

A Different Street

“If we pressure Big Bird, he’ll roll on the rest of his crew.”

Detective Branson isn’t convinced and knows that the NYPD doesn’t have sufficient evidence for an arrest. While the subject is being brought into the interrogation room, Detectives Branson and Punderson have been arguing about how to approach the situation. Seventeen restaurants have had to close up in order to deal with the huge piles of poo left on their doorsteps, along with broken windows. Big Bird is suspect number one, but Branson and Punderson have struggled to discover his motivation or nail him on charges for the crimes.

“Listen to me, Branson. We’ll give him some of the classic good/bad cop business. He’ll fold like a cheap tent. I’ll intimidate the shit out of him. Then, you come in as the friendly woman detective. He’ll bear his soul to you after I speak to him a couple minutes.”

“Sexist prick. You been watching cop movies or something? People actually do that good/bad cop crap?”

Big Bird is led into the interrogation room and sits down on the rusted folding chair. He has a wide smile on his face. Det. Branson leaves him alone in the room with Det. Punderson.

“Ah, detective. What can I do for you? It’s a beautiful day outside.”

“Cut the shit, bird. You better cooperate if you ever hope to fly the coop again. We’ve got some questions for you. We have witnesses that say you hit another restaurant with your antics last night.”

“What do you mean, detective?”

“Don’t play dumb. You crapped on their doorstep, and threw a brick through the window with a note saying “You’re shit out of luck.””

“I don’t know what you mean. Anyway, if you had a witness I’d be in cuffs already.”

“Notice I said *witnesses*. Face it, bird. Your goose is cooked. I remember when kids used to look up to you. What the hell happened?”

Big Bird’s smile has vanished and is replaced by a cold hard glare. Punderson knows he needs to push him further.

“So nowadays you fly over society, or you see us parked under a tree. You decide because of a little misfortune, you’ll just do a flyby and crap all over our car. Guess what, buddy. There’s a new rooster in the hen house now.”

“A little misfortune? Maybe you should do some digging into *Sesame Street*. You could see what really happened there. So yes, I protest now. Too many restaurants have poultry on the menu. It’s time I stood up for my brothers and sisters.”

“I’m gonna clip your wings, bird. What you’re doing is illegal, and the next time you slip up, I’m gonna be on you like pigeons on bread crumbs in the park.”

Det. Punderson walks over to the door and is already sweaty from getting so worked up. He opens the door and Det. Branson joins them.

“Mr. Bird. Mind if I call you that?”

“Sure thing, lady. You can just call me ‘Big’ if you want to. I’ve been told I am.”

Big Bird bobs his head and laughs at his own joke. Det. Branson is not amused, and Punderson's left eye twitches.

"This isn't a joke, asshole. Just because you're big and yellow, doesn't mean you can fly close to the Sun."

"Punderson, relax a second. Alright Big, why don't you stop at peaceful protests? There would be nothing illegal about that."

"Like she's saying, you keep taking it a step too far. You're no different than your little buddies Elmo, Cookie Monster, and the Count. Oh yes, we've heard about their exploits too. Your little flock is making quite the scene in our city."

"Detective, could you please stop with all of your puns. Do you not realize you're doing that?"

"Don't take it personally, Big. Det. Punderson talks to everyone that way."

"So what do you expect me to do? Give up my comrades?"

"Comrades?! Is this a revolution now? You guys a bunch of extremists trying to overthrow the establishment? Wanna know what I think? I think you're a bunch of fat turkeys waiting to get carved up."

By now, Big Bird is starting to get worked up as well. Of the three, Det. Branson is the only one controlling her voice. Big Bird and Punderson are standing and pointing as they bicker back and forth.

"Wait til the guys hear how you're harassing me. You have no proof of this. I'm a peaceful protester. I don't break any windows. I don't curse either."

"Oh, sorry Mr. Upstanding Citizen. My mistake."

"Apology not accepted, motherfucker."

“I thought you didn’t curse. Not that that’s the only thing you’re lying to me about today. Let me ask you something. What kind of makeup do you have? Mostly light or dark meat underneath? Maybe we’ll find out someday.”

“Uh...Det. Branson? This man is threatening me.”

“Stand down, Punderson. That’s enough of this. Mr. Bird, you’re free to go. But, I hope you’ll think closely about what you and those friends of yours are up to. If you do anything illegal, you will get caught and convicted sooner or later.”

As Big Bird begins to walk out of the interrogation room, he turns and looks at Det. Punderson.

“Det. Punderson, can I ask you one question? Why did the chicken cross the road?”

Det. Punderson takes this as an insult and lunges toward Big Bird. Two officers close by are forced to grab and restrain him before he lays a hand on his target. Big Bird winks as he leaves Punderson’s sight. Once he’s gone, Punderson and Branson go over the results of their interview.

“Well, Punderson, did that go according to plan?”

“Oh yeah. We made him nervous. He was about to crack, too. He knows we’re on to them all. Their days are numbered.”

“I think we should put a tail on Big Bird. See where he goes. Maybe he isn’t as clever as he thinks. Probably a good chance he’ll try to contact Cookie Monster, Elmo, and the Count. Let ‘em know that the heat’s coming.”

Branson pulls out manila folders stuffed with pages dealing with other unsolved cases. The Count, Elmo, and Cookie Monster are all suspects in ongoing

investigations. Cookie Monster is wanted for numerous thefts—stealing cookies from kids. The Count is the only suspect in a rapid outbreak of women having bite marks found on their necks, and found with decreased amounts of blood. The NYPD has been trying to put a case together against Elmo for grand theft auto for months.

While her and Punderson look through the files of Big Bird's associates, a call comes through the speakers.

"10-30 in progress. Witnesses report multiple kids having their cookies stolen. Chocolate chip. Cookie Monster seen fleeing the scene."

"Let's go, Branson. Big Bird'll have to wait. Looks like the chips are down!"