

Withdrawal Symptoms

Laura made breakfast and then returned to her yet-untitled ghostwritten autobiography of Murder Mark. Today she had to tackle the prickly subject of Murder's relationships with women. There were and had been various women who had accused Murder Mark of sexual assault...both recently and at the time of the incidents. Roger Pennington (check name) had been charged with assault in 1978 but his girlfriend at the time agreed to drop the charges.

Yes, Roger Pennington did indeed have a bad reputation with his behaviour involving women but so did many of his contemporaries. Some witnesses to the punk era brushed off these accusations as being typical of the time and also hardly unusual behaviour for male rock stars or aspiring rock stars.

But that did not justify it. That did not make it 'okay'.

Laura had asked Pennington or Murder Mark about his relationships with woman and he had admitted to being a frequently jealous possessive asshole who had on more than one occasion resorted to violence. There were at least three women, one a former girlfriend, who were willing to go on record about being assaulted by Pennington. In all cases, alcohol or cheap amphetamines were involved, but they didn't cause the violence but rather brought out what was already there.

It was not pretty and Roger Pennington had consented to have this information published. Her phone rang. It was Jessica Warren wanting to talk on Zoom. Laura consented and clicked on the link Jessica had provided.

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

Hi Laura. Did I get you at a bad time?

lsinclair@gmail.com

No. I was working on a writing assignment but I can take a break. What's up?

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

Dennis Townshend has been kidnapped.

lsinclair@gmail.com

What? When and where?

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

New York. Upper East side. Eric Taylor reported it.

Laura remembered that Townshend was richer than Taylor.

lsinclair@gmail.com

They...the police ...are sure it's a kidnapping? They're sure Townshend didn't just take off by himself?

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

Two gunmen held them up in their suite and then took Townshend. Taylor was bound up and gagged. He managed to un-gag himself later and call the cops.

lsinclair@gmail.com

Sorry, Jessica. I'm still digesting this.

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

Of course. This kidnapping seems to be the work of pros. No fingerprints...nothing messy.

lsinclair@gmail.com

What about on the doorknob?

jessannwar@

Oh. That's a good question, Laura. You don't think there's some weird connection to Simon's suicide, do you? I mean, why and how?

Laura decided to confide in Jessica.

lsinclair@gmail.com

Jessica, I don't think Simon committed suicide. Here's why. The handwriting on his note..the 'Genug' note, isn't the same handwriting as on the scrap paper memos on his computer table.

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

What? Are you sure? Have you told the police?

lsinclair@gmail.com

I don't trust the cops not to laugh in my face unless I can bring them more evidence. I have talked about this with Dan and also with Simon's brother...Neil Puryear.

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What was the brother's reaction?

lsinclair@gmail.com

Negative. Dismissive. What else could Simon's death possibly be except suicide? Oh, and I'm never ever to bother him again."

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

Well, that's pretty explicit, Laura. He sounds defensive, if I may say so."

lsinclair@gmail.com

I agree, Jess.... Oh, by the way, when we have the exhibition of Simon's paintings, we're going to have to take turns regulating the numbers of people in the gallery space. We may be able to have free wine outside in the alley.

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

That might be complicated. Licensing and all that bullshit.

lsinclair@gmail.com

Yes. Bureaucracy. This fucking pandemic. Listen, please don't tell anybody what I'm saying about Scott's death not being a suicide.

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

Okay. But if it's not suicide, then what is it?

lsinclair@gmail.com

Murder. How I don't know, but murder.

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

How are you, or who is anybody, going to prove it? And what would be the motive? Who on earth would want Simon dead?'

lsinclair@gmail.com

I don't know, Jess. But with the two hand writings not being the same person's, then something is strange here. More than strange.

Talk later,

Laura.

Laura decided she'd have to break from working on Murder Mark's autobiography. A parade of anti-maskers was marching outside her west window. The anti-maskers were a gang of complete idiots, but they were not marching in a vacuum.