

## **A Husband's Confession**

**May 14, 2011**

This morning events have been unsettling for me. I decide to calm my thoughts by watering my plants and enjoying the Florida sun. I am lost in my troubling thought as I let the warm sun calm my body. I am forced into the present as cold water splashing on my feet and see my plant spitting it out as I hold a nearly empty watering can. I try to take my mind off this dreadful feeling in my gut that something is terribly wrong. I cannot understand why Gerard acted so impatient to get to his clients at the Salvation Army. Why is he going on a Saturday? He rarely does.

Again, I try to continue to tend to my plant until I hear sound of tires close by. I turn to see my husband driving in the carport. This does not look like the man I last saw. His face is white and sweaty. Is he sick or has he just heard horrible news. My body starts to tremble and a lump forms in my throat. We both enter on opposite sides of our porch and pause briefly as I try to make eye contact. He walks off into the kitchen with his work bag. The panic sets in as I following him into our home.

“What is the matter? You look very upset.” There is a pause as I look intensely at him trying to get him to look at me. He turns away from me.

He slowly puts down his head and sighs. His voice shakes and cracks as he says, “I’m in *a lot* of trouble.”

“What’s going on?” I ask as I become increasingly concerned. Complete silence falls over the room. I can’t take it anymore and ask again with more conviction.

“What did you do, Gerard?”

“I have been accused of something *really* bad.” He stands there in a daze, frozen in time.

Impatient for more information, I ask “What *is* it?”

He pauses for what seems forever and then he looks up. I stare straight into his eyes. He still doesn’t speak, so I shout, “C’mon! What?” My ferocity surprises me.

He drops his gaze to the floor again and walks into the kitchen dividing us by our bar. He can’t look me in the eye as he sputters these words, “I’ve been accused of having one of my clients give me a blow job.” I stand at the bar; gripping the edge tight because I’m afraid I’ll fall to the floor. Sheer terror turns my legs to rubber as I fight the spinning of the room. I open my mouth, but nothing comes out. The whole room starts to go black except for the small tunnel as my eyes meet his. Am I going to pass out? I muster up enough courage to ask if it’s true, not really wanting to hear the answer.

“Did it happen?” He bows his head and pauses for too long. I say repeatedly in my head, this is not real. This cannot be happening! *Oh My God!* I catch an almost imperceptible nod of his head.

I am dumbstruck. I look him up and down thinking I don’t know this man standing in my kitchen. How could he cheat on me with a client? What did he do to that poor woman? This not only risks our marriage, but his job, as well – his reputation, his dignity. How could he do it? Where was his head?

I steady my legs and slowly walk over to the dining room window. A sick feeling invades my stomach and an incredible emptiness takes over. My lips tremble as I try not to cry in front of him. I can't look at his face. I'm totally disgusted with his presence and desperately want to leave, but my legs don't work. I guess, because he just stands there looking guilty.

I can't say how much time passes, but I hear him ask me, "C'mon, Deb, haven't you ever cheated on anyone?"

I can't believe he is asking me this. "No, I have *NOT!* I would never do that to anyone including you!"

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked you that."

"I would think you should know me by now. But, then again, I thought I knew you, too, and I *never* would have believed until just a few minutes ago that you could be so deceitful and reckless with our marriage."

A thought crosses my mind. "How did you find out about this?"

"Someone from work called me when I was on my way home."

"One of the staff?"

"No." Gerard barks at me.

"Well, then, who?"

“One of my clients called. Apparently, the one I had “been with” told her friends about what happened, and they encouraged her to go to the Rape Crisis Center to file a complaint.”

Rape. Crisis. It is the first time I think of it in those terms; before this moment I thought he meant this “encounter” with his client was consensual.

“Rape Crisis Center! Oh my God! You *forced* her?”

“No, no!”

I slowly shake my head in a constant no movement while thinking, did I just hear that?

“How can your answer not be no?”

He is quick to respond, “Remember last week when I told you one of my clients wrote a sexually explicit letter to her ex-boyfriend, who she’s legally forbidden to have any contact with?”

