

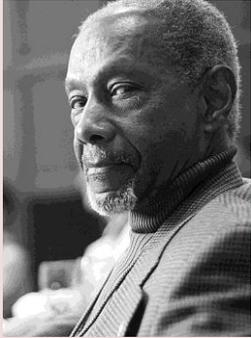


This month's HMM™ excerpt gives hardcore modelers their first look at the underbelly of GK. In the late 1990's, rumors began circulating about a shadowy group called "The Resin Police". This radical, anti-recasting vigilante group is alleged to have engaged in an aggressive and often violent campaign against anyone they perceived to be working against the best interests of GK. Their victims were most frequently alleged recasters, sellers of recasts, and purchasers of recasts. But in recent years, The Resin Police have been alleged to have also targeted unscrupulous mail order dealers, greedy GK producers, untalented sculptors and even GK artists who posted on line photos of a substandard build-up effort. No one involved has ever publicly acknowledged the existence of this secretive organization or being a member but HMM™ has obtained reliable information about the inner workings of this shadowy group thanks to the cooperation of GK artists who had grown concerned about how the violence impacted the hobby. After a decade of assaults, state and federal law enforcement agencies cooperated to apprehend the culprits and to put an end to the reign of terror by The Resin Police. HMM™

correspondent, Sylvester Johnson, reviewed records from a number of local and federal law enforcement agencies, court documents and interviewed witnesses in the only criminal case brought against the alleged leaders of the group to bring us this compelling expose'.

The Hardcore Modeler's Manual™: Volume One

Chapter 33 (The Resin Police) pp. 244-250



HMM's Sylvester Johnson

In March of 1997, at a fan convention at the Hillside Holiday Inn, just outside of Chicago, local police were called to investigate the assault of two convention vendors and one of their customers. The three victims were nearly catatonic with fear and each suffered from severe intestinal discomfort. Doctors removed pieces of a Korean vinyl model kit from the hind quarters of two victims and a size 7-1/2 work boot from the third victim. All three men refused to provide law enforcement with any details concerning their victimization. Found inside the vinyl recast parts and in the work boot were sarcastic notes that read, "Happy Modeling from The Resin Police".

Vendors at the Hillside convention included elderly Playboy Bunnies, middle-aged Penthouse Pets and porn stars no longer physically able to "perform". And, because many of the attendees were autograph seekers and collectors of nude photos and x-rated videos, local law enforcement concluded that the insertion of model parts and the work boot into the rear ends of the victims was either part of some deviant sexual practice that went horribly wrong or the work of a violent, militant, anti-pornography, feminist group; the police believed the word "modeling" in the note referred to "nude modeling". State and federal law enforcement officers would eventually learn that the distinctive and unusual injuries suffered in the Hillside case were nearly identical to those inflicted upon more than three dozen victims during the next decade.



1997 Hillside Victim

The second assault occurred in October of 1997 at a fan convention in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The victim, owner of a small Asian garage kit business, was found unconscious in his hotel room and stuffed in a shipping carton labeled for delivery to Thailand. He was in extreme discomfort, unable to walk and reluctant to sit down during his interview with local law enforcement. Upon his admittance to a local hospital, x-rays revealed several items, including a men's work boot lodged sideways, in his lower bowel. Local law enforcement officers sarcastically referred to the assault as "bootlegging".



Hellraiser recovered N J victim's booty

1997 New Jersey Victim

Surgery saved the victim's life and the work boot was retrieved. Inside the boot that was a note that read "Happy Modeling from The Resin Police". Also removed was a ¼ scale bust of the lead Cenobite character the horror film, *Hellraiser*, each pin amazingly still in place on the figure's head. The victim refused to provide any information about the perpetrators or the horrors to which he had been subjected; he insisted that no crime had occurred and that he would not cooperate with any investigation or prosecution. Because the victim had been an exhibitor at a large convention at which heavily-tattooed vendors with multiple piercings sold merchandise related to demons, vampires, serial killers and other monsters, law enforcement authorities were convinced that this victim was engaged in a unique brand of extreme piercing or that he was assaulted as part of a ritual by Satanic cult members who had attended the show.



