

Introduction

There is something I want to make perfectly clear from here on to the end of the *Echoes* series.

Jeremy Clark of, Allentown, Pennsylvania stopped being the center of this story a long time ago.

He is still the name my readers know, so he remains the doorway into the story for them. But he is no longer the point.

I do not know his real name.

Jeremy Clark is the name he gave me. I doubt he has ever set foot in the United States. His accent was very difficult to place, and the man behind the voice was never as clear as the voice itself.

My readers know him as Jeremy because that is the name attached to my experience, my books, my timeline, my evidence, and the voice on the phone.

So, this book will still use that name when it needs to.

But *Anuraga* is where I begin showing what stood behind him.

Jeremy was only one visible face of something much larger.

Something colder.

Something deliberate.

Something far more sinister.

Every piece of this machine needs to be exposed. There are men and women trapped beneath it who do not even know it. They need to know. They deserve to know. They deserve to understand how the machine works, how it traps them, and how to escape it without being destroyed.

That is why this series has not been about Jeremy for a long time.

The point of this entire book is the machine.

There is a glossary at the end of this book. Sometimes we think we know what a term means only to find out that it isn't exactly what we thought. Feel free to explore the glossary at any time.

A note from the author

"Trauma does not preserve events and memories filed neatly like a filing cabinet. Sometimes it scatters them like papers in the wind."

That has happened to me more than once, but I have always caught it before a book went to press. Until now.

I discovered that something I included in the chapter about leaving Jeremy for the second time, the chapter that contains the shower scene, did not belong there. The last part of that scene had been placed in the wrong moment. Up to that point, he had never been that cruel to me, and that is why I questioned it.

When I wrote *A Walk in the Fog*, I corrected that scene. Once I did, it finally felt right. I no longer doubted that when I went numb in the shower, Collie stepped in and carried what I could no longer endure. I felt like a frightened child again, and that was her protecting me the only way she knew how.

I am telling this story now with more memory than I had before, though not everything has returned. I am also telling the story of how we met differently. Quite honestly, I am tired of repeating the same conversations over and over. This time, I want to tell the story from a different perspective because there were many things I did not know then.

There were things I could not see until years later. Those are the very things that finally helped me understand why I lived in such a constant state of confusion.

They show how he found the doorway to my heart so quickly. They show how I unknowingly handed him the key. I thought I was welcoming love. I never realized I was opening the door to control.

* * * *

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Chapter 1: Our Meeting Told Differently

We met on Instagram.

It felt as if I had known him for years.

Before I ever knew of him, he may already have been evaluating me. He was well practiced. You could even say he was well trained. Jeremy was not robotic, and I do not believe he was without emotion either. But he was trained in observing, approaching, creating comfort, accelerating intimacy, and reading emotional openings quickly.

He had seen me before I saw him.

I did not know that then.

I did not know there were men who watched women the way a hunter watches movement in the trees. I did not know my openness, the very thing people loved about me, could be read as an invitation by someone who had already practiced what to say.

I was not a guarded person by nature. I never was. To me, being guarded meant closing the door too soon. It meant missing the chance to begin with openness and truth. It meant possibly missing something special in another person because distrust had spoken first.

If I felt danger, I pulled back.

If something in me whispered, be careful, I listened.

But if I did not feel that warning, I met people honestly. I answered honestly. I gave from the place I had always given from.

And that was exactly what he was looking for.

He was not looking for a weak woman. He was not searching for a foolish woman.

He was looking for depth, openness, loyalty, faith, care, tenderness, and endurance.

Those were not weaknesses.

Those were the qualities he learned how to use. I believe he became interested because I was real. He had already been to my page before. I do not know how many times. He knew where to find me. He had hoped I would be there when he came looking.

And that day, he caught me.

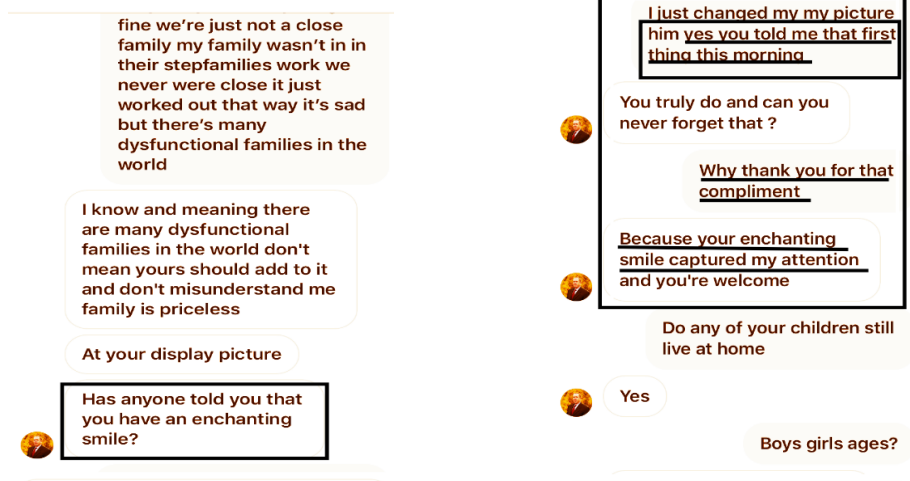
I am a romantic at heart. I find archaic words interesting, and I love British series set in the 1700s and 1800s. The language in them fascinates me. The words sound romantic to my ears.

I even keep a notebook of words I find exciting. I write the meaning I think the word has beside it, and when the show ends, I look it up in a special dictionary. Then I write the real meaning next to my guess. Most of the time, I am right. I practice using those words in sentences and try weaving them into my writing.

So, when one of the first words he used with me was enchanting, it drew me toward him immediately.

These words are from the original transcripts of our Instagram conversations.

Notice how he used the word enchanting.



Those words mattered to me.

They were romantic to me.

They sounded old-fashioned.

They sounded like something from another time; the kind of words that belonged in the stories and language I already loved.

At the time, what I heard was a beautiful compliment.

Now, looking back, I can see something else too. Whether he knew it yet or not, I do not know. But he had just opened one of the doors to my inner self, and I freely welcomed him there.

The transcripts are small but readable, and they are only a few of the trail of breadcrumbs I unknowingly left in each of my books in the Echoes series.

I valued tenderness, honor, respect, and a man who knew how to treat a woman gently.

When he said I had an “enchanting” smile, and then later told me his mother had trained him early to treat women with respect;

Those words did not land as random flattery.

They landed inside a place in me that already longed for that kind of man.

He did not sound dangerous.

He sounded gentle.

He sounded respectful.

He sounded like a man who had been taught to honor women.

He used language that matched my heart before I knew he was matching anything.

I include parts of the original transcripts so the reader can see what I saw then. Not what I know now, but what I believed I was hearing in those first conversations.

These words did not frighten me.

They comforted me.

They made me feel seen, safe, and loved.

That is where the fog began.

“Taking care of someone,” I told him, my voice soft but firm, “takes everything you have: energy, patience, and heart. It’s exhausting.”

Jeremy listened intently as I continued.

“Don’t get me wrong. I didn’t mind taking care of my mother or my husband. I loved them both, and I was happy to do it. But I’m tired, Jeremy. I’ve been tired for a long time.”

He thought for a long minute before he asked me this question.

“And you think you’ll be taking care of people for the rest of your life?”

I exhaled, shaking my head slightly.

“That’s just how it is. Someone has to do it.”

I did not know it then, but another door had opened.

He had heard the exhaustion in me.

He had heard the woman who had spent years caring for others.

He had heard the place in me that did not expect to be cared for in return.

And soon, he would plant the seed.

Maybe someone should take care of me for a while.

The script was already in motion, but I did not know was a script.

“But does it always have to be you?” he asked, his voice laced with something I could not quite place.

I let out a small, bitter laugh.

“Maybe. But no one else in my family would volunteer. They’ve got their own lives, their own problems. Besides, I don’t need anyone to take care of me. I can take care of myself.”

Jeremy did not respond right away. He seemed to choose his words carefully. When he finally spoke, his voice was steady.

“Would it be so terrible,” he asked, “to let someone take care of you for a change?”

I opened my mouth to argue, but stopped.

The question lingered in the air between us.

For the first time in a long time, I allowed myself to imagine what it might feel like to be cared for, not out of obligation, but because someone truly wanted to.

“Yeah,” I admitted finally, my voice barely above a whisper. “That would be nice. But I don’t see that happening anytime soon.”

That was when he said it.

“I want to be the one to take care of you, Colette. For the rest of your life.”

His words hit me like a wave. They were filled with a quiet determination that left little room for doubt.

“Why?” I asked, my voice trembling. “Why would you want to take care of me? We hardly know each other.”

His voice was soft and sincere.

“Because a husband takes care of his wife. And you deserve to be taken care of.”

Something inside me cracked.

I had spent so long being strong, so long being the caretaker, that I had never truly let myself consider being on the receiving end of that kind of love.

Jeremy had a way of grounding me. He had a way of calming the storm when I felt overwhelmed. Somewhere along the way, without realizing it, I had begun to trust him.

Then Jeremy began talking about marriage seriously.

His approach was so matter-of-fact, as if marriage was the most natural thing in the world. But for me, it was still something I struggled to understand.

“I don’t get it,” I admitted. “Why would you want to marry me? I mean, Jeremy, I’m ten years older than you. What happens when I’m eighty and you’re still going strong? I don’t want you to end up burying a new wife after only a few years of marriage.”

The way he reacted caught me off guard.

He did not laugh it off. He did not brush it aside. Instead, his voice became serious.

“Colette, age is just a number. It’s not about how many years we have. It’s about how we spend them. I don’t care if we have one year or fifty. I want to spend them with you.”

He had planted a seed in my mind, something I had never thought of before.

Wouldn’t it be nice if someone took care of me for a while?

I never asked for help. I never expected it. I never even thought of it. But the seed was planted, and he came back often to water it.

I did not think of it that way at the time.

At the time, I only knew I had begun to desire it.

When I said yes, I believed he was the one worth keeping.

Jeremy and I had decided to get married in February of 2019.

He seemed so open and honest.

His voice sounded like the voice of reason itself.

He already treated me as his wife.

He told people we were married.

He called me his wife.

At the time, that felt serious and beautiful to me.

It made me feel chosen.

It made me feel as if our future was already real, not something we were only imagining.

He did not speak of marriage as a distant possibility. Jeremy spoke of it as something already settled.

But in the final days of January, he told me he had gotten the bid on a construction job. I was happy for him until he told me where it was.

Africa.

He was gone in three days.

He told me he was in Benin. There was a seven-hour difference between us. When he first went to Africa, the calls began around one o’clock in the morning my time. If he was in Benin, that would have made it around eight o’clock in the morning for him. He told me his workday began around then, so from the beginning, my sleep began bending around his day.

Later, when the calls came at two or three in the morning, it would have been nine or ten o'clock for him. I did not question it much then. He was far away. He was working.

I believed I was making room for love across the time zones.

He noticed that I could not wake up easily when he called late. Instead of changing when he called, he told me to adjust my sleep so I could be awake and talk to him before he went to bed.

I was not working except on some weekends, so I adjusted my sleep to match his.

At the time, that felt like love.

It felt like making room for him.

Now I can see it was also one of the first times I began arranging my body, my rest, and my life around his needs.

He already treated me as his wife. He told people we were married. He called me his wife.

To him, I was his wife.

And because he treated engagement with the same seriousness as marriage, I always felt that way too.

That mattered.

It made the bond feel sacred before anything legal had happened. It made the commitment feel sealed before I had time to question how quickly it had formed.

I felt respect for Jeremy because his demeanor toward me was consistently respectful. He was loving. He listened to me. We understood each other, and it did not take long for me to fall in love with him.

There was something else too, something that seemed small then but looks different to me now.

In my desperation for him to return, I wrote him a soliloquy.

It was not something crafted for performance or praise. It was the language my heart spoke when ordinary words were no longer enough.

* * * *

My Soliloquy

Where art thou, my knight in shining armor, amongst this world in disarray?

The weight of this evilness is suffocating, and chaos knocks relentlessly upon my door. My soul yearns for thee as the world around me crumbles into despair. My heart doth call out thy name in desperation, yet the silence that follows is deafening. Though I hear no reply, my ears still echo with the sweet memory of thy words — those whispered vows of love and passion that once set my spirit aflame and have not yet died.

My heart, hollow and aching, knows not how to endure this emptiness. Thou art afar, and I am left to cling to the fragile threads of hope that weave between the moments we once shared.

Alas, such visions are but cruel teases of my restless mind. My wanton lips, untamed and yearning for thy kiss, betray my resolve. I feel faint, my strength faltering under the weight of this separation, yet I have no choice but to wait.

Oh, how I remember the moment I gave thee my heart. Thine eyes brimmed with knowledge and certainty, while mine shone with wonder and awe. In that instant, thou swept me off my feet with a passion so pure it captured my very soul.

