NEW HOPE FOR THE DEAD

A NOVEL

CHARLES WILLEFORD
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NEW HOPE FOR THE DEAD

and the Hoke Moseley Novels

If you are looking for a master’s insight into the humid decadence of South Florida and its polyglot tribes, nobody does that as well as Mr. Willeford.”

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Charles Willeford was a highly decorated (Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Luxembourg Croix de Guerre) tank commander with the Third Army in World War II. He was also a professional horse trainer, boxer, radio announcer, and painter. Willeford, the author of twenty novels, created the Miami detective series featuring Hoke Moseley, which includes *Miami Blues*, *Sideswipe*, *The Way We Die Now*, and *New Hope for the Dead*. He died in 1988.
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*The Hombre from Sonora*
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*The Way We Die Now*
*The Shark-Infested Custard*
NEW HOPE FOR THE DEAD

A Novel

by

CHARLES WILLEFORD

with an introduction by James Lee Burke

VINTAGE CRIME/BLACK LIZARD

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To Betsy and the boys
“Man’s unhappiness stems from his inability to sit quietly in his room.”
—Pascal
Charles and I taught many years together at Miami-Dade Community College. Early on I became aware of his tremendous sense of humor, his wit, and his ability to tell wonderful stories. But as I came to know Charles better, I also began to realize his great reservoir of humanity, his goodwill, his loyalty to his friends, and his modesty as a man, an artist, and a decorated soldier.

He was one of the most extraordinary men I ever knew. He literally lived history. He rode the rods when he was fifteen, lived in hobo jungles, boxed as a club fighter, fought roosters, raised horses, enlisted in the cavalry when he was sixteen, drove a tank in the worst battles of the Bulge, won the Croix de Guerre, the Purple Heart, and the Silver Star. He believed the best profession a man could have was that of an infantry rifleman, but he would also become a college professor and a novelist. I never knew anyone who did as much in his life as Charles.

My essential point, however, is that Charles was a true friend to me. Without mentioning the fact to me, he would recommend my work to reviewers, write a quiet note to a literary-page editor to the effect that this Burke fellow is somebody the editor should pay attention to. At every opportunity he would work my name into his column or write a review that would pop up in a place like The Boston Globe and, of course, tell me nothing about it.

When I began work on my novel The Neon Rain, I wasn’t really sure what I had or where I was going with it, and I sent two chapters to Charles. He was a fine critic, and his help and encouragement with those early pages had a great deal to do with the book’s eventual success. I owe him a lot. He was one of those rare artists who took as much pleasure in the success of another writer’s work as he did his own.

I always thought of Charles as the old soldier. But I mean more by that than the term normally implies. His qualities were chivalric. He was brave and kind and humble. His goodwill and optimism always made others feel better about themselves and the world. I don’t think I’ll ever know anybody like him again.
“CRAP,” Sergeant Hoke Moseley told his partner, “is the acronym for finding your way around Miami.” He glanced at Ellita Sanchez as he shifted down to second gear, and waited for her to nod.

She should know that much already, having been a police dispatcher for seven years, so there was no need to explain that C stood for courts, R for roads, A for avenues, and P for places. It didn’t always hold true that courts, roads, avenues, and places all ran north and south. Sometimes they looped in semicircles and wild arabesques, especially the roads.

Hoke’s major problem with Ellita was making conversation. He never knew exactly what to tell her or what to take for granted, even though he was the sergeant and she was the new partner. She seemed to know almost everything he told her already, and she had only been in the Homicide Division for four months. Some of the things Hoke knew from experience and had tried to explain to her—like the fact that junkies sometimes rubbed Preparation H on their track marks to reduce the swelling—she knew already. CRAP was one of those oddities that very few cops knew about, and he really hadn’t expected her to say, “I know.”

