

A Minor Case Of Stockholm Syndrome

By

R.S. Courier

My father always said I was too smart for my own good. He said, 'One day, that mind of yours is gonna git you in a shit load of trouble'. Well, congrats dad, today your prophecy comes true. If this towel rod were in any other house, I probably would have torn it from the wall by now, scattering chunks and dusty clouds of sheet rock all over this desert tone, sand stone tiled floor. In another house, there probably wouldn't be a desert tone, sand stone floor in the master bathroom. In another house, the bathroom wouldn't have cost a quarter of a million dollars. No ninety-six inch black Italian marble counter top, (that's right, the good shit) with its four meticulously placed stainless steel sink basins and their accommodating mother of pearl faucets and handles. Not to mention the three by eight, one piece, tapered glass mirror with frosted edges and hidden vanity lights.

I could go on, but what's the point? No one would be stupid enough to build a bathroom like this, except me. This is my baby. From conception to delivery, from the floor joices to the airbrushed walls, not another man's hand laid work to it. The same goes for this god damned towel rack. At the time, I thought it would be a good idea to use a solid stainless steel rod for the dowel. I even commissioned a metallurgist to craft two claw shaped ends from a blend of iron and platinum that he recently received a patent for. The whole contraption weighs a good thirty pounds. Now, you can't just screw thirty pounds of sleek, smooth, steel brushed metal to the wall. No, you have to use brilliantly engineered zip lock fasteners that fan out against the opposite side of the sheet rock to receive and secure the bolt. Each can hold up to eighty pounds. I used six, three on each side.

Sure it all looks good on paper, and it definitely satisfies your chest beating, Tim Allen tendencies to tell your friends and colleagues that your towel rack can suspend four hundred and eighty pounds of dead weight, but all that design, engineering and metal can be a little depressing when your handcuffed to it.

I don't mean handcuffed in the philosophical, tied to your work kind of handcuffed. I mean, I'm fucking handcuffed to this damned thing.

The real tragedy up to this point is how well the evening had actually been going. Tonight had been the grand opening of the Herman Fletzer Memorial Art Museum. A grand two-story monstrosity of glass and steel, with a thousand angles and slices, topped with a pyramid point, spiking into the black Wyoming sky. Truly, a modern masterwork.

I should know, I designed it. As of right now I am the youngest architect in the state to have a building of this value erected.

There was a competition sponsored by County Commissioners. All the local architects, and actually anyone with an interest in such matters were invited to submit designs for the structure. Mine looked the best for the least amount of cash. One morning, I'm a struggling AutoCAD technician with a crippling school loan, two weeks later, I'm moving into a 1.5 million dollar house with enough disposable income to do whatever I want to it. All the while, bouncing to catered charity functions and hundred dollar plate political dinners, toting my celebrity sized halo. Instant socialite, just add cash.

It was my night, tonight. My night to shine, to smile, to pump flesh, drink overpriced wine, eat overcooked veal, be important. Sandy was in fine form. As the daughter of a Senator, this crowd was more like her tribe. A tribe she had been exiled from since our marriage. She always told me it didn't matter, that our Friday night beer and pizza gatherings in front of the TV were the grandest banquets she needed to attend. Seeing her in this element of glitter and perfume, I realized how much she had sacrificed for me. Between sips of Cabernet and hollow compliments to the wives of oil barons, she tells me with a smile and a wink that we will be leaving early.

They're good cuffs too, not those cheap gimmick S&M ones. These bastards are government issued, complete with serial number.

After my cute little speech about coming from nothing, and love of my life, and once in a lifetime opportunities and all that other pseudo sentimental shit one says on a stage, in a tuxedo, on the biggest night of his life, Sarah grabbed my hand and led me out a back exit. Avoiding attention, we sneaked into our rented Limousine, told the driver where to go, and made love all the way to our house. I can safely say that that was the high point of the evening; it's been the worst of nightmares since.

We were still kissing and slurping all over each other when we stepped through the doorway. I'm guessing that's why I didn't notice something was wrong until it was too late. I remember thinking how redundant it was that we had to get dressed again just to walk 30.56 feet from the car to the front door, (yes I poured the concrete in the sidewalk too) only to strip down again once the door was closed. In an act of sexual dominance, I hoisted Sarah off the ground, where she wrapped her legs around my waist and attacked my neck face and head like a cat cleaning a paw. With another gallant motion, I kicked the front door shut and started re-unzipping her dress. My fingers were halfway down her spine when I first noticed that something was wrong. Maybe it was a movement or maybe a sound, I can't remember exactly, but I knew we were in danger. I'm of the belief that all humans possess a certain inbred instinct to danger. The problem is that we live in such haphazard times that we become numb to the feeling and start to ignore it. The really sad thing is that this desensitization to a natural defense mechanism is considered normal, part of a healthy mental development, while those that still cling to it are branded with labels like 'paranoid' or 'hyper-vigilant', (I was a psych major my first year and a half in college).