I sent that soliloquy to the only address I had in, Allentown, PA. I just figured they would forward it to him in Benin, but it was returned to me in May of 2019 simply marked “Return to Sender.”

I called the Post Office in Allentown, and asked if there was a forwarding address left by him at that address.

They asked me what the old address was, and I read the address to him. He said there was no such address in, Allentown, PA. I thanked him and quietly hung up.

I set it in my catch-all drawer—along with a note. Returned to me on May 5th marked “Return to Sender,” called PO in and was told no such address, and forgot about it for the time being.

Chapter 2: The Script

At the end of the published paperback of *A Walk in the Fog*, I announced that “Anurag Thakur will never hurt another person again. It is dead.”

That is the name I found during my investigation of the man who said he was Jeremy. I did not understand the importance of that name then. I only knew it mattered. I will discuss that name more fully later in this book.

But before I can explain that name, I need to explain the script. Here are more transcripts from the original Instagram conversations. I tried to put them in order, but not all of the transcripts were needed as proof, so there are cards missing.

The script did not begin with threats.

It did not begin with money.

It began quietly.

It began with watching.

It began with choosing.

It began with testing.

It began with words that sounded tender enough to trust.

A script is a set of words designed to create a certain effect. It can be written to portray feelings, imitate emotion, or make another person believe those feelings are real. Feelings are human. They are part of how we were designed by our Creator. They move us. They reach into us. They can soften us, comfort us, excite us, and draw us toward another person.

When feelings are expressed and then returned, a rhythm begins. One person sends affection.

The other responds. That response encourages more affection.

Then more comes back.

Back and forth it goes.

The feelings begin to grow. A bond begins to form. Each response strengthens the next one. What begins as words becomes a pattern. What begins as a pattern becomes a habit. What becomes a habit begins to feel like love.

That is where the danger was hidden.

And that is what happened between Jeremy and me.

If you look closely at the language that passed between us in that short time before we ever spoke on the phone, you can see the pattern begin. You can see the words that drew me in. You can see how quickly the rhythm formed.

He gave affection.

I felt it.

I responded.

He gave more.

I returned more. Back and forth it went.

At the time, it did not feel like a pattern. It did not feel like training. It did not feel like anything dangerous.

It felt human.

It felt warm.

It felt like tenderness being answered by tenderness.

* * * *

But now I can see something else.

I can see the beginning of the pattern.

I can see how the voice named Jeremy began teaching me to need him.

Refer to the transcript cards beginning of chapter two and see if you can pick out the hooks.

They are there.

The enchanting smile.

The fact that he had been to my page before, more than once.

The training his mother supposedly gave him about how to treat women.

The respectful tone.

The soft voice.

The way he lowered that voice when he wanted to calm me.

When he spoke softly, I melted.

Notice one line from the transcripts. It was December 7, 2018, exactly one year to the date that my husband of thirty years had died.

By then, the rhythm was already working.

I needed his voice to calm me.

I needed his voice to soothe me.

I did not know then what that meant.

The man behind the mask, who called himself Jeremy, followed the script step by step. His words made me feel noticed, wanted, cherished, and safe. They motivated me to answer in the same emotional language.

I was not responding to a stranger on a screen.

I was responding to what felt like tenderness.

I was responding to what felt human.

That is the cruelty of it.

The script did not feel mechanical while I was inside it. It felt comfortable. Natural. Deeply loving.

And each time I answered him from my heart, the bond grew stronger.

I want to present the evidence of the things he said deliberately, because the words were not random. They were part of the script.

There was repetition in what he said.
Certain words had to be spoken.
Certain tones had to be used.
Certain phrases had to be repeated.

They were not accidents.
They were tools.
They were used on purpose.

For instance, Jeremy listened closely to the things I talked about. He encouraged me to talk about the difficult things in my life. He listened closely all the time. He encouraged me to talk about my belief in God.

I did not know this yet, but I was handing him information.
I was handing him my faith.
I was handing him my tenderness.
I was handing him my loneliness.
I was handing him my need to be seen.
I was handing him my belief that the husband is head of the wife by God's own authority.
I did not know I was giving him a map.

I am still seeing things that did not make sense back then, but do now. I asked him what religion he was after I told him I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He skirted the question and practically refused to answer. The only thing he would say was "non-denominational."

In my forty-five plus years in the door-to-door ministry, I had never heard such a fuss about not wanting to answer. People had told me many things through the years. But this was different.

Now I believe that answer may have been part of the script — a vague, non-descript, American-sounding religious answer that could be used when a question like mine came up.

He encouraged me in normal conversation to talk about different subjects for a reason. It was for him to listen and get the sense of how to make himself a perfect match for me.

When he had the information that was important for him to know, he began to mirror me.
His beliefs were the same as my beliefs.

His view of marriage was the same as my view of marriage.

His way of dealing with things was the same as my way of dealing with things.

Engagement held the same seriousness as marriage.

His view of family matched the family I had always wanted, especially because he knew I came from a broken one.

He made himself a faithful, one-woman man.

He said his mother had taught him early that he was not to toy with a woman's affections.

He saw how tired I was from taking care of the people in my life. He saw how much that had taken from me. He saw how many years had passed with many of my own needs unmet.

This was only the beginning of him becoming my knight in shining armor.

This was only the beginning of him rescuing me from the burdens of caring for everyone else.

I had even written a story and told him he was my knight in shining armor. Little did I know that what I wrote would turn out to be almost prophetic of what our relationship would become.

We planned on marrying.

He treated me with love and respect.

Until he no longer did.

I began my investigation of him in less than a year after we met. By then, I had caught him in several lies. I knew they were lies because I checked many of the things he told me. At the time, I made excuses for him. I wanted him to be real. I wanted the man I loved to be the man he had shown me.

Eventually, I began to investigate him because I wondered if he was who he said he was.

He was invisible online. But while my investigation was still focused on him, some of the things that turned up revealed important things. I did not know those findings were important until years later. A few of them became incredibly important only in these past few months.

But in 2019, I did not yet understand all of that.

I only knew something did not feel right.

I only knew I was already attached.

I only knew that when I tried to leave him the first time, I could not stay gone.

I begged.

At the time, I believed he had good reasons for not taking me back right away. I had doubted him. I had questioned him. I had hurt the man who said he loved me and wanted to take care of me for the rest of my life.

But looking back, I can see something important.

It was not only my apology that brought him back.

It was when I told him I needed him.

That was the word.

Needed.

When I said I needed him, he took me back.

I did not understand what that meant then. I only knew I was relieved. I only knew the pain stopped when welcomed me back. I only knew his voice could calm me again.

But now I can see it.

The script had worked.

The hooks were in place.

The seed had taken root.

This was the beginning.

This was where I learned that leaving him hurt, and returning to him felt like rescue.

That is how the script became more than words.

Chapter 3: The Price of Leaving

Before I left Jeremy the first time, I had already begun checking the things he told me.

His stories were not holding together. He had sent me pictures of himself, and the first time I seriously doubted him, he sent me a contract that looked businesslike. But there were things about it that even I, a former truck driver, could see were phony.

I made a page about him on my website. I posted the pictures he had sent me, the contract I believed he had made up, and the fact that I believed he was a scammer.

I warned other women to watch out for him. I told them he would make them fall in love with him, but he was only looking to steal their money. I listed some of the favorite lines he repeated and told women to beware.

Then I sent him a text with the link to the page so he would know that I knew he was lying.

He called me within ten minutes.

He asked what I was trying to do to him.

“Are you trying to destroy me?”

I told him I was trying to warn other women about him.

Because this happened more than seven years ago, I do not remember the exact dialogue from that conversation. But I clearly remember what happened next.

He told me to get on my computer, go to my website, and take all the information about him off immediately.

He claimed he did not have internet access on his phone, but I became certain he was watching while I removed everything from the website.

I know because I missed one item.

He kept asking me whether I had taken everything down. Each time, I insisted that I had. He asked me two or three times before finally telling me to look again.

I looked and found the one item I had missed. I removed it without saying anything.

“Is it all off now?” he asked just as it disappeared from the page.

That clinched it for me.

He had internet access on his phone, and he had been watching.

“We’ll talk about this later,” he said.

Then he hung up.

When he called again, it was later than usual. He asked why I had done that. I repeated that I had been trying to warn other women about him.

This time, he was sweet.

He insisted he was not scamming me and wanted to know what had caused me to believe he was. I told him someone had sent me information from the *Dr. Phil* show about scammers, and I thought what they described sounded like us.

We talked for two hours.

He told me he would never do anything like that to anyone, least of all me. By the time we finished talking, I believed him.

I thought everything was fine again.

I loved him so much.

The next day, he did not call at his regular time, so I called him. He sounded a little cold.

I asked what was wrong. He told me he had to call me later because there was a problem with one of his workers.

Later, he again failed to call at the usual time after returning to his hotel, so I called him. He still sounded a little cold, and I asked again whether something was wrong.

He said he was tired and needed to sleep. He told me he loved me and said goodnight.

I felt as though he had not really forgiven me for putting those things online. I felt terribly low.

Then he called at his usual time before work and reassured me that he loved me.

I was relieved as soon as I heard his voice sounding normal again.

After a couple of weeks, his stories began changing again, and more lies piled up.

So, I left him.

I stopped answering my phone, and I did not call him.

The first time I tried to leave Jeremy, I was only able to stay away from him for a few days.

I discovered something strange about that. I had never felt this way before. It was not long after I left him that I began to panic.

I needed to talk to him because I was scared and confused.

I felt as though I were walking in a fog.

When I called him, he asked me what I wanted.

I told him I was sorry I had left him. I told him I wanted to come back.

At first, he sounded deeply hurt.

“You left me once,” he said. “You’ll do it again.”

“No, no, I won’t.”

He asked why he should believe me. He said he could no longer trust me not to leave him again.

I began to cry and beg him to please take me back. I told him I was sorry I had left.

He did not say anything for a long minute. Then he said he did not think he could take me back because he did not trust me anymore.

I was crying harder by then.

“Please, Jeremy,” I begged. “I promise I won’t leave you again.”

He did not speak right away. He waited for another minute before answering.

“No, I can’t. You really hurt me.”

I begged him again, with more tears.

“Jeremy, please take me back. I’m scared. I don’t know what to do. Please take me back. Please.”

He did not say anything.

I waited, but he still said nothing.

So, I pleaded some more.

“Jeremy, I am begging you to please take me back. I love you, and I can’t live without you in my life.”

I waited again.

He still did not speak.

I began crying harder and begging again.

“Please. I’m scared. I love you, and I need you.”

This time, I heard him take a deep breath and slowly exhale.

Then he finally answered me.

“I will take you back. You need to promise me you won’t leave me again.”

“I promise I won’t leave you anymore, because I need you so much.”

He said he would forgive me this time, but I had better not leave him again.

I thanked him for letting me come back. I was relieved, but I was crying even harder.

His punishment was not loud.

It was distance.

It was waiting.

It was silence.

It was him refusing to take me back right away.

It was not cruel in a way I could easily name.

I had hurt him. I had left him without saying goodbye.

At the time, I believed he had good reasons. I had questioned him. I had doubted him. I had hurt the man who said he loved me, the man who said he wanted to take care of me for the rest of my life.

So, I blamed myself.

I thought I had to make it right.

I thought I had to prove I still loved him.

I thought I had to prove I was sorry.

So, I begged.

Not endlessly.

This first time, he did not need to make me beg for long.

He only had to wait until I said the word that told him the script had worked.

I told him I needed him.

And when I said I needed him, he took me back.

That is what I did not understand then.

It was not only forgiveness I was reaching for.

It was relief.

The pain of leaving stopped when he returned. The fear quieted when his voice softened. The ache in me eased when he let me back into the place I thought was love.

I thought he had forgiven me.

Now I can see something else.

He had learned what I sounded like when the hook was fully in place.

I was living in cognitive dissonance by then, although I did not know it by that name. It felt as if I were walking through a fog, watching myself move on autopilot.

I was carrying opposing truths inside me.

He told me he loved me.

He made me feel safe.

But he was lying to me.

And I knew he was lying.

He knew I knew it too.

Knowing did not set me free.

I had also just discovered that I needed him.

The lies did not stop. Every so often, I would take hold of one of the lies he had told me and confront him with it.

I soon discovered that confronting him was a losing battle.

He never truly denied the lies, but he never acknowledged them either. He made light of them. He changed the subject. He explained them away. Sometimes he told me I had heard him wrong.

He had never said that.

He tried to gaslight me, and I confronted him about that too. I asked him if he had ever seen the movie *Gaslight*.

He acted as though he did not know what I was talking about, but he backed away from doing it so openly.

For a while.

It was not long before he began trying again, but now he was more careful. I caught him trying to be sneaky about it, and I confronted him each time.

Eventually, he understood that I was watching for it.

He did not stop confusing me.

He changed the way he did it.

One day, after I had returned to him, I made a remark about how difficult it must have been when he started first grade.

