

The Little Girl

Westlake - A Prologue

I walk to the Westlake / MacArthur Park Metro Station, at the plaza in front as always in the evening a lot of traders. Some have laid their goods on the ground, some have tables, what all they offer! A lot of clothes, shampoo and cosmetics, tools, music and movies. And of course food - all in all, no goods for a privileged clientele.

I look around a bit, most of them I know from the last days, some from the last year. Then I see a woman with a young girl. She's small and looks a bit haggard, difficult to say how old she is. But it seems that she looks older than she is. The girl seems to be around eleven or twelve years old, also small and haggard.

I cannot really understand what the woman searches. Something for her daughter I can hear, she searches in the piles of clothes. But she takes nothing, she not talks with her daughter about it, she only searches. It seems as she would search for something very special, something that's impossible to find.

In the meanwhile the girl has a lot of fun. She looks at all the things on the tables, but she not touches something, but she smiles. It seems that's a real fun for her, to be here, to look at the things.

I look at them, thinking about whether they live in this neighborhood or not. They are no Latinas, maybe she's married with a Latino, maybe this is the place where she has found her place. And the girl? What will the future offer her? A good education in a country were money is the key for everything? I think about it, that I want to know, that I wish to know how her life proceeds - but maybe it's better not to know it.....

Sirens!

I walked around in this area as I did it so often at this time. Still it was not the time to leave, even when it was obvious that I would have to leave this city at the end. Whatever the aim would be, even when there would be no aim at all, this city I had to leave. It was a balmy night, half-moon and Jupiter, the bright Venus near the horizon. The shops had closed, the streets not empty but much lesser people now. Also on the streets lesser cars as not that long before. The time of the food trucks and the BBQs on the sidewalks began. I liked this time very much, the air full of scents, people who bought something to eat for at home or they had a meal right here. I stood on the sidewalk opposite to Mac Arthur Park and looked at the BBQ on the sidewalk across the crossing. I should eat something, drink something and why not some fruit afterwards. I waited till the lights would get green – cross-walking now also in L.A. city, a bit like in Santa Monica. And as the lights turned green it began - sirens! First only one siren somewhat away. A siren in L.A.? Nothing special, the whole night you could hear them. Often it was the fire department, not necessarily the police. And because there was a large hospital nearby, also often ambulances. But very fast one could hear more and more sirens, sirens from different directions. The first who arrived were the fire department with two emergency vehicles. A smaller one and one of the large ones with a ladder. I looked up the hill as more and more vehicles arrived. An ambulance, two police cars, then a third one.....at the crossing a chaos begun as the police blocked the road from both directions. I looked whether I could see smoke, but nothing. But this not seemed to be a normal operation.

I looked at the blinking lights – they were hypnotizing.....all looked like a big chaos, but like ants, the chaos had a system, I only could not see it. Then a police car had a fast stop at the other side of the road, at one of the entrances of MacArthur Park. Two police man jumped out, one of them was Yves? He saw me, hesitated. Then he gave the other officer a sign and ran cross the street.

Yves

"Peter?"

"Yes?"

"You here?"

"Westlake?"

"Thought that you're on your way to San Francisco?"

"We had no dinner so far? You think I would leave without to say goodbye?"

"Sorry, I thought you're in a hurry to leave the city."

"Therefore you should know where to go, at least you should decide which direction. What happened?"

"Neighbors have alarmed the police. They heard a quarrel and then loud screams. A woman and her daughter lived there. A man was with her, maybe her friend, he's on the run."

"He's a suspect? What happened?"

"The mother and the daughter are both dead, obviously beaten to death. I've only some brief information so far - sorry I have to go....."

"Sure....."

He ran to his colleague who had waited on the other side of the road. They entered the park - with rifled guns.....

My Comfort Zone

I looked at the lights again, in a special way they were beautiful, beautiful in a balmy night, a balmy night in Westlake, walked around while a mother and her daughter died – I had heard no screams? I had saw the shiny half-moon, Jupiter and Venus, had smelt the wonderful scent of the BBQ across the crossing while they died.....

Westlake, I loved it to be here - and now? L.A., in this city you could be killed at any time at every place. At a gas station in West Hollywood as well as in an entrance in Long Beach, at night at Venice Beach or as a not involved victim during a car chase. Every day at least a murder, not to talk about other crimes - rape.....

Sometimes this city looked so beautiful, but then also so ugly. Always on the run, no time for nothing, always this hustle for money, no moment of rest, no moment to breath, always you had to be something special, to be a star, that it was.....

I still looked at the lights, fewer now. The police car still on the other side of the street – Yves? Haven't saw him again and I got tired. I turned around, only some blocks till my motel, should eat something. Should I buy me a large cup of coffee at the 7-Eleven? Something sweet would be good, tacos at the food truck in front of the laundry – Alexandra.....

