



Nobody to Kill: A Dick Burns Minit Mrdr®
William Garner & monkeyrotica

Published: 2008

Categorie(s):

Tag(s): pulp, dc, detective, monkeyrotica, "dick burns", "minit mrdr"

Chapter 1

Naked Came the Dick

After Dick Burns had finished kicking his dog, he was ready for some lunch. He rustled up some week-old Chinese food from the Kelvinator and was halfway finished when the phone rang.

"Burns?"

"No." It was his boss.

"Goddammit Burns! Get your ass down here! We've got a case for you."

"I gave at the office. And anyway, Burns ain't here. This is his mother."

"Shut up. Be here in half an hour or I'll... "

Burns hung up. He went to the bathroom, stared into the cracked, toothpaste-and-floss-detritus-splattered mirror above the sink. He pulled his snub-nosed .38, scratched for a bogie up his left nostril, said, "Baby, you're just a cigarette butt in the beer can of life. Get over it. You got bills to pay."

Burns took a cold shower, splashed himself with some wood alcohol, threw on an organically starched Holiday Inn towel, and he was out the door. He took a piss-yellow gypsy cab to the agency, rode the elevator to the seventh floor, whacked open the boss's door with a dripping wet palm.

"Grab a seat, Burns. And get that gun out of your nose."

"Sorry."

The boss looked angrier than Jesse Helms at a drag freak clambake. He barked into two telephones at once. His cracked, yellowed dentures clenched a stinking, smoldering, brown thing that could have been a cigar. The boss was a bald-headed gnome of a man with moist, bloodshot eyes like a sow in heat. Swollen flaps of sweaty flesh oozed from the collars and cuffs of his ill-fitting blue serge three-piece. It looked as if the suit was vomiting lard. The jar-like shape of the boss's head, combined

with the office's unusual aroma, reminded Burns of a jar of pickled eggs gone bad. Burns sat himself in the polished leather chair across from the boss's carved walnut desk and waited for the hectic phone conversations to end. The boss hung up both lines at the same time, waddled over to the wet bar, grunted, "The usual?"

"Got any cleaning fluid?"

"No. Just bourbon."

"Give it to me."

The boss poured a double highball, splashed some Rose's grenadine, tossed in a baby onion. He handed the drink to Burns who gulped it in one swig.

"Found a body in your bathtub last night, Burns. What do you have to say for yourself?"

"I got an alibi. I was screwing your wife."

"My wife's dead, Burns."

"She is now."

"Never mind." The boss reached into a drawer, pulled a dog-eared black and white photo of a naked man with a butcher's knife in his head. He threw it on the table, said, "Look familiar?"

Burns sniffed his drink. "Looks like a naked man with a butcher's knife in his head."

"Smart boy. You're the lucky stiff that gets to find out who's behind it. And I don't mean next week."

Burns scratched his ass, lit a cigarette, said, "Any suspects?"

"Apart from you? No. But we did find this." The boss pulled out a strand of bloodstained cheesecloth and a business card that read, "Doug Smith, Family Butcher, (Families Butchered Daily)."

"Smith, eh? Sounds like a Grade A lunatic to me." Burns put the cigarette out in the palm of his hand, narrowly missing his UPC tattoo. Several scabs festered there, including a recent stigmata scar, and a note that he wrote to himself with a rusty fountain pen to pick up the dog's scrofula medicine. "Who's the client?"

"Name's Lana Burner. The grinner's her husband. She's paying us five G's plus expenses." The boss tossed him a wad of bills that was thicker than his dick.

"Nice timing. My rent's 3 months passed due."

"You'll like this broad, Burns. Built like the Hoover Dam and twice as moist. So, try not to screw up this time like you did the Shriner case."

Burns smiled to himself. "I didn't kill anybody who wasn't going to die anyway. Besides, one of them ran over my little piggy toe with a go-cart."

The boss turned to some paperwork. "Get to work. And Burns?"

"Yeah?"

"Put some clothes on."

Chapter 2

The Lady in Red

Burns went to his office on the eighth floor. A painter was busily rubbing out "Richard Q. Burns, Wholesale Poulterer" with paint thinner. Burns shoved him out of his way, knocking the painter into a can of thinner. The painter cursed and began mopping himself up.

