



AUTHOR OF HOLLYWOOD STATION

**JOSEPH
WAMBAUGH**

THE OUTRAGEDUS BESTSELLER

THE CHOIRBOYS

"STARK...ORGIASTIC...BRILLIANT.
WAMBAUGH'S FINEST BOOK."
—*Los Angeles Times*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY JAMES ELLROY

Chapter One

Territorial Imperative

The man most deserving of credit for keeping the MacArthur Park killing out of the newspapers before it brought discredit to the Los Angeles Police Department was Commander Hector Moss. It was perhaps Commander Moss' finest hour.

The blond commander was so exultant this afternoon he didn't mind that Deputy Chief Adrian Lynch was keeping him waiting the allotted time. Chief Lynch kept all callers waiting precisely three minutes before coming to the phone, unless his secretary told him it was an assistant chief or the chief of police himself or one of the commissioners or a city councilman or anyone at City Hall who reported directly to the mayor.

Moss despised Lynch for having a do-nothing job and a specially ordered oversized desk. Moss knew for a fact that Deputy Chief Lynch had secret plans to increase his personal staff by two: one policewoman and one civilian, both of whom were busty young women. Commander Moss knew this because his adjutant, Lieutenant Dewey Treadwell, had sneaked into Lynch's office and searched his file basket when a janitor left the door open. Of course Lieutenant Treadwell could not receive a specifically worded commendation for his assignment but he did receive an ambiguously worded "attaboy" from Moss.

But there was another assignment which Treadwell had failed to carry out, and Commander Moss' stomach soured as he remembered it. It had to do

with Moss' IQ score of 107. Throughout his twenty-one year career his IQ had meant nothing to his rise to the rank of commander. Indeed, he had not even known what his score was. He had been a state college honors student in police science and reasoned that no one with an ordinary IQ could manage this. But with the retirement of a senior deputy chief it had been called to Moss' attention by none other than Deputy Chief Lynch who didn't think the promotion board would consider a man for such a high police post who possessed an IQ of only 107. Lynch's own IQ was 140.

Commander Moss was livid. He took Lieutenant Treadwell to a Chinatown bar one Friday after work and forced the teetotaler to down five cocktails, promising his personal patronage for the rest of Treadwell's career if he could carry off a most delicate assignment. The ever ambitious, thirty year old lieutenant agreed to slip into Personnel Division that night and change Commander Moss' IQ score from 107 to 141.

Commander Moss downed his fourth Singapore sling and said, "Treadwell, I know I can depend on you."

But instantly the lieutenant's ambition gave way to fear. He stammered, "If anything ever . . . well, look, sir, the watch commander of Personnel is a former detective. He might start sniffing around. They have ways in the crime lab to tell if documents have been tampered with!"

"Don't talk crime lab to me, Treadwell," Moss replied. "Have you ever worked the Detective Bureau?"

"No, sir."

"You listen to me, Treadwell. You're an office pogue. You never been anything but an office pogue. You don't have the slightest idea what goes on in a working police division. But you keep your mouth shut and do what you're told and I'll see to it that you're a captain someday and you can have your own station to play with. You don't and I'll have you in uniform on the nightwatch in Watts. Understand me, Treadwell?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Now drink your Pink Lady," Commander Moss commanded. (It was Hector Moss who had persuaded the chief of police that the traditional police rank of "inspector" was no longer viable in an era of violence when policemen are called upon to employ counterinsurgency tactics. Thanks to Moss all officers formerly of the inspector rank could now call themselves "commander." Moss had "Commander and Mrs. Hector Moss" painted on his home mailbox. Commander Moss had been a PFC in the army.)

Lieutenant Treadwell tried desperately every night for three weeks to sneak into Personnel Division. Each morning he reported a "Sorry, sir, negative" to Commander Moss. Lieutenant Dewey Treadwell lost ten pounds in those three weeks. He slept no more than four hours a night and then only fitfully. He was impotent. On the twenty-first night of his mission he was almost caught by a janitor. Lieutenant Treadwell was defeated and admitted it to Commander Moss on a black Wednesday morning.

The commander listened to his adjutant's excuses for a moment and said, "Did you get a good look at the janitor's face, Lieutenant?"

"Yes, sir. No . . . I don't know, sir. Why?"

"Because that boogie might live in Watts. And you'll need some friends there. because that's where i'm sending you on the next transfer, you incompetent fucking pansy!"

Commander Moss did not send Lieutenant Treadwell to Watts. He decided a spineless jellyfish was preferable to a smart aleck like Lieutenant Wirtz who worked for Deputy Chief Lynch. What he did was to go into Personnel Division in broad daylight, rip the commendation he wrote for Treadwell out of the file, draw a black X through it with a felt tipped pen, seal it in an envelope and leave it in Lieutenant Treadwell's incoming basket without comment.

