Twister

A Short Story inspired by a Captioned Image

By Maryanne Peters

I put it down to good policework. My policework. Checking the scenes thoroughly. Interviewing the witnesses. Understanding the clues. Good policework. Dedication.

My father was a policeman. I respected him and I respected the work that he did, but he did not achieve great heights. He said that it was about the satisfaction of doing good. That is the measure of achievement that a policeman should be aware of, not their rank or salary bracket.

Still, I felt that you could do more good solving big crimes, such as the sex criminal who became known as “The Twister”.

What made the Twister different was that he raped men. We had no idea how many victims there were. Men don’t always report being raped. We were guessing that the five reported attacks might be less than 20% of actual attacks. So finding him was made more difficult. We need to track patterns. We need the times and locations of all offending.

But it was clear that we were facing the same perpetrator. The same choice of target and the same *modus operandi*. The victims had all been drinking on the nights in question and may have been incapacitated to some degree. But everyone had been seen by multiple witnesses either night or earlier, abusing women or attempting to persuade them to have sexual relations. In a word, each was a potential rapist. The Twister was some kind of perverted vigilante.

He would wait until the victim was on the street alone and well clear of any surveillance camera. It appeared that the locations for the attacks had been selected with this in mind, indicating a high level of advance planning. The Twister would seize the victim using a ligature around the neck, twisting to constrict and subdue the victim. There was some talk of a knife being held to the ribs, although no victim actually saw a blade. But the threat of strangulation or some other means of killing was enough to force the victim to expose his anus and receive solid pounding up the back passage. Then to finish the attacker would twist the victims’ testicles, leaving them in agony while he fled. So twisting the ligature and twisting the nut - “The Twister”.

It was not clear if the penis was used or some kind of tool. Whether man or woman the instrument of assault was assumed to be a sex toy or dildo, most likely strapped onto the attacker to allow free hands for restraint. No organic residue was left behind, not any powder to indicate the use of a fresh condom. The only traces were of petroleum jelly – a cheap lubricant that was generic and widely available.

The victims never saw the assailant’s face. The attacker always wore gloves – common blue latex gloves. Clothing was clearly synthetic material – the kind that does not leave fibers unless torn.

There was a theory that it might be a woman. One victim saw skin on the upper wrist and noted that it was hairless. He also said that he saw a glimpse of long blond hair in a reflection in a nearby reflective surface. Another victim heard a few words spoken by the rapist and said that “it might be a woman with a deep voice”. It was not much to go on.

The Captain in charge of the case was interested in theory, referring the offender as “he or she” but It seemed unlikely to me. There was strength on display. The person was not large but strong enough to subdue more than five men, each of who had proved themselves capable of subduing their own victims.

Part of being a good investigator is to try to put yourself into the mind of the attacker. What is he (my assumption) trying to achieve? Justice, it would seem. Could it be a wronged woman? It seemed to me more likely that it was a man who was perhaps close to a victim of rape.

I decided that I would look at rapes that had occurred before this offending stopped, perhaps where the rapist escaped conviction. My theory was that if the attacks were motivated by the desire for justice, that pre-supposed an injustice had occurred.

My Captain did not follow my reasoning. He called it “a long shot”, but he had enough respect for my abilities to give me licence to probe into the idea, on my own. That suited me. I work well on my own. As it happened, once I had my shortlist I could work with the whole team during the day and follow my own lead in the evenings after work.

I had isolated 17 potential leads, all men who were the fathers, husbands or partners of rape victims. I had no evidence on any of them. So, what do you do? I could rely on no surveillance resources on “a long shot” so I would have to do it myself. Attacks took place between 7 and 9 pm on any night, as often as every three weeks, by our guess. So that meant one of the 17 being staked out by me for not less than two hours every night for two weeks each. Every night I planned to spend two hours outside somebody’s place, for almost 8 month’s work in total.

But to me it was more than a hunch. I was eliminating possibilities. That is what police work is all about. It is not about deduction followed by confronting the accused and waiting for him to collapse into a confession. That never happens. It is hard work. Drudgery. Stake outs. Sitting in your car and waiting.

