

Bullet Proof Vests

Although seemingly obvious, there are two proven maxims that narcotic enforcement officers should never forget; (one) you are not an indestructable "superman" and (two) body armor saves lives. However when the truisms are turned their back on because of an irrepressible but irresponsible urge which occurs simultaneously to the opportunity to be "Johnny on the spot" and make the arrest, a road map to disaster is being followed.

Tucson Police Department Detective Jeff Ross had a bright future ahead of him in 1981, he was a "rising star" within the department and was married to a beautiful fellow officer. A tall, well put together, and handsome young man with a mane of light blond hair, Jeff was a favorite of his sergeant, Werner wolff. And when plans were made for a "buy bust" operation in the back office in a "biker bar" on highway I-10 west of Tucson in the summer of that year, Jeff was assigned to conduct surveillance inside the bar. A perfect position for the street wise detective who normally dressed in colorful "spaghetti strapped T-shirts," blue jeans and boots.

Jeff's job was to sit at the bar and provide security along with observing what went on while the undercover was in the room at the rear with the manager of the public-house. The arrest, or arrests, would be made by local police officers and DEA agents, who were wearing bullet proof vests, and were positioned outside the premises. Guns were easily obtainable in Arizona, the only identification needed being a valid state drivers license, and it was presumed correctly that the target would have one.

After a little play acting negotiation, the undercover gave the arrest signal via a concealed "kel" transmitting device. The "dope" was in the back room and "all" the outside agents and police officers had to do was to arrest the defendant and seize the evidence.

However when Jeff eyed the arrest team, decked out in raid jackets and armored vests, enter through the front door and dash towards the room in the rear, he quickly and unexpectedly slid from his stool and took up the lead. The bar's dope dealing manager was sitting behind a desk which faced the office door and when Detective Jeff Ross flung open the unlocked door, the totally startled manager picked up an automatic from the desk and fired. The bullet struck Jeff in the chest and he fell back against the wall, and slowly slipped to the floor.

But before Jeff came to rest, A shotgun blast echoed through the bar. Struck in the upper torso and head, the lifeless "doper" was blown from the chair. In a few short seconds, it was all over and had Detective Jeff Ross been wearing an armored vest, he only would have been bruised.

In memory of Jeff's zest for life, his wife scattered his ashes from an airplane over his favorite fun city, Las Vegas.

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