



# One Tough Cop: The Bo Dietl Story

By Bo Dietl

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### The Bo Dietl Story

From his rookie days to the dangerous work on the police decoy unit to his moonlighting as a bodyguard for Arab sheiks, this is the true story of the maverick cop who made the busts, the headlines and the controversies. Now Bo Dietl tells what it's really like inside the raw and deadly world of a big-city cop -- and how one man became a legend from the station house to the streets.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

From the introduction by Nicholas Pileggi author of *Wiseguy* Bo Dietl was probably the best detective in New York. -- *Review*

#### About the Author

Never content to just take it easy, **Bo** retired from the NYPD in 1985, to start an investigation and security firm, Beau Dietl Associates (BDA). Specializing in corporate investigations for major international companies, BDA has grown to become one of the largest international agencies with its worldwide headquarters located in the historical News Building at 220 E. 42nd Street in New York City.

While serving as an Executive Producer for his major motion picture *One Tough Cop*, Bo developed a love for the movie business. Soon after, he started his own production company, How Good Is This Production Company, with his partner Steven Witkoff, the megadeveloper of The Witkoff Group. The Production Company is currently working on several projects.

As a father, Bo has always been deeply concerned about children's issues. Accordingly, Bo has been the driving force behind the computer software product, *One Tough Computer Cop*, developed in conjunction with Computer Concepts, Corp. of Bohemia, N.Y. This software allows parents to monitor their children's activities on the Internet.

Bo, being an entrepreneur at heart, has now expanded into the real estate industry. Also in partnership with Steven Witkoff, Bo has an ownership interest in several major buildings located in metropolitan areas around the United States.

Visit the BDA Website at [www.beaudietl.com](http://www.beaudietl.com).

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### Chapter One

October 10, 1981

*Ordinarily, you get blown down by the noise of a live stationhouse. Cops are just naturally loud. They walk like elephants, they bang things around, they yell instead of talk. It's the kind of place, if you wanna be heard, you gotta speak up. It's not like walking into a library.*

*So I was a little surprised when I didn't hear the usual uproar when I came to work that night. I never knew that silence could be so loud.*

*I was doing decoys out of the Two Five Precinct in East Harlem. This is a Saturday, which is my busy season. All the muggers will be out shopping for victims. My head is getting set like cement for sitting in some pissy doorway waiting for someone to attack me, which is what decoy duty is all about.*

*Then I walk into this, this...I don't know what to make of it. Usually, you can hear the bitching a mile away. Especially on a Saturday. Prisoners are bitching about getting busted. Civilians are bitching about politicians and landlords. Cops are bitching about all the*

*bitching.*

*But not tonight. None of the sergeants were yelling for coffee. The prisoners were actually meek. The cops were quiet.*

*It was like walking into a tomb.*

Bo Dietl, a veteran plainclothes police officer, made an educated guess. A cop's been shot. Nothing else could explain the reverential hush.

"What's going on?" he asked one of the pale detectives.

The detective hesitated, weighing whether or not to answer. Then he remembered that Bo was a cop, a member of the family, and replied:

"They raped a nun."

*I know that I felt my knees get soft. It was a blow. No doubt about it. Some things you don't expect. Even if you've seen everything. Even if you're made of stone. Even if you expect it.*

*I was shocked. Then I thought what everybody thought:*

*Nothing is sacred.*

"From the convent?" asked Bo.

The detective nodded. "They raped her inside."

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Convent stood like an unsteady high-wire walker on 116th Street and an avenue called Pleasant. It teetered on the line where the last defiant Italians waited to be pushed into the suburbs by the approaching blacks and Hispanics.

The holdouts accepted the inevitability of their dislocation with a mixture of fatalism and rage. One by one, the outposts fell. And the small flock of nuns who lived in such open innocence among them were like symbols of their own vulnerability.

"Inside the convent?" asked Bo.

"Inside," replied the detective.

Not that they hadn't all feared just that. Not that they hadn't been listening with some third ear for that bulletin, for that social rumble that would signal a final shifting of the ground.

