

Among the Tin Cans And Broken Glass

By T.A. Novak

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the past and present officers of the Detroit Police Department, men and women that daily risk their lives for the citizens of Detroit. While this book might depict some officers in a bad light, I want to stress that this type of officer is in a very small minority. I admire and salute all police officers for their willingness to serve

I would like to especially dedicate this work to the memory of men that I personally knew that were killed in the line of duty. Sergeant Stanley Sech, killed in February, 1963 while answering a "Family Trouble" run; Patrolman Jerome Olshove, killed in July, 1967 during the riot and Patrolman Stanley Rapaski, killed during a bar hold up in January, 1969. Stan was off duty and a customer that chose not to take action because his wife asked him not to. Stan followed the orders of the criminals and died when one of the holdup men shot him when Stan's badge was found in his wallet. Requiescat In Pace.

Chapter 1

May 21, 1962

Jake tugged at door handles as he walked close to the buildings. The moonlight glistened off the shards of glass, the resident jewels in Detroit's concrete alleys. His footfalls crunched as he walked. His toe accidentally kicked a can. When it stopped rolling Jake's flashlight beam caught the label. DelMonte Peaches.

The night was warm. He crossed the side street and checked the back of the abandoned TV repair shop. It had plywood nailed over the rear door and window. He walked a few more steps and looked through the bars on the back door of Bill's Barber Shop towards the front. The three empty chairs were silhouetted against the faint light filtering in from the street. Bill always fastened the back door with two padlocks. Jake's nightstick dangled loosely from his right wrist, twisting on its leather thong as he pulled on the locks. He walked a few more steps around three garbage cans and tugged at the back door of Ziggy's Market.

"Umph."

What was that?

The noise startled him. He froze. He strained to hear more. Someone was in the alley with him; somewhere within earshot. He turned, slowly scanning all that he could see in the dark. A power pole was six feet to his right. Across the alley, he made out the fence surrounding the backyard of the home facing Burnside. Jake felt that the noise came from beyond the power pole that stood past the alley that Teed off of the one he was in. That alley ran between Burnside and McPherson. His eyes slowly panned the area pausing to make sure it was a garbage can he saw. Twenty feet up the alley was the back door of the Seven-Eleven Bar.

No, it didn't come from there, Jake thought. Maybe the sound came from just beyond it? But he wasn't sure. His mind raced. A muffled voice? Maybe. But where?

His eyes backed up; covering everything he could distinguish between the direction of the sound and the pole next to him. Again his night eyes searched beyond the dim light bulb that barely illuminated the back entrance of the bar. Further down the alley the back of the Sunoco Station looked quiet. The old stake truck parked blocking the back door was there.

Maybe a rat?

No, it wasn't a rat. Maybe if I take a step or two? Wait!

He tried shutting his mind off.

Headlights and the roar of an engine pierced the night. A car turned into the alley from behind, heading toward the officer. He pressed himself against the building, keeping his badge toward the wall. The car turned left in the alley beyond him, and went down four houses. The driver got out and rolled open the garage door to the side, then drove in. The door rolled closed. In seconds Jake heard the man door on the garage close.

Silence returned. Shit! Whatever I heard, kiss it good-bye.

Jake relaxed, wondering if his mind was playing tricks on him. His heartbeat returned to normal.

He walked a couple of steps and leaned against the power pole. He stared into the darkness. His night eyes caught sight of movement. He was sure he saw a head bob above the stakes on the bed of the old truck, then back out of sight. He searched his memory, trying to visualize the truck he had seen a dozen times in daylight. It was an early 50's red Ford ton and a half with a stake bed. Frank Burns, the owner of the gas station kept old, used tires in it. He parked it parallel to the back of the station using it as a barricade to the rear door, a deterrence to burglars. Jake worked his way towards the truck, trying not to let loose stones or broken glass crunch under his feet. Questions were rushing through his mind.

What would anyone be doing in the bed of that truck? Stealing old tires?

Time and again Herbie White had told the class at the Police Academy, "Crime isn't always obvious. Sometimes it's an out of place noise. A movement. Something that just doesn't fit. Be curious. Earn your pay."

