

EDWARD LEE AND  
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DAHMER'S  
NOT DEAD

# Dahmer's Not Dead

by Edward Lee & Elizabeth Steffen

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DAHMER'S NOT DEAD

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DEDICATION:

To Doris June and J-Fer.

Also, for Debra Miller, Patricia Bradley, Vette Myers and the rest of my federal and civilian friends who indulge me in my eccentricities and animal adventures. Thank you!

And for R.K.

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## PROLOGUE

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, JULY, 1991

“PV-Two-Zero-Seven, do you copy?”

“This is Two-Zero-Seven, I read you. Go ahead.”

“PV-Two-Zero-Seven, are you 10-8?”

“Roger.”

“Proceed to AB on North 25th Street, Building 1055, Unit 213 for possible Signal 22. Investigate and report.”

“Roger, but what’s the scoop?”

“Possible domestic complaint. Standby for complainant descript via case number filed by PV-Two-Zero-Eight... Tenant’s name is Dahmer, Jeffrey, 31 years old, white male...”

««—»»

“10-4,” Chase groaned. “Two-Zero-Seven 10-6 to North 25th Street. Out.”

*What a pain in the ass*, he thought, hanging up the mike. He stubbed out a Winston and honked the cruiser's horn. *Kick me too, why don't ya?* In moments Chase's partner, Sergeant Dallas Gollimar, returned to the patrol car with two coffees and a bag of Burger King Double Whoppers with Cheese. "What!" Gollimar snapped.

"We just got a goddamn call," Chase complained.

"You're jivin' me, right? It's twenty minutes before shiftchange!"

Chase started the shining white Dodge Diplomat, an old car but ever reliable. He and Gollimar were good cops, as far as street cops went. You gave them shit, they'd give it right back to you, but you treat them decent, they'd do the same. They'd seen their share of the tough stuff on this victor beat, and never balked. They knew what they were doing, and they knew the job. Only thing they hated was punt calls twenty minutes before they were off shift.

"We just got a Signal 22," Chase said. "Christ, I don't even know what the hell that is."

"Unknown Trouble," Gollimar told him, getting in, slamming the door. "I haven't heard that one in years. Usually they turn out to be domestics."

"That's what dispatch said." Chase lit another Winston. "You ready for this? Two-Oh-Eight just copped some kid running down the street screaming. The kid had his hands cuffed behind his back, had bruises on him."

"Two-Oh-Eight? Who's that? That's Beer Gut and Karp, ain't it?"

"Right." Chase pulled out onto the hot bright street; the traffic was a bitch, but you got used to it. Daylight raged across the windshield. "So they pick this kid up, and the kid tells them some guy tried to kill him in his apartment, some guy named Dahmer, North 25th Street. And we gotta check it out."

"Bullshit!" Gollimar exclaimed. "It's twenty minutes before we go off! Those fuckin' guys are always punting their shit to us. Let *them* take the call!"

"Can't. It's in our loke, Weiser's orders. Beer Gut and Karp are writing up the in-pross paperwork right now; they had to take the kid to the hospital. The kid had

bruises, like I said, and claimed he'd been drugged."

"Drugged? Oh, man. This sounds like a crock of shit. Somebody always drop-kicks their garbage calls on us. I'll give you ten to one, Beer gut and Karp are both slugging coffee and donuts and laughing it up right now, those fat sons of bitches."

Chase shrugged, cruised past The Pier Three Annex, a restaurant *he'd* never be able to eat at. On 32.5 a year and city taxes going up fifteen percent? Stuckey's was more like it. And Burger King. But— *A job's a job*, he realized. *Things could be worse.*

"Hey, man?" he asked. "Where's my Double Whopper with Cheese?"

««—»»

"A terrible, terrible smell, all the time now," the old lady told them. Chase and Gollimar had met her on the landing, not the super but some old crone in a shaggy robe. "And the noise! You boys wouldn't believe it."

"What kind of noise, ma'am?" Gollimar asked.