Burns' secretary Marge was at the front desk quietly adjusting her breasts and snapping gum. She said, "There's a Mrs. Burner in to see you, Dick. She claimed it was urgent so I..."

Burns groaned, lit up another cigarette. He tossed the burning match over his shoulder into the half-empty can of paint thinner, torching the hapless painter and sending him screaming down the hallway. Marge dashed after him with a Dixie cup full of spring water. Burns reached into a jelly bean jar, pulled out a fistful of Savage Pleasure condoms. He thrust them deep into his suit pocket and entered his office.

A redhead in stiletto heels, a black silk mini-dress and a veil was sitting on his desk with her legs jackknifed. Her skirt was hiked up to her waist and she was busy tightening her black lace garter belt. She looked about 15 but could pass for 22. She looked like she did that for a living. Her body was the kind that makes adolescent boys do things to themselves until they're sore. Burns tried in vain to hide the prominent bulge protruding from his seersucker slacks. The slit on her skirt went halfway to Des Moines.

"Get off my desk."

"Oh, Mr. Burns," the redhead cried, throwing down her skirt, "you're finally here. You must help me. My husband...my husband was"

"Shut up and get off my desk."

She continued to sit on his desk and began crying into her hands. Burns slammed the door, trudged over to the liquor cabinet. His trouser bulge knocked over a bottle of rye. It was going to be one of those days,

he thought. Burns cursed, then he remembered that he didn't like rye. He felt better, poured two scotches, handed one to the sobbing redhead. He sat down, put his feet up on the table, pulled the bloody business card from his suit pocket, tossed it at Mrs. Burner.

"Know anybody named Doug Smith?" Burns asked, putting the cigarette out in his hand.

"Why... why yes, I do. He... he's a... friend of mine."

By the way she'd said "friend," Burns figured Smith was getting his hose stretched courtesy Mrs. Burner. It was written all over her Revlon Cherry Frost lips.

Burns took his feet off of the desk, leaned close to her. "Alright, ma'am. If you want me to find the guy who did the deli slice number on your old man, you've gotta come clean." He leaned back in his chair. "Spill it. You and Smith were dry humping, weren't you?"

"No!"

"You turned him on to water sports!"

"No!"

"You gave him upper GIs!"

"No!"

"You made him watch you pee!"

"No! Mr. Burns, I've... I've never been anything but faithful to Henry," she begged, her long red fingernails nervously darting towards her ample cleavage. She eyed Burns's bulge, which was now beginning to pulse dramatically.

"Looky here, ma'am. I'm just the poor shamus you've hired to find whoever offed your hubby. I'm going to need something to work with, see? What's your relationship with this Smith character?"

She wiped her nose. "He... he used to deliver meat to my icebox."

Burns arched an eyebrow.

"I mean, he... he used to be our household butcher. But since Henry and I starting having a few... marital problems, Doug and I became very close. It was so good having someone to talk to over the ground chuck. Then, yesterday I found my husband... I found him in the kitchen and... oh, it was just so horrible!" The girl swigged her drink, wiped a tear from her cheek.

"So Smith wouldn't have any reason to kill your husband."

"Why, no. None whatsoever."

"Did your husband have any insurance, Mrs. Burner?"

The girl shrugged. "Just the usual \$100,000 triple indemnity policy in case of death by cutlery. Why do you ask?"

"Just curious. You doing anything tomorrow night?"

She flashed him a coy grin. "Why, Mr. Burns! Are you trying to pick up on a widow?"

Burns gave her an open-handed slap in the mouth. "I'm asking the questions around here, Red! Where were you between the hours of 8 and 11 last Thursday night?"

"I... I was playing Yahtzee."

"With who?"

"Nobody... just myself."

"Where?"

"In the basement of my home."

"Mrs. Burner?"

"Yes?"

"Your home doesn't have a basement and it's impossible to play Yahtzee by yourself."

"Oh, what difference does it make. I love you, Dick! You *must* help me."

She leapt up from the table, threw her arms around him, and began emitting low moans. She emphatically humped Burns's leg with the monotonous rhythm of a James Brown bass line. Burns tossed his drink in her face, pulled his gun.

"Get me some coffee."