At the front of the truck Jake pressed against the wall of the gas station. He strained, listening. Only then did he hear a rhythmic movement. He drew his revolver and moved to the back of the truck. He flicked on his flashlight. The beam exposed the face of a boy turning to look over his shoulder into the light. Sweat rolled off of his forehead, the beads glistening on his dark skin. "Police! Freeze!" Yelled Jake.

Underneath the boy was a skinny, shaking, wide-eyed girl. She began to cry.

Another order followed, "Get up, slowly. Hands where I can see them."

January 8, 1962

A forty-something-year old police officer walked amongst the classroom filled with casually dressed men and women. His dark, wavy hair was parted on the left. His navy blue shirt was neatly pressed. The three vertical military creases on the back were straight and sharp. His Sam Browne was spit shined including the holster worn in a cross draw fashion. The matching navy blue trousers showed not a wrinkle ending crisply at the black shoes reflecting the overhead lights. The embroidered gold bars on his left shirtsleeve just above the cuff indicated twenty

years of service. The silver badge over his left breast bore the numbers seven four seven. He stopped halfway down the second row looking at the silent class.

“What’s your name recruit?” The officer barked.

“Bush. John Anthony Bush, Sir.”

“You can cut the ‘sir’ shit, kid. You’re not in the Army now.”

“I was in the Marines, sir.”

“And I supposed that you can give me fifty push-ups, Mr. Ex-Marine?”

“Probably a hundred.”

“Bullshit.”

The officer turned towards the rest of the class. “How many ex-Marines have we got in here?” Eighteen hands went up out of the forty-eight men and two women in the Detroit Police Academy class of January 1962. He thought for a minute; then continued walking between every row in the class. “Must be my lucky day. Over a third of the class are jarheads.” With a wry smile he shook his head and walked among the desks in the classroom.

“Let’s get back to business. I’m Herbert White, Patrolman, Detroit Police. You will be looking at my handsome face for the next thirteen weeks here at the academy. While others will try to drill some basics into your head on criminal law, code of ethics and such, my main job is to try and let some of my twenty two years of street work rub off on you, so you don’t get your ass killed. Better yet, to keep you and your partner from getting killed. Oh, and by the way, I do run the self defense and the physical training classes.” He stopped in front of Bush’s desk, smiling again, “And I will see if this ex-Marine can in fact do a hundred push ups. Right Mister Bush?”

John Anthony Bush was a skinny 168 pound five foot eleven inch recruit. For sure, not an imposing looking future police officer. He was born in Detroit; a second generation removed from Poland. His father, Ted, changed the last name from Buszewski to Americanize it, “so it would be pronounced right.”

Jake, as he liked to be called, was raised in a strict home. There, Germans were krauts, Japanese were nips, Italians were whops or dagos (depending on what Ted Bush wanted to call them that day) and coloreds were niggers. Jake’s dad never finished the 9th grade and both his parents worked at factories when he was young. His mom’s job was eliminated by the time Jake got into high school. She never went looking for another job. A brother and two sisters made up the rest of the family. They all had their household chores and they had to be done or a belt across the ass was the first warning. Sometimes mom preferred using an ironing cord, or a broom; whatever was handy. Dad was always called on for the heavier punishment. Home was not the quietest place. Jake’s mom and dad fought a lot.

A catholic education gave Jake further training on doing what was told. The nuns of Ascension in Baseline (before becoming the city of Warren) did not spare the rod. The priests of Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods did not need a rod. A student did not question the authority of a Marist Father more than once. Father Boulanger (all five foot two of him) showed one six foot three Allen Davis the quick way to the floor in one such incident. Lesson learned. No more questions. The fathers were respected. All of Jake's school years were spent with other white kids.

Jake worked from his sophomore year on, slinging pizza at Tina's, then delivering sporting goods for J&J's or washing dishes at Ciro's. Here Jake worked side by side with Sims and Sonny, one an ex-boxer and the other a seventy-year-old grandfather. Both were black. Jake liked them.

The last two summers before graduating Jake worked two jobs. If he wanted a car, he had to buy it. If he wanted it to keep running, it came out of his pay. There were no free rides at the Bush household.

Work meant no real time for sports. Oh, a bit of football at the local park or a hockey game at Hielmann Field could be worked in, but no organized going out for the team at school stuff. Work also meant no beer parties with the boys and very few dates. The fights Jake had growing up were mainly with his younger brother, Dave. So, he was not born and raised on the streets. He was just an average kid with average grades from an average home.