"Like...power tools or something like that. A big saw."

*Power tools?* Chase wondered. *Okay, so the guy's building something.* The only thing that smelled was this call. They got them all the time like this. A lover's spat. The girl gets pissed, runs out, talks shit about her hubby or boyfriend, then has a change of heart. They kiss and make up. All charges dropped. Only difference here was the complainant was a *guy*, which either meant he was gay or he had one tough girlfriend with the first name Jeffrey. But what else had the old lady said? Something about a smell? "I don't smell anything," Chase observed.

"Neither do—"

"Ho!" Chase jerked back and nearly yelled just as they'd taken another step.



There was a smell, all right. Faint but pungent. Disgusting. It brought Corporal Jack Chase's memory back to childhood days, when he and a friend named Lee had been rummaging around behind the old, closed McCrory's in Newark. They'd stuck their gallant young heads right into that open BMI dumpster and seen what were probably the remnants of a dead German Shepherd that must've been rotting in the sun for days. The stench made them both flinch back and throw up in tall weeds...

"What is that?" Gollimar griped.

"It ain't good, I'll tell ya that."

"What's this guy's name again?"

Chase checked his notepad. "Dahmer, Jeffrey, white cauc., 31 years old. Works nightshifts as the Wokina Chocolate Factory on Toback Boulevard."

Gollimar rapped bare knuckles hard on the to Room 213. The smell seemed to treble.

"Shit, the guy works nights," Chase reminded. "He's probably asleep."

"Yeah, you're right. He's probably—"

The apartment door clicked open. A sullen face seemed to hang there, perplexed. Unshaven, kind of pallid, straight light-brown hair.

*Crazy eyes*, Chase noted at once.

"Yes?"

"Jeffrey Dahmer?"

"Yes?"

"I'm Sergeant Gollimar of the Milwaukee Police Department, and this here's my partner, Corporal Chase. Mind if we come in and have a talk?"

Chase's eyes seemed to snag on a visual tick, peering over his sergeant's shoulder.

"Actually, I do mind, Officer. I work midnight shifts and I'm very tired—"

"Yes, sir, I understand that," Gollimar responded in what cops called "report-speak," a cordial, polite tone of voice even when you weren't feeling cordial or polite. "But we've been asked to investigate a complaint filed by—"

Chase's eyes suddenly bloomed like shocked flowers. He wasn't even sure what he was looking at when his instincts popped a hair-trigger in his mind. In a well-trained half-second move, he hit the thumb-snap on his holster, shucked his Colt Trooper Mark III, and bulled past Gollimar. He snapped the revolver into the tenant's face, shouting, "Put your hands in the air right now, put your hands in the air!"

Gollimar recoiled. "What the hell are you do—"

"There's something hanging in the closet and something really fucked up on the bed!" Chase shouted. "Check it out while I keep a bead on this guy!"

Sergeant Gollimar drew his own piece. "Hold him," he said, moving cautiously into the foul, three-roomed apartment. The place was a dump, filthy, and the stench, now, was almost overpowering. *What in God's name...* Then—

*The closet. Jack said to check the closet...*

Gollimar stared.

"It's a—shit, man, it's something from a gag shop," he scoffed. They hung there absurdly. They *couldn't* be real.

"The bed!" came Chase's next bellow. "Look on the bed!"

Gollimar turned. Something wasn't right. Suddenly his sweat was oozing and his mind fogged up. He looked down at the bed, which seemed covered with sheet plastic. Yes, he looked down and—

—stared.

These were no rubber party gags. They were real. They were severed limbs. And he knew now that the things he'd seen hanging in the closet—two severed hands wired together—were just as real. An arm on the bed looked as though the bicep had been filleted out of it. A glance higher in the closet showed him more darkened things sitting on the top shelf, but by then you could've put a gun to Gollimar's head and he would not have moved forward for a closer inspection. Another glance, to the opposite corner of the bedroom, showed him a lidded 57-gallon industrial drum.

*Drums*, was all Gollimar thought.

