The Blindness

By: Craig Law

I find myself leaning back with my eyes wide open knowing that my life is nothing more than a misconception. My thoughts get drowned out by the noise of rain drops pounding against the gutter while lightening flashes through the shades that cover the window. How I became like this, no one but Him and I know.

Every week Monday through Thursday I visited Thomas for two hours in the morning. He was my therapist but also my friend. We talked extensively not only about my problems but about random things that struck us odd in every day society and even his family. He tells me stories about his little daughter Susie and when she would cry in the middle of the night because she sees the shadow of an old coat rack against the wall. She would claim someone was there staring her down as she covered herself under the blankets until he flipped the light switch to show her it was merely a shadow.

I have nights similar to that. I imagine figures flashing in the doorway calling my name as they creep closer to my bedside. I just lay there paralyzed from head to toe unable to move away from the figures. I remember one night I came face to face with one of them. It was around two in the morning and I woke up to the hollering of a neighbor’s girlfriend. As I opened my eyes, I rolled over and glanced at my alarm clock and saw her. She was beautiful. Her hair was pitch black and fine as silk. Her lips were plush and full of life, she had gorgeous hazel eyes that stared directly into mine and her skin was as flawless as a new born child. It was unfortunate that only moments after seeing her, the sun beamed through the window shades and I opened my eyes to the light realizing that it was all a dream.

I told Thomas about my dream the next day when we met for our two hour session. He had told me that “In hard times, people imagine things in order to replace a loss that they have experienced.” He didn’t have to say anything more afterwards. I knew precisely what he was implying.

It has been nearly three years since the death of Julie. The sound of the gun echoing in the kitchen numbs me to this day. Knowing that if I had only been two minutes earlier, and she would still be alive, killed me. I remember the days she would come home from work at three in the afternoon and begin making our supper for when I had gotten home two hours later. I can still smell the aroma of spices when I walk by the kitchen. Any memory of us would not fade from my mind.

The day she had died I recall myself dropping the bags of groceries on the sidewalk after hearing the shot and running inside only to see a pool of blood forming under her head. I had immediately felt my heart sink and drown itself. I couldn’t believe what I had seen. I didn’t want to believe what I had seen. I hurriedly ran beside her body, trembling, and took hold of her hand. I checked for any pulse to indicate life but found none. I whispered in her ear “I love you” and fell down beside her body holding her tighter than I had ever before.

I looked around for the killer in rage and in misery and it was then that I saw the gun that had slid over beside the refrigerator. The gun that lay beside her body was the gun that ended her life as quickly as God had given it. I called the police and reported it as a murder despite the clear evidence and within ten minutes I could hear the sirens blaring down our street.

The cops hurriedly ran into the house forcing me to evacuate the crime scene. I knew that they could not operate with me standing in their way so I escorted myself out the door. Within moments, two EMS workers carried the corpse out to the ambulance. The sight of my wife lying under a blue sheet, dead, brought tears to my eyes and the sounds, of the people who had gathered, became hollow. I found myself caught up thinking of our past and the conversations we had together tuning out the outside chaos until an officer had tapped me on the shoulder.

We had only been married for a year and a half before that day. We were the happiest couple anyone could imagine. The love we shared for each other was dear and we were even talking about having children soon. Everything seemed so perfect between the two of us.

I remember going on for two years questioning why she had done it. I couldn’t fathom the thoughts that must have swarmed through her head at that time. But part of me didn’t want to understand. I knew that if I found out the reason for her killing herself, I would find more than one reason on why it was my fault. I didn’t think that I was emotionally capable of dealing with the idea of her death being left on my conscience. So I continued to ignore my subconscious and any thought that would bring her death to questioning.

Until six months ago.

I was sitting on the couch next to the kitchen watching a football game when I saw a note pressed under the fridge. I walked over into the kitchen and dropped down to one knee in order to reach the piece of paper and pull it out from under the fridge. I pulled gently trying to avoid ripping the folded paper and eventually it was in my hands. I unfolded the sheet of paper and I realized it was a letter. I dropped to both knees in tears.

*7/23/06*

*Matthew 11:5 “…let the blind receive sight…”*

*I have written this letter to you to tell you that your wife was not suicidal. She was very happy with the way her life was going and it is because she lived in sin that her life had to end. I have watched and studied you wife for quite some time Mr. Scott. I have learned her actions and her way of life and was quite intrigued with her routine. I found that she is very caring and compassionate toward you and the people who surrounded her but does not show that kind of love for God and that is sin. I say to you Mr. Scott that you are within the presence of God and He does NOT tolerate sin.*

I crumbled up the letter outraged and threw it across the room. It landed beside the picture frame on the microwave of Julie and me during one of the youth rallies passing out slices of chocolate cake to the kids. Seeing that picture made me smile slightly as I thought about that day and the joy we shared together. But just like everything else in this world, the smile didn’t last. Quickly, I recollected the reality of this situation and was immediately brought back to anger.