Slowly, I pushed Sarah off of me, shushing her when she asks me what's the matter. I knew I should have turned on the lights when we walked in but, when in the moment, you always think some things can wait. I knew I should have turned on the lights then, but the light switch (the brass, three stage, Victorian style light switch) was a good five feet behind and two feet to the left of me, and there was no way in hell I was going to turn my back on that dark 2500 square foot, studio style floor. So, with one hand outstretched behind me, and the other holding a finger to my lips, I walked blindly backwards, hoping my anal retentive attention to detail would lead me to the forty-five dollar switch, (actually, I know a guy who deals in fixtures, he sold it to me for a fraction of that price. Don't tell Sarah.)

I was probably only inches from the switch when, out of the corner of my eye, I saw the curtains move, but I might as well have been a mile from it. I knew I was too late. Sarah screamed. The noise jerked my attention away from the curtains for a split second where I saw another figure coming at her from behind. I almost got the warning through my teeth before they were snapped shut by something very hard and very fast crashing down on the top of my skull, followed by that same something smacking against the bone right above my right eye socket. In cartoons there is always a bright flash followed by a circling halo of stars whenever the clever mouse renders the bully of a cat unconscious. Ironically, it's not much different in real life, something to do with the retina detaching or moving around or something like that. I'm not exactly sure. The big difference, and this is important to remember, is that unlike the indestructible cartoon kitty, you probably won't be able to recover in a couple of seconds with a few rapid shakes of your head. Trust me, it only makes things worse.

However, I discovered a minor perk in getting knocked out. As it turns out, you tend to be left with a rather peaceful, rather tranquil feeling as you fall to the floor, despite the tremendous pain slicing through your skull, and despite the fading sounds of your wife screaming in terror.

My uncle Steve used to be a prison guard, although I think they now prefer the term 'Correctional Officer'. Anyhow, he told me that the best way to get out of a set of cuffs is with shit. You can spit and or sweat, on your wrists all you want, but that stuff tends to evaporate too quickly, leaving the skin sticky, impeding movement, causing severe rubbing, scratching even tearing of skin. Which brings us to the next possible lubricant, blood. Blood works well, but only if there is enough of it, and only if its used quickly. If the blood dries or clots before the cuffs are off, you'll be wishing you had stuck with the spit and sweat. Shit works well because of its consistency. It has a natural smooth and lubricating texture that tends to stay moist longer than most bodily fluids. As a bonus, should the shit go dry, its viscosity can be easily recaptured by, you guessed it, spitting on it.

Unfortunately, Good ole Uncle Steve never explained how one was to get the shit on the wrist while in a full tuxedo and handcuffed to a towel rod. Story of my life, always just enough information to hang myself with.

I haven't heard Sarah since I came to in this bathroom. I know it sounds morbid, but I hope she's dead. You always hear about things like this and every time, the women suffer some ungodly fate. A million hellish scenarios run through my mind every second about what these people, whoever they are, are doing to my wife at this very minute.

My father, the Marine, always told me that thinking like that in these types of situations only makes matters worse. He would always preach that in matters of life and death, my thoughts should only be directed at trying to stay alive, everything else was secondary. Easy for him to say, the only dangerous situation he was ever in was a case of the clap from a Japanese hooker in Okinawa. Smug hypocrite bastard, I'd like to see what he would do if he was here now.

Who am I kidding? I know he was right. He may have been an asshole to live with, but he never lied to me about anything, even if I wanted him to. So, I guess the first order of business is to get a complete grasp on the situation at hand. What can I deduct from the information I have? I know that at least two people forced themselves into my home while I was at the party. I don't know who they are, or what they want. However that information isn't really that vital at the moment. I'm inside the bathroom that connects to the master bedroom on the second floor of the house. This means that while I was unconscious, the assailants took the time to carry me up two flights of stairs off set at a forty-five degree angle by a landing. This means, I think, that my murder was not their objective. If it was, then why not finish the job on the main floor and save the legwork? OK then, if they don't want to kill me just yet, then what do they want me for? The most logical explanation would be as a hostage for some financial gain. On the other hand, most hostages aren't taken captive with the amount of force that was used on me. Chlorophorm or some other sedating chemical is the best method for this.

How long have I been in here? I see that they never bothered to remove my watch, even when placing the cuffs on me. You'd think that such a detail would be important to a hostage taker. Another hole in that theory. If I can just twist my wrist a little more to the left....there. It's 2:30 AM; I've been here for about three hours.

SMACK!

