

BLACK, AND WHITE, AND RED ALL OVER by Deeann D. Mathews EXCERPT

“It used to be 'what's that black and white and read all over?' was a joke told about the newspaper, but every newspaper in the hands of racist reactionaries in the South has indeed been red all over – soaked with the blood of innocent Black people brutalized and slaughtered over lies in print that continue to this day.

“No more will we allow the wholesale placarding of racist tomes about ourselves and our children to pass for news. No more will we not have a voice to raise in challenge. No more shall we, the Black populations of Tinyville, Littleburg, Miniopolis, Smallwood, Shortport, Big Loft, and the rural countryside be passively painted as savages while the real savages sit comfortably in places of law, commerce, and politics. Be it known to all Virginia: those days are over! Hereby understand that the Lofton County Free Voice will roar back at the voices of racist reactionary news, beginning in Tinyville, then across Lofton County, then to the uttermost parts of Virginia!”

Captain Ironwood Hamilton and Lieutenant Patrick O'Reilly of Tinyville's two-man police force stood at the nearest public bulletin board nearest the police station, reading what they had been reading, over and over again, on their regular dawn walk through the town.

The lieutenant was 25 years old, medium height and build, with bright red hair, ruddy skin, green eyes, and a shocking Southern drawl (unless you know the Scotch-Irish history of the southeastern United States).

The captain was 45 years old, six feet tall, sinewy, with iron-gray eyes and hair to match. His features looked like something that those Southern artists who loved to carve Confederates out of marble would have adored – classic, strong features, handsome, calm, and resolute. The slight pinch in those features from the sudden headache the captain was experiencing would of course have been glossed over.

“Wow,” said Lieutenant O'Reilly. “Have ever you read such bombast in all your life, Captain?”

Captain Ironwood Hamilton shook his head slowly, slowly because of the headache that was increasing every second.

“It's only bombast if the Lofton County Free Voice can't do what it says. I rather think it can, or at least can make a gallant effort.”

Lieutenant O'Reilly's green eyes got wide.

“Captain, you're not serious! A Black newspaper? In Lofton County? They won't last a week!”

Captain Hamilton shook his head again and restrained his urge to rub his throbbing temples.

“It's not 1819, and these are not amateurs we are dealing with. Just from this first issue, I know they have a good chunk of money in hand, dedicated people, and good strategic and tactical sense.”