

Payment Due

“Keep your hands where I can see them, cause the second I can’t, I *will* shoot you”. It had been fairly easy to get into Steve and Donna’s house. I just followed them in. Of course, I had to watch them a while to figure out their routine. Find out when they always came home together during banking hours. I had to rent a couple of different cars with tinted windows so I wouldn’t be seen in the same car several days in a row, casing their house in this nice upper-middle-class suburb of Hesperia, California. So, I put in some hours in back seats with a pair of binoculars, some snacks, and a pee jug. But it paid off. Saturday mornings, just like clockwork, they went grocery shopping right after breakfast and were back by 10am. The local banks closed at noon. I implemented my plan the following Saturday morning. There was an immediate hiccup.

The grandson was the wild card. I had never seen him there before, but through my extensive internet research, I knew who he was. When I saw him riding in the backseat I had about two seconds to decide. “Fuck it” I thought. “In for a penny, in for a pound”. As they pulled into the attached garage, I walked quickly up their driveway in my dark suit, short haired wig, Caucasian colored latex gloves, and sunglasses, like some hipster Mormon, and slipped in right as

the garage door was closing. They were fumbling with groceries as Steve keyed the entry door to the kitchen. They didn't even notice me until Steve turned around to close the door behind him and there I was, pointing a large bore revolver at his stomach.

He didn't recognize me at first because it had been over thirty years and I was wearing a fine disguise. But he saw the gun, heard my 'hands where I can see them', and got a sickly look on his face. "Don't hurt us. You can take whatever you want". "That's a great attitude Steve. Now set the groceries on the floor and everyone sit at the far end of the kitchen table, slide your cellphones to me, and then put your hands flat on the table". They did. "Now Donna, take these zip ties and bind Steve's hands behind his back". She did. "Now sit back down". It was tricky holding the gun and putting the zip ties on her but I made it work. I was only expecting the two of them so I had to tie the boy's hands with a cord I yanked out of the toaster. He was a cute kid named Paco (from my internet research), around ten years old and seemed surprisingly calm. I guess all the violent TV and video games does have an upside. It inures them to potentially violent situations.

After they were all bound, I sat at the head of the table and took off my shades and wig. The initial confusion they had

experienced at my knowing their names turned into recognition. “Charlie? Is it really you?” exclaimed Donna like she was glad to see a long-lost friend. “Untie us right now and get the fuck out my house”. Steve said, suddenly becoming the hard guy. I jumped up cocked my .44 revolver (it didn’t really need to be cocked since it was single action but I was going for the dramatic gesture), and put the muzzle on Steve’s left knee. “One more word of that tone Steve and I will blow off your knee cap”. Steve choked back a growl and shifted his angry glare to a spot on the table in front of him.

I sat back down, warned them not to interrupt, and calmly gave the prepared speech. “Thirty some years ago when you ripped me off for my weed that I fronted you worth nine thousand bucks and change, it really fucked up my life. I was trying to get my college degree and take care of my three kids on my own. I didn’t really have time in my life to get a job, but without that money, I had to. I worked graveyard shift at a gas station, while my new young girlfriend stayed home with the kids, even though she was immature and not very good with them. I did my homework during the slow times at the station. My relationship went to shit, I was sleep deprived and we lived like fucking peasants. I got through it by fantasizing about killing you both. How I would do it. The looks on your faces right before you died. What I would say before I blew your shit away. But after a couple of years, I

graduated with highest honors and got a decent job. I was finally able to support my family above the poverty line. I still wanted to kill you but it was no longer an obsession. A few years ago, I retired and moved out here to California. Things have been going pretty well, but due to the high cost of living in SoCal, I am now low on money. Rather than go back to living like a peasant, I decided to collect the money you owe me. So, you are going to pay me ten thousand in cash in the next hour or I am going to kill you both.”