The bathroom door flies open with such a force, I jump to my feet. In walks one of my assailants. Don't ask me how, but the second I lay eyes on him, I know he's the one that took me down. Something in the eyes, an anger, an arrogance, a dark driven intelligence that reflects the manner in which I was struck. He sidles over to the countertop, bouncing from heel to toe as he walks. He's big. I would say that he out classes me by three inches of height and at least eighty pounds of weight. Broad shoulders. Thick arms and legs. He's wearing combat boots covered in what appears to be a thin gray layer of concrete mud. His jeans are definitely well used and splattered randomly with oil stains. Across his chest is a gray t-shirt with ARMY written in black letters, slightly covered by a red flannel shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows. The man's neck is wide at the base, rippled with muscle, and tapering only slightly into his head. A head complete with a square chin, furrowed brow, and a healthy crop of sandy blonde hair.

"Oh, don't get up on my account," He says as he plops himself onto the counter, casually dangling his feet. "You're in for a long night. I'd save my strength if I were you." For a moment I'm genuinely confused as to what to do. I'm torn between defying this asshole on my feet, and an almost uncontrollable urge to obey my new master.

"Sit!" His voice is so commanding that my legs seem to collapse on their own accord. This causes a tremendous well of shame to wash over me. I know I should be

tough, that I shouldn't take any shit from this guy. I know I should be a man and show some dignity, but the only thing running through my mind is; please don't hurt me!

"Well?" He asks in a condescending voice.

"Well, what?" I manage to croak out. Suddenly, I'm very aware of how thirsty I am.

"Well, I'm sure you have a million little questions buzzing around in that head of yours. Don't you?"

Nodding, I try to stand up again.

"I SAID, SIT THE FUCK DOWN!" And my legs betray me again. "You think this is some sort of fucking game here? I'm trying to be nice here, but if you disobey me like that again, I'll finish popping that fucking head of yours like a god damn peach, you hear me?" By the time his rant is finished, his face is so close to mine that our noses bump together. "Now, ask me whatever you want."

I'm sobbing now; this too is against my will. Regardless, it takes me a moment or two to get my composure.

"Where's my wife?"

"YES! Now that is the right fucking question to be asking to start this shit with. You're going to do just fine."

"Where is she?"

"Sarah? She's a peach ain't she? Don't worry my man, she's just fine. And she's going to stay that way, if I like the way this conversation goes. Now, what's your second question?" He rests against the countertop and lights a cigarette.

"What do you want from us?"

"Holy shit, yes! You are a fucking peach! Did you hear the way you asked that? 'What do you want from us' not 'me', that's good, that implies compassion, love, devotion. Have you done this shit before, or are you just a natural? Never mind. Now look, I wasn't shitting you when I said you are in for a long night. Ain't nothing I can do about that. Some things just take time. I'm sure you can relate." He emphasizes his point with a sweeping gesture of the bathroom. "You're peach of a wife said you did all this yourself. That true?" A sniffing nod is the only response I'm capable of at the time. "Well, you did a fantastic job around this place. And I mean that. I worked under a carpenter for five years, and I know quality work when I see it."

"What do you want?" I rasp out.

"Oh, right! Sorry, I tend to wander." He arches his back and takes another drag from his cigarette before he continues. "You built that fucking glass castle in town, right?"

I nod.

"And I understand it received a great number of art pieces earlier this week."

Again, I nod.

"Now, I also know that these pieces are just loaners, from Denver.

And....Would'cha quite nodding your goddamn head. You look like your having a fit. Now, I know that these pieces, being only loaners, are headed back to Denver come Monday." He stops, and smiles at me like I have a clue as to what he's talking about. I just stare back and shrug my shoulders.

"So?"

“So! Jesus, you are pretty dumb for a smart guy. Why the hell do you think I’m interested in the art in that damn place?”

“You’re.....going...to steal it?”

“Well, not all of it. Just one piece. There happens to be a peach of a Renoir on display on the second floor of your building.” Of course, I knew which one he talking about. The curator from the Denver museum had been scolding the workers finishing that floor all week like an old slave master. Ranting and cussing about the worth of the painting and how the very breath from their underclass lungs would somehow tarnish the paintings aesthetic ness. He had been especially harsh on one of the workers, I remember. Though I couldn’t stand the sight of that snobbish curator, this worker just seemed to keep pestering him. Always standing next to and gawking at the painting, he even touched it once. Finally, I had to tell the foreman to let guy go, before the curator got angry enough to pull the entire collection.

Now I looked at my captive with my one functioning eye, and see the pieces fall together.

“You worked in the museum didn’t you? You were that guy that kept pissing off Reemer.”

He claps his hands and laughs. “Peach, baby. You are indeed a peach. I knew you’d figure it out.”

“So that’s why you’re doing this? You kidnapped us because I fired you?” His smile vanished as quick as it had appeared, and his head shook slowly.

“It’s like your brain is packed full of gun powder, but all your matches are soaking wet. Trust me when I say that I hold absolutely no grudge over getting canned by you. I was ‘casing the joint’, comprende?”