“Holy shit, man!” Chase was yelling again. “There's more stuff out here too! All over the place!”

This was no apartment, it was an interstice of hell. *We're in hell*, Gollimar baldly thought. He did not know how to react. A psychic gag-reflex seemed to tremor in him while the little that was left of his professional instincts walked him out of the room.

“Keep your motherfucking hands in the air, you fucking son of a bitch, or so help me God, I'll blow you clean into next year!” Chase was still bellowing from the other room.

Gollimar, shocked in only seconds, stumbled back amid the stench. *Keep cool, keep cool. Don't fall apart*. “I gotta call for some back up. We got serious 64 material in there.”

“Tell me about it!” Chase cracked. “There's a fucking *head* sitting in a box! Next to the refrigerator!”

There were, in fact, several more heads *inside* the refrigerator, a small 18.4-cubic foot Sears Kenmore. Gollimar, however, would never see those heads. His psyche would not allow him to pull open the door, nor would it allow him to look directly at the head in the box or even contemplate opening the Tappan chest freezer on the other side of the kitchen.

“I'm gonna kill you if you make one more move, you son of a bitch!” Chase yelled at the suspect.

Could a human spirit go numb? Gollimar floated more than walked deeper into the tiny, unkempt kitchen. He was about to pick up the phone and call District Six Dispatch when he noted the stove...

Something seemed to rumble there, a black, enameled pot. *A lobster pot*, he recognized. He and his wife had one; every Labor Day they went out back and cooked lobsters for their friends, a big party.

But this was no party.

Steam gently gusted from the pot's lid. Gollimar would never have guessed in a thousand years that this same lobster pot would eventually be auctioned off nearly four years later for \$2,500. It would be purchased by an aviation lawyer from Philadelphia. The refrigerator, on the other hand, would sell to a "private investor" from Reston,, Virginia, for 15.4. Many things in this self-same apartment, in fact, would sell for extraordinary sums solely due to the things which now occupied them.

Gollimar stared at the lobster pot. Then he lifted the lid with a pot-holder sporting a knit caricature of a Calico cat. Why he did this he would never know and always regret. He looked into the pot.

*My God*, he thought, but it was the palest and least sapient thought that had ever occurred to him in his life.

««—»»

"You all right?"

Gollimar, down on one knee, nodded with his forehead in his hand. The huge white van sat parked in the lot, a single light revolving. MILWAUKEE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER read the side panel. Evidence was here too now, along with at least a dozen District Six cops. When Chase had seen what was in that lobster pot, he'd nearly lost his Double Whopper with Cheese. Gollimar had not been so lucky.

Two paramedics marched out of the apartment entry, bearing a stretcher topped by a number of plastic bags. A photographer from Ident reeled out behind them, his face pale as cream. More evidence techs entered the building, in rubber haz-mat suits and Scott Air-Pack respirators.

Gollimar's voice sounded parched, only half alive. He rubbed his face and shivered. "What kind of a world is this?" he asked himself more than his partner.

"A fucked up world," Chase answered just a listlessly. Every time he lit a cigarette, he spat it out. Everything seemed to taste the way the inside of that apartment smelled. He would have dreams of that smell for the rest of his life. Gollimar would resign in a year and a half, haunted too by dreams. Veteran street cops always expected the worst. But this?

This was worse than the worst could ever, ever be.

"An *evil* world," Chase completed his response. A glance to the right showed him his PV, Two-Zero-Seven; in the back seat sat the suspect, handcuffed and waist-chained. Chase, as if summoned, approached the unit, shouldered past the surrounding phalanx of uniforms.

The day blazed, the sun high in a perfect sky. Birds chirped and swirled in elegant circles overhead. It was a *beautiful* day. So how could something like this happen? How could it?

Chase leaned over the half-opened back window. "Hey," he said.

The suspect looked up. The pale face remained calm, calm as the July sky.

"How could you do something like that?" Chase asked in a voice like crumbling rocks.

