

Super Cop

Bill Hammonds' name appears once again on the "Best Detective of the Month" roster. It is the sixth time in a row that Hammonds has received the honor. Hammonds was promoted from patrol to investigations just nine months ago.

"How does he do it?" you ask yourself aloud.

"Hammonds is doing a damn good job, isn't he?" Pete Rowe comments as he steps up to the bulletin board.

"That's not the word for it. Look at the difference in all of our case loads and conviction rates and then look at Hammonds'. His conviction rate is almost 80 percent while the average is around 20 percent," you point out.

"Well, I've heard that he's got a whole army of snitches working for him," Pete says as he walks away from the bulletin board.

"Snitches" is a slang word for informants. Without good informants, an investigator can do very little with an investigation. But it takes time for an investigator to develop good informants. Hammonds did not seem to have any trouble developing informants during his first weeks as an investigator. It took you almost two months to develop a couple of snitches, and Hammonds seemed to have an "army" of snitches working for him during the first several weeks of his detective assignment.

"How does he do it?" you ask yourself again.

That afternoon your captain calls you into his office.

"Mike, how's that investigation coming on the country club burglary?" the captain asks.

"It's a pretty tight case, Captain. I've got a couple of leads and I'm waiting for a response from the crime lab," you explain.

"I've been getting some pressure up the ranks to get this thing resolved. You've been working on the case for about two weeks. I'm

going to put both you and Hammonds on the case and see if we can't get this thing solved," the captain says.

Walking out of the captain's office, you feel as though you have been slapped in the face. It seems obvious that the captain feels you are not as competent as Hammonds would be in solving this case. It is an insult, but one you will have to live with.

The next day, Hammonds walks up to you, sporting a grin.

"Mike, I hear you're having trouble with a burglary at the country club?" Bill asks, somewhat snidely.

"Very funny, Hammonds. C'mon, let's contact some of your snitches and see if they know anything," you retort as you grab your overcoat.

Hammonds will not allow you to talk with any of his informants. Hammonds always insists that you stay in the car while he gets out to talk. You are not very concerned because several detectives are "protective" of their sources and do not like others around while talking with them. After a while, you begin to wonder what kind of informants Hammonds has working for him. Almost all of Hammonds' snitches seem to be either drug users or pushers.

"Now all we have to do is sit back and wait for a phone call," Hammonds says as he begins to drive back to the station.

"Did any of your snitches know anything?" you ask.

"No, not yet. But one will turn up something real soon," Hammonds responds confidently.

That afternoon, Hammonds comes into the detective office with a warrant in his hand.

"This is it, Mike. I've got a warrant for Jake Lennan, the one that broke into the country club." Hammonds says as he waves the warrant in your face.

"OK, Hammonds, now tell me how you did it," you say, looking over the warrant.

"It was easy, Mike. My snitches came through with the information. Besides, I think there is a real good chance that Mr. Jake Lennan will want to talk and confess to the break-in as well as return the stolen property," Hammonds comments.

You look at Hammonds in disbelief. Hammonds, noticing the expression on your face, continues to explain.

"Look, if this Jake guy doesn't talk and confess I'd sure hate to be in his shoes when my snitches get hold of him."

Hammonds' last statement puts a thought in your mind. Apparently Hammonds is using his informants to do the investigation work for him. Hammonds' informants may even be using force on suspects like Jake Lennan to confess and return stolen property. It seems Pete was right about Hammonds having an army of snitches. You

begin to wonder what Hammonds is giving his informants in return for their services.

"What're you paying your snitches for doing your work for you?" you ask with increasing skepticism.

"Nothing much. I may let them slide on a few things they may be involved with," Hammond responds as he turns and walks away.

It is becoming more apparent to you that Hammonds may be solving cases by using his informants to do the investigation work, as well as engaging in other inappropriate activities. Hammonds' use of drug addicts and pushers as informants leads you to other possible conclusions. He could be ignoring violations of narcotics laws by his informants in return for information and services. You decide to confront Hammond with your suspicions.

"Well, why not? I'm solving more cases than anyone else here. Why not let snitches slide on some things in return for good convictions? I haven't put one thug in jail that didn't deserve to go. It's throwing back the little fish for the big ones," Hammonds argues.

Hammonds continues to explain to you how he has been using his informants to "catch" the crooks and make them confess to their crimes.

As you think about what Hammonds said, you wonder if that is the way an investigation should be handled. His argument seems to have some merit and does produce results. It does not seem right to you that a police officer should ignore illegal activities of one group and arrest others. You decide to ask your captain.

"Look, Mike, in our business it's give and take. We have to look at our priorities. We have to look at the worst offenses and let the others slide. We can use that to our advantage the way Hammonds is doing. We've all done it as investigators—maybe not to the extent that Hammonds has, but if all of us would take that advantage, we would solve more cases," your captain explains.

The captain's statement still does not satisfy you. You still believe Hammonds' methods are unethical, even if "that's the way it is" in detective work.

You wonder what you will have to do to become "Detective of the Month."