It felt like someone would had destroyed your fantasy, your shelter, your home - the last place you felt secure. This was ridiculous, sure, also this a part of Los Angeles, also a lot of dreams and dreamers here, a lot who will have to realize one day that their dreams broken, no longer, away.....

I bought me a extra large coffee, sweets and several tacos to go. A long way in front of me, still hours till dawn, hours to walk aimlessly, no longer a place to cover.....

Manhunt

Immediately within hours the media had a new lead story: Illegal immigrant kills innocent woman and her daughter - what a blasphemy! You don't think so? Well, every day people get murdered in this city, every day they committed suicide in this city, every day women get raped in this city - the media? No interest in such stories, too normal, maybe as a side note. Unless we would talk about a celebrity, about a rich person, or about a story like: A white person, murdered by an illegal immigrant. With this configuration it was even interesting that a poor woman and her daughter had been murdered in Westlake. I mean, do you really think, that normally someone was interested in a murder case in a neighborhood like Westlake, Crenshaw or Compton? A bit naive - or? But this case, with an illegal immigrant involved? Especially nowadays, even in a state like California, enough lobbies for whom this was a moment to celebrate. Not that they were interested in the two victims, who would be that naive? The victims were totally uninteresting for them, but an illegal immigrant! Now they had their story.....

I was disgusted, nobody talked about the victims, nobody was interested in their story, in their life. But this illegal immigrant on the run? - A real manhunt! Yes, a few parts of the media tried a fair, balanced and profound reporting. But nationwide a outcry of the upright happened. And as always, the ones who screamed loudest.....i felt sick!

With every day they not caught the suspect, the situation became more and more tensed. A lot of pressure on the police - maybe to much Latinos at the police? Did they cover him? Did they help him to escape? Back to Mexico? Why he had been able to come into our country illegally? Why we not protected our borders better? Why we not listened to groups who knew it before, who knew how we should act to protect our inhabitants for such criminal elements? Sometimes the world was so simple.....

Did I sympathize with the suspect, who was almost certainly the murderer? No! Should he be the murderer, he had to be sentenced. But that was not what they talked about. Their interest was only to misuse the case, to use the case for their purposes. As I said, the victims were uninteresting - apart from the fact that they were white, and therefore innocent people. And also the suspect as such was uninteresting, apart from that, that he was an illegal immigrant - maybe it would have been enough already that he was an immigrant, but illegal, that was a fit occasion for them.

At the third day, the third day with endless discussions about immigration at TV, endless (mutual) recriminations, not to talk about the hate in the Internet, the situation for the Latinos became almost unbearable, up to open hostility, physical violence. "The Latinos" - we all knew the stories about the gangs in L.A., the crimes rates in L.A.! Well, with nearly fifty percent Latino inhabitants no surprise! And then the Afro-Americans, another ten percent. And then the Asian-Americans, nearly fifteen percent. More or less seventy-five percent - would one have to say more?

Again, this world could be so simple, you could make it such simple. Black and white, good and bad, why make an effort and use your brain? The white, rich and successful citizen not did such awful crimes, he followed God's rules, he was the upright. Yeah, the world could be so simple.....

I walked around all the time, no idea where I should go, not Santa Monica, not the pier, not the beach, not MacArthur Park, not Echo Park, not even the Rose Garden.....

It was day, it was night, no time anymore, not thoughts anymore, only muddled stuff. It seemed as everything tumbled down, and I wondered why I had such problems with this situation. I wasn't naive. Not regarding Washington, the momentary situation, the alt-right and other groups. Why this

affected me so much? I felt exhausted, like after a marathon, like after a long fight, I had problems to breath, problems to see the things clearly, everything blurred, unclear. The world started to whirl, but I had no break-down, it was something different, not knowing what it was.....

I thought I would die, but this was ridiculous, I was ridiculous. I raised my head, 3rd Street, what a surprise! It was evening, no moon, no planets today. A cloudy evening, no balmy night. A light rain, heavy drops. A light chilly breeze. Union Avenue, a few feet down the hill till Gus's. When had I eaten the last time? Latino kitchen, why not.....

Why We Do The Things We Do

I entered Gus's, not the same atmosphere as normally – or was I the problem? The smile of the young woman behind the counter seemed artificial, but maybe this was a wrong interpretation? Normally we bandied a few words, not today. I ordered the soup of the day, chicken soup with vegetables today, the rip-eye steak with rice and beans, roasted bread and guacamole, also a side salad. I took my fresh squeezed orange juice and the cup for the coffee – I missed this feeling of comfort that I had normally at this place – decided to sit outside. A bit cold today, but the patio was always a nice place. I sat down and waited.

