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LOVE - COPS & MOBSTERS: An R. Blaise Conte Mystery

By Robert Jamelli

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Love COPS & MOBSTERS



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R. Blaise Conte . . . Formerly a CID (Criminal Investigation Department officer) and New York Police Department (NYPD) officer, now a private investigator working out of an office located at 3344 Grant Avenue, Secaucus, New Jersey. Conte graduated from high school in 1999 and entered the Army Military Police, leaving in 2005. He left the NYPD in 2015.

Justine Mayflower . . . NYPD detective and girlfriend of Conte. She has worked Vice and Narcotics and has Undercover experience. She now works Major Crimes Homicide.

Red Lyons . . . NYPD officer and the current partner of Justine Mayflower.

Jimmy “Fingers” Walton . . . Street hustler who “knows everyone” and who speaks several languages, including Spanish, English, some Italian, and some German. He has African-American, some Puerto Rican, and some Anglo-American bloodlines, which help him move in many circles.

“Happy” Jack Williams . . . Former document counterfeiter and information magnet, also an engraver and jeweler who owns a jewelry store.

Harry Chiani, a.k.a. “Dirty Harry” . . . Street hustler, loan shark, and part-time bookie, with connections to some mobsters in the Umbrio and Garbaldi families.

Frank Grieco . . . NYPD sergeant who trained Conte. In charge of evidence room and scene preservation.

Latia Lee . . . Pittsburgh detective and later FBI agent.

Jeff Denorz . . . FBI Special Agent and Latia Lee’s eventual husband.

Chapter Three

The Women, and Then Some

Wednesday Night

Always using the name “Michael Smith,” Michael Tarantino had made good use of the various dating sites. This was how he had met Janet, Joyce, and Lorraine. He also maintained a close relationship with Charleen Dubois and Barbie Tarent. In the past, he had met a few other women, too, which turned out to be one-night stands or just not worth his time. Sometimes he’d last with a woman about a month and then move on. He thought it might be time to move on from Charleen and Barbie.

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Over the years she had jobs in various sectors of Washington. There she met her first husband. He was in the diplomatic corps. She got to travel around the world during their twenty years of marriage. She had two boys and a set of twins, one boy and one girl. Unfortunately, her husband's interest in women in the countries they stayed in got to be too much for her. She bounced back to Washington, working in Congress until she met her second husband. He was a naval officer and a career man. He loved her children and it looked like she had found a good man. But her luck with men did not hold, as her second husband was killed in an airplane crash. She was able raise and educate her children by going back to work.

A few years later, she was still working for the government. She was an office manager in New York for the U.S. Marshals. It was exciting to see the inside working of the U.S. Marshals. She had twelve people in her group. They did everything from filing to computer projects.

Over the years, she had discovered her biggest vice was sex. It was more fun for her now than back in the day. She had first discovered it in her middle school days with her best friend, Marie. They found out about boys and sex together.

Janet had never cheated on her first husband; she found his sexual appetite satisfied her, too. And she was careful now, with the dating sites and whom she agreed to meet in the city. She did make trips to

the Poconos or down to the shore to meet men, and she and Marie would have semi-regular meetings to compare notes. She had helped Marie hook up with a guy named George Johnson. This helped Janet gain certain pieces of information, passed on from Marie's and George's pillow talk.

Janet met Michael on a dating site and agreed to meet him in a small bar. After that, she felt comfortable with him even though he was so young. He could see she was a woman looking for sex. He did not know she had regular sex. When they had their encounters, she always called her best friend, Marie Kuch.

Marie and Janet had been middle school friends but also rivals. They were like that all through school, and even though they went separate ways after high school they kept in touch, trying to out-do each other. Marie had gone to college, met her husband, and settled in New York City. Her husband had been an investment broker, and he died a year after Janet moved to New York. Janet often wondered if Marie knew she had shagged Marie's husband more than once. She knew why Marie was jealous of her encounters—she had more men than Marie.

