

# **GOLD, the short story**



by Mike Bozart | July 2011

*"It was just another trip to the beach until ..."*

[revised in April 2016]

Note: This 3,000-word short story preceded the 80,000-word, erotically charged, suspense-filled, deceptive odyssey *Gold, a summer story* by two years. Some of the characters, scenes, and plot in this beach tale were used in the e-novel.

It all started with a weekend trip to Carolina Beach. Record-breaking heat. A late July weekend. The sun was completely mad in a torrid rage.

Her soon-to-be-ex-husband, Mark, was, too. He trailed her. Susan never noticed the small sedan he rented. However, she almost lost him around Laurinburg, when she stopped for gas. Well, almost. While standing at the gas pump, he watched her as she wondered: *Why did I not fill up the tank in Charlotte?*

Two hours later, and she's finally there. Carolina Beach. Out of the car. Barefoot. But, the beach sand was oh-so-infernally hot. It almost blistered her soles. *This sand is as hot as lava!*

She settles her 30-something, tanned, Native American body on a yellow-and-green beach towel in front of the Marriott. Almost immediately, bugs. An array of flying insects. Mosquitoes. Sand fleas. Horseflies. All biting. Then a gnat alights in her left eye. Totally miserable. *Why did I pick such a hot-ass, insect-infested weekend to come down here?*

Susan goes back to her hotel room. Sweaty. She takes a shower. A cold shower. *Ah, this feels much better. Screw that nasty beach. Scummer [sic] sucks. Why couldn't it be October? I wonder where Mark is. Oh, who the hell cares!*

Mark waited under the bed. (He had slyly slipped into her room when the cleaning lady went into the bathroom.)

After eleven refreshing minutes, Susan exits the shower wrapped in a white bath towel. She sits down on the bed and begins brushing her raven hair. While looking in the mirror above the dresser, she sees Mark's left shoe sticking out from under the bed and almost screams. (Mark does not know that she has noticed him.)

She recomposes herself and gets dressed. And then she runs. Outside. Then down the steps. *How the hell did he get in my room? That tricky bastard! That was way too close!*

She makes it safely to the hotel office and reports the intruder/estranged husband. The desk clerk calls the police. A CBPD (Carolina Beach Police Department) officer arrives three minutes later.

The CBPD cop searches her room. Twice. However, her newly estranged hubby is nowhere to be found. *Where the fuck did Mark go?* (He actually jumped off the 3<sup>rd</sup>-floor balcony onto the sand and quickly hobbled to his car, only suffering a sprained ankle.)

Mark, the brown-haired, thirty-two-year-old Caucasian ex-husband-to-be, drives to a small motel on Canal Drive. He parks the car around back and checks in. Once situated in the two-star room, he begins to drink liquor. Vodka on the rocks. At seven o'clock, it's Xanax for dessert. And a half-hour later, he swallows some hydrocodone pills. He starts feeling crazy at eight. Insane thoughts abound in his cranium. *I'm going to find out what she's doing down here,*

*one way or another. Oh, yes; I'm going to win this time, sweetheart. When should I call my lovergirl? Later tonight.*

The fiery furnace called the sun finally sets. Mark gets in his car and decides that this is the night. Faster and faster. His rage causes him to depress the accelerator pedal to the floorboard. <Crash!>

Back at the Marriott. "I'm glad that we have some time to be together." They, an older Asian American couple, were both saying this. Him and her. Alternately. In the hotel room next to Susan's as the gloaming glommed onto the piney horizon.

The older Asian American couple, Ben and Bao, heard the afternoon door slam. However, they decided not to get involved, thinking it wasn't their business.

After the police cleared her room, Susan finally fell asleep at 7:07 PM. She was frazzled, but even more exhausted. Then a knock on her door at 8:08 PM. She hesitated to get up, but finally did. *Who is it now?*

She walked to the door and looked through the peephole. She saw a cheerful older Asian American couple in exotic (to her) garb. She opened the door.

They said hello to each other. Susan noticed that Bao had a handbag just like hers. *That's mine! How did she get it? What a day!*

"I come to return your handbag, miss," Bao said. "I saw it sitting in the parking lot." *What?!*

Susan accepted it. "Thank you so much."

"Are you alright?" Ben asked.

“Yes, I’m fine. I just need to rest. It’s been a long day.”

“Ok, goodnight,” they said in near-unison.

She closed and double-locked the door. Susan even pushed the recliner against it. She suddenly remembered that it was their 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary. *Please God, don’t let Mark come back here. Police, please find and arrest him.*

She went into the bathroom. She could hear a conversation in the room behind hers via the HVAC ductwork. Susan put her left ear next to the vent. *Am I really hearing this?*

“Jesus H. Christ, Jane, I just wanted a quiet, relaxing weekend at the beach. Is that too much to ask at my ripe old age?”

“You forgot the Viagra, didn’t you? What fun we will have now. Not!” *He’d forget his dumb head if not for his neck.*

“I’m sorry. Damn, I hate this memory loss. But, I can’t help it.”

“Ah, maybe I can get your old pecker hard. C’mon, get over here, big boy.”

“Who are you on that bed?”

[some female laughter]

“It’s me, Charlie – your goddam wife for the last 48 years! Now, get over here and fuck me like a man.”

“You won’t let go of that pouting mood just yet; now will you, Jane?”

As entertaining as their conversation was, Susan decided to stop eavesdropping. She lay back down on the bed, listening to some Fleetwood Mac on the nightstand radio. She drifted into a twilight sleep and began hearing little audio tidbits in her quasi-dream.

*They are uneasy. | Like that lady next door. | What kind of mischief is she involved in? | He tells her not to worry about it. | Ah, the police will sort it out. | They always do. | Let's enjoy us! | The need was great. | It had been a stressful three years. | The foreclosure. | The bankruptcy. | The lawyers. | The creeps. | That evil moon. | That eternally restless sea. | Madness nonstop. | An easy life is now gone.*

Then a knock on her door again. She looked at the LED alarm clock on the nightstand. It was 10:09 PM.

Susan struggled to get out of bed. She slowly moseyed over to the door. But, before she could look through the peephole, she heard a deep male voice: "Carolina Beach Police. Anyone in there?"

"Yes, one second, officer."

She unlocked and opened the door. "What is it officer? Did you catch him?"

"We need to have a word with you, if you don't mind, ma'am," the burly, middle-age, white cop said. "Just a few questions down at the station." *Oh, my God! Why?*

"Oh my, what was happened, officer?"

"We'll discuss it at the station, ma'am." *Huh?*

She followed the officer to the CBPD station, just three minutes away. Once there, she took a seat in the tiny interrogation room.

“What is this about?” Susan asked. “How long will I have to be here?” *What a totally screwed-up vacation this has been. All thanks to my adorable a-hole husband.*

“We’ll start in just a moment, miss,” the rookie white officer said as he chomped down on a caramel. “It should only take ten minutes, tops.”

Susan spied what he was eating. “Ah, caramels. C’mon, pass that bag over here, officer. Make this a little more bearable for me.”

A shift of scene. The Carolina Beach McDonald’s the next morning. Tourists had already saturated the place by 8:30.

Down from Michigan, four Caucasian college lads tried to undo their hangovers with strong coffee.

“There are too many loud kids in here,” one of them (Rick) declared.

The screams of finally-at-the-beach kids and cash register tills slamming shut cacophonically intermingled.

“I agree, Rick. Too much noise and commotion. Guys, let’s get out of here. It’s making my hangover much worse.”

One of the hungover foursome picks up a local newspaper and reads the headline to the other three: “Man drowns after car goes off bridge.”

“That’s why the right lane was closed, man!”

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