While I waited, the patio got more and more fuller, and as my food came sat at nearly every table some people. I looked inside and saw that also inside nearly every table was occupied. At one table three police officers sat, no special sight here. Gus's was also popular with the police – well, very good food and the pricing was very fair. And also my food was very good, as all the times, and I started to enjoy my meal. I enjoyed it more and more and realized how hungry I was. I emptied my coffee and went into the restaurant to refill the cup. Now the mood inside of the restaurant had changed, I not would say as cozy as normally, but much better than before. One of the cooks saw me as I took milk and sugar. He nodded with his head, I also. Yes, this was still a wonderful place, still the people here were wonderful, the neighborhood was still a wonderful one. As I returned to my table a man stood there with a cup in his hand and his number. He looked at me:

“Can I sit here, Senior?”

He looked around, and in fact all the other tables were more or less occupied.

“Sure, I'm alone here. Feel free to sit down.”

He sat down at the opposite corner of the table. I wasn't sure, but I had the feeling that I've saw him not for the first time, maybe he was also a regular customer. I continued eating and also he got his food. He had decided for the broasted chicken, also with rice and beans, but with the tortillas, not the roasted bread. We both ate, no words were spoken. As I had finished my meal I walked inside again for another coffee, he followed me with his cup.

“You're the private investigator, Senior?”

“Please don't call me “Senior”. I never was one.”

“Sir?”

“Peter, I'm Peter.”

“But you're the private investigator.....Peter?”

“Well, no. At least not at the moment. I've no license at the moment.”

“But maybe I can ask you something anyway?”

“Sure. Shouldn't we sit thereto?”

We walked outside and he sat down opposite to me.

“You not wanna finish you meal first?”

“Not so important at the moment. I've a problem, maybe you can help me?”

“As I said I've no license at the moment. I'm not allowed to work as a private investigator at the moment.”

“No investigations, I need a legal advice.”

“I’m also no lawyer. Maybe you should ask a lawyer?”

“It’s more a moral problem I have.”

“Therein I’m a specialist – sorry, that was not appropriate. What’s your problem?”

“You can keep something? I mean something that’s really problematic. Something that maybe offends the law.”

I thought about Elysian Park, about Azusa and others. What could he offer me, that I wouldn’t know.....

“Yes, a plain yes.”

“The double homicide at Westlake?”

“You have information about the suspect?”

“Suspect? You not think that he’s the murderer?”

“He’s not sentenced, therefore he’s a suspect. On the other hand all leads towards him, but sometimes things are not as they seem – he’s still a suspect. But I have to say that at the moment.....I think he’s the murderer.”

“Thank you for your honest words. I not know it definitively, but I think also that he did it.”

“And your moral problem? You know him?”

“He’s a relative, I’m his closest relative in the US.”

“You knew that he’s illegally in the US?”

“Of course, he.....”

“It’s okay, I think that’s not your problem – or?”

“No.”

“Should we go to another place?”

“No.....I know where he is.”

“You know his whereabouts?”

“Yes.”

“You’ve talked with him?”

“Not really. I cannot talk with the police!”

“You cannot betray him?”

“Yes.”

“And the victims?”

“I said that I’ve a moral problem.”

“Would it be possible that you talk with him? That you tell him he should face the police”

“You know what will happen then?”

“With him?”

“Yes.”

“They will crucify him. But what’s the alternative? The situation now? You also think that he did it.”

“That’s my problem. We know what this means.....California, the dream of California!”

I saw Minh.....Alexandra.....Lizzy’s mom.....

“Death row.”

“Yes, a good reason to start with the executions again.”

“Assumed that he did it - then he did it.....”

“Assumed that he would be white, assumed he would be rich, assumed he would had lived as a honest citizen in Bel Air, assumed the victims were illegal Mexican immigrants, assumed that he could afford to hire a whole bunch of top lawyers.....death row?”

“Presumably not. Money can buy you nearly everything in this country. Not all, but a fucking lot. And we know the situation in our prisons, this wonderful private profit-seeking industry!”

“Therefore what should I do?”

“He should face the police. Sorry, but this is the only advice I can give you.”

“This would mean I would kill him!”

“That’s the reason why he should face the police. I not said you should tell the police where he is.”

