

Going Undercover

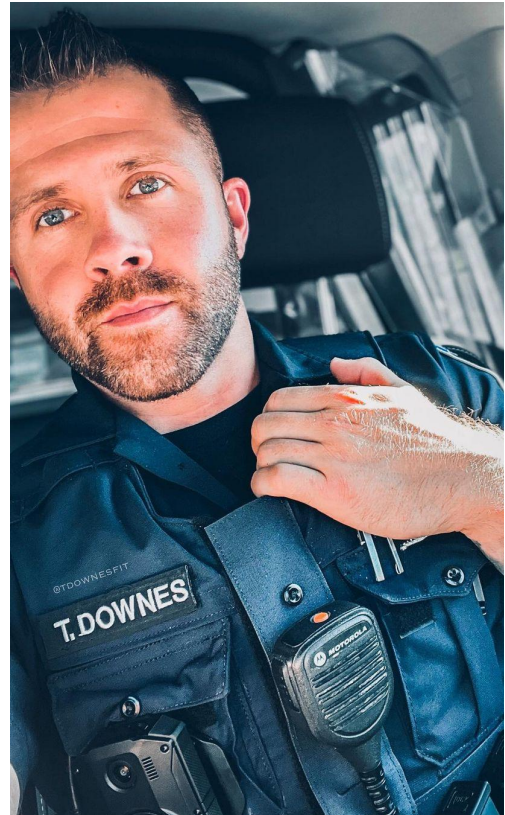
A short story by Henry Cavanaugh

Troy took great pride in the fact that he had been the one approached to participate in a top secret undercover mission rather than any of the other officers working at his station. He took his job in law enforcement incredibly seriously and had dedicated his whole life to it, so he was thrilled to see it paying off with opportunities like this. To him, it wasn't about the money or even doing the right thing. Troy just wanted to clean up the streets of his city and get all of those grubby lowlives behind bars. It would be an "out of sight, out of mind" situation if he had his way - and he *would* get his way eventually.

When he was first informed of what the undercover mission involved, Troy had immediate doubts about its legitimacy. His superiors were talking about putting his mind into the body of some stoner freshman at the local college so that he could help track down the dealer who was running the entire drug business in their city. It was a simply absurd concept and if Troy hadn't had the respect for his superiors that he did, he would have openly laughed in their faces. He had never known Chief Watson to be the joking type though and that was the only reason that the officer even contemplated that there might be some truth to the bizarre proposition.

Although still harboring suspicions that this was some elaborate workplace prank, Troy quickly agreed to participate in the mission. He wanted to prove he was capable of anything so he could be given more responsibility in the future and ultimately usurp the Chief to take the role for himself. Besides, provided this brain transplant was really possible, the mission sounded like an easy job. He'd have the case closed in less than twenty-four hours and be back in his body before his fiancée could even notice he was missing!

The college student that Troy would be going undercover as really couldn't have been any more different on a physical level than him. The kid was five-foot-six (a full eight inches shorter than Troy) and had perhaps the scrawniest build the police officer had



ever seen. A strong gust of wind could probably knock him over! Troy glanced through the profile that had been given to him by the Chief about the identity he'd be assuming for the mission and committed the basic details to memory. His name would be Josh Jones and he was an art major at the local college, although his attendance record left a lot to be desired. Josh's eyes were sunken into his face and his cheeks were sallow, giving him an overall gaunt appearance that some might even go as far as to describe as unsettling. In Troy's eyes, occupying Josh's body would be the downgrade of the century and he definitely wouldn't be spending much time in front of any reflective surfaces. Usually there was nothing Troy enjoyed more than admiring his All-American good looks in front of the mirror, but when it was that pale and solemn face looking back at him, he knew he'd have very little to appreciate.

"Let's get this over and done with, shall we?" the arrogant police officer grunted, looking between the Chief and the scientist who would be conducting the wild science experiment. Josh was still and unresponsive in a hospital bed, with a strange metal contraption around his head like a crown. A second bed was next to it and with some (somewhat understandable) reluctance, Troy climbed onto it.

"There's one more thing I should mention," the Chief began in his usual gruff tone as Troy was tied down to the bed at his wrists and ankles, "We can't afford to be an officer down, so while you're in Josh's body, he'll be in yours." This revelation caused immediate alarm for Troy but before he could even begin to protest, a gag was forced into his mouth by the scientist. "Don't worry, we've got the machine programmed so he'll believe he's you and go about your day just as you would. It'll be like there's two of you! Then, once you've helped bust this thing wide open, we'll swap you back and he won't remember a damn thing!"

