

# Future **Pig** oink oink oink

By Ryan Priest

## **WHY WE LIKE IT:**

*Not a whole lot goes on in this story but a whole lot goes down. Read it and get your leg stuck in Dirty Realism while The Twilight Zone eats your toes. Compared to the cops in this ballsy fiction swine are as clean as sunshine and rats are pillars of virtue. In Future Pig, the 'pigs' are flesh and metal—bizarre homo horribili reassembled with mechanical limbs and faces, real life Robocops who are a lot scarier, a lot darker, than any screenwriter's fantasy. The necrotizing peer pressure of a malevolent blood fraternity is guaranteed to pump venom into your complacency but the real question here is 'how much is will be?' And 'how much is now?' The prose is angry enough to be semen for a whole new language.*

*Five stars*

*(Spacing and font size are author's own.Eds.)*

## **QUALITY QUOTABLE:**

Anything was better than that. Anything except for quitting. No one hired ex-cops. It was a known thing. Last time he checked, unemployment was still around eighty-nine percent. It was a buyer's market for employers and no one was buying washed out cops.

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Technically, Michael still had another two paid weeks of recovery time but cops who took their full recovery were considered weak. The union wouldn't let them fire you but he knew how it'd be. The others would start calling him soft behind his back. He'd get a bad rep as a

pussy and a troublemaker. His desk drawer might get filled with tampons. They might be used. His locker would be perpetually vandalized. At some point, everything in the station belonging to him would be smeared by sweaty genitals or stuck up some cop's hairy ass. Cops can be brutal. Finally, he'd be bullied out of the department.

It still hurt but he made sure not to show any outward signs of it. This wasn't the type of station where friendly coworkers were eagerly going to greet him, concerned about his injuries, "Glad to have you back, Mike, shame about the hand."

Instead, walking through the door, he'd been met with the shitty, scarred-up face of Diego O'Malley, whose half-Irish, buck-toothed grin made him look like a rat. "Well, well, well look who's back from maternity leave."

Mike didn't answer verbally. He simply lifted his new carbon-fiber prosthetic hand into the air and flipped O'Malley the bird. He'd spent eight hours the day before learning how to lift his middle finger. It was excruciating but you had to, when you worked with guys like these.

"Geez, that all? How long were you out? A month?" O'Malley sneered, showing a mouth of mismatching, colored teeth. Some were white, others were gold, one or two might have been real but a series of metal bridges and partials gleamed out from every direction.

"Less than a week, it happened last Tuesday." He defended himself. He'd have to be on guard, other cops would test him too, seeing if he came back soft, if the loss of a hand was enough to break him.

"That's nothing. Two years ago, a couple Filipino kids stabbed my eye out with a broken bottle." O'Malley turned his head, showing off the jagged, scarred tissue around his right eye, which was a glowing red prosthetic. It even had a built-in laser scope that he loved to turn on,

flashing other cops and suspects in the eye when they weren't expecting. "And I was back the next fuckin' day. I didn't take a single day off."

"You didn't? The guys down at the bath house must have been crushed." Mike shot back.

"All right..." O'Malley nodded and walked off. Mike let out a sigh, one down, an entire department to go.

He fumbled with the buttons on his shirt but it was just too hard. He had almost no control over this hand yet. His shift started in fifteen minutes and he was going out there on solo patrol with only one wing. He'd be putty in those animals' hands.

"Hey, Klein, Captain wants to see you."

Mike looked up and saw, first the metal peg leg and then the body and face of Sergeant Pine. His long, walrussy mustache could never fully hide the look of shame and resignation etched permanently into his face. Everyone knew Pine's story. He'd taken a shotgun to the knee early in his career but he'd had it replaced by a standard police issue prosthetic.

Then, during the West Covina riots of thirty-nine, he and his partner had been dragged out of their cars and tortured. Those crackheads did everything to them. The next morning, backup officers found the two, naked and thrown into a dumpster. Pine's partner was dead and his leg had been stolen.

The department claimed that it was Pine's own fault for losing his leg and they refused to issue him another one. There was no way to afford a new limb on a cop's salary so he'd been forced out of the field and behind a desk.