Bo and his partner, Detective Tommy Colleran (known for sufficient cause as "Cowboy"), jumped into their unmarked cruiser and ran the lights to the brick convent. It was ten blocks, and Bo turned on the siren and smacked the magnetic dome light on the roof as if he were on a hot run, as if there were still some chance to save the nun.

At the convent, the police cars with their flashing lights were scattered like rage. A street full of blinking

fists.

*It was grim. Not one break in the action. You know, one of the things cops do, we have a very soothing influence on a crime scene. Someone's in charge. You can relax. It's safe. But not here. The tension was still very high. Here, it's like we were the victims.*

Bo spotted an old friend, Pete Christianson, taking charge. They had gone through the Police Academy together more than a decade ago. Their careers had taken different turns, but going through the academy together remains an old school tie. Now Christianson was a detective working in the Manhattan Sex Crimes Unit, already, planting the flag of the unit over the case.

*Everybody wants a big case. It's not just the action, although that counts for something. Big rewards go with big cases. Promotions. Recognition. Naturally, you're gonna get a lot of ugly little backdoor fights over who runs the investigation. Major Case Squad wants a piece. Borough Detectives wants it. Sex Crimes says it's theirs. There's a lot of nasty competition and politics and jealousy when it comes down to who gets the big jobs.*

*And it's right from the first because catching the case is already half the glory.*

"Petey, what happened?" asked Bo.

Detective Christianson shook his head. "It's crazy, Bo."

Bo Dietl was no threat. Just a plainclothes precinct cop, not one of the prowling downtown hotshots looking to steal a big case. Christianson pointed across the street at the beige sandstone building that housed the convent. "Two guys. They went in! They actually went inside and raped a nun!"

The policemen stood across the street and looked at the convent, squinted, then turned away. "A thirty-year-old nun," continued Christianson. "A little thing you could hold in one hand."

And he held out his upturned hand, as if he could actually hold the little nun in his palm. Then his voice became brittle. "They punched the shit out of her. They raped her. They sodomized her...."

*You listen to the details of crimes over the years and you get a little hard. It doesn't mean so much after you've seen it fifty, a hundred times. It becomes, like, you know, the words that you put into a report. "Perpetrator then proceeded to force the alleged victim to perform various acts of sodomy including..."*

But this was different. This was a nun.

"They stuck a broom in her," said Christianson. "They actually stuck a broom in her. Then they stuck candies in her. It's hard to believe. They carved crosses all over her butt. And on her breasts. Twenty-seven crosses."

*Who counted? A doctor. Not a cop. A cop would have covered her up. Been ashamed. Had to be a doctor to count the twenty-seven crosses carved on her behind and her breasts. A cop could not do it.*

The number 27 gave the story ballast. It was a police detail. Not a wild rumor. Not an emotional figment. Corroboration. Substance. Counted crosses. An official detail.

"They used a sharpened nail file. We found it. There was blood on the nail file. They may even have used a

crucifix. We're still checking. Maybe one of the crosses in the convent is missing.

"Then they pissed on her. Pissed on her and threw her down a flight of stairs and left her for dead."

Tommy Colleran groaned. "Oh, Mother of God. Oh, no!" He was pounding himself on the chest. "They didn't do that!" he wailed.

The police were not at their professional best. Every once in a while, a cop would stop what he was doing -- checking the street for debris, looking for fingerprints, interviewing a bystander -- and just stand frozen in the glare of oncoming implications.

"How is she?" asked Bo.

"Who?" said Christianson, startled by such a direct question. Most of the cops had just listened and made comments or uttered oaths.

"The nun," pressed Bo. "How is she?"

"How do you think?"

"She's not dead?"

"No, she's not dead. She's in shock."

So was everyone else. Dazed detectives went through the motions of an investigation. Forensic and technical teams went in and out of the convent, faces sagging with defeat.

The uniformed men brought in for crowd control were unnecessary. The crowds were held back by revulsion. The civilians stood on far sidewalks and watched in pinched fear. They thought what the cops thought: Nothing is sacred.

Detectives and plainclothes teams circled the building looking for something. A discarded weapon. A bloody piece of clothing. A telltale something.