I think I should explain my actions to you at this point. I am not as stupid as I’m sounding right here. I am trying to employ a simple act of submissiveness, like in gorilla tribes. The whole shirking and cowering before the Alpha Male thing. As long as this troglodyte believes he’s smarter than I am, I have a slight, and I emphasize slight, hand on the situation. To help this along, I let my composure slip and begin crying again.

“So just go steal the damn thing! I don’t care! Just leave us alone!”

“Well, believe me, I do wish it was that simple. Unfortunately, there is a rather sophisticated security system attached to that building. Surprisingly sophisticated, and I need all that un-lightable gunpowder in your head to get around this system.”

Now the panic really starts to set in. While most people fear monsters of the creepy, crawly, spider-like, or snake-like variety, mine take completely different forms. My monsters are invisible. They take names like, ‘wrongful prosecution’ and ‘illegal incarceration’ and they all serve the great leviathan Injustice. I blame George Orwell, and my eighth grade English teacher. That which I fear most is being imprisoned and tortured for something I have nothing to do with. I’m really sobbing now.

“Hey, hey, don’t fall to pieces on my yet. It ain’t that bad. I know you’re a smart enough guy. You’ll give me the pass codes without much struggle and we’ll all be on our merry ways.”

“I don’t have them.” My voice is just above a whisper, but by the reaction on his face, I know he heard it.

“Now, see that is shit I don’t like to hear. Haven’t I been reasonable here? I haven’t lost my temper, much, I answered all your questions. Hell, I did everything I

could have to lighten this uncomfortable situation. Do you think I like doing shit like this? This kidnapping shit? Hell, no! This whole fucking thing is amateur as hell! But, god damn it, I need those fucking codes! I could just hack the shit, but I don't have the time. Please, please do not try to be a hero here. I can and will unleash all the dark shit in the bible upon your sorry ass in the blink of an eye. But, damn, that is not what I want to do."

"I'm serious, I don't know anything about the security system." In a flash he is off the counter, pinning my chest to the wall with his knee and grinding his thumb across my shattered eye socket. The pain is so intense that I actually piss in my pants, while he rants on, barely audible over my screaming.

"Is this what you want, mother fucker? Does that feel good? 'Cause I can promise you this is only going to get worse." He lets off his torture for a moment, giving me a chance to respond.

"I swear....oh God! I swear I don't know anything about it! It was subcontracted out!"

"Ok, ok, I see how ya are. You're strong, I can respect that. But, since I don't have time for strength, perhaps I should bring in a member of the 'weaker sex' to get the ball rolling. What d'ya think?"

"Oh God, no! Please don't hurt my wife, not my Sarah!"

"No, no, no, we're done doing shit your way! Play time is definitely over!" The knee that was crushing my chest snaps into my chin, cracking the back of my head against the wall. The bathroom door closing behind my attacker is the last sight I see before I black out.

"Jack?" The voice sounds like it's coming from the top of a well that I'm trapped in. My vision is hazy and my head feels like it's split in half.

"Jack, sweetie?" I begin to feel something touching my cheek; my shoulders are aching horribly, and my tongue feel swollen in my mouth.

"Wake up fuck head!" This voice is different, not near as sweet and not far enough away, and is followed by a dowsing of cold water. The water jerks me out of my stupor and my head snaps to attention. Unfortunately, my head doesn't realize how shocked and disoriented it is. The rapid movement causes my vision to swirl and my gut to lurch. Consequently, I spend the next minute or so vomiting all over my tux and my wife.

"Now that is fucking nasty!" My vision clears enough to see our attacker standing over us and my wife shaking globs of puke from her arms and hands. "Man, what the fuck did you eat? Is that macaroni?"

"Leave him alone you bastard!" Sarah screams and flings a handful of puke at him. The bully gives me a look of mock surprise and a chuckle as he wipes the mess from his face with his shirtsleeve.

"Damn! Feisty! I bet she's a peach of a firecracker in bed!"

I can see that Sarah is seething. She really doesn't seem all that afraid. Thank God for small wonders. I knew she was strong, stronger than anyone I had ever met. And I was happy to see that she seem relatively unharmed so far.

“Sarah, honey don’t...”

“Don’t what?” She glares at me with tears in her eyes. She feels guilty for some reason, that’s her guilty look. “I’m not just going to sit here and watch him torture you!” She’s stroking my hair and sobbing uncontrollably. She leans in to kiss me, and our lips almost touch before her head is yanked back by a handful of hair, and she is sent sprawling across the floor, howling in a combination of pain and rage.

“Look, this all very heart warming. I’ve got a stiffy a cat couldn’t scratch, but time really is of the essence here.” I look up at the man, as he tries to tip toe around the reeking vomit. He’s holding a wooden bucket that Sarah had picked up a couple of weeks ago at craft fair. She’d had hopes of planting some daisies in it, once the garden was finished. “I’m going to ask just once more, and then shit is going to get real interesting.”

“Leave him alone!” She rises and tries to attack the man, but he swats her away like an unruly child. She crumples to the floor in tears again.

