

Withdrawal Symptoms

Laura had to confront another stumbling block with the Murder Mark autobiography. She had to deal with how The Scholars began to disintegrate due to the usual factors...specifically the guitarist becoming a junkie. Wasn't there a junkie in every band, she scowled.

The guitarist was older than the other band members. He had been around the block. Every late seventies punk band had one member who was an older rocker. Fashion would demand that they cut their hair short and always wear at least a black leather jacket...the more leather the better. Laura thought of the contradictory origins of the term 'punk'. It had been prison argot for the sex slave, a bottom whose institutional currency depended on his bottom status being common knowledge. Punk music had queer origins despite the protestations of so many of its practitioners.

She remembered the suburban art school bands many of whom had obviously queer band members. Those bands celebrated suburbia and scorned all forms of mandatory downtown chic. Who the fuck was William Burroughs, anyway? Who would want to do heroin and be like Keith Richards?

Well, a lot of old rocker punks became heroin users. Including Murder Mark's guitarist and bandleader. This created problems within the band...about focus and about money.

She had mail. She looked and it was from Jessica Warren.

jessannwar@sympatico.ca

Hi Laura

With the new COVID restrictions being announced today there's no way we can proceed with the exhibition of Scott Puryear's paintings.

However, I have been talking with a West End gallerist about having a show of Scott's and my work down the road...sometime after this lockdown has been lifted.

Best,

Jessica.

Laura would respond later. Hopefully Jessica would soon have more information about an exhibition plan with this mysterious West End gallerist, or dealer.

She returned to Murder Mike and his disintegrating band. Since the guitar player had overdosed, she could google other old punks who still were technically alive who had been or still were hardcore junkies. But did she really have to? Surely she could say that drugs particularly heroin had become prevalent in the late seventies punk scene without dwelling on the subject? Although the subject was of course part of the formula. So many nerds who wanted to be junkies or somebody 'transgressive' bought these rock bios and other tell-all books.

She had bought in and now she had to cash the cheque. She had to pander to her market.

And what to do with Scott's paintings and his books? Used books stores were now closed or by appointment only. Could she then make an appointment with one of them? But what a sorry fate for Scott's art books. Where and whom, then? And maybe between herself and Dan she could

store the paintings for a while at least. he looked at her bedroom cupboard and a cleaning was quite overdue.

Too much mess. Her messy apartment, the two messy art dealers who had been kidnapped apparently for drug -related reasons. Was Taylor and Townshend's gallery a drug front? What did Jessica Warren think about this scenario.

And Scott Puryear's life didn't seem to have been a messy one? But had it been one, actually? Laura looked at her cupboard's top shelf. There were useless VHS tapes that could be tossed to make room for the paintings. But why should she and Dan Stratton get stuck with the paintings? It wasn't as if they were leftovers.

Damn Scott Puryear's asshole brother. Wasn't he who or what would by default constitute Scott's estate?

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some questions

Dear Jessica,

Here are some questions we must find answers to:

Was Taylor & Townshend a gallery serving as a front for drug trafficking?

Why was Dennis Townshend kidnapped and not Eric Taylor?

Why would the handwriting on Scott Puryear's suicide note not match the handwriting on the artist's personal notes if there wasn't a second person writing the suicide note?