

Newsworthy

By Tiffany Lewis

“When he gets here I’m gonna kill him.” I spoke out loud and paced the living room. “He knows what I did, and I am going to have to kill him.” I stopped, looking around the room as I processed my thoughts and then headed for the kitchen. I grabbed the biggest knife I could find out of the butchers block. I held it in my hand and gently touched the blade. It was sharp. I quickly exchanged the large knife for a paring knife. Light and easy to handle, my subconscious spoke. No, no, get the butcher knife. That’s a guaranteed kill.

“Wait,” I said out loud. “I have a gun. I mean what single woman living in the city doesn’t need a gun? But do I want to deal with all that blood splatter?” I paced around the kitchen. *Okay, okay, calm down Tina. Keep it cool. Just because he has these supposed pictures doesn’t mean he will use them, or that he really has them at all. He could be lying.* I went into the living room and sat down. Why did I have to get caught up in this madness? I am not cut out for this type of insanity. I can barely stand being in the room with myself right now. What I did was so wrong but the best friend in me feels justified. I just can’t handle it! This is too much for my fragile mind.

I resolved to never listen to my idiot friends again. This was all their fault. We four girls got together for lunch at a local deli every Wednesday at noon. We usually just talked, ate and enjoyed our time together, but last Wednesday our conversation brought me to a stark decision. Adrian, my longest-lasting friend, was picking at her turkey on rye when she said something that caught our attention.

“I was thinking about killing him last night.”

“Huh?” I said, looking up from my soup.

“Well, he’s been using me as a punching bag a lot this week and I had the feeling that he needed to die.” She laughed. “It wasn’t like that. I mean, I was thinking, yes, I was thinking of shooting him, but of course I wouldn’t.”

“Adrian, you need to just leave that bastard. He is such an asshole and he treats you like shit.” Josie chimed in. She sat up straight and stuck her nose in the air. “You are better than that.”

“I know, and I caught him with another woman at his office, again. Ugh, I hate him, but I can’t leave. He is my life right now.”

“Well, he *wants* to isolate you like that, you know,” Pam, our outspoken friend said, with a tenacity so thick you could taste it. She waved her hands wildly in the air, “He won’t let you work, see friends or

even stick your big toe out of the door without his say. He's trying to keep you trapped. He's such a bitch."

"Hey, that's my husband." Adrian said.

"So?" I said with a laugh, "He doesn't treat you like a wife. Oh, if I had my strength up, I would kill him for you." I clinched my fist.

"Tina, don't make promises you can't live up to." Pam giggled and sipped her Diet Coke. She leaned back in her seat in the cool and relaxed way that she always did.

"I know how to catch him. All I need to do is come on to him. He's such a horn dog that he'll let me get right in close with him and then I could slit his skinny little throat."

"Wow, now that's rage," Josie said.

"Hey, if you wanna take me out of my misery, be my guest," Adrian said with a grin.

"Don't give me permission. I've wanted to hurt him the way he hurts you for years now. Sometimes I think that's the only way he will stay away from you, because you seem to not want to leave him."

"Ouch," Adrian said. She frowned, sticking out her lip and squeezing her arm in false pain.

"It's true." Pam added. "It's been five years and you have made no attempts to leave. Thank God you guys don't have any children."

"That's not an option for him," Adrian said, "He has three children already and he does not want any more responsibility."

"But what about you?" I asked. I leaned forward and touched her hand "Don't you want kids?"

"Of course. I'm young. I definitely want some children."

"Well then you need a new husband. Let's get rid of this one first and then we'll find you a new one."

"Tina, I love you; you always have my best interests in mind," Adrian said to me with a smile. She quickly changed the subject to her latest shopping expedition and left me with my thoughts.

I was so adamant about defending Adrian because of my father. He left my mother and I when I was eight and it was the best thing that could happen to us. My father was abusive and my mother was the victim of his rage.