Tears had started to silently roll down Donna’s cheeks. She was still a good-looking woman at sixty with her Hispanic dark eyes and skin. The white that was taking over her long, straight, formerly black hair, looked just fine. Steve hadn’t aged as well. His pocked marked face was now blotchy as well, and he had ugly looking bags under his eyes. He still looked pissed but a component of fear had entered his face. “Can I talk now?” he asked. I nodded in the affirmative. “We don’t have ten thousand in cash and even if we did, we wouldn’t give it to you. Now get the fuck out.” I calmly stood up, set the .44 on the table and pulled my back up gun out of my ankle holster. It was a seven shot, .22 revolver that fired long rifle, magnum, copper jacketed rounds. I placed the muzzle on Steve’s left knee where I knew it would not hit an artery (more internet research), and fired. Steve bucked, howled, and pitched over backwards writhing on the floor.

Donna started to stand but I put the gun on her and she sat back down. The boy was no longer calm. He was shit scared and wailing like a banshee. I pointed the gun at Donna's head and told him that he could cry but if he continued to scream, I was going to shoot her in the face. He slowly got the noise under control but tears and snot were pouring down his face.

I switched guns again and put the .44 hard against the side of Steve's head and asked him if he was going to cooperate with me. He said he would. I pulled another power cord off a blender on the counter and made a tourniquet for his leg above the knee. I then helped him get back up in the chair.

"Now we have a hard time line. If that tourniquet is on there much longer than an hour, you will lose the leg Steve. So, Donna, how are you going to put ten K in cash in my hand in the next hour?" She replied thru her tears. "We have about two thousand in the bank and I could get another four off my credit card. Would that be enough?" "No Donna it would not. I have waited over thirty years and gone thru tons of bullshit because you ripped me off for those four pounds of Wisconsin green bud that I grew, then entrusted with you. You said you fronted it to a guy named Slick and never saw him again. So, you not only insulted my intelligence, you also caused my kids and I to live in poverty. You are lucky I am not hitting you up for twenty thousand." I turned to the boy. "That's right, your

**grandma was a pot dealer and a rip off artist back in the day.”
He closed his eyes and cried some more.**

The tourniquet had pretty much stopped the bleeding on Steve’s knee but he was looking a little shocky. I ordered them all out to the garage and made Steve and the boy get in the way-back of their big SUV, and lay down spoon style. I covered them with a blanket and told them they had to be quiet if they wanted to survive. Then Donna and I went back inside. I stood in the doorway so I could watch the vehicle and Donna. I cut the zip tie off her hands so she could clean the blood off of the floor and tidy up the kitchen. I didn’t want anyone to look in the window, see the mess, and call the cops. When she was done, I got in the front passenger seat and ordered her to get behind the wheel. Before she opened the garage door I said “Have you thought about how you are going to get the rest of my ten thousand?” “Yes” she replied.

“A good friend of ours from church keeps five thousand in cash in a safe in his house. He calls it his earthquake money. I’ll tell him that our daughter Mandy got another DUI and needs to be bailed out of jail. He knows that she has been struggling with a drinking problem for years and already has one DUI. We pray for her together in our prayer circle.”

“You’ve found Jesus Donna. That’s nice. How does ripping off your close friend who is single parenting three kids fit into that?”

“Uh, well we didn’t think that giving money to a a, a, drug dealer was something that Jesus would want.”

“What do you think Jesus wants you to do now Donna?”

“Give you your ten thousand”.

“Good. You and Jesus, and I are all on the same page then. Let’s go to the bank and then on to your friend’s house.”

Everything went smooth at the bank. The teller at the drive-thru knew her by sight and handed over the six grand after she scanned the card and Donna signed a few papers. Things didn’t go as well with her Jesus buddy. We parked in the driveway of an upscale McMansion. I reminded the guys in the back that they would be dead within a minute if they moved or made any noise, although I would never have put a bullet in the grandson.

I asked Donna who would be in the house. She said that the guy's name was John and that his wife might also be home but she thought that she was still in Palm Springs visiting her sister. I asked her how she would explain my presence. She said that she would say that I was Mandy's father-in-law. The .44 was back in the belt holster on my butt and I had the .22 in my right front pants pocket for easy access. Both guns had been purchased at Wisconsin gun shows with no paper trail.

