

## The Do-It-Yourself Project

### Chapter 2

St. Celia's hospital is located about a ten minute drive from the park where the assault had just taken place. That is driving normally; Jeff made it in under six minutes that Friday night.

The sight of Jeff carrying his mate through the emergency room doors caused a stir. They were suddenly besieged by nurses and a doctor. The ER staff guided Jeff, still with his precious burden, to a treatment room. They thought that was the best course of action, rather than attempt to remove the woman from his grip. Jeff was directed to place Mary on the examination table.

When he did, Mary attempted to reach out with her left hand/arm. Sister Monica, the head nurse, tries to pull Jeff aside. As he moved at the nurses pulling, Mary cried out, "Don't leave me!"

Jeff responded, "I'm here, dear"

Jeff was moved aside, a nurse with a clipboard accosted Jeff. "I need some information, sir."

"Sure, what do you need, are they going to help her soon? Those bastards, I stopped them as soon as I could get up."

"Sir, what is the ladies name?"

"Mary, Mary Baker."

Her next space on her form is titled 'information obtained from'. She asked, "Your name?"

"Jeff Baker, are you going to help her soon?"

Jeff stood beside his love with her left hand clutching at his sleeve. As the nurse looked over at the patient she saw the ruby engagement ring and the gold wedding band. The next block on her form is 'relationship to the patient', without asking she checked the block marked spouse. Then she simply copied Jeff's name and the 'spouse' checkmark to the area titled "next of kin."

She next asked "Age of patient?"

"Mary is 17", answers Jeff.

Still following the printed form she came to 'nature of complaint'. Following the tradition of all medical personnel at the time of calling people seeking help by their first name,

she said, "Jeff, how was Mary injured?"

"We were attacked in the park. Three S.O.B.s attacked us. They were tearing at her before I could do anything."

The next block to be filled in says for 'females only followed' by two preprinted questions. "Jeff, is your wife pregnant?"

"No, not yet at least."

The nurse then skipped the question of nursing.

The next block is a statement followed by a question.

"Jeff, we are a religious institution. What religion does Mary profess?"

"Oh, we are both Catholics."

The nurse who was a nun smiled and said "I knew, you are such a nice couple. Do you think your wife would like the chaplain to come down?"

Jeff looked over at his love to seek her wishes. Mary mouthed the words "Father Tim."

Jeff turned back to the nun-nurse and said "Sister, I think she would like you to notify Father Timothy Strickland. He is over at St. Luke's. I have his number if you don't have it handy."

The request surprised the nun. This couple was asking for the big shot Priest/Lawyer that she recently had heard so much about. The Priest they were asking for seemed to be the fixer for the Archbishop. They even had his private number, if the young man was to be believed. She passed on the request to a student nurse who was standing by to take care of such details.

During this exchange the doctor had begun to examine Mary. He indicated to one of the nurses to cut off what remained of Mary's dress. When he looked up and pointed to Jeff the nun-nurse said to him, "Husband." One quick look at the person laying on the table told the doctor the source of pain she was experiencing. Her shoulder was severely dislocated, a minor but very painful injury. He decided to get an x-ray to make certain no bones were broken before popping it back into its socket. The doctor then gestured to the nurse with the scissors to hurry up. Meanwhile he was cleaning up some of the blood on Mary's face. He was pleasantly surprised that none of the wounds were deep or long enough to require sutures. He checked them for any residual debris and instructed a nurse to apply some antiseptic. On the largest of them, he applied a butterfly to secure its edges. He thought she's a lucky young woman; the wounds should heal without scaring. Next, he set about examining the rest of her body. What he found was bruising where her dress had pulled at her soft tissue when the assailants

were attempting to rip it from her body. There were also marks on her arms where she had been restrained by one of the assailants. Then with a look of gentle concern he addressed this supine patient, "Mary, I must remove your underwear to complete my examination, please forgive the intrusion."

The doctor had examined enough victims of this type of assault to know how violated and powerless they felt.

"Doctor, my Luv stopped them before they could get that far with me."

Mary motioned Jeff to move closer. He bent down so that Mary could whisper in his ear. "Luv, you do it. I don't want anybody's hands there but yours."

"Doctor, she asked me to remove them", said Jeff.

"Ok, I'll tell you what we can do. Mary if you will spread your legs a little and let me look at the inside of your thighs. After I do that I'll ask your husband to lift your underwear just enough so I can confirm that there aren't any injuries that need my attention. Is that ok with you?" asked the doctor.

Mary eyes shifted back to Jeff seeking his approval. Jeff put his mouth to her ear and murmured to her "Mary, I have been dying to get into your pants for so long but I never wanted to do it this way."

The doctor checked and found nothing remarkable.

The doctor spoke to Mary "I'm going to have one of the sisters take you up for some X-rays of your shoulder. I don't think anything is broken. I am only asking for them in an abundance of caution."

"Doctor, can't Jeff take me? Please?" complained Mary.

"Well, my dear, I would really like to have a chance to check your husband over and I can be doing it when you are upstairs. You won't be gone all that long. I promise to keep him right here until you get back."

Jeff nodded his approval to Mary.

There was a large commotion in the receiving area, as several 'officers of the peace' arrive with their hands on their weapons, demanding attention.

"Where is he?!, We have a reported kidnaping and assault with a deadly weapon."

The intake clerk told the officers, "We have two victims of an assault being treated now but no kidnapers."

One of the policemen pulled out his handcuffs saying, "Must be them. Where is he?"

