

Bound For Trouble

Written by

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FADE IN:

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Near dawn, in the distance, the snow-capped mountains.

A woman running hard through a maze of stark trees -- naked, bruises and cuts on her arms, legs, face. This is HOPE, 20s, and she is running for her life.

She's swallowed up by the dark and the woods. Gone.

In the distance, the SOUND of an approaching 18-WHEELER. Ahead, a break in the woods.

**I/E. CAR - NIGHT**

JED TILLMAN and SHELLY TILLMAN, 54 and 52 respectfully. He drives down a twisty, wooded road. Shelly dozes.

He forces his tired eyes alert, flicks through radio stations when someone skirts out in front of them!

Hope stands in the middle of the road. Her terrified face frozen in the HEADLIGHTS, staring at him.

Shelly wakes, screams -- Jed swerves too late -

Hope SLAMS INTO THE WINDSHIELD - broken glass mixed with blood. Jed comes to a SCREECHING HALT. Both are panting.

**EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - NIGHT**

Jed bolts from the car, shaken, scared, runs to the smashed front of the car.

Hope lies on the ground - dying but not quite dead - her eyes are wide open in terror, breathing heavily, in pain.

Shelly kneels, reaches a hand out -

Hope jerks back in fear, a small smattering of blood brushes on Shelly's hand.

Shelly recoils, impulsively wiping the blood on her coat. As Jed dials 9-1-1-

**EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT**

Predawn twilight, a foreboding farmhouse, dark, derelict, cordoned off by yellow tape. The surrounding countryside is even darker.

An FBI TAHOE arrives, joining two patrol cars.

**INT. FBI TAHOE - NIGHT**

SPECIAL AGENT FERN LOCKHART in an FBI windbreaker, not unattractive, some mileage, with a boyish edge, speaks into her wireless Jabra BT500 -

FERN

I'm asking you to let me finish this.

(firm)

I ain't waiting.

AGENT LOGAN(V.O.)

No, you ain't listening.

Look Fern, you found him, your work's done. Let HRT take this guy down. It's what they do.

Fern ends the call - takes in the house. Snorts coke.

**EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT**

She disembarks with a crime scene kit, greeted by a slightly unpolished Sheriff, HORACE, a paunchy guy in his 40s.

HORACE

Sheriff Brett Horace -- Metro PD.

FERN

Agent Fern Lockhart -- FBI - Washington Field office.

HORACE

I was hoping they'd call you guys in. This above my paygrade. Things like this just doesn't happen here in ---

FERN

I understand they're two witnesses.

Horace gestures towards the Tillman's in back of a police cruiser, still visibly shaken.

HORACE

Mr. And Mrs. Tillman were driven when it happened.

FERN

Your deputies should probably separate them. If they're allowed to talk to one another, multiple witnesses at a scene tend to contaminate each other's memories.

HORACE

Oh-- sorry.

FERN

Your people have done an amazing job securing the scene.

HORACE

I'll get them separated.

Fern observes the couple again. On second thought --

FERN

Scratch that. Just get their information. I'll do their interviews another time.

**INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT**

A dwindling down CRIME SCENE. Sheriff Horace escorts Fern. BLOOD EVERYWHERE, smeared on walls, pooled on the wooden floor.

HORACE

How she escaped is beyond me, but she's at the hospital. You wanna talk to her?

**INT. FARMHOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT**

The crosslit moonlight cast eerie shadows-

Fern is practically giddy with excitement. Swings a pen-sized flashlight around -- leather, steel, all manner of S&M paraphernalia.

Sheriff Horace is rooted in place.

The exploding thunderstorm echoes around them.

There's an old-fashioned iron bed with no sheets, all kinds of dirty stains on its mattress... rawhide is tied to the bedpost.

She's both mortified and fascinated, as she computes what she's seeing. Fern snaps out of it.

FERN

You guys searched the place?

HORACE

'Course we did. Scoured every inch of it. He ain't here.

FERN

I'm just saying, it's a old house, crawlspaces... false wall. Lots of places someone could hide.

Fern studies a wall plastered with candid photos of terrified women, most are in various stages of undress.

FERN

Yea, it's him. Miles Shaw.

HORACE

And they let him out?

FERN

A good lawyer and sympathetic judge. That's American justice for you.

She opens up a satchel to reveal; the perfect RAPE KIT, meticulously neat and clean; rope, shiny knives, etc...

There's an erotic perversity in the way she inspects the instruments of torture.

FERN

It's perfect. Very well cared for. Alligator clips, leashes, handcuffs, whips, and dildos. Sexual sadists start off with a limited rape kit, as we call it, because his is so refined. He's been doing this for a while. I wouldn't be surprised if there were more victims.

(then)

They become aroused by their victim's suffering. Often keep journals, photos, and other items to help them re-live their exploits.

Fern eyes her reflection in a full-length sex mirror on a wall. She can only look away, ashamed.

Sheriff Horace proceeds to chew up a handful of antacids.

FERN

He's the worse of the worst. This guy's old school. Uses a bailing wire attached to a wooden beam to strangle his victims. He twists it so many times... beyond the point needed for death.

HORACE

This place gives me the creeps. If you don't need me anymore --

FERN

-- No, I'll take it from here.

HORACE

I'll leave my deputy out front.

Fern moves to the window, Horace pulls his jacket up over his head and runs towards his patrol car.

But, something is off here. Strange. Canted. Artificial.

She grabs a chair and hurls it at the mirror. It shatters revealing a tiny secret room. She draws her gun,

### **SECRET ROOM**

Fern steps in. There's nothing out of the ordinary. But it's dark... shadows everywhere -- too many places for someone to be hiding.