Perhaps, he thought, her two-year A.S. degree in police science at Miami-Dade Community College was actually worth the time and money she had invested in it. At any rate, she was getting more sensitive to his moods. She just nodded now, instead of saying “I know,” and this had begun to irritate him visibly. And something else was bothering Sanchez. Her pretty golden face was more somber lately, and she no longer smiled as broadly in the mornings as she had at first. Her quiescent moodiness had been going on for more than a week now. At first, Hoke had attributed it to her period—if that’s what it was—but a week was a long time. How long did a period last? Well, whatever it was that was bothering her, it hadn’t affected her work. Yet.

One thing Hoke knew for sure: He hadn’t done anything to offend her. If anything, he had bent over backward to make her an equal partner—subject to his directions, of course. He almost always explained why he was doing something. But Sanchez was, first of all, a woman, and she was also a Latin, so perhaps there were some sexual and cultural differences here and he would never really know what was on her mind.

Sometimes, though, when he wanted to make a humorous comment, the way he had with his old partner, Bill Henderson, and then took a look at her, with those huge tits looking voluptuous and maternal in the loose silk blouses she always wore, he held his tongue. Having a female partner in the car
instead of Bill wasn’t the same. Maybe he should let Sanchez drive the car once in a while. But that didn’t seem right either. The man always drove, not the woman, although when he and Bill had been together, Bill had driven most of the time because he was a better driver than Hoke, and they both knew it. For all Hoke knew, Ellita Sanchez was a better driver than either Bill or himself.

Tomorrow, then, maybe he’d let her drive—see how it worked out …

“The next street,” Sanchez said, pointing to the green-and-white sign, “is Poinciana Court.”

“Yeah.” Hoke laughed. “And it’s running east and west.”

They were looking for an address in Green Lakes, a Miami subdivision built during the housing boom of the mid-1950s when the developer was looking for young families with small children, for Korean war veterans with $500 saved for a down payment and jobs that paid them enough to afford a $68-a-month house payment. These had all been $10,000 houses then, with thirty-year fixed mortgages at 5 1/2 percent interest. That wasn’t expensive, even then, for a three-bedroom, one-bathroom house. Today, however, these same houses in Green Lakes, now thirty years old, were selling for $86,000 and more, and at 14 percent interest rates. Many similar housing areas in Miami, depending upon their locations, were slums now—but not Green Lakes. The wide curving streets and avenues, named as well as numbered, were lined with tall ficus trees and Australian pines. There were “sleeping policemen,” painted yellow, every hundred yards or so, road bumps that didn’t let a driver get into high gear. Many owners, as they prospered, had added bathrooms, “Florida rooms”—glass-enclosed porches—garages, and carports, and most of the homes, if not all, had their backs and new Florida rooms facing man-made square lakes, with water the color of green milk. The lakes were originally rock and sand quarries, and much too dangerous for swimming (at least a dozen people had drowned before the Green Lakes Homeowners’ Association had banned swimming altogether), but the lakes had Dade County pines and jogging paths around their borders, and in the evenings there would usually be a cooling breeze sweeping across the water.

As neighborhoods go, Green Lakes was a nice place to live.

The subdivision was close enough to Hialeah for most shopping purposes, but far enough away to avoid the Latin influx, and still much too expensive for a lot of black families. These conditions would all change with time, of course, but when they did the houses would probably appreciate to $100,000, and variable interest rates would be sitting in the low twenties. The residents who lived in Green Lakes now were lucky, and they knew it. The crime rate was low because of an effective Crime Watch program; there hadn’t been a homicide in this subdivision for more than two years.

Hoke spotted the blue-and-white squad car parked in front of the house. The hatless harness officer was leaning against a ficus tree at the curb, smoking a cigarette and talking to two teenage girls. The girls, wearing tank
tops, jeans and running shoes, kept their ten-speed bikes between themselves and the cop. As Hoke pulled to a stop behind the police car, the radio in the blue-and-white crackled. Aggressive birds sang back from the trees, and sprinklers whirred on a nearby lawn. A few houses down, a dog barked from behind closed doors.

As Hoke and Sanchez got out of the car, the officer, a Latin with square-cut sideburns down to and even with his dark eyes, moved away from the tree and told the two girls to get moving. They rode away for about a hundred yards, stopped and looked back.


