

17. SICK

What got you started? You wedge your van so that it is protected beneath a bunch of shade trees. You are perched at the top of the hill. From your vantage point, you can look down on the neighborhood pool. They can hardly see you. You see everything.

Do you have tools in there? What are you up to? Maybe you are just taking a break. You have your eyes closed.

Or you are watching the neighborhood kids. Or getting a birdseye view of a woman sunning herself in a bikini. You strain to get a closer look. If only you had a camera.

You are perched on the top of the hill. You are doing surveillance work. You have a camera. The telephoto lens is trained on a woman in a two-piece swim suit. She is rubbing tanning creme onto her body. Her skin is supple. She knows not to overdo it. She adjusts her top. You concentrate on her hands.

You snap a few quick shots. No one can hear the click. You are too far away. All this for further study.

The camera lens caresses her body. It gives you a closeness that you could not otherwise achieve. You can recall this moment when you look at these shots at home. You don't even have to deal with the inconvenience of a processing lab.

Occasionally, you get some really candid shots. She shows you more than emotion. She is offering you an intimacy that you could not get any other way. She looks up in your direction as if to give you permission for your intrusion. But she can have no idea that you are there. Even if she could see the van, the tinted window would prevent her from actually seeing you leering at her.

You snap another shot quickly before she pulls up the back of her suit. It is as if she is on the verge of catching you, and you have to get that last picture before you get busted. She gives you an obliging smile.

You follow her smooth legs down to her toes. She has painted her nails freshly before she came out to the pool. That extra care impresses you.

Just as your excitement starts to overwhelm you, she reaches for her phone. She doesn't want to let a moment like this slip away. Neither do you. But she seems a little distant. All her movement is directed to the world unseen. Even her smile seems like a distraction from the immediacy of the here and now. You feel excluded from her climactic revelation. She laughs just as you snap another picture.

Is this enough for you? Is your butterfly getting away? Maybe there was a hole in the net. Or she wasn't right for the collection.

She goes back to ignoring you. She lies back on her towel and closes her eyes. She is only worth a couple of snaps. Then you go back to eating your sandwich. It is a hot day. But you don't feel it in the shade.

You prepare your camera again. You cock your wrist ready to let off another couple of rounds. The sun has grown too intense for her. She decides to jump in the water. As she bounds up for her chair, your camera work traces each stage of the action. She looks even more robust as she pops up. She gracefully dives into the water. You hope that you captured that excitement.

There is something so effortless about her movement in the water. You perfectly

compose the shots to coincide with her ease. You can't let it stop there. You wait until she is finished. She lifts herself up onto the deck. Each image is a further invitation. The water has made her suit hug her body. You alternate close up with full body shots. You want to get it all.

She shakes the water from her hair. This is a priceless view of sheer action. It still is not enough.

She realizes that the water has pulled at her suit. It hugs her frame too tightly. She slides it along so that affords a minimum of modesty. Nevertheless, you have already caught her in a moment of revelation. You seemed to take the shots faster than ever. You didn't want to miss a thing. It only made you feel closer to her. As if her every move was only a reply to an inquiry on your part. You feel a part of her. And she has shared herself with you.

Is that sufficient? Can you pack up and go?

As she lies back on the chair, the swimsuit now blends with the skin. The tightness of her muscles and the tautness of the skin make her a joy to behold. The more that you concentrate on the image, the closer that you feel to her. She has engaged you in conversation, and now you are rambling on. She really digs the flattery.

You wish that you could speak with your hands. Maybe you can. Maybe you can show her the pictures.

You do a few close ups of the face. There seems to be a contented look. She has enjoyed the refreshing water. Now the sun burns down on her. But the cold water make the sun sting on her skin. She adores that sensation.

She settles back into mediation. You try to join her. There is no reason that your gaze can't encompass all the wonder that she now contemplates. You feel the union.

You almost feel aroused by experience. You feel a little dirty for intruding. But she smiles, and that seems to egg you on. If only she knew of your commitment, she would invite you to play along. Why else has she made such an effort to immerse herself in the experience.