The intake clerk, Sister Aloysius not having had this experience before sought out the nurse supervisor. This nurse is the one who took the receiving information from Jeff. She had seen similar situations before, someone thinks that they see something; reports it to the police. The police react without verification then later when all the facts are gathered, reason prevails. In the meantime, her ER becomes a circus. Tonight she thought if we wait for the Priest that the nice couple asked for to arrive; he can help me get this straightened out with minimum fuss.

Back in the treatment area the doctor has been talking to Jeff. The doctor convinced Jeff that he allow himself to be checked over. Jeff had a clearly visible bruise on his face and the shoe prints on his clothes indicated that he has received numerous blows to his torso. After examining Jeff, the doctor told Jeff he could find nothing to be concerned about. Just take it easy on your ribs for a couple of days.

A transport orderly returned Mary to the ER. She brought with her the X-rays and radiologist's report, confirming the doctor's original diagnoses; Mary had a uncompounded dislocated shoulder. The doctor made profuse apologies to Mary explaining that this next part was going to cause her further discomfort. He then set about to wrench her shoulder into its proper position. He started the process by stating "Mary, seeing the way you reacted earlier to having someone touch you, I am going to have your husband hold you while I do this, rather than one of the nurses. Is that ok with you?"

Mary bit the lip, then nodded her head. "Is it going to hurt that much?"

The edges of the doctor's mouth drooped as he shrugged, "It's the only way I know how to fix it."

The doctor then showed Jeff what he wanted him to do. He positioned Jeff so that his chest was pressing Mary to the table. Jeff's left arm was under Mary's neck with his hand gripping her body between her neck and injured shoulder. His right hand was placed below her left shoulder almost on her breast. This arrangement put Jeff's and Mary's faces close together. Jeff can clearly see the look of fear in Mary's eyes. When he sensed the doctor moving, he placed his lips over Mary's. He opened his mouth and with all the emotion he could summon tried to suck the pain from his love. Mary responded by opening hers in return and let herself flow into her mate. The young lovers lost themselves so deeply that Mary never felt the yank and twist that restored the position of her joint. The doctor gave them a few more moments of tenderness before interrupting them. "Mary, its all over. Its going to be sore for a couple of days, I am going to prescribe a mild muscle relaxant to help with the healing process."

As the doctor walked away, he shook his head at what he had just witnessed. He had seen some powerful exchanges of love. This one he was going to have put near the top of his list.

The level of communion that the mates had just achieved was so tantalizingly close to what they had been seeking earlier that it made that need even more urgent.

Out in the waiting area, the circus that Sister Monica had feared had developed and now was assuming epic proportions. Several other police officers and a brace of detectives had joined the law enforcement contingent. Outside, three more cops were digging into every nook and cranny of Jeff's car. Every police car that had arrived was 'parked' in the emergency access lane at a different angle. Each one was still running its front doors open and its light flashing. Fortunately, the officers had turned off the sirens, though they had left the police radios on at maximum volume.

Father Tim arrived in the ER about this time. Sister Monica saw him and quickly shepherded him into the treatment area. Father's first concern was Mary's condition. "Is she asking to be anointed? I brought the Holy Oils just in case."

Sister Monica replied, "You won't need them for Mary, her condition is painful but not life threatening. You he might need them for her husband, with the way that pack of hyenas in the waiting room are snapping at him."

Sister explained to Father Tim what she knew of the assault. During this recital she continually refers to Mary as Mrs. Baker. (*Katharine, what have they been up to?*) (*Timothy, I think, maybe they have been trying to play house.*) Father Tim then requested to talk to the couple privately. He was led to a holding area where he found Mary lying on a gurney dressed in hospital gown. Jeff was sitting at her side. They were holding hands, talking quietly . They looked up and saw Father Tim and got a very sheepish look.

Jeff announced, "Father, we didn't mean to inconvenience you."

Before he could continue Mary interrupted, "Its all my fault."

"No, Father she's wrong, I am the one to blame."

"Shsss! Luv" responded Mary as she reached with her good hand to try to cover Jeff's mouth. "It is mine and you know it."

"Both of you, stop it right now! You were assaulted by criminals. You can't blame yourselves for the acts of the likes of which attacked you." (*Katharine, I thought they were more mature than that.*) (*Timothy, Me thinks that they are talking about something else.*) (*Huhm?, Katharine*)

The pair sought each other's attention and with matching arched eyebrows communicated, we know that! Then each flicked their eyes in Father Tim's direction and back to the other's gaze. Next, they both lifted their shoulders with Mary winching at the movement. {Translation: He doesn't understand. Are you going to tell him or am I?}

*(Katharine, they are at it again!)*

*(Timothy, of course they are. They have it down petty pat, don't you think?)*

“Ok, you two, what are you not telling me? Mary, let Jeff answer for the both of you.”

Jeff began, “Father I... er we went up there because it was the only place we could... er... you know...? Ok?”

*(Timothy, I told you so!)*

“Remember, I told you; you two are not married, not at least in the eye's of The Church.”

To which Mary replied, “I don't want to argue with you Father but I sincerely believe that Jeff and I have made **THAT** commitment in the eyes of God. Are not he and I, the ordinary ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony?”

*(Timothy, you better help them fix it and soon.)*

*(Katharine, We have to fix another problem first.)*

“Have you talked to the police yet?” Jeff and Mary shook their heads. “Good! Then I'll assume when you asked for me you were seeking the advice of your attorney as well as for my spiritual guidance?” Father Tim said as he was nodding his head vigorously.

