

The Search

May 15, 2011

I must have gone to sleep because at 4am Gerard is waking me. Still groggy from the medication, it all feels like a dream or should I say nightmare. There is a police officer behind him in the shadows looking at me. Gerard tells me I need to get up. The officer is standing right outside the door as I quickly stand up and go behind the door. The officer swiftly raises the tone of his voice and says, “Ma’am, you need to step out here right now.”

I immediately respond in a demanding voice, “Give me a minute to put on something more appropriate.” I start to shake and find it hard to stand while I think this ordeal is far from being over. I quickly change and am lead out of our bedroom. I am shocked to see five law enforcement officers.

“Do you know why we are here?” The detective asks Gerard.

“Yes, I do.”

“How did you find out?”

Gerard pauses, “Someone from the Salvation Army called me.”

“One of the staff?”

“No, one of the clients.”

They disgustingly look away and talk amongst themselves while they start the search. One of the officers asks me to step into the sunroom and I have no idea where Gerard is since I’m only concerned with me getting through this.

Already in a daze from what is happening I need to deal with this situation on additional sleeping medication. Neither of us says anything. We’re in shock. There is two Port Orange police that escort the Daytona Beach Detectives????to our home. They look everywhere but don’t make a mess like you see on television. I feel as if I’m above myself and looking down at the search taking place just as if it is a television show.

There are two detectives visibly agitated as they walk around, and I notice they all are looking at Gerard with hatred. The detective asks me to sit on the couch because he needs to talk to me. I can't tell by their mannerisms it is not going to be an enjoyable conversation but I'm soon to find out.

“Your husband is a sexual predator. You think you know him, but you don't”

I don't know how to respond so I say nothing and look away in shame and think why do I need to feel guilty but I do. In my mind I'm thinking I really don't know Gerard or think he is capable of anything like this. Then this same detective gets right in my face and raises his voice at me.

“We have your husband's semen all over her lips.”

I don't know how many times I hear those words go through my head before I can even begin to comprehend but still say nothing. What can I say?

There is a flurry of activity going on in our home. By this time an office talks in a loud and disgusted voice at Gerard, but I don't hear him say much since he is back in the office.

The detective asks me, “Do you own a video camera?”

“We don't have one, but Gerard sometimes borrows one for drug coup...” I stop talking in the middle of the word court because Gerard is violently shaking his head no. When they notice he is trying to communicate with me they escorted him out of our home and sunroom. Inside the detectives and cops are examining his computer and contents of his desk and I know they will soon check other rooms. I hate to think they will be going through my bureau drawers and see all my unmentionables.

“Do you have a computer?” Asked the detective.

“Yes, I have a laptop.” By this time, I am starting to feel like a criminal by association not a victim of his horrendous acts.

“Has Gerard ever used your computer?”

“I ask him only when I need help to do something.”

Reluctantly I surrender my laptop which feels as if I'm giving away my baby. As law enforcement is looking at my computer I think they are judging me and suspicious for the different sites I have been on and the detective is full of questions about each site.

“What is this black light site? You went on it few times?”

“I didn't know.” It was then I think they might feel I'm lying so I try hard to come up with an answer. Then I remember and give them an answer that satisfies them.

The detectives continued, they sternly ask. “What is this site called prism you go to all the time?”

“This is the site I go on to do work at home.” Then Gerard's computer is unplugged, and they can't continue to check mine so they say they had to take it.

I am furious and speak in a raised and desperate voice. “Gerard doesn't use mine and I really need it for work. Please don't take it, I have over 7,000 pictures. I am very angry at Gerard at this moment because I no longer have all my pictures I hold dear to me.

As I am thinking, oh my God, I can't believe this is happening. I'm shaking on the inside and feeling faint then he asks a question I dread they would ask me.

“Do you own a camera?”

Tears start to roll down my cheeks and my heart becomes heavy as I remember the images of my life that I may never see again. I reluctantly answer, “Yes...”. I slowly hand it over to him, feeling my heart break. I reach for the table as my legs wobble. “Please don't take that. Photography is one of my passions, and this camera has the very first photos of my new granddaughter on it. Please don't take my camera!”

“I'm going to have to go through all the photos on it, then I'll decide if we're taking it or not.”

I'm finally able to swallow the burning lump in my throat at the thought of being able to at least keep my camera. The stern detective and the Port Orange Police officers gaze through all one hundred and thirty-four pictures. As I look at their expressions trying to figure out their next move I see a slightly softer side to these professionals. They “oooooh” and “ahhhhh” over the photos of my first grandchild, who was only six weeks old when I took them on my recent visit

to Maine. One of them says, with a smile on his face, “what a cutie!” Another replied, “She sure is.” So, they are human beings with hearts after all.

“Okay, there’s nothing on here we need. You can keep the camera,” he says as he hands my priceless camera back to me. I thank him, as relief washes over me. One more tear of relief trickles down my right cheek. Suddenly, in the next moment I am once again plunged into the reality of what is going on here: the complete undoing of my life as I know it.

Gerard is outside smoking a cigar trying to calm his nerves. There are two officers outside with him and they are sure not going to let him out of their sight. I can hear them talk to him

“Would you be willing to come to the police station and answer a few questions?”

Gerard reluctantly says, “Yes.” Gerard gets up and comes into the house to get his keys and when the detectives are leaving one turns around with a disgusted look and says to him, “Oh, by the way, don’t go to work next week.” At this moment I am ashamed I have any involvement with him. Gerard looks at me with his keys in his hand as he is leaving while I look away being so upset with what is happening.

As he is leaving I say, “Don’t eat or drink anything because then they will have your DNA.” He nods with a terrified look on his face and I think why did I say that? I guess I watch too many crime shows.

I quickly head to the window, peeking out the sides of the blinds, hoping my neighbor is not looking back at me. All the police and detective’s cars leave through an eerie mist with a man I no longer know. My attention returns to the neighbors who might possibly be watching everything that has been going on. I wonder how I am going to explain all of this. Overcome and confused I spend the rest of the early morning trying to process all that has happened since Gerard arrived home only a few hours ago. This cannot be happening to me! I feel so out of control of the situation while posing questions to myself. Is this only the beginning? Am I strong enough to deal with all of this? I am thrust back to reality as I hear Gerard’s tires crunch over the tarred driveway. Fear instantly washes over me as he . . .

Content subject to change during editing.