You sit back a little fatigued. You want to grab a few more shots while you have a chance. There are other women on the deck. Each has her own set of appeals. You try to learn the charms of each. You don't want to play favorites. At the same time, you need to get to know each and every one of them. You are not here merely to ogle at their attributes. Your admiration is only the first step in getting to know them

Each one that you observe, you lead through the same ritual. They are all so willing to cooperate. What would it really be like if they could turn the table on you? You can imagine her turning her lens upon you as you stare at her body. Now she observes all your imperfections. It is almost as if your body is withering before her eyes. This is hardly sufficient punishment for you offense. On the other hand, it might stop you in your tracks. But in your own way, this might just be a tribute to your method.

Try as she might, her interest could hardly penetrated the opacity of your front window. From the girl's view, it seems like an abandoned van. It might as well be that. For the occupant is just that type of soul. Cast off by the world, he is turning the insult into a badge of honor. And he scours the pool deck for another lovely to fill his view screen. He will not cease taking liberties. The more delightful the creature, the more she seems to live off of attention. He has no shortage in that department. He helps her survive. He is her life line.

And so your are rewarded for your vocation. She lies on her back and undoes her top.

This is too good to be true. You are furious in your effort to include every second in your rendition. You are on a mission. Such an ideal cannot be left to fade away. You are here to offer her immortality.

You wonder will all this be sufficient. At home, you can project these pictures on your computer screen. You may even be able to use editing to provide a closer view. You want to discover her essence and be able to communicate that appreciation to her.

What got you started? I know that I have asked this question before. But my answer was superficial. I want to move a way from the pop psychology to get at the heart of the matter. Now, you seem like such a pillar of the community. Can anyone else detect the heart of a monster beating inside that chest of yours.

I know that a life in business can takes its toll. You have been even more ruthless than the next guy. What motivated such a cutthroat method?

You may want to convince others that you are motivated by a sense of fair play. You may have even modeled your practices of sportsmanlike conduct from tennis. There you have learned the art of wearing down an opponent with an overpowering serve. At you most extreme, you have learned how to drive your opponent into the ground. But you have always done it with the flair that you associate with the game.

It is obvious that the sport has offered you all that you need to effect your method. You know how good manners are associated with the respect of the rules. Everything that you do is according to accepted rules of conduct. And you follow etiquette to the degree that it allows you to soften up your opponents. All the while, you probe for weakness. And exposed thread is turned into a gaping hole. A tick becomes the foundation of your rival's tears. You let a physical inability become the source of a deep-rooted psychological fear.

You are certain to play within the bounds of respectability. You are extra careful not to over-step. Meanwhile, your volleys just become more and more powerful. Where you first explored, now you devastate. You bring all your power to bear on your returns. You are crushing.

You are so clever in your application. The audience can hardly detect the change on your part. They are more aware of the breakdown of the opponent. They first see a marked aggressiveness on the part of the other player. This eagerness causes the player to hit wide of the mark. Blame abounds. Your rival loses his temper. You stay well within the rules of decorum. No wonder it appears that you are always the gentleman. It is the other person who exhibits all the signs of hostility.

You have spent years learning to get into another person's head. And you are an expert. Perhaps, you can sense the self-destructiveness in yourself. You play with such craft that one might assume total devotion on your part. You seem gracious enough. But behind the manners, you are unrelenting. You are digging inside. You are boring like a drill. You just hollow out your opponent.

Even as you snatch away victory, you depend on the other's resentment to fuel your success. It is a method that is totally accustomed to success. Failure is never an option. That is the hallmark of your understanding.

Victory is not simply enough. You want to destroy the other player, your enemy. The battle has been won, and the enemy must be reminded how much of a mistake it was even to

challenge your supremacy. That is the key to your mastery. You will never countenance the viewpoint of the other person. You stand triumphant.

It is funny how the rules of nobility have shored up that attitude of yours. You take the result as foregone. And it is completely natural that things would end up in this fashion.

