

RAID

Bill Carver

I looked at the clock on the table next to the bed. It showed in big red letters that it was two-thirty. And I knew that it was in the morning not in the afternoon since I picked up my victim a few hours ago at ten-fifteen at night. She was still out from the drug I had administered to her. She was tied to the queen bed and she was gagged. She was to be the last of my victims in my crime spree in the lovely Virginian town of Richmond.

We were in room 204 of the Hanford Motor Lodge. It was my first time here and the lovely couple I rented the room from seemed very nice. But they were going to be very disappointed in me for the mess I was going to leave for them to find in the morning.

I had arrived in Richmond six months ago and quickly made my mark. My first victim was two weeks after I arrived and after I decided how I was going to kill in this town. I had to come up with a method and pattern for the police to follow before I left town and my killings would be a mystery for all time. I never killed more people than Jack the Ripper had killed while I was in any of the towns that I visited. I've been known as Shredder, Holeman, SnakeEyes along with others. But my favorite was a few years back when I was known as Raptor. In Richmond, they're calling me Dicer. As in slice and dice.

It's okay as a nickname.

Much better than my real name.

Alice is her name. She was leaving the campus building as I grabbed her. She was doing some late night computer programming for a project she had due tomorrow. Or today as it is now. Alice doesn't need to worry about her project now.

She was clean takedown. I came up to her carrying a stack of books as she was exiting the building. I pretended to have trouble getting the door open with my hands full of books. She politely held the door open for me. As I tried to get past her, I bumped the door frame and dropped the books I was carrying. I made sure that we were in the blind spot of the surveillance cameras covering the lobby of the building.

We both bent down to pick them up, but when she took her eyes off of me I injected her with my needle full of knockout juice. Her eyes showed that lovely look of panic and then she went down. It was such a beautiful look that she gave me. I wish I had a camera and could have taken a picture of that look.

A real Kodak moment.

Miss Alice will get herself lots of pictures tomorrow after she's found here.

Then I'm out of Richmond.

I'll be on the road and hundreds of miles before Alice is found in room 204. I'll

get all the news about her from the Internet when I reach my next town. I'm going south where it's a little warmer. I already have my next killing theme planned. Female body builders. I don't recall them being chosen as victims for a serial killer. They have strength, maybe they'll give me more of a fight.

I'll find that out then. But for now Miss Alice needs to wake up to start tonight's work.

She stirred in the bed and I knew that she was coming out of it. I liked it better when they wake up themselves rather than when I have to wake them. It's more gradual and they slowly realized where they are and then they panic. When I wake them, their reaction is not the same. It's all in the little things that make my activities worthwhile.

I moved from the side of the bed and sat down in the room's chair by the window. I shifted the chair to allow me to look at Alice. The round dining table next to the chair was already set up with my tools. I had the knives, points buried in the table top, in Alice's line of sight. I shifted and tied down her head so that the first thing that she saw when she woke up would be my knives in the table top.

Again, I wished I had a camera. Her expressive eyes would generate another Kodak moment.

Unlike other killers, I never took souvenirs of my work or from my special friends as I like to think of them. My memory was very good and I relished all my memories. With forensic technology today, collecting mementoes from my activities was courting disaster.

Travel lightly and quickly was my belief.

Alice groaned slightly as she stirred and fought against her bindings. Only a few more minutes before things the night's work began.

I turned toward the window in the room as I heard a car pull into the parking lot. The Hanford was a busy place and tomorrow it would be as well known like the Super 8, the Motel 6, the Yesterday Motor Inn and the others I've used in the past here and elsewhere.

I heard the car park and then the closing of two doors. They didn't slam the doors on the car, which I thought was considerate of them as it was past two in the morning. It's nice that others still have consideration for others.

Alice groaned again and was attempting to shake her head, but as I had tied it down, she struggled to move her head. I settled deeper into my chair to watch her as she came awake.

Then I turned my head toward the window and listened to the noise coming from the parking lot. It sounded to me that two more cars had pulled into the parking lot and I confirmed that when I heard five doors slam shut. These people weren't as nice as the first car's occupants. They made a lot more noise.

The small light by the far side of the bed was on. I got up from my chair and walked toward the light. How biblical of me.

Alice groaned again, but I barely noticed that as I reached under the lampshade and turned the switch to off. The room went dark. There was still some ambient light showing through the edges of the curtain and the door that wasn't sealed properly. I walked around the bed again and walked to the room's drapes.

I took a breath and slowly spread the drapes apart in the center of the window. In the dim parking lot lights I saw that another vehicle had joined the three others. I knew the ones that had just arrived because they were all in the same section of the parking lot and there was a group of people standing around.

They were all cops.

Two of the cars had the light bars across their tops and the other two were unmarked, but they had the same dull, boring look you expect to see with unmarked police cars. The fourth car's occupants had just walked up to the others and a man in the middle of the group began talking. The others circled him and as the man talked they all turned to look toward the building that I was in. He pointed at a series of rooms on the second floor and on the first floor.

