

SATIRICAL FICTION: THE STORY OF THE NEW POLICEMAN

This satirical story has proliferated on Chinese Web sites in various versions and degrees of scurrility over the past year or more. The story's content and apparent popularity reflect a deep cynicism in China toward the guardians of justice and public order.

Officer Wu, in uniform for just one week, decided to reward himself with a movie. Seeing a long line at the ticket booth, Wu gave a sigh and took his place at the end of the line.

"You must be new on the job," remarked a man standing nearby.

"How do you know?" asked Officer Wu.

"Huh! When do you ever see a cop standing in line!" said the man.

"Oh!" said Wu, as he finally understood. He strode up to the ticket counter, put his money down and said, "I'd like a ticket."

"You must be new on the job," said the woman behind the counter with a smile.

"How did you know?"

"A cop never takes his wallet out of his pocket. If you want something, you just say so, and no one dares to refuse."

"Oh." This was another new insight for Wu. He gave it a try, and sure enough, he wasn't refused.

Once inside the theater, Wu casually located a seat in the lower auditorium and sat down. His bottom had barely come to rest when someone beside him commented, "New on the job?"

Wu was really astonished and more than a little suspicious. "Who says so?" he demanded.

"The old cops all know they can go upstairs to watch the movie. Only you new guys come down here."

Wu went upstairs to the balcony and saw that indeed, quite a few policemen were sitting there. He took a seat, and soon afterward the movie began. A police officer nearby turned and looked at him, then coolly commented, "You must be new on the job."

"How can you tell I'm new?"

"How many old cops sit there like a little tin soldier? Most of them are like me."

Wu looked at the veteran, who had propped his legs up against the neck of the person seated in front of him. It certainly looked a lot more comfortable, and seemed much more police-like.

The movie was about half-way through when Wu felt the need to relieve himself. At the entrance to the restroom, the attendant blocked his way and said, "You must be new on the job."

Wu still couldn't figure it out. "Do I have it written on my forehead? How did you know?"

"We never have cops coming in here. They just pee over the railing. It's obvious you're new."

Wu felt very embarrassed that he'd come so close to letting the side down. He walked over to the balcony railing and let fly a stream. "Hey!" someone yelled from below! "There's a new cop upstairs peeing on me!"

"..." Wu looked over the railing.

"See? When the old cops pee they splatter a whole row – only a rookie would drop it all on just my head! #@\$%&!"

Red in the face, Wu quickly zipped up and turned to sit back down. "You must be new," said a fellow cop nearby.

"..."

"An old cop would never zip up that fast. Why not let the little guy stay out for some air and maybe shock a girl or two?"

Officer Wu was starting to feel depressed. Back out on the street he decided to console himself with a call girl. After a little groping, the girl asked, "New on the job, eh?"

"How did you know?" asked Wu, feeling rather light-headed.

"Experienced cops are never so polite, they just barge in and get it over with."

Finishing the job with no further ado, Wu decided that in order not to disgrace the uniform any further, he should go without paying the girl or her establishment. As he swaggered out the door of the dancehall, the proprietor gave him a glance and said, "You must be new on the job."

Wu felt he was reaching the end of his rope. Grabbing the proprietor by the neck, he demanded, "How is it that even you can tell?"

"The old cops don't just go without paying, they demand a protection fee as well!"

A new cop is still a cop. Wu said, "Give me the protection fee!"

The proprietor said, “You’re still acting new. The old cops always have us deliver the money to them—they wouldn’t be caught taking it themselves.”

After suffering humiliation at the hands of the dancehall proprietor, Officer Wu decided to exercise his prerogative as a police officer and teach the proprietor a lesson. Hearing lascivious noises from the next room, Wu kicked down the door, and finding a naked man and woman inside, he yelled, “Don’t move! I’m a police officer!”

The woman sat up drowsily, and with a sideways glance at her companion said, “You must be new on the job.”

The man agreed, “He’s a rookie for sure.”

Wu barked at the pair, “How do you know I’m new?”

The woman smirked at the man next to her. “What old cop doesn’t recognize his own station head?”