His days were spent in mockery. Field cops, "real cops" as they preferred, were merciless. They'd swirl his head in a toilet, they'd leave tacks on his seat. Once they'd locked him in a cell with a PCP addled sex predator.

"Fuck him." That's what the others had said when, in rookie innocence, Mike had asked why they were being so cruel. "He's not a *real* cop, he's a desk jockey. That desk jockey is never going to save your life. He's never going to be the one who pulls you out of a burning vehicle. He'll never put a bullet into the cholo who's about to slit your throat!"

Anything was better than that. Anything except for quitting. No one hired ex-cops. It was a known thing. Last time he checked, unemployment was still around eighty-nine percent. It was a buyer's market for employers and no one was buying washed out cops.

Cops were hated but no one would tell them that to their faces. Their neighbors all smiled, civilians always said how much they *liked* the police but it wasn't true. The second a guy lost his badge, he'd usually get kicked out of his place, businesses would refuse to serve him, his non-cop friends would all dry up suddenly and his cop friends would have nothing more to do with him either. No one had time for chicken shits who couldn't hack it.

He couldn't get the shirt buttons right, so he let it go and hoped his kevlar vest would cover everything up. The captain's office was across the station. Everyone whisked back and forth as always. The North West LAPD precinct was the busiest room in the city. If you included fines and court costs, they produced more revenue for the city than any other enterprise. The scumbags didn't stop for anyone. They could never keep up with all the crimes, all the criminals. The most they could hope for, was to stem the final crush of anarchism that seemed more inevitable every day.

Every officer over thirty was missing a piece or two. That was the price of the job. As he made his way to Captain McGillicutty's office, he passed prosthetic legs, arms, hands, one guy, Beale, was missing his lower jaw and had it replaced by an awful, blue prosthesis that he'd take off to scare rookies.

"You wanted to see me, Captain?" Mike knocked on the already open door.

"Yeah Klein, come on in." Came back the cold, digitized voice of McGillicutty.

He walked in and stood at attention. McGillicutty was behind his desk looking up. It was always hard to get a read on the boss, he didn't have a face. There was a flat, non-expressive metal plate where his face had been. Two red eyes, electronic eyes, shone out from behind deep recesses. Instead of a mouth there was just the mesh of a speaker.

A few years ago, he'd been on a high-speed chase going after some gangbangers. On and off the highway, speeds going as fast as one hundred and twenty, five squad cars versus a car jacked sedan. Hoping to shoot out the tires, McGillicutty had hung himself out of the passenger window and unloaded at the car. He missed the wheels with the first volley and while he was trying to reload, not paying attention, WHAP! A metal street sign clipped him right in the face, took about an inch off, eyes and cheekbones in all. Officers on scene said they could see McGillicutty's brain. There were now pictures of it all over the internet.

"So, a whole week out huh?" The steel faced captain sat back in his chair and held out his left arm, which was completely metallic, down to the skinny, skeletal hand at the end. "Take a seat."

"Sir, this was my first serious injury. It was difficult to acclimate to this new hand."

"What'd they give you?" McGillicutty, Cutty to his peers, craned his neck to get a look at the hand in question.

"PK Designs, SF Mark Z6." Mike said, holding it up. McGillicutty snatched the arm and pulled the hand closer so he could inspect it.

"Nice, you know I had an SF Mark 3 before I lost the top part of my arm. I liked it, heavy as fuck, steel. Do you know what I used to call it?" He grinned, at least it sounded like it would be a grin.

"What sir?"

Even though they were alone, out of habit McGillicutty looked over each shoulder before responding with a chuckle. "My nigger beater."

"Sir!" Mike started, "You do know I'm half black right?"

"Yeah, but I thought you were cool." The toneless robotic voice said, "You're cool aren't you, Klein?"

"No, no, I'm cool, sir. Clever name. " Mike groveled, eager to show he was a team player and definitely not, under any circumstances, a troublemaker.

"What happened to you? Blow box?"

"No." Mike replied. Most limbs lost on the job were due to blow boxes. The cartels and drug runners had taken to spiking some of their merchandise with a new explosive. It was a chemical that was a powder when contained but the second it hit oxygen it exploded, usually taking a hand with it. The blow boxes had their desired effect. A cop thought twice before ripping open any strange package, looking for drugs.

