

7. THE CUTTING

I put on my gloves. I thought that I should wait until I get out of the car. Maybe wait until I am at the door. I could put them on before I go inside. Before I do what I have to do. What I have to do inside. What I will do inside.

I need to make a clean break. This will be the first step. I will cut away all extraneous detail. I will get down to what is essential. My cut has to be razor-clean. There can be no remains of something that might interfere.

There is a great deal that reminds me of what happened. I don't like to think about the awful effects. I will need to reconstruct all the details of the scene if I am to erase it from view. The scene could play in darkness. It is not so much what I see. There is screaming. I hear the screams. If I just took this memory away, things would not seem so unpleasant.

The door is locked so that no one can escape. It would be unfortunate if a witness escaped. If someone told what happened. I have to be able to control the results of this scene. I need to make sure what people think about what happened.

It has to appear as if there are no witnesses. That will only make it all better for those involved. If their participation is a problem, I need to make sure that there is no connection to their former involvement.

I have come here because I am the only one who can set things right. I am the professional. It is not enough to change the event. I have to change the memory of everyone involved. I have to persuade them that things happened differently from how they first recalled them. The key to influencing how they think is my ability to alter the evidence. This will determine how the scene is reconstructed. In the end, if no one has a stake in what happened, it will appear as if nothing happened at all. There will be the abandoned building, the scene of the incident. But anything that ties anyone to the scene will disappear. The place will be completely clean of evidence.

My hands are shaking. I sit down. I need to wait through the changes. I put on my gloves. I sit and wait.

The machine is running back and forth. But there are no other sounds. I have made sure of that. I need to concentrate on the task at hand.

ARIEL

I know that you think that you can just take off on your own. But you can be found.

WALTER

I'm not the one who's thinking about running away.

He is standing up. He decides to sit down. She looks over at him. It makes her feel more at ease.

ARIEL

You should have done more about this while you had the chance.

WALTER

This isn't just about me. We've both been involved from the start.

ARIEL

I don't know a thing about your damn package.

WALTER

That seems rather convenient to maintain right now. If you weren't involved, why did things go down the way that they did?

Ariel walks over the window and opens the curtains.

ARIEL

You need to come clean, Walter.

WALTER

That is what I promised.

ARIEL

You're not going to change. The only reason that you're sitting with me right now is that I threatened to leave you. I can't stay with you. Not now. Not ever.

WALTER

We could start over. Have it be like it was.

ARIEL

I don't think that it ever was anything. You've been lying to me from the beginning. Everything that we've ever done has been a lie. We have always been a lie.

WALTER

What do you mean by that? How has it been a lie? You're being so abstract. We bought this house. We had plans.

ARIEL

I can't make plans anymore. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.

"We need to do the scene again. There will be changes. We need to make some changes".

ARIEL

I know that you think that you can just take off on your own. But we found you, Walter. You've been caught. You're still trying to be so mysterious on us. Admit what you did, and we'll go light on you.

WALTER

I'm not the one who's thinking about running away. I didn't do anything. I really can't believe anything that you say about going light on me. You brought me here because you want me to admit to something that never happened.

She is standing up. She decides to sit down. She looks over at him. It makes him feel more uncomfortable.

ARIEL

You should have turned yourself in when you had the chance. Now we have all the evidence that we need.

WALTER

This isn't just about me. We've both been involved from the start.

ARIEL

I don't know a thing about your damn package.

WALTER

That seems rather convenient to maintain right now. If you weren't involved, why did things go down the way that they did?

Ariel stands up.

ARIEL

You need to come clean, Walter.

WALTER

That is what I promised.

ARIEL

You're not going to change. The only reason that you're sitting with me right now is that we picked you up.

WALTER

Are you going to charge me or let me go?

ARIEL

You've been lying to me from the beginning. If we let you go, you're just going to run away. That's what you've been doing all along. From the moment that you left Denver, you've been hiding.

WALTER

What do you mean by that?. How has it been a lie. You're being so abstract. We bought this house. We had plans.

ARIEL

I can't make plans anymore. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.

There's another scene that is relate. I try to imagine it.

