

Torment

He did the crime and he was found out, but his victims won't leave him alone,
continuing to torment him from beyond the grave.

This isn't in the official police report. I haven't talked to Sheila about this. She's my appointed therapist. Don't get me wrong. I started to tell her. She might have even heard the whole story. I can't remember now. Sheila said that it was just my subconscious trying to make sense of the trauma and that I needed to confront it so I could move on. I realized that wasn't getting me anywhere so I played the game just to get out of therapy.

My name's Halsey. Detective Bert Halsey. My partner was Detective Jim Montaigne. We'd been working homicide together for close to six years. We were good at our jobs, closing more cases than anyone else in the department. After a lot of legwork we finally had enough evidence to bring in Mark West for the murder of his wife, Melanie Grier and her mother, Joan Grier, matriarch of the Grier real estate empire.

We'd interviewed West a couple of times already. At first he was distraught, as you'd expect after your wife and mother-in-law were murdered and dumped in the ocean. We went back after we discovered the life insurance and that he was sole heir to the Grier fortune. He was cool, but distracted, always looking away and not giving any solid explanations for his whereabouts and actions leading up to their death. He was a mess by the time we made the arrest and brought him in for the formal interview. He'd let himself go and was even more distracted than before. Jim and I put this down to his guilty conscience.

After he was processed, we put him in interview room #3. Jim watched while I took the first round. I went through the formalities. He declined a lawyer, although I'm sure his was on the way anyway. He was distracted just like the last time. I'd ask questions and he'd respond, but not to me. It was like I wasn't even in the room. He kept shouting "No one will ever find me guilty of anything". He became more and more distracted, finally just shouting out "Stop antagonizing me. Stop. Stop. Stop" over and over. I walked out.

Jim and I watched and listened to him ranting. After a couple of minutes he seemed to calm down. He slouched into his chair and looked, for all intents and purposes, like he was sulking. His rants devolved into mutterings that we couldn't understand. Mostly it looked like he was addressing his comments, however incoherent, to the chair.

Jim decided to give it a try. When he walked in, West panicked. I thought he was going to jump out of his chair but he just sat like he was strapped in. He never looked at Jim. He was tracking something else that only he could see. No longer murmuring, his ranting picked up. He was shouting "NO. NO. You can't do that to me. Stop torturing me." Jim gave up after a couple of minutes and came out.

We agreed that we needed to start the paperwork to get West committed for psychiatric assessment. We had enough evidence to at least get him before a judge for a determination so Jim went off to see when we could get a hearing. I waited and watched. West ranted some more but lapsed back into murmuring to the empty chair.

When Jim came back West started screaming "I won't go!", "You can't make me go!", "Leave me alone", "Stop tormenting me!" We looked at each other, our hair standing on end. We thought he was talking about the hearing and assessment. Suddenly, he was on his feet, his chair skidding

backward into the wall. Then he was swaying and jerking around, his arms in the air, screaming. He threw himself against the glass. In a flash he was on the table. It looked like he was hugging someone and surfing at the same time.

We ditched our coffees and barged through the door. That was the last normal thing I remember. We were suddenly in a roiling ocean. The waves were crashing over our heads. The wind howled and the salt water stung my eyes. I was panicking as I tried to keep my head above water. I kept hearing a woman's voice in the distance calling out "Over here. Over here. Save yourself." Then West, frantic, screaming "Help me". When the wave crested I could see him in the distance clinging to a navigation buoy. Jim was swimming towards the buoy.

I couldn't keep up. I was being swept further away. I saw Jim climb onto the buoy and grab onto West. They were clinging to the mast. I knew I wasn't going to make it. I was going down. Before I went under, I caught another glimpse of the buoy. Behind Jim and West were Grier mother and daughter. Joan Grier was calling out to me. She wasn't shouting, but I heard her clear as a bell. "We'll come back for you later, dear". Then everything went black.

I have no recollection of what happened after that, but the report says that I was unconscious and laying in the doorway. Jim and West were dead, together on the table with their arms around each other. Also noted in the official report, but without follow-up or analysis, was that our clothes were slightly damp and the air smelled like salt. I went to both funerals.

That's the story. I understand why they took West. I don't understand why they took Jim. Maybe that was an accident. I don't know why they want me either, unless it was to keep the secret. No one would believe me anyway. Joan is true to her word. They're coming back for me. I don't think there's anything I can do about it, and no amount of therapy is going to change that. I'm just going to stay out of the ocean and away from interview room #3.