

This is the first 2400 words of the first story in the book, it is titled:

Tat

Anderson wrinkled his furry brow, narrowed the gaze of his granite like eyes, and thought about how much he would like to meet the woman in the picture he was leering at.

Five foot-four, 110 pounds, smoky auburn hair, brown bedroom eyes, nice tits (about a C cup he estimated) and a *very* tight ass. The perfect woman as far as Anderson was concerned. But then there was always that problem he came up against when he looked at photos of women he desired. They were almost always uniformly dead.

Such was the life of a homicide detective.

Still, he fervently wished that Anise Jackson had been alive when he came across her since she was not only a hot babe; she seemed to be smart, too. True, she worked as a bartender at a local dive called The Bombay Club, but she also attended school full-time at Bridgeville College where she was majoring in Criminal Justice. Anderson picked up the transcript the college had sent to him earlier that day. Had she lived, Anise would have wound up on the Dean's list with her grades—which were way better than the one's Anderson managed to scrape together when he went there. From his interviews with the old boob who owned the club and one sharp bartender named Annie, who claimed to be her best friend, he discovered that Anise was pretty tough, too. No one ever gave her any shit and got away with it. Despite all of this, she was now a guest of the county in Morgue Central. Worse, her reservation was arranged by the latest flavor-of-the-month psycho serial killer, who the press had cutely dubbed the Prime Cut Killer since all of his victims had sections of their bodies removed.

Anise, though, was different from all the others. In her case, the psycho had not only murdered her, he had taken off her most of her left arm and all of her right tit. Never before had he taken off an entire appendage of any kind much less such a nice one from such a nice woman.

Dear, sweet little Anise, she could have meant so much to a lonely, bitter man like Anderson. Was it possible to fall in love with a picture—of a dead girl?

Anderson put down the photograph and fondled the .38 Special tucked under his arm. He planned to use it on the bastard that murdered such a splendid woman.

“Take your hand out of your lap, Anderson” said Jacobs, his newest moronic partner, as he entered to squad room.

Anderson reluctantly took his left hand away from his Johnson and flipped Jacobs the bird with it as he wondered how soon he could drive this puke to the point where he would request a transfer. No one liked working with Anderson, and that was fine with him. He always performed—everything—better alone.

“Funny, Jacobs. Did you stop long enough at trying to get Patti into the sack to get her pathology report?”

Jacobs, who was extremely married, always got pissed when Anderson reminded him of how nice it was to be single, even if it was the third time single for his senior partner.

“Fuck you, Anderson. You’re just ticked because she would rather have one of her corpses instead of you.”

“Only because he would stay hard until he decomposed dick head. So what did she have to say?”

“Just the usual, shit. Dead and gone. Killed by a .22 bullet between the eyes and hacked up like a slab of beef, just as sloppily, too. Old Prime Cut never went to med school, Patti is sure of that.”

“Then I guess that leaves us with shit-as-usual.”

Anderson slipped Anise’s picture back into the folder and swore to himself. He had never been so frustrated over a case. In his 20 years on the job, none have perplexed him more than this one. Sure, he had his share of unsolved cases, everyone did, but most of the time he had a clue as to who did it. Many times he knew who the perp was, but could not prove it in the fucking courts. So, on occasion, he had to be judge and jury—not that anyone could prove anything...

“Alright Jacobs, you know the routine. Get out the board and forget about getting home for supper tonight.”

“I know Anderson, you are as predictable as a bowel movement, just not as refreshing. I already ordered in from the Golden China.”

Anderson, looked up in surprise. Sometimes Jacobs actually seemed like he gave a shit. He just might turn out to be a good partner--but only for someone else.

Their dinner order came so Anderson paid for it as Jacobs set up the white board with the pictures of the seven known Prime Cut Killer victims, including that of sweet Anise. Underneath, was written the victim’s stats. Name, age, race, date of death, where they were found, and what part of them was missing.

Virtually nothing matched that would give them a pattern to the Prime Cut Killer’s actions or a clue as to who his next victim would be.

There were victims as young as 16, as old as 73, black, white, male, female, a lezbo and two homos (one confirmed, one suspected), the rest were straight or undecided as far as they knew but the only thing they had in common was that they had nothing in common, nothing that would jump off the board anyway. This really put a knot in Anderson's colon: he wanted to find who this murderous fuck and give him a lead enema before some sob sister lawyer got him off because his mommy hated him.

"So we've got nothing again. No links, no background matches, no leads to show us who this fuck is."

"That sums it up partner," Jacobs rejoined, "but maybe this latest one has given us break. The babe was a bartender at a hot night spot where a lot of perverts hang out trying to land some local talent. Maybe he was a customer; lots to choose from there."

"You mean like Mrs. Dunleavy?" Anderson responded sarcastically, knowing that Dunleavy, the third victim, was a 73 woman barely able to get out of bed, much less haul her ass down to a nightclub to troll for johns.

"You know what I mean Anderson; maybe the old broad or some of the rest didn't hang out there, but maybe they had relatives who did, relatives that look like your latest fantasy girl there, ones that wouldn't give a loser the time of day, so he killed someone they loved for revenge."

"That's as good a guess as any, I suppose, but I don't really want to put that much effort into chasing down such a hinky angle without more of a lead," replied Anderson as he tried to choke down some of the Golden China's chow mien, which tasted like a boiled birds nest, "but I guess it is better than sitting around here on our asses eating this shit."

"About time you came around to my view on something, Anderson."