Chapter 3

Dick on Ice

Mrs. Burner wiped her face, sashayed over to the Bunn-o-Matic Quad-ruplex Imperial coffee machine, put on a pot of water to boil. She turned around, spread her legs and leaned back, staring at Burns over her shoulder and quietly licking her swollen, beestung lips.

"How do you take it?" she whispered.

"Usually packed to the rim with ice." Burns lit another cigarette, eyed his fresh new client. He thought about the poor slob with the cleaver in his brains. Burns could see why some guy would want to kill for her. Some women would probably do it too.

"I like it boiling hot," she muttered, stroking the chrome Half-and-Half thermos. "Pumped full of steaming cream, with a long, thick stick of cinnamon thrust in. I get the impression you're tired of the ordinary grind, Mr. Burns. You're looking for something exotic, something spicy. Why do you take yours cold?"

"August in D.C. can be hell, sister. I just like to watch the sweat roll down the sides. Especially in weather like this." Burns looked out the window. On the ledge, a pigeon burst into flames.

Mrs. Burner closed her eyes and imagined a tall glass of iced latté. She shivered. Burns put his drink down, walked over, put his arms around her. Burns' bulge poked her in her gut. Her bedroom eyes met his. She purred, "We *are* talking about coffee, aren't we Mr. Burns?"

"No, we're talking about Dianetics. Fuck do you think we're talking about?"

"Kiss me, Dick."

"Shut up." Burns backed off. "Right now, you're my prime suspect, Mrs. Burner."

"That's ridiculous! Why would I hire someone to investigate a murder that I was guilty of?"

“Beats the crap out of me. But right now, you’ve gotta scam. I’ve got people to talk to and deals to cut.”

She picked up her purse, opened it, handed Burns her card.

“If you need me, Mr. Burns, just give a holler. You know how to holler, don’t you, Mr. Burns? Just open your mouth and scream.”

She turned and walked towards the door. From Burns’s angle, she looked like two bald circus midgets wrestling under a silk blanket.

Chapter 4

Dead Yuppies Don't Talk

Burns stopped by Doug Smith's butcher shop. It was locked up tighter than a sorority girl's butthole. Peering in through the front window, he saw various carcasses hanging from the rafters. In the door, a sign written in crayon read: "Am across the street getting tight. Back in 6 hours." Burns weaved through the rush hour traffic to the bar. The ten-foot-high neon lights said "Baby Boomers." He lit a cigarette, squinted at the sun-bleached, Xeroxed menu in the window. In a cute cursive script, the menu promised, "Enjoy your very unique yuppie meal in an authentic exploding infant atmosphere!"

Burns shoved his way through the \$5 Bud-swilling crowd, bellied up to the fern bar. He grabbed the bartender by the collar, screamed, "Where the hell's Smith?" The shaking bartender's beady eyes darted towards the rear of the crowd. He pointed with his chin towards a back corner booth. Burns followed his gaze, saw two ill-matched gentlemen squatting like toads in the darkness, silently playing dominoes. The fatter of the two was wearing Ray-Bans, a battered trenchcoat, and a red mohair wig. He was about as conspicuous as a dismembered nun at a Latin mass. The other Jake wore a bloodstained apron, Coke bottle glasses, and was nursing a foaming drink in a tiki god glass. He wore lard in his hair and his face looked like a plate of cold grits. Burns let go of the bartender, flicked off the safety of his gun and walked over to the booth.

Burns leaned over the table, his knuckles resting on a pair of Guinness coasters, said, "Scuze me, gents. Which one of you is Doug Smith?"

The pasty-faced joker in the wig abruptly stood up, pushed past Burns and headed for the door. Before Burns could turn to shoot him in the spine, a furry hand grabbed his arm.

"You'll have to excuse my friend. He's been having problems with his bowels."

"You Smith?"

The bloody apron guy downed his tiki drink, wiped his lips.

"What if I was?" he spat, shoving three filterless Camels into his gap-toothed mouth. "You looking to fuck this Smith guy in the ass?"

Burns thought about that for a moment, grabbed the joker by the lapels. The cherry of his cigarette was a dime's width from the man's eyeball. Burns blew rancid cottonballs of smoke into the shivering butcher's eyes.

"Listen, butcherboy. If I want to fuck a man, I send him a couple of drinks and we go into an alley." Burns put the cigarette out on his own neck. "I got a couple questions for you."