The suspect returned Chase's glance. The eyes set in the head looked dead.

"Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven," Jeffrey Dahmer said. "Yet thou shalt be brought down into hell—"

*Good God Almighty*, Chase thought.

“—deep into the pit.”

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## CHAPTER ONE

COLUMBUS COUNTY DETENTION CENTER, PORTAGE, WISCONSIN

NOVEMBER 28, 1994, 7:50 A.M.

“Come on, J.D., get the lead out, huh? You too, Rosser.” Detention Officer Wells wished for a smoke, a cup of coffee. He needed to find Perkins to get yesterday’s scores, which he himself had missed due to a preposterous argument with his wife. He cowed Dahmer, Vander, and Rosser into the Block C recreational unit. The three ragtag inmates shuffled along with their mops and buckets, all dressed in dark-green prison coveralls. Vander was a white supremacist, Wells had heard, and belonged to some KKK-like club full of silly bonehead nazis. Killed his wife and said two black guys did it. Rosser, black himself, stood close to 6’3”, all muscle and bad news, playing a Ganser game according to the prison psych staff. Terrifying to look at, murder and madness on two legs. The sides of his head were shaved—since the new detent rule that allowed convicts to have their hair any way they wanted. “A violation of the basic human right to self-expression,” some ACLU lawyer had insisted. Fine. They could shave their heads and shellack them for all Wells cared. Rosser, yes, had the sides shaved, with a fat plop of hair sitting on top. A new DO several months ago had made the mistake of offering personal comment. “Get that black buck Jiffy Pop shit off your head, you asshole,” he’d told Rosser. The DO had been fired the same day for racial traducement, even though the DO *himself* had been black. But that was fine with Wells too. In the slam, he did not perceive race, or convicts and their identical human freight. *They’re all in this together, so the last thing any of them need are DO’s in their shit simply because of their color.* Rosser had shot a guy in the head four times during a hold up in 1990, wasn’t up for parole till 2042. His Ganser was a God theme, not uncommon.

But then there was Dahmer—“J.D.,” as he was called by most everyone on the block. *His* parole didn’t come up until 2927. *Gee*, Wells thought in jest. *I wonder if he’ll make it?* Kind of a quiet sad sack, which surprised every DO in this 676-man Rock Ramada. When a guy strangles and dismembers seventeen people, and *eats* some of them, you expect him to have a certain look, a certain aura. But Dahmer didn’t have any of that. He was a pud. He’d cranked on thirty pounds since coming here in February, 1992. Sat in Cell 648 most of the time, smoking cigarettes and listening to religious music. Weird thing was he’d *asked* for general pop, which sounded pretty stupid to Wells. Every black inmate in the joint wanted Dahmer’s ass, yet the guy gets his lawyer to plead with the director to give him main line habitation. Some schmuck last July tried to cut Dahmer’s throat during a church service but botched it because

any of that. He was a pud. He'd cranked on thirty pounds since coming here in February, 1992. Sat in Cell 648 most of the time, smoking cigarettes and listening to religious music. Weird thing was he'd *asked* for general pop, which sounded pretty stupid to Wells. Every black inmate in the joint wanted Dahmer's ass, yet the guy gets his lawyer to plead with the director to give him main line habitation. Some schmuck last July tried to cut Dahmer's throat during a church service but botched it because the blade fell off his shank. Still, though. Dahmer knew people were gunning for him yet he insisted on living in the general prison population. "I want to see the world," he'd told Wells. *This ain't no world, you meat-head*, Wells had thought. *It's a fucking county max full of killers, and half of 'em want to kill YOU*. Didn't matter to this guy, though. It seemed almost like he was begging for it. So the director gave him tee-seg—therapeutic segregation—and let him be on the clean up crew for seventy-cents an hour. He was out four hours a day on detail, and he attended the service in the chapel every morning.

"Dahmer, hey, Dahmer," Rosser taunted. "What human meat taste like?"

