get the right replies and "Shazam!", job done. This man, whom they had identified, was into everything, including drugs. The rumours were that he was backed by the Romanian Mencken, and his mafia team. On the face of it these men were respectable who posed as a group of 'businessmen', most basing themselves in the exclusive village of Mansefield, near Glasgow. It was said the Romanians also had a stranglehold on Edinburgh, Dundee and the luxury end in Aberdeen. The narks claimed Mencken had ambitions to open franchises in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. He saw Glasgow as small beer compared to Edinburgh; that's why he had based himself near Glasgow, out of the limelight, they said. Norbert knew better.

Norbert's Law

Snap!

Walking fast as she always did, Trish swung into Baliol Street in the early hours of the morning of Thursday the 22rd May. She saw the traces of smoke wafting from her close mouth and from the broken windows of her first floor flat, the place she had started out, six months earlier. She had a new group of girls 'working' this flat, with Genka now in charge. The building façade was lit by the emergency team's floodlights. The crowd was subdued, murmuring. Trish recognised neighbours from nearby closes, but as Jeanie did not fraternise with them, she did not know their names.

The Fire and Rescue squad were already removing their breathing apparatus, rolling up their canvas hoses, stowing their gear. The fire was out. They were clearing up. Someone shouted her name and she turned to the voice.

The young policeman's ashen face made her stomach spasm. Bile rose into her throat. She fought it down, regained control.

'Are you Mrs Jean Currie?'

'No, Ms Currie. What's happened?'

'Do you live on the first floor of number two-forty?'

'For God's sake, tell me, what's happened?'

'Listen, do you live on the first floor at two-forty Baliol Street.'

'Yes! What's happened?'

'Come with me, to the Incident Vehicle. My Super wants you.'

'No, first tell me what's happened?'

'Come on, *move it!*'

He lunged to grab her arm, but she stepped back and raised her hand for a chop.

'Don't! Don't dare touch me sonny boy, or I'll snap your fucking wrist!'

Norbert's Law

Tosser

Trish had to hope her tail, her minder, DS Alfie Affleck from SI3 was on the ball, watching her being taken. She met with him only once a week in her old caravan round at the remote Roseneath peninsula. It was here they swapped bodily fluids in an urgent frenzy of re-assuring normality, while they exchanged notes and planned the week ahead. These meetings never lasted more than an hour, and then they returned to their respective covers. Alfie had never revealed what his was, in case she was caught.

The crowds parted to let them through. She heard an elderly female voice mutter: "There's the whore!" Someone added: "Aye, fuckin' right hoor, that yin!" Jean set her face to a fixed smile, as she did when her punters pawed at her, and pretended not to notice.

The huge caravan was crowded with men and women. Only a few were in uniform, most in casual clothing, the new breed of data analysts, sitting at laptops, rowed on each side, leaving only a narrow corridor. At the far end there was a tiny office. Inside a tall slim man in a grey suit stood looking at her through a glass partition. He was alone.

She recognised him as one of her punters, the one with the silver Mercedes who brought all his own gear in a pilot's briefcase.

Part one of his session was always a slow and slippery hand job, with lots of Johnsons' Baby Oil squirted. While she increased the tempo he liked to writhe and wriggle and she had been instructed to smack his calves while telling him to lie still and do as he was told. During this phase he wore a clear plastic snood over his head to increase the effect - autoeroticism.

In part two she must first spank his now flaccid penis with a small fly swat, gently, while telling him how very naughty he had just been. Then, when he turned away, she must change to his own little beaded whip, to be used viciously across his buttocks until it drew blood, his punishment for cheating on whoever he was cheating on.

In part three she must then spray-on antiseptic TCP while he sobbed asking forgiveness as she wiped him clean and dry with his first towel, telling him that although he had been a bad boy, she had made it better.

Finally, the man would carefully re-pack his gear, shower, dry himself with his own towel, return from the bathroom fully dressed, pack it, pay his fee of £300 and leave. Thirty minutes of less. No drink, no drugs that she was aware of. All good clean fun.

Norbert's Law

Beyond his first visit when he had set out his needs, his requirements, he had not spoken a single word.

It takes all types, she told her girls.

Trish knew that this grey suit was not her mark, but perhaps this was the door was opening, at last.

'Go through to the Interview Room, please, Ms Currie. That's him, Superintendent Desmond Hall.'