Burns shoved him down into the worn leather of the booth. Still shaking, Smith lit his smokes, inhaled deeply. Burns wedged in next to him, motioned for the waitress. He pulled out his tobacco pouch and began rolling another cigarette.

"Name's Burns. I got a client with a funny story. A real gutbuster. She claims you gave her husband a discount lobotomy."

"Lana Burner, eh? That tramp is lying through her eyeteeth. I've got an alibi. I was screwing your boss's wife."

"You and half the butchers in the neighborhood. Spill."

"Mr. Big Dick, huh?" he sneered. "OK. I was playing Yahtzee with her in the basement when the old man took the dirt nap. Honest injun."

A bored looking waitress in cut-offs, flipflops, and a wet t-shirt minced over to their table. "What can I do you for, boys."

"Three triple vodkas for my friend here," Burns muttered. "Gimme a Yoo-Hoo in a dirty glass, with a SportShake chaser."

Burns and Smith watched the waitress disappear into the undulating crowd of legal secretaries, paralegals, and congressional aides. Burns fumbled for a lighter. Smith offered his. Burns took it, lit his cigarette, took a deep drag said, "Burner claims she was playing Yahtzee by herself."

"Right. You can't play Yahtzee by yourself."

Burns toyed with the lighter. "That's what I told her. But she figures different. She says you didn't like the old man. Something about recovering repressed memories of your 4-H club being a satanic cult."

Smith mugged, "You're one funny fuck, buddyboy."

"I'm from D.C."

Smith nodded knowingly. The waitress returned and served the drinks. Smith slammed the three vodkas in rapid succession. While he wasn't looking, Burns pocketed Smith's lighter.

Smith wiped his mouth with his shirtsleeve. "Trying to get me drunk so you can milk me for some evidence, eh, Burns?"

"No. It's Be Kind to Lard-headed Meatpackers Week."

"You're a real rib tickler, Burns. I like that." He finished his last drink, wiped his quivering liver lips on a snot-encrusted hankie. "Tell you what, dick. I'll give you a hint." Smith leaned over the table, whispered, "Mr. Burner... he liked little boys. No lie, G.I."

There was nothing in that for Burns, so he let it ride. Smith got up, winked at Burns and walked towards the door. Burns hustled over to the payphone by the crapper, put a call through to the boss.

The voice on the line barked, "Yeah? Whatisit?"

"Listen, boss. I'm having a rough time with Smith. He talks a lot, but he ain't saying much. He's making about as much sense as buying retail."

"We've got worse problems. Burner's body's disappeared from the morgue and the wife's split town with the insurance money."

"That's fine. I get paid anyway." Burns hung up. He went to the bathroom, removed an eighth of a stick of dynamite, lit the two minute fuse and left. Outside, an attractive couple in matching Hard Rock Cafe t-shirts started to enter the bar. Burns stopped them.

"I wouldn't go in there if I was you. The service sucks."

I See My Client Naked

“Looks like this case was solved for you, Burns,” the boss mumbled, chewing on another stinky brown thing. “The Burner kill was a set-piece. He faked his death for the insurance money and then split town with the wife. The old lady was in on the grift. She cashed the check at a bait-and-tackle shop outside Annapolis and that’s the last anyone’s heard of her.”

Burns sniffed. “Uh-huh. Next you’ll tell me there aren’t any alien slave camps on the moon. I don’t buy it, boss. Too simple. Too clean cut. This was an inside job. I’m staking out Burner’s crib.”

“How you spend your spare time is your own business, Burns. But remember, you’re not on the company clock.”

“Meaning...?”

“Meaning, you can forget about writing-off your motel nooners as business expenses.”

Burns took a cab up to Burner’s house and hid in the bushes. Three days later, a tan Buick with Maryland plates and a “Get US out of the U.N” bumpersticker pulled into the driveway. Lana Burner and Doug Smith emerged from the car, walked up the pebble driveway and entered through the garage. They peered around nervously like a pair of amputee kids who’d gotten their stumps caught in the cookie jar. Burns got out of the bushes, skulked around to the rear of the house. He squinted through the kitchen window. Doug and Lana were splitting up bundles of cash between them. The doorbell buzzed. Doug left to answer it. He returned with the mohair wig man that Burns saw in the bar. The man shook hands with Lana, pulled a chrome-plated automatic. The two men pushed her up against the counter. The mohair man handed Smith the pistol, climbed up on the kitchen table and began stringing a noose from the rafters. Burns backed up about twenty feet from the kitchen window, pulled his piece, took a running leap and crashed through onto the kitchen floor.