"Shut up, Rosser," Wells ordered. Dahmer remained silent, shuffling along next to Vander. Vander's bald head gleamed in the caged line lights. "Don't listen to him, J.D.," Vander said aside. "He's an asshole."

"Dahmer, hey, Dahmer—"

"Goddamn it, Rosser, I said shut up," Wells repeated. "You don't and I throw your big bad killin' ass straight back into bev-seg where you can count the lines in the cinderblocks for twenty-three and a half hours a day."

"Ain't no cell on earth can hold the Son of God," Rosser whispered. "You are the number of the beast, and that number is six-hundred, three score, and six."

"Cut with the Ganser shit. You're just making an asshole of yourself."

"You callin' the Son of God an asshole?"

Wells couldn't help but laugh. He followed them up into the gymnasium, then pointed out their assignments. "Vandie, J.D., you two split between the weight room and the treadmill cove, and Rosser, you mop the latrine. Got it, guys?"

Dahmer and Vander nodded. But Rosser? No way. He'd always be running his yap



about something. “Aw, man,” he complained. “You’re gonna make the Son of God mop the *latrine*, man?”

“That’s right.”

“But-but, I am the million-year-old Son of *God!*”

“Fine,” Wells said. “And you’re gonna get that latrine so *clean* that God Himself would happy to drop His poop in our bowls, so tell that to your Dad. I’ll be right outside but I got my eye on all of ya’s. Get the job done and no dicking around.”

The three inmates dispersed with their forlorn buckets and mops. Wells went back out on the main line, tapped out a cigarette.

No sign of Perk. *Christ, I wonder how bad the Redskins lost yesterday.* Wells had a fin on a tight spread, but Shuler was looking hot.

Early morning, the main line seemed oddly quiet, a *Zombieville* of shuffling men all dressed in the same muck-green prison utilities and all wearing the same drained faces. Wing sectors of four to six men each were being escorted to and from chow. Wells thought it was funny; this morning Dahmer had eaten only one hard-boiled egg—he ate the egg white only, leaving the solid yolk—and some cereal with no milk. Said he was on a diet, of all things. *Who the hell do you need to look good for?* Wells thought. *The wall?*

Wells drably smoked half his cigarette, then tamped it out in the red butt-can. Perkins must be on drive detail, escorting inmates to the county courthouse in downtown Portage.

About ten minutes later, at precisely 8:10 a.m., DO Wells turned to go back to his supervisory post, but he didn’t even have time to finish the turn before the lock-down alarm began to blare through the prison like an air raid siren, so loud that even the dense block walls seemed to throb outward with each blast. The prison was having a heart attack.

««—»»

The nightmare-face hovered so close she could smell it. Yet it didn't smell real, it didn't smell human. Like clay, it smelt, like damp, creekly earth. The face seemed gray in the dream, as though its features had been crudely gouged from a blank of—indeed—clay. A slit for a mouth, a slit for nose. Twin slits for eyes. But whose face was it?

*Help me, help me!* she squealed amid the REM-sleep turmoil. *Get it away from me!*

It was the insuccinct face of any cop's fear, the face of the symbolic death that waited around every corner.

“Helen? Helen?”

The jostling felt earthquake-like. The walls of her dream vomited sound akin to echoic demolition. The hand, from another world, continued to nudge her.

“Helen?”

Her eyes slid open. Now, another face, just as obscure, hovered above her, just as pale and as inhumanly defeatured. Her mind seemed to slide with the unbidden opening of her eyes. Then the real world cleared as did the visage. Of course, it was Tom.

Immediately she caught herself rubbing the silver locket between her fingers. It was a big locket, big as a Bicentennial dollar, and deep. It had her father's picture inside. Through a variation of necklaces, it had hung around Helen Closs' neck for close to three decades, a present her father had given her on her thirteenth birthday. “Welcome to teenagerhood!” he's celebrated. He'd died the next day, a massive coronary at the realty office he owned.

“Honey, are you all right?” Tom asked.