In May of 1998, while cleaning up after a garage kit convention in Louisville, Kentucky, a maintenance worker at the Executive West Hotel discovered the nearly lifeless body of a convention vendor bound and gagged, and stuffed into a shipping carton. The victim had nearly died from asphyxiation because of the bubble wrap which was duct taped around his head and Styrofoam packing peanuts stuffed into his mouth. And, the size 7-1/2 men's work boot deposited in his rectum contained the familiar note, "Happy Modeling from The Resin Police". With no cooperation from the victim, Louisville police were stymied in their efforts to solve the crime. Still unknown to law enforcement were the distinctive similarities among these assaults.

1998 Louisville Victim

In April of 1999, law enforcement officers in East Rutherford, New Jersey responded to the scene of another vicious assault that had all of the characteristics of the 1997 "bootlegging" assault (boots, buttocks, and note) two years earlier. The authorities immediately recognized the similarities and realized that this was more serious than a random act of violence or some extreme consensual activity. Shortly afterward, East Rutherford investigators received an anonymous tip that the assault was the work of a violent vigilante anti-recasting group known as "The Resin Police." A search of a national law enforcement database revealed to local law enforcement, for the first time, a connection between these unusual assaults and dozens of others at hobby conventions going back to the mid-1990s and all across the U.S. But neither local nor national law enforcement databases had any information about "The Resin Police" or any other hobby-related vigilante group.

Unraveling The Mystery of The Resin Police



Special Agent Sherry Locke-Holmes

so-called “girl kits” and hobby magazines. The nature of the assaults suggested a deep-seated anger toward the victims, and the size 7-1/2 work boot found at the scene of each assault was consistent with the size of a woman’s foot.

Agent Locke-Holmes examined the notes recovered from 37 now-confirmed victims who had been assaulted between 1997 and 2004. Handwriting analysis confirmed that the notes had been written by three individuals working in concert. Law enforcement agencies across the country were astonished by the number of victims that were revealed by Agent Locke-Holmes’ investigation. She developed a psychological profile of the likely perpetrators and concluded that all three were outspoken, argumentative, highly motivated individuals with intense anger toward the assault victims and, obviously, capable of great violence. She determined that all three suspects were intelligent, probably Caucasian, and devoted family men. She theorized that each possessed strongly held opinions and was willing to take action against “wrong-doers” even when those actions might be self-defeating. And it was clear to Agent Locke-Holmes that each had been victimized or was closely allied with someone victimized by recasting. “While the size of the boot retrieved from the victims initially led us to suspect that the perpetrator was a smallish individual,” Agent Locke-Holmes said, “we eventually concluded that the small boots were chosen for quicker and easier insertion in the victim’s ‘caboose’... if you know what I mean.”

Once the suspect profile was completed, Agent Locke-Holmes focused on identifying artists and producers whose work had been recast. These, she determined, would be the most likely perpetrators of the bootlegging assaults. However, she and BAT Force were challenged by the great number of recasted producers and frustrated by the number of bootlegging assault victims who remained uncooperative and unwilling to speak about their victimization. And, the assaults continued: Boston and Las Vegas in 1998; Allentown, PA in '99; Burbank, California in 2000; Chicago and Indianapolis in 2002; San Diego in 2003; and in East Rutherford, New Jersey in the spring and the fall of 2003 and again in the spring of 2004.