I suppose that it was just luck that Marshall Bishop (not his real name, of course), was my second suspect. He was in all respects an ordinary man, married for some years but no children. Tragically his wife was in a virtual vegetative state as a result of a sexual assault some years before, and Marshall Bishop was caring for her in their own home as a full time carer, while doing some free-lance copy writing. He had no criminal record. Beyond that, I knew little about him, but had read the file on his wife’s rape.

The attacker was well known to the police – a guy called Homer Fassick. A violent criminal with prior rapes, but many more other attacks. The evidence was clear, but this guy had turned state’s evidence for another crime in another city, which occurred at the same time. Acceptance of his evidence in that case gave him a cast-iron alibi for the rape. It was clear to me that the evidence in the other case was fabricated, but a major crime figure and three associates were sent to jail on the testimony of this guy, who was now God-knows-where in witness protection. The alibi was bullshit, but it had to be accepted. Where is the justice in that?

I arrived late, and I had no idea that Bishop had already left the house. I took my place outside with my takeaway dinner and a soda. Then came through on the radio about another assault by “The Twister” across town. I was just about ready to strike Bishop off the list and drive to my third suspect’s place.

I finished my soda and packed away my empty takeout packaging, then I saw a lady enter his home. I could see that she had long curled blonde hair. She was wearing a fashionable overcoat belted tightly around her slim waist, but she had on dark tights and heeled shoes. It seemed to me that I was wrong, because she moved as a woman in those shoes. She used a key in the door and went inside.

My first thought was to calculate that there was clearly time to drive a car from the scene of the last attack to this point. But if this was the perpetrator then who was she. Was there somebody else living in this house who was close enough to the Mrs. Bishop to be the vigilante?

No evidence. Hunches are great, but where was the evidence. Was there evidence of the crime on the offender? I there was I would need to act quickly. I could knock on the door. Perhaps refer to the old “neighbors report a disturbance” line. I decided to approach the house and take a look through windows.

We always say that it is a low threshold of probable cause to take a look, but a much higher one to gain access. The house had windows at ground level. I could risk it.

But I found myself at the back door and discovered that it was open. It seemed like an open invitation to enter. I could always say that an open door was evidence of a possible intruder.

There was a woman standing at the kitchen sink washing her hands. There was a discarded pair of blue surgical gloves next to her. The coat was draped over a chair. I could see that the tights were part of a full outfit – a leotard or something like it, sheer from neck to toe. The legs were long and shapely, the butt tight, the hips slim. The blond curls shook and shimmered in the dimmed light as she went about her chores. I backed away a little before knocking on the door jamb.

The shock made her jump. She spun around, her red-painted lips a perfect O around her open mouth. The wig was fake but the face, made up to perfection, was quite beautiful.

“Excuse me Ma’am,” I said, with my well-practiced ignorant and unsuspecting face (a vital tool when interviewing suspects). I am a police officer, just checking homes are secure because of a spate of recent offending around her, and I notice that your door was …”.

I then realized that I was unable to say anymore than that. She looked at me. The first thing that was clear to me was that this was that despite the knockout view from behind, this was not a woman. But yet nor was this a man either. There was something in that moment of shock and surprise that left her (and that is the right word) vulnerable, and in need of my protection.

Yes, there was the evidence of a crime, but I had already contemplated my reaction should I finally rum this offender to ground: If I found the violent offender was a dominant gay man seeking cover by attacking only abusers because a family member had suffer, he would suffer the full force of the law; if it was a man who was taking revenge for those family members, he might be worthy of some understanding; but this was unexpected. It was a woman, almost.

Nor did that disgust me. The truth is that I had occasional resort to prostitutes – cops often do, and more than once the girl had a dick. It was no problem for me just so long as she was a good-looking woman who knew how to please a man. In many ways those new girls try harder to do that, and maybe they even know by virtue of being on the other end. Who knows?

But there was no thought of sex at that point. Or I saw was somebody who was in the throes of guilt and was totally disarmed. She was the victim now. I was the brute who stood to attack her.

