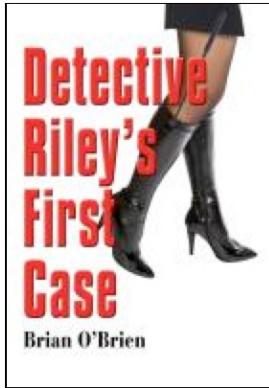


**Detective  
Riley's  
First  
Case**

**Brian O'Brien**





*The President is unreachable when the Vice President learns that terrorists have hidden a nuclear bomb in Manhattan. An official search could cause a deadly panic so he remembers his father's advice: "There's nothing smarter than a smart cop!" He sends the best cop he knows - reckless, hard-drinking ex-cop Riley, who is clueless but the beautiful Secret Service agent sent along as his bodyguard and undercover wife develops a search scheme both brilliant and dangerous.*

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# **Detective Riley's First Case**

**Brian O'Brien**

*Detective Riley's First Case*

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Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-62646-393-6

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-62646-394-3

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

Printed in the United States of America.

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2014

Second Edition

*Brian O'Brien*

## **Dedication**

To Margaret and Linda, without whose love, patience and help this book would never have been completed.

*Detective Riley's First Case*

## **Chapter Seven**

Riley was driving down the street in the gathering dusk.

He looked forward to getting home, and the frantic greeting of his black lab, Irish.

As usual he was driving too fast.

He heard the screech of his own tires as he went around a corner and slowed down.

After all, the last thing he wanted was to have some dumb sergeant auctioning off Irish.

It wouldn't be too long now before he would have enough money saved for a down payment on one of those town houses at the beach on the Delmarva Peninsula, about a two-hour drive from Baltimore, not far from Ocean City, but far enough away to have a quiet beach, at least in the winter.

That was when he rented there, when the rent was cheap and there was no one around. The real estate woman assured him that after he bought it the summer rentals would pay the mortgage for the whole year. That meant that he and Irish could spend the winters there and the summers renting a row house on the Baltimore Harbor like the one he and Irish lived in now.

He liked the beach in winter, hardly any people.

And Irish liked to run free on the beach, and in nearby woods, and just along the roads, and run and run and run.

And then they would come back to the beach house, which wasn't really on the beach. It was a town house, but if you went out on the upper or lower deck you could see the ocean a few hundred yards away.

And from the upstairs deck, next to the round enclosure like a silo, covered with shingles like the townhouse and enclosing the circular staircase, you could get a much better view of the ocean, in between the huge high-rise apartment buildings that faced on the beach.

He liked to stand up on the upper deck with a drink, even when it was cold and windy, and look at the ocean and the sky. The clouds made patterns that he never tired of watching.

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Irish liked it up there too. Irish would occasionally stand briefly on his hind legs, with his paws on the top of the wall that ran around the upper deck, looking down in hopes of seeing a stray rabbit in the bushes, and sometimes the two of them would stay up there for more than an hour, even when it was a dark day, and cold and windy.

Irish could run free in the woods behind the beach road when they went for a walk, and he was welcome at the roadside restaurant nearby, although they couldn't let him inside. But they would find a bone for him and he could be tied up outside, and Riley could have dinner and a drink or two inside and keep an eye on him through the window, and then they would go home.

And they could settle in front of the fire, and Riley would read, and drink, and Irish would snooze, and if there was a snowstorm Riley could see the snow swirling in the night through the windows high over the fireplace, and they could hear the wild wind screaming, and the big surf crashing on the beach not far away, until it was time to put out the lights and go up the circular staircase to bed, and listen to the sounds of the wild weather outside until they fell asleep.

He couldn't live there until after he retired, of course, but if he caught a stray round one of these days, a disability retirement might hurry that day. But not in an auto accident, he thought, too unpredictable.

His thoughts were interrupted when the police radio next to him squawked.

The dispatcher gave a laconic report of a man seizing a woman at gunpoint and forcing her into a house at 345 Upshaw St., asking all units in the vicinity to make a silent, repeat silent, approach.

Naturally he was on Upshaw.

He looked out at the houses. He was passing 345.

Some people have all the luck, he thought.

He pulled the dirty gray police Dodge with no hubcaps over to the curb, picked up the mike, told the dispatcher he, Riley, was on the scene and about to enter so please advise all, repeat all, officers responding that an over-age, over-weight homicide dick in plainclothes was responding so be sure and challenge before firing, repeat challenge before firing.



*Brian O'Brien*

#

## **Chapter Eight**

Riley looked up at the house as he got out of the car.

It was an ordinary three-story house, gray, like the police car, like the dull gray afternoon had been before it turned to dusk which was now rapidly turning to dark.

There were lights behind thick curtains on the first floor but the upper two floors were dark.

He knew what the Chief would say.

He'd say what the desk sergeant always said, what the book said, what they drilled into you at the Academy -- never go anywhere alone, always wait for backup, no matter how long it takes, always wait, just wait!

He walked up the path and up the steps of the porch and stopped before the front door.

He thumbed the holster strap off the Glock 30 on his hip and left his suitcoat open.

He favored a strong-side carry, which for him was the right hip.

He rang the doorbell and could hear it ring inside.

Immediately the light in what he guessed was the downstairs living room went out, leaving the house dark.

He thought that was a bad sign.

