

40. The Interview

(In a county lock-up. #1, a reporter, is sitting at a table going over some notes. #2 enters. He/she is in handcuffs.)

- #2: Jack/Jackie King?
- #1: *(Looks up.)* Yes.
- #2: *(Walks over to the table.)* Thanks for coming.
- #1: Why don't you sit down, Nancy/David. *(#2 sits. #1 pulls out a mini tape recorder.)* If you don't mind, I'm going to record our conversation.
- #2: Go right ahead.
- #1: *(Starts the recorder.)* Before we get started I have to ask you something. Why me?
- #2: I saw you at the trial everyday and I've read your articles. You're a good reporter.
- #1: Thank you.
- #2: That's why I asked you to come here. I thought you'd give me a fair shot.
- #1: Then let's get right to it. The jury only took four hours to find you guilty. Did that surprise you?
- #2: Not really. A dozen people saw me shoot and kill Charles Armbruster. It's a little hard to fight evidence like that.
- #1: Then what exactly do you hope to accomplish by having me interview you?
- #2: I want people to know that I'm not a murderer.
- #1: Let me get this straight. You waited for a cuffed and shackled, unarmed man to leave a court room. You went up to him and shot him three times at point-blank range. He was dead before he hit the floor, but you're not a murderer.
- #2: No.
- #1: Well, the state not only called it murder, they called it premeditated murder. So, I'd be interested in how you see it.

- #2: Charles Manson was a murderer. So was Jeffrey Dahmer. I shot an animal, a rapist. If it the was the Old West I would have probably been elected sheriff for what I did.
- #1: Well, it isn't 1880 and this isn't Tombstone.
- #2: *(Pause)* How much do you know about Charles Armbruster?
- #1: *(Checks his/her notes.)* He was convicted of six felony assaults and rapes. Has been in jail more than he's been out...
- #2: Did you know that the state classified him as a habitual criminal, but they still let him out? That he is the main suspect in seven other rapes in which two of the victims were killed, but was never brought up on charges because of lack of evidence?
- #1: No, I didn't.
- #2: We weren't allowed to bring any of that up at the trial. A human doesn't act like he did. I just put him out of everyone's misery.
- #1: But according to the law the man had rights....
- #2: Rights?! You wanna talk about rights? How about my sister's right? My sister was beautiful, talented, happy. That...he abducted my sister, raped her, beat the crap out of her and then dumped her body out of his van on the side of the road under the assumption she was dead.
- #1: I know. I was at the trial. But she ID'd the van, picked Armbruster out of a line up. He was going to go to jail.
- #2: So what? That's not good enough. Do you know he winked and smiled at my sister at the indictment? His going to jail wasn't going to start to pay back what he did to her.
- #1: Did what you did to Armbruster heal her? Is she OK now?
- #2: No. She...
- #1: She's under a doctor's care and not doing well. *(Pause)* Yeah, I was at the trial. Remember? *(Pause)* Look, I can't start to imagine what she went through...or what your

family is going through, but I can't condone vigilantism, either.

#2: It's not like I do this everyday to everyone...

#1: I didn't say you did, but do you know how many horrible crimes happen? To people just as innocent as your sister?

#2: I don't need a lesson on how bad society is.

#1: Maybe you do because you can't kill everyone who wrongs you. And I can't write an editorial on how your killing of a rapist is a good thing. You took another's life.

#2: And for all intents and purposes he took hers.

#1: *(Pause)* You're right, he did and now your family has to suffer two losses. Your sister's and yours. They all really need your support, but you won't be there to give it. Do you realize what you've done and where you're going?

#2: *(Pause)* Mr./Ms. King, Look at these... *(He/She holds out the cuffed wrists.)* I'm locked up and probably will be for a long time. I'm not a stupid man/woman. I'm going to jail, and for a long time, most likely. I am terrified of that and what might happen to me there. I may wind up dead. Who knows...but...

#1: But what?

#2: I take full responsibility for my actions and I'll take whatever the consequences are because in my heart of hearts, I don't believe I did anything wrong.

#1: *(Just looks at #2.)* I believe you and in a way I admire you. Still, I'm a reporter. I don't write an opinion column and I won't put my personal slant on the news. I just write it.

#2: So you're not going to interview me?

#1: I didn't say that. Right now, you're news. And an interview will sell papers. But we have to do it soon. The trial's over and the reality is, in a couple of weeks, nobody's going to remember you. Your fifteen minutes are up.

#2: That's a little cold.

#1: No, just the way it is. You should know that, but there are

some ground rules.

#2: What?

#1: Like I said, I won't slant the story and I won't editorialize. I will try and get comments from the DA, the police, whoever I need to round out the story. This story won't be a soapbox for you. Can you live with that?

#2: I suppose.

#1: You'd better be sure, because it's not open for negotiation.

#2: *(Pause)* I just want to be heard.

#1: You will be. *(Turns off the recorder and starts to rise.)* I'll talk to my editor and make sure he wants to go with this. OK?

#2: Fine.

#1: *(Starts to exit.)* I will tell you something, off the record.

#2: What?

#1: If I had been in your place...I very well might be in your place.

#2: *(Starts to smile a bit.)* Thanks.

(#1 exits.)