The first time I saw my father beat my mother was when I was six. We were sitting down to a nice peaceful dinner. My father thought something was wrong with the pork chops but my mother must have been just a little too smug in thinking there was nothing wrong with the pork chops at all. My father sprung up from the kitchen table and punched her right in the face. He dragged her out of the kitchen by her thin delicate neck and continued to beat her in the next room. She screamed and pleaded for him to stop.

I scurried to my room. There was nowhere else I could go. I got into my bed and balled up like a fetus, covering my ears tightly until all I could hear was my heart beat. I cried myself to sleep. When I awoke the next day my mother was gone to the hospital. My father showed no remorse and he never apologized. The beatings continued for two years. He beat my mother for her mistakes, my mistakes and even his mistakes. He beat her when he was awake and he woke up out of his sleep to beat her. He was unpredictable.

One day I had seen and heard enough. I was an emotional wreck by this time; nervous and always on edge for fear of what my father might do to her. As we sat at the dinner table my father began to yell at my mother about the condition of the house. He was saying, "I work all day and I have to come home to a filthy fucking house!" I clinched my fists as he spoke. I gritted my teeth and then after mustering up all my courage I grabbed my butter knife and thrust it towards him.

"Stop it you fucking pig! I will kill you if you hit my mother again and I swear to God I will do it!"

My father looked at me with his mouth open. My mother held her chest.

"Tina, don't be foolish," he said. He raised his hands towards me in a gentle surrender.

"No! You! You don't be foolish!" I pointed the knife with conviction. I wanted him to believe that I would do it.

"Tina, please, this is not necessary." My mother pleaded.

"This is necessary." I looked at her briefly, as tears welled up in my eyes, and then back to my father, "I will kill you." My breathing was heavy and I began to tremble.

My father took a deep breath and pushed back from the table. He dropped his napkin on to his plate and stood up. He looked at me one last time and turned to leave the room. I never saw him again.

I felt like I saved my mother from him. She was eventually married to a wonderful man and had more children. I felt that I needed to save her and I can't imagine what might have happened if I would not have intervened. I needed to save Adrian too, but I needed more than threats and a butter knife to do it.

I was stupid to let my emotions and that little bit of joking and talking make me think that it would be okay to actually *murder* Adrian's husband. I really must be psychotic. Only a psycho could take the small amount of suggestion from our lunch conversation and turn it into murder, and I know I must be a little psychotic because I got great joy out of his murder —I know that now. It wasn't until I got the call from the photographer that I began to regret my actions. Before that I was just coasting. I had taken on the active role of supportive friend as Adrian grieved, just as I had done for my mother.

"I just can't believe it," Adrian sobbed. I hugged her tightly.

"It's for the better, Adrian." I looked her in the eyes, "You're free now."

"But Joe didn't have to die for me to be free. I just needed to get out of there, peacefully."

"I don't think Joe was going to let that happen. He was not willing to just let you go."

"I could have tried." She wiped her face with broad strokes of her palms. "Now I'm a widow, and don't you think that I'm not being investigated. Because of all the things Joe left me, the cops suspect me in his death."

"Do you have an alibi?"

"Yes, I was out of town with Joe's baby girl that week. She was moving into her dorm and Joe couldn't go, so he sent me. I was with her and her friends having dinner. But that means nothing to the police; they are still questioning me. They probably think I set this up."

"No way, Adrian. That is not something you would do."

"They think that I wanted to get rich off him and because he was a chronic cheater, they feel I had a reason to get rid of him."

"But you didn't, that's all that's important, just keep doing what you're doing, you have nothing to hide."

Adrian was a rich widow, at least. Joe had left all of his stocks and bonds to her as well as their home, cars and insurance policies of which she was the beneficiary. Although he was controlling and abusive towards her physically he did seem to care about her in some ways, while he lacked compassion in others.

I sprung up from the couch at the sound of a knock. The knock came again. It was coming from the apartment next door. I settled back down on to the couch and tried to relax. *Tina, chill out. If this guy comes in with an issue, just stab the bastard like you did Joe.* The memories of that night came flooding back in to my mind.