Jeff replied, “Yes, I guess so.”

Father Tim said, “Very well, then we have them in a double whammy: 'Seal of the Confessional' and 'Lawyer Client Privilege'.”

*(Timothy, you can be so devious at times.)*

“Now, tell me everything that occurred tonight, everything!”

Jeff and Mary recited the evenings events when they came to the motel part, Father Tim stopped them with the comment, “Stop right there, I don't want to hear any more about that until I put my stole on. You were indicating that you stopped to inquire about lodging in the future.”

*(Timothy, your lawyer tongue is returning)*

*(Yes Katherine, later tonight is in the future)*

Then when they got to the park he again interrupted with “You were just passing through and stopped to have a short marital discussion.”

*(Timothy? Did I hear correctly?)*

“By the way that was your lawyer making the last comment not your Father Confessor.”

*(Katherine, this two hat thing is going to be a little hairy.)*

“But, Father, we didn’t intend to do much talking.” retorted Jeff.

Mary hid her eyes and added, “He’s right Father.”

*(Katherine, this one is going to be difficult.)*

“My children, *(Timothy?)(Katharine, that’s priest talk, a term of endearment)* if my guess is right, you were going to attempt to have the ultimate communication a married couple can have. *(Oops, Katharine, I hope that they don’t catch my slip. Oh, Katharine wipe that silly grin off your face, I am trying to be serious here!)* In the nature of keeping the subject of the discussion private, we will leave it alone. What I was indicating is that discussions between husband and wife are subject to “marital privilege”, in other words; you cannot be compelled to testify against your spouse. Understood? Ok, Continue with your story.”

Jeff took up the narrative. He described the shock of the glass being broken on Mary’s side of the car. Then his being bodily ripped from his side and suffering through numerous kicks. His assailant leaving him, Jeff assumed the attacker thought that he was no longer a threat. His hearing Mary’s pleas for help. Finding the rock under his hand. “Father, do you know how many of the events in ‘Track and Field’ are based on ancient warrior skills?” Jeff tells of disabling two of the attackers with rocks, then his aborted chase of the third. Coming back to Mary, and finding her in great distress. Picking her up and making for their car. The cop arriving. The officer who had no inkling as to what just happened. The officer’s demand to place Mary on the ground. Jeff’s wordless refusal. The police officer’s opening the car door at his request. Jeff thanking him and telling the cop where he was taking Mary. Driving directly to the hospital. Probably running some red-lights in the process. We arrived here and the nuns have been taking care of us since.

Father Tim took all this in. After a few moments thought, he said, “Jeff, you did the right thing at every turn. Now I will go out there and attempt to straighten this out.”

On his way to the receiving area, Father Tim stopped to talk with the doctor who had been treating Mary and Jeff. He asked if it was possible for the doctor to order something like an aspirin for Jeff. In way of explanation he offered, “I want to be able to tell those ‘hyenas’ truthfully that Jeff has been given a ‘pain killer’ and is unable to converse with them at this time.”

The doctor thought for a moment, then said that he would order the medication. He started to walk away. Then he turned back and added, “The way that Mary trusted her husband there was no way possible that he is responsible for her injuries. If you want me to testify to that in a court of law, as a trained medical observer, I will gladly do it.”

Father Tim went to the waiting area and sought out the person in charge of the police

contingent. What he discovered was it was Detective Del'Grosso, an extremely unpleasant individual. Father Tim presented his card:

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Rev. Timothy Strickland, B.A., M. Div., JD  
Of Council to the Archdiocese

Turner 5-5555

The Detective looked at the card and replied, "Oh and a lawyer too, who are you representing?"

Father Tim answered, "The Baker's although since they are members of the diocese that interest is there also, but in this instance the Baker's are my primary clients. Just what seems to be the problem?"

"Baker's, you say? Are they my doers? I have a report of a crazed perp, who savagely attacked two young boys who were assisting a young girl in the park. He then kidnaped the female after threatening a police officer, while he was attempting to maintain the peace. We can throw in resisting arrest and fleeing the scene of a crime and that's just for starters. Two of the youths that were attacked are currently hospitalized in serious condition."

Father Tim features hardened in to a look of total incredibility. "Mr. and Mrs. Baker were transversing that excuse of a park, when they were set upon by assailants of unknown age, who caused grievous injury to Mrs. and Mr. Baker: then, even though Mr. Baker was personally in need of medical attention, he used the means at hand to subdue the aforesaid persons before they could violate his wife, Mrs. Baker. When a police officer arrived on the scene, he assisted my clients by opening the door to their conveyance, which had been damaged by the assailants Mr. Baker thanked him for his help, Mr. Baker then informed the officer where he was taking his wife to seek medical assistance. Mr. and Mrs. Baker arrived at this hospital directly from the incident. They have been undergoing treatment since their arrival. And now you are suggesting that they are somehow guilty of an infraction of the law?"

Del'Grosso gave Father Tim a hard look. The detective's partner motioned him aside. They talked privately for a few seconds "I have run into this lawyer before, we better check our facts before we make fools of ourselves."

Del'Grosso refused to heed the other cop's advice. He said, "I'm not afraid of his collar I'm going to treat him like any other lawyer. I really want to get one of those preppie kids that are constantly coming into the city and lording it over the locals. I'm sure that this 'kid' did some really bad things." Then related how he thought that anybody who lawyered up before he had a chance to question him hard had to be guilty. He then demanded that the culprit be produced for some 'in-depth' interrogation.

