

Hold the Front Page.

Being Chief Crime-Correspondent on 'The Palm Beach Post' was a young hack's dream-come-true, but, ten years on, things were more *Little House on the Prairie* than *Mean Streets of Chicago*. Palm Beach, Florida, is small, and the residents rich enough to ensure that what's theirs remains theirs, protected by state-of-the-art cameras, heat-seeking devices, and five-meter fences.

'Brad, you just gonna have to go out and find somethin'! You can't jus' sit on your butt and expect the story to come to you!'

The end of the day: Dave, my editor, was on my case - again. I had been called into the chief's office many, many times, but...he slammed his hand down hard on the desk and shouted: 'I'm laying it on the goddam line, Brad - come up with the goods! Fake News if you must! Or... you can forget replacing that ol' Chevy of yours!'

My gut twisted and sweat pricked my forehead. I mumbled something incoherent and left, Kayleigh's words about 'hangin' in there for the kids' ringing in my ears. I needed a drink.

So, I walked the ten minutes to Barney's Bar, head down, hands thrust deep into pockets. Everything was peaceful - no automobiles parked illegally; no vagrants cluttering the neat sidewalks; all trash deposited, as required, in the cans provided.

'Look like you need a drink, bud. The usual?'

I nodded

'Wanna talk?'

I didn't, but ... 'Barney. Can you give me a story? Any story! Deadline's tomorrow, noon, and my job, my marriage - *everything* - depends on it.'

Barney rolled his bottom lip, polished another glass, then shook his head.

'Nope. Sorry, Brad - just another quiet week. Good luck, bud.'

Four hours, and a quarter bottle of bourbon, later, I left the flashing neon of Barney's behind me. The long walk home took me past the office. I stopped, adjusted my glasses, and squinted - all the lights were off, bar one: mine. I quickly checked the parking lot - just my Chevy, so no-one working late - then quietly let myself in. Everything was silent apart from the thudding of my heart and the rasp of my own breathing. It's an old block, so no lights came on as I negotiated the cold stone staircase up to the second floor. The door, unlocked, was slightly ajar. I stopped, held my breath, and listened. The sound of cursing, and drawers being opened and slammed shut drifted across the empty newsroom; monitors flickered, and through the frosted window I could see, silhouetted, whoever was searching my office. I crabbed my way across the room, took the Smith & Wesson from its hiding place, then pushed at the door.

He was large, kneeling, a hoodie pulled over his head. Confidential files strewn the floor.

'Okay, punk, put your hands up, and turn around - real slow. Good. Now, show me your face.'

He did.

I froze.

'You??'

Donald J Trump?!

Jesus H Christ!'

I grabbed my cell-phone.

'Dave,' I breathed, 'I think we got ourselves that story...'

500 words

*Apologies for any offence given by the blasphemy towards the end – I just think the character would say it.*