“I know why you are here,” she said. “I just want to explain, if you’ll let me.”

Her voice was perfect. A husky and wonderfully feminine voice, trembling in tone with an understanding of her predicament. She knew that I was not checking back doors. I was here looking for the Twister, and the rapist had been found.

“Do I need to draw my weapon?” I asked her. All procedural rules said that it should be trained on her right now. She should move away for the kitchen bench, get down on the floor.

“There is not gun in the house,” she said. I believed her.

“Show me what you want me to see,” I said. Not even calling for back-up. It was in total contravention of proper procedure. I was entranced.

She led me down the hall. The tight butt and those long legs further captivated me, as did the noise of her heels on the tile floor. She went through a door and inside was a bed with a woman lying there hooked up to monitors and with an intravenous drip in her arm. Her eyes were closed and smeared with gel. She seemed to be barely breathing.

“This is what is left of my wife,” she said. There was a tear rolling down her cheek.

How sad was that moment? I just felt sympathy. Even a rock would, finding itself in that room. She sobbed and I held her. She felt like a woman. She smelled like a woman.

“I have done terrible things,” she sobbed. “I know that I need to be punished, but I would never survive prison, and who would care for her. She is a prison where the only escape is death. Where is the right in that? If I were not here they would pull the plug. I couldn’t bear for that to happen.”

What could I say? How much crime in the world goes unpunished? Police officers like me see the grief of victims all the time, but somehow this grief cut deep.

“Would you punish me?” We were now face to face. Her big moist eyes were pleading me. For what?

She started to take off her clothing. Just that one piece zipped in front. The perfect outfit for crime. The long polymer strands would not shed, and if they did, they would prove generic and untraceable. I would have admired her ingenuity, had I not been bowled over by her body. I was shaved clean, and to my surprise it was soft, and on her chest were unmistakable breasts, belonging on a teenage girl. Yet in contrast, there were male genitals too, shaved and small and housed in a steel device – a cock cage.

Seeing me stare she explained: “I cannot let myself function as a man. Only men can rape. I used a tool on them. A big one, with a narrow tip to ensure that I get it in easily. I have punished myself with it before. Even though they were all monsters, I needed to feel what they felt. I will get it for you. It’s in my coat.”

“I am not going to punish you,” I said. “It seems to me that your guilt is punishment enough. But it seems to me that what you really need is somebody to hold you.”

She threw her naked body at me, so that I could hold her again, and run my hands across that smooth and soft flesh. It seemed unreal that so fragile and feminine a creature could have found the strength to lash out. Perhaps the desire for justice was so strong in her.

That same desire asked me to penalize her, as she attempted to tie herself to the bed. But for me it was not punishment, it was sex. Maybe even more than that, because my feelings were so strong it defied understanding. Not just because there was a small flaccid penis rattling around inside that cage as I plunged into her, but because it really did not matter to me.

I did not leave that night. I stayed with her. I held her through that night, and in the morning, we kissed and we both understood. She could never face any time in prison. She was doing what she had to do. She felt the guilt. I saw in on her face the first time I gazed upon it. A strong sense of justice drives me too. She may have begged me: “Take me in, the freak I am,” but I will never do that.

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| I just told her that it had to end. In return I promised that I would find Homer Fassick and we would punish him together. That promise is what has bound us ever since.  Under her wig (which she took off before attacking the rapists) her head had been shaved to avoid hair fibers, just as the makeup on her face would avoid skin cells dropping. But her hair has grown out now, as have her breasts.  The truth is that I was right. I saw it when she stood at the kitchen sink that night. She was a woman all along. It was not until she found herself at home, caring for an unconscious wife on a well-placed insurance policy, that she had the freedom to become herself and to venture into the wardrobe that her wife would never use again.  Now we can pursue justice together, as a loving couple.  So, as I wait for Marcia to recover from her surgery next to the bed still occupied by her prone wife, being so grateful that she has agreed to be my wife.  The End  © Maryanne Peters 2020 |  |