A Significant Break In The Case



Atlanta Assault Victim Marty Lawrence

In August of 2004, Marty Lawrence walked into a restroom at Atlanta International Airport. He had just disembarked from a flight originating in Thailand and carried with him a duffel bag full of vinyl recasts. He was assaulted so quickly and with such fury that he never knew what hit him. One witness described the assault: “When Mr. Lawrence entered the restroom, he was confronted by three masked assailants in paramilitary gear. A fourth man, this really short, middle-aged Black dude, acted as a lookout and prevented anyone else from going to the restroom during the assault. The sounds coming from in there were *heart-breaking*. I mean, I’ve never heard a grown man cry and scream like that. Hope to never hear that sound again. It was a helluva thing. *A helluva thing!!*”

The victim, an admitted recaster, was held down while parts of half a dozen garage kits were forced into his colon. He was found stuffed into a shipping carton that was taped shut and addressed to Thailand; the carton had been left in a stall in the airport restroom. The usual boot and Resin Police note, “*Happy Modeling from The Resin Police*”, were left *with* the victim and later retrieved by emergency room staff. Seven years after the first bootlegging assault, law enforcement finally had the first suspect description. With the exception of a fourth perpetrator, the description matched Agent Locke-Holmes’ suspect profile to a “T”.

The escalation of violence and the frequency of the assaults began to affect attendance at fan conventions; convention attendance was down and hobby participation was also down. In 2006, for the first time in the history of GK, the three major model figure magazines set aside their differences collaborated to educate the modeling community about recasting and about the bootlegging assaults. “It was clear to me that we needed to work cooperatively with the other publications,” said Dan Jorgenson of *KitBuilder’s Magazine* looking back on those difficult times. “It was hard to feel sorry for the jerks out there who were ripping people off by recasting kits. But when you see how damaged and humiliated they are after being victimized by a bootlegging assault, your heart can’t help but go out to them and their families. So, I contacted my buddy, Terry Webb, co-owner of *Amazing Figure Modeler Magazine* to see *how we could help*. We recognized that these bootlegging incidents were escalating and innocent people could get hurt.” “All of this bootlegging was ruining the hobby,” AFM’s Terry Webb said. “And Dan and I agreed we had to make a strong statement. We began appearing together at conventions to educate people about bootlegging. We felt this was THE most significant threat to the viability of our hobby.”



KitBuilders’ Dan Jorgenson

“It had become an intolerable situation”, recalled Fred DeRuvo, owner of *Modelers Resource Magazine*. “The three magazines decided to make public service announcements in our publications and to participate in panel discussions together at fan conventions. We had to put an end to bootlegging.”

A Second Break In The Case

The magazine collaboration, however, was to no avail. The bootlegging assaults continued. Four victims at Comic-Con 2006 in San Diego; three victims at G-Fest 2006 in Chicago; four victims at CryptiCon in Minneapolis in 2007. One victim, a priest, was bootlegged at Vati-Con 2007, the first fan convention held in Vatican City and endorsed by the Catholic church. The unfortunate victim had entered a recast in the show model contest. Observers crossed themselves while the victim screamed, "Holy Jesus! Holy Jesus!" Each incident involved three masked Caucasian men bootlegging the victim while a fourth man, a short man of African American descent served as lookout. It had all the hallmarks of a "The Resin Police" assaults and the motive appeared obvious: recasts!



New Jersey Victim Paul Clifton boxed and left on New York street
Atlanta. She described three white men in paramilitary gear

At the spring Chiller Theatre Expo 2007 in New Jersey, Paul Clifton, a seller of vintage toys and model kits, unknowingly offered a recast of a kit to a well-known west coast kit dealer. Clifton was abducted from his hotel room that night, wrapped in bubble wrap, duct-taped, stuffed into a shipping carton and left on a New York City sidewalk too frightened to come out of the box. Numerous recasts, a boot and the note were removed from his body.



Distraught Vati-Con Victim

Another important break in the case came in early 2008 when a posting on a major hobby forum started an intense discussion about recasting. The person making the post commented happily about having purchased a recast of an out-of-production model kit. He'd never been informed about the damage done by recasting and was shocked by threats and other expressions of outrage directed toward him. The forum moderator threatened to ban those more outspoken forum members responsible for the threats. Within days, both the moderator of the hobby forum and the un-informed poster were bootlegged outside of their respective homes. The forum moderator was bootlegged in front of his horrified wife. She was able to give a description that matched the suspects in the airport bootlegging assault in Atlanta. She described three white men in paramilitary gear and a short Black man at the end of the block communicating with them with gang signs.