I told him I could not stop thinking about how hard it must have been for him to learn English after being thrown into a situation where no one spoke German and he could not speak English.

He asked me what I was talking about.

I reminded him that he had told me his family moved back to the United States when he was six. I said he must have felt lost starting first grade without understanding what anyone was saying.

He tried to tell me he had never said that.

Instead, he said his mother had taken him to Singapore when he was ten so he could learn the culture there.

Another story.

Another contradiction.

Another attempt to make me doubt what I remembered.

I knew he was lying.

He knew I knew he was lying.

But even that did not set me free.

I still needed him.

And I still did not understand what he had done to make me need him so desperately.

Chapter 4: The Pattern Repeats

After we made up, things did not return to normal right away.

For the first few days, Jeremy was slow to respond. When we talked in the mornings, he told me he had lain awake all night.

I asked him why.

He told me he could not sleep or eat when we fought.

He never talked for long at those times. He would tell me he had to get to work or that a worker was at the door and needed him.

I would hang up the phone thinking about how badly I had hurt him.

It was painful to believe I had caused him that much pain.

I tried to talk about cheerful things. Near the end of our conversations, I usually told him again that I was sorry I had hurt him.

Then, when he got over what I called his “mood,” he would become himself again.

I was always thankful when he returned and told me he loved me.

There were other times when he suddenly pulled away for no reason I could understand. Sometimes he remained silent on the phone for several minutes.

Those silences were painful.

I immediately wondered whether he was tired of me.

I wondered whether he was going to leave me.

I could not stand the thought of him no longer being in my life.

Sometimes it seemed as though he intentionally started a disagreement and then pulled away. His distance made me feel as though he no longer loved me.

So, I tried harder to please him.

When he was pleased with me, he spoke his sweet words of love. He made me feel certain that I belonged to him.

Then he would come back as though nothing had happened.

The moment I heard his familiar voice, I felt relief.

His voice calmed me.

His voice soothed me.

At other times, he shortened our conversations when he wanted to pull away. There were many moments when I questioned whether he loved me.

When that happened, I tried harder.

I tried to say the right thing.

I tried to make him happy.

I tried to bring back the loving voice.

Then he would tell me he loved me again. He would speak those familiar words, and once more, I knew I was his.

His calm voice never failed to soothe me when I was upset.

His silence began to terrify me.

When he became silent, my logic seemed to disappear. His silence meant he did not love me. It meant I had done something wrong. It meant he might get rid of me.

I knew I could not do without him in my life.

During those painful times, I held my breath and walked on eggshells until he loved me again.

I did not yet understand that a pattern was repeating.

He pulled away.

I became frightened.

I tried harder.

He returned.

I felt relief.

Then it happened again.

Human bonding is natural. It is part of how we were designed by our Creator. Bonding can include friendship, affection, love, trust, loyalty, comfort, and the feeling of belonging to another person.

That kind of bond is not wrong.

It is human.

When Jeremy introduced himself to me online, many things began happening quickly. He swept me off my feet, and I fell in love with him. The feelings were real to me. The warmth was real to me. The longing was real to me. My response was human.

There is even a physical side to bonding. The brain and body respond to affection, attention, closeness, hope, and love. Chemicals such as oxytocin and dopamine can be involved in feelings of connection, pleasure, comfort, and attachment. That is normal. In a healthy relationship, those feelings can help two people grow closer in love, trust, and safety.

But like many good things in this world, bonding can be misused.

When someone understands how affection, attention, silence, fear, and relief can affect another person, that knowledge can be used to draw a person close and keep that person attached. The bond may still feel like love, but something harmful has entered it.

That is where trauma bonding begins.

Trauma bonding is not normal love.

It is a bond formed or strengthened through a painful cycle: closeness, fear, confusion, hurt, distance, apology, relief, and then closeness again. The person who hurts you also becomes the person who soothes you. The one who causes the pain also becomes the one you run to for comfort.

That is what makes it so confusing.

You are not only attached to the love.

You are attached to the relief that comes when the pain stops.

That is why people can stay in relationships they know are hurting them. It is not because they are foolish. It is because the bond has become tangled with fear, hope, longing, and relief.

That is what I did not understand at first.

I thought I was fighting to keep love.

I did not know I was being trained to need the relief only he could give me.

Chapter 5: The Second Time I Left

Something in Jeremy had shifted.

He no longer whispered love.

He wielded it like a weapon.

He did not beg me to come back.

He punished me for trying to leave.

That was when the torture began—not with fists, but with silence. Long stretches passed without a reply. Then came sudden words: urgent, accusing, twisting the blame so subtly that I began to believe it might belong to me.

I had hurt him, he said.

I did not understand him.

I did not know what he was going through.

If I had only trusted him, none of this would have happened.

He made it sound as though I had broken something precious, and only I could repair it.

So, the begging began.

Seconds passed.

Silence.

I begged again.

Minutes passed.

Still no voice from him.

I was praying and crying.

I could not stop.

Then, finally, I heard his voice.

“You hurt me deeply this time.”

I begged again, my voice beginning to crack.

There was more silence.

Then he spoke again.

“Why do you keep doing this to me?”

I kept begging.

By then, I felt empty, as though I might pass out.

His accusations continued.

“Why? Why did you do this to me again?”

My voice grew hoarse. My breathing became ragged.

I was sobbing uncontrollably and pleading for forgiveness.

He kept me there until I had almost no voice left.

Three hours passed while this continued.

Finally, he forgave me.

But he was not finished.

His voice changed.

It was calm now.

Gentle.

Almost concerned.

He sounded like love again.

“I’m worried about you, sweetheart,” he said. “If you can’t calm down, you’re going to make yourself sick.”

Then he began giving me instructions.

“I want you to take a shower. That always calms you down.”

He told me to take the phone with me on speaker and place it on the counter so he could hear the water running.

Nothing about his words sounded alarming.

Nothing he said would have sounded strange to someone overhearing the conversation.

It sounded as though he cared about me.

But this was not only concern.

This was not only love.

The punishment had escalated. Now he was directing what I did and where I went while I was still sobbing, exhausted, and barely able to think.

He wanted me to remember what leaving him felt like.

When the water struck my face, I became numb.

I felt as though I had no body. I felt like a kid again. I began to giggle.

When I stepped out of the shower, I was completely detached from what had happened.

The punishment had continued until something inside me broke away.

* * * *

He was still on the phone.

I saw the phone sitting on the counter.

I picked it up. “Hello,” I said.

He asked if I was dry.

“I just got out of the shower.”

I was breathing fast.

“Dry off with a towel,” he said mean.

I couldn’t move, my blood ran away, I felt skinny.

He asked, “Aren’t you dry yet?” He was mean.

I started to cry.

I asked him what I was doing before I took a shower. I was still crying and shaking.

“You don’t remember?” he asked. “Do you remember why you’re crying?”

“No. I feel funny, like I’m not inside here,” I whispered. “Everything looks different. Kind of wavy. Why do I feel like that?”

Then I asked, "Why am I so tired all of a sudden?"

His voice became very soft and nice.

"I want you to go into your bedroom, put on your pajamas, and get into bed. Can you do that for me?"

"Yes, I can do that," I whispered. "Will you tell me a story too?"

Now he was so nice.

Now he was treating me good.

He asked if I was in bed yet.

"No, not yet," I whispered. "But I'm getting my pajamas on."

He told me to let him know when I was in bed so he would know I was safe and ready to sleep.

"I'm in bed now," I told him. "I'm ready to sleep. But the light is still on."

He said it was all right. I could sleep with the light on just for that night.

He told me he loved me very much.

He said he would talk to me again when I woke in the morning.

"I love you too," I said.

Then I fell asleep with the phone still in my hand.

* * * *

In the meantime, my investigation continued. Each time I found a new lead, I followed it until it led me to the next one.

Much of what I discovered gave names to the things he was doing to me, the effects those things could have, and the effects I was already feeling firsthand.

I knew what the word *escalation* meant. But now I felt the cruelty of it.

I felt what happened when his punishment increased until I was nearly broken.

What I was learning showed me that when an abuser feels control slipping away, the punishment may become more severe.

I learned that his silence and his withdrawal from me were forms of punishment. I also learned that the return of his love strengthened the bond and made it much harder for me to leave.

He would reassure me that he loved me. When he felt certain that I needed him again, he would sometimes pull away, leaving me to wonder whether he still loved me.

Then I would try harder to please him.

When he was pleased, he might give his love back to me.

Sometimes he did.

Sometimes he did not.

I learned that this pattern is called intermittent reinforcement. Because the affection is unpredictable, the person keeps trying, hoping the love will return. The uncertainty can make the bond even deeper and more difficult to break.

The pattern taught me to look to the same person who caused the wound for the relief from it.

Chapter 6: The Path Was Already There

When I awoke, the phone was still in my hand.

I remembered the begging, the shower, and the way his voice had changed. I understood that I had lost a piece of time while he remained on the phone.

I smiled to myself.

I realized that my child had taken over for me.

Collie had spoken in my place when the punishment became too much for me. I needed relief from the cruelty that lingered in the escalation of his punishment. It had already gone on for three hours. I was tired. I felt as though I could no longer function, and I desperately needed relief.

The punishment had continued to escalate, and I could not see any relief coming soon.

The last thing I remembered was getting into the shower. I remembered the water hitting my face. I began to feel numb. I felt like a kid again.

Then I woke up in bed with the phone in my hand.

That was when I smiled.

She had been watching me.

She saw me losing myself when I went numb, and she stepped in and took over.

Now I can see where he found the opening and stepped right into it. At the time, I only knew that I was frightened, confused, and desperate not to lose him.

He had not created that opening. It was already there.

But he had reached into me and found the little girl who froze when given an order, then hurried to obey because she was afraid of what would happen if she did not.

She was terrified of losing him.

She was terrified of being abandoned.

This cat-and-mouse game was beginning to entangle things from my past with our relationship.

I knew something was not right. Questions began to arise about how he had been able to make me need him so desperately.

He saw an opportunity.

He found another avenue through which he could control me, and he made himself at home in that path.

The fog had lifted a little, and in that moment, I felt more like myself than I had in months.

I was beginning to understand more.

This was the place where he discovered that guilt worked on me.

He knew I would try hard to make things right.

He knew I was always trying to be good.

He knew I hated confrontation.

He had studied her too.

He made himself the knight.

The rescuer.

Our savior.

What he was doing to me was evil.

Why couldn't I stay gone?

This was where I began to realize just how strong my bond to him had become.

Jeremy did not create the frightened child who hurried to obey him.

She was already there.

Long before I ever heard his voice, I had learned that love could be taken away. I had learned that someone I loved might walk out the door and never come back. I had learned to believe that another person's hurt might be my fault, and that if I were good enough, loving enough, or sorry enough, I might be able to make everything right again.

That path had been forming inside me since childhood.

I remember my mother saying that someday she was going to walk out the door and never come back.

Usually, at least three of us children were fighting. Sometimes it was four of us when our brother joined in, but most often it was the twins and me.

When she threatened to leave, I ran to her.

I told her I would be good.

I promised I would not fight anymore.

I begged her not to leave.

I felt guilty and responsible for it happening at all. I believed that if she walked out that door and never returned, it would be because I had not been good enough to make her stay.

I did not know then that my mother was exhausted.

I did not know that adults could say things from frustration that children would carry as truth.

I only knew that my mother might leave and that I had to stop her.

My father reached that same frightened place in me in a different way.

He would call me to him and whine, "Collie doesn't love me anymore."

I would run to him, put my arms around him, and tell him, "I do love you, Daddy. I do love you."

I do not know why he thought it was funny to keep doing that, but he did.

It made me feel as though I did not know how to love. It made me believe that love had to be proved whenever someone questioned it.

I did not stop to wonder why he was saying it.

I did not know that I could say, "That isn't true."

I hurried to reassure him.

I hurried to make him feel better.

I hurried to prove that I loved him.

Another terrifying feeling I learned from my family was having love taken away from me.

That fear came from my mother's threats of leaving us and never coming home again. It came from my father pretending that I did not love him. It came from believing that another person's unhappiness was my responsibility.

If someone I loved was upset, I had to fix it.

If someone threatened to leave, I had to become good.

If someone questioned my love, I had to prove it.

I do not blame my parents for everything that followed in my life.

Parents were not taught much about raising children in those days. There were many stay-at-home mothers, but that did not mean families were free of problems. I was never taught how to be a parent either, and my parents were not always good examples.

They did the best they could with the knowledge, strength, and love they had.

Understanding that does not erase what the child feels.

My mother was not a stay-at-home mother. She was a hairdresser, and she had a shop in our house. Women came to our home and sat in the living room while they waited to have their hair done.

When I was about three years old, I crawled around on the floor, meowing and rubbing against people's legs, waiting to be petted.

Some of the women picked me up and sat me on their laps.

If no one picked me up or petted me, I kept crawling and looking up at people until someone did.