Hank, a friend growing up across the street, was planning to go into the Army the summer he and Jake graduated. "Wanna go in on the 'Buddy Plan', Jake?" asked Hank.

"I was in the Boy Scouts once. Didn't like Mr. O'Danny's oatmeal. I'm joining the Marines."

Ted Bush said Jake did not have enough guts to join the Marines. That made Jake more determined. On June 18, 1958 Jake was sworn into the United States Marine Corps. That night a train had him on his way to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Between twelve weeks of boot camp and four additional weeks of Advance Infantry Training at Camp Pendleton, Jake learned how to fight the Marine Corps way. That is, kick ass, or get your ass kicked. Jake lost as many as he won.

After two weeks leave, Jake reported to Naval Air Station Moffett Field located in the bay area of California. His orders read to report to Marine Barracks as a member of the Marine Guard Company. The Marines didn't call them MPs, but that is what they were. This introduced Jake to law enforcement.

A Marine Guard on a naval base meant instant authority along with a Colt forty-five automatic in the hands of men as young as seventeen. Some marines, no doubt, were too young. In the first six months Jake was stationed at the base, two on-duty marine guards were shot by other marines. They were playing fast draw with their pistols. The shooter and the wounded both spent time in the brig.

Six months later another young marine shot up the main gate. No one got hit. Private Shannon was looking for a discharge. He got jail time. Jake was a witness to this one and learned to duck and dive as one round from a Colt .45 missed the Corporal of the Guard by less than a foot and three other shots went off into the night. Jake did not stand around to see where Shannon had his .45 pointed.

Jake became NCO in Charge of the main gate, even though a PFC, as a result of his other guard team members being arrested for being drunk on duty on the main gate. They went to the brig. Jake was under house arrest for two days until fingerprints on a broken gallon jug of burgundy wine and twenty-four empty Schlitz cans proved that at least one Polack from Detroit did not drink.

Jake's new gate crew was fresh from boot camp, all Privates, and all black. Their names were Sweets, Miller and Davis. To them Jake was the "Roos-key," nicknamed by Miller who thought Jake was Russian. To Jake, they were his work mates, his fellow marines and in time, his friends.

The Marines had American Indians, Japanese Americans, Hispanics and every kind of WASP from every corner of the U.S. Jake didn't even want to think of what his dad might have called any of his fellow Marines.

Later in his Marine Corps career, a burglary arrest at the base golf course clubhouse cemented Jake's future direction. Jake wanted to be a cop. He planned his life with this goal in mind.

Jake married a girl he met as she was going through his gate. Her name was Anne. Her father was in the Navy. At age nineteen Jake became a father. A few months after Deborah was born Jake landed a straight day job in the Marines. He was the Motor Transport NCO. That change allowed him to attend Foothill Junior College part time. He also took every correspondence course that had a law enforcement slant.

The last year as a Marine Jake spent two hours every other day in the base weight room. He was determined.

Jake also started applying to police departments. First to Los Angeles, then San Francisco and Detroit. Los Angeles and San Francisco sent their entrance exams to the Marine Barracks. Major Jim Leicht, second in command of the Marine detachment, administered them. The two tests were passed. The City of Detroit sent a letter to Jake that briefly said that to pursue a career as a police officer in Detroit, he would have to apply there in person upon his discharge. Los Angeles wanted Jake and San Francisco put him on a waiting list. Jake opted to return to Detroit, his home, and try there.

On June 17, 1961 Jake was honorably discharged from the marines. He, his wife and two daughters (one and a half and six months old) drove to Detroit. On June 21st he applied at the Detroit Police Department Headquarters. Written tests, physical agility tests, then a physical exam followed. Police Department investigators interviewed old neighbors and school administrators. The background investigations took forever.

In the meantime Jake picked up a job as a bartender at the restaurant he worked at prior to joining the marines. And he waited.

An envelope with the Detroit Police letterhead finally arrived in mid-November. The letter was to the point. It directed John Anthony Bush to report to the Detroit Police Academy at 8am on January 8, 1962 located at 100 Clinton.

