

## Justice

"So, how does the disappearance of your ex-wife make you feel?" the tweed jacketed and overweight balding man sitting across the table from me asked, while he looked at me over his wire rimmed spectacles.

*You have no idea. I'm so fuck-ity-do-dah happy!*

"I'm sad. Not for me of course, but for my daughters. It's a tragedy that they have to grow up without a mother." I answer.

*She was a lousy mother; the ignorant bitch only cared about herself.*

"Conrad, if we're going to reach any conclusions or make any progress, you need to be honest with me. Now, truthfully, don't you feel any remorse?"

The chain on my handcuffs rattled on the hard tabletop as I folded my hands together, and I closed my eyes for just a second; just a fraction of a second. I needed to play it back again, even if just for a second. As I closed my eyes, the delightful images sprang to life on the black velvet movie screen of my closed eyelids.

*Oh the wonder of it all! The exquisite, almost orgasmic joy the sounds of her screams bring me.*

I feel a slight shudder of pleasure surge through my body, and quickly glance at the doctor to see if he's noticed.

"I'm not sure what you're talking about doctor," I reply.

The man sighed, and removed his glasses, "We know you did it Conrad. Why don't you tell me why you did it?"

*You don't know shit. I was too careful. The boat and car were both rented with cash, and untraceable. Hell, even the taser tags were untraceable. I bought it at a gun show in Missoula three years ago. And since my momma didn't raise any fools, I paid for it with cash too.*

I stretched my legs out as far as the shackles allowed, "Look doctor, you're barking up the wrong tree. I have no idea what happened to my ex-wife, but don't expect me to get all teary eyed at her disappearance. She's done her best to make my life hell."

"Is that why you did it?" he pressed.

"All I can tell you is what I've already told the police. I was in Seattle when my ex-wife disappeared. I have no idea where she is, or what might have happened to her."

*The chains tied to her various body parts before being dumped into the dark cool waters of Puget Sound would ensure her fat ass body was never discovered. Oh God! My knife had sliced her flesh like warm butter, and the sticky sweet smell of her spurting blood made me feel that same dizzy drunk feeling I'd only before experienced after downing a bottle of Jack Daniels.*

"You know that I'm merely evaluating you, don't you? I'm not here to judge you, and everything you tell me here is in confidence. Nothing you say in our sessions can be used against you in court."

"I keep telling you doc, I don't know anything about the bitch's disappearance."

"You mean your ex-wife?" he asked softly, and leaned forward expectantly, like he's just discovered a hidden nugget of gold in the still deep waters of my mind.

"I mean what I said. The bitch."

"Is that how you see her?"

"How else could I see her? The cunt stole my daughters from me. She promised me she'd keep my girls from me, and she sure as shit did. I spent tens of thousands of dollars fighting her in court, but the mush-mouthed commissioners wouldn't do shit. And every chance the bitch and her idiot husband got, they were sticking their grubby hands

out asking for more money.”

The doctor flipped through the yellow notepad in front of him, “I see. So. Were you more upset about her keeping your daughters from you, or about her and her husband trying to get more money?”

“Her moron husband is a eunuch and won’t ever be more than a worthless piece of shit. I’ve busted my ass for everything I’ve ever gotten, and he can’t stand the fact that I’m everything he’ll never be.”

“That still doesn’t explain why you killed her.” He stated.

*I killed her for the sheer joy of it you idiot! And I didn’t really have a choice, did I? She refused to let me live my life. Fuck, that’s why I left the bitch. I just wanted to live my life without her dragging me down into the dank, murky pool of her mediocrity.*

“I keep telling you doc, I didn’t kill her, hell, for all I know she’s off fucking a boyfriend somewhere.”

“You know better don’t you?”

“Look, I had the cunt when she was the best she ever was, and that ain’t saying much, but maybe she had some hard-up boyfriend somewhere.”

He didn’t take the bait.

“You know, the District Attorney has said he’s going to press murder one charges, and if you’re convicted, he’s going to ask for the death penalty. You could help yourself by confessing and telling the police where you took her body. Your confession would give her family, and your daughters for that matter, some peace by knowing what happened.”

*Somehow I doubt that. I’m the only one who’s at peace knowing what happened to her. If only I could have stretched the glorious event over a longer period of time! The weak bitch died after only a few hours of glorious ecstasy, damn her.*

“Have you talked to my attorney? She said this was all routine procedure, and their booking me was merely a formality. I’m going to be out of here on bail after my arraignment on Monday. They had to bring me in for questioning, but since I didn’t do it, the cops haven’t got squat on me.”

The doctor cleared his throat, and looked back over his shoulder at the flattop wearing Cro-Magnon guard standing at the door behind us. “Could you give us a moment please?” he asked.

“Push the buzzer if you need me Dr. Finch.” The guard said, and stepped out into the hallway, carefully locking the door behind him.

“I am here at the request of your attorney, Ms. Beasley. It seems she’s a rare commodity these days, namely an attorney with integrity. She wanted me to evaluate you, and offer an opinion regarding your innocence, or at least reasonable doubt of your guilt. When did she speak to you last?”

“Yesterday afternoon, just after they brought me in for questioning.”

“Then you are unaware of the new developments? Yes. Yes, of course you are.”

“What the hell are you talking about doc?” I asked calmly.

