

Your mamma should have named you superman... The song was an old familiar country song Jim Sullivan remembered from his first years in Ireland. Sullivan listened to the song playing in his hatchback truck. Returning from a great ho-down, kicking his heels with the ladies, it had been a blast.

He drove through the Webster tube from Alameda. As usual, though the hour was late, the road was full. Time to get off the beaten path. Sullivan turned on Seventh and headed towards Jack London Square. On his way, the street was mostly deserted except for the cadillac-shaped vehicle driving not only the wrong direction but without headlights. Sullivan flashed his headlights as he passed them. Suddenly, he heard a screech and looked in his rear-view mirror. They had attempted a 180 and with their headlights on, their car peeled towards him.

“Oh, for crying out loud,” Sullivan knew what this was all about. Gangs were known to have an initiation routine. Anyone who signals to turn on the headlights is the next victim for the

new recruit. If the kid wants to join the gang, he has to shoot the guy who flashes their headlights at them.

Sullivan sped up, turned left at one corner, turned right at the next. Sure enough, they followed.

“If there’s one thing I will not tolerate...” Sullivan mumbled. He swerved his truck to the right so his truck was blocking the road. Their car stopped a short distance away and their passenger door opened. Sullivan couldn’t see what the kid was holding but it didn’t look like a donut.

Sullivan grabbed the double-barrel shotgun from beneath his seat, and got out of the truck so the truck was now between him and the kid. With one pump of the shotgun the kid froze. Sullivan pointed it over the top of the truck and got his clear shot. The gun pumped an explosion into the car’s tire. The three-wheeled car backed up in a wobbly screech as the kid with the gun ran after them trying to get back inside.

Sullivan watched them squeal away and returned to his truck. He got on the CB radio and called in, “James 31. Seventh, near Webster. Start several units. There’s been a gang-related shooting.”

“10-4. Who are you?”

“James 31, off-duty. There’s been a gang-related shooting

from a cadillac, possibly blue, with an exploded front tire.”

“Uh...10-9. Did you say exploded?”

“Yeah, exploded.”

“10-4. That’s a cadillac, possibly blue with an exploded tire.”

“10-4.” Sullivan closed the channel. He turned his radio back on and drove to work for the graveyard shift.

At my house, Sophia entered the living room from the garage through the mudroom and sat on the couch.

“Fantastic place you have here!” She kicked off her shoes, nuzzled into the corner of the couch and jack-knifed her legs off the floor. “Do you think I could get a beer? Or are you desperate to show me your bedroom?”

“One beer coming up,” I said. I went to the kitchen, snagged two beers out, and popped the caps off into the sink. They pinged all over the sink like pachinko balls. This time, it made me think of the Brownian motion microscopic particles have when colliding with the molecules of their surroundings. I returned to the living room and offered her the beer.

“Heineken!” She said. “Nice choice.” She took a drink and looked at the bottle.

I looked at the painting of the collie.

“Why are you still standing? Have a seat.” She patted the place next to her.

I sat on the couch wondering if I should still reveal my fears and have her validate them.

“So, Bill. Can I ask you a question?”

“You just did.”

She giggled. “Here’s another. Tell me, Bill. What’s your real name?” She looked at me as she took another swig from the beer.

I studied her. Is she bluffing? Is she really psychic? She burped and smiled, dramatized her innocence by over-fluttering her eyelids.

She wasn’t bluffing.

“How did you know?” I asked.

She smiled wider. This was a game. “Alright I’ll tell you. You know, people do interesting things when they remember things. They look up to the left. When you told me your name, you looked up to the right. Looking up to the right means you’re making something up, not trying to remember.” She put

the bottle down on the coffee table in front of her. “But then, anyone who has to look up to remember their name must have recently fallen off a horse and hit their head on a rock.”

I nodded. “A woman after my heart.”

“Better believe it.”

I drank from my beer. Thought about the bedroom mirror. All the cameras behind it. “It’s Nathan,” I said.

“Nathan. Now that’s a nice name. Sit closer.”

I stood up. “This isn’t really why I asked you here. Could I show you something in the bedroom?”

“Well, you gotta admire a man who says what he wants.”

She put her beer down and I pointed the direction.

Inside the bedroom, she sat on the bed and bounced up and down. “Pretty good spring action!”

“Over here,” I said pointing to the mirror. I cupped my hands and looked behind the glass. Yep. Still there.

Sophia came and cupped her hands against the glass. Her hands peeked out of her long sleeves like kittens in a mailbox.

“Uh...” Sophia said. “I don’t think...”

“What do you see?”

She just looked at me like I had betrayed her in some way. “I think you should take me home, now.” She started walking

away.

I grabbed hold of her arm. “What do you see?!”

“I see a guy who makes a living posting his escapades online. Now let go of arm, or so help me...”

“You see them? The cameras?”

“Of course! Why? Was I not supposed to?” Her voice got louder. But I could tell she was trying not to yell.

I let go of her arm, cupped my hands at the mirror and looked at the cameras again. “They’re not mine,” I said.

“They’re my landlord’s.”

“What?”

“I found them today. Just before meeting you,” I said.