“Don’t worry sweetheart, I’m done fucking your man here. I don’t get what I want, it’s your turn.”

A glance of curiosity crosses her face. “What the hell does he want from us, Jack?”

I take a couple of deep breaths, forcing my vocal chords into action. “He wants the security codes to the museum. He wants to steal a painting from there.” She looks at me with a hint of resentment in her eyes.

“So give them to him!”

“Yeah, ‘Jack’, give them to me!” My frustration has reached a paramount level.

“I DON’T FUCKING HAVE THEM!” Attempting whatever retaliation I can accomplish, I start kicking at the man’s shins. It only succeeds in making me look more pathetic.

“Well, sorry sweetheart. Looks like were moving on to phase two.” He reaches down and grabs the back of her hair, lifting her off the floor. She screams and claws at him, but her tiny frame seems to cause him only a minor discomfort. “You don’t mind if I use your bed, do you?” He chuckles and slides the planter bucket onto my head before he leaves. The last thing I saw before the dark, wooden insides of the bucket was the accusing, unforgiving look on my wife’s face, asking me; how could you?

It’s hard to say how long I’ve been in this bucket, listening to the screams in the other room. It feels like hours, but I know how these things tend to make time linger. It doesn’t help that I’ve drifted in and out of consciousness this whole time, the whole concussion thing, you know.

Even though my internal clock is definitely sprung, I’m sure that I haven’t heard anything from the other room in quite some time. I need to regroup, get my senses back, and get this damn bucket off my head. I find that it is actually easier than I had anticipated. Simply pinch it with my elbows close to the opening, and wiggle the head out. As a small consolation prize, since my up-chucking episode, my stomach and head are no longer spiraling off in different directions. Mom always said I’d feel better once I threw up. I let the bucket fall quietly into my lap. For some reason, I know I mustn’t

make a sound right now. Something important is going on, and I can't disturb it. I have to get a look into the other room.

I shift my body as close to the door as possible, sliding across the slimy, stinking floor. Damn! What did I eat? Once I'm as far over as my cuffs will allow, I stretch my legs out to the door. Opening it isn't going to be hard, I can do that with a simple push of my foot. The hard part is getting a good look outside while in this position. I decide to stand up, and some of the queasiness rushes back, but nothing I can't handle. I poke at the door with my toe, and arch my head back at the same time.

I can see that the lights are on; nothing looks broken or even overturned. Stretching farther, I notice that there is still a commotion on the bed. I freeze, paralyzed by what I am about to see. It doesn't take a genius to figure out what is happening on that bed, and I know that once I look at it with my own eyes, life between Sarah and I will never be the same again. And yet, I can't look away.

Confusion comes over me once the full scene comes into view. Though not entirely sure of what I should expect to see, I know this is not what I should expect to see. The man is definitely having his way with my wife, but my wife isn't really playing the part of the victim as well as I she should be. In fact, she doesn't seem to be playing it at all. She's moaning, and caressing, and SMILING!

"WHAT THE FUCK!" I didn't mean to say it that loud, really. The two jump, startled and look at me.

"Well, holy shit! We got us a Peeping Tom!" The man says, chuckling. Sarah jumps off the bed and motions for him to stay put, whispering; I'll handle this. She walks quickly to me, naked, eyes down. Never looking at me she takes me by the shoulder and leads me back into the bathroom. I stare at her in utter disbelief.

"Sarah, what the fuck is going on?" She doesn't answer, doesn't look at me, just folds her arms across her naked breasts and pretends to think. "Hello!"

"Shut up! I'm thinking."

"You're thinking! Well, by all means, continue. I mean, I wouldn't want you to say or do anything without having thought it out. I'm sure you have a rational reason for happily fucking the guy that is going to kill us in the near future."

"Just shut up for a minute would you! Jesus! You know, at first I was as shocked as you are when I did this, but now it's starting to make some sense."

"I'm sorry, make sense?"

"I'm not happy with you Jack. I guess I never really have been. It sucks that this is what it took for me to realize it, but it's the truth." All I can do is stare at her, dumbfounded. It takes me a minute to realize that my heart is breaking. You must understand this is a new sensation for me. Sarah is the only person I ever felt close to. I'm not some reserved little shut in with a wall around his heart, but until I had met her, other people just seemed insignificant. She taught me what it was to love someone, and now she's teaching me how to lose someone. I can't let this happen.

"Sarah, for God's sake, he's going to kill us."

"No, sweetheart.....not us..." This is starting to make a tragic sort of sense. A nugget of information from the back of my mind floats to the surface. There is a rare, psychological condition referred to as 'Stockholm Syndrome'. In this condition, hostage captives, usually women, tend to have sexual desires and even feelings of love towards their captors. It's the only explanation.

“Sarah...”

SMACK

The man bursting through the door causes the both of us to jump. He slaps Sarah across the face and kicks my feet out from under me. Once again, I'm on the floor with my hands bound high over my head. I don't think people realize just how uncomfortable this is.

