

IN COLD BLOOD

NYE: Mr. Hickock, my name is Harold Nye, and this other gentleman is Mr. Roy Church. We're Special Agents of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and we've come here to discuss your parole violation. Of course, you're under no obligation to answer our questions, and anything you say may be used against you in evidence. You're entitled to a lawyer at all times. We'll use no force, no threats, and we'll make you no promises.

HICKOCK: I know the form.

NYE: Now, Mr. Hickock...

HICKOCK: Dick.

NYE: Dick, we want to talk to you about your activities since your parole. To our knowledge, you've gone on at least two big check sprees in the Kansas City area.

HICKOCK: Uh huh. Hung out quite a few.

NYE: Could you give us a list?

HICKOCK: Well, there was Denny's for about \$13 for breakfast, there was Roy's Pharmacy for \$15 for some stuff, toothpaste and stuff. I wrote one to Universal Auto Service to fix the fuse box in my car. That was about \$130.

NYE: I'm curious, Dick. Why do these people accept your checks? I'd like to know the secret.

HICKOCK: The secret is: people are dumb.

CHURCH: Fine, Dick. Very funny. You're a real comedian. Prior to November 20th you're doing swell and then you start hanging paper all over Kansas, Texas and New Mexico on your way here to lovely Las Vegas. Why?

HICKOCK: That'd make a book. Perry, my buddy Perry Smith, was paroled in spring. Later on, when I came out, he sent me a letter, postmarked Idaho. He wrote, reminding me of this deal we used to talk over about Mexico. The idea was we would go to Acapulco, one of them places, buy a fishing boat, and run it ourselves. Take tourists deep-sea fishing.

NYE: This boat. How did you plan to pay for it?

HICKOCK: I'm coming to that. See, Perry wrote me he had a sister living in Fort Scott. And she was holding some heavy change for him. Several thousand dollars. Money his dad owed him from the sale of some property in Alaska. He said he was coming to Kansas to get the dough.

NYE: And the two of you would use it to buy a boat?

HICKOCK: Correct.

NYE: But it didn't work out that way.

HICKOCK: What happened was, Perry showed up maybe a month later. I met him at the bus station in Kansas City..

CHURCH: When? The day of the week.

HICKOCK: A Thursday.

CHURCH: And when did you go to Fort Scott?

HICKOCK: Saturday.

CHURCH: November fourteenth. What time did you leave for Fort Scott?

HICKOCK: That afternoon. We did some work on my car, and had a bowl of chili at the West Side Cafe. It must have been around three.

CHURCH: Around three. Was Perry Smith's sister expecting you?

HICKOCK: No, because, see, Perry lost her address. And she didn't have a telephone.

CHURCH: Then how did you expect to find her?

HICKOCK: By inquiring at the post office.

CHURCH: Did you?

HICKOCK: Perry did. They said she'd moved away. To Oregon, they thought. But she hadn't left any forwarding address.

CHURCH: Must have been quite a blow. After you'd been counting on a big piece of money like that.

HICKOCK: Yeah. Well. We definitely decided we were going to Mexico. Otherwise, I never would've cashed them checks. But I hoped... Now listen to me; I'm telling the truth. I thought once we got to Mexico and began making money, then I'd be able to pay them off. The checks.

NYE: One minute, Dick. I'd like to hear a little more about the trip to Fort Scott. When you found Smith's sister no longer there, what did you do then?

HICKOCK: Walked around. Had a beer. Drove back.

NYE: You mean you went home?

HICKOCK: No. To Kansas City. We stopped at the Zesto Drive-In. Ate hamburgers. We tried Cherry Row. You know it?

Nye and Church shake their heads.

HICKOCK: You kiddin'? Every cop in Kansas knows it. It's a strip of park with whores, hustlers, but plenty of amateurs too. Nurses. Secretaries. I've had a lot of luck there.

NYE: And this particular evening. Have any luck?

HICKOCK: The bad kind. We ended up with a pair of rollers.