I opened the chest I kept in the closet. I always kept a lock on it because it was full of some very private and dangerous items. The large chest, marked with a heart was where I kept my dominatrix toys. Leather and whips, electrodes and plugs, everything I needed to make a man beg. I had already spoken to Joe about our rendezvous and he was waiting for me at his office. I knew Adrian was gone, although she hadn't told me until after Joe's murder. Old blabber mouth Joe was more than willing to spill the beans.

"Hi Joe, this is Tina."

"Ms. Tina, how are you?"

"I'm good."

"Great. What can I do for you? I know this is not a call about the paper," Joe asked with a laugh. Joe

was the editor in chief of our city's newspaper and although his job did involve a lot of late nights to stay on top of the story, he also spent a lot of that time on top of interns.

"No, I was actually —I hate to sound so forward, but, I think you and me should get together."

"Get together? Without Adrian, you mean?" I bet he was smiling like the Cheshire cat.

"Yes."

"And what are we going to be doing at this get-together?"

"Well, Joe, you are a pretty bad boy, so I thought I would spank you."

"Really? Well Tina, I am a married man, but I've been checking you out for a long time, and I think I could find some free time to get," he laughed. "Punished. I'm surprised you're into all that. You're a bit of a prude."

I bit my lip to hold my anger and said, "Oh no, Joe, I'm a big ol' freak."

"Well, that's good. Look Adrian is out of town this week with my youngest daughter at her college, so I'd love to bend you over this desk. Why don't you meet me here at my office, tomorrow night around eight?"

"Sounds good," I said. I wouldn't be the first girl he'd tried to bend over that desk. I shuttered and frowned in disgust. *Nasty Bastard*. I hung up the phone. He was too easy. I didn't even have to explain myself or assure him that I wouldn't tell Adrian. He didn't even care if she knew.

Joe was a small man. Thin with a tiny little head, long gangly arms and legs and he needed a tan badly. He wore thick round glasses and although he had a nice length of hair he had a giant bald spot in the top of his head that made his aerial view look like a swimming pool. The best word for him was, scrawny. He had money so he was a nice dresser but clothes could not hide his lack of attractiveness. He couldn't have weighed more than one hundred pounds, soaking wet. I don't understand how he took advantage of Adrian. Seems like she could have beat him up too, if she tried, but there is something to be said about how the mental weakness of a person can leave them physically weak.

I pulled my black leather corset over thin hips, gloves over manicured nails and panties over a round firm butt. I had taken an investment in my physical fitness and I think it paid off. I topped it off with the long matching black boots. I pulled my long brown hair up into a bun and did my make-up just right. I filled up my big faux leopard-skin bag with all the appropriate toys and under all that I put my shinny new butterfly knife. I had bought that especially for this occasion. With my trench coat wrapped tightly around me I headed to my car.

I called Joe when I got to the newspaper building and he let me in.

“Why, hello, beautiful.”

He was so cheesy, but I put on my best smile and said, “Hello, handsome.” I followed him up to his office and he locked the door. The building was abandoned from what I could tell, and although his door had a large glass window along the right side, I still felt comfortable, confident and invincible.

Joe came up behind me as I put my bag on the desk and grabbed me. I cringed at his touch. I turned quickly and pushed him away. He looked at me with his eyebrows raised in confusion.

“I’m in control, honey. You just sit down and let me work,” I said with a smile.

He grinned. “I’m not used to this, so be patient with me.” He plopped down on the couch. His thin frame barely wrinkled the leather.

“I will be giving you just what you need. Don’t you worry.” I untied my coat and let it drop on to the Oriental rug.

“My, my, my. You are smoking hot Ms. Tina.”

“I’m glad you think so,” I said as I went to my bag. I grabbed it and threw it down on the couch next to him. I pulled out the gag ball, strapped it onto his head and pushed it into his mouth to shut him up. He seemed to be enjoying it. I got out the fuzzy handcuffs and handcuffed his hands together behind his back. Last I cuffed his feet together. He giggled all the way.

