

Special Agent Harriet Crunch - Part One

Narcotics law enforcement is a bottom line profession and there should be no room for middle of the road or bargain basement agents. An agent either does what is necessary or someone could get hurt. And that truism became quite clear to Special Agent Tommy Sheenan in 1973 while assigned to DEA's Long Island Resident Office.

The case was a typical DEA "buy bust" operation. Special Mike Yaniello, acting in an undercover capacity, was scheduled to meet two black drug dealers at their Long Island residence to buy a few ounces of cocaine. And when he had seen the "coke" he would broadcast the arrest signal via a concealed "Kel" transmitting device to the covering agents who would then enter the house and effect the arrests and seizure.

Anxiously waiting outside the "bad guy's" small Cape Cod, Special Agent Tommy Sheenan jumped out of his G-Car when the "Kel" receiver echoed the "hit" signal. As Tommy ran to the front door, Special Agent Harriet Crunch (name changed to protect the guilty), one of DEA's first female agents, was only a few feet behind. Pushing in the front door, Tommy stepped into the living room with his gun drawn. Special Agent Yaniello and the two defendants were sitting on a couch directly in front of him. Staring intently at the two dope dealers, Tommy took up a crouched firing position with his two hands pointing his .38 caliber two inch snub nose at arms length.

"Federal Agents you're under arrest...freeze," he shouted and almost immediately realized that he was in grave danger. A third defendant had been hiding behind a curtain on a five foot high window ledge to his immediate left and was now pointing a gun at his head.

"Shoot Harriet. Shoot him!" Tommy instinctively screamed.

However the only sound Tommy heard was Special Agent Harriet Crunch sobbing and crying. The thought of shooting someone had overwhelmed her and she was hysterical.

A. mille-second later, still covering the two defendants to his front, Tommy did the next best thing. "Drop the gun M..... . F.....," Tommy commanded. "You may get me but a whole bunch is coming in after me. You'd be a dead man!"

AS the gun dropped to the floor, the rest of the back up agents rushed into the house to assist with the arrests and console a very shaken Special Agent Crunch.

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