“You two having a nice little chat in here? Good, good. You don't mind if I join in do ya?” He is still naked, and fully engorged. I am overcome with absolute dread. “Ya know, Jackie, I was thinking. You must be one of them voyeur types. Ya know, the kind that likes to watch other people fuck. I mean, how long were you staring at us before we noticed? I bet quite a while. Yeah, you act all sad and tore up and shit, but bet your dick is harder than mine right now. Well, I figured since you been such a peach this evening, why don't I just fuck your wife right here? That way you don't have strain your neck to get a good peak. How's that sound?”

“Charlie what the hell are you doing?” Charlie? Charlie? She's on a first name basis with him now?

“Oh, don't act like the thought didn't cross your mind either. C'mon let's see how far his sanity can go.”

“No!” She screams as he grabs the back of her neck and forces her down to the floor. He positions her on her hands in knees, which slip around in the piss and puke as she struggles. Finally, he grabs her arm and twists it around her back. She stops fighting. Her face is no more than two inches from mine.

“There we go! Trust me babe, you're gonna love this!” His face is flushed and he's breathing hard. With his free hand he reaches up onto the sink counter and snatches a bottle of lotion. Laughing and grinning like a Cheshire cat he squirts a glob of the lotion on his swollen penis then begins to stroke it.

“Charlie? What are going to do?”

“Shut up! I'm trying to talk to your husband! Look at that ass Jack. That has got to be the prettiest peach I have ever laid eyes on. Wouldn't you agree?” He starts tracing the contours of her ass with his finger. “So smooth and round, a perfect heart shape. All leading to the cutest little hole. Damn! What an ass!” Suddenly he stuffs his finger into her anus as far as it can travel, causing Sarah to scream out in pain.

“No, Charlie, no! Please!” Without further comment, he forces his now lubricated member into the hole his finger previously occupied. Sarah winces and grits her teeth. I can see sweat forming on her forehead and running down her cheeks. Her hands grab my pant legs and clench into fists. She comments on his violent thrusting with tempo keeping Ungh, Ungh, Unghs, through her clenched teeth.

In a short time, however, the ordeal seems to become less stressful for her. Her hands unclench, her breathing regulates, and her grimace of pain turns to a smile of pleasure. “Damn, that is good!” She breathes out.

It's impossible to define my thoughts at this moment. I have completely lost control of everything around me, even myself. Yes this is tragic. Yes, this is horrible. But, oddly enough, there is also a sense of freedom lingering in the air. Freedom from feeling, from thinking, freedom from very existence if I want it. I feel drugged, but I'm

sure it's just the concussion talking. Regardless, I stare at my captor, this Charlie. I stare at him more out of wonderment than hatred at this point. I guess I never realized what some people could be capable of doing. Though these are things I would never wish on my worst of enemies, there is a certain satisfaction in knowing them. A greater understanding of the Universe, and the horrors it contains. Sure, you hear about situations like this in movies, books, or water cooler talk, but until you actually experience them, they exist in only a detached, observational closet in your mind.

“What the fuck are you looking at?” His voice snaps me from my reverie. “You got a thing for me, Jackie boy?” He says this without missing one glorious thrust into my wife's ass. “You're getten' off on my aren't you? You like watching me fuck, don't you?” I shake my head no, but doubt sinks in. Am I starting to like this? No! Can't be! “Yeah, I think you are! Well, forgive my rudeness. I had no idea you wanted to play too.” He stands up, pulling out of my wife, and stands in front of me, shoving her out of the way. “You want some of this?” He asks stroking himself in my face. Now he's caressing my face with it. Rubbing it slowly on my cheek and under my nose. For some reason, the mix of the sex, shit, and lanolin paste smeared under my nose is not entirely unpleasant. Now he's rubbing my lips with it. I'm trembling. I don't want this go on. I'm disgusted, infuriated, and frightened, but gradually, all these feelings slide into apathy. I just don't care anymore, and I open my mouth.

He slides in gently, thrusting back and forth across my tongue. I make no movement; just sit there like a broken sex doll with a gaping mouth waiting for him to finish. I could bite down, two thousand foot pounds of pressure pushing two rows of ivory knives would bring his happy thoughts to a crashing halt in a matter of seconds. But, I don't. What's the point? He rules me now, they both do. My demon king and his soulless bride.

He grunts, shooting his load against the back of my throat. The gag reflex is uncontrollable, causing me to cough and retch the vile fluid from me. Without a word, he straightens up and walks from the bathroom, leaving my wife and I to discuss the events of the evening.

I look to her for some sort of validation. I need to know that she will take care of me, as I have lost the capacity. But all she gives me is a look of utter disgust before leaving me alone in my various messes.

My shame is complete.