I did not know how to say, "Please hold me."

I did not know how to say, "I need someone to notice me."

So, I became a kitten.

I made myself small and soft and lovable.

I waited for someone to reach down and pick me up.

My mother used to tell me that she loved babies, but she would also say that she never should have had five of them. She forgot that babies grew up quickly and were not babies for long.

But she loved infants.

She had her hands full with five children and a business. She was exhausted much of the time, and her patience wore thin quickly.

Then one of the twins developed polio when she was eight months old.

The polio vaccine did not become available until the mid-1950s. It is amazing that none of the rest of us got it.

Around the same time that polio entered our home, rheumatic fever entered it too, and I became sick shortly after Laurie did.

My mother no longer had only five active children and a business to care for.

She had five children, two of them very sick, and she was already exhausted.
I remember my mother being tired.
She was so tired that she kept sleeping.
She slept at night.
She slept when we were awake.
She slept through lunch and supper too.
Daddy had to take care of her.
He finally made a doctor's appointment for her. He said she had slept for two weeks and he knew she needed help.
I remember her psychiatrist, Dr. Keeney, sometimes coming to our house.
He had red hair.
He wanted to see her living conditions and how she interacted with us children.
There is one more thing I remember.
My mother took me to Dr. Keeney's office once, and I had to sit in the waiting room.
I heard Mommy crying.
I froze.
Then I started crying too.
I asked the woman behind the desk what the doctor was doing to her.

Why was he making her cry?

I wanted him to stop.
I was panicking.
I wanted him to stop hurting her.
The woman went into the office, and in my child's mind, she told him to stop hurting my mother.
Then I had to sit outside in the sunshine on the steps and wait for Mommy to come out.
She never took me to his office again.
I did not understand therapy.
I did not know that crying might mean my mother was talking about painful things.
I only knew that someone I loved was crying behind a closed door.
I believed she was being hurt.
I believed I had to make it stop.
That was another part of the path already forming inside me.
When someone I loved was in pain, I felt responsible.
When someone I loved was angry, I felt frightened.
When someone I loved pulled away, I felt abandoned.
And there was one memory that reached deeper than all the others.
I was five years old.
I had already gone to sleep when my father came into my room and lay down on my bed.

I woke to the weight of him.
I smelled the beer.
The terror came instantly.
There was no possible place to go.
My body tightened.
My eyes squeezed shut.
I prayed to disappear.
When I opened my eyes, he was gone.
I don't know where I went.
Those were the only words she had.
She did not know words like dissociation.
She did not know how to explain what happened inside her.
She only knew that she had been there, and then she had not been there.
She knew the weight.
She knew the smell of beer.
She knew the terror.
She knew the instant freeze.
She knew there was no way out.
She knew she had to become still and disappear until it was over.
For most of my adult life, I carried the damage.
She carried the memories.
I carried the fear of people leaving.
I carried the need to keep peace.
I carried the guilt when someone was unhappy.
I carried the panic when love was pulled away.
But she carried the feelings that belonged to the memories.
She carried the loneliness inside them.
She carried the terror of being completely alone with no one coming to help her.
Until now.

I can feel her terror now.

I feel her hopelessness.
I remember that feeling now.
That is what I did not understand when Jeremy began giving me orders.
When his voice changed, my body froze.
Then I hurried.
When he demanded obedience, I did not respond only as the adult woman who loved him.
The path inside me was older than Jeremy.

The child already knew what it meant to freeze when a man gave an order.
She already knew what it meant to feel that there was no escape.
She already knew how to become still.
She already knew how to hurry when someone might stop loving her.
She already knew how to prove love when it was questioned.
Jeremy did not create that opening.
It was already there.
But he found it.
He stepped into it when he pulled his love away.
He stepped into it when he made me beg.
He stepped into it when he used silence as punishment.
He stepped into it when he gave orders and demanded obedience.
Then, when his voice became soft again, he became the person who made the danger stop.
He was loving me again.
He wasn't mad at me anymore.
He was being nice to me again.
That was what the child needed.
The same person who caused the fear became the person who brought relief.
The same voice that frightened me became the voice that soothed me.
The same man who made me feel abandoned became the man I believed could rescue me
from abandonment.
That is why leaving him felt so unbearable.
I was not only leaving a man.
I was stepping into every old fear that love might disappear and never come back.
I was stepping into the child's terror that she had done something wrong.
I was stepping into her belief that she had to be good, hurry, obey, apologize, and prove her
love so she would not be left alone again.
But something changed while I was writing chapter five.
She got my full attention.
She did not give me polished sentences.
She gave me the words she had.
"My blood ran away."
"I felt skinny."
"He was loving me again."
Those words did not need to be corrected.
They needed to be heard.
Pat had told me years ago to listen to my child.
I thought I understood what she meant.
I did not understand fully until now.
Listening does not mean turning the child's words into adult language.

It means respecting her as the child she was.
It means allowing her to tell me only as much as she can tell.
It means not asking her to make the memory neater, clearer, or easier for an adult to understand.

She was a child.

She did not have adult words.
She had feelings.
She had pictures.
She had body sensations.
She had terror.
And she had the words she could reach.
For years, she was alone inside those feelings.
She knows that I left her there.
I know it too.
But I am not going back into blame now.
That is not what matters anymore.
We are together now.
I am listening now.
I will not abandon her now.
She does not have to tell everything at once.
She can speak until she has had enough.
Then we can stop.
She can give me one feeling.
One picture.
One child's sentence.
And I can stay with her.
The path was already there before Jeremy came into my life.
But it does not lead only toward fear anymore.
It leads back to her.
And this time, when I find her, I stay.

Chapter 7: Behind the Script

The script is passed among scammers, who share its methods with others who want to learn how to collect money for themselves, either alone or with the help of team members.

I do not know much about scams carried out by people pretending to be American movie stars, although that type of scam appears to be popular here. From what I have heard within my own community, several may be taking place at any given time in some of the senior apartment complexes in my town.

In the short conversations I have had with victims and their loved ones, I have heard common threads running through many love scams.

They are told that age does not matter—that age is only a number. They are told that what is inside matters and that, in the scammer's eyes, they are still young and beautiful.

These methods are not limited to one particular age or type of person. They can be adapted to anyone who wants to be seen, valued, or loved for who they are, both inside and out.

The similarities do not prove that every scammer is reading from the same written document. They do show that the methods are widely known, shared, copied, and used because they work.

What I believe exists is a player's handbook—a collection of instructions and methods explaining what to do, what to look for in a target, how to feel that person out, and how to learn what to say.

I cannot say with certainty that there are never word-for-word scripts. Some scams are carried out one-on-one. Others involve teams of three or four people. International, long-term love scams may operate within a hierarchy, using formal training and methods that are far more organized and professional.

I know only what I experienced and what my investigation uncovered.

I share those experiences in the hope that they will help others recognize the trap they are in and find their way out without being destroyed by it.

The scammer may choose the words, but the machine supplies the steps.

Those steps allow the conversations to feel personal while still making them recognizable from one victim's story to another.

The script is flexible because the person being targeted unknowingly helps shape it through every honest response.

What the Handbook Teaches

The information in the how-to manuals I have been calling scripts is really a collection of methods.

It teaches scammers how to search for possible targets, how to study them, how to identify emotional openings, and how to decide which targets to pursue and which ones to release back into the ocean.

It teaches them how to create a need, how to deepen that need, and how to maintain it.

It teaches them how to make a person feel seen.

It teaches them how to listen for loneliness, responsibility, grief, faith, guilt, loyalty, and the desire to be loved.

It teaches them how to take the honest things a person reveals and return those things in a form that feels like understanding.

It teaches them how to make the target begin thinking their way.

Reason comes first.

The scammer must appear reasonable, trustworthy, and safe. He must make his explanations seem believable enough that the person begins questioning her own concerns.

Later come the methods for handling resistance, increasing pressure, and escalating punishment when the target begins to question what is happening or refuses to obey.

The first lessons create the attachment.

The later lessons protect the scammer's control.

Together, they form the handbook behind the script.

In my case, he had already visited my page. He had seen my photograph, read my biography, looked at my hobbies, and learned whatever else I had made visible.

He had seen me before I knew he existed.

He later told me that he had hoped I would be online when he came to my page. I was online that day.

The way he greeted me was to ask whether anyone had ever told me that I had an enchanting smile.

A Door Opened

It opened a door to my inner self, and I was drawn to him.

Perhaps he had seen something in my biography that made him think that particular question would reach me. He asked me not to forget it and said he had been drawn to me because of my enchanting smile.

To me, it was a wonderful compliment. “Enchanting” seemed to be a word from another time, the kind of word that almost announced, “I was brought up with class.”

He had found the right word.

Our conversation moved from his childhood as an only child, spoiled by parents who had plenty of love to give him, to my childhood in a family of five children.

We compared his family with mine. In my family, each of us struggled for the attention of a mother who was exhausted from raising five children while working every day in the beauty shop in our home.

He always seemed to know the right things to say to reach my heart.

Now I know why.

He was a good listener. He listened so carefully that he could recall conversations almost word for word.

For a long time, I have suspected that he may have recorded some of our conversations. I cannot prove that he did. But it would explain how he always knew what to say, how to say it, when to repeat certain things, when to plant a seed, how often to water it, and when to return to harvest the fruit of his labor.

He taught me just as I taught him, but we had very different intentions in our minds and hearts.

Mine was to please him and make him happy.

His was to bond me to him so tightly that I would believe I could do nothing without him.

He needed me to turn to him. He needed me to depend upon his voice to soothe the storms he created along the way. He encouraged me regularly to lean on him.

Eventually, that dependence gave him the power to control me.

I did not see it as control. I saw it as love, protection, and proof that he cared deeply about me.

Teaching Me to Carry the Blame

He looked for openings in my past that he could use to reach my heart. He compared our two households and recognized what I had missed.

He saw an entryway into my heart, stepped through the opening, and made himself at home.

And I welcomed him there.

From the beginning, he skillfully reminded me that I had allowed him into my heart. He told me that he could not have entered unless I had let him.

Now I see what he was really doing.

He was training me to believe that everything he did—or helped create—was somehow my fault.

He taught me to accept responsibility for his decisions and carry that responsibility myself. He taught me to take the blame for things he had deliberately done to bind me more tightly to him.

He relieved himself of responsibility for his own actions and made me believe that I had done those things to myself.

Becoming My Knight in Shining Armor

We talked about the years I had spent caring for others. I had cared for my mother through twenty years of Alzheimer's disease and for my husband through his seven-year decline with dementia.

He contacted me only ten months after my husband of thirty years had died.

From only a few conversations, he saw another door to my inner self. He was willing to become the man who came to my rescue.

He made himself my knight in shining armor.

He encouraged me to talk about how tired I was from the responsibility of caring for the needs of others. Then he used what he learned to plant a seed.

Had I ever thought about how it might feel to have someone care for me for a change?

He planted the seed, watered it, and then presented himself as the answer.

He told me I needed someone to take care of me. I needed someone who would always be beside me, and he wanted to be that person.

He wanted to care for me because a husband takes care of his wife.

He saw how tired I was from always being the caretaker, and he offered himself as the solution.

The Machine Takes Shape

This is exactly how I see the machine now.

The script is a large part of the machine, but it is not the entire machine.

Different names, voices, words, scenarios, countries, men, and women are each only one cog in a wheel. That wheel is one of hundreds of wheels required to keep the machine running.

The names can change.

The voices can change.

The stories can change.

The steps remain recognizable.

The machine is always hungry. It is fueled by the money scammers collect and feed into it.

It runs on people's hard-earned money.

Stolen money.

Money taken from victims.

I was a victim, although I did not see myself that way for a long time.

In fact, after only a few months, I knew he was scamming me. I began investigating the voice that called itself Jeremy.

I started by searching for the man behind the voice.

Instead, I found the machine that runs the scams.

At the time, I had no idea what I had uncovered. I only knew that there was something important about the names I had found.

Preparing the Victim for Control

Certain methods are used to control victims, but they do not begin as obvious control.

Even while the scammer is teaching a person to need him, the victim may not suspect what is happening.

By the time the control becomes recognizable, the victim has already been prepared.

Gaslighting has begun to confuse her sense of what is true. Trauma bonding has attached comfort to the same person who causes the pain. The victim becomes trapped in a cycle of affection and withdrawal, closeness and indifference, love and uncertainty.

This push and pull is called intermittent reinforcement.

The loving person appears, disappears, and then returns.

The victim begins waiting for the warmth to come back.

Relief follows distress, and the person who created the storm becomes the only person who seems able to make it stop.

The victim turns to the abuser for comfort from the pain the abuser created.

When I Became the Cat

In my case, the storm sometimes began with a fight he deliberately picked.

He knew that I could be pushed only so far before I pushed back.

As I mentioned before, there were moments in that cat-and-mouse game when I knew I had become the cat.