“So, naughty boy, let’s see what you’re working with.” I unzipped his pants. He had on briefs. I laughed and looked at him. He shrugged. “You knew I was coming and you couldn’t wear anything more sexy than this?” he tried to smile but the ball was keeping his mouth from moving too much. I reached into his pants and helped his briefs down in the front so I could pull his manhood out. It was not impressive, which I already knew, from Adrian’s accounts. I got on top of him, still in my leather panties and bounced up and down a few times. He was as excited as a school boy.

“Um, you know, I love Adrian very much.” I grabbed my flogger from the bag. It was a very heavy, 2 pound flogger with 30 thin tails for whipping. It was made up entirely of buffalo hide and was 28 glorious inches long. I searched for the heaviest one I could find to inflict the most damage. As I swung it around I continued to speak. “I would never do anything to hurt Adrian.” I stood up off of him. He had a weary look in his eyes and I loved it. “You, are, soooo naughty.” I reached back and slapped him in the face with the flogger so hard he fell over on the couch. I had tried to put all of my power into that hit, and it looked like I succeeded. I caught him off guard too. He was a little dazed and that was good for me.

He frowned and shook his head as he tried to get up. Without hands to help him he was having the damndest time. He tried to roll off the couch but I stopped him. I sat the flogger down and pulled him up

by his shoulders.

“No, you’re not getting off that easy, bitch.” He started to wiggle and squirm wildly, frowning and trying to yell at me. I sat back on his lap. His face was bleeding in thin droplets from the cuts inflicted by the flogger.

“Oh, are you okay baby, was that too hard?” I asked. I laughed as he leaned forward towards me, trying to push me off. I slapped him across the head a few times, laughing hysterically. I knew his head was sore. I stood up again as he struggled to come off the couch. I used one hand to push him back as he reeled forward again and again. I laughed and wacked him with the flogger again. He fell over, and this time he didn’t try to get up. I pulled him back up by his shirt and he grunted in pain. His head slumped back against the wall. He stared at me with glassy eyes. I think he was in shock. Not because of the pain, but because of the situation he had found himself in. I’m not sure he could have ever seen this coming.

I grabbed a glass of scotch from the top of his bookshelf and splashed it in his face. He screamed, and I could hear it, even through the ball. That distilled alcohol on those cuts was sure to upset him.

“Um, Joe, this is the best part.” He continued to scream as I remounted him. He was enraged by his pain. He tried to throw me off. I grabbed his hair and pulled his head straight back pulling as hard as I could to control his jerking. “This is for every time I had to ice Adrian’s eye or neck, for every time you beat her, or treated her like shit, for every harsh word and action you performed against her, sex against her will, keeping her trapped in your little hell hole, for every little slut you fucked. You deserve this more than anyone I could ever give it to.”

He tried to speak and his eyes showed only pure anger. They squinted and bulged as his muffled words spoke his emotions. He thought he was getting up after this beating, but he wasn’t —I was going to make sure that he never saw another day. I reached in my bag with one hand and grabbed my knife. It was closed. I showed it to him; he thrashed wildly as I flipped it open and armed it in one swing. He was getting out of hand, so I slapped his bleeding cheek and pulled his hair taut to regain control. “Good night you son of a bitch.” I said angrily.

He screamed a muffled, long, loud scream and I was ready for him to be silent. He jerked and squirmed. I rode him like a horse, leaning and bending to his movements just enough to keep a stable aim with my knife. Finally, I slammed the knife into his temple, leaving it sticking out of his head. His eyes went blank. His head became heavy as his neck gave up on holding it. He stopped fighting. It was over. I breathed in a deep breath and let it out so hard that it blew his little bit of hair back. I stood up and packed my things slowly and slipped on my coat. I headed out of the door and was home in no time. I cleaned all

of my clothes including the heels and jacket in the washing machine with bleach. I put on satin gloves and then I cut the clothing up as fine as I could with a brand new pair of scissors. Next, I stuffed everything in a garbage bag, including the scissors. I went back downstairs with the garbage bag and got in my car. I drove for 20 miles and dumped the bag in a garbage can in front of a dark house. They could have the clothes.