“Could you talk with him?”
“Then I would know where he is. What then I should do?”
“Maybe I can arrange a meeting at a neutral place?”
“Would be possible. But this would not change a lot at the end. What shall I do after you’ve leaved? When you have told me the place where we will meet? What shall I do then?”
“You would have to call the police?”
“I would have to.”
“Some say that you’re a man of integrity.....that you shield murderers.”
“You talk about the Trifunovski case. It was not by chance that we met here, or?”
“No, I followed you.”
“We saw us before?”
“I eat sometimes here.”
“The Trifunovski case – no innocent died there. I think, you cannot compare this two cases.”
“But I have a moral dilemma.”
“Yes, and I can’t offer you a simple solution, no solution at all. That’s the dilemma with such dilemmas.”
“What should I do?”
“Assumed you could arrange a meeting right now? Maybe I would have no time or opportunity to contact the police? Maybe I would contact the police afterwards but he would be no longer there? Maybe I would had saw the man who arranged the meeting for the first time? Maybe he would had blindfolded me and I would had no idea were the meeting point had been? At the moment I see many possibilities, but only at the moment.”
“You mean that you would tell the police a story that would protect us all?”
“First I would have to tell the police a story. Believe me, that’s the only solution when this meeting should take place. Then stories, maybe I should start to write stories. But in the end I will have a moral dilemma, but that will be not the first and I fear not the last. Therefore.....I’m no innocent person, I’m no judge, not I.....”
“Okay, how we should do it?”
“Can you go to him with me? I mean, would it be possible for you to go to him just now?”
“Yes, I said that I will come later with something to eat.”
“Then you should buy something.....”

Looking In The Eyes Of Evil

“You will know now were he hides out.”
“You’ve blindfolded me.”
“Ah, yes of course.”
It was no long way, then he stopped in front of a small house.
“Here it is. Will you wait for a moment?”
“I think that would be no good idea. We go together.”
He opened the small gate and we walked to the entrance – no light in the house. He opened the door with a key he had, we entered the house, stood in the hallway, but he not switched on the light.
“It’s me. I’ve something to eat and don’t panic, I’m not alone.”
He spoke with the dark, but the dark began to move.
“I will turn on the light now. He’s a friend of mine, you can trust him.”
The light went on, the smell of the house now even more incisive then before. It was an old, small and shabby house, but a good place to hide. The silhouette was no longer.
“We come to you.”
For a short moment his head appeared.....
“He’s none from us! He’s a white guy, he will betray us! You’re an idiot!”
“Trust me, he’s a man of integrity. He’s well known in our community.”

“He’s white, you’re an idiot!”

“I trust him more than many of our people. Let us talk, please.”

“About what he would talk with me?”

“He will tell you.....”

I thought it’s time now to speed the things a bit.

“I will come to you now. I have no gun. I will ask you one question, and then we will see what will happen. But now I come to you.”

I walked into the room where he was. A bed and some furniture in it, all very old and dirty. He stood in the room, a bottle in his hand.

“Not with me my friend. First of all you put the bottle on the table again. Then you sit on the bed, I will use this chair and when you like you can eat your meal.”

He looked at me, he was unsure what to do.

“Do what he said – do it!”

He sat down, I also, the man on the other chair. He offered him the food.

“No, not now. Why you’re here?”

He looked at me, he not trusted me, he had a lot of fear.....

“I will ask you one question now. Will you give me an honest answer we will talk. But should you lie to me I will call the police.”

“And you will decide whether I lie or not?”

“Yes, because we all know what the truth is. I ask only because I want to hear it from you. I will see in your eyes when you say it.”

He had his head down.....

“I said that I wanna see your eyes!”

He raised his head and looked at me, suddenly he seemed to be relaxed, relaxed because he knew the question.....

“You’ve did it?”

“Yes.”

“You’ve beaten the woman to death?”

“Yes.”

“You’ve beaten the twelve-year-old girl to death?”

“Yes.”

Now he shivered, tears ran down his cheeks and his eyes stared at me. He waited that I would do something, he seemed to be redeemed – but I said nothing, I only stared into his eyes.....

After an immeasurable eternity a voice appeared.....

“What now?”

“As I said to you. There’s only one solution. He has to face the police.”

“That will be a disaster, for him and us.”

“All will generate the same result. This case is no longer a case, this case never was a case. It’s not about him and not about the victims, it’s about politics and interests. He, you, your people? You-all can do whatever you want. They will use it for their interests, everything is written, everything is decided, whatever will happen.”

“Then it would be of no importance what he would do.”

“Not quite. A trial would took the wind out of their sails, at least somewhat.”

“You meant that they would have their murderer - that this would serve justice?”

“Yes, the evil would stand in front of them. He would have to atone, they would have their show.”

He looked at him

“Would you do this? I think also it would be the best.”

“Can I speak with him alone?”

The man stood up and left the room.

“Okay, we’re alone now. Say what you have to say. But please don’t tell me something about why

you did it and such stuff. I not wanna hear this, you can say this in court.”