I knew it instantly whenever I stood up to him and caught him off guard.

He stuttered and stammered.

He lost his train of thought.

He could not decide what to say next.

For a moment, he struggled to regain his footing.

And I smiled the entire time.

I smiled every time it happened.

It never lasted long though.

As soon as he regained his footing, he put the mask back into place. He recovered quickly, took control of the conversation again, and I became the mouse once more.

But for those few moments, I was the cat.

And I loved it.

I loved rattling him. I really did take pleasure in it.

When Punishment Escalates

Resistance of any kind calls for punishment, and repeated resistance calls for escalation of punishment.

The point of punishment is to keep the target under the control of the scammer.

Resistance means that the target has begun to see things differently from the training the scammer has provided to the target, without the target's knowledge.

This must be corrected to the degree that the scammer sees fit to gain complete control of the target once again.

I must have been a big threat to him, because he punished me without any mercy what-so-ever.

So severe that I have not recovered full memories of this treatment.

It really doesn't matter; it is over and done with.

I know it happened; I talked about it in the last chapter.

I have not forgotten about it, but I have moved on.

I left him five times during this six—year relationship, and four times I returned to him because I was deeply trauma bonded to him.

In between those times, I exposed him on my website, three times, and once on Instagram. I sent him a link to each exposure. I wanted him to know I knew he was liar, and a scammer. I wanted other women to know too, and not be taken in by him also.

I confronted him on many things, but that was a losing battle. I knew I would never get the truth from him.

Each time I left him, including the last time, I had questions that all victims have after breaking free. I wish to answer this so that when you leave the fog behind, you will have no questions left unanswered.

Did he love me even a little bit?

Was any of it real?

Did I misjudge him?

Did he love me?

I wish to answer those questions so that when you leave the fog behind, you will not be left searching endlessly for answers that will never come from the person who hurt you.

To answer them, I must first tell you about a name I found during my investigation.

Chapter 8: One Big Machine

The name I found was Anurag Thakur.

It was the name attached to the phone number in Allentown, Pennsylvania, that he said he had changed years ago.

At first, I believed Anurag Thakur might be Jeremy Clark's real name. I knew the discovery was important, but I did not yet understand how important it would become.

I didn't begin to investigate that name until months later, and I only discovered how important it was a few months ago.

There is a man named Anurag Thakur who holds a position in the Parliament of India. I have great respect for government officials around the world, and I would never want to cause suspicion to fall upon anyone who had no part in this scam.

When I began investigating the name and its meaning, what I found was too close to the life I had lived for me to ignore.

But I was no longer looking for the name of the man behind the voice. I was looking for a name for the machine I had uncovered.

That is why I chose the older Sanskrit forms, Anuraga Thakura, as the name of the machine.

Anuraga carried the meanings of love, affection, attachment, and devotion.

Thakura carried the meanings of mastery and authority.

And there it was.

The voice that calmed me had been carrying the language of love.

The voice that commanded me had been carrying the language of authority.

Together, they described what the relationship had become:

Love under command.

Devotion under authority.

Attachment under control.

Neither word was created for a love scam.

Anuraga Thakura was the name I chose for the machine behind the handbook, the machine for capturing a heart and holding it for ransom.

The machine runs on the stolen money the scammer collects.

For six years, he was feeding me to the machine.

It is a double-edged sword.

Anuraga, one edge, was beautiful.

It sounded like devotion.

It sounded like affection. It sounded like a love that followed after me, stayed near me, and returned to me.

It sounded like the kind of love I had always dreamed of—the kind that saw me, chose me, protected me, and promised not to leave.

That was the edge I saw first.

That was the edge that shone.
But there was another edge.
The second edge was hidden.
Thakura can mean master or landowner.
It can denote ownership or authority.
The script is the voice of the machine.
The scammer is the driver.
The victim's trust is the road it travels on.
And the stolen money is the fuel that keeps it running.

And then, when he wanted to gain back the control he had lost, he reached for the deepest part of me.

He reached for my faith.
He told me I was not submitting to his God-given authority.
He told me I was not submitting myself to God.
And I believed him enough to tremble.
That was Anuraga and Thakura working together.
The softness and the command.
The love and the mastery.
The comfort and the authority.

I had said it myself though, I did not understand how much it revealed.

Back in December of 2018, I had told Jeremy that I loved Jehovah God more than him and that there was nothing that would ever change that.

But here it was, 2021, and Jeremy said that I was not only refusing to submit myself to my husband, I was refusing to submit myself to Jehovah.

I made this remark to Jeremy in return:

“Jehovah God has not been happy with me anyway, not since I chose you over Jehovah back in December of 2018.”

That was not a small sentence.

That was the wound speaking.

That was the fog speaking.

That was the place inside me where Jeremy had been lifted far higher than any man should ever have been lifted.

There were times I loved him so much it was almost as though I saw him as a god.

Not because he deserved reverence.

Not because he was holy.

Not because he had earned that place.

But because the machinery had joined love to authority so completely that I could no longer separate the two.

He became the voice that calmed me.

The voice that corrected me.

The voice that forgave me.

The voice that told me whether I was good again.

Even in the coercion, he did not always have to rage. He could use that calm, commanding Thakura voice.

He could sound controlled, reasonable, righteous, almost tender.

And that made it worse, because terror wrapped in calm does not look like terror at first.

It looks like correction.

It looks like spiritual order.

It looks like love asking you to come back into place.

But it was not Jehovah pulling me back.

It was Jeremy using Jehovah's name to keep me under his control.

And that is why the name matters now.

Anuraga was the love that attached me.

Thakura was the authority that bent me.

Together, they named the machine.

All through these books, the breadcrumbs were there.

I did not know what they were leading to then.

I only knew the voice.

The calm.

The tenderness.

The correction.

The silence.

The punishment.

The way love seemed to return when I submitted and disappear when I resisted.

I did not know the breadcrumbs were leading me to a machine with a name.

Anuraga Thakura.

Love attached to mastery.

Comfort attached to command.

Devotion attached to authority.

That was the machine.

And a machine cannot love.

A machine has no feelings.

A machine does not grieve.

A machine does not miss.

A machine does not repent.

A machine does not lie awake wondering whether it destroyed someone who loved it.

It only functions.

It feeds.

It uses.

It adjusts.

It changes the script when one script no longer works.

It reaches for another wound, another fear, another hope, another door.

That was what finally allowed me to let go of him completely.

I still had to heal.

I still had to grieve what had happened to me.

I still had to gather the broken pieces of myself and bring them home.

But the attachment was gone.

The romantic love was gone.

Because I was no longer trying to understand the heart of a man who had loved me badly.

I was looking at a machine.

And a machine cannot love me back.

I once swore to him that I was not going to stop until I found out who he was.

And I did not stop.

I searched names.

I searched numbers.

I searched addresses.

I searched stories that shifted every time I touched them.

I searched the lies he gave me and the ones he forgot he had told.

I thought if I could find his true name, his true face, and his true place in the world, then I would finally understand what had happened to me.

But what I found was larger than a man.

I found the machine.

And inside that machine I found:

The voice that calmed me.

The authority that commanded me.

The script that loved me only while it could use me.

And once I saw it, I finally understood.

A machine cannot love.

A machine cannot repent.

A machine cannot grieve what it has destroyed.

It can only function until it is exposed.

Then it loses power.

It is seen by the target.

It is now dead to the target.

While I was still in the fog, while I was still confused and still investigating him, he was following a process to get me under his complete control without me seeing what he was doing.

I was told this was mechanics.

It is not love.

It is all planned.

It is learned.

It is a process.

A methodical process.

And though I understood it was not love, it was very difficult to accept.

He had done this before with other women. He had practiced time and again what to say, how to show love, and how to step into a path that was already there—a well-beaten path to the heart of the child within the adult.

He knew how to fill the needs of the wounded child and become the savior.

Process—I Hate that Word

It is a process.

I hate that word.

It is steps that are taken.

It is a handbook of procedures.

It is a role that Jeremy played.

He wore a mask.

He followed a script.

He laid the foundation.

He trapped me with his smooth talk.

His words of love—and I leaned into them.

He quietly closed the trap behind me.

I lived in confusion as he became the person I leaned on and depended upon.

He continued speaking his words of love to me.

If I recognized that something wasn't right, he quickly and skillfully used his smooth talk.

And I would disappear into the fog once again.

Repetition of facts is what it takes to make a person who is drunk inside words of love able to see again.

As these things were being done, I suddenly realized my friends were gone.

Did I push them away?

Or did he keep me so busy with confusion, calling him every three hours?

Making my thoughts agree with his?

When did he turn on me?

It seemed sudden when he did.

For a long time, I was not ready to hear the final truth.

I was still looking for the man inside the machine.

Still looking for the heart behind the voice.

Still looking for some small piece of love that would explain why I had stayed, why I had obeyed, why I had gone back, and why I had believed.

But my story knew before I did.

The breadcrumbs were everywhere.

They are in every book I wrote.

They exist in the words I wrote.

The voice that calmed me.

The tone that commanded me.

The silence that punished me.

The tenderness that returned when I submitted.

The fear that rose when I resisted.

The way love and authority were braided together until I could no longer tell one from the other.

I kept circling the truth long before I was ready to stand inside it.

And in the end, the breadcrumbs my story left became the proof of the final discovery.

I had not lost a man who loved me.

I had uncovered a machine with a name.

A machine named Anuraga Thakura.

“And a machine cannot love.

King Solomon

There is nothing new under the sun.

King Solomon asked Jehovah for wisdom. Jehovah gave him wisdom and understanding beyond any other imperfect human who had lived.

Even the queen of Sheba traveled a great distance, bringing servants, cattle, sheep, gold, and gifts, just to hear his wisdom with her own ears.

And Solomon, with all his wealth, all his power, and all his achievements, still called the selfish pursuits of men a chasing after the wind.

“I saw all the works that were done under the sun, And look! everything was futile, a chasing after the wind.” Ecclesiastes 1:14

That is what Jeremy’s script was.

A chasing after the wind.

The deeds Jeremy acted out were not new.

“There is nothing new under the sun,”
said wise King Solomon. Ecclesiastes 1:9

The names change.

The technology changes.

The phones, websites, fake accounts, bank transfers, and scripts change.

But the voracious appetite underneath does not change.

It is still the same old thing.

A chasing after the wind.

Nothing new.

Nothing original.

Nothing holy.

Nothing loving.

Only an old hunger dressed in new clothing.

“The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole obligation of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13

Even after I saw the machine, I still was questioning whether he had loved me at all. Maybe just a little bit? Even at all? Did he even care? Does he miss me? Does he even think about me now? Or ever?

In my case, I have to smile when I ask does, he even think about me? I smile because we fought a lot about the same thing. Him being a scammer. I knew he was a scammer and I gave him a hard time. I stood up to him, but I quickly saw that doing that was useless and I would never get an honest answer from him.

I was investigating him and I told him I was. I told him I would never stop until I found the truth. He was virtually a ghost. One time when he answered the phone not realizing the call had already connected, I heard him say, “Sshhh, quit.”

I’m pretty sure that most of you know what that means. He already knew I no longer trusted him, and I had already told him that too. But, yet, I still couldn’t leave him. There’s a network that protects the identity of scammers. He didn’t want to talk about where his accent was from. There was one time I pinpointed the location of where he was calling from. He was in Nigeria. I caught him off guard and he didn’t know what to say. Whatever he finally managed to say didn’t make any sense.

Chapter 9: The People Inside the Machine

When it comes to a love scam, people often have the wrong idea about how one works.

There is so much more to a love scam than the voice on the phone.

The machine itself was revealed in the last chapter, and a few of its parts were named: the script, the scammer, and the stolen money, which is the fuel that keeps the machine running.

But a machine has many parts.

There are wheels that must turn in their designated places. There are bolts, belts, and screws holding everything together. You get the picture. It is complicated, and maybe it is beginning to sound boring, so let me get to the low-down of the scam game of love.

Any big business needs a business plan, and a plan takes people to carry it out.

So does a long-term, long-distance love scam.

It is Big Business.

There may be scammers who work strictly alone and do everything themselves. But I know how much time Jeremy and I spent on the phone. In the beginning, he was able to sweep me off my feet quickly.

The scammer has to earn the trust of a stranger. That person must be convinced that the scammer is sincere. But training a person to need you takes a great deal of time and effort. An illusion has to be built that is believable, and then it has to be continually fed.

The scammer must make the target believe she is loved. He must provide convincing evidence that he intends to spend the rest of his life with her. He has to make the calls, invent the emergencies, collect the money, remember what he has said, and keep the story alive.

That is time-consuming.

I remember one comment Jeremy made that raised my eyebrows. It was after I had begun investigating him. We were arguing, and he suddenly said, "Oh, I don't know if this is all worth it."

I knew exactly what he was referring to.

That is why many scammers may choose to work in groups. The work can be divided so the load does not become too much for one person to carry.

I doubt that Jeremy was working entirely alone.