These were the first bootlegging attacks not associated with a fan convention but they were not the last. Soon afterward, a modeler in Wichita, Kansas was bootlegged after posting photos of a model kit with a substandard paint job; a kit producer in Florida was bootlegged after refusing for several months to respond to multiple forum complaints about his failure to ship kits for which modelers had paid; an egotistical east coast sculptor was bootlegged after failing to deliver a commissioned sculpture in a timely fashion; a suburban Chicago kit producer was bootlegged after ratting on competitors who were producing unlicensed kits; a Kentucky model contest judge was bootlegged when contestants disagreed with the awards; several supporters of competing New Jersey conventions were bootlegged after their participation in a long running war of words on a hobby forum. Dozens of boots and notes were recovered.



Bootlegged Forum Moderator

These incidents, along with the suspect profile developed by Agent Locke-Holmes, led law enforcement to start monitoring the activity on hobby chat forums and other public websites through which modelers shared information about the hobby. These forums had not been popular until about 2006 but Agent Locke-Holmes quickly noticed that arguments and conflicts would erupt between hobbyists, producers, sculptors, sellers of model kits, and even the moderators of the forums. She also noted that the issue which was most incendiary was recasting. Agent Locke-Holmes' profile supported the idea that members of The Resin Police would be among those most actively involved in these arguments. Years of monitoring and tens of thousands of hobby forum postings provided law enforcement with three strong leads.

BAT Force Identifies The Resin Police

In August of 2009, Agent Locke-Holmes and her BAT Force agents undertook closer surveillance of the suspected leaders of The Resin Police. In spring of 2009, the ring-leaders caught the attention of BAT Force because of their involvement in almost every dispute or controversy arising in hobby forums and internet chat rooms. Each of the men kept lists of companies and individuals involved in recasting or selling recasts, those customers to whom kit producers and dealers should not sell, and individuals associating with or supporting recasters. Many bootlegging victims were listed as suspected recasters on one hobby forum or another and it was clear that many hobbyists used these forums to direct The Resin Police to *deserving* targets. But when the group began targeting producers of substandard models, GK dealers with sloppy business practices, forum mods with whom they disagreed, arrogant sculptors, even hobbyists who posted photos of a poorly painted kit, modelers began helping Bat Force build their case against The Resin Police.



The End of The Resin Police

In January of 2010, BAT Force agents arrested three suspects in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. These three men are alleged to be the masterminds of The Resin Police. Each fits Special Agent Locke-Holmes' profile perfectly: strong family ties; strongly-held, out-spoken opinions concerning recasting and other GK issues; deep-seated hatred of recasters, their supporters and patrons; paranoid ideations that studio moguls and licensing departments are out to get them; and moderately acceptable model-building skills. Each was charged with 54 counts of Aggravated Assault and 4 counts of Attempted Murder.



"Rotten" Robb Rotondi



Scott "The Swede" Johansen



John "Nucky" Tucky



Judge George Stephenson

In a decision that stunned courtroom observers, and over the objections of bootlegging victims, their families and the U.S. Attorneys handling the case, Judge George Stephenson, the presiding Judge, released all three defendants on only \$1.00 bail. Trial for the defendants was originally set for April of 2010 but the judge granted an indeterminate continuance so as to avoid interfering with their garage kit sales during the peak of the hobby convention season. It has been two years since the continuance and no new date has been set for trial. The men remain free on \$1.00 bail. The bootlegging assaults have stopped.

The fourth suspect, described as a very short, middle-aged African American man, is still at large. The investigation continues.

HMM™ wishes to thank Sylvester Johnson for his determined and insightful investigative reporting on this important GK story. And, while HMM™ and Black Heart Models do not support the illegal practice of bootlegging, we affirmatively condemn sellers of recasts, the practice of recasting, and those who support recasting and recasters.

Check back next month for another exclusive excerpt from Lacey Mautler's The Hardcore Modeler's Manual™: Volume One.