Michael loved the sex with Janet but it did not stop him from continuing to check out other dating sites. This was how he had first found Joyce Freeholder, a small-town Jersey girl, who had battled weight-gain all her young life. She had

always felt boys avoided her because of it. She had had a couple of short-term boyfriends, but once they had her they were gone. She was an excellent student and had landed a scholarship to Rider University. She excelled in accounting and in her senior year landed an internship at Inter-Epic Investments. This international investment group was one of the largest in the world. She did so well there that they hired her right out of college.

Joyce was soon assigned overseas to places like Rome and London. In London, she became a bike enthusiast. She also became more aware of what she ate. She never became thin but did mold herself into an attractive woman. In Europe she had many affairs. Finally, after twenty years, she became a vice-president in the firm and moved to New York. But the biggest problem she still had was men. She had had affairs with various men, and she even delved into sex with some women, but she preferred men.

After a couple of emails from the dating site she met Michael in a café. He was finishing up a cup of tea when she sat down at the next table. She asked him if he was really Mike Smith. He corrected her, "Michael Smith."

He told her no one ever called him Mike. She asked if he was serious. He said yes. Then they shared lunch and he decided it was not going to be a wasted day and made a small advance. Lunch was finished and they found themselves going to a motel.

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Lorraine enrolled in a local college and got a part-time job. She moved back home with her parents and started a new life. Eventually, she started to work at a law firm as a legal aid. She had a couple of long-term love affairs but no more marriages. She had just broken up with a long-term boyfriend when she took a dare to join a dating site. By this time she was managing a high-powered law firm in New York. This allowed her enough money to live and enjoy New York.

It was during that time that she met Michael Smith on a site. They exchanged a few emails and had one online chat. He asked if they could meet in person. He suggested a café for coffee. She agreed and they met and talked. He asked her out for dinner the next night, and from there the affair began. She

quickly told her twin Louise about it and shared details of their romps.

Louise Drake had married her high school sweetheart, as well. He had joined the Army and she became a military wife. She learned to move and pack. She also bore three children and was the good wife. After his twenty years in the Army, they settled down in Connecticut and he worked for the State Department within the United Nations.

Louise and Lorraine had always been close. Lorraine would tell Louise something sexual she'd done with Michael, and Louise would try to get her husband interested in it. But by this time he had lost his lust for sex. Lorraine helped Louise get a job in one of the district attorney's offices as a secretary. But she wanted more than a job; she wanted to meet Michael.

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As Michael Tarantino juggled his women, he kept up his social life in grad school. One Wednesday night in the library, he was doing research in "the dungeon." The basement of the library was often called that, as it had many older books, micro-fiche with the proper equipment, and microfilm. Shortly after Michael arrived, Michelle Van Guy came down to do some work. She was twenty-something, blonde, five-feet-six with a small build. She had a soft, sweet face that caught Michael's eye. She was trying to run a couple of rolls of microfilm into a

projector but was having problems feeding it through.

"Hi, do you need any help?" he asked.

She smiled and asked if he could help her load the microfilm. She sat at the console as he, from behind, slowly wove the film through the portals. He could smell the sweet but light fragrance of her perfume. He softly kissed her neck. She nuzzled against him. "Is that the secret to setting up these machines?" she asked.

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"I never did that ever with anyone on a first date. This isn't even a date," she said.

"How about a late dinner? That would be a date, and I know this nice little place we can go to." She agreed and off they went.

At the restaurant he asked her name. "Michelle Van Guy," she said. "I guess I should know your name."

"I am Michael Tarantino." He thought about using the name Smith but realized she could find out otherwise by just asking around. On the campus everyone knew his name and who he was. "Where are you from?" he asked.

"I am from Berlin. That is in Rensselaer, not Germany," she laughed. "You're from New York City, right?"

"How can you tell?"

"You're so sure of yourself. You know, when you touched me I just felt warmth and your soft touch. How did you know I wouldn't scream or yell rape? Or just smack you in the balls?"

"Your eyes. You have such beautiful blue-green eyes that said 'love me'."

"Bullshit."

"No, I just got a vibe. It happens."

"So you're a Casanova?"

"I wouldn't say that, but I think I know or can feel things. It's a curse."

"Well, we better not tell my boyfriend about it. He is jealous and stupid at times."

"And what does he do?"

"He's a cop. You know, carries a gun."

"Yes, let's not tell him. Maybe this should be a one-time thing."