You pretend that your celebration is all-encompassing. All the losers might share in the spoils. But there is no such luck. You offer vinegar as a toast. In humiliation, there is no hope of recovery. Period.

You are careful not to be seen as rubbing it in. Your taunts are more subtle than that. All responsibility seems to revert back to the opponent for the demise.

I know there are those who wish revenge against you. They gather like a circle of rejected sorcerers trying to devise some kind of spell to take you down. How naive! Magic will have little use in the upcoming confrontation. You have already used the dark arts in your favor. Mumbling and imprecations are of no purpose here. You have shown that your competitors are hardly a match for your talents. Their frustration only makes them look silly against your formidable skills.

I have watched you prepare yourself over and over. You psych yourself up by imagining that it is yourself who you have engaged in combat. And you work to exploit your every weakness in the contest. That is where you learn how deep is your will. And you trade upon that strength to carry you through in the conflict.

This is business. This is reality. But you treat it all like a game. And you are not afraid to destroy the soul of another to gain you victory. There is one and one reality for you. The world of the contest.

The game offers you opportunity for further and further abasement of your fellow. No wonder you are so cruel. There are really no limits to your oppression. Some may respect that attitude. They too have been raised under a regime of extreme subjugation. But most of us value friendship over the devastation of the opponent. You allow for no middle ground. You expose the lie of the game. You show us how the game has been built to enhance the devastation of others. How the game hinges upon an over-inflated pride on the part of the victor. And each step in the conquest is the crushing of the loser.

In the most desperate moments, you hide behind the rules so that you can grind your weapon deeper into the flesh of the other. Now you are committed to the etiquette as it permits no restraint to your blood lust. The spirit of the game institutionalizes just such sentiment. That is why you are such a devoted player.

You have realized that submitting to the rules of society only makes you more proficient at unleashing your hatred. At times, you come off as a total statesman in hiding behind the law. The law has been made to sanction just this kind of application. But you are careful not to appear to be demanding. Such is your artistry.

You have substituted domination with style. You are perfect at exercising such panache. Wow!

It is a wonder that you could have taken all that time to submit to the social order. No doubt it was a constant delight to expose the actual intentions that underlie the hierarchy. It is you who stands for the egalitarian principles in game-playing. You already appreciate the fact that the table is slanted. So you use that bias to your advantage. When it appears that the angle

will be laid bare, you deflect criticism to the zeal of your opponents.

Do you want to play? There are rules.

And so it all begins again in accordance with your training. You appear to bear no trace of your former self. You have left the barbarism to the game itself. You are an arbiter of taste. You are an epitome of manners. You have grace!

Any knowing participant realizes that there is no real chance in the contest. The rival is equally deluded as you. Moreover, your opponents may suffer from the same kind of pride that has inspired you from the beginning. You know how to pick them. Even the most humble are revealed for their avarice. You don't have to worry about desperation. You have always been at the edge of desperation. That is the system.

I've been watching you from across the street. You have no idea that I'm here, but I see your every move. Of course, you don't see me. Really you live a life without suspicions. Your wife is waiting inside for you. There is no reason to doubt that she is there for you. It has been a long day. She has spent all day getting ready for you. Earlier she was sunning herself by the pool. She called you the moment that she set up her deck chair. You didn't have time to talk but you appreciated the fact that she called. Once you heard her voice, it reassured you. After all, everything is running smoothly at home.

You decide to leave the car in the driveway. Maybe you plan to wash and wax it later on. Or you're going to go out again. Either way, you decide not to open the garage. You hesitate as you get out of the car. You brought home some work from the office. It didn't all fit inside your briefcase. You want to make sure that you have it. You hate the fact that it wasn't already on your lap top.

I watch you adjust yourself as you slam the car door. You look around to see if anyone is watching. Of course, you still don't see me. But you wonder if they know. Can they detect that you are a fake? What are you hiding?