“I could commit suicide.”

“You had enough time for that, now it’s too late. And apart from that, this would be the worst solution. Then it would be better you would try to escape to Mexico.”

“I would have sentenced myself .”

“That’s the problem! They want you alive.....they want have the satisfaction to sentence you. That’s part of the game.”

“You will call the police?”

“Maybe it would be better to keep some things out of it. This place for instance.”

“You will bring me to a police station?”

“I think this would be the best.”

“And then? You found me?”

“I will tell them something, sometimes strange things happen. The story will be uninteresting as long as we tell the same one.”

“And what have I done the last days, where I have been?”

“Use your imagination and avoid to involve other people.”

“Should I say that I slept under bridges?”

“Believe me, your story will be of no real interest. They wanna see you suffer, they wanna see you bleed. Tell them that you’ve hide in the area Echo and Elysian Park. I will say that I walked around Elysian Park tonight, I do this sometimes at night. I saw you by chance and could catch you.”

He looked at me, the young and fit man.....

“Hey, this is no reality show. You tried to escape, you fall and I was able to fetter you because coincidentally I had a rope with me – hey, this is no game, this is fucking real! On the way to the police I will tell you a story and it would be better you listen carefully and stick to it!”

“Can I ask you a favor?”

“You’re kidding – or?”

“No, would you give me one more day?”

“That’s a joke! How many days more you gave your victims?”

“Would you trust me?”

“Your victims trusted you?”

“I would have to arrange something, then I would be ready to face whatever will be. One day, I need one day.”

“And I? I would leave now? And tomorrow I will come back and you will wait for me that I can bring you to the police? We not have to talk about that you will face the death penalty – soon you will have an eternity on days!”

“I will be here. I will pay for that what I’ve done. One day?”

“For what you need this day?”

“I can’t tell you. I will stay the whole time here, you can watch the house if you like.”

“Suicide?”

“No, they will get their monster.”

“You ask for trust?”

“Yes, a two-time murderer asks you for trust.”

Why I should trust him? Trust? Alexandra? Her I’ve not trusted, with all the consequences, why him? Because it was time to act differently? Time to start to trust, at least someone, someone who had murdered a mother and a child in this brutal way? I closed my eyes, it would be a joke would I accept this. He was a murderer, no mercy, he not deserved it!

“I will leave now. I will not be outside. I will come tomorrow at 9pm. You will wait for me. I will tell you a story and this will be your story. Should you be not here, I will hunt you, I will get you, and I will kill you. Should you have committed suicide, I will tell the police who helped you, you know what will happen with him. Everything understood so far?”

“Yes.”

“Then I will leave now and for the world I hope that you will be here tomorrow.”

I looked into his eyes and he in mine.....

“I will be here – promised.”

“The promise of a murderer? Who knows, maybe more worth than the promise of an honest man. This world is crazy and insane.”

I stood up, turned around and left the room. I not looked back. So many wrong decisions I had made, while trying to be a private investigator – and now? How bizarre that would be, would this be the right decision. It would be like life would laugh about me, like if everything I did so far, would only had been a crude story. I meant it as I said it. I would hunt him, I would kill him. But that was not my problem. What should I do, would he be here and would wait for me.....

A Question Of Guilt

The next day I stood up late after having a short and strange night with crazy dreams. No, no nightmares, just weird stuff. I couldn't remember the dreams as such, but to a lot of puzzling images and feelings. I couldn't believe that I trusted him and feared that I could trust him. All was so unreal. It was an awful double homicide, nothing else. Should I – no, I not should try to understand his deed. He was guilty and I was no judge. But our judicial system? But maybe this system was not the problem as such, but more our society, better some parts of the society? This trial would become a fucking show – O.J.? Maybe he should write a book, or should I write one? His book: How my dream turned into a nightmare and I became a murderer. My book: I hunted him and killed him – justice at the end! Who would sell more books?

Should I think about, what had happened in the forefront to his deed? Yes, as an educated person. But again, I was no judge, not saw me in this position. What would it change, change for the victims, dead, they are dead. Only one life, no life anymore. He took their lives – but the man had spoken in the right way. What if the murderer would be white and rich and the victims illegal immigrants? Some young black unarmed men in the NY underground? As a white armed man? Who would not understand that you had to shoot them all? A young black man on your lawn? This is a threatening situation, everybody understands this! Why sometimes a life is worth such less, sometimes nothing? Every life that ends, for whatever reason, is a sad thing – really? Hitler, Goering, Himmler.....?