He used one of his big fists to bang twice, hard, on the wooden front door, growling as loudly as he could: "Open Up! Police!" If he still had the Magnum he would have used the butt to bang on the door but he knew better than to use the Glock. They were told not to hit anything with the butt of the Glock, particularly not to use the butt to hit someone on the head, and a forgetful probationer drove the lesson home by banging on a door with the butt of his Glock and shooting himself in the foot. Since then he understood Glock had made improvements that made such accidents impossible but he didn't want to experiment.

Something made Riley step away from the door right after doing that and plaster his back to the wall beside the front door.

He unshipped the Glock, dropping his right hand down at his side, his trigger finger flat alongside the trigger guard, so the Glock was pointing at the floor of the porch.

With his left hand he reached into the pocket of his baggy suit coat and felt three or four spare magazines for the Glock.

Enough, he thought.

Probably more than enough since they were extra-stack magazines.

He then brought the Glock up next to his ear, used his left hand to complete the two-handed elevated grip they teach at the police academy, keeping his trigger finger flat along the side of the trigger guard so it stayed off the trigger, and pressed his back against the wall beside the door.

He thought how funny he'd look to the two uniforms when the first black-and-white rolled up.

Just like a character in a Clint Eastwood movie.

It would get a lot of laughs back at the homicide table, where they called him "Dirty Harry" when they weren't calling him "Doghouse Riley".

Then it got less funny.

There was a soft sound, kind of like a kitten sneezing, only louder, twice, behind the door and two round black holes appeared in the shadowed darkness of the door, each with a little yellow triangle of fresh wood showing beneath it where the slug had punched through the door.

Small bore, Riley thought, probably a .22 or .25, probably from an automatic with some kind of a silencer, both shots close together, right in the middle of where his chest would have been if he hadn't been playing Dirty Harry.

My Kevlar vest probably would have stopped them with no trouble, he thought, and left me only a couple of nasty bruises, as if I'd been jabbed in the chest -- hard -- with the end of a broom handle.

The vest, of course, was stuffed in a bag in the trunk of the gray Dodge parked on the street.

He no longer had Clint Eastwood's Magnum with the long barrel -- or Eastwood's nerve. But hell, at least I can act as well as he could, he thought.

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He sort of gargled and coughed at the same time.

It sounded so comical he almost laughed, but it was all he had, so he had to go with it. He did it some more, moaning that he was hit, and while he was coughing what sounded like his last bit of life out he reached down with his left hand and tried the knob on the front door.

He was immediately sorry he did.

It turned as he tried it.

The door wasn't locked.

That really scared him.

#

## **Chapter Nine**

Riley hung onto the door knob, afraid to let go because it might squeak.

He couldn't believe it.

The damned door wasn't even locked.

You'd think people would have sense enough to leave their doors on the latch, so they locked automatically when you closed them.

He wondered if he should wait for backup.

Or maybe get the Kevlar vest out of the bag in the trunk of the Dodge.

But he was committed now, he couldn't let go.

He turned the knob all the way and slid the door open, very slowly... good, no squeak ... and then, before he could give himself time to think about it, he slipped quickly inside and gently eased the door shut behind him as he pressed his back against the wall next to the door and went back to his Clint Eastwood imitation, two-handed grip inches from his right ear.

What, he thought, am I supposed to do now? I know what the Academy and the Manual tell you, after they get through telling you again to wait for backup.

They would point out that you shouldn't be there if you had heard them tell you not to go in at all until you have backup, but when you do go in they tell you exactly what to do.

If you're in, with or without their blessing, they tell you to keep making like Clint Eastwood and go through the whole downstairs, one room at a time, quartering each room like a pie, remembering to look through the cracks of doors first, and be prepared to shoot through them, without warning, because perps can -- and probably will -- shoot at you from there, also without warning.

That, of course, assumes you can see.

All he could see, wherever he looked, was blackness and more blackness.

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He remembered that in houses like these there was often a window off the hall that gave onto the porch, but all that he saw when he looked was more blackness.

Then, from upstairs, he heard a woman's muffled whimper.

Then a man's barely audible, urgent whisper.

Then silence.

The dispatcher's report of a man taking the woman into the house at gunpoint must have been correct. Riley wondered what kind of gun it was and how many cartridges it held. Then he remembered the shots through the front door, very small bore. Maybe five shots before re-load, maybe seven plus one, with at least two gone before re-load.

He moved slowly and carefully through the total blackness to where he thought the stairs might be.

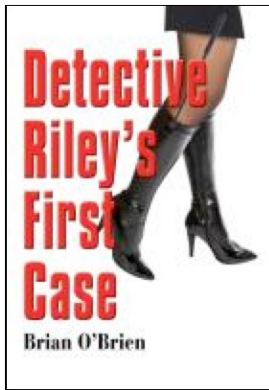
Suddenly he tripped on something and fell forward, abandoning the Clint Eastwood two-handed grip next to the right ear to throw both hands in front of him to break his fall, putting the heel of his right hand forward, so he wouldn't lose the gun.

Both hands broke his fall, with not a second to spare.

Luckily the gun didn't go off, probably because he'd followed Academy rules and kept his finger along the trigger guard and away from the trigger, and he didn't drop it, either.

He had found the stairs, all right, literally tripped over them.

#



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