To say that Troy was displeased with this sudden turn in events would be an understatement but given how he was both physically restrained and gagged, there was no opportunity for him to fight back. He was forced to accept that somebody else would be operating his body, wearing his uniform and potentially even romancing his wife! That last thing was the one to really make Troy's blood boil. He couldn't stand the idea of another man getting their hands on his wife's sexy body, even if they would technically still be *his* hands!

As the metal crown was placed upon his head and began to exert extreme pressure upon his skull, Troy silently made a prayer to his God that the ordeal would end as quickly as he was hoping. Now that he'd seen the kid whose body he'd be temporarily occupying with his own eyes, boosting his reputation in the eyes of the Chief no longer seemed like such a desperate need. He already knew that he was going to hate being the scrawny runt, but there was really nothing left he could do other than go through with the mission!

Right before the body-switching machine was activated, Troy locked eyes with the Chief and was immediately gripped by the intense desire to get some revenge on the older man once he was safely back in his body. Maybe a body swap of his own would be the perfect way to get rid of the old Chief...



It had been quite the shock for Josh to wake up and find himself in another man's body, especially when he discovered himself in the break room of the local police station. Before he could spend too much time acclimatizing to his unfamiliar reflection, Josh was interrupted by a metallic whine as the door to the break room was pushed open. An older man with a thick mustache poked his head through and nodded in approval when he saw that Josh was up on his feet. "Downes! How's the head feeling?" the man barked. What really struck Josh even in his understandably bewildered state was the fact that the man's expression was one of suspicion rather than concern. The question was far more loaded than it appeared on the surface, so the college student figured his best bet would be to play along in careful fashion.

"It's better... sir," he replied, forcing a smile onto his face. Josh had only had a few seconds to take in the unfamiliar appearance in the mirror before the interruption, but it had been more than enough time to identify that he was objectively more handsome at that current moment. The perfectly proportionate features and the stubble that occupied the lower part of his face were a far cry from the bleak visage that Josh was used to seeing in reflective surfaces. Sure, there was some serious "*I peaked in high school*" vibes going on but in Josh's self-deprecating opinion, it was a marked improvement. It certainly helped that the handsome face was paired with a muscular body. Josh had never imagined that he'd have pecs and abs but as he glanced down at his bare chest, there they were in all their glory! If he didn't have company at that moment, he'd probably have tried to see if he could bounce his pecs like the idiot jocks at his college liked to do.

"Hmph. Well, when you're done admiring yourself, get your uniform on. Your shift starts in ten minutes!" It seemed that Josh's response and behavior had been enough to convince the older man that everything was precisely as it should be, as he quickly departed and closed the door behind him. This allowed Josh to finally take a moment to try and comprehend exactly what was going on. Casting his mind back, Josh did his best to recollect where he had been prior to waking up in the break room. Strangely he didn't even have any memories of going to sleep, let alone participating in whatever the hell had caused him to wake up in another man's body.

No, the last thing he could remember was being stopped by a police car while he was on his way back to his dorm. He'd just made a purchase from his regular dealer - a

sketchy character who went by Golem and refused to share his real name - and as such his anxiety immediately sky-rocketed at the thought of being caught with a sizable stash of weed in his pocket. The events after being pulled over were hazy though... had he been knocked out or something of the sort? *Knocked out by a police officer? That seems a little unlikely, but then again so does seeing somebody else's body in the mirror, so I guess it can't really be ruled out, huh?*

Figuring that his best shot at getting answers would be to go along with the unusual circumstances he'd found himself in, Josh quickly dressed in the uniform that had been neatly folded up on the chair next to the cot he'd been sleeping on. It was strange but as he pulled each individual item in the uniform on, an unfamiliar confidence and a strange sense of pride began to build within the college student. Deep in his mind, buried deep beneath Josh's own psyche, he could somehow recall donning the outfit regularly. It was this that led to Josh's discovery that the memories of Troy Downes were occupying a space in his mind just below the surface. All it took to access them was some real focus and now that his mind wasn't cruising a drug-induced high, that really wasn't too difficult. As such, Josh soon proved himself perfectly capable of playing the role of a police officer without much of an issue and over the next twenty-four hours he started to feel more and more settled in Troy's flesh.

Although it was never openly talked about, Josh was even able to uncover some answers for what had caused him to suddenly occupy a body other than his own. He'd stumbled across files that outlined a sting operation to bring down Golem and his drug empire and the cops had chosen Josh as their method of getting close to the dealer without arousing too much suspicion. This new information encouraged Josh to think about his own body for the first time since waking up as Troy. Knowing that his pathetic body was currently being controlled by a man as arrogant as Troy brought a smile to Josh's face. He could only imagine how much the whole experience was probably tormenting the real police officer!