Would he wait for me, he would question everything. He would be like someone who decided to be a martyr in order to rescue the lives of others – what a wonderful Hollywood topos! I decided that I would ask him what had happened in that night, would he wait. I would have to do it. All this questions, no simple, no general answers. Life as such was to complex to give simple and general answers. All the time questions will appear which will be hard to answer. Maybe you will find no answer at all, at least no final answer. An infinite process. But what instead? Therefore, maybe it was okay that the man has shot the men in NY? The man on the lawn? Maybe they were men, just men? But maybe it was a matter of racism, that still today it was acceptable for an armed white man to shoot unarmed black men – Strange Fruit? Who should answer this question? The society? But who's the society? Interest groups? The ones with the most money? The majority? I would have to ask him.....

I hoped that he would wait. I would have to ask then. It would do me good to ask. No, it would change nothing therein that two people are dead now, but I would have to ask. He was guilty and he would pay for it. I was guilty and I had not payed for anything. How would it be, equal rights for everybody? Not on a sheet of paper, in reality? Let's say, that everybody would get the same access to lawyers, not a question of money anymore? That the color of your skin would not count anymore? That the same violation of law would have the same consequences? Yeah, all this

questions and so much more. And this case? What should he tell me, that would, in whatever kind of way, make this deed justifiable? What reason would make a bloody murder acceptable? I was frightened cause of the four unarmed young men, therefore I shot them? I thought about what he possibly would tell me. Alcohol or drugs maybe? He not looked like an addicted person. That he had freaked out? His situation as illegal person, the mood in this country today? But we talk about the killing of two humans! Maybe he went nuts? Beating her, maybe even to injure her? But killing her – and the daughter? In such a way? I wasn't sure anymore whether I should ask him, or not. But it would be cowardly not to it, when he would have showed me, that I can trust him, to trust the two-time murderer.

I decided that it was not good to sit here in my motel room, pondering about questions I would find no answer to. It was early evening now, still some hours till 9pm. I should walk a bit, should eat and drink something. But not Downtown West or Westlake. I should take a shower and then I should cross the freeway. I should spend some hours Downtown, looking at the skyscrapers, at the shop windows, Broadway maybe, Angels Flight, Grant Central Market.....enough to kill some hours. No Skid Row, but why not an early Old Fashioned at Seven Grand? A burger and something sweet at IHop? A wonderful mocha at ilCaffè? I would have to ask him.....

Trust A Murderer

I stopped at 8.45pm in front of the house. Not with the Sunbeam, I had rented a normal car to do this. In the house was light what surprised me somewhat – a good or a bad sign? I opened the small gate, walked to the entrance and rang the bell. The man opened the door and looked at me.

“He waits in his room. Do you need me any longer?”

“Yes, you should accompany us to the police. I need you for the story we have to tell them.”

“Okay.”

He stepped aside and I walked to the room. The murderer sat on one of the chairs. I turned around.

“Can I be alone with him for a moment?”

“Sure, I wait at the door till you both come.”

I sat down on the other chair and looked at him.

“A murderer you can trust in – well, it's a freaky world.”

“Are you disappointed because I'm not dead? I will face whatever will come.”

“No, I'm not disappointed, I'm afraid of what will come.”

“Shouldn't I be afraid?”

“Why, you know what will come. The verdict is spoken. Why you did it? Or maybe a better question, what happened?”

“You really ask me? I thought that's not important for you?”

“It's not important, that would be the wrong word. I simply cannot understand that you can sit here, still alive, after such a deed. Once I asked a young girl the same question. It would be interesting whether you will give me the same answer or another.”

“What does she answered?”

“That's not important for you. We will not discuss her answer, I wanna hear your answer.”

“I not did it because I had a reason. The only what I can tell you is what happened in that night.”

“Feel free to speak!”

“I came into this country two years ago. I thought that this is the land were all my dreams will become reality. I was young, full of energy, willing to do everything that would allow me to build up a better live for me. I also thought that I could help my relatives at home. At the beginning all was good. I worked hard, earned some money, I even could send some money home. But then I got more and more the feeling that I never would get a real chance. It was okay, when I mowed the lawn for a few bucks, nobody asked then whether I was legally in the US or not. The same when I

worked hard and many hours on construction areas. No, then nobody is interested in this. But when it's helpful for them they tell everybody that illegal immigrants are all criminals, drug dealers and murderers. Yeah murderers, like I'm one now. But I not wanna say that this justifies what I've done. But I became more and more disillusioned and angry. Then I met her and her daughter. That helped me for a while, but in the end I was no help for them. It became more and more difficult and she decided that it would better, especially for her daughter, that I never would see her again. This gave me the rest. I started to drink, got in contact with some gang members. I became criminal, nothing severe, I stole cars. I was good in it. I not know why I did then what I did, but at this day I started to drink very early. Then I thought that I should go to her, don't know why. She refused to let me in, but I pushed her aside. I was angry about everything and everybody. She screamed at me and her daughter came, crying. The situation confused me totally, but I heard that she yelled, that she will call the police would I not leave, that she will tell them that I'm an illegal immigrant and a criminal. I took something and hit her. There was blood on her face, but she started to hit me, scratch and bite me. I started to hit her, again and again, till she laid on the ground, motionless. Then I looked up and saw the girl, she loved me, we always had a lot of fun together, she loved it when I told her stories from Mexico, from my home. She had tears in her eyes, she had saw me killing her mom. Then I did it....."