NYE: Named?

HICKOCK: Mildred. The other one, Perry's girl, I think she was called Joan. We spent the night at Fun Haven, this cheap place where you get some cabin deal for ten bucks. Next morning we woke up to find they'd rolled us and beat it. Didn't get much off me. But Perry lost his wallet with forty or fifty dollars.

NYE: What did you do about it?

HICKOCK: There wasn't nothing to do.

NYE: You could've notified the police.

HICKOCK: Aw, come on. Quit it. Notify the police. For your information, a guy on parole's not allowed to booze. Or associate with another Old Grad...

NYE: Alright, Dick. It's Sunday. Fifteenth of November. Tell us what you did that day when you checked out of the Fun Haven.

HICKOCK: We ate breakfast at a truck stop near Happy Hill. Then we drove to Olathe, and I dropped Perry off at the hotel where he was living. I'd say that was around eleven. Afterward, I went home and had dinner with the family. Same as every Sunday. Watched TV - a basketball game, or maybe it was football. I was pretty tired.

NYE: When did you see Perry Smith?

HICKOCK: Monday. He came by where I worked. Bob Sands' Body Shop.

NYE: And what did you talk about. Mexico?

HICKOCK: Well, we still liked the idea, even if we hadn't got hold of the money to do all we had in mind - put ourselves in business down there. But we wanted to go, and it seemed worth the risk.

NYE: Worth another stretch in Lansing?

HICKOCK: That didn't figure. We never intended coming Stateside again.

NYE: On the day following the check spree - that'd be the twenty-first. You and your friend Smith disappeared. What were your movements between then and your arrest here in Las Vegas. Just a rough idea will do.

HICKOCK: A little bit of everything, I guess. We just drove and we'd stop in town to get a drink or a night's rest or something. In El Paso we met another couple girls, nice ones, Mexican ones - I like them with dark skin. Louisa and Rosa. Wow, you guys wouldn't believe that pair. We picked them up in this place called Juan's, a real dump but it played the best combination of music you ever heard in your life. Like a mixture of jazz with Mexican stuff. And the girls were unbelievable....

CHURCH: And then this and then that and then these girls and those girls and this town and that joint and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Right? Right, Dick? I guess by now you know why we're here. I guess you realize we wouldn't have come all the way to Nevada just to chat with a couple of two-bit check chiselers.

NYE: Would we, Dick?

HICKOCK: What?

NYE: Come this far to talk about a bunch of checks.

HICKOCK: I can't think of any other reason.

NYE: Tell me, Dick. Have you ever heard of the Clutter murder case?

HICKOCK: Whoa, now. Hold on here. I'm no goddamn killer.

CHURCH: The question asked, was whether you'd heard of the Clutter murders.

HICKOCK: I may have read something.

CHURCH: A vicious crime. Vicious. Cowardly.

NYE: And almost perfect. But you made two mistakes, Dick. One was, you left a witness. A living witness. Who'll testify in court. Who'll stand in the witness box and tell a jury how

Richard Hickock and Perry Smith bound and gagged and slaughtered four helpless people.

HICKOCK: Living witness! There can't be!

NYE: Because you thought you'd got rid of everyone?

HICKOCK: I said whoa! There ain't anybody can connect me with any goddamn muder. Checks. A little petty thievery. But I'm no goddamn killer.

NYE: Then why have you been lying to us?

HICKOCK: I've been telling you the goddamn truth.

NYE: Now and then. Not always. For instance, what about Saturday the fourteenth. You say you drove to Fort Scott?

HICKOCK: Yes.

NYE: And when you got there you went to the post office.

HICKOCK: Yes.

NYE: To obtain the address of Perry Smith's sister.

HICKOCK: That's right.

NYE: Perry Smith has no sister living in Fort Scott. He never has had. And on Saturday afternoons the Fort Scott post office happens to be closed. Think it over, Dick. That's all for now. We'll talk to you later.