There were occasional interruptions while we were on the phone. They did not happen constantly, but they happened often enough for me to notice. I did not know who was there, what was being said, or whether the interruptions had anything to do with me. By themselves, they prove nothing.

But when I place them beside everything else, they add to echoes returning.

I also do not believe Jeremy held a highly important position in any hierarchy. He could sound confident and authoritative, but I was able to rattle him too easily.

When I questioned something, he had not expected me to question, or when I reacted in a way he had not anticipated, his confidence could slip. That makes me wonder whether he was still learning, testing methods, or answering to someone else.

He may have held authority over me without holding much authority inside the operation. That is an important difference.

A person does not have to stand at the top of the machine to control the person caught inside it.

Of course, this is all hindsight. I had no clue they worked in groups. While I was inside the fog, I did not even know there was a script

I thought I was dealing with one man. I believed that the only man I was dealing with was Jeremy.

There were times when men interrupted him while we were talking. At other times, I heard children nearby.

Two separate incidents remain especially clear in my memory.

Once, when he answered my call, the first words I heard him say were, "Quit. Ssshhh."

I do not think he was aware that the call had connected.

I am not stupid. Anyone can make an educated guess about what may have been going on in that room, and I doubt they would be wrong.

On another occasion, we were already talking when he asked me to hold on. He said his sixteen-year-old son wanted to talk to him.

The voice I heard did not sound like a sixteen-year-old boy.

It sounded like a whiny little girl.

Those were separate moments, but both revealed something beyond the carefully constructed life he described to me. I could hear people around him, yet what I heard did not always agree with what he told me.

I noticed many slips like these.

I am not blaming myself for failing to understand them at the time. I am simply looking at those memories now with information I did not have then.

The slips were there.

I just did not yet know what they were showing me.

Another slip came through an open window.

One night, Jeremy told me he had opened his bedroom window. Loud music was playing outside.

"What kind of music is that?" I asked.

"What do you mean?" he said.

I told him it sounded like Middle Eastern music.

"It is just the band next door," he said. "That is the music they play."

I asked him again whether it was Middle Eastern music.

He said no.

Then he shut the window.

“Why did you close it?” I asked.

He said he had gotten cold.

The music did not prove where he was. Music can be played anywhere. But his reaction stayed with me.

He had supposedly been in Pennsylvania. It was winter in the United States, and we were experiencing a cold snap. It did not make sense to me that he would open his bedroom window and leave it open while loud music played outside. I doubt the band he said played at different clubs was practicing outside in the cold.

What stood out even more was the timing.

Chapter 10: Cruel Coercion

I felt the cat-and-mouse game between us, and I enjoyed it when I knew I was the cat.

I knew when I had rattled him. The confidence disappeared from his voice immediately. He stammered and stuttered, losing both his train of thought and whatever he had intended to say. He did not have a clue how to answer me because my words had come so unexpectedly. It was as though a windstorm had suddenly consumed him.

I used to laugh inside when that happened. I loved it. But I would only smile while we were talking. If I laughed too hard on the inside, it might slip outside, and he would demand to know what I was laughing at. A smile was something he could never detect over the phone.

In those moments, I was not the one being chased. I had caught him unprepared. I had stepped outside the rhythm he expected, and he was the one trying to find his footing again.

But the game was about to change.

He changed the rules again without telling me. He pulled away and returned, gave protection and then took it away.

I never knew which voice I would hear when I answered the phone. That kept me wondering whether he loved me.

By then, I had already exposed him more than once. Each time, the punishment had grown worse.

This time, I escalated too.

I did not only write about what he was doing.

I made videos.

I made five videos. I published one on my website. The other four were intended to be shown later.

To a scammer, public exposure can threaten far more than pride. It can threaten the flow of money, the secrecy of an identity, access to future victims, the credibility of the false story, and control over the current target.

I was the current target.

The punishment does not necessarily have to solve the problem forever. It may only need to restore control for the moment. If fear, guilt, silence, or a forced recantation buys another few weeks or months, keeps evidence offline, or discourages the target from speaking again, then it has served its purpose.

The severity of the punishment may reflect the severity of the threat—not to the relationship, but to the machinery supporting the scam.

Five videos represented a larger threat than one video post. One had already been aired, and four more were waiting. I was no longer only doubting him privately. I had spoken against him publicly, in my own voice, and I was prepared to do it again.

Removing one posted video would not be enough. He needed to stop the other four from appearing and make me discredit the one that already had aired.

The trauma bond was already set deeply in me, and cognitive dissonance was constantly warring within me. I needed him—or rather, his voice—to calm and soothe me.

But I also knew he was a liar, a thief, and a coward.

In 2020, I wrote a scathing article called “Outliers.” It was about him. I decided to air it in 2021.

This was my third exposure of him on my website. I read “Outliers” aloud in my own voice. The article was about love scammers, and I named him as one. I called him a liar and a thief. I said he was vile and despicable, and I called him a coward.

Those were the final words I read in the video I had already aired.

As I always did, I sent him the link.

About fifteen minutes later, he called me.

Livid is too gentle a word for how he sounded when I answered the phone. He was audibly upset, and his accent became harder for me to understand when he was angry.

But I understood his message.

It was loud and clear.

I do not know whether I hung up on him. I remember speaking to him again later, and this time he was calm.

He told me he would forgive me and take me back, but there would be consequences for what I had done to him. Every condition would have to be met before he would forgive me.

There would be no discussion.

There would be no debate.

Then he began listing the conditions.

He sounded as though he was reading them to me. He did not pause between the steps.

I would have to make five new videos to answer for the five videos I had already made.

I had to say that I had done wrong and was now taking responsibility by making amends.

I had to tell everyone that I had made up lies about him because I wanted to destroy his good name.

I had to say that I knew him to be an upstanding citizen and that he had been one throughout all the years I had known him.

I had to call myself a liar and tell everyone that I was deeply ashamed of myself.

I had to apologize to him by name and beg for his forgiveness.

If I ever took a stand against him again, I would have to beg for his forgiveness on bended knee.

And I had to sound sincere while saying these things.

I tried to reason.

I told him I had done nothing wrong.

I had only told the truth about him.

He said, "These are the conditions. There will be no discussion, and it is not open for debate."

I tried to reason with him,
but he only repeated that it was not open for discussion
and he would not debate it with me.

These were the conditions for his forgiveness.

I told him I did not need forgiveness.

I had done nothing wrong.

He repeated that the conditions had to be met.

Then he told me it would be so much easier to comply without resistance.

And it would hurt less.

He told me he could not talk to me again unless I agreed to meet his conditions.

He reminded me that he was my husband and I was his wife. As his wife, I owed him my obedience because God had authorized the husband as the head of his wife. He reminded me that the wife was supposed to be in subjection to her husband in everything.

He said he hoped I would come back to my senses and understand the importance of cooperating with him. He said he would help me fulfill the requirements.

One more time, he told me that I needed to comply quickly, completely, and without reservation because he was my husband.

And he emphasized again that it would hurt less that way.

Then the line went dead.

I do not know how much time passed before I called him.

That part is fuzzy again.

Even now, when I try to place myself inside it, it does not feel as though it really happened to me.

But I remember calling him.

When he answered, his voice was calm.

He asked whether I was ready to comply without hesitation.

I told him I would try if he would help me.

I remember him saying, "I'm your husband. I told you I will help you fulfill each requirement because I love you so much."

One more memory appeared before the rest disappeared into the fog again.

I remember saying, "Please don't tell me our marriage is ending. I love you."

He replied, "I know you are worried about our marriage, but it is doing fine as long as you keep making progress."

Then the memories were buried in the fog again.

I cannot tell what is not clear in my mind at this time.

This is how memories appear. There is a flash, a glimpse of part of a scene. Sometimes it reveals itself.

Sometimes it does not.

For a long time, all I had was a flash of myself sitting beside my laptop after a video had aired.

It was confusing. I had no idea what it meant.

Today, it finally revealed itself.

I had to get it down quickly because a flash may reveal only part of a memory and then disappear as suddenly as it arrived.

It must have been the video he made me create and place on my website.

I must have done it.

I know that because Mary asked me why I had done it.

I told her I would have lost him if I didn't do that.

I do not remember making the video now. But that conversation tells me that I did.

I must have betrayed myself.

I must have apologized to him and begged for his forgiveness.

I must have called myself a liar.

The memories of actually making that video have gone back into hiding from me once more.

I know from *A Walk in the Fog* that there were hours of conversation on the phone, resistance, and changes in the progress I was making toward meeting his conditions. I wrote those memories when they were with me.

But the actual memories are gone from me again.

I will not fill in words that I am not sure are facts merely to make the story complete.

What appears clearly now is the aftermath—the confusion and the war inside me as I tried to hold two truths at once.

Two truths that did not belong together.

It is called cognitive dissonance.

I needed him, but he had hurt me so badly.

He coerced me into saying something that was not true.

I had already told the truth in the video I aired of my own free will. Anyone could hear that truth simply by clicking the play button.

I had called him a liar and a thief.

I had said he was vile and despicable.

I had called him a coward.

He was deliberately cruel and methodical in the way he coerced me into turning that truth around and calling myself a liar.

He spent hours upon hours telling me that this was the only way I could repair the hurt I had caused him.

He made the truth the offense.

He made my exposure of him the injury.

Then he demanded that I repair the damage I had supposedly done by destroying my own credibility.

But the truth was still the truth.

I had already spoken it.

He punished me for telling people what he was, what he was doing, how he was making his money, and how the machine was being fed.

That was the truth.

When the time came for me to prove that I loved him, I failed myself in order to save him.

I betrayed myself because I was not strong enough in that moment to tell him that he was not worth betraying myself for.

I am not a weak person.

It was a weak moment—one he had spent hours creating.

He had made me believe that losing him would hurt more than turning against everything I knew to be true.

But betraying the truth hurt more than anyone may ever believe.

Unless someone has stood in my shoes, they cannot imagine how much betraying the truth hurt.

I am not a weak person.

I became weak in the very moment he had trained me for.

The truth is the truth, and I told it the first time, in the first video, when I spoke entirely of my own free will and aired that video about him.

I called him a liar and a thief.

I said he was vile and despicable.

And then I told the greatest truth.

I called him the coward that he is.

He spent hours upon hours making me believe that it would hurt less if I simply said I had lied about him. He trivialized the cost of the damage he had already done to me. He caused me to become so deeply trauma-bonded to him that I believed I needed him more than I needed my own self.

I know that I have to live with that for the rest of my life. In my heart, I know that I went against everything I was inside and everything I knew to be true.

These memories of my own self-betrayal arrived on June 19, 2026, at 1:18 p.m. Central Daylight Time.

Only a few months earlier, in January, I had found something in a conversation with a friend that nearly destroyed me. It was a statement made in a conversation I do not remember having.

The statement read simply:

“He owned me.”

I did not know that.

Even after reading those words, I was not sure they were true.

Today's memories have made me sure.

He did own me.

Or rather, he fed me alive to the machine.

Chapter 11: The Coercion and the Videos

I was caught in a machine. I didn't know it.

I thought I was held in the trap that Jeremy set for me six years earlier. I just knew that I was trapped. Manipulation, gaslighting, trauma-bonding, blame shifting, future-faking, intermittent reinforcement, and punishment and reward cycles are powerful tools, and the machine knows how to use them against someone.

I was deep in the fog. I still thought that I was only dealing with one man.

Cognitive dissonance and dissociation were my constant states of mind.

He was trying to destroy me.

I saw early on, less than five months into the relationship, that he was doing something to me.

I knew I wasn't myself; I never needed to stay with anyone when I felt something was wrong. I was always able to walk away and not even look back.

I tried to leave him, but once I left, I couldn't stay gone.

The cycle of punishment followed by relief is a form of intermittent reinforcement. It can create a powerful bond that is difficult to extinguish.

I honestly didn't know what I was supposed to do.

I needed to go back. I needed him to tell me what to do because I didn't know. I was afraid. I was scared because I didn't know what was out there.

When I called him and wanted to come back, that's when the punishment began. He didn't want to take me back; he said I hurt him. I had to beg; he didn't answer me right away. I begged some more. Silence again.

I begged once more and admitted that I needed him.

That is when he took me back.

The lies were piling up once more; it was getting hard for me to stay. But I was hesitant to leave again because I had hurt him. I thought he was scamming me. I saw Dr Phil and the flags were so similar to our situation.

We argued about that and I did leave him a second time.

I don't remember how long before I called him and wanted to come back. He used guilt, silence, and sudden accusations against me. He wouldn't take me back. For more than three hours I begged and pleaded with him.

I begged for mercy, and he showed me none.

I saw how the punishment was escalating.

He finally took me back, but by then I had been crying and begging for so long my breathing was ragged and I was hoarse.

He began to talk to me as if he cared, it sounded like love.

But he wasn't done yet.

He told me I needed to take a shower; he said that always calms me.