"Maybe you give me your phone number and I'll let you know." She smiled. They were getting ready to leave. He'd drive her back to her apartment. He gave her his cell phone number and his home number; they were registered to Michael Smith. He asked her for her number and put it in his cell phone.

"I won't call you, but if you call me I'll know it is you," he said.

As they talked and left the restaurant, a squad car slowly passed. One officer, looking around, caught sight of the blonde. "Charlie, isn't that Mike's girlfriend?" Lenny Haminski asked.

The driver slowed down and looked. "Yeah, I think so. Looks like her. I only meet her a couple of times," Charlie Goohil said.

Michael and Michelle walked up the street to a side street where he had parked his car. They got in and he pulled out and was heading toward her apartment. The squad car followed. They ran the plates and it came back to Tarantino Enterprises.

"Holy shit! You know who Tarantino is?" Lenny said.

"Yeah, some mob guy."

"Look, he's letting her out. She kissed him," Lenny added.

"Yeah, on the cheek. I think he's from the school. Don't make a big deal out of it."

"We should tell Mike."

"No, we should not. Tell him his girlfriend had some coffee with a guy and he took her back to her place and did not get out of the car and she kissed him on the cheek. You know, he's super-sensitive and goes off half-cocked. Now, throw in that the guy seen with his girlfriend is something with the Tarantino's? No way," Charlie said in a strong tone.

"Let's stop him and see who he is, at least."

They were still following Michael slowly, from a good distance. Now they pulled closer and lit him up.

Michael pulled over and thought, *just what I need; a boyfriend cop pulling me over.*

"License and insurance, please."

He pulled out his license—the family license to drive the car—and opened the glove box for the insurance card. He asked, "What did I do wrong?"

"Sir, you left off a passenger and did not put on a signal." Lenny looked at the picture and the name. "Mr. Tarantino, is this your car?" he asked.

"It's the business's car. I have permission to drive it. This allows me to drive this business car." Michael showed him the family license.

Charlie asked hurriedly, "Who did you drop off?"

Tarantino thought, *these guys are her boyfriend's colleagues.* "A friend from school. We did some work in the library and went for coffee. It is late, so I drove her to her apartment."

"You know her name?" Lenny asked.

"Michelle Van Guy. Is she wanted or—?"

Charlie cut in and said, "Thank you, Mr. Tarantino. Next time signal. You're free to go."

Michael pulled away. Charlie watched and then turned to Lenny. "You are a dickhead. 'Do you know her name?' They know each other at the school. Don't mention it to Mike."

"Yeah, okay." And they continued on their beat.

* * *

Michael had left Michelle off at the apartment she shared with her boyfriend. He thought to

himself, *these two cops can cause me problems if they tell her boyfriend.* He was upset with himself. He thought, *this girl is trouble ... but she can really make love ... she is trouble but she is hot ... maybe I should just stay away.* He got home and his landline voice mail was blinking. He pushed the button. As he did, he remembered what his late mother had told him when he left for college.

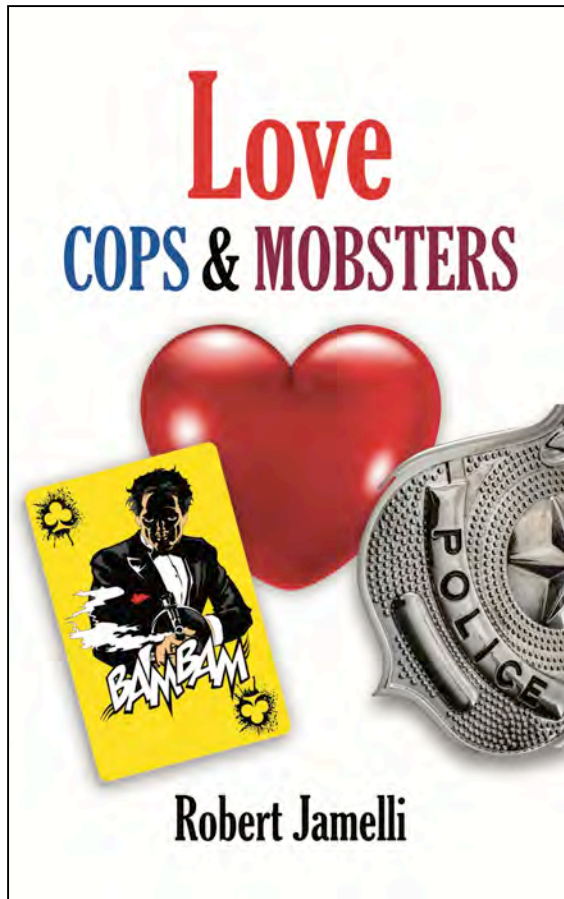
“Michael, you have fun and study hard. When you find love, no matter who she is, you bring her home to me. I am not like your grandfather: ‘She has to be of the blood.’ This Sicilian who was to marry, I forget her name, some Sici from the neighborhood. Well, he saw this,” she had said, as she pointed to her hair and ran her hands down her body, “and it was all over. I didn’t even have to blink my blue eyes at him. He marries a Neapolitan. His father was okay with me, but his mother—what a pain in my ass. Until I pumped out three boys, and all of you have turned out great. I won’t be that way, you bring her home.”