"Acid? That's how I got this." The captain pushed his chair back so that he could show off the two blue, chrome rods of connected metal that served as his right leg. "I came up on this meth cookhouse, chemicals everywhere. The suspects scattered and one guy dumped a drum of acid over. It ate through my shoes and started burning my feet. I fell over onto my side and the shit just ate right through my leg."

"No sir, mine was a noise complaint. The suspect was a teenager, he'd been playing his music too loudly and the neighbors had called nine one one. Another officer, Gil Jasmuzky, and I arrived on the scene at the same time. We quickly subdued the suspect but he became agitated once in custody. He claimed he couldn't breathe with Gil sitting on him.

"I told the suspect to shut up but he looked like he might try something so I warned him. I said, 'You shut the fuck up or I'm going to shoot you.'" Mike explained.

"You did the right thing. You gotta make those scumbags understand they have to submit."

"Well, out of nowhere, his mother comes running in. 'Don't shoot my baby!'"

"Oh no!" The captain laughed, he knew where this was going.

"Yeah, the bitch comes running at me with a butcher knife and before I know what to do, she slams it down, taking my hand off at the wrist. Luckily, Gil was there to put her down with one to the head."

"They couldn't reattach it?"

"The doctor said they could but it'd require flying a surgeon in. Our plans don't cover vascular surgeons, so I had to opt for this."

"God damn insurance vultures." The metal face shook back and forth. "So, Gil shot the mom, what happened to the son?"

"He musta been all broken up about it. He hung himself that night in his cell, if you know what I mean."

McGillicutty laughed, he knew.

A new knock came at the door. It was Pine again, he hobbled in with some paperwork that needed the captain's signature.

"Here." Captain said pushing the signed paperwork back at Pine. "That all, faggot?"

"Yes sir..." Pine said with downcast eyes, as he took the paperwork and limped back out of the room, the metal end of his peg leg clanking against the floor with every step.

"Piece of shit..." McGillicutty said under his breath as Pine left. "You see that man?"

"Yes sir."

"He took a week off once too. I don't want to see you end up like that."

"No, sir." Mike could feel the sweat beginning to bead up on his brow. He knew he shouldn't have taken the entire week. "Like I said, sir, I worried I might be a liability to my fellow officers until I could use my new prosthetic better."

"How is it now?"

"A-ok, sir. I'm one hundred percent. Better than ever." He lied.

"Good, good." McGillicutty said, making Mike feel a little bit better. He needed this job. There was no way a one-handed ex-cop was going to find other work and it was common knowledge that former cops had about a two-hour life expectancy in any of the homeless shelters or shanty towns. "I notice you're seldom at Hardigan's after your shift? Don't you like your coworkers? You too good to drink with other cops?"

"No, sir. I'm at Hardigan's all the time. Well, maybe not as much as other guys but I have a new girlfriend and she's been taking up a lot of my time. Too much of it really, I'll make sure it stops."

"Girlfriend?!?" If a noseless, lipless, metal mouth could snort, he'd have snorted. "I haven't had a penis for the last twelve years! Some piece of shit ex-cop sold me out when I was working undercover in the cartel."

That was another reason washouts were hated. Everyone knew the best way for a former cop to make some money was to betray his old friends and sell secrets to the cartels.

"When those cocksuckers found out I was an undercover, they tied me up, cut my dick and balls right off and shoved them in my mouth. They wanted me to swallow, to swallow my own manhood. But fuck those guys, I spit them back out in their faces. That's a cop, that's what a cop does. Taking off a week? I don't know what that is.

"I tell ya what, when the doctors were sewing me up, they started trying to talk me into all these hormones, said they could keep my sex drive at normal. Said I could learn to get off in new ways or some shit. I told them don't bother, I don't have time for all that. "

"You're right sir. My dedication could be greater. I promise I'll focus more on the job." Mike spat out nervously.

"It's all right, son. I know you're young." McGillicutty rose out of his chair and walked around the other side of the desk to put his metal hand on Mike's shoulder. He was standing directly in front of him, making it impossible not to stare at the crotch of his pants and wonder what horrible condition lay underneath. "Remember, you're a cop, you can have any woman you want, any time you want, even in front of her husband, if that's your thing. Why do you want to mess around with girlfriends?"