You realize that your new disguise may not be enough to cover up your past misdeeds. But what do you really have to fear. What is your worst misstep. Taking a little too long to take a peek at your neighbor's wife. Or slowing down to watch the high school girls leave school. It's not like you've really broken any laws. You haven't even crossed the bounds of common decency. So be it.

You are doing everything that you can not to let the traces of psychosis show through. Your efforts are so good as you blend in with your other neighbors. The ones who try to take liberties with the baby sitters. Just give her a year or two and she will have achieved the age of consent. What does it matter if an older tutor decides to coax along the passage of maturity.

Fortunately, you are not the one to interfere in the natural progress of adolescence. You hardly linger over your neighbor's delights. She quickly covers herself with a robe. Just in time to provide you with a dignified cover in case someone else was also watching.

You are so conscientious in restraining your appetites. At this point, they might as well not even exist. And for your benefit, it would hardly be fair to dwell on such foibles. Better that you turn your mind to constructive activities. Lively conversation with your spouse might be just the thing to take your mind off any possible temptations. Besides, what good is sin to a heart who is already gratified by his saintly pursuits. You do have such a devilish smirk on that face of yours.

Does your wife really satisfy you? Are there really no thoughts about the delectable treats supplied by your neighbor? Of course, we are talking about her cooking. And if you want to get into some good cooking, you really have to spend some serious time around the kitchen. It does get good and hot in there.

Maybe if you sneak on in for a little taste, you'll only be extra hungry when your wife offers her wares. And it might just be the neighborly thing to do. See if his wife needs a little help before her husband gets home from work. She's spent all that time slaving away in the kitchen. A little extra reward is certainly worth her efforts. After all, your poor wife isn't home from shopping so what are you going to do while you wait. Why not kill two birds with one stone? And then just sling off another one before bed. You know what it's like being a man.

Fantasy is all well and good, but it's nothing like the real thing. Although you've already sworn off such excesses. It's all about turning over a new leaf.

When the neighbor's wife passes you on the way, she'll still know what it's all about. What allows her to walk around in a bikini with her robe half-open.

It's not like she has anything that your wife doesn't have. Your wife is that kind of wholesome girl that was the stuff of your dreams. But the other woman is something else. It's as if she lives to have sex. She may not be able to pull off that act forever, but it's surely worth striking while the iron is hot.

Today, you smooth down your jacket as if the expert pressing was not enough. It was only yesterday that you picked it up. It does show how worn out you feel after a long day.

You've done the utmost to restrain yourself. Not a word that might betray your former nature. But tonight, you are a little short with your wife. I can't hear the yelling outside. You've hardly raised your voice. She stills shows the hurt as she mopes around the living room. You attempt an immediate apology. You remain repentant for the rest of the evening. But that doesn't stop you from take a look out the window to see if you're shapely neighbor is skulking about. You can hardly expect her to be wandering around in a bikini at this time of night.

The next step would be to peep into her window. But you hardly want to skirt the bounds of illegality. You do have a spotless reputation to preserve, at least for the time being.

It's not as if you are going to turn to the pornos in consolation. You still have a young wife waiting for you even if you do feel a little alienated today. It's nothing a little tenderness won't cure. But you wonder if gentility is really part of your nature.

For the moment, you prefer your isolation. You take your sacrifice as a form of punishment, but it actually inspires you. It only makes you savor your encounter with the neighbor with more vigor.

What are you supposed to do now? You are not going to stalk your neighbor. And you really would prefer to be next to your wife. But you are not going to give in that easily. Who knows what will come of a fantasy such as this?

Your wavering heart only contributes to your sense of fastidiousness. Even as your wife notices the transformation, she feels the attraction between the both of you increase. The next night you fumble through intercourse to confirm masculinity. You don't imagine sex with your attractive neighbor. You grudgingly accept the appeal of your wife. This provides just enough inspiration to end with a flourish.