LIVING ROOM A SECLUDED CABIN

It is a luxurious cabin. They are sitting in a sunken living room on the built in couch.

ANGEL

You're not going to let me go.

WALTER

You can walk out if you want.

ANGEL

You're just going to let me go like that.

WALTER

I'm not saying that. You have to promise not to get me in trouble.

ANGEL

Are you afraid that I'm going to tell people what happened?

WALTER

I'm not afraid. There are some things that I don't want you to repeat.

ANGEL

So you admit it. You're going to try and shut me up.

WALTER

We have to agree on the same story.

ANGEL

You can't leave me like this. You can't tie me up

I published a novel of some acclaim that detailed my childhood. It was a harrowing tale that documented my struggle to overcome being abducted as a child. I was forced to witness

events of cruelty and perversion to which no child should be a party. The novel describes how I escaped those influences through an extensive process of therapy.

It was a novel of identity. From that point on, I cast off those arduous influences to reshape myself. I also tasted success from my first novel so that may have influenced my further projects. I had formerly felt isolated due to my bizarre history and its associated condition. I now felt like a celebrity due to the acceptance that followed. My unfortunate past seemed like a memory almost as if it had happened to someone else.

The characters in my novels went through a similar transformation. They were neutral characters who lived in a world without a past. They bore a trace of cruelty but they worked to blend into a world of power where their authority was taken for granted. Their privilege took the place of domination. The regulated lawns of protected communities spoke even better than torture ever could about the regime of cruelty. In their own way these novels were brilliant. Tales of anonymity that were couched in authoritarian terms. They perfectly documented the neutrality of modern life.

My success made me a regular guest on late night talk shows. The hosts loved my witty comments. My appearances offered the hosts the opportunity to seem more urbane than they in fact were. It also let my own achievements seem of more import. We rewarded each other. This seemed like real progress. Each appearance expanded my audience and upped my sales. This led to further books of light intellectual stimulation to give my readership the feeling that it was tackling the puzzles of the ages. This relationship could have continued on practically indefinitely.

Something real disturbs the elaborate world that I have built around my fiction.

I am in a bar. A woman approaches me.

“I know your fascination with cruelty. You can hurt me if you know when to stop.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I’ve read your books.”

“I’m flattered that you like to read, but I have no idea what you are talking about.”

“I assumed that your books are autobiographical.”

“They are stories. Fiction.”

“But you enjoy cruelty.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“You’re a weird little man.”

“We all have our deviance. No one is completely normal.”

“Maybe you could demonstrate what you are about.”

“Those are stories that you’ve read. They only bear a slight resemblance to anything in my life.”

“That torture device that he adapts in *The Physician* to achieve the most intense orgasm. How did you make it?”

“It’s not real. It’s a metaphor for modern life.”

“I don’t understand. There are no more metaphors. Just feelings. Highs and lows. I want to feel that high!”

“I don’t know what the hell you mean.”

“I want you to tie me up and do those things that happen in the book.”

“Those are not pleasant things. They weren’t meant to appeal to the reader. They are supposed to disgust you totally”

“I don’t really see it that way. It seems sort of cool when you describe it. Don’t you get off in writing like that. The power that it gives you over other people. Over women.”

“I’m trying to teach a lesson how I write. It’s chronicles the worst in humankind so that we can avoid that side of ourselves.”

“But once you have a little taste, you want more.”

“Not at all.”

“But that’s who you are, Mr. Fisher.”

“If you want to write, you have to consider all sides. Become all the characters at once.”

“If I asked you to come in the washroom and watch me masturbate, would you do that Mr. Fisher?”

“I don’t know. I find you appealing. You’d be hard to refuse.”

“So you’d do that for me?”

“I thought that it was all hypothetical.”

“What if I wasn’t so appealing? Would you still do my bidding?”

“I don’t know. You are appealing.”

“Am I appealing because it makes it easier to explore your perversities?”

“What are you talking about?”

“I’m not offering you my fantasy. It’s your fantasy.”

“You’re voicing it.”

“You’re not going to put that shit in a book if it doesn’t turn you on. Would you come along with me, if I was diseased?”