Jake showed his dad the letter. Ted Bush may have been proud of his son, but never showed it. "I heard that they give out a trophy to the best shot at the Academy. Bet you twenty bucks you can't win it."

"I learned in the Marines that I'm not that good of a shot," Jake answered. "But if they give one for the best grades. I'll bet on that one."

March 16, 1962

The thirteen weeks of training passed quickly. And, yes, Jake did get the opportunity to do his one hundred push-ups for Officer White. The graduation from the academy was held at the Detroit Fine Arts Building auditorium on that Friday at 1:00pm. There, diplomas, badges and assignments were handed out.

Jake ended up in second in the scholastic standings. Jake lost the \$20 bet with his dad. Ted wouldn't take it. He bought Jake a slapjack as a graduation present.

"Here's something to even the odds in a fight." Ted may have been too tough for hugs, but the tear in his eye told Jake he was proud of the son wearing blue and badge number Two-Four-Four-One.

Jake Bush, Frank Prudent and Elmer Lambroux were assigned to The Eleventh Precinct from the January class. They were now officially a part of a department of fifty two hundred men and women police officers in the City of Detroit. Graduating officers were ordered to report to their assigned precincts after the afternoon ceremony. The three planned to meet in the Eleventh Precinct parking lot.

As Jake drove up to the precinct building, he looked over his assignment. It was an early 1900 vintage concrete two-story building located at the southeast corner of Conant and Davison.

Officers Lambroux, Bush and Prudent nervously walked into the garage just off of a parking lot in the back of the station house. Their orders were to report to Inspector Harlan Brushaber. The two overhead garage doors were open. Inside a silver 1960 Plymouth idled with the driver's door open. Each side of the car had a large, sweeping wing painted on it with "Detroit Police" stenciled under the wing. Both were painted dark blue to contrast with the silver. A red bubble light sat atop the car. The radio could be heard calling out car numbers with locations and short messages.

An officer with a cigar in the corner of his mouth came out of a door as the three entered the garage. The officer pulled the cigar out of his mouth and yelled over his shoulder to the door ajar behind him. "Hey Dick. Come look at the new uniforms Herbie White sent us. Damn they get smaller all the time. Bet not one weighs a hundred seventy-five..."

From behind the door appeared another officer with his hat on the back of his head and a clipboard in his hand. "New guys reporting in?" He saw the nods. "Welcome aboard. Dick Van Harron here. The cigar with a mouth is Larry. Larry Horvath."

The three rookies shook hands with the two officers as the radio sounded.

"Eleven-Four, meet a man Seven Mile and Van Dyke. Property damage hit and run."

"That's us. Gotta go," the cigar smoker said as he jumped in behind the wheel.

"Can you tell us where to find Inspector Brushaber," Prudent asked as Van Harron climbed in the passenger side.

"Right through that door. See the Sergeant." The car tires screeched as Horvath hit the gas.

The three went through the door Van Harron had motioned to and walked down a short passageway that opened up into a high ceiling room. To their left was an elevated four-foot high dark mahogany desk. It ran nearly the full width of the room. There was a four-foot opening at each end. The off-white plaster wall behind the desk was twenty feet high. An eight by six foot map of the Eleventh Precinct with the scout car territories was centered on the wall behind the desk. At the right end of the desk stood an American flag. To the left, the State of Michigan flag.

A bald officer wearing glasses shuffled papers on the left side of the desk. In the center sat another officer, sergeant stripes on both arms, and glasses on the end of his nose, making notes on papers in front of him. Standing behind the Sergeant leafing through a binder was a tall, slender officer in a white shirt with gold lieutenant's bars on his collar. He was referring to the map from information in the binder. To the far right a young man in a light blue shirt worked a switchboard. The patch on his shirt read, Police Cadet. Bush, Lambroux and Prudent stopped in front of the sergeant, removing their hats.

"Excuse me," Lambroux said. The sergeant looked up, his right hand pushing his glasses higher on his nose.

"Our new officers, right?" The sergeant said as he leaned back in his chair.

"Yes sir," Lambroux added. "We are supposed to report to Inspector Brushaber."

The sergeant turned toward the cadet at the switchboard. "Ring the inspector, Bill. Tell him the new guys are here." He turned back to the three, motioning with his head. "The door just past the cadet."