“In the car.”

“Put it on. You’re under arms, you’re supposed to be covered.”

Garcia got his hat from the car and put it on. The hat looked two sizes too small resting on his abundance of black curly hair. He looked ridiculous in the small cap with its scuffed visor, and Hoke could see why the man didn’t want to wear it. On the other hand, he could also get a decent haircut.

“Where’s the decedent?” Hoke asked.

“In the house. Officer Hannigan’s inside.”

Sanchez started toward the house. Hoke indicated the two girls who were inching back, pushing their bikes. “Don’t let a crowd gather. Before long, gapers’ll show up, so keep ’em across the street.”

Officer Hannigan, a rangy blonde in her early twenties with purple eye makeup and coral lipstick, opened the door before Hoke and Sanchez reached the front porch. She had licked or gnawed most of the lipstick from her long lower lip.

“Don’t you have a hat either?” Hoke said.

“It’s in the car.” She flushed. “Besides, Sergeant Roberts said it was optional whether we wore hats or not.”

“No,” Hoke said, “it’s not an option. Any time you’re wearing a sidearm, you’ll keep your head covered. If you want me to, I’ll explain the reasons why to Sergeant Roberts.”

“I’d rather you didn’t.”

“Where’s the decedent?”

“Down the hall, in the small bedroom across from the master bedroom. We didn’t go into the room, but I looked at it—the boy, I mean—from the door. He’s an OD all right, and was DOA as reported.”

“That’s very helpful, Hannigan. Let’s go into the dining area, and we’ll see what else you can tell us.”

The living room, except for two squishy, lemon-colored beanbag seats, was furnished with antique-white rattan furniture, with yellow Haitian cotton
cushions on the couch, the armchair, and the ottoman. There were vases of freshly cut daisies on three low, white Formica-topped tables. The beige burlap draperies were closed, and three circular throw rugs, the same color as the draperies, were spaced precisely on the waxed terrazzo floor. The dining area, which held a round Eames pedestal table and four matching chairs, was curtainless. The open vertical Levolors filled the room with bright morning sunlight. A blue bowl in the center of the table held a half-dozen Key limes.

“All right,” Hoke said, as he sat at the table, “report.”

“Report?”

“Report.” Hoke took a limp package of his specially cut-short Kools out of his jacket pocket, looked at it for a moment and then put it back. Sanchez, unsmiling, stared at the young woman but did not sit down. Hannigan clutched her handbag with both hands and cleared her throat.

“Well, we received the call on the DOA at oh-seven-thirty. I was driving, and we started right over. There was a mix-up, I guess, and at Flagler we got another call to abort. But just a few minutes later, before I could find a turnaround, we were told to continue.”

“Do you know why?”

“No. They didn’t say.”

“There was a boundary dispute, that’s why. A block away, on Ficus Avenue, the Hialeah boundary begins. So at first they thought the DOA should go to Hialeah instead of Miami. But after they rechecked the map, Miami won the body. We would have preferred, naturally, to give it to Hialeah.” Hoke took out his notebook and ballpoint. “Who discovered the decedent?”

“The boy’s mother, Mrs. Hickey. That’s Loretta B. Hickey. She’s divorced, and lives here alone with her son.”

“What’s the dead child’s name?”

“He isn’t a child. He’s a young man, nineteen or twenty, I’d say, offhand.”

“You said ‘boy’ before. How old are you, Hannigan?”

“Twenty-four.”

“How long you been a police officer?”

“Since I graduated from Miami-Dade.”

“Don’t be evasive.”

“Two years. Almost two years.”

“Where’s the mother?”

“Now?”

“If you keep twisting the strap on your handbag, you’ll break it.”

“Sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry; it’s your purse. The boy’s mother.”

“Oh. She’s next door with a neighbor. Mrs. Koontz. The young man’s name
is ... was Jerry Hickey. Gerald, with a G.”