“What are you talking about?”

“We are all corrupted by our own sin. We are decayed through and through.”

“That doesn’t seem pleasant.”

“You can spray perfume on a corpse and it will still rot before you.”

“You look pretty alive for a corpse. And I can smell your perfume at this distance.”

“Does it turn you on? Or do I have to scream in agony before you’re even affected by a thing.

“I’m really not like that.”

“Not yet. This is too easy for you. You don’t realize the possibilities. Buy me a drink. Better get one for yourself as well. We can see the other side of your character.”

“This is the other side. You’ve created a fiction for yourself.”

“Just buy me a drink.”

She is convinced that the alcohol will turn my Dr. Jekyll into a Mr. Hyde. Then she can have her fine run with the Mr. Hyde. We are at a table together.

“Mr. Fisher, everyone has their fantasies. You’re the sort of guy who likes to write them down. And you need to make them unique. So you don’t conceal anything. But in person, you try to come off as this reserved guy.”

“I guess I have all the weaknesses of an average guy.”

“But if you were an average guy, no one would want to read your stuff.”

“I’m not that unusual. That’s my point. What used to be the subject matter of the

Marquis de Sade has become normal fare in the suburban household. I'm just telling it like it is."

"You're creating a market for this kind of stuff. You're encouraging people to explore their fantasies."

"Most people lead regular lives. They struggle to make money. They try to hold together a family. It's a bitch just to afford health insurance. Or clothes for their kids. And there are the well to do who take advantage of that sort of thing. They act out the cruelty that they inflict day to day."

"A man with a conscience. So do you get even more moral when you're getting off?"

"You've got it all in reverse."

"I've got it like it is."

She gives me a wide eyed stare. She wants the liquor to take effect.

She continues, "You say that pain helps you prolong your erection."

"That's really no discovery on my part. Any concentration on some other sensation, a puzzle, a distraction. All those things will delay climax."

"Do you want to delay climax?"

"Or increase the level at which it occurs."

"Hence your attachment to cruelty. Your sexuality is a recipe for dominance."

"Again, it's all a literary device."

"You don't get erections."

"I'm not saying that."

"Mr. Fisher, you're so clear in print. But when you start to explain yourself, your words come out all twisted. Are you hiding something? Maybe there's a cruelty way worse than you document in your books.

"I'm a simple man. "

"You let your words do your talking for you. Your victims just follow in line. Then you're surprised when they ask for the things that you write about in your books."

"It's nothing like you read about."

"Are you telling me that you didn't kidnap someone?"

"That's a story."

"But there's the newspaper story that talks about the girl that you drugged. And then you tried to strangle her while you were having sex with her."

"Everything that we did was consensual. She's pretending now that she was underage. It's all bull shit. I never hurt her."

"She said that you put a plastic bag over her head."

"I wouldn't even put a plastic bag over my own head."

"You don't know what it's really like."

"I actually do."

She starts to finger herself as she licks the fingers of her other hand. I can see how she is getting nice and wet. She wants me to work my way into her.

"Mr. Fisher, are you big for me yet?"

"I'm always big for you."

"I want to see your pen, Mr. Fisher."

"I'm going to write you a good story."

“Aren’t you going to take your pants off?”

“I just want to watch you.”

“What is your fascination with watching?”

“Watching is touching if you look hard enough.”

“You are a pervert.”

“I just want to stay clean!”

“There’s something going on with you. Something psychological. You know it.”

“I have no idea.”

“There was something that you saw. You were forced to watch. And from that point on, you’ve tried to turn watching into doing. The more intensely that you watch, the more that you feel that you are participating. And the world only reinforces that feeling for you. It makes you feel that you’re doing something.”

“That sounds really well thought out on your part.”

“It’s more than well thought out. It’s what happened. It your face. What happened to make you that way. Why do you hurt so?”

“I’m glad that you’re sympathetic. Have you jacked yourself off yet?”

“I was faking it all for your benefit.”

“But even something fake like that is only the beginning of something more real.”

She is working hard to make her point. I only see it as the beginning of something more.