The hackles on Father Tim's neck arose at the last statement. Speaking directly to Del'Grosso, "Are you placing my clients under arrest?"

Del'Grosso started to answer when his partner butted in, "No we are not. We don't have a warrant at the moment."

To which Father Tim replied, "In that case, as their attorney, I can not allow it. They have both been given some medications for their injuries. Therefore, it is not possible at this time to have a responsive conversation with them."

"So I'll get a warrant," sneered Del'Grosso.

Del'Grosso hustled off to find a phone. He called the on-call Assistant District Attorney {ADA}. Fearing the worst, Father Tim got out his black book and called the President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, a long time friendly adversary and now a parishioner at St. Luke's. He requested a hearing on the soon to be requested arrest warrant. The judge grilled Father Tim on the night's happenings as he knew them.

When he was finished the judge told Father Tim, "Father, I will get involved this one time. All of this is ex parte so I will set it up but I will not give any suggestion to Judge Goldstein on how to handle it. Make your case to him in open court. Now, unless there is something else, I will call the administrative clerk and so order it."

"Judge, there is another small matter, Mary Baker is 17 and therefore under the curfew age. Jeff Baker is over 18. Just to make things clear, could you order Mary to be released to Jeff, *in loco parentis*?"

"Tim, if you can make that one go down you're a better lawyer than I am. A wife released in custody of her husband, as a parent, good luck selling that to the wife. But I will include that in my order. Now, give me ten minutes, then call the clerk for the details."

As Father Tim hung up the phone, he could still hear the Judge's mirth.

*(Timothy, you are a little too self satisfied. What did you just do?)*

*(Later, Katharine, I have some more thinking to do Please?)*

Father Tim waited the allotted ten minutes and called the clerk. The hearing had been set for tomorrow at the central booking unit where a judge is stationed for such contingencies. He went over to the two detectives and suggested that they call their ADA back. They reluctantly did as bidden. Finding that they had been maneuvered around, they told the priest that tomorrow was a different day. Judge Goldstein didn't cater to papists like the President Judge did.

Father Tim left the two officers to get the hoard out of the Hospital. He went looking for Sister Monica. Once he found her, he asked to get the pair ready to leave. The Sister then told him what the police officers had done. They had subpoenaed all of Mary's

clothes as evidence.

"I am compelled to collect even her unmentionables, all of them! She is going to feel so exposed!" bemoaned the Nun. "We can give her a gown but they are so immodest, that she would be embarrassed even to seen even by her husband."

"Embarrassed, in front of her husband?" enquired Father Tim.

*(Katharine, I did it again, sorry)*

*(Timothy, don't be sorry. You are simply acknowledging the reality.)*

Sister Monica, somewhat flustered, replied, "I don't know much about those things. The gown is the best I can do."

*(Psss, dear you brought along your cassock, didn't you)*

*(It is in the car, Katharine.)*

*(Timothy, a cassock is almost a dress.)*

*(Let her wear it, Little One?)*

*(My husband, you haven't called me that in ages. Of course, let her wear it!)*

"Sister Monica, I have a cassock in the car. It would certainly be more concealing than that 'gown'."

Sister Monica considered it for a moment. "I never thought about it but the cassock would be perfect. There is nothing more protective than to wrap oneself in the cloth."

Father Tim retrieved the vestment from his car. The sister took it from there; helping Jeff remove the requested 'evidence' from Mary, and helping him put the pseudo dress on his love. With Mary modest, they left the ER. Father Tim in the meantime had brought his car to the entrance. Jeff looked around, seeking a glimpse of his car but not seeing it, he returned his attention to his mate. Father Tim noticed the momentary concern and the quick dismissal. *(Katharine, we are dealing with the real thing here.)* *(Timothy, of course we are. You males are so dense at times.)*

On the way to Mary's house Father Tim realized that Mary was trying to remove her rings.

"Mary, I don't think that is fair to Jeff."

"Father, I don't want to hurt my parents."

"Mary, who is more important to you, Jeff or your parents?" questioned Father.

“Jeff!” sobbed Mary.

“Then?” was Father’s one word question.

Mary turned to her mate , “I’m sorry Dear, I love you and we will be together. But I feel my parents still control me.”

“Mary leave them on and I will tell them about our vows.”

Father Tim pulled into Mary’s driveway. Jeff helped Mary out of the passenger’s seat. The trio walked to the front door. Father Tim opened the door and motioned Jeff to take Mary inside.

Just inside the door, they were greeted by Smokey. He wanted to jump up and welcome his mistress and his new pack leader but his keen sense of danger prevented him. He smelled injury and pain in the air. He became more troubled as he identified the source of the scents, his mistress. The more he sniffed there were other signals in the air. He sensed fear on his new leader but the fear was not of him. The third one had no fear at all on him. He was the one in command of this little party. Smokey turned and held his ground between the trio and Mary’s advancing parents.

“Just who the hell do you think you are barging in here? And you two children, you are way past your curfew,” blustered Mary’s dad.

Father Tim had his back to the parents. He said, “Jeff, take Mary to her room and see if you can make her comfortable. I will talk to these two until you get back.”

Jeff looked at his love and arched his brow. Mary pointed up the stairs and said “First door on the right.”

At this point, Mary’s mother chimed in with, “He can’t do that, it would be sinful. And where is her new dress?”