Norbert's Law

Bobby

At his request, this punter was known to Jeanie as 'Bobby', and she to him as 'Dolores'. Most of her regulars were talkative. 'Bobby' was not. "Bobby the Bobby"-Jeanie's smile was wider, genuine, and she covered her mouth. Trish had taken him for a solicitor, or perhaps a surgeon, such nicely manicured hands.

"I must be slipping, losing it", she mused. "I thought I would be able to spot another copper at a hundred miles."

Maybe at last the heavy rucksack would do its job. She was heartily sick of hefting it every time she left Waterfront Court, taking it wherever she went. But she could not risk leaving it, not even in her locked wardrobe. Although they were good girls, she could not trust leaving it with them in the house; the temptation was too much.

As she entered the office, Hall spoke past her using a quiet, pleasant and cultured voice, addressing the young policeman who was shepherding her.

'Tom, grab yourself a coffee. I need ten minutes, OK?'

'Eh, yes, eh... Yessir!'

'Bobby' pulled down the blinds and they were alone. He leaned across, pushed her into a chair and hissed into her ear.

'Right, Dolores, you fucking prat, give me that rucksack and sit still on your fat arse. So this is where you hide yourself when you're slumming it. Surely you can do better than that dive.'

'Bobby, a wee word of warning, for old times' sake. If you take that stuff off me they *will* find out. Then you won't have a tadjer to pull on. These people are serious. They're from Manchester.'

'Give me it, and shut the fuck up. One more word and I'll do you myself. Then you'll never be able to tell them anything, not from the depths of Loch Lomond, not when you're chopped into fifty different pieces with my shiny new chainsaw. Get it?'

As he was speaking he was testing the coke on his gums, smiling. He opened his pilot's briefcase and thought about transferring the coke from the rucksack. Norbet had insisted that it must be real, and that it must be packed loose. It worked. Bobby changed his mind, and rammed the rucksack into the briefcase and snapped it shut. He took out his mobile, punched a speed-dial number. She heard only his side of the conversation.

Norbert's Law

- 'In the bag, so to speak.'
- 'Yes, I'm ready for pick up.'
- 'The Cue Club? Right, I'll be there in two minutes.'

The Superintendent opened the door, waved the young policeman back in.

'Tom, cuff her and take her to Govan. I've explained that she is 'helping with our enquiries'. Note in the book that she has declined a solicitor. Don't let her speak to anyone until I get there. Understood? I need to check out what she said. She may be in the clear. Be with you in an hour or so, OK, son?'

Jeanie Currie was cuffed and taken away.

In the back of the police car she again asked Tom what had happened.

'Give over, you know what happened. You paid for the hit, didn't you? I threw up when I saw it. Three women, throats slit then gutted from you know where to. . . Then he tried to dispose of the evidence, set the place alight with petrol. Prat. Blew himself up. Killed the old lady living above you, smoke got her. Ninety-two she was. I hope you're proud of yourself.'

'No, not me, Tom, I'm in the clear. I bet you when forensics do their stuff you'll find he was one of Emil Mencken's boys. You'll have them all on file, I'm sure.'

Norbert's Law

Shazam!

As they drove into the secure yard at Govan, the police radio crackled:

'All Units, All Units. This is a Code 12. All Units in the Greater Glasgow operational area: be aware that there has been a large explosion at a private dwelling in the village of Mansefield. The patrol attending reports that there are six dead bodies including Assistant Chief Constable Ritchie Renton and Superintendent Desmond Hall. This is a suspected terrorist attack. A security cordon is in being put in place. All Units that are not actively engaged in other duties must call Control immediately for re-tasking.'

Trish smiled. The rucksack had done its job, detonated by Alfie following the tracker embedded in the rucksack grab handle. The high-powered explosive was the latest from the boffins, layered into the rucksack's fabric. Made in Israel.

She must sit tight and stay shtum, wait for the seventh cavalry.

ooOoo

Two hours later, DS Affleck arrived at Govan with a release form signed by Edwin Hemmings, a man known only to those privileged to be called to security briefings at the Home Office in London.

After an hour of urgent phone calls the word came down. Alfie collected Trish and they sped off in a hired car. Jeanie Currie's involvement had already been expunged from the record.

It was Hemmings who would fax the full list of dodgy Scottish cops to the First Minister in Edinburgh. With the head of the viper removed, the others should be easier to clear out of the nest.

At Waterfront Court the Bulgarian girls were on their own again.