I slept like a baby that night.

But now I could barely sleep. Someone had seen me; someone took a picture of me with Joe. I don't know if the person saw me actually do the killing or if he just saw me in there with him and thought it was just some freaky stuff. I asked the mystery man to meet me at my home so I could deal with this ordeal personally. The mystery man was late.

Why had I ask him over to my house? What was I thinking? If I kill him here, there will be blood everywhere and no one to give me an alibi. *Stop thinking that you are going to kill this man. You already killed one person, just handle this diplomatically.* Just then, the knock on my door came. I knew it was my door this time; there was no denying it. I ran to my room and slipped the gun in my waist band. *Don't take any chances.* I headed to the door, took a deep breath and opened it.

I had been expecting some wiry little nerd. I mean who else works for the paper? The man I saw was very attractive —not nerdy at all —with long hair, striking gray eyes, high cheek bones and a body from heaven. He looked like he had just come from the gym. Sweat permeated his tank top and his shorts were pulled up and tied, not sagging like the cool kids. Those were the shorts of a treadmill runner, and so were those legs.

"Can I come in?"

"Sure," I stammered. I stepped aside for him. He had a large camera bag slung over his shoulder and chest. He came in and stood near the balcony door. From this high, 16 floors up, all I could see behind him were stars. I stood across from him on the other side of the coffee table.

"Let's get right down to business." He took off his bag, set it down on the coffee table and pulled out a stack of pictures. He slapped them down on the coffee table. "Take a look."

I approached the pile and scooped them up. This punk had me dead to rights. He had pictures of the whole thing: In my jacket, out of my jacket, on top of Joe, he even had a picture of me inflicting the lash marks on Joe's face. But the most damning picture was the one with my hand holding the knife. How did he get such intimate shots of my crime? The angle indicted that he was looking in through the window in the door, which I should have guessed would be an issue when I first got there. I didn't know for a fact the building was empty. I should have taken precautions.

“How did you take these?”

“Through the window.” He offered up his explanation quickly, as if he was confident that giving me the information would change nothing, “I was coming up to bring him the proofs from my latest shoot. I was going to go home after that so I had all my gear. When I looked in and saw you two I just thought it was some sex stuff, which Mr. Murphy is pretty familiar with. I mean, if I had my camera every time I caught him banging an intern I could make a website.” He laughed, and then became serious again, “But you, you we’re not just there for sex. I caught you and I want money for my silence.” He was talkative.

“Wow,” I said with a laugh. I dropped the pictures onto the coffee table. “You must not have done any research on me before you came out here with this deal. I am a kindergarten teacher. I have no money.”

“Well you better find some!” he said with as much drama as a soap opera. He pointed at me and his excitement lifted him to his toes. “I will sing like a canary, and I have more copies, and I, I set this all up so if you try to kill me, they will find you. I expect to walk out of here with some money tonight.”

“You didn’t even warn me, you idiot. How was I supposed to get this money for you? Banks are closed. How much do you even want?” I was really thinking that I might have to kill this moron.

“Ten thousand dollars.”

“Oh my God. You’re kidding. I don’t have that!” I looked at his sweaty body again. “Is there anything else I can do to make you change your mind?” I smirked.

“Hell no. I knew you would try to pull that crap on me. That’s how you got Mr. Murphy.”

“Well then, give me some time to get the money.”

“No! I need the money now or the pictures are going!”

“Where the fuck am I supposed to get it? You didn’t warn me at all! This is supposed to be a negotiation meeting! Not the meeting where we exchange goods! Think about what you’re asking me!”

“I don’t care. You’ve seen my face and if I don’t walk out of here alive, they will find you. I’ve set it up!”