"I hoped that your story will be different. You know what will happen when this is your testimony?"
"But I have to face the trail, I know it now. And to answer your question: No, it's impossible to live with this guilt."

"But you're still alive? What did you yesterday?"

"I pondered about everything. I know now that I have to die."

"You not talk about the death penalty – or?"

"No, no modern country should have this. I will judge myself, after I gave them the possibility to sentence me."

"What's your plan?"

"I will face the police, I will face the trail, I will face the sentence. I think this will help my people the most. What happened has happened. Then I will kill myself in prison. I think this will satisfy everybody. No waiting whether they will start again with the executions or not. Death penalty is wrong, how many were mistakenly executed? But I know what I did and I will take the consequences. I think my answer is not the answer you hoped for – what had the girl answered?"

"No, no.....I've no idea. Her answer gave me hope, yours is so without hope. She became sentenced to death. I visit her from time to time, talk with her."

"Would you visit me?"

"I'm not sure to be honest. No, I don't think so. I have to go."

"You hate my answer?"

"This world seems to be an insane world sometimes, but then the world is such a tender one. I cannot imagine one answer that could be acceptable. Every possible answer will be an answer you would have to hate. And I will hate all the discussions that will come up now. Who's to blame, who should be the judge? There will be a lot of judges, many will raise their voice, many will be hypocritical. But at the end you did it, like she did it. I have to tell both of you the story that you should tell the police."

We left the house and I dialed a number.

"Yves, it's me Peter. Your still in your office?"

"Yes, as I said you before. I've night shift today. Will you tell me now why you're interested in that?"

"Yes, it's because of the double homicide in Westlake."

"You've information?"

"I will come to you, not alone. The murderer and another man will accompany me."

"Wow, that's an information! You will come here? Shouldn't we come to you?"

“No, it’s better this way. I will need around 40 minutes to the police station.”

“You can use the parking lot behind the police station. You drive your Sunbeam?”

“No, I drive an old Plymouth.”

“We will wait at the parking lot.”

We talked nothing during our way to the police station. There wasn’t any more to say. I entered the parking lot and saw Yves and some other officers waiting for us. I got out of the car.

“Hey, Yves. The man on the passenger seat is the suspect. The man on back seat is the man who convinced the suspect to face the police.”

“Is the suspect enchained?”

“No, not necessary. It’s his free will to come here. You will have no problems with him.”

“Okay, let us go in.....Peter, you will come with me.”

They separated us and I followed Yves into his office.

“I fear to ask, but what’s the story?”

“I sat at Gus’s Drive In yesterday evening and had a dinner. The man, he also eats from time to time there, addressed me. He started a conversation about bits and pieces, asked me about my status as private investigator, what I would think about the double homicide and suchlike. I told him that I still stay at Jerry’s Motel. Today I left the motel very late, he waited for me and told me that he knew where the man is who committed the double homicide in Westlake. He’s a relative of him. He also told me that he has convinced him to face the police. The only thing was that they not knew, how to do it. Well, you know, not the best mood here at the moment.”

“They feared that the police would act inappropriate?”

“Yes. Especially because of the man. He had some contact with the suspect, but not informed the police immediately.”

“And I have to say that this was in fact no good idea.”

“Yes, but what should he do. He feared that this would escalate everything. And he saw, that the suspect searched for a solution. He told him that he knew me and that he would talk with me, maybe I would agree to be a mediator. That was the reason why I called you.”

“Now I see. You asked me about my shift, to come with him to my police station during my office hours.”

“Yes, now he’s in police custody without any trouble. I think that’s good for everyone.”

“Okay, suspect?”

“He will confess everything.”

“Okay, that’s all for now. Please stay in the city.”

“Okay. We had no dinner so far.....”

“No, no dinner so far - I’m not sure whether this will end the trouble of the last days or the real trouble will start now.....”

“Will start now, but at least they have their monster now.”

