

Turn, Ugly Truth (Part 2)

Robbie lay on the chic, sunshine-yellow, hotel bedspread and stared at the ceiling. He appeared lost in thought, but he really wasn't. He was drained. His mind was barely functioning; his body was limp and heavy; his heart was broken. He didn't know what to do next.

He had assured Kim that he believed her, that he understood why she never said anything, that he did not blame her for any of it. But Robbie couldn't get past the fact his *brother* had raped his *wife*.

He tried not to focus on the fact this had remained a secret for six years. He tried not to focus on his brother's utter betrayal, and all the times over the past six years he had helped him out with money. He most definitely tried not to focus on his parents' advice to try and forgive Rick. The effort to not focus on these things made Robbie's face flush and his fists clench.

He tried to focus on where he was right now. Which was lying on a designer bedspread in a boutique hotel. Alone.

He kept running through the events since yesterday, when he had heard Kim accuse his own brother of rape.

'Robbie, mate, it's not what you think,' Rick had said, arms wide as he backed away.

'Oh Robbie,' Kim said and covered her face with her hands.

Between those two reactions Robbie knew what to believe - the accusation was true. He quickly crossed the kitchen, grabbed Rick by the arm and dragged him to the back door. He opened the door and roughly pushed Rick out into the night.

'Don't you ever come near this house again,' Robbie said.

'Robbie, come on,' Rick pleaded as Robbie slammed the door in his face.

Robbie leant his head against the door, closed his eyes and breathed deeply. Kim did not moved behind him nor reacted to him throwing Rick out of the house. He turned and moved towards her, but she pulled away from him.

'I can't Robbie,' she said, her back to him. 'Not just now.'

Robbie sighed, then went into the lounge and ended the party, giving an excuse about Kim suddenly taking ill. No one asked where Rick was. Robbie suspected someone had

overheard the altercation. Right now, he didn't care. He just wanted everyone out of his house so he had some time to think.

That night he slept on the couch to give Kim some space. She didn't object.

The next morning, he left before Kim had risen. He drove to Rick's hotel, seething with anger, his hands gripping the steering wheel until his knuckles turned white. When he arrived, and parked at the hotel he stood outside for a few minutes, taking deep breathes and slowing his pulse. When he felt he had his anger a little more under control, he entered and asked for Rick's room number.

'I'm sorry, there's no-one by that name staying here,' the clerk said.

'Did he check out?' Robbie asked.

'No,' the clerk said. 'It appears no guest by that name has checked recently. Are you sure you have the right hotel?'

'I don't know,' Robbie said and stumbled away from the desk. If Rick wasn't staying here, then where was he? There was only one place Robbie could think of – their parents' house. It's not like he hadn't stayed with them before when he was in town. Why Rick hadn't said he was staying with their parents was a mystery to Robbie.

Sitting in the car outside his parents' house, Robbie couldn't decide what to do. Now he was here, and almost certainly had Rick pinned down, Robbie was caught between anger and disappointment. This was his brother, for god's sake! Robbie's sense of familial responsibility made it difficult for him to accept the betrayal Rick had perpetrated. On the other hand, Rick's betrayal made Robbie feel his sense of familial responsibility was misplaced. Whatever the situation may be, Robbie decided he had to speak with Rick now, before things went any further, and see where he stood.

Robbie exited his car and walked up the drive to the front door. Before he reached it his mother appeared on the door step, wringing her hands and glancing back into the house.

'Now Robbie,' she said, 'there's no need to make a scene.'

'What are you talking about?' Robbie asked as he stopped in front of her.

'We know you're angry with your brother,' she said, 'but you can't come here and be all aggressive because of that. What's happened, happened.'

‘Really, mother?’ Robbie said. ‘What’s happened, happened? That some feminist view of rape you have there.’

‘Rape?!’ his mother said and almost fell back through the doorway. ‘What are you talking about?’

‘Rick raped Kim six years ago,’ Robbie said.

‘Rick said it was an affair,’ his mother said.

‘It wasn’t an affair,’ Robbie said. ‘Rick’s lying to cover his own ass. Now let me in so I can talk to him.’

‘I don’t want any violence here,’ she said.

‘I promise I won’t be violent with Rick,’ Robbie said, ‘I just want to talk to him. Are you going to let me in?’