I've got a lot on my mind right now. Since my dark royalty's departure, the feelings of apathy I had escaped into are now vanishing. Anger, rage, and seething hate are seeping into my limbs like circulation returning. I know any moment now someone is going to come through that door and send me to eternal sleep with a trunk load of would be repressed memories, guilt and humiliation. I'm mildly curious to find out whose going to pull the proverbial trigger. The most logical choice would be Charlie, but something tells me that would just be too easy. It could be Sarah, sent on some clichéd damnation mission to complete her journey to 'the dark side'. Though an interesting concept, it still doesn't seem like the more likely choice. No, if I had to guess, and I do,

I'd say door number three; the man I saw rushing at Sarah from behind, when this whole thing first started. That'll be his job.

If things had gone just a little different, I would probably be willing to just let him waltz in here and snuff me out. Hell, I probably would have thanked him. Charlie pulled a good mind fuck on me. Between the lectures, questions, beatings, taunts, and sodomy, he had effectively turned me into mush. But, the bitch had to fuck that up too. If she hadn't looked at me with such disgust, like I had wanted this to happen and she just couldn't stand for that, I'd still be a pile of mush right now.

Instead, all I can think about is cleaning the sins of my soul with their blood. I have to make them pay. I have to get away from this damn towel rod. With renewed determination, I make it to my feet again, grabbing the stainless steel rod with bloodied hands. I test its strength with a few firm tugs. Yep, it's still just as secure as the day I installed it. Damn it! I place a foot against the wall and pull with all my might. Then I put both feet against the wall and try again. Nothing. Damn it, damn it, damn it!

But wait, what is this? The claw shaped end closest to the door, holding the rod in place, has seemed to develop a crack in its finish. Interesting. Upon further inspection I see that the crack is actually a hairline fracture spanning its entire surface. Interesting. My knowledge of metallurgy consists of one semester of welding in college, but even with that limited amount of training, I know that a perfect blend of iron and platinum should never crack and split like this. Interesting. I give another sharp tug, this time closer to the end. The crack widens. Interesting. Another tug. A wider crack. Another tug. A wider crack. HMMMMM!

It would appear that I have been ripped off. It looks like I paid seven hundred and fifty dollars for a pair of towel rod ends molded from nothing stronger than standard pot metal. Scratch that, substandard pot metal. It's pure junk! Maybe even aluminum! Tug, tug, tug, tug, tug, then....snap! The rod pops free! In my cuffed hands I hold my shackling anchor triumphantly like a scepter. Funny, I don't remember the ends of the rod tapering into such fine points. Probably just the concussion talking again.

Of course, you realize that my problems are only half over now. Though I am free from the wall, my hands are still cuffed together, and you know what that means. Time to shit on my wrists. Why the hell not? I'm covered in every other body fluid, might as well complete the outfit.

As quickly as possible, I fumble with my pants. Unfastening the clasp, then the zipper, then pushing them down my soaking wet legs. The best way I figure I can do this is by squatting, reaching between my legs with both hands, catching a glob of shit before it hits the floor, rubbing it on my wrists and slipping my cuffs off before the smell hits me.

The first glob hits the floor with a splat. Damn it! I had hoped I wouldn't have to look to do this, but that doesn't seem to be the case. Now watching the next turd push out like a strand of soft serve ice cream, I anticipate its trajectory and snag it before it falls. Never in my wildest dreams did I think catching a handful of shit would be a major triumph. Funny how our lives change from moment to moment.

With a frantic haste, I rub the foul matter all over my wrists and pry at my cuffs. They slide off with complete ease. Thank you, uncle Steve, you sick twisted fuck! I stand up, stretch my back, lay the cuffs next to the sink next to the towel rod, and start

washing my hands. In the mirror, I see the door open behind me. This time however, I don't feel the slightest inclining of fear. Let's get this over with.

"What the fuck happened in here?" I had been looking at the rod when the person entered and it surprised me to hear a brand new voice in this little act. I turn to face this new character with the towel rod in hand, poised to strike and send one pointed end through his eyeball. But, I hesitate. The look on his face is total confusion. "What the fuck have you been doing in here?" He coughs and places a hand over his nose and mouth. I guess it does smell rather bad in here. He looks at the surroundings, then at me, then at the shit covered cuffs on the counter, then at me, then at my pants around my ankles, then at me again. The look of confusion and worry only worsens as time goes by, despite the fact that he's the one with the gun in his hand. "Did you shit on yourself?"

"I ...I had to."

"What?"

"So I could get the cuffs off. Shit works as a natural lubricant. It has a thick consistency, and retains moisture longer than any other body fluid." He looks at me and the pair of cuffs like to children caught doing something naughty.

"Why didn't you use the soap?"

"Huh?"

"The soap, man, or....shit even the lotion there?"

"....." Those are very good questions.

He shakes his head in disbelief, and lowers the gun. Seeing my opportunity, I make to strike at him once more, but he's faster with the pistol. Before I can make a movement past a flinch, I'm staring down the barrel of a gun.