I couldn’t help but gather myself in rage and walk over to the wadded up letter where the picture lay. I slammed the picture face down knowing that I couldn’t handle the pain it brought to me and picked up the letter. I quickly unfolded the letter with tears pouring down on the ink and read it over again.

*Why did it take me so long to find the letter?* *The killer is probably long gone now working in some office building in New York.* But I couldn’t let the killer win even if he was 1000 miles away from here. Every night from then on, I would suspend myself in my room shutting the door behind me in search of the killer. With each night approaching as the sun quickly faded in the horizon, I seemed to grow more and more obsessed with this unknown killer. It became more than just an obsession though. It became my life. The obsession grew to such extremes in which any evidence of my personality relinquished into the darkness of night.

I had found out that my personality had changed with a few sessions of counseling with Thomas. He had noticed that I was concealing more and more of my life from him. I grew weary of this counseling and longed to do something about my problems rather than talk about them. It was obvious to me that nothing I talked about would help me find the person who had murdered my wife in cold blood. Nothing I talked about was able to bring her back into my arms. It was useless.

I quickly found myself consolidating my thoughts into one primary focus and avoiding any scheduled appointments with Thomas. He would call me from time to time to check up on me and to be sure that I was safe or at least that is what the answering machine had told me every time he called. I ignored the entire outside world from then on and my obsession became my deity.

I looked constantly over any information I could gather on the police reports or photographs from the crime scene that I was able to get my hands on. I remember each night getting only two or three hours of sleep while the rest of the night, I suspended myself in the attic only occasionally coming down to refill my coffee cup. Those nights turned into weeks and weeks into months. Until I hit a break through.

 Two months after finding the letter, I had finally reached a connection that could possibly lead me to the killer. I talked to Bob, the pawn shop owner down the street, about any Model 908 Pistols that he sold from 2005-2006. Bob wasn’t able to give me any addresses or phone numbers on the buyers but, because he was a friend of the family, he gave us two names of people that had purchased a Model 908 Pistol in that time period. The names he gave were both foreign to me. Mark Trail was the first one. “Mark is a frequent visitor and gun fanatic that purchases all kinds of hunting weaponry.” The other name was Tim White. “Tim was just another regular that lived just down the street from here.” I was curious at why Bob had made such a snap into ensuring that these people were justified as regulars and thought it odd but then again, it was fitting to his personality. After finding nothing that could lead me to the killer I left without another word with frustration.

As I strolled into the driveway, I noticed a light had been left on in the house. I proceeded to finish pulling into the garage and turning off the engine. I managed to get halfway out of the car before I felt a sharp pain run up my right leg. I looked down in reaction to the pain only to notice that a bullet had torn away part of my calf muscle. I immediately pulled the remainder of my body back into the car and quickly shifted into reverse. Before I knew it, I was on the highway pushing 85 in effort to reach a police station.

Then it clicked into my head. I didn’t see my attacker. How was I supposed to convince a police officer someone had shot me with nothing to back up my claim? For all they would know, the shot could have been a failed suicide in which case, they would immediately send me to a mental hospital. I couldn’t go to the police. I couldn’t go to a hospital either. I knew that they would ask the same questions on how it had happened and beside that, I didn’t have any insurance to pay for the bill. I kept thinking of where I could go that was safe from questioning until one thought came to mind.

I took the next exit and turned around and headed to Thomas’ home. I knew that he had experience in stitching from his childhood when his father had run a leather production company. I figured with any luck, he would be able to sow up the wound after cleaning away any bacteria and dead skin that might cause any further infection.

Within the next 15 minutes I had found myself on Thomas’ bed under an old cover not having to explain what had happened. It was at times like these that I had appreciated the only friend I had ever had since the death of Julie.

Thomas quickly took a knife to the wound to extract the bullet that had remained from the shot. The pain was unbearable. Thomas had tied me down to the bed posts with warning on the intense pain that would come but that didn’t seem to help as soon as the stainless steel blade had touched my wound. My leg quickly jerked in reflex to the blade causing Thomas to accidentally cut deep into my leg. It had happened so quickly that I didn’t notice the cut until he had mentioned it to me.

After a few moments of anger, Thomas had decided it be better to give me a heavy dose of Aleve and Nyquil. The Aleve was to reduce to the pain after the Nyquil had taken effect in causing drowsiness and eventually a complete state of rest. I agreed without question to his idea and took the drugs.

I woke up the next morning to the sound of pans banging against the stove. I rolled over looking at the clock as it read 7:47 a.m. I flipped the covers from atop my leg and saw that my wound had been covered with gauze and tape but I could feel the stitches holding tight the bullet wound and the cut from the blade. I tried strolling out of bed on my injured leg and found that it was a tolerable pain and with that, limped into the kitchen where Thomas had been preparing a breakfast.