His mother paused uncertainly before moving aside to let him pass. Robbie entered the house and found his brother waiting in the sitting room with their father. Their mother followed Robbie into the room and stood beside Rick.

‘Why, Rick?’ Robbie asked.

‘Now Robbie,’ his father said, ‘let’s not throw around accusations without proof.’

‘You think Kim would lie about this? Have you even spoken to her? If you had, you would know it’s true,’ Robbie said.

‘It may have seemed that way to Kim, but Rick didn’t mean it,’ his father said.

‘Oh, really? And why are you speaking for him anyway? Can’t stand up for yourself Rick? Is that why you told me you were staying in a hotel? To make me think you were taking care of yourself at last, being self-sufficient? But you’re not, are you? Here you are, once again, mooching of our parents, lying about your life, lying about Kim!’

‘I never lied to you about Kim,’ Rick said.

‘You raped her!’ Robbie yelled. ‘You raped my wife and then tried to hit on her again, tonight, in my house!’

‘I was just messing around,’ Rick said.

‘That’s all this is to you, isn’t it?’ Robbie asked. ‘Life’s just one big party, where you get to mess around and everyone will laugh and say good old Rick.’

‘Come on, Robbie,’ said his father, ‘I think you should be thinking about family and forgiveness.’

‘Are you kidding me?’ Robbie asked, looking from his father to his mother and back again. ‘You two are seriously going to stand there and defend Rick?’

‘Well, it takes two to tango,’ his mother said.

‘This is insane!’ Robbie bellowed at his family. ‘I’m out of here. Don’t expect to see me again. Any of you.’ With those final words Robbie turned, left the house, and slammed the front door behind him.

Robbie stormed to his car and fishtailed as he drove down the street, almost losing control. His anger overflowed from him and he screamed as he drove. He didn’t know where to go next. He wanted to see Kim but he was afraid to go there while he felt so angry. He didn’t want her to see him like this. He didn’t want to go to any of their friends, as he would have to reveal what had happened. He felt it was Kim’s right to tell people, not his. He felt trapped and alone.

Robbie drove to a nearby park, deciding he needed to walk the anger out of his system. Or at least reduce it to an acceptable level. He circumnavigated that park seven times on his quest to inner calm. He never reached the equilibrium he was hoping for, but after two hours of walking around he felt composed enough to see Kim.

Once home, he walked through the back door quietly, but not so quiet that Kim wouldn’t hear him enter. He didn’t want to startle her. He put his keys on the kitchen counter and called out ‘Kim?’

‘In the bedroom,’ she responded. Her voice sounded normal to Robbie and he felt a flicker of hope.

Robbie walked down the hallway and entered the bedroom. Kim had a suitcase on the bed and was folding dresses into it.

‘What are you doing?’ Robbie asked,

‘Going away for a few days,’ Kim answered.

‘Why?’

‘I can’t be here right now,’ she said. ‘I’m ruining everything for you. I just need some space.’

‘You’re not ruining anything,’ Robbie said. He sat beside her on the bed and gently placed his hand over hers. ‘I get this is hard for you but you shouldn’t have to leave. If you need some space, I’ll go to a hotel for a couple of nights and you stay here. Is that ok?’

‘I can’t let you leave your home because of me,’ Kim said.

‘It’s not because of you, it’s *for* you,’ Robbie said. ‘I love you.’

‘Oh Robbie,’ Kim said as she wiped her eyes. ‘I love you too. I never meant to make such a mess of things.’

‘You haven’t,’ Robbie said and took her in his arms. ‘I swear. It’ll be alright.’

After a few minutes of sitting together Robbie pulled free of Kim’s arms and went to pack a bag. He threw random clothes in without looking, his mind trying to desperately figure out what he could do now, how he could fix this situation.

Now, lying on the chic, sunshine-yellow, hotel bedspread, staring at the ceiling, he finally found a solution.

Robbie rose from the bed, pulled his mobile phone out and called his parents.

‘Is Rick there?’ Robbie asked.

‘I just want to talk with him,’ Robbie said.

‘I’m coming over,’ Robbie said.

Robbie hung up his phone and placed it back in his pocket. His jaw was set tight as he went to his overnight bag and ruffled through miss-matched clothes until he found what he wanted. He pulled the gun from the bag, checked it was loaded, then wrapped it in a jacket and put it under his arm, and left the hotel.