The next day you feel that it is really time to move on. Your shapely neighbor

complements your dapper threads. You hold your head up deserving of such praise. She invites you in for a cup of coffee and a snack. Just something to tide you over until your wife arrives home from a profitable day of shopping. Your neighbor can hardly offer that same sense of style that is so characteristic of your loving wife. But she has a mastery of technique to make up for her visual shortcomings. All told, she may be the prize of the two. But that is how you have seen your partnership up unto this point so there is really no compromise in this moment. You can merely close your eyes and let your body do the talking.

Of course, you can hardly carry through with such a unfamiliar proposition. And even if curiosity has led you to a such an absurd point, you can hardly hope to satisfy every whim on your part. Nevertheless, you seen quite open to what might happen along the way.

You have been extra careful not to succumb to the charms of the neighbor's wife. But that hasn't stopped you from dreaming. If that is your worse offense, then you are not doing too bad. What has happened is only to be expected for a liberated male. You undo your tie to give you a little relief and close your front door behind you. I still have my eyes on you.

I have been watching you. And I don't like what you have been doing. This is the sort of thing that is disgusting even to have as a fantasy. You are going to have to stop this right away.

I bet you're laughing as you get this message, You figure that I can't do a thing to stop you. Really I can't. But if I could, you'd be receiving more than a message right now.

Don't think that this is going to end with a warning. I am not going to sit idly by, and let this continue. I bet you think that you can escape before the authorities arrive. Maybe. But I'm a lot closer than you think. I'm not going to attempt this on my own. This can't be tolerated.

You are such a sick mind that there is probably little any one can do to appeal to your good sense. You obviously get a thrill out of the pain of others. Contemplate the pain of your own that you will feel if this keeps up. I guess that is already part of your equation. This is what made you such a sick fuck in the first place. Go ahead! Do what you're good at.

Maybe there was a time in you life where you had the good sense to control yourself. That time is far gone. But imagine for the moment that it is not. What pushed you over the line and made it impossible to control yourself? Could you somehow bring that point back in your imagination? Roll back time until you could actually stop this kind of thing.

Obviously, you can't, that would be asking too much. And I know that you are too far gone. I could spend ours trying to chip away at that hard shell of your personality. I could pretend that I was getting closer to something that might pass for a human heart. That would be a ruse on your part. Just a trick so that you could lure others to the point of vulnerability. You have learned just enough to accommodate another to that point. You have resolved on the proper amount of flattery to stir the soul. But beyond that point is unknown ground.

How can you be that cold? How can you get close enough to someone where you can feel their fear and not let it influence your sympathy? Have you never felt such emotion yourself. No doubt, that is the key. You have been deeply affected by just such hurt on your own part. And you sought rescue. When none arrived, you became convinced that was the norm. It wasn't enough to feel despair. You had already crossed that threshold. You convinced yourself that the only way to get rid of that feeling of helplessness was to allow that thing to repeat itself. Only this time you would be the aggressor. Everything that had happened to you, you would dish out to some unsuspecting soul. This would only be the beginning. In this moment of darkness, you

would take pleasure in your domination. And it would be something to which you would commit into perpetuity.

You have hardened yourself in the process. You have come to accept such a thrill. Anything less and you feel frustrated. That is the source of your strength. And you expect everyone around you to be defenseless against such ferocity. No one believes another to be this depraved. Sure, we have all heard stories. And we know that types like you exist. But to actually contemplate your ilk is to drive most to revulsion.

Just to think about what you are doing is to allow that little bit of disgust to enter the system. And once you have taken hold in the mind, you attempt to work the same perverse method that has made you the way that you are. There are only two players in your game: aggressor and victim. Simply to cast off the demon that you have infected me with makes me an aggressor like you. That's exactly how your mind works. Consistently, you face that moment of decision. And the chips fall the same way every time. You turn the situation into your advantage.

I wish that you were not so severe. And I do everything that I can to try to stand in your way. I know that it is more than hopeless. It is disastrous trying to contemplate what to do.

I think that your illness hinges on the sheer impossibility of considering an alternative. Everything seems to take you back to the same point of depravity. You have made an art out of it. There is nothing unique about what you do. There is nothing that really makes today any different than any other day.