The questioning of the bystanders followed the normal routine. Did you see someone? Who comes here on Saturday? Was there a stranger?

The detectives working in East Harlem were like most New York City police detectives -- second- and third-generation Irish and Italians; former choirboys out of Queens and Brooklyn with an indelible trace of Catholic awe. They expected sin -- it was part of man's flawed nature. But there were still taboos, unthinkable crimes that ran like a shiver through their ranks.

Inevitably, they had come to fear for the inhabitants of the convent. It became a routine, as they passed the convent on their rounds, to utter admonitions like prayers. Be careful, Sister. Be sure to lock the doors! Watch where you go. Walk near the gutter. God bless!

They knew something that the nuns didn't know: in the Two Five, unthinkable crimes were recorded daily on the precinct blotter.

The gentle nuns smiled indulgently, humoring the nice policemen, convinced, as their faith decreed, that they were exempt from all secular consequences.

The policemen took no comfort in the fact that they'd been right.

*While Petey is talking to me and Tommy is pounding his chest, I am looking at the convent. Studying it. This is a crime. There's somebody who did it. That's our business. You gotta be a professional.*

Bo Dietl was regarded as a flamboyant showboat by most members of the NYPD. His media-prone nature was considered pure vanity.

But there was no denying his talent. In the turmoil of a crisis, he became -- always -- a cop. He was clear-eyed and had a commonsense knack for seeing the connecting dots that completed a picture. He had something else that, like his explosive personality, would not be weighed in his favor when it came time to advance his career: he had a true sixth sense.

The book cops who ran the department along technical lines would never acknowledge it, they would never credit it as a valid credential, but it was there all the same. Everyone who ever worked with Bo Dietl had seen it in action.

"This doesn't look like a sex crime to me," he said, standing across the street, looking at the brownstone next door to the convent. The roof of the four-story apartment house led down to the roof of the three-story convent like a step. "This looks to me like a burglary. It turned into a sex crime, but it started out as a burglary."

Christianson bristled. "This is a sex crime," he said with utter finality. "End of story."

Technically, they were peers, but he had just tried to shove Bo off the case.

Already the bolstering teams of veteran detectives were arriving in their unmistakable unmarked cars. From all the high commands in the city, the picked detectives with their gleaming first-grade gold shields were assembling. They all had their retinues and their reputations.

Bo didn't stand a chance. He was a thirty-year-old plainclothes cop with a silver shield and a bad reputation with the superchiefs. He might have accumulated the greatest arrest record in the history of decoy work, he might have sat through a thousand nights of undercover, but he was overdue for promotion because of his antic ways. He was quick-tempered and vaguely impudent.

The bad-boy style might be overlooked -- after all, a lot of good cops liked to drink and stay out late and raise hell -- but there was a very disturbing quality of independence that they detected in Bo Dietl. He seemed to live by his own, private code of honor. Not by the fifteen hundred explicit pages of the department rules and regulations.

Bo wrote his own guidelines. If he was taunted into a fight by some street tough, he would settle it man to man. He wouldn't add on charges afterward.

And he wouldn't use his gun. In one confrontation, when he was facing down a madman armed with a knife - - while a lieutenant stood across the street and ordered him to shoot -- Bo talked to the man, fooled him, and tackled him, without firing his weapon. He did

get cut, but he didn't have to kill the man.

There was something that outweighed everything else. Something about Bo Dietl frightened them. It was his strength. He was just short of five-feet-eight, but he had incredible physical power. He could lift cars with his bare hands. After a night of drinking, he could wrench parking meters out of the cement. And he was the arm-wrestling champion of the entire police department.

For some reason, this troubled the men who ran the police department. It was as if they didn't quite have him under control. They could take away his shield and his gun, but they couldn't take away his strength. It was as if Bo Dietl had a secret, unlicensed weapon. Which is pretty much how Bo felt about it.

"This is not your case," said Petey Christianson.

*Yeah, okay, I get the hint. But I had an inkling about this one. Something in my scalp. Me and Tommy hang around long enough to pick up whatever we can pick up and then we get out of there. But I have a feeling.*

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