Hoke wrote the information in his notebook. “Has the father been notified?”

“I don’t know. Joey, Officer Garcia, didn’t notify anyone, and neither did I. Mrs. Koontz might’ve called him. But we were just told to—”

“Okay. Unlatch that death grip on your purse and dump the contents on the table.”

“I don’t have to do that!” She looked at Sanchez for support, but Sanchez’s disinterested expression didn’t change. “You have no right to—”

“That’s an order, Hannigan.”

Hannigan hesitated for a moment, chewing some more on her lower lip. With a shrug, she emptied the handbag on the table. Hoke poked through the contents with his ballpoint, separating items that ranged from a half-empty package of Velamints to three wadded balls of used tissues. He picked up the ostrich-skin wallet. Tucked between a MasterCard plate and Hannigan’s voter’s registration card, in a plasticene card case, were two tightly folded one-hundred-dollar bills.

“That’s my money,” she said. “I won it at Jai alai last night.”

“Did Garcia win, too?”

“Yes! Yes, he did. We went together.”

“Sit down.” Hoke indicated the chair across the table as he got to his feet. “Put your stuff back in your purse.”

Hoke opened the front door and beckoned to Garcia. As Garcia ambled toward him, Hoke fanned the two bills in his left hand, and extended his right. “Let me see your share, Garcia.”

Garcia hesitated, his brown face mantling with anger.

“He wants to see our Jai alai winnings!” Hannigan called shrilly from the dining area.

Garcia handed over his wallet. Hoke found eight one-hundred-dollar bills, folded and refolded into a tight square, behind the driver’s license.

“That what you call an even split, Garcia? Eight for you, and only two for Hannigan?”

“Well—I found it, not Hannigan.”

“Where?”

“In plain sight, on top of the dresser. I—I didn’t touch nothing else.”

“You and Hannigan are assholes. Stealing a ten-dollar bill is one thing, but don’t you think Mrs. Hickey would miss a thousand bucks and scream to the department?”

Garcia looked away. “We—we figured the two of us could just deny it.”

“Sure. The way you did with me. Ever been interrogated by an Internal
Affairs investigator?"

“No.”

“You’re lucky then you didn’t try to lie to me. Now hustle your ass next door and get Mrs. Hickey. Bring her back over here.”

“What—what about the money?”

“The money’s evidence.”

“What I mean, what about me and—?”

“ Forget about it. Try and learn a lesson. That’s all.”

Hoke returned to the dining area. “Hannigan, we’re going to examine the body. While we’re in the bedroom we can’t watch the silverware and you, too, so go back to your car and listen to the radio.”

The concrete-block-and-stucco house had three bedrooms and one bathroom. Two of the bedrooms were half the size of the master bedroom. The bathroom could be entered from the hallway, and also from the master bedroom. At the back of the house there was also a Florida room that could serve as a second living room, with glass jalousies on three sides. The back lawn sloped gently to the square milky lake. A sliding glass door led from the master bedroom to the Florida room, and across the hall from the larger bedroom was the spartan room occupied by the dead Gerald Hickey.

Mrs. Hickey’s bedroom held a round, unmade king-sized bed, with a half-dozen pillows and an array of long-legged nineteenth-century dolls. There was a pink silk chaise longue, a maple highboy with a matching dresser and vanity table, and a backless settee. The vanity table, with three mirrors, was littered with unguents, cold creams, and other cosmetics. The round bed was a tangle of crumpled Laura Ashley sheets in a floral pattern not observed in nature, with a wadded lavender nightgown-and-peignoir combination at the foot of the bed.

Sanchez picked up one of the long-legged dolls. Hoke sniffed the anima of the owner—Patou’s Joy, perspiration, cold cream, bath powder, soap, and stale cigarette smoke.

“You ever notice,” he said, “how a woman’s room always smells like the inside of her purse?”

“Nope.” Sanchez dropped the doll on the bed. “But I’ve noticed that a man’s bedroom smells like a YMCA locker room.”

