

**“Working for Marshall City”**

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## **“Rookie” Drug Bust a Major Bust**

By Danilo Escalante

A “rookie” goof by a zealous Marshall City police officer allowed reputed druglord Ronnie King to walk free from the Thompson County courthouse yesterday.

Judge Dennis Hangman ruled that the 47 pounds of nearly pure cocaine seized from King earlier this year could not be used against him in a criminal case.

Officer Cary Cartman failed to give the so-called “Miranda warnings” during the questioning of King shortly after arresting him on unrelated charges. King told Cartman the whereabouts of the drugs, which Cartman then seized. King was held without bail until his release yesterday.

“This was a rookie mistake,” State’s Attorney Abbott Sutcliffe explained at a courthouse press conference. “It shouldn’t happen, but it did. We have to learn from our mistakes and move on.”

Sutcliffe may have been referring to a recent case in which a senior attorney in his office caused a mistrial by telling the jury that the defendants would try to explain away their behavior – violating the rule that the defendant need not explain anything in a criminal case. An angry judge had to dismiss the jurors and start all over again.

“We just have to be careful about putting untrained people into positions of heavy responsibility. It won’t happen again in my office, and I am sure that the Marshall City police force will train its officers more thoroughly,” Sutcliffe added.

As for King?

“He’ll be back,” said Sutcliffe. “These guys always are.”

Not everyone was so complacent. “Anyone who’s watched an episode of Law & Order would have known better,” said a courthouse observer who asked not to be identified. “That cop should be fired. But these prosecutors and cops all look out for one another. Nothing will happen.

The Mayor’s office declined to comment.