Lieutenant Treadwell, after his hair started falling out in tufts, earned his way back into Commander Moss' good graces by authoring that portion of the Los Angeles Police Department manual which reads:

sideburns: Sideburns shall not extend below the bottom of the outer ear opening (the top of the earlobe) and shall end in a clean-shaven horizontal line. The flare (terminal portion of the sideburn) shall not exceed the width of the main portion of the sideburn by more than one-fourth of the unflared width.

moustaches: A short and neatly trimmed moustache of natural color may be worn. Moustaches shall not extend below the vermilion border of the upper lip or the corners of the mouth and may not extend to the side more than one-quarter inch beyond the corners of the mouth.

It took Lieutenant Treadwell thirteen weeks to compose the regulations. He was toasted and congratulated at a staff meeting. He beamed proudly. The regulations were perfect. No one could understand them.

As Commander Moss cooled his heels on the telephone waiting for Deputy Chief Adrian Lynch, the deputy chief was watching the second hand on his watch sweep past the normal three minute interval he reserved for most callers. Chief Lynch couldn't decide whether to give Moss a four minute wait or have his secretary say he would call back. Of course he couldn't be obviously rude. That bastard Moss had the ear of the chief of police and every other idiot who didn't know him well. Lynch hated those phony golden locks which Moss probably tinted. The asshole was at least forty-five years old and still looked like a Boy Scout. Not a wrinkle on that smirking kisser.

Lynch punched the phone button viciously and chirped, "Good morning, Deputy Chief Lynch speaking.

May I help you?"

"It's I, Chief. Hec Moss," said the commander, and Chief Lynch grimaced and thought, It's I. Oh shit!

"Yeah Hec."

"Chief, it's about the MacArthur Park orgy."

"Goddamnit, don't call it that!"

"Sorry sir. I meant the choir practice."

"Don't call it that either. That's all we need for the papers to pick it up."

"Yes sir," Moss said. And then more slyly, "I'm very cognizant of bad press, sir. After all, I squelched the thing and assuaged the victim's family."

Oh shit! thought Lynch. Assuaged. "Yes, Hec," said the chief wearily. "Well sir, I was wondering, just to lock the thing up so to speak, I was wondering if we shouldn't have the chief order quick trial boards for every officer who was at the orgy. Fire them all."

"Don't . . . say . . . orgy. And don't . . . say . . . choir practice!"

"Sorry sir."

"That's not very good thinking, Hec." The chief tilted back in his chair, lifted his wing tips to the desk top, raised up his rust colored hairpiece and scratched his freckled rubbery scalp. "I don't think we should consider firing them."

"They deserve it, sir."

"They deserve more than that, Hec. The bastards deserve to be in jail as accessories to a killing. I'd personally like to see every one of them in Folsom Prison. But they might make a fuss. They might bring in some lawyers to the trial board. They might notify the press if we have a mass dismissal. In short, they might hurl a pail of defecation into the air conditioning."

Chief Lynch waited for a chuckle from Moss, got none and thought again about Moss' low IQ. "Anyway, Hec," he continued, "we have a real good case only against the one who did the shooting and I think we're stuck with that. We'll give the others a trial board and a six month suspension, but we'll take care of it quietly. Maybe we can scare some of them into resigning."

"Some goddamn shrink at General Hospital's saying that killer's nuts."

"What do you expect from General Hospital? What're they good for anyway but treating the lame and lazy on the welfare rolls? What do you plan to do about that dumbass detective who examined the officer the night of the shooting and ordered him taken to the psychiatric ward?"

"Ten days off?"

"Should get twenty."

"Afraid he might complain to the press."

"Guess you're right," Chief Lynch conceded grudgingly. "Well, hope you're happy with our office, Chief!"

"You did a fine job, Hec," Deputy Chief Lynch said. "But I wish you'd talk to your secretary. I've had reports she didn't say 'good morning' twice last week when my adjutant called."

"Won't happen again, Chief."

"Bye bye, Hec." Deputy Chief Lynch wouldn't stand for a violation of the Los Angeles Police Department order concerning phone answering. After all, he had written the order. Officers had to answer thus:

"Good morning [afternoon or evening], Wilshire Watch Commander's Office, Officer Fernwood speaking. May I help you?"

If any word was left out of this standard greeting, the officer could be subject to disciplinary action. It was said that once when a desk officer at Newton Street Station had uttered the entire phrase before giving the caller a chance to speak, the caller, a cardiac victim, fell unconscious before completing the address where the ambulance should be sent and died twenty minutes later.

Deputy Chief Lynch was a man to reckon with because he had thought of the most printable slogan in the history of the department. It was the slogan for a simple plan to spread out the staff officers geographically, giving them line control over everything in a given area. But if the plan were to be newsworthy, it needed a word or words to make it sound sophisticated, military and dramatic.

It came to Deputy Chief Lynch in a dream one night after he saw Command Decision on "The Late Show."

"Territorial Imperative!" he screamed in his sleep, terrifying his wife.

"But what's it mean, sir?" his adjutant asked the next day.

"That's the beauty of it, stupid. It means whatever you want it to mean," Chief Lynch answered testily.

"I see! Brilliant, sir!" cried the adjutant.

One often read in the Los Angeles newspapers that the chief of police was shuffling his officers around in the interest of "Territorial Imperative."