A smell hits her nose. Her flashlight finds --

A pot full of shit and piss with crazy FLIES hovering. The sound of their collective buzzing is like a small outboard motor.

Gun raised she stealthily approaches another door that quivers ever so slightly. Presumably from the wind.

Fern FLINGS the door open -- nothing. Sighs in relief.

Suddenly, reflected in a mirror is HIM, creeping towards her with a homemade SHIV in his hand. Fern spins.

FERN

FBI! Hands in the air. Do it NOW!

The knife SLASHES Fern's arm, slicing THROUGH her skin.

He PUNCHES her in the jaw, sending her sprawling to the floor. He's on top of her, trying to RIP her GUN from her grip. She hangs on tenaciously.

She deflects the punches with her spare hand, but he's beginning to overpower her as --

**INT. PATROL CAR - NIGHT**

Rain hammers the car.

DEPUTY LONGBOW, 50s, snuggled in a police parka, takes a bite from a partially unwrapped McDonald's hamburger. He adjusts his big hearing aid.

**INT. FARMHOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT**

Fern slowly regains consciousness, on her back, hands tied to the bedpost. Stripped to lacy bra and panties.

MILES, 30s, shirtless, he's eerily composed, almost mild-mannered, covering all bases in a pair of boxer-briefs.

MILES

Good nap?

FERN

A rested mind is a quick mind.

MILES

(grinning)

You win some, you lose some.

FERN

Yea, there's always next year. Always darker before the dawn. April showers bring may flowers.

Miles looks up, lips narrowed in an angry sneer.

MILES

*Shut up.*

(then)

So the hunter is now the hunted. What's your fascination with serial killers?

FERN

I have some questions of my own. Maybe we can trade.

Fern violently, starts twisting and thrashing, trying to extricate herself. Water leaks from the roof, splatters her arms, face, and hands.

For one curious beat, Fern looks up, studies the roof. The only sound is the gentle lapping of water droplets.

MILES

Been meaning to fix that.

FERN

Fine words from someone who ran like a bitch when his baby brother got his face caved in. I hear you had to toss your drawers because of the skid marks.

Chagrined, Miles stares. Her utter nonchalance shocking him to his core.

MILES

What makes you think I want kill you now?

FERN

I wouldn't begin to presume.

(then)

But --none of your victims lasted more than three days. If I'm right, I've got a little over 48 hours -- when the exhilaration wears off, then you'll kill me.

Miles flicks his wrist, flashes a nasty-ass blade. Thrusts the knife against her flesh. Fern flinches. Ouch.

FERN

Either shit! Or get off the pot.

And then, as quickly as it came, the flash of rage is gone and Miles is as composed as ever.

MILES

You're a lot smarter than you look.

FERN

You're not as dumb as I thought.

MILES

Agent Lockhart. I see you done your home work. Well, I've done mine.

FERN

Fern, call me Fern.

(a sad beat)

You know what my name was before I got married. Fern Green. My mom was married to a man named green so she called me Fern. Ain't that a laugh. Fern's the kind of green plant that don't grow flowers and don't produce no seed. I guess she named me pretty good at that.



Miles stares at her solemnly -- then laughs.

MILES

Okay, Fern. A PhD in criminology from Stanford University, and you consult with various law enforcement organizations around the country. Ever got it wrong, this profiling shit?

FERN

Not when it comes to you. Killers like yourself take time and care to study their victims. Get to know them even. For their own twisted and practical reasons.

Miles runs the blade along Fern's body, trying to decide where to cut. He moves languidly, sensually, it's erotic.

Fern struggles to hide her overwhelming nerves, searching for something to jump-start a conversation.

FERN

"Old mother Twitchett had but one eye,  
And a long tail which she let fly; And  
every time she went over a gap, She left  
a bit of her tail in a trap.

(off his look)

It's an old nursery rhyme, except for the  
one eye and the tail it could have been  
written for me.

Fern chokes something back. A bitter laugh, or a sob, maybe a strange combination of both.

FERN

Old mother Fern, witch from Biloxi,  
Mississippi caught in her own trap.

(then)

I did this to myself, not you, I let my  
pride get in the way.

MILES

But I don't see why?

FERN

Oh open your eyes, it isn't hard to see--  
look at me-- it ain't hard to see that no  
man would ever look at me. Go on look  
again.

There it is again. That eerie, piercing stare.

FERN

Here's what I think, Miles. I think just 'cause someone does a bad thing doesn't make them a bad person. You agree?

MILES

I don't know.

Fern discreetly eyes the wet rawhide binding her hands beginning to loosen. Subtly moves her wrists, trying to extricate herself.

FERN

It's not your fault, Miles. You were born this way. It's like having straight hair or curly, blue eyes or freckles. You can't help the way you were born.

Miles flinches as if he's in pain, turns away.

MILES

SHUT UP!!!!

Hands now free, Fern flattens his nose with two hard jabs. A stunned Miles staggers.

Fern delivers a swift, violent kick that shatters Miles kneecap. Miles drops.

She springs onto his chest, a knee at his neck, pinning Miles. Her left hand curl around his throat, raises her baby Glock to his face.

He holds his hands up, palms exposed, surrendering. Miles's nose bleeding and already swelling.

FERN

I was wrong. You're dumber than I thought. Rawhide stretches when it gets wet.

Fern staggers back to her FBI cell phone, gets a dial tone, taps in three numbers. As she dials:

FERN

You have the right to remain silent.  
Anything you say can and will be used  
against you in court...

(into phone)

Agent Fern Lockhart, FBI...

PUNCH TO FADE OUT.