He thought, *mom, I wish I could. You died too young.* He missed his mother. Maybe that is why he was drawn to older women, although Michelle wasn’t older. His phone rang but he did not pick it up. It went to voice mail.

When he checked the message, a soft voice said, “Hi, Michael, this is Louise. I want you to know I really loved today. Could we set up a one-on-one soon? Call me.” She left a number. Michael checked

his other messages. "Beep ... Michael this is The Hammer. You need to stop by tomorrow." Beep ... "Paging Mr. Smith. We should see each other soon. You have the number." Beep ... "Michael, this is Charleen. Remember me? It's been over two weeks. Call me." He sat down and thought, *I need to get away for a few days*. He went to bed, thinking of asking his dad to lend him a few dollars to go somewhere off the grid, maybe asking Michelle to take a trip with him.

Michelle got back into her apartment. Her boyfriend was still on his second shift and not home yet. She got undressed and took a shower. She thought she better get Michael's scent off her before Mike got home. She got into bed and read a little, thinking about Michael. *He had nerve*, she thought, *but he also made me feel hot, both in my mind and my body. I have to see him again*. She got out of bed and dialed his number. It rang to voice mail and she left a message: "This is Michelle, you know, microfilm. Call me at this number." Michael heard his phone ring and picked it up; he saw who had called and left a message. He decided to roll over and get some sleep.



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"I am from Berlin. That is in Rensselaer, not Germany," she laughed. "You're from New York City, right?"

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"No, we should not. Tell him his girlfriend had some coffee with a guy and he took her back to her place and did not get out of the car and she kissed him on the cheek. You know, he's super-sensitive and goes off half-cocked. Now, throw in that the guy seen with his girlfriend is something with the Tarantino's? No way," Charlie said in a strong tone.

"Let's stop him and see who he is, at least."

They were still following Michael slowly, from a good distance. Now they pulled closer and lit him up.

Michael pulled over and thought, *just what I need; a boyfriend cop pulling me over.*

"License and insurance, please."

He pulled out his license—the family license to drive the car—and opened the glove box for the insurance card. He asked, "What did I do wrong?"

"Sir, you left off a passenger and did not put on a signal." Lenny looked at the picture and the name. "Mr. Tarantino, is this your car?" he asked.

"It's the business's car. I have permission to drive it. This allows me to drive this business car." Michael showed him the family license.

Charlie asked hurriedly, "Who did you drop off?"

Tarantino thought, *these guys are her boyfriend's colleagues.* "A friend from school. We did some work in the library and went for coffee. It is late, so I drove her to her apartment."

"You know her name?" Lenny asked.

"Michelle Van Guy. Is she wanted or—?"

Charlie cut in and said, "Thank you, Mr. Tarantino. Next time signal. You're free to go."

Michael pulled away. Charlie watched and then turned to Lenny. "You are a dickhead. 'Do you know her name?' They know each other at the school. Don't mention it to Mike."

"Yeah, okay." And they continued on their beat.