“When were you”—Hoke started to say “inside a man’s bedroom” but caught himself—“inside the Y locker room?”

“When I was on patrol, a long time ago. Some kid claimed he’d been raped in the shower.” She shrugged. “But nothing ever came of the investigation. No doubt someone cornholed him, but we figured he claimed rape because the other kid wouldn’t pay him. It became a juvenile matter, and I was never called to court.”
“How long were you on the street?”

“Just a little over three months. Then I spent a year guarding manholes all day so Southern Bell could hook up wires under the street. Then, because I was bilingual, they made me a dispatcher. Seven years listening to problems and doing nothing about them.”

“Okay … let’s take a look at the body. You can tell me what to do about it.” Hoke closed the door to the master bedroom and they crossed the hallway.

Jerry Hickey, with his teeth bared in a frozen grin, was supine on a narrow cot. Except for his urine-stained blue-and-white shorts, he was naked. His arms hugged his sides, with the fingers extended, like the hands of a skinny soldier lying at attention. His feet were dirty, and his toenails hadn’t been clipped in months. His eyes were closed. Hoke rolled back the left eyelid with a thumb. The iris was blue.

On a round Samsonite bridge table next to the bed there were three sealed plasticene bags of white powder and shooting paraphernalia—a Bic lighter, a silver spoon, and an empty hypodermic needle with the plunger closed. There was the butt of a hand-rolled cigarette in an ashtray, and three tightly rolled balls of blue tinfoil. Hoke put the butt, the tinfoil balls, and the square packets of powder into a Baggie, which he stuffed into the left-hand pocket of his poplin leisure-suit jacket. The right-hand pocket was lined with glove leather and already held several loose rounds of .38 tracer ammunition, his pack of short Kools, three packages of book matches, and two hard-boiled eggs in Reynolds wrap.

Hoke stepped back a pace and nodded to Ellita Sanchez. There was a knotted bandana tied around the dead man’s upper left arm. She examined the arm without loosening the crude tourniquet and looked at the scabs on his arm. “Here’s a large hole,” she said, “but the other track marks look older.”

“Sometimes they shoot up in the balls.”

“You mean the scrotum, not in the balls.” Sanchez, with some difficulty, pulled down the stained boxer shorts and lifted the man’s testicles. There were a half-dozen scabs on the scrotum.

“This malnourished male,” she said, “about eighteen or nineteen, is definitely a habitual user.” She pointed to a row of splotchy red marks on the dead man’s neck. “I don’t know what these are. They could be thumb marks or love bites.”

“When I was in school,” Hoke said, smiling, “we called ’em hickeys. That’s what we used to do in junior high in Riviera Beach. Two of us guys would grab a girl in the hall between classes, usually some stuck-up girl. While one guy held her, the other guy would suck a couple of splotches onto her neck. Then”—Hoke laughed—“when the girl went home, it was her problem to explain to her parents how she got ’em.”

“I don’t get it.” Sanchez appeared to be genuinely puzzled. “Why would you do something like that?”
“For fun.” Hoke shrugged. “We were young, and it seemed like a fun thing to do to some stuck-up girl.”

“Nothing like that ever happened at Shenandoah Junior High here in Miami. Not that I know of, anyway. I saw girls with hickeys at Southwest High, but I don’t think any of them were put there by force.”

“You Latin girls lead a sheltered life. But the point I’m trying to make is, these marks look like hickeys to me.”

“Maybe so. From the smile on his face, he died happy.”

“That’s not a smile, that’s a rictus. A lot of people who aren’t happy to die grin like that.”

“I know, Sergeant, I know. Sorry, I guess I shouldn’t joke about it.”

“Don’t apologize, for Christ’s sake. I don’t know how to talk to you sometimes.”

“Why not try talking to me like I’m your partner,” Ellita said, compressing her lips. “And I didn’t like that crack about my sheltered life, either. Growing up in Miami and eight years in the department, I don’t even know what sheltered means. I realize I’m still inexperienced in homicide work but I’ve been a cop for a long time.”