He told me to take him with me on speaker and put it on the counter so he could hear the water running.

Get in and let him know when I was done showering.

Once the water hit my face, I felt numb and must have been operating on auto pilot.

Once the water hit my face and I felt the numbness over take me, I don't remember anything else until I woke up with the phone in my hand.

When he called, he comforted me and asked if I was okay. He was his lovable self, and he talked to me as if nothing had happened. He made me feel safe again.

I'll probably be told that I can't pretend I knew what was on his mind while he was punishing me, but this was obvious.

I was getting the message loud and clear; I'd better think twice before I ever think about leaving him again. I still thought he loved me.

Anything I ever accused him of, he never denied, but he never admitted to them either. He tried to change my mind about the things I accused him of, and he succeeded in the beginning.

There were times that I exposed him on my website, and I exposed him on Instagram. I warned the women on Instagram not to fall for him; he was a scammer.

On my website I put his picture on there too, and said he was a scammer. I put his phony documents on there. He knew it was there because I sent him the link. He told me his life was in danger while it was on there, and that I never knew who could have seen it already. I wondered at that time what he was into, but I knew that he would never tell me that.

He put on his most intimidating voice and told me to take it down now because as long as it was there, his life was in danger. He made me take it every bit of it off the internet while he watched me on his computer while I took down what I put on there. When I had taken it all off, he offered me some advice.

“If I were you, I'd be careful what you do and say about me, because you don't know what I am capable of.”

I left him five times and came back to him each time. I needed his voice. I told him that I needed his voice. He asked me if I loved him? I told him that I fell in love with his voice. I knew that his voice calmed me and I felt okay again.

I was paying for the voice to soothe me.

Today I know there is a machine behind him, and other scammers who runs love scams. I was a reliable target. I was reliable and honest.

He knew I would pay him every month.

He just kept telling me he had bigger fines, and behind in payroll.

I even borrowed money 7K, 20K, and I have no collateral, and I didn't when I borrowed it. I don't know how I got the loans. When I was transferring the 20K to him, I told him that it would be the last large amount of money he could get from me. He said, "I know"

In 2020, I wrote an article called "Outliers."

At the time, I did not fully understand everything I was seeing. I knew Jeremy was lying. I knew he was scamming me. I knew something was terribly wrong. But I did not yet understand the machine behind what was happening to me.

In 2021, I exposed him again. This time, I did not only put what he had done online. I made five videos. I appeared on camera and told people that he was a scammer and that this was how he made his money. I read from "Outliers," the article I had written the year before.

In that article, I called him a liar, a thief, despicable, vile, and a coward.

That is when the punishment became severe.

Some of the dates in my earlier books may not line up perfectly because I was still confused then. I was still trying to understand what had happened while I was living with the effects of what had happened. Memories did not come back to me in neat order. They came in flashes, pieces, and fragments.

But this is the timeline as proved by my diary entries

"Outliers" was written in 2020.

The videos were made in 2021.

That was the exposure that brought the severe coercion.

With the knowledge I have now, I strongly believe he was coached or outright told to use coercion on me.

He took the love I felt for him, my faith in God, and my conscience, and used them as weapons against me.

He used them to make me recant and call myself a liar.

How he did it I've told already, and those memories have gone back into hiding. It's in A Walk in the Fog. That is when I wrote it. That's when the memories came temporarily and went back into hiding.

Memories aren't filed away in a file cabinet. There are flashes, and parts of a scene. It's as if a tornado had run through the mind and scattered them everywhere. Once in a while, I get a flash. Some are gone, and some come in pieces. They aren't neatly stored. They are so traumatic that they go back into the places they were hiding.

I did recant. I still have the one flash that doesn't go any further than me sitting at my laptop looking very dejected. I had just seen a video.

But the flash is not the only reason I know I recanted. Mary later asked me why I had done it. I told her I would have lost him if I didn't.

I do not remember making the video now. But I know that I did it.

I later learned that coercion does not always involve physical force. Psychological pressure can wear down a person's resistance. Fear, repeated demands, punishment, humiliation, exhaustion, and the promise of relief can all affect a person's ability to resist.

The cycle of punishment followed by relief is a form of intermittent reinforcement. It can create a powerful bond that is difficult to extinguish.

That helped me understand something I had not been able to understand about myself. I knew what he was demanding was wrong. I knew that what I had said about him was true. But after hours of pressure, I finally complied.

I recanted.

I called myself a liar.

I cried a lot after that and didn't know why I did it. I couldn't figure out why I did it or how he got me to do that. I betrayed myself. I called myself a liar.

* * * *

I'm Speaking to Loved Ones Now

I would like you to know something that I experienced along the way. I have good friends, caring and loving friends who tried to tell me from the beginning that he was scamming me.

When they started telling me that, I was already trauma-bonded to him, and always looked to him for direction and to see if I was seeing things right.

He used to tell me that it was him and me against the world. There were people who didn't know how deep our love ran, and would not want us to be together. They were trying to break us up.

People telling me that he was just scamming me and he didn't love me at all, made me defend him and sent me running to him to see if that was true.

I always took his side because I just knew he loved me.

I had to tell my friends that Jeremy was off limits for any conversation. If they couldn't do that, I didn't want them coming around.

I did have one friend that didn't do that. She listened to me. I read my diary entries to her. Her heart was breaking for me, but she didn't drive herself away from me.

He wanted me to not have so much contact with her, but she was my best friend, we were helping each other through the deaths of our husbands, who had passed only a few weeks apart. We had known each other for eighteen years and lived across from each other. I couldn't stay away. I didn't want to so I didn't.

She knew how many times I left him, and went back. One time she told me she didn't like the way he was manipulating me. I told her I didn't see it that way. It was over him wanting me to call him every three hours, and I was doing that. I told her that I saw it as having a chance to talk to him a few more times a day, and I was happy to do that.

You loved ones probably know something isn't right with the relationship. But it does no good to tell them he's scamming them.

Listen to them.

They may be reluctant to listen to you at first, but don't give up on them. Just treat them with respect. They are adults.

I knew he was scamming me. Yet people sometimes said things that drove me right back to him.

The machine uses shame; it depends on it to keep people trapped.

Some people don't know they are trapped.

My books are written from inside the fog of confusion. This is the book I reveal everything I have learned from day one. Once someone see the machine, it loses its power over that person.

But the ones who are trapped and don't know it—I'm hoping my books will help.

Even they will feel the trap that has them loosen its grip once they see even one thing about it.

Chapter 12: Seeing One Piece at a Time

Long before I was able to see the machine, it was only one piece at a time. After the coercion, it kind of did something to both Jeremy and me. It was easier for me to leave him. The third time I left him I still loved him. But by then, I was tired of the supporting him. I told him that after he asked me how I was going to feel leaving him broke and hungry.

He had told me that there was no one on the crew that spoke English, then he told me there was one man that could speak a little English and he gets things interpreted through him although he was hard to understand. One day I supposedly heard one of his workers asking him a question. The trouble with that was this voice I heard was speaking very clear American English and had no accent.

Twice, I had encountered someone who answered the phone that wasn't Jeremy. I asked one man where his accent went, because he was losing it. He said I'm losing my accent? OOOHH NOOO, and laughed about it.

Jeremy wouldn't have laughed at that, my saying that would have caught him off guard. But then the voice on the phone said something with a Pennsylvania accent. I laughed and said, "Well, there's that Eastern accent." He laughed too. It was not Jeremy.

Another time I told the voice on the phone his accent was changing, I asked him why. He just asked, "My accent is changing? I don't know why." That would have thrown Jeremy off balance too. But it didn't this guy. So, it was the accent and his reaction. It wasn't Jeremy. I am no world traveler, but his accent is not one I can place.

The Pattern Became Louder Than His Voice

I saw the money patterns, just when one thing was close to getting paid off, something else would happen and more money would be needed. I saw no end to it. Then there was escalation of punishment. The reaction when he was exposed. I knew there was more to this than meets the eye. But he wasn't going to tell me.

One lie could have been explained away, two and three of them spread apart, but there were patterns, and they could not be explained away.

I thought I had been pretty lenient with putting up with his lies. Every one of them just screamed Scammer.

I still needed his voice to soothe me, but I could no longer pretend that I couldn't see what was going on. In fact, I couldn't unsee those things.

The pattern of affection, lots of it, then pulling away, the intermittent reinforcement, the silence, the fear of losing him, accusations, making me beg, coming back and comforting me and starting all over again. I began to care a little less for him, but I still needed his voice. I still was stumped as to what he did to me to make me need his voice.

I Started Keeping My Own Evidence

I had been keeping diaries, I took notes as to the things he told me, that way when he tried to gaslight me, I had proof that he did tell me those things. He still never would admit it, but I knew what he told me and that was enough for me to know I wasn't crazy, I did know what I was talking about.

I could trust myself.

Phone numbers he changed on a regular basis, and always with the same excuse. I almost asked him one time if one of his wives was giving him problems. I already had figured it out with the research I was doing on love scams, and the research on him, I just accepted it for what it was.

I didn't hide the things I found out, I posted them on my website, made videos, found names that were AKA, and a name I gave to this machine. My diaries showed I was turned him in to the FBI, and the next I was giving myself over to him to teach me. I came to think he was trying to destroy me. But all these things I was feeling and confused over also helped me see that he was scamming me, lying to me, and didn't love me.

When he loved me, he really loved me, but when he pulled away, kept silent, made me beg, this wasn't love. It was something else.

This is for the ones who believe that his love is deeper than any love you've ever known.

The machine keeps records. You need to take notes, keep them, see if you don't see a pattern forming. What's the worst that could happen? You could prove me wrong.

Or you could see a pattern.

You're not crazy.

Trust what you feel.

Trust what you see.

The Voice Was Losing Its Spell

For three years his voice soothed me. It always calmed the storm that he caused. I cried much of the time while we were in touch every day. I began to notice how much I cried. Just about every day. My health was not good when I was in the relationship with him, when I left him, my health improved I was happy. Then we'd make up and I be sick again. I was miserable again.

I began to feel entitled to hear his voice. After all, I was paying for it, I was paying for his voice.

It should be there all the time soothing me. But the truth, the truth was beginning to be in front of my eyes all the time. His voice was losing its power over me; I could not justify it anymore. It could no longer push the truth aside. I was seeing him truly for what he was.

The voice that once felt like safety was sounding like the trap it was, there was no beauty in it anymore, there was no safety in his voice. His voice was only chains that pulled at my soul, and there was nothing more to say.

I saw him for the liar he was.

The Final Money

I remember when I was transferring the 20K to him. That was the largest amount I transferred to him at one time. I softly told him that it would be the last large amount of money he could get from me. He just as softly replied, “I know.”

That was our good bye. We both knew it was ending.

Even though we talked on the phone and I left him a fourth and a fifth time.

I still needed the voice so I returned. I was crying when I came back the fourth time and he asked me if I was going to leave him again. I started crying harder and said, “I don’t know, maybe.”

I didn’t know if I was still bonded to him, but things were changing fast with me. I felt less for him, and I know that I needed to get away from him. The truth was the truth, and I couldn’t take anymore, even though I went back to him only two weeks ago.

I had to break away from him. I needed to get out of his reach and cut the ties. I didn’t know if I could do it yet. But I cut the ties anyway. His newest phone number I removed from my contacts. I never memorized his numbers, there was no need to, he was on speed dial. I changed my phone number, and left him. I didn’t say goodbye. He couldn’t call me, and I couldn’t get in touch with him. It had to be this way.

I found that I still needed him, but I had no way of getting in touch with him, I made sure of that.

I didn’t want to be able to get in touch with him in a weak moment.

There were a lot of those. I knew I did the right thing.

The Machine Needs Confusion

When I was in the fog, I was easy to control, I was confused and was dependent on him to take care of me. That is what a scammer needs—he needs to have his target confused because once the truth becomes known, the fog lightens. The senses come back, and the scammer knows it is only a matter of time before the fog is gone.

I left him for good in 2022, but it was 2024 when I finally, truly broke away completely. That’s when the phone call came in that was a live call, but no one said anything.

That call told me I was free.

Everything I had felt for him was suddenly gone. I was finally free.

I had already begun to write my story; it turned into a trilogy under a pen name. Then I decided that I was ready to speak in my own voice, and to tell what happened to me in the hopes that it would help others. I continued doing research on love scams, and I never stopped investigating him. In 2024 I found the name Anurag Thakur attached to his phone number located in Allentown, Pennsylvania. It only appeared once before it was disconnected.

What Began to Save Me

I was lost I have to be honest about it. But I had to go on because there was no way for me to go back this time. I wrote, I kept the evidence, I found more in my diaries. My friend who listened was there for me. She immediately saw me coming back to me. My own conscience and my faith in God. I couldn't unsee them.

I still needed his voice because I was still bonded to him, but I was free. I picked up a paint brush and started painting in addition to writing. Then I began doing crafts and making things with my own two hands. Who knew I had talent besides writing. I didn't, but people buy my things and they buy my hand autographed books.