Inspector Brushaber was hanging up his phone as the three new officers approached his open office door. He stood up from behind his desk and took two steps around it. The inspector had a starched white shirt with a gold oak leaf on each collar. He wore a dark navy blue tie that stopped precisely above his belt buckle. The badge over his left breast was a smaller gold shield. “Come on in, men. I’m Inspector Harlan Brushaber.” He extended his hand, shaking each officer’s hand as the officers filed in.

“Frank Prudent, sir.”

“Elmer Lambroux, sir.”

“John Bush, sir.”

The Inspector motioned the men to sit as he walked behind his desk. He remained standing, all six foot two of him. The office had two large windows. The window behind the desk faced west toward Conant. The other was facing north, Davison. He walked to the north window looking out onto the traffic. He watched a few cars go by. When he turned, he came to a rigid parade rest with his hands clasped behind his back. The silence made the seconds drag.

Jake was thinking, He either has a board stuck up his ass or was a drill instructor. Jake gave the inspector another good look, and then decided the inspector was no doubt a sea going bellhop, what they call a Marine stationed aboard ship. From top to bottom, not a hair was out of place, not a wrinkle was in his shirt nor in his navy blue trousers. He had a small spit shined holster worn on his right hip. It held a nickel-plated snub-nosed revolver. Jake’s eyes were checking the shine on the Inspector’s shoes when he spoke.

“I’ll make this short and to the point. You officers have just spent thirteen weeks at one of the finest police academies in the country. You are now a part of the Detroit Police Department. A department I have now served for over thirty years. The badges you now wear make you a part of what I think is the greatest job in the world.” The inspector paused. “You represent fifty-two hundred members of this department as you wear that uniform.” The inspector walked to the rear of his desk. “Remember this—if you tarnish the badge you are wearing, you tarnish me and every other officer on the department. Keep this uppermost in your minds as you start your new careers.” The Inspector slowly looked into the eyes of each young officer before him. “Keep something else in mind—you’re on probation. The sergeants and lieutenants will send me a monthly report on your progress and work ethic your first year. Any misstep and I’ll guarantee that your career will be a short one.” The Inspector paused again. The three young officers noted the stern look on his face as he let his last sentence sink in. “Any questions?”

The three young officers looked at each other. “No sir.” Prudent answered for the group.

“Good. See the lieutenant at the desk for your shift assignments.” The officers stood, thanked the Inspector and exited, closing the door behind them. They took a deep breath and went to the front desk.

The lieutenant turned away from the map, looking at the three as they approached. "I'm Lieutenant Robertson. This is Sergeant Fitzmaurice and that's officer Bollis, our clerk." A brief exchange of hello's followed. The lieutenant continued. "Take a minute to relax. The Inspector's speech is probably close to the one I heard when I reported in three years ago. The boss likes to let you know that he is in charge." He put down his binder and took a sip on a cup of coffee. "Which one of you is Bush?"

"Here sir," Jake replied, shaking the hand the lieutenant was offering.

"You are on my shift, afternoons."

"Prudent?"

"Frank Prudent, sir." Frank stepped forward. "You're on nights working for Lieutenant Jines."

He looked at the remaining officer. "You must be Lamberoux. Days, Lieutenant Ruggles' shift. Roll call for all shifts is fifteen minutes to the hour. Prudent, your shift starts Sunday night at midnight. Lamberoux and Bush, you start on Monday. Any questions?"

He turned to the sergeant. "Sergeant Fitzmaurice, would you show the men our station house?"

"Sure." The sergeant stood and walked around the desk. "Anyone interested in a coffee? It's there in the corner," his head nodding towards a coffee pot. "Grab one and follow me for a quick tour." He pushed his way through the double doors on the opposite side of the room from the desk. The three new officers passed on the coffee and followed in to what turned out to be the squad room. "This is where we hold roll call."

The fifteen-minute tour of the station that included the holding cells through a door behind the desk and the detective offices upstairs. There was a pistol range in the basement. The tour was wasted on Jake. His mind was drifting off as he counted the hours until his first shift. As he made it to the parking lot he looked at his watch. 68 hours until Monday, 3:45pm. He climbed into his '55 Ford and headed home.