Thomas saw me limp into the room and immediately helped me to a chair. There, we sat for only a short period of time before the past events had replayed in my mind and I realized I was wasting valuable time. I knew that while I was sitting here over a cup of coffee, the assaulter would be getting away. I couldn’t risk losing this person for a second time.

I quickly picked myself up using the chair for support and wobbled my way out the door and to the car. Thomas had tried to stop me by telling me that “it would be best if you lay off of your leg for a couple days.” Thomas and I both knew, without question, that it wasn’t an option in my mind. I knew that I had to find this person and bring justice into my life for the first time in what seemed like decades.

I turned the key and started the engine. The radio began playing from where it had left off last night and startled me. It seems that even now, knowing I was safe, I was suspicious of any and all surroundings. I remember thinking of things that rang in my head from being so cautious on my way home.

What went through my head on that short trip wasn’t a typical thought about what I had needed to accomplish that day but rather death. The importance of death seems to go unknown until it is standing on your doorstep. Then again, nothing is at is seems in reality until you are facing fate in the eyes. I learned that lesson the hard way.

I once again pulled into my garage where the skid marks lie cautious to get out so quickly. I slowly reached for the door handle after turning off the ignition, looking left and right, and placed one foot on the ground – waited a moment – and continued on. In a matter of minutes, I was able to pull myself to the front of the house and walk to the front door.

Before I entered the house, I thought to myself that I had better obtain some sense of assurance that it was safe to enter. I peered into the window and saw nothing out of place other than one lamp that had been moved from the table beside my recliner to the dining room table. It struck me odd that nothing apart from a lamp had been moved. It suddenly dawned on me that it had been the same light that I noticed turned on the previous night. That thought seemed to ease my fear of entering.

Knowing that whoever had moved the lamp, would most likely be gone, I continued inside. Despite the comfort I had felt before entering, I still continued slowly and cautiously and was looking around for anyone that might try to kill me again. I saw nothing.

With my safety in the clear I limped over to the dining room, where the lamp was sat, in order to turn the light off. It was then that I saw that there was a little piece of paper under the lamp with its edge peeking. I swiftly grabbed the note knowing exactly who it was from and read.

*5/17/09*

*Mr. Scott,*

*You have furthered the denial of God in your attempt to find me. You must realize that the only way you will find justice is to peer through the eyes of faith rather than sin. If you open your eyes you will see the truth. But it is obvious that you are incapable of opening your eyes because you are a soul stranded alone.*

On the day I found that note, I couldn’t help but to think of how psychotic this person was. It had been nearly three years since this person had written a letter to me. Why did he/she want to make contact with me after so long?

Two months later, I discovered one more note by the anonymous writer.

I woke up this morning and flipped on the news channel. The weather man had said that there was an 80% chance of thunderstorms all from 3:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. *It has been a while since we have had a good rain and the garden was getting dry*. I was willing to say anything to get the killer off of my mind. The obsession hadn’t faded in all the six months that I have been searching for the person responsible for Julie’s death.

Time passed as I just sat down on my recliner contemplating what exactly I would do if I had came face to face with this person. Many options had run across my head and all of which sounded pleasurable at the time. Knowing the killer was still out there, somewhere, infuriated me. I couldn’t help but thrive for revenge. I wanted to take away what had meant most in his/her life just as he/she had done mine – their life.

When Julie had died, the killer succeeded in taking more than just her life. He/she had taken mine. I was nothing like I was three years ago. I didn’t have any of the same friends or same hobbies. I was a completely new man.

I looked up at the right hand corner of the television screen to notice that the clock read 3:12 p.m. I realized that the mail man had come an hour or so earlier so, I picked myself up out of my chair and walked outside to check the mail. In the mailbox, there was a Sports Illustrated magazine, two bills, one for the electric and one for the mortgage, and a white letter addressed from 9823 North Avenue. I took the mail inside curious of who would be sending me a letter.

I walked over to the dining room table and sat down the magazine and the bills. Afterwards, I walked into the kitchen and opened the drawer closest to the pantry for a knife. I grabbed the knife from its place and walked back over to the dining room table where the mail lies. I cut open the envelope addressed from 9823 North Avenue with a dulled kitchen knife and unfolded the yellow piece of paper.

*7/13/09*

*Mr. Scott,*

*Meet me at this address. I’ll be waiting for you.*

I hurriedly grabbed my keys off of the microwave in the kitchen beside the stove and paced out to the car in the garage with my heart racing. I could feel my fingers numbing and my head spinning with my adrenaline being pushed higher than ever before. Then hopped in the car, entered the address into my GPS, and made my way to the location. The drive seemed as if it were taking hours. I would guess that would be due to my adrenaline racing at the time. In actuality the drive was merely thirty minutes.