“Okay, partner.” Hoke grinned. “What’s this look like to you?”

“This is just an overdose, isn’t it?”

“It looks that way.” Hoke closed his fingers and made tight fists, reaching for something that wasn’t there. He crossed to the closet. A pair of faded jeans and a white, not very clean, short-sleeved guayabera were draped over the closet door. Hoke went through the pockets of the shirt and pants and found three pennies, a wallet, and a folder of Holiday Inn matches. He added these items to the Baggie and then looked at the top of the dresser against the wall. There was no suicide note in the room, either on the card table or on the dresser, but there were two twenties and a ten on the dresser top.

Hoke pointed at the money without touching it. “See this? Amateurs. Our two fellow police officers left fifty bucks. A professional thief would’ve taken all of it. But an amateur, for some reason, hardly ever takes it all. It’s like the last cookie in the jar. If there’d been twenty-two bucks on the dresser, they’d have left two.”

Hoke added the bills to the stack of hundreds and handed the money to Sanchez. “Later on, when you write the report, lock all this dough in my desk. I’ll get it back to Mrs. Hickey later.”

The top dresser drawer contained some clean shorts and T-shirts, and a half-dozen pairs of socks. The other drawers were empty except for dust. The narrow closet held a dark blue polyester suit, still in its plastic bag from the cleaners, two blue work shirts, and one white button-down shirt on hangers. There were no neckties. There were no letters or other personal possessions. The only clue to the dead man’s activities was the book of matches from the
Holiday Inn—but there were two dozen Holiday Inns in the Greater Miami area, with two more under construction.

Hoke was puzzled. If there had been a suicide note, Mrs. Hickey could have found it and flushed it down the John. That happened frequently. A family almost always thought there was a stigma of some kind to a suicide, as if they, in some way, would be blamed. But this didn't look like a suicide. This kid, with a thousand bucks and more heroin to shoot up with when he awoke, should have been a very happy junkie. It was, in all probability, an accidental overdose, perhaps from stronger heroin than Jerry was used to taking. One less junkie, that was all.

But Hoke still wasn’t satisfied.

“Take a look in the bathroom,” Hoke said to Sanchez. “I’ll call the forensic crew.”

Hoke called Homicide from a white wall phone in the kitchen. The OIC of the forensic crew would inform the medical examiner, who would either come out or wait at the morgue. In either case, there would be an autopsy.

Hoke lit a Kool, being careful not to inhale, and went outside. The two girls with the bicycles had disappeared. Hannigan, wearing her cap, sat in the front seat of the police car with the door open. Hoke wondered what was holding up Garcia and Mrs. Hickey. He cut across the lawn. As he stepped through a break in the Barbados cherry hedge between the two yards, the front door opened and Garcia came out, hanging on to a struggling, giggling woman. The woman’s face was reddened and blotchy and streaked with tears. She had a fine slim figure and was taller than Garcia. Her wide-set cornflower-blue eyes were rolling wildly. She was, Hoke estimated, in her late thirties. She wore a pair of green cotton hip-huggers, a yellow terrycloth halter—exposing a white midriff and a deepset belly button—and a pair of tennis shoes without socks. Her long, honey-colored hair was tangled. She stopped giggling suddenly, raised her arms above her head, and slid through Garcia’s encircling arms to the grass. With her legs spread, she sat there stubbornly, sobbing with determination.

“Where’s your hat, Garcia?” Hoke said.

“I left it in the house. It fell off.”

“Get it and put it on. When you wear a sidearm with a uniform, you’re supposed to be covered at all times.”

A short, matronly-looking woman with steel-gray hair edged shyly out of the doorway, making room for Garcia to reenter the house. She was wringing her hands, smiling, and her face was slightly flushed. She wore red shorts and a T-shirt. She was at least forty-five pounds overweight.

“It’s all my fault, Lieutenant,” she said. “But I didn’t mean it.”