"Put that fucking thing down." His voice sounds almost depressed. "Look. I'm going to level with you here. I never wanted anything to do with this shit. I told both of them that this was a stupid idea, and it was going to cause nothing but trouble."

"I'm sorry, did you say both of them?"

"Yeah, Charlie and Sarah."

"What?"

"Look, man, it was their idea. Sarah knew that you used your guys' bank account number as the security code for the museum."

"I'm getting tired of saying this, but I really have no idea what you're talking about."

"Your bank account, man! That's what Charlie was after, not some stupid painting. Think about it! What the fuck would he be able to do with a painting? He installs fucking carpet for a living. Anyhow, they dreamed up this whole kidnapping scheme, hoping that when you did talk, you'd still be clueless as to what was going on."

"Um, please don't get pissed, but I don't have a bank account and even if there is a security code at the museum, I haven't the foggiest idea of what it would be. I don't want to play this game anymore; I'm tired and fed up. So read my lips; I HAVE NO BANK ACCOUNT!"

"Dude, quit fucking with me! I really don't want to shoot you."

"Seriously, I don't believe in banks, the interest rates are shit." He cocks the hammer of the pistol and glares at me. "I'm not lying! I've always put my money in a diversified trust fund. My stock broker's the only one that can get it out." I know by the

look in his eyes that he knows I'm telling the truth. What's bothering him is he realizes he's just as much in the dark as I am, and he's not happy about it.

"Son of a bitch!"

"You said it was Sarah that told you about the bank account?" He nods. "But, she knows that there isn't one. Why the hell would she say that?"

"Look, man, your wife has some fucking issues. I never trusted her sorry ass from the moment I met her. Fuck! I knew this was fucking mistake." He lowers his gun and turns to leave.

"Wait!"

"What? You still want me to finish you off?"

"No! No! I just want to know what you plan on doing."

"What do you fucking think? I'm gonna go downstairs and put a bullet in both their fucking skulls." He makes to leave again.

"Wait!"

"Man! What the fuck now?"

"Let me do it."

"Say, what?"

"Look. I know you're pissed about the situation, but look at me! What was the worst thing that happened to you last night? Having to sit through a marathon of Golden Girls reruns playing on my new plasma TV? I HAD A DUDE'S DICK IN MY MOUTH! I can guarantee that there is no other person alive that wants those two dead more than me right now! Plus...well...think about this; sooner or later, this house is going to turn into a crime scene. Give me that gun, walk out that door...no, that one there, it leads to the backyard, go through the yard, down the alley and vanish. I promise you that no one will ever know you were in this house at all. What d'ya say?" He reaches into his pants, retrieves a second pistol and tosses it to me. The gun in his hand stays trained on me as he back out the door. No, I shake my head and point to the other door.

"Remember, mother fucker, I know where you live." He backs out a little farther, then, "Hey man, good luck. And...I'm sorry." With that he disappears from the doorway.

I check the cylinder of the revolver like I actually know what I'm doing. Guns were never a common household item in my home, but I knew enough to know that it required bullets, and the bullets came out of the end with the hole in it. The thing appeared to be loaded, watch enough westerns and mob flick and you'll pick up what to look for. Satisfied, I make my way down the stairs with the rod and pistol in each hand. Quietly snooping and listening for voices or anything else that would pinpoint my victims.

As one would guess, the grunting thrashing sounds of sex are the first things I hear. Jesus, they're like animals! I peek around the corner of the stairwell. At first, I can't see anything, then Charlie's naked back pops up from the couch. I realize he doesn't notice me yet, too fixed on the business at hand. Slowly, I creep across the floor until I'm directly behind him. He's got Sarah's ankles in each hand and is driving at her like a jackhammer, faster, and faster.

"Hungh, I'm gonna cum!" He grunts into the air, causing Sarah to buck harder against him.

I hear the shot before I realize what I've done. Damn! That is fucking loud! Before Charlie hits the floor, I see a small, bloody hole on top of his spine. He's in such a state of shock that he can't even scream out. He just lays there, paralyzed from the waist down, twitching like a decapitated chicken. I make my way to the couch, stand over him and glance at my wife. She stretches, yawns, gives me a sultry look and rubs her vagina.

"About time you decided to come out of the bathroom. I was starting to wonder if you'd ever get here." Without taking my eyes off of her, I fire three more shots into Charlie's twitching body until it no longer moves. She barely blinks.

As if in a daze, I look around the house, then to the double pointed rod in my hand. I know these points weren't there when I installed it. And I know those towel rod ends had been the genuine articles when I picked them up, I could tell by their weight. That crazy bitch had planned this whole scenario, down to this very moment.

She's really going at herself right now. Her fingers pumping like a hummingbird into her gyrating pelvis. Charlie was right, she is a peach.

"Happy Anniversary, sweetheart." She says through pouting lips, before her voice explodes in an orgasm.