A scene with a blindfold.

“Betty, we’re going to blindfold you. Then we’re going to take off your clothes.”

She is kneeling on the bed with blindfold on. I have already taken off her dress.

“I know you. I know you too well.”

“What are you talking about?”

“You can cover my eyes, Mr. Fisher. But I know who you are.”

There is another man in the room. I am sure that there is another man in the room.

“I know the other man. His name is Kaz. He’s been directing the scenes from the beginning.”

“Betty, I want you to scream for me. Make it look realistic.”

“Are you getting this on camera?”

“Don’t worry about that. Just do what I need you to do.”

“I don’t feel right here.”

“Just try to make yourself feel comfortable.”

“I know this all seems very important for you. But I really feel that I have no part in this at all.”

“Just maintain your position until we’re ready for you.”

“Mr. Fisher, when I met you today, I didn’t think that I would be doing any of this.”

“This is exactly what you want to do. That is why you sought me out. You know about my reputation.”

“I only hope that I can tell my friends what happened today. I don’t know if they will believe me.”

“You have to promise not to tell anyone. That’s why I invited you. I thought that you could be sworn to secrecy.”

“You can’t make me promise that.”

“Let’s just say that you can’t repeat anything that you saw here. It’s sort of a rule.”

“I didn’t come here for rules or lessons.”

“But that’s how it has to be.”

Kaz is sitting in a chair. He adjusts the chair.

“Mr. Fisher, is there someone else in here with us?”

I don’t want to answer her question point blank.

“Quit worrying about things. Just relax.”

“Is there someone else here?”

She realizes that I am ducking her question. I go over to her and rub my hand along her back.

“That feels so good.”

She hardly has the will to say anything.

“Betty, I love your hair. Do you mind if I run my fingers through it.”

“Go ahead.” She coos. I run my hand through her luxuriant blonde hair.

“I chose you out because I loved your hair. How it falls on your shoulders.”

Her shoulders are bare.

“I picked you out, Mr Fisher.”

I feel hot. The air conditioner is working well. But I can already feel the pressure mount. There is little that I can do to change what is happening here. It is all transpiring too quickly.

Kaz himself is squirming in his chair. He has come here for action. He doesn’t want just talk. He is saying as much. He wants to give the order. He wants to watch us both acting out his commands. How can he communicate if I am the only one who know that he is here. He appears resentful.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY (dim lighting)

ARIEL

I want to leave you.

SCRIPT SUPERVISOR: You’ve changed your hair. You had it down in the last scene.

ACTOR: It’s too fucking hot in here.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Get a fan over here.

CREW ASSISTANT walks over to the fan and plugs it in. Then he turns it on.

SOUND: It was garbled. We need to do it over again.

ARIEL

I want to love you.

WALTER

What does love mean?

SCREEN WRITER: Being able to count on you.

ART DIRECTOR: The set looks terrible. I never ordered those curtains.

PRODUCER: It's too late to do anything about them now.

ARIEL

Being able to count on you.

ARIEL

We bought this house together.

ARIANE

I moved in with you.

PRODUCER: She takes a sip of a name brand cola.

DIRECTOR: That's not in the script.

PRODUCER: It better be. They need to see the label.

ACTOR: I want some coffee.

WALTER

What do you want?

She looks over at him.

ARIEL

I want some coffee.

He hands her a cola. The label is visible.

WALTER

I've got my eyes on you.

ARIEL

What are you looking at?

Vacuum bedrooms
do dishes
clean toilets
do kitchen floor
do rugs in living room

"Quit criticizing me. I can always find someone who will love me for what I am."

"But will you ever find anyone to love you for what you aren't."

"What does that mean?"

“It’s about loving you for what you are becoming.”

“I’m not going to change for you.”

I stand in front of the set. I am watching them feed her the lines. I will need to correct it

all.

“I’m the one that’s leaving you.”

“Walter, you’ve become the sorriest excuse for a husband.”

“You moved in with me.”

“It’s our house now.”

“Very convenient. You’ll still have to fight it out in court.”

You can cut out all that scene. Flash back to the wedding.