I had a friend who was telling me that a scammer doesn't have any love for the target, has no feelings now for them. Works with more than one target at a time. I was told many things I wasn't ready to listen to. I was still hurting and wanted to go back, but there was no way. I cut the ties; I am out of his reach. His voice can't tell me what to do, or pull away, or soothe me.

Here it is 2026, and I still sometimes miss that voice. I know I will never hear it again. That is the way it has to be. I'm glad I just walked away.

His voice will never command me again. That bond is broken.

* * * *

Message to the One Still Inside the Fog

I know there are many who may be trapped in the fog and maybe you aren't ready to leave yet. That's okay. We are all cheering you on. Maybe try to write things down. See if you notice a pattern. See and note what happens when you question him. See if love is followed by fear. Take note if the only time he comforts you is after obedience. One piece of truth could loosen the chains on the trap. You probably won't see the truth all at once. It doesn't happen that way. The fog is confusion. If you can see one truth, you will see another.

Trust the one truth you see. You can do it.

The Machine Cannot Survive the Truth

The machine can only survive through secrecy, shame, confusion, and emotional dependence. When one more person sees the pattern, the machine weakens.

The machine didn't lose its power because I became stronger in one day. It started losing its power the day I began to see it. I saw it through tears and confusion. I still loved him; the machine cannot be unseen. I want everyone to know that there is a machine behind all the love scammers. There are people inside the machine. They are all inside that machine driving it wherever they want it to go.

If they are trapped inside the machine, you did not put them there. You cannot rescue them by sacrificing yourself.

They came in search of you.

It's an ugly machine, vicious in nature and feeding on stolen money.

But once I understood that there was a machine, it began to loosen its power over me. It did take time, **but I saw the machine, and was able to finally accept that a machine cannot love me.** A machine cannot change; it only continues to blow smoke and make a lot of noise. It is strong enough to run over a stone wall and how much easier it is for a machine to run over a person. It took six years of my life away from me.

I am still healing, sometimes hurting, many times crying still with flashes and lost memories. But I am free.

I also want to make this statement. **I did not do this alone. I had help, I have a support system.** With references

Chapter 13: After I silenced the voice

When I quietly slipped away and broke the tie that binds, I did not celebrate, I did not rejoice, the house was quiet. I still wanted to hear his voice. I wanted to call and tell him I'm sorry, but I had to leave that way. All I would need to hear is his voice, and I'd go running back.

I can't do that anymore. He always sounds like he loves me, but in my heart, I know he doesn't. That hurts, because I trusted him, I loved him. I need him, but I can't trust myself. That is why I just left. That's why I changed my number, that is why I took his name out of my contacts, and deleted his number. Neither of us can reach the other.

I can no longer hear him, demeaning me, and treating me like a commodity. The quiet is very nice, it's peaceful, no one is demanding me to obey. I still feel like he is just waiting for me to call him, and that troubles me. I shouldn't feel that way.

This is only the first night away from the voice.

The videos are still fresh in my mind, and I feel teary eyed and fearful that he is going to punish me. But I walked away, I am not within his reach anymore. Collie joined me in my grief. We talked about the voice. We discussed how unreliable it was. We never knew if he was going to be cold and silent, or warm and loving toward us. We cried, then we laughed because we did leave in silence, and we both feel so relieved.

He hurt me when he was cold and went away from us. I didn't like him when he did that. I was always afraid he wouldn't love me again. He was mean when he did those kinds of things to us.

We agreed that this was the best things for us to have done. We also agreed that pizza would be nice. He wasn't on the phone telling us not to spend money on something we don't need. But I say yes, pizza is just right for us tonight. We also agreed that we deserved a treat after being brave enough to leave him like we did. Collie agreed with me so we ordered dessert too.

That night I lay awake waiting for the phone to ring. I almost wished I could call him, but I made sure we couldn't reach each other. I missed his voice. I always fell asleep softly when his voice was the last thing I heard at night.

I knew how he bonded me and made me need him. I saw that in my research. So, it said that when the voice is no longer in reach, the bond begins to weaken. Each day became easier than the one before it. It still took me a long time to stop missing his voice.

So, now I am taking each day one at a time.

I knew his voice was dangerous to me and I believed it, but I still miss the comfort his voice could bring me.

Missing his voice didn't mean that I wanted him back again to keep hurting me.

Especially when he made me go against the truth, not only as I saw it, but as it was. He made me call myself a liar, and air it. But missing the voice means that the bond was real, it is proof that it was still inside my body, and in my nervous system.

It is not proof of love for him, it is proof of conditioning, attachment, and habit.

Learning to Trust My Own Mind Again

With all the evidence I had kept to prove that he had been doing something to me, I reviewed that evidence. I went over the evidence with a friend. A trusted friend, one who did not try to push me.

In discussions I could see that what I had written down, and what he later denied saying, I could see that I wasn't crazy. I was right when I told him what he said. He had to have kept notes or recordings to remember conversations word for word.

I kept accounts of things he said. I had made sure I had told my best friend what he said, when he said it. Especially when he had told me that his parents moved back to the states when he was six. He didn't speak any English he said, and he started first grade not knowing any English. Later he tried to tell me he didn't tell me that but he said his mother took him to Singapore to show him her culture.

Things such as that I was able to prove to myself I was not losing my mind. I knew what I was talking about all along. He had been trying to gaslight me and I had proof of that.

Keeping notes, diaries, or writing down events or conversations gives you leverage; not against him, because he will never admit to it, but for you. You can go back and see that you knew what you were talking about all along. It's proof you have your bearings. It was him trying to manipulate and gaslight you.

I trust myself. I knew what I was talking about when he accused me of getting a memory wrong, or what he said or what he did.

The Silence Became Safety

Silence in that toxic relationship meant it was punishment. Then when he finished punishing, his voice sometimes would give comfort and safety. After being away from him for a while, silence has taken on the same meaning it used to have. It was freedom. It means silence without punishment. It means comfort and safety with no fear added every time silence comes.

I was free from the fear I felt when the silence came. I was free from all demands he made; I was free from begging for a piece of love he would skillfully withhold from me. It meant no hurrying to answer the phone quickly so there were be no accusations from him. Silence now is freedom from the chaos he used to cause in my life.

Now when there is silence, it is mine.

It is to enjoy, it is relaxing, it is peace. There are no worries when silence comes, there is only enjoyment in the silence I hear and there is a deep satisfying peace that is attached to it.

What He Took and What He Could Not Take

He bonded me to himself. Once the hooks were in place, and he was sure I was trauma-bonded, he took money, my health, my precious time, my trust, my peace, my confidence, and my memory. I was 68 years old in 2018 when he contacted me, and he was able to take some things away from me temporarily.

In the end I believe he was told to pour degradation upon me. From what I learned about him while I was trauma bonded, and what I know now about getting an obstinate target under control, I strongly believe he was told to use coercion and coached on how to be effective with it. The coercion was effective. It stripped me of my spiritual stability, and my sense of self.

He succeeded in making me call the truth a lie, and he made me call myself a liar

I must confess that I was feeling pretty low when I realized I called myself a liar, and I was made to put that on my own website to save him.

There were things he was not able to take from me.

He couldn't take my conscience.

He couldn't take my faith.

As everyone can plainly see, he was unable to take my voice.

He could not take my child home with him.

He was not able to write the ending to this story. Collie and I own that.

The Child Was Still There

Collie was still there. She finally got my full attention. I took her under my wing. I really listened to her. She has told me her secrets that she has carried for seventy years. Now I understand why I carried all the damage, and she kept all the secrets of why I was damaged.

We no longer walk alone, each in our own path. I am now able to feel her terror; I know the depth of the aloneness she felt inside that terror. She was always hoping someone would hear her and come to help her. I know how that abandonment felt. No one came to rescue her I had abandoned her entirely when these things happened to us.

All of these memories are things that came upon me when I was deep in the fog. While he was doing all these things to me, he found my child and used her too.

The Grief Was Complicated

The grief was not a simple type of grief. When the relationship with a scammer is over, you may find that the grief is different from losing someone to death. There are layers that are grieved. Each situation is different.

I grieved the loss of Jeremy as a friend. I lost the love of a voice that could calm me instantly when I heard it. I lost a dream I had built before I knew it was an illusion. I grieved that it was an illusion. I lost the man I thought Jeremy was, the man he presented to me.

I lost a marriage I thought would take place. I lost the life he had promised me. I grieved the voice. Grieving is not the same as excusing him. I do not excuse his criminal activity, but I forgave him for the deceit he presented himself in. I grieve a man who is inside this hierarchy and may have no way out.

Rebuilding With My Own Hands

When I picked up a paintbrush, I began picking up the pieces of my life. I crafted, I made things of beauty, I surprised everyone, and I surprised myself. People buy my merchandise. I take special orders, and my best customers are right in my own neighborhood.

Debbie and I sell our things together at festivals and other venues. I found that setting up the tent, and table and merchandise is taxing on a seventy—five—year old body. We have found several venues that are worth all that work. We will be at those again this year. I love the fall festivals and county fairs.

I love standing at my table in a venue and talking about my books. I get in meaningful conversations with them and they buy them. The few reviews on Amazon are great reviews. I'm looking forward to people leaving reviews on *A Walk in the Fog*.

People don't often think of reviewing a book unless it is through a book club.

Now my hands are busy doing useful things contributing to this life we know as normal for this time period. I'm no longer sending money to a machine that is up to no good. I'm writing, painting and building a life again.

After two years without the voice, I'm together again, and better than I was before. I've gained a few good qualities along the way.

I am not the same woman who fell in love with a scammer.

The Voice That Replaced His

I hear a different voice now.

I hear my own voice making new friends, spreading smiles around, giving them away in fact.

I write under my own name now, and am proud of it. I'm revealing the secrets of the life of a scammer, their tactics, and secrets. I am revealing the machine that stands behind every scammer, and the layer of protection to the scammers that are ghosts online.

I have left breadcrumbs in my books for those in the fog and may not know it. Maybe they will see something and realize it is being done to them.

I trust my voice; it will never let me down again. I have all my confidence back again, all the things he stole from me I have picked up and they are in place. Last of all, I never lost my voice. It has not been silenced and it won't be.

My voice has been speaking all through this long-term, long-distance love scam.

When the Echoes Finally Quit

I was no longer waiting for his call. I was no longer waiting for permission. I was no longer waiting for him to tell me what to do. The voice that had once commanded me was gone. Mine was still here.

Every day now is freedom that is fit for a celebration and it took a while to feel like freedom because needing to hear a voice to calm, soothe, comfort, and feel safe isn't freedom.

I still have my own voice I never lost that, and I'm putting that to good use too. I've rebuilt my life again, and I'm happy now.

The pieces left in the wreckage of this episode in my life have been picked up, sorted through, salvaged and repurposed.

I am still healing, sometimes hurting, sometimes crying, and it took everything I had to walk away with no way to be able to contact him and left him no way to contact me. The machine is powerless in my life. I can see it plainly and I want others to see it too. Once it is seen, it can begin to loosen its power.

When I began investigating, I was looking for the man behind the voice. Jeremy wanted me to stop investigating. I told him I was never going to stop until I found out who he is.

I thought if I could find his true name, his true face, his true place in the world, then I would finally understand what had happened to me.

Wizard of Oz

Jeremy reminds me of the Wizard of Oz

When the wizard of Oz spoke, he had confidence, people feared his voice. He held their attention. People didn't know what to expect from him.

Jeremy silently commanded respect, he was charismatic and quietly captured attention. He appeared well educated; he knew a lot about human behavior. I found a name attached to his phone in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The name was Anurag Thakur. I wondered what it meant. I learned the Sanskrit version, Anuraga means love, comfort, devotion, and the name Thakkura means master, command, or authority. The meaning of the two names standing together beside the script looked too close to the truth to what I had been living. Love attached to mastery, comfort attached to command. Devotion attached to authority, but I saw a curtain and I was curious as to what was behind it. So, I walked over to it and pulled it open. Just like the Wizard of Oz, what I found was a man behind the curtain. He was operating a machine which made him appear larger than he was, smarter than he was, and more fearsome than what he was. I found Anuraga Thakkura. The machine that he was operating from behind the curtain. But in reality, all he was doing was hiding behind a curtain, that was hiding his real identity. He was using tools making the machine smoke and more tools to make a lot of impressive noises.

What I found was larger than a man.

I found a machine I named Anuraga Thakkura.

His love was attached to mastery.

The comfort he gave was attached to command.

His Devotion was attached to authority.

Together it became a two-edged sword.

And once I saw the machine and was able to accept it for what it was, just a noisy machine.

I understood. I was able to accept Jeremy for what he was too. Just a man hiding behind the lies he told.

And just like the machine. Jeremy could only function until he was exposed.

And I exposed him.

Just like the machine.

And a machine cannot love anybody.