

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



The Locked Door by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | October 2017

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by Mike Bozart

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Karen, a 31-year-old single Asian American, arrived home at her one-bedroom, one-bathroom, second-floor east Charlotte (NC, USA) apartment at 5:55 PM. It was a tranquil fall evening, but this particular late October Thursday (2015) had been anything but at her uptown trend-analysis office; she was completely exhausted. She flopped on the couch, flipped on the local news, and exhaled. *What a day! Need a glass of Merlot. Sleep is going to feel oh so good.*

Halfway through the international news, Karen arose and stumbled into her old ottoman. She looked at it. *I don't really use that thing anymore. It's just in the way. Better put it up before I trip over it and do a nasty faceplant. [frontward fall]*

Karen then grabbed it and walked over to the storage closet. She put the well-worn, brown leather, two-seams-ripped footstool down on the beige carpet. Then she grasped the door handle. But, the door was locked. This puzzled her. *That's strange. I guess that I accidentally turned the switch to horizontal again, just like I did a few weeks ago. I'm way too tired to deal with this right now. I'll use a flathead screwdriver to open it later. Why does a storage closet door in an apartment have an inside lock anyway? I bet that the contractor only ordered handlesets with locks. Probably a volume discount. If the lock were on the outside that would be crazy – and quite dangerous: a tiny solitary confinement cell. One could accidentally get locked in there. Wonder if I can disable it. Or, maybe just tape the thumbturn in the vertical position. Well, that's a project for another day. Don't even have any duct tape. Time to eat and lie down. I need a goodnight's sleep like a parched rice paddy needs a long soaking rain.*

At an already-dark 7:37 PM, Karen was in her queen-size bed reading a spy novel. She had forgotten all about the locked storage room door. At 7:58 she was sawing logs; she was out like a lamb.

He quietly unlocked the closet door at 8:02 PM. He turned the pewter doorknob and slowly pushed the lightweight foam-core door open. He stepped out and quietly reclosed the door.

Then he silently tiptoed across the living room floor to her bedroom door. He looked through the crack. He saw parallel blanketed ridges: her legs at the bottom of the bed. The low-wattage nightstand lamp was still on. The same book was

lying on the red coverlet, off to her right. It was just as he remembered.

He then opened the bedroom door some more. He saw the left side of her tan face and remembered their times together in that very bed. It was now five months since they had broken up.

Without any forewarning, Karen turned her head towards the door. She was starting to awake. He quickly pulled the door back to its original slightly open position. She resettled; she never awoke.

He then soundlessly made his way over to the front door. He unlocked the deadbolt as quietly as possible and let himself out. From the dim, 1960-ish, brick-walled corridor, he relocked the deadbolt and doorknob lock. Then his 32-year-old, lanky, Caucasian American body slinked away. It was the third time that Jack had secretly entered and exited Karen's apartment – with her in it.

Down in the parking lot, blonde-haired Jack prepared to enter his car, a 2009 silver Ford Mustang. Just as he touched the door handle, he was struck on the back of the head by a truncheon. He was knocked-out instantly; his body slid down the side of the car and onto the asphalt parking lot.

The late-20-something Hispanic male attacker then dragged him over to his green minivan and handcuffed him. Then he placed Jack, facedown, in the back of the seats-removed 2006 Dodge Caravan. Next, the attacker tied bandanas over Jack's mouth and eyes to gag and blindfold him. Then he got in the driver's seat and promptly drove off.

At the crossroads township of Red Cross (28 miles – 45 km – east of Karen's apartment) on a now-quiet four-lane highway (NC 24/27), Jack started to come to; his consciousness was achingly returning. He groaned and moaned. *Gosh, my head hurts! I'm all bound-up in a moving vehicle of some kind. What's going on? Why me? Why me!*

"Take it easy there, pretty boy," the gruffish Mexican American shouted backwards from the driver's seat. *¡Qué escoria!* [*What a scumbag!* in Spanish]

Jack growled indecipherably. *What in the world has happened? Apparently I've been abducted. But, by whom? Who is this guy? He sounds Hispanic. Where are we going?*

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