The building was four stories tall and looked four centuries old. The windows were busted out and the walls were covered with graffiti. The old pipes seemed to have built rust for decades with holes forming through the cast iron. I could see AC window units installed on each floor that seemed older than my mother and the sidewalks broken with grass growing through the cracks. The building itself was a dark brick that left a sense of uneasiness on me.

I tiptoed up the broken sidewalk trying to avoid stepping on any of the glass that had come from the shattered windows and walked past the old pipes in efforts to reach the front entrance. Without warning, the weather mans’ predictions were made true. The sky had turned grey and rain drops began trickling down over the shards of glass. I quickened my pace to try and avoid being drenched in rainfall. Within a few seconds, I had found myself upon the front two doors.

The doors were a dark green with claw marks scraped along the wood frame and what seemed like letters inscribed near the rusted brass handle. I leaned in toward the door in effort to read the etched out letters and managed only to make out the large print. “Open Your Eyes” is what the door read. I couldn’t make out the rest of the words below due to the rain flowing down in my eyes but I figured what was left was of ill importance. I knew who had carved those words.

I continued into the building and shut the door behind me. After closing the door I turned around to analyze the building but the entire place seemed to be engulfed in darkness. I saw only one light in the whole building and that was through a window down the hall where headlights shown through. I searched the walls trying to find a switch and after a few moments of sliding my hands over the walls, blind, I ran across a switch. I flipped the switch in hopes a light or two would be turned on but quickly found that the switch was not working.

It began lightening. The flashes brought more light through the building allowing me to see my surroundings for brief moments. I saw that up ahead, there were staircases that lead to the next floor above and without much thought, I made my way to those stairs with each flash of light. Each step that I took was accompanied by a loud squeak in the ancient oak floor boards that gave notice to the entire building that I was there.

The stairs were old and rotted. I could hear the sound of mice playing under the steps as I crept closer -- each one alert of their company. The cold wind that rushed through the broken windows along with the rapid beat of my heart constantly seemed to take my breath away. I stood there a moment before making any attempt to climb the steps.

The first step I took was simply to ensure that I wasn’t going to fall through immediately and then progressed up the stairs cautiously. As I reached the top step, I noticed a light flicker through a room several doors down revealing a broken board in the hallway. I took that as a sign of caution. The last thing I had wanted to do was fall ten feet down on top of aged planks. With that idea in mind, I had taken hold of the wall and crept inch by inch toward the flicker of light.

As I inched my way toward the door, I noticed a tall shadowy figure standing in the door way preventing the light from guiding my path. *That was him.* The droplets of rain immediately turned into sweat and my adrenaline began to rush. Any fear within me was being covered by the rising of rage. There was no turning back now. I have waited six months to find this person and I knew I wouldn’t have another chance.

I continued towards the doorway ignoring that darkness that blocked my view.

As I reached within ten feet of the door, the image of the shadowy figure became visible. The shadowy figure was a man of what seemed like mid twenties to early thirties with long brown hair that reached down to his shoulders. He was wearing a white gown of some sort that portrayed him as Jesus Himself. The sandals on his feet were torn on the heels and stained by the blood drops that dripped from his hands. *Who was he?*

I kept on walking, except this time slower, towards the door frame and toward the person that stood in it. My mind was filled with curiosity of who this man could have been and I could not stop my feet from progressing closer to him. My mind was telling me to turn back immediately before something bad happened. My heart and my feet, apparently, held strong and continued. My left foot fell into the hole that the flickering light had revealed to me earlier. I picked myself up unhurt and looked up at the door. *He was gone. How?*

I walked into the room to gaze around and see where the man had gone. I looked in the closet that was set into the far left wall and under the desk opposite of the door where the lamp was sat. *He wasn’t there.*

The light flickered once more until I twisted the bulb in the lamp to tighten it in its socket. With the light constant and illuminating the room, I saw that there was a note left on the chair that lay in front of the desk. This time I took my time to read the note. There was no hope in me finding him anymore. I pulled two edges of the paper apart and read.

*7/14/09*

*It’s time Mr. Clark.*

*What was it time for?* Feeling beaten I dropped the note to the ground and sat down in the old chair careless of whether or not it would support my weight after all those years of aging. I leaned back in the chair trying to relax my mind and tears came rolling down my face. I tilted my head backwards in attempt to stop the flowing of tears and closed my eyes.

A moment later I lifted my eye lids to dry away the tears. Except this time I was not leaning back in an old chair. I was lying in my bed covered by three layers of sheets and with two pillows under my head. I could hear no rain pounding against the gutters. No lightening. The sun was shining bright and I could hear the birds chirping outside of the window. I looked over to glance out of the window and saw the image of the person I had waited so long to see. Julie.