"I don't, sir. Being a cop is the most important thing in my life."

"Good answer." The metal face nodded. "Everything else okay? You working out regular, taking your steroids? You know those perps could be on anything. We have to be just as strong as they are, just as tough, just as crazy."

"Absolutely, sir."

"That's what I like to hear. Well get out of here, officer. Remember what we talked about, yeah?"

"Yes, sir!" Mike said as he jumped to his feet and gladly slid out of the office.

He heaved a sigh of relief. He was going to have to call his girlfriend, she wasn't going to like it but the captain was right. He needed to be giving the department one hundred and ten percent.

Before he could call his girlfriend or even make it back to his locker, a man came colliding into him with a lot of energy. He went flying into the edge of a desk, the corner slammed into his back and his new hand smashed against the desk's hard frame.

Blinding bolts of pain flooded his consciousness. He gritted his teeth and saw that he'd been struck by a fleeing suspect. The three cops who'd been beating him hadn't held him down enough and he'd managed to scurry to his feet and take off, right into Mike.

The three officers had him back on the ground and they were giving it to him even harder. The man was probably in his fifties, black, maybe he was homeless, it was difficult to tell whether his tattered clothing had already been that way or if it was a result of his resisting arrest, or giving an attitude, or whatever had earned him the once over.

They were really laying into him. It was savage beating, some of the man's bloody teeth were already on the white tiles. These cops were in the thick of it, their frenzy had taken control. Each time they'd growl or scream, long, white ropes of saliva spat out of their mouths. If they weren't stopped, they were going to seriously hurt this man.

"Stop stop!" Mike pushed them away, forcing himself in between the attacking cops and their helpless victim.

"Hey Klein, what the fuck!?" They protested but Mike used his good arm to pull them away by their vests. He didn't care what they said, he wasn't going to let them kill this guy.

"I'm not letting you guys do this!" Mike screamed out. It didn't matter how loud he was, the entire department was now watching. Mike pushed everyone away from the suspect. "He's mine!"

And Mike smashed his new hand down as fast as he could, as hard as he could, onto the suspect's face. It hurt worse than losing the damn thing but he didn't care. He struck again and again, the heavy prosthetic breaking the facial bones underneath. Again and again, he hit him until the pain became so great that everything just went numb and he could feel nothing.

He stood up and flicked the blood off his hand. The suspect had been dead for a little while by this point. It didn't matter, someone from county would be by to scrape up the pieces. The coroners knew not to ask a lot of questions. They were *cool*.

"Sorry boys, had to test out my new nigger beater." Mike shrugged with a smirk. His fellow officers all laughed and patted him on the back, congratulated him on his return. These were his brothers and sisters and their approval meant something to him.

In the back of the room, Captain McGillicutty stood, leaning against the wall, watching the scene go down. He nodded his head and if cold, unflinching metal could smile, he'd have smiled.

The End

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *I'm an African American who has spent most of his life split between Los Angeles and Dallas so I've had my share of interactions with cops. I've had them and their twenty pounds of gear sitting on my back, my chest. I've had their guns pointed in my face. It's the same attitude every time, they act as if they're engaged in some street war, as if their jumping on your back like a rodeo cowboy was the last, singular line of defense of against society delving into total anarchy. Then I saw an article, where a Dallas/Ft. Worth police department had*

*punished one of their officers for NOT taking steroids. So I wrote Future Pig in an effort to understand what makes a normal, even well-meaning and brave man or woman, turn into a violent scumbag the second they get a badge pinned to their chest. An individual who becomes a police officer isn't necessarily bad, but the entire practice, mindset and culture of policing is toxic and needs to be routed out. These cops aren't out on the streets against super-criminals and tv villains, they're out there with us, our kids, our friends.*

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** Ryan Priest is a black man who has been roughed up by cops a time or two. When not dodging sirens, he can be found programming computers for a paycheck. His work has appeared in *Punchnels*, *Literally Stories*, the *Manawaker Podcast* and several other fire publications. A full list can be found at [www.ryanpriest.net](http://www.ryanpriest.net)