

# WRONG PLACE WRONG TIME



Pauline Yates

(*Story*: Gone Girl; *Character*: Richard III; *Deed*: assassinate Donald Trump)

## Original Scene:

And finally! There I am! My debut!

I know from the second Ellen shows up, glowering like Elvis, that this is going to be good. A few gorgeous photos of me, a still shot of Nick with his insane *love me!* grin from the first press conference. News: there has been a fruitless multi-site search for ‘the beautiful young woman with everything going for her’. News: Nick fucked himself already. Taking candid photos with a townie during a search for me. This is clearly what hooked Ellen, because she is *pissed*. There he is, Nick in his sweetie-pie mode, the *I am the beloved of all women* mode, his face pressed against the strange woman’s, as if they’re happy hour buddies.

What an idiot. I love it.

Ellen Abbott is making much of the fact that our backyard leads right to the Mississippi River. I wonder then if it has been leaked — the search history on Nick’s computer, which I made sure includes a study on the locks and dams of the Mississippi, as well as a Google search of the words *body float Mississippi River*. Not to put too fine a point on it. It could happen — possible, unlikely, but there is precedent — that the river might sweep my body all the way to the ocean. I’ve actually felt sad for myself, picturing my slim, naked, pale body, floating just beneath the current, a colony of snails attached to one bare leg, my hair trailing like seaweed until I reach the ocean and drift down down down to the bottom, my waterlogged flesh peeling off in soft streaks, me slowly disappearing into the current like a watercolour until just bones are left.

But I’m a romantic. In real life, if Nick had killed me, I think he would have just rolled my body into the trash bag and driven me to one of the landfills in the sixty-mile radius. Just dispose of me. He’d have even taken a few items with him — the broken toaster that’s not worth fixing, a pile of old VHS tapes he’s been meaning to toss — to make the trip efficient.

I’m learning to live fairly efficiently myself. A girl has to budget when she’s dead. I had time to plan, to stockpile some cash: I gave myself a good twelve months between deciding to disappear and disappearing. That’s why most people get caught in murders: They don’t have the discipline to wait. I have \$10,200 in cash. If I’d cleared out \$10,200 in a month, that would have been noticed. But I collected cash forwards from credit cards I took out in Nick’s name — the cards that would make him look like a greedy little cheat — and I siphoned off another \$4,400 from our bank accounts over the months: withdrawals of \$200 or \$300, nothing to attract

attention. I stole from Nick, from his pockets, a \$20 here, a \$10 there, a slow deliberate stockpile — it's like that budgeting plan where you put the money you'd spend on your morning Starbucks into a jar, and at the end of the year you have \$1,500. And I'd always steal from the tip jar when I went to The Bar. I'm sure Nick blamed Go, and Go blamed Nick, and neither of them said anything because they felt too sorry for the other.

But I am careful with money, my point. I have enough to live on until I kill myself. I'm going to hide out long enough to watch Lance Nicholas Dunne become a worldwide pariah, to watch Nick be arrested, tried, marched off to prison, bewildered in an orange jumpsuit and handcuffs. To watch Nick squirm and sweat and swear he is innocent and still be stuck. Then I will travel south along the river, where I will meet up with my body, my pretend floating Other Amy body in the Gulf of Mexico. I will sign up for a booze cruise — something to get me out into the deep end but nothing requiring identification. I will drink a giant ice-wet shaker of gin, and I will swallow sleeping pills, and when no one is looking, I'll drop silently over the side, my pockets full of Virginia Wolfe rocks. It requires discipline, to drown oneself, but I have discipline in spades. My body may never be discovered, or it may resurface weeks, months, later — eroded to the point that my death can't be time-stamped — and I will provide a last bit of evidence to make sure Nick is marched to the padded cross, the prison table where he'll be pumped with poison and die.

#### Altered Scene:

And finally! There I am! My debut!

I know from the second Ellen shows up, glowering like Elvis, that this is going to be good. A few handsome photos of me, a still shot of Donald with his insane *love me!* grin from the first press conference. News: there has been a fruitless multi-site search for the man described as '*despite his misgivings, he was a good lawmaker for the ease and solace of the common people*' with '*everything going for him*'. News: Donald fucked himself already. Taking candid photos with a townie during a search for me. This is clearly what hooked Ellen, because she is *pissed*. There he is, Donald in his sweetie-pie mode, the *I am the beloved of all* mode, his face pressed against the strange woman's, as if they're happy hour buddies.

What an idiot. I love it.

Ellen Abbott is making much of the fact that my backyard leads right to the Mississippi River. I wonder then if it has been leaked — the search history on Donald's computer, which I made sure includes a study on the locks and dams of the Mississippi, as well as a Google search of the words *body float Mississippi River*. Not to put too fine a point on it. It could happen — possible, unlikely, but there is precedent — that the river might sweep my body all the way to the ocean. I've actually felt sad for myself, picturing my naked, pale body, floating just beneath the current, a colony of snails attached to one bare leg, my hair catching seaweed until I reach the ocean and drift down down down to the bottom, my waterlogged flesh peeling off in soft streaks, me slowly disappearing into the current like a watercolour until just bones are left.

But I'm a romantic. In real life, if Donald had killed me, I think he would have just rolled my body into the trash bag and driven me to one of the landfills in the

sixty-mile radius. Just dispose of me. He'd have even taken a few items with him — the broken toaster that's not worth fixing, a pile of old VHS tapes he's been meaning to toss — to make the trip efficient.

I'm learning to live fairly efficiently myself. A man has to budget when he's dead. I had time to plan, to stockpile some cash: I gave myself a good twelve months between deciding to disappear and disappearing. That's why most people get caught in murders: They don't have the discipline to wait. I have \$10,200 in cash. If I'd cleared out \$10,200 in a month, that would have been noticed. But I collected cash forwards from credit cards I took out in Donald's name — the cards that would make him look like a greedy little cheat — and I siphoned off another \$4,400 from his bank accounts over the months: withdrawals of \$200 or \$300, nothing to attract attention. I stole from Donald, from his pockets, a \$20 here, a \$10 there, a slow deliberate stockpile — it's like that budgeting plan where you put the money you'd spend on your morning Starbucks into a jar, and at the end of the year you have \$1,500. And I'd always steal from the loose change jar when I went to his office. I'm sure Donald blamed Melania, and Melania blamed Donald, and neither of them said anything because they felt too sorry for the other.

But I am careful with money, my point. I have enough to live on until I kill myself. I'm going to hide out long enough to watch Donald John Trump, president of the United States, become a worldwide pariah, to watch Donald be arrested, tried, marched off to prison, bewildered in an orange jumpsuit and handcuffs. To watch Donald squirm and sweat and swear he is innocent and still be stuck. Then I will travel south along the river, where I will meet up with my body, my pretend floating Other Richard 111 body in the Gulf of Mexico. I will sign up for a booze cruise — something to get me out into the deep end but nothing requiring identification. I will drink a giant ice-wet shaker of gin, and I will swallow sleeping pills, and when no one is looking, I'll drop silently over the side, my pockets full of Virginia Wolfe rocks. It requires discipline, to drown oneself, but I have discipline in spades. My body may never be discovered, or it may resurface weeks, months, later — eroded to the point that my death can't be time-stamped — and I will provide a last bit of evidence to make sure Donald is marched to the padded cross, the prison table where he'll be pumped with poison and die.

It will be the perfect assassination.