

## KISS OF DEATH

He didn't remember kissing her. She said that he had, and she seemed like an honest woman so he believed it was true, though he couldn't help but suspect that it was out of character for him to kiss strange women on the street. The most compelling evidence in favor of her claim was the feeling he couldn't shake; as a police officer she wouldn't risk perjuring herself by filling out the arrest report, charging him with sexual assault, and starting the ball rolling in the case of *The People of New York v. Thomas Crain*.

Officer Lopez believed him when he told her his name was Tommy Crain, because of the way it dropped from his lips like a dare, but she was incredulous about his excuses for his lack of identification. There was something not right about a white man, affluent in appearance, without a wallet, and her suspicions were only reinforced by his claims that he didn't need one. Her experience had been that people without identification were hiding something. Still, she proceeded with the rest of the questions on the arrest report, accepting his answers as truthful in anticipation of their verification.

“Phone.”

“212-769-1382.”

“Address.”

There was a moment's hesitation before it rolled off his tongue. “230 Bleecker Street, Apartment 2D.”

“Place of birth.”

“New York City.”

“Date of birth.”

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“January 17, 1978.”

“Age.”

“Do the math.”

She stopped, did the math, and looked him over to answer the next questions for herself – sex, race, ethnic, skin. “Height”

“Six – one.”

“Weight”

“One seventy five.”

His hair and eyes, she noted, were both brown and he wore glasses. She judged his build medium. “Marital status.”

“I’m free as a bird, baby. I’m all yours if that’s what you’re askin’.” She gave him a hard, unfriendly look and her lip curled. “US Citizen?”

“Yup.”

“Social Security Number”

“157-82-9134”

“Education.”

“The best.”

“Religion”

“None of your goddamn business.”

She set down her pen and took a deep breath. “Look, Mr. Crain...”

“Tommy.”

“You’re being charged with the assault of a police officer, which is a felony and for which you can be sent to prison.”

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*To enjoy the full text of “Kiss of Death”, and to read some of the best “Coffee House Fiction” of 2009, order the 2009 Coffee House Fiction anthology by emailing [fiction@coffeehousefiction.com](mailto:fiction@coffeehousefiction.com) or searching Amazon.com ( keyword “Coffee House Fiction”).*