For the time being you have focused on the details of your conquest. You believe that this is enough to pull you through. The distinctive marks have convinced you of the basic appeals of the present instant. The supple give of the flesh. The wide-eyed wonder of the victim. The untamed character of the spirit. All these aspects of the other's person have turned you on. But nothing in the nature of this person has been enough to touch you in a caring way. Sure there have been hints. You need such glimmers to convince you that you are actually having some affect. However, even these positive reflections of the soul have only been inspiration for further cruelty on your part.

I may continue in the illusion that all of this might add to some realization on your part. The weight of all this evidence would be just enough to make you come to your senses. Some light might go on in that brain of yours.

I feel worse than a dupe. I am even more of a victim of your degeneracy. I am completely aware of how far you are willing to go to sustain that ill will. Still, I act as if I can affect that monstrosity. Who am I kidding? At least, your victim is wise to your nature. That the only way to end the torture is to confront you physically. I continue to act as if some appeal to your good will might soften your personality.

Perhaps, you need an audience to maintain your ruthlessness. And I am offering you just such witness. This only feeds that helplessness which is the bedrock of your soul. At the same time, it allows you to break off any contamination from your sympathetic nature. I permit you to forgo all appeals to that side of your self. There is really no fear of weakness on your part. You now have sufficient inspiration to lead you on your path.

Here, I am feeling all the emotions that might stand in your way. But they do little to slow you down. You just keep on in your disgust. You are the ghost in my psyche. And I

cannot exorcize your influence. I am the phantom which has haunted you, but now my very presence has made it easy for you to dispense with my interference. Go ahead!

You are on the verge of your ultimate satisfaction. You can share your perversity with another soul. I hardly want to pretend that I have crossed over to your sort. On the other hand, if my witnessing does nothing to end your reign, I only contribute to your supremacy. You now realize that you are not alone. And you can take delight that your absurd logic now spins around my brain.

I wish that each step along the way might bring us closer to a positive resolution. That taken together, all the testimony would be enough to cause you to stop. I know this is too much to ask. For the time being, I might pretend. Somewhere deep inside, there is still a flame that burns in the hope of ending your callousness. I know that this is not the case. But I act as if it just might be.

There are innocents in the world who are oblivious to your type. They believe in the intrinsic good of the human psyche. It would be a burden to even contemplate one such as you. They have steeled themselves to such influences. Faced with such overwhelming images that now plague me, they would shut down. So they do everything that they can to remain blind to your ilk. For these innocents, you might as well not exist. Perhaps these are the types to whom you most felt victim. And you seek such naifs just so that you might inflict your vengeance.

No wonder most devout reserve vengeance for the almighty. Such pleasures are too weighty to be left to mere mortals. Where do you stop? And along that blurred line, you have come to rest. You alternate between the all-knowing omnipotence and a forever ignorant weakness. To compensate for that weakness, you attempt to enhance your regime of cruelty. How pathetically vain!

I know that you attempt to evade my insults. Just as your cruelty has pervaded my soul, my arrows have pierced your soul. Let the pain linger. You are so familiar with such a method.

It may have been an accident that I discovered your performance. I know that you chose to do all this in public for a reason. You love the fact that I watch you, but I can do so little to get in your way. I am almost an accomplice to your escapade. For a while, I let this fact haunt me. But that is just your style. All along, you have tried to show off. However, I see behind your confidence. Let us go one on one.

Even as you get into the extremes of bloodlust, I have been adept at distracting you. I have reserved just a few seconds for myself. This has given you time to pause in your application.

I am getting to you. I don't have to touch you for you to realize just how close I am coming to affect you. My knowledge is more pressing than touch. Like your style, it originates on the inside. I have reminded you of a past of utter desperation. You have tried to increase your aggression. Now you realize that is not working. For once kill has started to lose its appeal. What can you do? Where is your hope?

Your victim might take some comfort from your hesitation. You try to increase the intensity but your heart is not in it. You have lost that connection which is so essential to what you have done.