*Why shouldn't I be all right?* her first thought hastened. *If I'm not all right, it's only because you just woke me up.*

“You've been sleeping since eight this morning.”

“I know,” came her graveled reply. “I worked a nighter last night.”

“Well, so did I but...”

Her shoulders jerked, as if to verify she was no longer asleep. “But what?”

“Well, I worked a nighter too, but, Christ, honey, it’s past seven now. I got up hours ago.”

And what did *that* mean? Her attitude, as always, honed to knife-sharpness fast as current through a copper wire. *What’s he implying?* “What?” she challenged. “I sleep till seven and that means I’m just a lazy, over-the-hill cow?”

Tom’s countenance gave up its expression of concern and immediately reverted to something terribly weary. But of course, she’d seen it many times before. “Aw, come on, Helen, get off that, will you? I’m not saying you’re lazy, I’m just a little worried. You never sleep so long. I was worried that maybe you’re sick.”

Helen’s gaze focused upward.

“You really are making this hard,” he said. Then he walked out of the bedroom.

She simpered were she lay. A conflux, then, of more realities. *I slept for eleven hours? Jesus Christ, get a life, Helen!* And she’d screwed it up again, hadn’t she? It seemed miraculous that Tom hadn’t written her out of his life months ago, considering her bitchiness. *I snapped at him again*, she realized, *and all for what? Because he was worried about me.* How many past relationships had provided the exact opposite? One rough spot after the next; after so many rough spots, they’d cut you loose. And why shouldn’t they? *Who needs a bitchy headache like me?*

Now the rest came back. She’d gotten off her shift at seven a.m., and come to Tom’s, to sleep with him. Staggered shifts didn’t make things easier, but the state medical examiner’s office had swing shifts too. Tom was number-one deputy at the M.E.’s; he’d pull nighters one week out of every three. They’d been “dating” for a year and a half, whatever “dating” meant.

*It’s always the same.* What was wrong with her? Pre-menopausal Anxiety. *Or maybe I’m just a genetic bitch*, she considered. Her hormones and mood swings weren’t Tom’s fault. “Menopause can be interpreted as the physical death of a

woman's femininity," Dr. Sallee, the state police shrink, had told her. "But it's important for you to realize that this is a *misinterpretation*, rooted in fear. It's something women constantly *fear* only because of the basic tenets of fear itself." Sallee's face often appeared similar to the face in her recurring nightmare. "Yes, you will be menopausal soon, but menopause does not signify the death of your womanhood. All it signifies is a new stage of your femininity, a new stage of *life*. Not a negative at all, but a positive."

At least he had a way with words. But it was hard for her to perceive Tom as anything but her last hope. She was 42—how much time could be left? Her first husband turned out to be such an asshole she was surprised she didn't kill him. And the relationships which followed? One botch after the next. She knew that if she ever hoped to be married again, Tom was the one. But if she didn't get a rein on her "pseudo-natal hostility," as Dr. Sallee called it, she'd blow it with Tom too. And that would be the last straw.

She dragged herself out of Tom's bed, scurried to the bathroom to gargle and fix her mussed, off-blond hair. Then she scurried just as hastily to the den. Tom sat behind his new Compaq computer, playing one of his CD-ROM games. He was so immersed that he didn't take note of her entrance, and—

*Who could blame him?* Helen wondered. *I wouldn't notice a bitch like me either...*

The X-Wing Fighter crashed, just short of knocking out the Demon Planet's power duct, when she came up from behind and put her arms around him. Terrifying explosions resounded from tiny speakers. "Well, you just killed Captain Quark," he said.

"You can bring him back to life in the next game," she reminded him. "Besides, he's not as good-looking as you are anyway."

Tom chuckled distantly.

"I'm sorry," she leaned over, whispered in his ear. "I'm sorry I'm such a bitch all the time. I didn't mean to snap at you."

"You didn't snap," he said in a tone that actually meant, *Yes, you did but I'm used to it now, so I forgive you.* "I was just worried. I thought you might be sick. Are you all right?"