

# My Obtrusion and It s Cure

by Matt Cromwell, 2003

Honorable Mention (top 23/500) WritersWeekly.com Autumn 2003 Short Story Conest

“... I have no idea why I started stealing stuff...”

That’s me, 5 years ago, on a leather lounge chair, spilling my guts at this psycho ward in Glendale, California.

“...uh huh....”

That’s this big-wig shrink, Dr. Schrock, tryin’ to pretend that he’s listening to me and taking notes on my “inmost thoughts.”

I’m in this place cause I’m a juvenile delinquent. Juvenile ’cause I’m 17; delinquent cause I’m a klepto. It started with shoplifting. Then one day I just walked into someone’s home (people never lock their windows) and took some jewelry and a hand mirror (don’t ask me why a hand mirror). Then I walked into another place and the owner came home. He would have killed me if I hadn’t jumped out his window when it was closed. Man, I was a bloody mess all over his tulips. They told me that he didn’t want to press charges ’cause he felt bad for me being hurt and all.

Spocky—think Dr. Spock, but stupider, he hates it—the shrink, has already heard about how my mother died when I was three and how after that, Dad and I were inseperable. But every session, Spocky asks me about the day I got lost campin’ with Dad.

“I already told you. I got a little lost, Dad calls me on the talkie and he starts hearing voices and then stops responding all together. I get freaked out and run back and find him lying on the ground. I scream at him and he opens his eyes and says he’s not feelin’ good so we should head home in the morning. I help him up, we walk back to camp, sleep and head home.” Man, I can have an attitude when I want to. The way I told it to him you’da thought I was cursin’ his mother out instead.

“When you found him on the ground, you say that you screamed at him and he opened his eyes?”

“Ya.” Even with a word, I’m *all* attitude.

“Did he open one eye or two?”

I didn’t know it then but Spocky knew what he was doin’. I couldn’t remember what really happened that day and I didn’t know why and that scared the hell outta me so I got all defensive.

“What kinda question is that?”

“What if I told you that it’s impossible that he opened both eyes?”

“I’d say you’re a quack cause *I* was there and *you* weren’t.”

“Okay, so what happened next?”

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“I told you! He got up, we went back to the camp, slept, and drove home.”

“What if I told you that he didn’t get up and walk back to camp?”

“What’s your problem? I’m telling you my story four times never changing a thing and now you’re tellin’ me I’ve got it all wrong!”

“I’m not saying you have it all wrong, just that you are protecting yourself from something.”

That hit me like a load a’ bricks, like a snake just wrapped itself around my stomach. It took Spocky quite a while to calm me down after that one. Then he started talkin’ real slow and peaceful and suddenly I felt like I was fishin’ the Fresno River again and Dad is askin’ me where I am through the talkie.

I’m sure you guessed it, but Spocky put me under and made me relive how Dad had fallen and hit his head real hard while talkin’ to me. Dad was hearin’ voices and only opened one eye cause he had this brain tumor that was messin’ up his brain and suddenly paralyzed his left side. Dad died that day with his head in my lap. Spocky said that event created a psychological obtrusion in my mind. Somehow, my little obtrusion had also blocked my memory of the funeral, going back to school, failing my classes, and starting to shoplift. It was so bad that I had imagined that Dad wasn’t dead, but just too busy with work to be with me. So for a year Spocky and I tried to recover all of it.

But here’s the kicker.

“So today’s our last session, huh? You tell the cops I’m recovered and I get to have my Monday afternoons back, is that right?”

“That’s right, you’ve earned it. It’s been tough work for you this past year.”

“Ya, but you really made it happen for me Dr. Schrock. Thank you so much.”

He grinned silently like he always did when I said something nice about him. Then I remembered something.

“But ya know, I should also thank that poor guy who’s house I broke into. He easily coulda had me put away for awhile. Do you happen to know how I could get a hold of him?”

“As a matter of fact, he sent me this just today.”

He handed me this nice card saying that he had heard about my recovery and wanted to invite me over for dinner with he and his wife. My jaw dropped like a rock.

Spocky says, “He said he didn’t want you to decline the offer so I’m supposed to bring you myself. We can go right now.”

I didn’t want to go, but if Spocky was there with me I thought I might make it through.

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As we drove I tried to remember this place. I knew I must have been there, but I just couldn't. We parked in the driveway of this great house.

“Man, I know how to pick 'em, huh?” Spocky just smiled.

As we came to the door that snake wrapped around my stomach again. I started to remember the doorway and the window (which was fixed). Spocky opened the door and the warmth of home cooking hit me like a kids Thanksgiving dream. A really pleasant woman came and reached out her hand. I thought she might have had a tear in her eye.

Then Spocky, also almost crying said, “This is my wife. Welcome to our home.”