

Storm Surge

First it was a ripple.

Then it was a wave.

When, I wondered, would it become a tsunami?

I had had my suspicions, of course. I'd heard the sniggering in the canteen, seen cryptic messages that only now I understand the full significance of. I didn't know whether or not to believe what I was hearing, but as the evidence mounted, the more I realised that I just had to do something. *Five hundred words d'you say? Okay, so I'll try and be brief.*

I'd met him first about fifteen years before. I was nineteen or twenty, really quite naïve. We were at the same gala, or some other function, one of the many such events he was invited to. I was impressed. (*I know...*) He was tall, broad-shouldered, and had a charisma that I had heard about, but had made my mind up not to be taken in by. He moved easily between the people, warmly acknowledging their greetings, shaking hands, slapping shoulders, and hugging them in close. A coterie of admirers hung around, wanting to be seen near him, always aware of the photo opportunity.

Later that evening, I had found myself alone with him – well, as alone as you can be in a penthouse along with a hundred or so dignitaries and their hangers on. And, of course, any remaining journalists: those who hadn't succumbed to the lure of free drinks. *I know. You get the picture.*

"Can I get you a drink?" He snapped his fingers, and a tray appeared. "And what do people call you?"

"Jane," I replied weakly.

He winked. "Hi, Jane. A pleasure to meet you."

We made small talk and eventually he suggested that we exchange numbers.

"Call me on this. It's a private one. Just between you and me." He winked again, then moved away.

Eventually, I did call that number. We met. I don't know how many times. We were discreet – and although I knew it was wrong, he made me feel special. Until, that is, he decided I wasn't.

Fourteen years later, as the flow of tittle-tattle and gossip threatened to turn from a trickle to a mighty surge, I realised that the moment for revenge had finally arrived. And that any feelings I may have had when I was a rookie needed to be put aside. I decided that I had to confront him, and I had to do it at the earliest possible opportunity. Time was of the essence - there could be no holding back.

He was sitting directly in front of me – one pudgy hand resting on the other. He looked me straight in the eye, the familiar smugness suffusing his face, daring me to ask whatever questions I wanted to. I took a deep breath and met his stare, the pounding of my heart threatening to drown out his response. I consulted my journalist's notepad... this could change everything.

"Good morning, Mr Trump. Is it true that you paid Stormy Daniels to keep quiet?"