By now, I am nodding with repulsion while remembering our conversation. I question him,

“I remember reminding you what your ethical responsibilities are as the clinical supervisor. I strongly suggested you turn the letter in since it was a violation of her parole?”

“She’s the one. I never turned the letter in. I know I should have, but I really didn’t want to get her in trouble. She’s been trying to get her life together.”

I am too traumatized to even speak by this point. My husband tries to explain himself innocent.

“It was in my desk this afternoon when we, when it happened. She told the police she went along with my advances because she was afraid if she didn’t I would turn the letter over to Drug Court and she would go back to jail. So it’s considered coercion, I guess. But honestly, Deb, I never threatened her with turning over the letter – I thought what we did was consensual. Whatever, it wasn’t rape; you have to believe that!”

“So, she knew you had the letter/evidence in your desk and you ask for a sexual favor. How do you think she was going to feel? You risked your career, your reputation and your marriage for that?”

“No, you do not understand.” While defending himself.

“I cannot believe this! You reluctantly agreed you would turn that letter in to your supervisor the next day! You know you are obligated to. I don’t know what to think – why didn’t you just turn it in? I’m supposed to believe that holding on to that letter didn’t have anything to do with what happened today? “

“It didn’t – you have to believe me. I made a mistake. But I didn’t rape her!”

This is one million times worse than I first thought. My husband, who up until a short while ago I trusted completely, just broke his vows to me and committed a horrendous crime against a woman,

I am still trying to process this when Gerard says, “I *really* need to get out of here for a while.”

“Good, because I can’t look at you right now.” I don’t think about where he is going or what he is going to do. I just want to be rid of him so I can think. I am starting to comprehend the chain of events that are about to become my life. Not only is he unfaithful to me, but he is a criminal and could go to prison for this. I can’t think of this right now; I have to figure out what I am going to do.

Even though I know I’m probably in no condition to drive, my better judgment goes out the window. *He’s not the only one who needs to get out of here*, I think to myself. I grab my keys and head to my Mustang convertible, craving a long drive with the top down and the wind blowing through my hair. I hoping the wind will blow away all my dreadful thought since Gerard walked in the door. Driving to the ocean comes natural think it will sooth me, but today it has the opposite effect. I’m flooded with so many wonderful memories; of our walks on the beach, kisses under the boardwalk - we even got married on the beach. Now those memories are filled with an ocean of questions. I feel my head is going to explode as tears start streaming down my face without a warning.

When I come back to present, I am parked. Fear floods over me as how I got there. Scary. My body doesn’t have one ounce of energy left so I sit bewilder. I put my hands up to my face and scream, “Oh, my God, I can’t believe what is happening. How could he do this to me, to us, to her? What am I going to do? What am I going to do? Damn!”

Unexpectedly, I have a horrendous vision of Gerard with his client, doing what they were doing a few hours ago. My stomach starts to churn and burn. I try to breathe

deeply to calm my whole body down. Not working. I open the door and lean out of the car and wrench up nervous bile that has been building up in my stomach over the last hour. This doesn't make me feel any better.

*What am I going to do? I wish I was in Maine where I could turn to my family and my best friends. How am I going to explain this to anybody? I need help dealing with this, but I feel so alone, terrified, helpless and devastated. I want to go Home. I need to figure out a way to get me and my belongings back to Maine.* These questions come to fast to comprehend.

When things get bad, I will think of Maine until I can get there. I will think of my son, my beautiful new granddaughter, my country home and the comfort of my dear old friends. I am so glad I did not listen to Gerard when he wanted me to sell my house up north. I just have to figure out how to get there. I can't stay here, that is not an option. I can't get away fast enough! I do not know this man any more.

I start hitting the steering wheel hard with my fist, over and over. Not sure what this accomplishes but it's an outlet for my pain and anger. Out of the corner of my eye I see a couple staring at me as they get into their car. I turn away as my cheeks get redder so I try to calm down until they drive away. I nervously chuckle when I think what I must look like. If they were mandated reporters, as I am, they would be obligated to call the police for my safety and others. Maybe someone should take away this poor, crazy soul to the psychiatric unit. Who knows, maybe that's where I belong right now.

*Content is subject to change during editing*