“Jeff, go on, she is hurting just standing there. There is no sin involved.” was Father Tim’s response.

While Jeff half carried, half walked Mary up the stairs to her bedroom, Father Tim turned his attention to her parents.

“Mr. and Mrs. Baker, I am Father Timothy Strickland, the Chaplin at Mary’s School and your daughter and Jeff’s attorney. There was an unfortunate incident in town tonight. Mary and Jeff were savagely attacked. Very fortunately, Jeff was able to subdue two of the three attackers and chased off the third one. The first two are in the hospital, and they are seeking the third. During the melee, Mary was injured. So Jeff took her to St. Celia’s for treatment. At the hospital, when they asked your daughter if she would like to have a priest visit her, she asked for me. So I came over. When Jeff gets back down, he will fill in the rest. I believe that he has some important news for you.”

Shortly, Jeff came down the stairs carrying Father Tim's cassock. Father Tim took the offered garment and put it over his arm.

Smokey, watching from the top of the stairs, stared at his pack leader trying to communicate 'you better learn to take better care of your mate and my mistress. While I'm on duty, no one dare approach her except you and maybe that new super-top-dog next to you.'

Father Tim prompted Jeff, "I believe that you have something to tell these good folks here."

With the thought of 'In to the valley of death rode the six hundred' bouncing around in his head; Jeff opened his mouth, "Mr. and Mrs. Baker, I have asked Mary to marry me, and she has said yes."

The first to react was Mary's mother, "It can't be for real she only has one of those play friendship rings."

Not to be upstaged, Mary's dad added, "What do you mean you asked her? You have to ask ME!"

"No, sir. I asked her, it is her decision and hers only!"

Not one to allow his authority to be questioned, Mary's dad retorted, "Well I won't allow it! I won't sign the papers. She's not old enough"

Seeing that this conversation was not going anywhere, Father Tim broke in with, "Mr. Baker, in the eyes of Holy Mother the Church she is, and she can. It is HER assent, not yours, that is required."

Mary's mother was feeling left out. She piped up with, "You can't buy her with that piece of costume jewelry that she has been trying to hide all week!"

The anger at the way he and his love were being treated finally boiled over in Jeff. He all but spat, "That 'piece of costume jewelry' is her wedding ring and has been in my family longer than you have been alive. And as if it matters, the stone in our engagement ring is twice the size of the one you are wearing."

Drawing a deep breath, Jeff continued, "Your daughter, the person who I love more than life itself, is upstairs hurting and you two are concerned with the value of jewelry and defending your turf. That disgusts me! Don't you even want to know what happened tonight? Or how serious her condition is? I'll be back in the morning to check on Mary. Father Tim, can we leave now?"

The priest looked at Mary's parents, then at Jeff. "Jeff, you are legally responsible for Mary, are you willing to leave her in these people's care?"

Mary's dad recognized the import of the question. He gaped open mouthed at Jeff and

Father Tim. Legally responsible? He was her father, she belonged to him; where were these interlopers coming from?

Father Tim perceived Mr. Baker's objections. In his most formal lawyer persona, he said "Yes, there is a court order stating such."

Father Tim politely said to Mary's parents, "Now, Jeff and I must leave you. I believe that you are good Catholic parents and law abiding citizens. I presume that you will behave accordingly. When Jeff comes tomorrow to pick up Mary, I expect that you will welcome him as your future son-in-law and not cause us to involve the police."

After Father Tim and Jeff left, Mary's parents began to accuse the other for being at fault for Mary's being injured. They each started to add others to their list of culprits. The one thing they never did was put themselves on their own list. One person they each had on their list was Mary herself. They attempted to enter Mary's room to admonish her about tonight's happenings and the way her so called 'boyfriend' treated them. They were greeted by Smokey's bare teeth and a sound so deep in his throat that it reached far down into their sub-human brain and caused them to slink away with their tails between their legs.

In Father Tim's car on the way to his house, Jeff tried to apologize for the angry outburst. Father Tim explained that there are times where righteous anger is called for, tonight was, in his opinion one of those instances. In an attempt to divert Jeff's dwelling on Mary's parents' reactions, Father Tim talked of more practical matters. He inquired how Jeff was going to retrieve his auto. Would it be acceptable for him to pick them both up and drive them to the hearing tomorrow?

When they arrived at Jeff's house, the priest parked behind the car in the driveway. Jeff led Father Tim into the house and made him comfortable while he went to wake his parents. Jeff went up the stairs and entered his parents' bedroom. He walked to his mother's side of the bed. Once there, he lightly shook her. With barely open eyes she mumbled, "You're finally home son. We were beginning to get worried."

"Mom, please wake dad. Something has happened; Mary and I will be ok but there are things I must tell you right now."

Jeff's dad started stirring with all the conversation. "Son, is everything ok?"

Jeff was somewhat evasive when he answered, "Dad, we will be able to work things out. There is a priest downstairs who helped Mary and I so much tonight. He is a good guy; please come down to meet him."

Jeff's dad somewhat skeptically asked "A priest you say, does he know about your mother and I?"

"Dad, the question never came up. I doubt that he would have any trouble with your situation. I think you may like him."

Jeff's mother turned to his dad and said, "For your son and I, please?"

"Valerie you know I won't deny you anything."

Jeff's mother put on a robe over her flannel nightgown. His father went as he was in his pajamas.

Father, please excuse our appearance; we don't usually have visitors this late. Come to the kitchen; we can all sit around the table."

