
TOI-5012017-IFPI

The following is a transcript from May 1st 2017 between Irene Fletcher and an unidentified interviewer.

[IRENE sighs, looking at the interviewer with tired eyes. She's leaning back in her folding chair, rocking on its legs. Her uniform is crumpled, unironed. Dark half moons are thumbbed beneath her eyes.]

INTERVIEWER: Whenever you're comfortable to begin.

FLETCHER: It's exhausting. Do we have to go through this every year?

FLETCHER: I'd almost rather take the physical endurance exam. Give me pullups any day of the week!

INTERVIEWER: I understand you and Cavello find this a strenuous exercise.

FLETCHER: Understatement of the year.

INTERVIEWER: It's just for the record's sake, Irene.

FLETCHER: I know. I know it's important. Consistency. Cross checking the facts. Compiling a case.

FLETCHER: Knowing why we have to do it doesn't make it any easier.

INTERVIEWER: There's a saying your partner lives by, isn't there?

[IRENE frowns, pausing to take a sip from her paper cup of water. She leaves a lurid berry lipstick mark on the waxed rim. When she speaks again, it's slow, contemplative. She sounds as if she's reciting philosophy, or poetry.]

FLETCHER: "Do what is right even when it is difficult." The man's a saint for taking in that hellion on wheels, but whether or not Josh chooses to martyr himself or not isn't a reflection on me.

INTERVIEWER: No one ever said it was, Irene.

[IRENE sets the cup down gently on the table. She wipes absentmindedly at a droplet of water that mars the surface with her palm.]

FLETCHER: Sorry- I don't mean to be so defensive.

FLETCHER: Sleeping poorly leaves me irritable.

FLETCHER: I haven't been sleeping well, lately.

FLETCHER: I haven't slept well in years.

[The INTERVIEWER remains silent, nodding gently. They listen attentively, brows furrowed as if deeply moved by her plight.]

FLETCHER: Not ever since the sightings started to happen.

[IRENE rubs her hand over her face for a moment, eyes closing, face pinched in pain.]

FLETCHER: The strangest thing about it all is that- it was beautiful.

FLETCHER: I don't think I've ever seen something so beautiful in my life.

[IRENE'S voice is hushed, almost reverent. Her right pupil is dilated. The darkness eats away at the thin ring of lurid, unnaturally bright green iris.]

FLETCHER: You can only really understand if you've ever looked at it yourself, laid eyes on it-

FLETCHER: But it's the sort of beauty that calls to you. It's beauty that invokes terror for all the horrendous deeds it'd drive you to do, the awful realization that you would go sleepwalking into oblivion, one willing footstep in front of the other: all caught up in a haze, and yet going of your own accord. Just to catch a glimpse.

FLETCHER: It's the sort of thing that poets are driven mad over. A dozen Caravaggios would be insufficient to capture even the slightest interplay of shadow and light over the planes of its face. No hewn marble comes even close to its shadowed outline. It's unspeakable. Language fails to encompass it.

[IRENE'S perforated left pupil shakes. The INTERVIEWER swirls their pen over their sheet of paper, making note of the abnormal eye movements. Small irises float across the paper. One of IRENE'S left pupils darts down to stare at the page. She seems unaware of this, though- continuing to talk. The INTERVIEWER puts down the pen abruptly, folding their hands on the table and obscuring their drawings.]

INTERVIEWER: And art therapy, how has that gone?

FLETCHER: Laughably. How do you draw the face of God? How do you draw the face of it's antithesis? You can't. It'd be like asking you to describe what you see in absolute darkness, the sort where you can't even see your hand in front of your own face. The sort in The Bends.

FLETCHER: Angels tell us to not be afraid, Officer. In their divinity is something that fractures those who lay witness. It's why they cover themselves with their wings- and even then, people have been blinded by their searing radiance. Heralds are never happy people.

FLETCHER: But whatever was in The Bends...

FLETCHER: It certainly isn't angelic.

[IRENE sighs. Her voice is wistful, the corners of her mouth drawn down in a small frown. Her gaze is downcast.]

FLETCHER: Anne was right, all these years.

FLETCHER: She's always been right. I've just been unable to look past my pride.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure it's been difficult, Irene.

INTERVIEWER: Drydenne takes a period of adjustment- for some people, it can be years. A lifetime, even.

INTERVIEWER: You shouldn't blame yourself.

[The INTERVIEWER pats Irene gently on the arm. She smiles momentarily, eyes raising to look them in the eyes. The INTERVIEWER breaks eye contact first.]

FLETCHER: I always dismissed her as a hypochondriac, an eccentric born and raised in a town where on my first night in, a woman who baked cherry pies and was an active board member of the parent teacher association chirped cheerfully about the bargain bin exorcism rates and banishments. I hadn't even unpacked my cardboard boxes yet.

FLETCHER: Drydenne's a weird place, you know? It's people are a little weird too.

INTERVIEWER: Drydenne certainly has strong local character. And flavour.

INTERVIEWER: It's a place that grows on you.

[IRENE huffs a little laugh. It's tinged with bitterness, but she nods. Her finger scratches across the table, tracing out loops and swirls on the top of the bumpy finish.]

FLETCHER: It certainly does.

FLETCHER: And it was sweet, sometimes- her insistence on keeping watch over the sigils she'd painted into the walls like murals of wildflowers, or leaving a little side of whatever we ate on the window sill. It was endearing the way a child's painting is- innocent, and sweet, and not very much worth of note, but lovely all the same.

FLETCHER: I wish that I had taken her more seriously.

FLETCHER: Anne knows better than anyone else what evil lies in these hills.

FLETCHER: She and her fiancée- they're getting married, some time soon. I'm happy for her. I'm happy that she's happy. Tony's a great woman.

FLETCHER: How many women would take a pair of pliers to their teeth for you?

FLETCHER: And Anne deserves that happiness. Someone who cares enough to prove it in shed blood. She'll be a wonderful bride- and wife.

[It's unclear which woman she is referring to in her last sentence. IRENE laughs, brushing some of her dark hair out of her face. She takes another sip]

from the paper cup. The water is lukewarm. Her lipstick smears like blood on asphalt.]

INTERVIEWER: It's certainly a gesture.

FLETCHER: It is.

[IRENE looks at the wall behind the INTERVIEWER'S' head. Her eyes are glassy. It's as if she's seeing right through it. Her shoulders twitch convulsively, and she grabs at one, fingers digging into the thin flesh overtop bone. The temperature of the room drops by several degrees. She shudders, before getting up from the table. She leaves the paper cup behind. The hand that had previously lifted it is clamped overtop of the perforated eye. The nystagmus is out of control.]

FLETCHER: Have to cut this short.

FLETCHER: Business.

FLETCHER: You know how it goes.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, Irene. Take care.

End of transcription log.