John took a long minute to answer the door. He was in his fifties, under six foot, and balding. He looked like he worked out. He smiled big at Donna then lost the smile when he looked questioningly at me. Donna quickly chimed in and introduced me as Mandy's father-in-law Charlie. Donna was working her role and John seemed to be buying it.

He invited us in and offered beverages. We declined the beverages and took seats in his nicely appointed living room. Donna made the pitch about Mandy and her most recent legal problems winding it up with a request for a forty-eight-hour emergency loan of four thousand dollars to bail her out. She even squeezed out a few tears to add to the effect. John took a long hard look at both of us and I knew it wasn't going to work. He appeared to be considering it but I knew he was just coming up with some bullshit excuse. I asked if I could use the bathroom and he pointed down the hall. But it was just a ruse

so I could stand up and get the .22 out of my front pocket and get around to John's right side. I pulled the gun and cocked it (again with the dramatic). He looked at Donna with a disappointed/disgusted look and said "How could you?"

She said "John, this man has already shot Steve in the knee and has him and Paco tied up in the back of the Expedition. If you don't give him what he wants he will shoot you too."

John tried to jump up in my direction and I shot him center mass. He went down hard, gut shot. I said "Where is the safe John? You don't have to die." He clutched his stomach, clenched his teeth and shook his head no. I got down by his feet and put one thru the bones of his left ankle. That obviously caused him more pain than the stomach wound because he screamed and rolled around.

"I'm just going to keep shattering your foot and knee joints until you give me what I want." "Bedroom in the back" he said thru clenched teeth. "Help him up Donna and support him back to the bedroom." As she was getting him up, I took a quick peek at the SUV in the driveway. It appeared that the boys were being good. John hobbled back to the bedroom leaning heavily on Donna. It only took a minute for John to open the safe. Then I had Donna help him lay down on the bed. I then shot him twice thru the head. "You're going to kill us all aren't you Charlie?" she wailed. I replied, "I would prefer not to and if you do exactly what I tell you to, I won't.

Now take the cover off of one of those pillows and hand it to me. Then go sit on the other side of the bed.”

With Donna safely ensconced on the far side of the bed I appraised the contents of the safe. There was \$5000 in cash as advertised but there was also a lot more. Fifty, one ounce gold coins worth about \$1200 a piece, at the time, and an assortment of guns long and short. I put the coins, cash, and four handguns in the bag and put the bag on the floor and had Donna take off the other pillow case. I got the .44 out and aimed it at her. I opened up the .22 and shook the fired and unfired shells out on the bed. I then handed the unloaded gun to Donna and told her to point it at me with her finger on the trigger. I had to assure her that I was not going to shoot her if she did as instructed. She did. I then told her to put the .22 in the second pillow case and hand it to me, which she did. I put the fired and unfired shells in the pillow case with the .22 then put that one inside the one with the loot. We went back thru the house and out to the car. I put the .44 in my pants pocket with my hand wrapped around it. It created quite a bulge but there didn't seem to be anyone looking at us.

I took a quick look under the blanket. Paco looked terrified and Steve was wavering on the verge of unconsciousness. As Donna drove us back to their house, I explained that I was off the grid and had some built-in security traps so that if anyone

was trying to find me on the internet or the old-fashioned way, I would be alerted. Then I would come back, because I knew exactly where they lived and where their kids and grand-kids lived. Furthermore, she now knew what I was capable of. And the icing on the cake was the murder weapon used on John with her fingerprints on it. I assured her that I would only send that to the cops if she or Steve mentioned my name to them. "You will come up with a cover story for Steve's knee. You're still a great liar Donna. John totally bought your story about Mandy. He was just another phony Christian asshole. Talks the talk but when you really need them.... Just bullshit. I liked you better, back in the day, when you hung out with some real bad ass bikers. They would have helped you out with the 4K in a minute. No questions asked."

Donna pulled into their garage and left the door open per my instructions. I bid them adieu and walked out to the street with my pillow case, got in my rental car with the stolen plates, and drove away. It's been over a year now, I'm living well on my seventy grand, and none of my security traps have been tripped. I read about the robbery/murder of a Hesperia man, prominent in the local church, John Stevenson. Police say it's an "ongoing investigation". That means they haven't got dick.