As everybody arrives in the kitchen, Jeff's mom was busy making coffee. She rummaged around in the refrigerator and came out with half of a cherry pie. Jeff's dad took his seat, he turned his attention to Jeff. "Jeff, we taught you better manners than this, please introduce your companion."

"Mom, Dad may I introduce Father Tim; he is the Chaplin at Mary's school and more importantly for this weekend, he is our lawyer. Father, my parents Valerie and Bill Baker."

Jeff's mom stopped her fidgeting with the refreshments at this last statement. "Jeff, why would you need a lawyer? And why didn't you call your father before burdening Mary's parents?"

"Valerie, give the boy a chance. Father, pleased to meet you. What my wife was really asking is why SHE wasn't consulted. Jeff has a very level head on his shoulders. I trust his judgement." With the last Jeff's dad put his hand on his wife's and smiled to take the sting out of the words.

"Son I have the feeling that this is going to be a long and involved recital, seeing as you deemed it necessary to bring along not only a priest but your lawyer."

Jeff begins the tale at last Sunday night. He told all, including presenting his heritage rings to Mary and how they made vows to one another, saying that he considered them married already.

"Son, are your mother and I going to become grandparents in the near future?"

"That depends upon what you define as the near future. Mary and I want children but haven't had the opportunity to start the process. In fact, that is part of what tonight's problem revolves around."

Father Tim started chuckling which turned into a belly laugh. "Your son has a power of understatement. They are young lovers, full of desire. And fortunately or unfortunately, they don't seem to be able to take that desire to fruition. I have been trying to get them to wait until they are really married."

"Mom, Dad, Mary and I were looking for a chance to fully express our love. We wound up in that downtown park where a bunch of thugs attacked us. As soon as I was able, I

did what was necessary to protect Mary.”

Father Tim joined the story telling, he described the happenings at the hospital. Jeff's mom kept repeating “oh dear”, “oh my”, “that's dreadful”, until her husband stood and walked behind her and cradled her head in his arms.

“Valerie, he's okay. Stop worrying.”

“Bill, what about Mary?”

“Mary?”

“Bill, she's now our daughter too!”

*(Timothy, these are good people!)*

“Well, son, what seems to be the problem then?”

Father Tim interjected, “The police had some cock and bull notion that the thugs were helping Mary and Jeff was the attacker.”

“Jeff just what were you two doing in the park?”

“We went there because we love each other and nobody is willing to treat us as persons. We are meant for each other. I love her even more than I love you two.”

“Son, if you are going to spend the rest of your life with Mary I sincerely hope that you love her more than us.”

Jeff's dad said, “You did more than your share earlier. Your mom and I never told you how much we appreciate what you did for the family. It's our turn to return the favor. What can we do to help? I can start by picking up your car and take it to your Uncle Ralph's. He probably has a window laying around.”

Jeff's mother then suggested that they can move in; she will make room in Barbara's room for Mary. Little Barb has always wanted a big sister.

“Valerie, what are you thinking?” retorted his dad.

“Bill, a teenage boy with a girl in his room? I don't want the neighbors wagging their tongues.”

“For God's sake woman, they will be a married couple!”

“You mean they will be doing...”

“Yes, that is one of the things married people do, remember?”

The discussion then revolved around Jeff and Mary getting to the hearing and the logistics of getting Jeff's car to his Uncle Ralph's.

Father Tim bid them goodnight and returned to the rectory.

After a restless night that involved a lot of soul searching, Father Tim awoke.

*(Katherine, are you awake?)*

*(Yes, Timothy dear not much need to sleep up here.)*

*(You remember your comment last night about helping them fix it?)*

*(Yes dear, just because I'm dead doesn't mean I'm senile.)*

*(Do you think they can make it, I mean marrying at this age?)*

*(We did, Timothy)*

*(But Katharine, we had a lot of help. And two sets of parents who loved us. Your dad gave us a house to live in, and my dad put me through college and law school.)*

*(Timothy, maybe its payback time. Remember, 'Charity begins at home'.)*

*(Are you suggesting that I take the poverty vow, Dear?)*

*(Timothy, you don't have to go that far. You will never use all that loot we gathered.)*

*(Katharine, you know if they keep up as they have been doing, their souls are in danger.)*

*(They don't seem to think so, Dear.)*

*(But Katharine, there are laws and they aren't following them.)*

*(Timothy, are you sure? I seem to remember that you used to a have a knack for getting around pesky laws.)*

*(Katharine, you know I never broke the law. Regulations, maybe? But never laws.)*

*(Saint Katharine, are you willing to do some aiding and abetting.)*

*(Timothy! 'Aiding and abetting?' You used to be better with words than that! I am perfectly willing to render assistance to those in need. Now tell me what you want me to do.)*

*(Katharine, would you go talk to Him again? Would you ask Him if He objects to my bending a few rules {not laws} in His service?)*

*(Oh, ask me something difficult, Timothy!)*

Father Tim dressed and walked over to the church to say the Saturday 8 o'clock Mass.

After mass, Father Tim picked up the conversation.

*(Timothy, He said to tell you that laws of nature are His laws. He doesn't care about 'rules', they are made to be circumvented any way.)*

*(Timothy, Just what are you up to?)*

*(Tell you later, Katharine. Let me get them through this morning's hearing.)*

Father Tim drove to Jeff's house to pick him up then to Mary's to pick her up. There was a minor confrontation with Mary's parents. Part of which involved Smokey and his protectiveness that was solved by taking him along for the ride. During the trip into the city, Father Tim explained to the young couple that he would probably be making many references to them that imply that they are a married couple. He will be doing that as their lawyer not as a priest. Ending the conversation with 'that he felt justified in doing so' since he felt that he could make a strong legal case for a "Marriage in Common Law."