*Did I forget something? No. I was very thorough. It took me four hours to scrub all the blood off the boat, and they have no way of even knowing it exists. I vacuumed the rental car, but that was rented under another name. Nope, they’re fishing. After several years of thinking and planning there was no way I was gonna screw this up.*

“Let’s digress for a moment. Tell me, how are your daughters responding to you?”

“Leave my daughters out of this doc, they’ve got nothing to do with this.”

“Actually, they have everything to do with this, don’t they?” he prodded. “Didn’t

you just tell me that your ex-wife had been trying to turn them against you?”

“I did, and she was. She’s been giving it her best for ten years now, and has damn near done it,” I spat vehemently.

*Calm down, they still don’t know anything. Oh, they suspect lots, but they don’t really know shit. There’s no way they could, I covered all my bases...except... no!*

The doctor closed his writing pad, set his pencil down, and leaned forward, confident that he was about to deliver the “coup de grace”.

“Did you know that the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s department was searching your house yesterday after the Spokane County Sheriff’s department brought you in for questioning? They found the tape Conrad. Ms. Beasley and I had the chance to listen to a copy of it this morning, and frankly we were quite aghast at the horrific sounds it contained.”

“What tape?” I asked calmly.

*Fuck! Now what? It was only circumstantial evidence right? There’s no way it was clear enough for anyone to prove whose voice was on the tape, and the background music would make it even more difficult. AC/DC’s “Highway to Hell” had seemed particularly apropos at the time. Stay cool; if motherfucking OJ can get off even after he left a bloody glove, you’re sitting pretty. Still, keeping the tape probably had been a really stupid move. Water under the bridge now, and who could blame me for wanting to replay the glorious symphony of her screams?*

“The tape you clearly made when you were killing her.”

“You mean my scream tape?” I said with a chuckle.

“Is that what you call it?”

“Of course. You mean to tell me, that all this,” I held up my hands and rattled my handcuffs, “is because I downloaded some scream track on the Internet?”

The doctor leaned back in his chair and looked at me over his wire-rimmed glasses with a bewildered expression. “You’re telling me that there is a plausible explanation for this recording?” he asked incredulously.

*My mind was racing. Recording the act was definitely not your brightest move ace. I’d been so deliberately careful. Careful enough to pull out all her teeth to prevent dental identification if by some freak chance her head ever floated to the surface; they each made such a delightful popping noise when I snapped the roots. Thankfully I even remembered to bring smelling salts, ‘cause the bitch kept passing out on me while I was doing it, but, I might have screwed up with the friggin’ tape.*

“Hell yes, I look at some pretty bizarre sites as I do research for my writing, and when I find something interesting, I sometimes record it. If I was going to murder my ex-wife, do you think I’d be stupid enough to record it? Especially when I know that I’d be a prime suspect, regardless of the circumstances?”

“Hmmm, you do have a point. I can’t say that I’m completely convinced the recording is so easily explained, but in the absence of any additional incriminating evidence, I might be inclined to believe your story.”

The pudgy doctor removed his glasses and thoughtfully rubbed the bridge of his nose for a few moments before he noisily pushed his molded plastic chair back from the table and stood up.

“So what now doc?” I asked.

“I’m going to recommend that Ms. Beasley continue her efforts on your behalf.”

The trial lasted the better part of two weeks, and I have to say the prosecuting attorney, the Spokane County District Attorney himself actually, clearly did his best to

convince the jury that I was the devil incarnate.

But he had a tough sell. The more he tried to paint a word picture for the seven man and five woman jury of me as a evil or bad person, the more he came up short. The facts didn't provide him with the range of color.

In truth, my ex-wife was a bitter vindictive woman who had spent the better part of ten years trying to turn my daughters against me and destroy my life, and no matter what angle he tried, that's exactly what the jury could see. Maybe the bitch didn't deserve to die like she evidently had, but who could blame me for finally putting her out of my misery?

Not this jury.

After three hours of deliberation, they found me not guilty.

I can't say that it's been a bed of roses for my daughters and I, but it's getting better.

We moved to the desert outside of Tucson, a world away from Spokane, and the meddling of my ex-in-laws.

The proceeds of the life insurance plan on my ex-wife I'd faithfully made premium payments on for a decade, allowed me to purchase a small ranch where the three of us could raise horses, and I could continue my fledgling career as a writer.

Just yesterday, as we finished brushing one of our mares, my youngest asked me, "Daddy, where do you think Mommy is? I miss her a lot."

I stopped what I was doing, and gave her the best answer I could. "I'm sure she misses you too sweetheart, and we just have to have faith that she's in a better place now."

"Will I see her when I get to heaven?" she asked softly.

*Only if you can see the bowels of hell from heaven's lofty vantage.*

"I'm sure you will honey. I know she loved you a lot. Now let's go get your sister and start dinner."

She put her currycomb on the shelf, and looked at me mischievously before racing out the big barn door into the fading sunlight. "Last one to the house is a rotten egg!" she yelled.

"Hey no fair! You've got a head start!" I protested, and watched her run across the hard packed dirt to the ranch house, with her long blonde hair flowing in the soft desert wind.

I closed my eyes for just a second, and again played the video in my head. I could almost hear the whole delightful range of screams of pain and anguish in the warm gentle breeze. My memory was perhaps not quite as vivid as Memorex, but given my narrow escape from the long arm of the law, it would have to suffice.

"Come on Dad, hurry up!"

I opened my eyes, and left, for now, the theater of my mind, and smiled at the sight of my two daughters waiting on the porch for me to start dinner.

Life was good.