Hunt The Man

As feared, the real trouble started now. The public’s disgust knew no limits. Yes, still a few prudent voices – but who listened to them? It was unbelievable what a nonsense some so called politicians and intellectuals delivered. Well, the extreme right, Breitbart, the so called alt-right, Nazis and all this shit? Okay, the usual hate speeches, no one expected something different from them. But it was disappointing who all joined the choir. Yes, the illegal immigrants! They were the largest threat this nation faced, always the same story, chose a group and give them the guilt for everything. So easy, so sad.

I thought about to leave the city, but not now. It felt good to stay here, Lucas Avenue corner 3rd Street. It felt good to walk around at the evenings and at the nights, here in Downtown West and

Westlake. But it was not the same, to eat something on the street, tacos, chicken with rice and beans, fish or a corn cob, sausages.....a lot of police on the street.....

It became more and more difficult for the Latinos, rumors and suspicions, ICE raids nearly every day – politicians showed hardness and power. But more and more the mood started to change, especially because for some people every non-white was an enemy now. Infringement from the police and attacks from civilians. More and more were no longer willing to accept this. A white racist drove with his car in a group of Latinos in San Diego and killed three of them and injured several. Yes, a man had murdered two humans, a man – two humans, Lady Justice, the blind lady.....

At the beginning only a few were interested in what the suspect said, that he confessed everything right after he had handed himself to the police. But then for some came the big disillusion. No big show, no new O.J. Simpson case, nothing like that! In fact, everything developed very boring for them. He had done it, he confessed it – nothing more. Yes, the victims had been whites, but they had lived in Westlake, they had been a part of this neighborhood, their neighbors and friends had been Latinos. The whole thing became more and more boring for them.....

After two weeks the biggest fuss was over. Other things were more important now. I thought about that this would be a good moment to leave this city, even when I was still not sure where to go now. Interstate 5, the farmland? And then how far? Till San Francisco? Why not beyond? Oregon? Also a nice state, not that hot, more rain, still the ocean and beautiful mountains and.....maybe?

Yves

“And, how you feel?”

“It’s very strange. I thought this all will end in a disaster. But now I feel much better. Felt not that good since a long time. You and Elizabeth had helped me a lot!”

“That’s nice to hear! And now, straight till the bay?”

“Oh, I’m not sure Elizabeth. Sure, San Francisco would be cool, but I don’t know. Maybe I should stay away from the big cities, at least for some time. Okay, San Francisco is much smaller and more human sized, but I think about the plain land between the cities.”

“Peter the farmer, that would be something new!”

“I’m no farmer, but honestly? I ask myself why not looking for a job in one of the smaller cities between the two large ones. And.....why not somewhat more north?”

“Canada?”

“Come on Yves! No, but why not till, Oregon – Washington?”

“Canada!”

“Well, no question that Canada is a very good country to stay there, maybe more pleasant than many other countries.....a bit cold, but apart from this.....”

“Peter as trapper in Canada! That’s a vision!”

“You both wish not to escape this city from time to time? No time for nothing, only money and fame!”

“Well, sometimes. But we’re both born here, we lived our whole life here, our friends.....what do you think Elizabeth?”

“I’m a creature of this city. I like it to have all the possibilities of this city, the culture.....I would not be able to bear the loneliness.”

“There’s no place in the world you can be more lonely then in a city like this. Maybe this is the capital of loneliness. Maybe it’s enough, having one person, wherever you live, to overcome loneliness.”

“Then I hope for you that you will find this person, wherever your travel will lead you.”

“Yeah, that would do me good.”

The End Of Soft Lies

Yes in fact, I thought this will lead into a disaster – and now? Not sure, but I know that it will continue. Maybe this is the important element, having the feeling that there’s the possibility for that it goes on. No standstill, things will change, the path is there, you can follow it.

But all what has happened will accompany you for the rest of you life. Minh for example, not to talk about Alexandra and Lizzy’s mom. But that’s good so, you not should forget this, forget them. Too much is too fast forgotten, as if history would not exist. Your history and the history of this world. Your history a part of the history of this world. Time now to finish this chapter, this story. But only to begin a new chapter, a new story. Till the time when everything will come to an end, an end for you, not for this world. And the world? One day this planet will no longer exist, our sun, our galaxy, our universe. Everything will come to an end, but why this gives no solace? Maybe because we’re individuals, maybe because it would be something wonderful to know the end of the story? I would like it, would like it to see how all will develop, what will happen a long time after I’m no longer – the restaurant at the end of the universe, traveling like Dr. Who till the end of time.....

No, I was still not able to understand life, to deal with it. I still felt like.....so much I felt in the wrong place. But it was time to continue, time to change things. Not important what would come, important to break with habits – even it would be only to drink a beer when you normal drink wine, coffee or tea. Let’s try it, do something new, try it, make change possible.....

Too optimistic? Not at this moment.....