I was getting frustrated. He was being so unreasonable and from the sounds of it, he had a backup plan. I mean, I couldn’t blame him. He’d witnessed a murder and coming to confront me was potentially dangerous, especially given the gun in my waistband.

“How did you get my phone number?”

“I stole Mr. Murphy’s phone, called the last number that called him and it was you.”

I sighed, I didn’t realize how many things could incriminate me. “We need to come to a deal here. I

don't have the money right now. Can I get some time?"

"No! No, I need the money today. I have everything set up."

"You know what, you little bastard? You have fucked this up! I don't have the money now. You act like you're too good for sex, and you're not giving me enough time to get anything! This will not end well, if you do not become more flexible."

"I can't be flexible. The people I'm working with will not allow it. They said I have to be firm."

"Well," I pulled the gun from my waist band. "They will just have to be responsible for your death."

"Hold it, hold on now." He put his hands up as he moved from behind the coffee table.

"Don't move, you son of a bitch." I stepped closer.

"I, I can't back down. If you kill me, the pictures will go out. Someone else has a copy of the images. You will go to jail."

I was becoming enraged. I stepped closer to him again and put the gun to his chest. "You are a silly little moron! I can barely see my face on those fucking pictures! And I will be gone before those pictures get anywhere. You think you planned this out right, but you did not you idiot —"

Before I could finish my monologue, he had his hands wrapped around the gun. He twisted it. I was not letting go. My finger slipped and a shot went off. *There go your chances of getting away quietly.* We struggled with the gun, spinning and pulling at each other. He was strong and he was fast. He tried to trip me. I stumbled, but stayed up. He swung his leg again and I fell onto him. He stumbled back and we crashed through the glass balcony door. We slammed into the banister and the gun went over it. I grabbed him around his neck but he broke my grip.

I could hear the sirens. *Tina, stop, try to get away! The cops are coming!* But I didn't stop. I wanted to kill him. My subconscious had no weight over my physical motives at this time. I braced myself with my hands on his chest and tried to push him over the balcony. Surely the fall would kill him. Great minds think alike I guess, because he grabbed me by the waist and hoisted me up on to the banister. As I started to fall back, I flailed around and reached for him trying to steady myself. He seemed to have no remorse for me. He stepped back as I reached. Then he smirked, as if he knew that killing me would be the best thing he ever did, and he pushed me over.

This was it. This was the last thing I would do in my life. Fall. When my friends found out they would mourn me. They would deny that I could ever kill anyone when they spoke to the police, but when they privately met for tea they would emphatically agree that I was guilty. Although the cops would never find my fingerprints, or blood in my home, the kid looking down at me from the balcony provided all the proof

they needed to link me to Joe's murder. Without me to argue, the photographer could scream self defense for throwing me off the balcony, so this case would be wrapped up. When I hit the concrete there would be no need for my trial because I would be dead.

Maybe it's for the best. I don't think I could have survived jail. I'm sure I would get life without parole for my heinous crime. I would probably kill myself in jail, or find the Lord. On top of all that, the embarrassment would be my end. My mother would cry and my siblings would wonder whether they might become killers one day. And what about humanity, wouldn't it be better for them if I was off the streets? If I found another injustice, would I feel that I needed to avenge it with death? Would I leave a path of destruction?

The sound my body made as it hit the ground must have been interesting. Too bad I couldn't hear it. I was unconscious before I hit the ground. After I hit the ground, I was dead. There would be no need for an ambulance, although my neighbors had probably called for one already. The kid upstairs would be a hero for finding Joe's murderer, my mother would claim my insurance and benefits at work and the newspaper would run another article about Joe's death but this time with my picture attached. I can imagine the headline would say, THE MURDERER OF OUR BELOVED EDITOR IN CHIEF FOUND DEAD. Instead of celebrating his life and mourning his death they will probably waste time detailing my wrong doings and put me in the spotlight. Tina 2, Joe 0."

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