The round house court was in session when they arrived. The ADA from last night was late. The police contingent was present and accounted for, including the officer who opened the door for Jeff. That officer was going to be the accuser, the complaining witness.

While they waited the judge deposed of several arrangements while waiting for the ADA who was to handle "The Baker Case". Judge Goldstein had a reputation of being very hard on out of town kids. When the ADA finally showed up, the case finally got called.

The ADA introduces himself, "Mr. Webber for the Commonwealth."

Judge Goldstein quiped, "You are tardy, Mr. Webber. A little to much bed and not enough sleep, last night?"

The commonwealth attorney was non-pulsed by the remark. "Your Honor, Pre-arrest hearings are unusual, I had to gather some facts."

"Gather facts? You should have them before you request any arrest warrant. Even if you were intending to take it to a magistrate. You should have had at least a good faith showing. I am reluctantly going to let you slide this time. Don't ever try that excuse with me ever again."

Father Tim and Jeff had taken their position at the defense stand by this time. Judge Goldstein inclined his head in their direction as an indication that it was their turn.

"Rev. Timothy Strickland, Esq. for Mr. Baker"

"Mr. Strickland or should I say Father? I didn't recognize you for a moment with that collar on", came the reply from the bench.

"Yes, Your Honor, it's been awhile since I put in an appearance before you. As for Mr. vs. Father whatever pleases the court."

"Maybe I should put on my yarmulka, then you can address me as, Your Honor Rabbi Goldstein. But let's keep it secular; you will be 'Mr.' and I will be simply 'Your Honor'. I take it that is Mr. Baker standing beside you."

"Yes, Your Honor. This is Mr. Jeffrey Baker."

"How does he plead?"

Jeff started to answer 'not guilty' but was prevented by Father Tim placing his hand on his arm.

"Your Honor, This is a hearing on an arrest warrant. No charges have been laid as of yet. Therefore there is nothing for my client to plead to."

"Well, Mr. Webber what does the Commonwealth have to present?"

*(Timothy, is it always this relaxed? I never had the chance to see you in action.)*

*(No, Little One most times everything is very formal.)*

The ADA related the police version of the 'facts'. To wit: Jeff came upon two youths helping a lady in distress and then committed an unprovoked attack on them. Then while in the process of kidnapping the young woman, he refused to obey a lawful order to cease and desist. Compounding his torts by threatening said police officer. He subsequently fled the scene and who knows what he did to the young woman then.

As soon as the ADA finished, Mr. Strickland rose and objected to what the Commonwealth had alluded to.

Excerpt from the transcript:

Mr (Rev) Strickland: "If it pleases the court, I demand that the Commonwealth produce more than third or fourth hand hearsay."

ADA Webber: Your Honor this is extremely unusual.

Strickland: Yes it is. The Commonwealth's attorney has not even indicated that he has a sworn statement from any Peace Officer concerning the events. Has Mr. Webber forgotten the import of the phrase 'Swear out a warrant'?

Webber: I can do better, I can produce the officer involved.

The Honorable Mark Goldstein: Ok both of you, you will address the court and not one another.

Goldstein: The officer is present?

Webber: Yes, Your Honor.

Goldstein: Bailiff call the Officer. Mr. Webber his name?

Webber: Officer Nicholas Ceepeeh Your Honor.

Bailiff: Officer Nicholas Ceepeeh approach the bench and be sworn.

Officer N. Ceepeeh is sworn.

Webber: Your Honor, do you wish me to qualify the witness?

Strickland: Your Honor, we are willing to accept Mr. Webber's good faith representation as to the gentleman's status as sworn peace officer.

Webber: Officer, for the record please state your full name, rank and district.

Off. Ceepeeh: Nicholas Michael Ceepeeh spelled Charlie-Echo-Echo-Papa-Echo-Echo-Oscar-Hotel. I am a patrolman second class attached to Park division at Girard Mansion Station house. My jurisdiction is anywhere in the city/county.

Webber: Last night May 22 and this morning May 23 were you on regularly scheduled duty between the hours of 11:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time and 7:00 AM EDT.

Strickland: Objection! leading question.

Webber: Your Honor this is so preliminary. I am allowed some leeway.

Goldstein: Mr. Strickland lets get this over with. If you stop picking at the nits, I promise to keep a short leash on Mr. Webber.

Webber: Officer please tell us what you observed last night as it relates to Mr. Baker here.

Ceepeeh: I was patrolling as I normally do. I check that area to chase off couples using the area for immoral purposes. When I saw that man there...

Webber: You are pointing at Mr. Baker is that correct?

Ceepeeh: Yea, that guy right there next to the priest. He was carrying a young female who was crying out in pain. I commanded him to stop and place the woman on the ground. He didn't do it, in fact he made threatening indications to me. He forced me to open the door to an automobile that was standing there. He then placed the woman in

the car and mumbled something to me. He then took off in the direction of the hospital. I checked the condition of the two injured good Samaritans. I then proceeded to call in the incident on my radio.

Webber: If it pleases the court, the Commonwealth respectfully requests that a warrant be issued for the arrest of one Jeffrey Baker. The primary charges being assault with a deadly weapon and kidnapping, both charges being felonies of the first order.