“He’s been watching me ever since I moved here, I guess. Taking photos, videotaping me...”

“Jeez!” She looked at the cameras again, then back at me.

“Sorry that I thought...”

There was no need for her to apologize. I brushed it off with a wave of my hand.

“What are you going to do about it?” She asked.

“I’ll call the police. See what they say,” I decided. “What about you? You probably want to get home.”

“I just got here!”

“I know, but you don’t need to get involved in all this.”

She smiled. “I know what you’re trying to do.”

“What?”

“You’re trying to get rid of me.”

“No! Believe me. I think you’re gorgeous. But now is not the right time. And the truth is, I’m not a one-night-stand kind of guy.”

“I know.” She studied him. “I also know you’re the hanged man. Suspended in a major life change.” She took out a business card from her back pocket. “I’m willing to help. Call me if you need anything, okay.”

“Fine.” I looked at the card. *Sophia Patai, Tarot Reader*. Below that, her phone number. Put the card in my pocket. “That reminds me.” I pulled out the tarot card from my shirt pocket. “Here’s your...” I saw the devil’s grin. As though he were laughing at me. Statistically, no way that card could have been pulled three consecutive times the way I had done.

Sophia noticed my reaction and said, “I know what I’m talking about. So call me, okay?”

I handed her the tarot card, removed her business card, and looked at her number. Same area code.

“Okay,” I said.

I drove Sophia back to her car and called the police. Told the guy on the other end of the line about the cameras, photos, and the painting of the collie with the snake camera behind it. The guy said he'd send a team over, but not to get my hopes up. There may be little they could do to help in situations like these. After the call, I took the streets back to my home. No. Not my home. I didn't know what to call it.

“What time did you make your discovery, Mr. Yirmorshy?” The policeman had introduced himself as officer Stelwarth. He and his partner had arrived, checked out the two-way mirrors and the living room and, at my request, stood outside to go over the details. Stelwarth had a firm presence and took notes in a notepad. His partner was a smaller guy, talked as much as a piece of toast.

“About eight o'clock,” I replied.

“What did you do afterwards?” Stelwarth asked.

I told him all that I had done after finding the painting. I told him about the pier, the Emeryville plaza where I met Sophia, and how I showed the cameras to Sophia before calling them.

I noticed the smaller officer. He was looking up at the stars like it was the first time he'd ever seen such things.

“What are you guys going to do?” I asked.

“For now, there isn't much we can do,” Stelwarth explained. “Your landlord's equipment is on his property. Fortunately, we could see from your mirrors that the photographs hung in his rooms were of you. That's an infringement of your right to privacy. We called in a request for a search warrant. Normally, the request would be denied. But you have something going for you. The camera in the living room. Because it crossed his property and entered yours, he might be considered trespassing.”

“Okay,” I said.

“I don't want to get your hopes up,” Stelwarth added, “because it's probably not enough for a search warrant. But one other thing you have going for you is that we're post 9-11. That means that getting a search warrant is a lot easier than before. The judge still has to approve it, and most judges are

hard-nosed about this sort of thing, but still..."

Stelwarth's walkie-talkie made some noise that resembled something talking. Stelwarth lifted the voice piece that dangled around the back of his neck to the front of his shirt.

"Go ahead," Stelwarth said into it.

More talking sounds emanated from the box on Stelwarth's hip. It might have been female, but I wasn't sure.

"10-4." Stelwarth turned back to me. "You heard the news."

I was astonished. Stelwarth somehow managed to understand what that box was saying. "I didn't, actually."

"It turns out Mr. Luke McCourt offered expensive camera equipment online and after getting people's credit card numbers, failed to deliver the equipment. The cards, of course, were over charged. You got your warrant."

It was a start.

"Someone is bringing it over now," he said.

While Stelwarth joined others in searching McCourt's place, the smaller officer stayed with me. Typically, in stress-

ful situations like these, people advise you to do visualizations to relax. The only visualization I had was of the police finding pictures of me frolicking with a prostitute I brought over one time.

“Why do you think he’d do this?” I asked, distracting myself from the visualization.

“It is kind of odd,” the policeman said. “Normally, voyeurs peek into women’s showers and bedrooms, not men’s. Did he have a lot of women friends? Or did he bring male friends home more often?”

“You’re asking if he was gay?”

The policeman nodded.

“No. I mean, I don’t think so.”

Stelwarth approached and said to Nathan, “You better come downtown. We have some questions we need to ask you.”

Shit.

In the distance, he saw Nathan talking to a policeman. The red and yellow lights danced through the trees like a disco.

With the classical music he was listening to in his car, the disco lights were surreal. Bach's inventions on harpsichord played a mathematically organized sound that kept him calm and focused.

"Nathan, I wonder if you realize what you've done." He took out a cigarette and lit it. The headlights were off, the engine was quiet, he took this opportunity to think. He could no longer go back to that place. That was certain. But what about the overall picture?

"Nathan, it seems you've forced our time sooner than I expected." He took another puff of his cigarette. The smoke swirled in his mouth, a shroud over his tongue.

"Good."

He snuffed out the cigarette, put its corpse in the car's trash, and let his car slip away into the night.

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