"Nobody move or they get a spare navel! Throw the heat on the floor, Smith."

Smith gingerly placed the gun on the floor, slid it towards Burns. Burns squatted down, picked up the gun. The mohair man started to inch towards the door. Burns pivoted, pointed a gun at the mohair man's nuts.

"Not so fast, lardass. Or should I say, Mr. Burner."

The mohair man turned in awe. "How... how did you know?"

"Simple." Burns said, stuffing a smoke in his mouth. "Next time you wear a wig, try taking the cleaver out of the back of your head. I noticed it as you brushed past me in the bar. Alright kiddies, time to tell Uncle Dick what this is all about before he shoots your eyes out."

"Oh, Dick," Lana screamed. "I'm so glad you've come. They were going to ..."

Burns gave her an open-handed slap in the mouth.

"Put a sock in it, sister. I wouldn't trust you with my old gym shorts. Up against the wall."

"Nice going, Burns," Smith snickered, "I didn't think you'd get my hint."

"Yeah, that 'little boys' reference cinched it for me. I figured you and the lady here had planned to off her husband for the insurance money. Except she didn't know that you and Mr. Burner had been bisexual fuck bunnies since gas was a buck a gallon. You had Fatso here fake his death, then had Lana cash the insurance check and meet up with you here. Then you two were going to wax Lana and make it look like autoerotic asphyxiation. Then it's off to Fire Island for the both of you. Very clever. But not clever enough."

"Oh, Dick," Lana cried.

"As for you, my little hatchet wound, you played me for the one-two sucker punch; cosying up to me, getting me to play the Knight in Shining Seersucker for you. You knew I'd be here waiting. You were hoping I'd plug loverboy over here, then ride off into the Technicolor sunset with you and the oodles of kale you scammed off the insurance company. Except that wouldn't be enough for you, would it? You're the all-or-nothing type. Barney never taught you how to share, so the day after we get to the Alcupulco Hilton, I wake up with no head. But you didn't count on one thing, baby. Dick Burns don't take the fall for nobody, see? Not the IRS or the alien sex bankers or any woman, regardless of how big their butts are."

Burns put the gun muzzle to the tip of cigarette, fired, inhaled deeply. "Goddamn queer libertarians; make me want to puke up my toenails. The way you run these sleazy grifts, scamming insurance policies, all the time pissing and moaning about Federal deregulation. It just ain't American. How the hell are we supposed to get honest-to-goodness healthcare reform with you tools pulling stunts like this?"

Lana, her husband and Smith stared at Burns, jaws dropped, their eyes as vacant as a gutted crackhouse. They looked like they'd just been told that 1972 never happened.

"Well it's gonna end now. Here. With the three of you. Everybody up on the table!"

The three criminals hopped on the table. Burns made them take off their clothes, loop nooses around each other's necks, and tie each others hands behind their backs. Burns tied the ends of the nooses to the ceiling rafters

"Now we're gonna play a little game. Maybe you've heard of it. I call it, 'Hangman.'"

Burns shot out two of the legs on opposite corners of the kitchen table. It wobbled dangerously under the three naked criminals. The slightest shift of weight caused it to come closer to tipping over and taking their lives with them. Burns put the cigarette out on his ankle, dialed-up the DA and the insurance company. He noticed that Mr. Burner and Doug Smith couldn't hide their excitement. It looked like they'd done this sort of thing before. Either way, they wouldn't be doing it again.

"Don't worry, folks. Given some luck, someone might show in a few hours." Burns picked his hat up from the floor, brushed off the broken glass, headed for the front door. "As for you, angel, I'm sorry we couldn't be Coffeemates. But I'll always remember you when I grind my beans."

Burns slammed the door behind him.

On the way to the bus stop, Burns noticed a four year old playing with a puppy. Burns remembered that he still had Mr. Burner's gun in his pocket. Smiling, Burns gave the gun to the tot, who promptly ran back into his house to play. Burns gave the puppy a good swift kick, took the Buzzard Point Express downtown to pick up his dog's scrofula medicine.

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