

November 20th, 2020

Those damn cameras

By Felicia Berger

Yesterday, I was feeling sick all day. I woke up every other hour last night and my head still hurts. I feel like I'm standing next to myself and my whole body aches. My life seems to be passing by without me being in control and every day goes by extremely slowly, just as if someone presses rewind every couple of hours.

It has in general not been a very good day, well, let's say week for me but it's Monday morning and that means I gotta go back to work. I'm the boss of the local grocery store in the small town, close to Chicago, I live in. I put on a suit and tie and drove myself to work even though I really did not wanna go there. It had been a very busy day so I drove by chick fil-a on my way home to get my favourite dinner and planned on watching the TV show I had started yesterday.

When I got home, I reheated the chicken, cooked some potatoes and changed into sweats and a hoodie and switched on the TV. Unfortunately, Netflix wouldn't open so I started zipping through the channels until I found a more or less interesting movie about two guys on a road trip from San Francisco to New York.

I woke up from hearing my wife shutting the front door, after coming home from work. I was happy to see her after a long busy day but she didn't seem to be sharing that feeling... She stormed into the living room and told me to turn off the TV immediately. (The guys had arrived in New York btw)

It took me a couple of minutes to find the remote, it had fallen in between the cushions of the sofa I was laying on. She didn't seem to even think about helping me look for it, instead she looked angrier and angrier every minute because my attention wasn't on her.

She kept tapping her foot on the ground, going through her hair and waving with the envelope in her hand. I was really confused and didn't know why she was acting up, I thought it was just a speeding ticket or something like that.

"What's the matter with you? I was happy to see you until you stormed into the room yelling at me!" I said to her.

"What's the matter? You ask me what the matter is?" she screamed back "I'll tell you what the matter is when you get back from court, apologize to the woman you raped and depose your punishment!" Her voice was shivering while she said "rape".

I froze, my whole body started shaking and I couldn't move a single limb on my body. There it was again, the feeling of being apart from myself. I could feel the tears forming in my eyes and seconds later, they were rushing down my cheeks.

"Rape?" I whispered, "You think I raped someone?"

"Think is not the right word, I KNOW it and so does the police and court", she said, surprisingly calm. I felt like I was in a trance, my ears were roaring, my throat hurt and I felt like I was about to lose my consciousness when a piece of paper hit my head. It was the letter she held in her hands.

I tried to read it but my hands were shaking so heavily I couldn't hold it properly and there were still tears filling my eyes, some of them dropped down on the paper.

The only words I could somehow read were "rape accusation", "Ms. Something" and "November 17th, 2019, court of justice in Aurora."

I didn't know what to say so when she asked me if it was true I only said "Of course it's not, I can't believe you'd think that of me", even though it probably sounded nothing like that, considering the fact I was still crying like a baby.

I woke up with a really bad headache on November 17th, the day on which I was supposed to go to court. The last days had been horrible, I was barely able to look my wife in the eyes, which probably didn't make her believe me but the letter said a woman from work accused me of raping her in the hallway at work. Who the hell would rape someone in a hallway?!

By now, I wasn't shocked anymore but mad, I was so mad I punched our bedroom walls until my knuckles started bleeding.

I got out of bed, put on my suit, brushed my teeth, combed back my hair and grabbed a slice of toast on my way to the car and slammed the door to show my wife I was still mad at the fact, that she still believed I would cheat on her by raping a woman.

I could see her standing at the kitchen window when I drove past our house. I got to the court building approximately 30 minutes later because of heavy traffic on the highway.

"Good morning Mr. Smith" said the lady at the front desk and told me where to go, I was confused why she knew who I was and why I was here but it turned out I was the only one who had gotten invited for the day.

When I got into the actual court room I saw a couple lawyers, the judge and a big screen in front of the room. "Good morning", I said and sat down at my seat.

"Hello Mr. Smith, Ms. Brown should be here any minute", the judge said to me.

Lots of time passed by until she actually came into the room and had a seat in the opposite corner of the room. She seemed a bit too nervous to be getting loads of money from me as repayment for her damages soon and as soon as she saw the screen her hands started shaking and her eyes froze. She was biting her upper lip as if she had something to hide. They didn't really say anything very exciting but when they mentioned the words "cameras" and "hallway at your work" I pricked up my ears. It was a long tape and somehow they couldn't manage to fast-forward it, so we watched an hour long tape of a couple of people going down the hallway, bringing mugs and dirty dishes into the small kitchen.

Suddenly I saw myself walking down to my office when Ms. Brown came from the opposite direction, grabbed my arm and tried to push me into one of the empty rooms. I got dizzy remembering how awful those minutes had been.

The next thing I remember is waking up in my bed and my wife sitting next to me crying with a tissue in her hand. She kept saying that she was sorry.

"It's okay, what happened? I don't remember anything", I said.

"The judge called and said Ms. Brown, or whatever her name is, confessed that she twisted everything, and that you're free and nobody is pressing any charges against you", she answered.

"Why didn't you tell me or anyone what really happened, darling?"

„Because I was ashamed of being raped by the "weaker sex", I said and fell back asleep.