“Sergeant, not lieutenant. Sergeant Moseley. Homicide. What’s all your fault? Mrs. Koontz, isn’t it?”
She nodded. “Mrs. Robert Koontz. Ellen.”
“What’s all your fault, Mrs. Koontz?”
“Lorrie—Mrs. Hickey—was very upset when she found Jerry dead. She came over here, so I thought it would be a good idea to give her a drink. To calm her down a little, you know. So before I called nine-eleven, I poured her a glass of Wild Turkey.”
“How big a glass?”
“A water glass, I’m afraid.”
“Did you put any water in it?”
“No. I didn’t think she’d drink all of it, and she didn’t. But she drank most of it, and then it hit her pretty hard. I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone ever get so smashed so quick.” Mrs. Koontz giggled, and then put her fingers to her mouth. “I’m sorry, Sergeant, I really am.”
“You should’ve put some water in with it.”
Sanchez knelt on the grass beside Mrs. Hickey, and handed her a wadded tissue to wipe her face.
“Perhaps you and Officer Sanchez can get Mrs. Hickey back into your house?” Hoke said. “I can’t talk to her that way. Put her to bed, and tell her I’ll be back this evening. It’ll be best to have her out of the way when the lab group gets here anyway.”
“I’m really sorry about her condition—”
“Don’t be. The world would look better if everybody drank a glassful of Wild Turkey in the morning.”
Hoke signaled to Garcia, who had retrieved his hat from the house. They walked to the police car, and Mrs. Koontz and Sanchez helped the sobbing Loretta Hickey into Mrs. Koontz’s house.
There were a dozen area residents standing across the street on the sidewalk. The neighbors, muttering to one another, stared at the two houses.
“Keep those people over there, Garcia,” Hoke said. “I’ll lock the back door, and you, Hannigan, can stay in the back yard to keep people from coming around to peep in the windows. You stay out front, Garcia, and don’t answer any questions.”
Hoke returned to the Hickey house and opened the refrigerator. There was no beer, but he settled for a glass of Gatorade, which he topped off with a generous shot of vodka from an opened bottle he found in the cabinet above the sink. He sat at the Eames table in the dining area, put his feet on another chair, and drank the Gatorade-and-vodka like medicine.
Sanchez returned to the house, sat across from Hoke, and made some notations in her notebook. “Except for some Dexedrine, and it was in a prescription bottle for Mrs. Hickey, there’s nothing of interest in the bathroom. Hickey obviously hasn’t taken a bath in some time, and Mrs.
Hickey hasn’t had time, I suppose, to take a shower this morning.”

“We’ll see how the P.M. goes, but it’s probably a routine OD. I’ll talk to Mrs. Hickey tonight, and we can work on the report tomorrow.”

“You didn’t have the right to make Hannigan dump her purse, Sergeant.”

“That’s right. I didn’t.”

“How’d you know she and Garcia took the money from the dresser?”

“I didn’t. How could I know?”

“The way you acted. You seemed so positive.”

“I just had a hunch, that’s all.”

“If she reports you, you’ll be in trouble. I’m your partner, but I’m also a witness. It puts me—”

“Do you think she will?”

“No. It’s just that …”

“Just that what?”

“If you hadn’t found the money, you could’ve been in a jam. Or if they’d stuck to their phony story that they’d won the money at Jai alai, you—”

“In that case, I’d’ve turned it over to Internal Affairs. Then, when Mrs. Hickey reported the money missing, Garcia and Hannigan would’ve been suspended for an investigation. Sometimes a hunch pays off, and sometimes it doesn’t. Pour yourself a Gatorade-and-vodka and relax.”

“I don’t drink,” Sanchez said. “On duty.”

“Neither do I. I’m taking the rest of the day off to look for a place to live. I’ll take my car, and you can wait for forensic. Garcia can give you a ride back to the station in their car.”

“We’ve got a meeting with Major Brownley at four-thirty.”

Hoke finished his drink and grinned. “I know.” He washed his glass at the kitchen sink and put the wet glass on the wooden dryer rack. “I’ll see you then. But until then, I’m on comp time.”