Despite having only lived Troy's life for a single day, Josh was already convinced that it was a more rewarding experience than his own body could ever offer. Within that twenty-four hour period he had used his new muscular frame and his uniform to intimidate his former bullies, work out in a gym for the first time ever and even flirt with the teacher's aide that he'd been crushing on all semester long. Things wouldn't go further than flirtation though, as Josh was now a married man. It had been rather startling for the perpetually single young man to discover that he would be sharing a home and bed with a gorgeous woman, but after the first night full of steamy lovemaking, Josh had been more than happy to accept his new situation.

After three wonderfully rewarding days though, Josh began to hear whispers that the Golem case was about to conclude. While his fellow officers were excited by the notion

that the streets might finally be cleaned up a little, Josh was much more concerned about what this news meant for himself. The real Troy Downes would soon be returning and would of course want to reclaim his body, but everything over the past seventy-two hours had brought Josh to a very simple conclusion: he didn't want to give up his new life! *This life was always supposed to be mine*, the former college student told himself. This mindset helped explain why he had become hooked on weed so easily; it was his mind's way of coping with being in the wrong body. Now that he was in the *right* body though, he wasn't prepared to let it get stolen away!

Getting access to the body-swapping technology without being detected proved to be difficult at first, but when Josh discovered that the scientist who had been responsible for the swap in the first place was gay and had a uniform kink, he saw a perfect opportunity. While he himself was as straight as an arrow, Josh was willing to let the twink scientist worship his muscular body in exchange for rewiring the technology. Rather than switching Josh and Troy back into the bodies they had been in before, it would instead be re-writing parts of Troy's mind to remove the memories of his former life. He'd remain perfectly aware that he was the real Troy but he'd never have any way to prove it, especially as Josh would be the only one to remember going through police academy and marrying his wife!

Coming face-to-face with his former body for the first time since the swap almost caused Josh to slip up and begin gloating about how much fun he'd had over the past few days but luckily he was able to hold his tongue. He shared a meaningful glance with the scientist before getting onto the gurney and allowing the metal crown to be placed upon his head, all while acting confused about what was going on right up until the point where the machine was activated.

A few short minutes later, the scientist declared that the operation had gone off without a hitch. Troy (having now formally shed his former identity as Josh) rose from the gurney and rolled his broad shoulders. "It's so damn good to be back in my body," he declared, briefly smirking at the scientist before leveling a glare towards the Chief. "Just so you know, I'm never doing that again," he growled, nodding towards where the other man was starting to rise from his slumber. "Worst three days of my life having to see *that* in the mirror."

The Chief barked out a laugh and nodded in agreement. "You did good, Downes," he declared. "Impressed all the right people. We'll see what we can do about having your exemplary service properly celebrated."

"Thank you, sir," Troy replied before fixing his gaze on the new Josh. "What's going to happen with him?"

Before the Chief could offer a response though, Josh let out a cry of confusion. His gaze was fixed upon Troy and an expression that exemplified both extreme confusion and rage had spread across his face. “It didn’t work!” he screeched. “I’m still in this freak’s body! That’s not the real me!”

Even though he had anticipated this sort of response, Troy still held his breath as the Chief looked from him to Josh and then the scientist. After inspecting the LED screen of the body-swapping machine though, the scientist shook his head. “Must be some residual personality left over from the shock of swapping twice in such a short space of time,” the scientist lied. He did such a good enough job at sounding honest that the Chief immediately believed him, even though Josh continued to protest loudly that the switch back had never actually happened.

“Face it, kid. You’re not cut out to be a man of the law,” Troy declared as he lifted up his arms to hit a double bicep flex. Everybody in the room was captivated by how the massive peak of his muscles caused severe strain on the fabric of his shirt sleeves. Meanwhile tears had sprung up into Josh’s eyes and such a display of vulnerability only played into the new cop’s hands even further. Tough guys like Troy didn’t ever cry, so that was all the proof that the Chief needed to see who was really who. He was confident that the arrogant man giving them all a show was the real deal while the sobbing mess was simply living in denial.

Now confident in his victory, Troy took a step towards the man whose identity he had stolen. Once he was close enough, the uniformed officer leaned in close and whispered a smug declaration that only his victim could hear: “There’s only one *real* Troy Downes and we both know that’s me!”

