

a.k.a...
JIMMY
SMITH

A NOVEL OF CRIME AND ROMANCE

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Preface

I was compelled to write this novel when Jimmy Smith's name appeared in an article of a newspaper I was reading.

Let me give you a little background. During most of my working years, one of my business friends were an unrepented womanizer. Not only was this man a womanizer, he patronized many of the brothels on the East Coast. When I would share a lunch with him, he would discuss in vivid detail the women he met, their talents and the owners of these establishments.

One, whom he especially promoted, was a "Jimmy Smith," who had his hot beds on the East Side of Manhattan. Jimmy Smith's innocuous name was always a part of his conversation and remained in my head.

Let's fast-forward ten years. While reading the local section of a New York newspaper, I read a small article about a Jimmy Smith having been gunned down during a vice raid on the East Side.

My story was born. Giving Jimmy another name and returning him to East New York/Brownsville in Brooklyn, New York was just a matter of writer's imagination.

Prologue

8 A.M.

At 8 A.M., Marty Thal parked his unmarked police car in front of the side delivery entrance of the apartment building. He placed a police marker on the windshield. After going through the basement entrance, he took the elevator to the main lobby, where Sam, the doorman stood, hands on hips.

“Where the hell do you think ya goin’?” Sam said, “You can’t get into this apartment without my OK.”

“Captain Thal, Midtown Vice.” Marty flashed his badge. “I need a key to Jimmy Smith’s apartment.”

“Sorry, Cap, can’t do that it’s against the rules.”

Marty stepped closer to Sam, “Don’t give me your shit, if you don’t want me to tell my friends at the IRS about the graft and the pay-offs you’re receiving you’d better be more agreeable.”

Backing down, Sam immediately answered, “Sorry Cap, I wasn’t sure that you were here on police business.” He quickly stepped to his desk and picked out the proper key, handing it to Marty. “You’ll bring it right back, right.”

“You’ll have it in a couple of hours.”

As Marty headed for the elevator, Sam went back to reading the

Daily News, shrugging his shoulders. Sam couldn't count the number of police officers who had gone up to Jimmy Smith's apartment in the past.

Marty did take the elevator but went down to the service entrance, retrieved a huge duffle bag from the trunk of his car and brought it to Jimmy's apartment.

With the key, he quickly entered the apartment and placed the contents of the bag in the second bedroom. He took a package from his pocket and put it into a drawer. The whole operation took less than five minutes. He exited the building through the main entrance saying to Sam, "Smith's not in. He must be out for breakfast. I'll keep the keys."

"Okay, I haven't seen him this morning. He should be back soon. Should I leave your name?"

"No need. I'll be back."

11 A.M.

Marty and his co-police officer, Joe Morrison, entered the building. "We're here to see Jimmy Smith." Marty said to Sam.

"I haven't seen him yet, but I'm sure he's upstairs. Sometimes he comes in the service entrance after breakfast." He nodded as the two police officers stepped to the elevator.

At the entrance to Smith's apartment Marty said, "I'll open the door and you step into the kitchen and look for any drugs. I'll go to the bedroom to see who's around. Give me ten seconds; I don't want to put you in harm's way."

"Okay, Chief."

Marty opened the door as his partner headed for the kitchen. Joe noticed a half cup of coffee on the counter, but before he could begin his search, a gunshot rang out. Joe ran into the bedroom and

saw a man lying on the floor, his head blown off. A gun was just out of reach of his hand. The shotgun held by the Captain was still smoking.

“My God, Chief, what the hell happened? Are you okay?”

“That schmuck Smith drew on me and I had to take him out.”

Chapter One

September 3rd, 1994

EARLY SATURDAY MORNING was my favorite time. I could drink my coffee and read the *Daily News* without worrying about appointments or being chased by the clock. I had just refilled my coffee cup when a small headline caught my eye in the Metropolitan Section. It probably would have escaped my attention had it not been next to an ad for the brand of basketball shoes I was planning to buy.

Local man shot to death in his house of prostitution.

It was a designed Madison Avenue phrase that was sure to catch the imagination and the attention of the reader.

Two Police Vice Officers shot Jimmy Smith, 54, of 6980 Fourth Avenue to death Friday morning, a police spokesperson reported. Smith, who had a long record of crimes including prostitution, larceny, and shy locking, drew his revolver on the arresting officers who shot him. Mr. Smith died instantly.

A search of his apartment revealed a significant quantity of money, drugs, and sexual paraphernalia. The police conclude that Mr. Smith was operating a house of prostitution. Mr. Smith has no known family. The Police Department is investigating further. Anyone having any information about Mr. Smith please contact the 87^b Precinct and ask for the Vice Squad.

I walked to the window carrying my paper and cup of coffee and stared out from my apartment on the tenth floor on Second Avenue and 59th Street overlooking the East River. An image of Jimmy's face, with his ever-present snarl, appeared in my mind. *Shot to death.*

The sun was struggling to break loose from the horizon. It was just barely light. Three tugboats were pulling their wares up and down the dark, mud colored river.

I knew that no one would come to claim Jimmy's body or his few personal possessions. If anyone would call the 87th, the informant would be transferred eventually to my office and any information would be down graded or ignored. Old Jimmy would receive a pauper's grave on Riker's Island and be listed as one of hundreds of unclaimed bodies in New York City. His other life would remain a secret.

Not many were privy to the facts surrounding Jimmy's attempts to get out of the rackets, surely not the police or the newspapers. I sipped my coffee while thinking that this was the way Jimmy would have preferred to go, with a bullet. At least it was from the police, not the syndicate who had put a contract on him.

I continued to look out at the East River and Long Island City with its flickering office lights still glowing.

At first I saw nothing but Jimmy's face with his ever-present grin. After an instant, Jimmy's face disappeared and I viewed the busy city ten stories below. The East River Drive was clogged with

traffic, even at this hour. In New York, everyone was in a rush. All were juggling for a more secure position on the three-lane road. What were they fighting for? It was like Jimmy's life; he too was always fighting for a better life.

A thousand memories of Jimmy passed through my mind. I could fill a detective's notebook twice over with all I could relate. Poor Jimmy, poor misguided Jimmy. A lost, confused soul from East New York trying to become "a somebody." I sipped the last of my now cool coffee, took a deep breath, exhaled slowly, and thought of Jimmy.