Strickland: Objection, I have not had a chance to examine the witness.

Goldstein: Sustained. Mr. Strickland you will have a chance in one moment. Mr. Webber consideration of your request is postponed until I have heard all the information available on this event. I hope that you have more concrete evidence than just the report of this officer. Mr. Strickland you may cross examine the officer now.

Strickland: Good morning, officer, My name is Timothy Strickland. As you noted earlier I am a Priest. Just so that you know I am also a member of the bar; I am representing Mr. Baker. With that out of the way; you said that you observed my client carrying a young woman. Can you give the court her name or otherwise identify her?

Ceepeeoh: I don't know her name but that's her sitting behind you.

Strickland: For the record, you are pointing to Mary Baker, who happens to be Mr. Baker's wife.

[noise from spectators and the bench]

Strickland: You also stated that Mr. Baker made threatening indications to you. Is not a better description of the event that Mr. Baker was being protective of his injured wife?

Ceepeeoh: He had a fierce look about him. And there were two people laying on the ground clearly injured by someone.

Strickland: I take it that is a yes.

Webber: Objection! He is putting words in the officers mouth.

Goldstein: Sustained. Mr. Strickland rephrase.

Strickland: Officer, is it possible that this new information changes your opinion of what you saw? A simple yes or no will do.

Ceepeeoh: Yes. It's possible that he was being protective of the woman.

Strickland: You said that my client said something to you after you opened the door to his car. By the way, did you find out later that it was indeed his automobile?

Ceepeeoh: Yes, I was told later that the car in question is registered to a Jeffrey Baker.

I am not exactly sure what he said though.

Strickland: Could it have been, "Thank, you"?

Ceepeeoh: Yes, that seems to fit now that you say it.

Strickland: You said that Mr. Baker took off in the direction of the hospital. How did you know that is where he was headed and not to say some secluded spot?

Ceepeeoh: He said that was where he was taking her.

Strickland: Oh. Next you referred to the two injured people as good Samaritans, Why?

Ceepeeoh: They told the ambulance attendants that they stopped to help a woman in distress and were attacked by someone.

Strickland: Then is it a fair statement to say that you really don't know what happened there last night?

Ceepeeoh: I guess so.

Strickland: Yes or no, Please.

Ceepeeoh: Yes.

Strickland: Your Honor, I have no further questions of the witness at this time.

Goldstein: Mr. Webber, anything further?

Webber: No, Your Honor.

Goldstein: Mr. Webber are you sure you don't have any other information to provide the court?

Webber: The Commonwealth is done, Your Honor, other than your ruling on our earlier motion.

Goldstein: Mr. Strickland do you have anything else at this time?

Strickland: I would like to call Mrs. Baker at this time.

Goldstein: Bailiff call the witness.

Bailiff: Mrs. Baker approach the bench and be sworn.

{Mrs. Baker is duly sworn}

Strickland: Mary, please state for the record your full name and county of residence.

Mrs. Baker: Mary Susan Baker We live in Montgomery County, in this State.

Strickland: Mary do you mean this Commonwealth?

Mrs. Baker: Yes, Father Tim.

Strickland: Without violating marital privilege, tell us about last night beginning when you reached the spot in the park.

Mrs. Baker: Jeff and I had been stopped for a few moments when something broke the window of our car. The next thing I remember clearly was two men holding me and ripping at my dress. Then my husband coming around the car and throwing something at the goons who were attacking me. Just before Jeff got him, the one who was doing the holding twisted my arm causing me to scream in pain. The next thing I am fully aware of was the doctor examining me at the hospital.

Strickland: Mary just to be sure. Jeff was not attacking you. He was defending you; is that correct?

Mrs. Baker: Yes, Jeff would never hurt me.

Strickland: Thank you, Mary. I have nothing more for this witness, Your Honor.

Goldstein: Mr. Webber, do you have any questions?

Webber: Yes, Your Honor.

Goldstein: Then proceed.

Webber: Mrs. Baker, why did you stop in the park?

Strickland: Objection! Why they stopped falls under the marital privilege rules.

Goldstein: Sustained. Mr. Webber don't even think of going there! It is covered in too much precedent to even contemplate.

Webber: Your Honor, they are just kids, it doesn't count.

Goldstein: I am going to pretend that I did not hear that. One more word from you on the subject will put you in serious jeopardy.

Webber: Yes, I apologize to the court. The Commonwealth respectively request an answer on our request for the warrant. Mr. Baker disobeyed a police officer we can't have that.

Goldstein: Anything else Mr. Strickland?

Strickland: Your Honor, we petition the court to dismiss this request.

Goldstein: I deny the Commonwealth's request for a warrant. And since I believe the people and the police have acted in poor faith, I am going to make a determination of fact.

Judge Goldstein's Dictum: This court finds that: Mr. Baker acted in a reasonable and prudent manner, when he refused to put his injured wife on the ground. He did not threaten a police officer; he merely requested his assistance. Furthermore his actions in defense of his wife's virtue are entirely within bounds of defense of another in mortal danger, *ego ipse eloquor*.

End of excerpt.

Judge Goldstein added an off the record comment to Father Tim and Jeff. "Mr. Baker and Tim, it's a shame your client didn't get the third one. It would have saved these incompetents the trouble of finding the real culprits.

*(Timothy, I am so proud of you. Now what are we going to do to help our children?)*

*(Katharine, that is what we are going to discuss on the way back to the rectory.)*

To Be Continued.

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