"Oh, I am there Jacobs, you can get started with the re-interviews of the relatives in the morning. Start with the Anises friends first, since she has no family, and if you get halfway through the list with no results, then drop it."

With that Anderson, tossed the Golden China garbage in with the rest of the garbage, grabbed his coat, hat, and headed for the door.

"Just for the hell of it Anderson, mind telling me what the fuck you will be doing while I am working?"

"Sure buddy; I will be cracking the case"

Every time Anderson walked into his drab little one bedroom walk-up despair hit him like a piece of trailer trash on meth. After two decades of scraping the worst of humanity off the streets of Bridgeville this was the best he could do? Soiled gray walls, paper thin carpet, air and heat that worked when they wanted to, walls so thin you could smell your neighbor taking a dump.

His for-shit-small-town-cop salary and two exes were keeping him broke and graft never interested him even if it was there for the taking. This may have made him the last honest cop in Bridgeville. Lately that sounded more like an epitaph than a good way of life, but there it was.

Neither of his past wives seemed too interested in remarrying either though most likely there were no takers even if they did feel the urge to get off the gravy train.

Locking his gun up, more to avoid temptation than for safety, he swept the trash on his dining room table on top of the trash on his floor where it looked better and had more of a chance of being taken out someday. As he poured a few fingers of Southern Comfort in his cleanest dirty glass, he threw his note book down and turned it to the Prime Cut Killer's victim's list he had compiled.

That fucking Jacobs was always pissing him off and making him say stuff he regretted later, including his big words about catching this puke when the truth was that he was as clueless as everyone else.

He may as well go back over his notes to see if he missed anything, doing that had helped in past cases during his time on the force, though none were ever as tough as this one:

7/24 - Bo Hanson - 27- SWM - (homo) - personal trainer - live in BF (alibi checked out) - busted once for coke possession, given probation (served) - no recent arrests - found in alley on Lower Chompsky Blvd. - shot once - chunk of left buttocks missing

8/13 - Dr. James Hagerty - 47 - MBM - Psychotherapist - well known head-shrinker in town - patients checked out, some loonies, but most just stressed housewives - found in back seat of his car - shot once - chunk of left bicep missing

8/14 - Mabel Dunleavy - 73 - SWF - (lezbo) - retired factory worker - bedridden - found dead in apartment she shared for decades with her "partner" - shot once - small patch of skin above the ankle missing

9/20 - Kyle Sagen - 16 - SWM - (homo????) - high school student/Burger Rack (flipper) - found dead in skate park after parents filed a missing person's report - shot once - three toes, left foot, missing

10/1 - Maria Gutierrez - 33 - MWF - stay at home mother of three - married, 16 years - husband owns small restaurant where she cooked now and then - shot once - most of left calf missing

10/15 - Asa Kogen - 87 - WWM - retired - confirmed Holocaust survivor (Auschwitz)! - found dead near local Synagogue - shot once - chunk of left forearm missing

11/15 - Anise Jackson - 22 - SWF - Bartender/school - live in BF (alibi) - no record, no group memberships - found behind Bombay Club - shot once - part of left arm and all of right tit missing.

Anderson set his notebook down and picked up his drink. Nothing. Nothing anymore than when he wrote them up or any of the hundreds of times he had gone over them since then. When Hanson was found with a piece of his ass missing, no one made anything of it figuring that he was a victim of a jealous boyfriend. But his boy's alibi was firm and there were no other leads, so they let it slide for a while hoping that someone would come forward.

When the good doctor showed up a few weeks later, shot and carved, everything was thrown out the window. He and Hanson were as opposite as two men could be. They were just running down leads on that case when the next day, the lezbo Mabel Dunleavy had been found by her "life partner". Anderson had looked for a connection

between this Mabel and the doctor, but he only treated Park Avenue type neurotics and the lady, despite being sick and old, reportedly had all her wits about her.

A month passed with nothing breaking for them when the Sagen kid turned up. His school friends said he was a closet homo, but his parents denied even the suggestion that he was one. Anderson figured that all parents would do that, so he looked into possible connections between Sagen and Hanson. Of course there were none.

Anderson took another pull at his drink and closed his eyes. His head was throbbing and would be worse in the morning, but he didn't give a shit. If he didn't drink, he would be out prowling the streets looking to shoot the nuts off anyone who he remotely suspected to be Prime Cut.

The Gutierrez woman, who turned up soon after the kid, really lit the media firestorm since she was the first one that did not have any contact with nut jobs, homos, or teenagers. She was married, working part-time, raising three kids, and dedicated to her church and family. There was nothing like an ordinary person being butchered to get the populous in a tizzy, since that showed that any of them could be next. Two weeks later that honor went to an old Jewish man who had survived the death camp of Auschwitz, immigrated to America, and raised a family only to become a victim of another deranged psycho, American style.

Then, a month to the day later, there was Anise who was young, smart, and sexy, with a long life ahead of her. Now she had been reduced to a slab of meat laying in cold storage, she would never see how her life would have turned out for her, worse she would never know him. And why? Because some sucking constipated psychopath needed to get regular and shedding innocent blood was his answer to a suppository.

Anderson's head drooped under the weight of the case, the booze, and the stress of the day. He was going to find this bastard. He had to. This was going to be his last case before he walked up to the Captain and told him to take his job and shove it. He would take his 20 package and go away, far away, to some place where sick bastards like Prime Cut dared not to go. There had to be such a place and if it turned out that there was none, he still had his gun....