As soon as he heard that the man was his station head, Wu spun around and fled. In the doorway he barreled into a well-dressed man, and stopped to apologize profusely.

The man laughed, “You must be new on the job.”

“You can tell too?” snapped Wu.

“I’m the manager here. All the cops know me.”

Wu fled from the dancehall, but just outside, under a lamp, he saw someone stripping a motorcycle. He ran over and grabbed the man, intending to take him into the dispatch station. The man said, “You must be new.”

“No I’m not! Come with me!”

“Of course you are! What experienced cop would bother with this kind of thing?”

“So what if I’m new! New cop, new ways!”

“Oh, I remember hearing your station head saying that back when he was a new cop.”

Officer Wu climbed into his police vehicle and sped off in a snit. As he turned a corner, a motorcyclist suddenly emerged from the darkness, and despite his best efforts to stop, Wu crashed into him. The motorcycle and its driver both flew into the air. Wu scrambled out of his car and hurried over to look. He found the motorcyclist on the ground in a pool of blood, his leg bleeding profusely. Without saying a word, Wu lifted the man and began carrying him to his car.

The man moaned, “Comrade, you must be a rookie.”

Wu sighed, “All day today people have been telling me I must be new on the job. It’s like I’m under a curse.”

The motorcyclist mumbled, “A seasoned cop would have finished me off. Now I’m dying of pain . . .” And with that, the man breathed his last.

Officer Wu returned home feeling very flustered. He logged onto the “Youth Topics” chatroom and registered under the ID “He Bian” [river bank] Almost immediately, someone with the ID “007” messaged him, “You must be a new cop.”

Wu was flabbergasted. On the Internet, no one knew you from a dog. How could this 007 know that he was a new cop,

or an old one for that matter? He quickly messaged back, “How did you know?”

007 replied. “The experienced cops who log on here are all under-cover, and they use an ID like ‘He Di’ [river bottom].”

Officer Wu resolved that from now on he would reform himself thoroughly and start acting like a seasoned police officer.

One day, as he was passing a cigarette stand, he walked over and picked up two cartons, saying to the peddler, “I’m taking these two cartons of Zhonghua.”

The peddler looked at him and laughed. “You must be new on the job.”

“Damn it! How did you know?” Wu demanded.

The peddler said, “Old cops never take the cartons on the stand—they know they’re fake. An experience cop will tell me, ‘Give me two of those Zhonghua behind you.’”

Walking away with the cigarettes, Wu felt that smoking them himself would be a waste, so he decided to get some money for them. He went to a tobacco and liquor store and said to the proprietor, “Boss, I’m returning these two cartons of cigarettes.”

“How much do you want for them?”

Wu thought about it and decided to make sure that he didn’t look like a new cop again. “A thousand each.”

He put down the cigarettes, took the money and turned to go.

The proprietor said, “I can tell you’re a rookie. An old cop would take the money and the cigarettes, too!”

Officer Wu went to get his hair cut. Noticing the comeliness of the girl washing his hair, he wondered if she provided any “extra services.” But having learned his lesson from before, he simply ordered her into the back room. As he was preparing to leave afterwards, the girl said, “You must be new on the job.”

“You too?” groaned Wu.

“Old cops always ask me to pay for the honor,” said the girl.

Soon Wu found himself afflicted with the pox, and he went to the hospital for treatment. The doctor took one look at him and said, “You must be a new cop.”

Wu was flummoxed, but the doctor replied, “Old cops get themselves fixed up at a private clinic—they wouldn’t dare to come to a hospital.”

Eventually Wu’s sexual proclivities led to his demise. As he arrived at the Pearly Gates, an angel remarked, “You must have been a new cop.”

“And how would you know?” Wu asked.

“The old cops all go to Hell.”

Translated by Stacy Mosher

Chinese versions of this satire can be found on a number of Web sites, including the following: http://www.boxun.com/hero/luobinfu/25_1.shtml, and <http://joke.myrice.com/arts/xhxxh/xhxxh/xhxxh22/1464324.html>.