Room 204 was included in the rooms that he pointed toward.

I didn't move from the window while they were looking in my direction. I didn't want them to see any movements from the drapes and realize that I was watching them.

They split into teams and started walking toward the building. They weren't heading for the second floor stairs but headed for the rooms below me. The leader of the group was consulting a list, I bet he got the list of rooms that were occupied from the Hanford's owners.

When I saw that no one was looking at the second floor, I closed the drapes and moved away from the window.

Alice groaned louder and I looked at her and saw that her eyes were now open. I smiled at her when her eyes focused first on the knives sticking out of the table and then on me.

I leaned in and whispered to her, "Alice. Glad you finally awakened."

She started struggling against the restraints that I had placed her in.

"Don't panic on me. Alice, I have a problem. Were you suspicious of me?"

She still struggled.

"Listen to me." I commanded.

She still struggled, not listening to me. I pulled back from her and then moved down the bed. I then punched her hard in the thigh to get her attention.

She lurched from the hit and whimpered from the pain, but I knew now that I had her attention.

I held my index finger to my lips to tell her I wanted quiet and for her to settle

down. I listened and heard a door below us open. These was some muted conversation and then it got quiet.

The first room had been evacuated. I wondered when the SWAT crew would arrive.

I turned back to Alice.

“It appears that I have been tracked. What part in that did you have?” I hissed the question at her.

She pulled back and worked to shake her head.

“Were you bait?”

Her eyes opened wider and she shook her head frantically.

I walked back and leaned back against the wall of the room.

“Stop that now.” I commanded.

She stopped shaking her head and she watched me.

I had fantasized and wondered what I would do when this day had arrived. I knew that I couldn't go on forever roaming the country and killing people. That someday an unexpected something would happen and I would be facing capture. I had thought about going out with guns blazing like Butch and the Sundance Kid in the movie or being captured and never saying anything. Or I could be captured and tell my story. Or being captured and causing a trial that would be the talk of centuries.

My hero Jack disappeared into history but did I want to do that?

I heard knocking at one of my neighbors on the second floor to the right of my room.

My decision was required in the next few moments. Time to put up or shut up.

Proactive or reactive?

My hands clenched in tension.

I decided and my tension melted away.

I walked over to my suitcase that was stored in the corner of the room under the clothes rack. I carried and then put it on the corner of the bed. I could see Alice straining against her restraints and her eyes trying to watch me. I reached out and gave her a pat.

Then I opened the suitcase.

I pulled out a ceramic chicken.

Alice's eyes opened wider and I could read that she thought I was crazier that she had believed earlier.

I smiled at her.

I heard the knocking on the door to the left of my room.

I put the chicken on the floor and stomped on the neck of the chicken.

The head broke off and I again stomped down on the chicken. The chicken broke into dozens of pieces exposing what was inside.

Inside the chicken was my Glock and extra ammunition clips. Carrying a gun around was dangerous if I was ever pulled over, but it seemed dumb to travel around unarmed. I carried it inside the chicken. It was not for quick use, but no cop would look twice at a ceramic chicken if I ever had been stopped and been searched.

I picked up the gun and looked toward the door and window. I saw a shadow pass by the window. A second shadow went past the window.

I pointed the gun toward the door.

Alice started screaming into the gag and started frantically bouncing on the bed.

There was a quiet knock on the door.

I opened fire.

Two hours later the Chief of Police was sitting in his car with the Captain who was in charge of the raid on the Hanford Motor Lodge. The Captain was running his hand through his hair and exhaled a loud sigh.

The Chief said, "It's a disaster. I need to know more. What's ya got for me?"

"I have four dead and three wounded. My first two men who went to room 204 were completely surprised and are dead. The two occupants in the room were killed. We had two more of our men shot and one fell down the steps. All three injured have been sent to St. Justin's Hospital."

"And you think it was the Dicer?"

"Yes. The girl has been identified and was last seen at her college. Her being tied down to the bed and the set of knives we found in the room lend a lot of weight toward my conclusion. The man we finally killed was the Dicer. He fought us from the room and we put a lot of rounds into the room. The girl was killed by our men."

"Are you sure?"

"Completely. She looked like Swiss cheese. Anyway he was shot once in the leg and then he tried to escape going around the corner building on the second floor. Our guys stationed on the other side of the motel arrived and he ran right into them. He shot a SWAT guy, but the body armor saved him. Then the Dicer was gunned down."

"What about our original target in the other room?"

"He disappeared when the SWAT team left to help the guys who were under attack from room 204. It was a strange situation. Here we were trying to set up a raid on room 284, which was in directly in back of 204. We were evacuating all the rooms that might have been in the line of fire of room 284 if there was a fire. And we just happened to catch Richmond's latest serial killer in the middle of one of his killings."

"It's a strange world Captain. A strange world."

The End