* * *

Michael had left Michelle off at the apartment she shared with her boyfriend. He thought to

himself, *these two cops can cause me problems if they tell her boyfriend.* He was upset with himself. He thought, *this girl is trouble ... but she can really make love ... she is trouble but she is hot ... maybe I should just stay away.* He got home and his landline voice mail was blinking. He pushed the button. As he did, he remembered what his late mother had told him when he left for college.

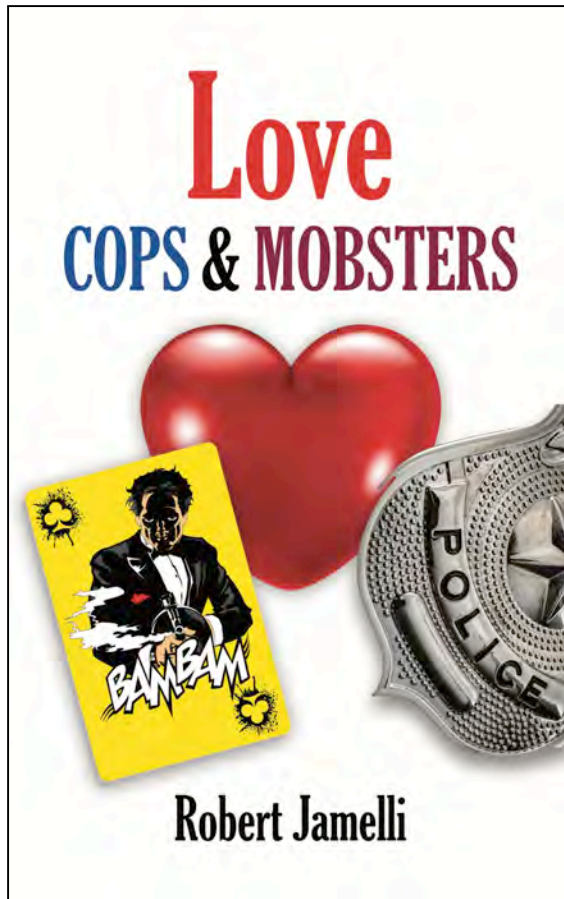
“Michael, you have fun and study hard. When you find love, no matter who she is, you bring her home to me. I am not like your grandfather: ‘She has to be of the blood.’ This Sicilian who was to marry, I forget her name, some Sici from the neighborhood. Well, he saw this,” she had said, as she pointed to her hair and ran her hands down her body, “and it was all over. I didn’t even have to blink my blue eyes at him. He marries a Neapolitan. His father was okay with me, but his mother—what a pain in my ass. Until I pumped out three boys, and all of you have turned out great. I won’t be that way, you bring her home.”

He thought, *mom, I wish I could. You died too young.* He missed his mother. Maybe that is why he was drawn to older women, although Michelle wasn’t older. His phone rang but he did not pick it up. It went to voice mail.

When he checked the message, a soft voice said, “Hi, Michael, this is Louise. I want you to know I really loved today. Could we set up a one-on-one soon? Call me.” She left a number. Michael checked

his other messages. "Beep ... Michael this is The Hammer. You need to stop by tomorrow." Beep ... "Paging Mr. Smith. We should see each other soon. You have the number." Beep ... "Michael, this is Charleen. Remember me? It's been over two weeks. Call me." He sat down and thought, *I need to get away for a few days*. He went to bed, thinking of asking his dad to lend him a few dollars to go somewhere off the grid, maybe asking Michelle to take a trip with him.

Michelle got back into her apartment. Her boyfriend was still on his second shift and not home yet. She got undressed and took a shower. She thought she better get Michael's scent off her before Mike got home. She got into bed and read a little, thinking about Michael. *He had nerve*, she thought, *but he also made me feel hot, both in my mind and my body. I have to see him again*. She got out of bed and dialed his number. It rang to voice mail and she left a message: "This is Michelle, you know, microfilm. Call me at this number." Michael heard his phone ring and picked it up; he saw who had called and left a message. He decided to roll over and get some sleep.



Michael is the youngest son of Roman Tarantino, a major organized crime figure. Michael meets a young woman, he falls for her and she for him. The problem is the young woman has an over jealous boyfriend who is a police officer.

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