Can I really stop you in your tracks? Maybe not. But just thinking about it has made you uncomfortable. I do not stop in letting my effect be known. This is why I am much more crafty

than you. I am sure that you have come across this sort of thing before. You meet a victim who suspects what is going on.

Of course, such realization is always too late. That is why I trade on your ignorance about yourself. You have used every event to help you relive those moments of desperation. It has convinced you that you have the strength

I know otherwise. I am the other side of your demon. And his time is running out. What are you going to do?

You feel too far along to let this victim go. There will be too much to explain. Do you have any choice?

What got you started? You have crossed this threshold before. You wanted to abandon your method. Just get on with things. But you have always feared detection. And such fear has only driven the ruthlessness. You dig inside to deliver a death blow. Only this time, you feel it work from the inside.

I am there, buddy boy. We are close. You want to deliver your enmity against me. My taunts reveal how little affect I am by your intent. Even as you feign extra cruelty, your victim's state only taunts you. This is how you really feel. This is how you have always felt. There has simply been no one around to remind you of your hopeless state.

Here is my hand. I am here. You cannot escape me.

Ha ha! You intone to yourself. I can't do a thing to stop you. But you are in a worse state. You can't do a thing to continue. And there is no one here to help you.

I suppose that I can recognize your face in another garb. You can disguise your anger. Let me look in your eyes. I can see that you have the face of a killer. You try to convince me that hate is hardly part of your repertoire. You are the essence of vitriol.

We are ready to settle our difference in the realm of well-behaved. I will follow your lead. This is a place where you never have to admit to defeat. You can always reach deep in yourself for further strength.

You have accustomed to hiding in the crowd. Even a trained eye has difficulty picking you out. I am at no such disadvantage. I just need to focus.

You are like all the mild-mannered men. They are only angels as long as they get what they want. They know how to look through a woman and reduce her to size. Of course, any woman of perception will easily see through such maneuvers. For those who are still in the dark, let this be a solemn warning. The wolves are out in force.

Once someone catches you at your act, you are quick to slink away. That is your greatest fear, that someone will call you out. You make every effort to devise your little schemes. But the worst part of it all is the degree to which you go to prevent your intentions from being discovered. Every time you go to extremes, you realize that you have to make every effort to cover your tracks.

Of course, there is a pattern to these little maneuvers of yours. And I have done my best to document the signs that you are again on the hunt. The ritualistic stalking. The relentless planning. The attempts to ingratiate yourself to your potential victims. I am sure that it will not be difficult to break down your intentions. You cannot avoid my observation. The pattern is evident. But there is another side to your activities. And it makes me a little disturbed that no one is else is clued in. You have tried to implicate me in your little schemes. I seem to be one step

ahead of you. You would suggest that my stealth is symptom of the same curiosity that motivated you in the beginning. You meant to protect the innocent. You just became fascinated by the seduction of power.

I have solved you once and for all. You think that you are immune. You aren't. You will never again be able to pursue your solitary projects without my interference. You will face your day in court. Watch out!

Run along and play. This is what little freedom that you have left. I am on to you. Don't pretend that I have become like you because I have contemplated your worst. We are different. You take pleasure in the pain of others. I cringe just thinking about your misdeeds. As I collect evidence, realize that your days are numbered. You can fools some of the people, but you will never be able to delude the truly aware.

I know that you use charm as your watchword. As times have become more difficult, you have sharpened your skills. Walking on tenterhooks, you seem to pull out the best of your tricks. The pressure is only going to get more intense. There will be a time when you cannot call on your wiles to extricate you from these situations. That is evident. Set your watch for that time in the future. Our showdown.

There is nothing similar about us. You are not part of my personality. You have not got in my head. I am numb to your probing. I have prepared myself for you more than you have for me. I am the one who is truly invisible. And your shadows become longer and longer as the light stares most intently at you.

You and I, we move towards our showdown. And I will take my time. You are on my watch, and I am coming for you!