



Lynn's Art

My Story

In Brief

My mother was a teenager when she gave birth to my brother, and 22 by the time I came along. We lived in a working class section of Detroit. My father was an engineer who worked as a draftsman and a part time professional photographer. My mother stayed home, and sometimes took shifts as a candy striper. They regularly socialized with other young couples in the neighborhood. They were popular, they threw great parties. This is a brief external snapshot, what went on inside our home remained carefully hidden.

My parents did to me what had been done to them, and so on, going back at least three generations. The sexual touching of children was normal, routine. On holidays, and at family gatherings, my grandparents, great-grandparents, and extended family participated in group ritualized and sadistic pedophilia. These ceremonies often took place in the basement of whatever home we were gathered in. All the males in my immediate family were Masons, members of the Scottish Rite. My paternal grandfather held the 33rd degree and was also a Shriner. Sometimes, especially on major holidays, my family attended similar orgiastic and drug fueled ceremonies along with other Masons. I was too young and too terrified at the time to grasp the meaning of their esoteric beliefs, but I can still hear their words, echoing and undimmed, as they carried out their torture.

I believe it was my paternal grandfather, Elmer Schirmer, who had a connection with someone called "the General". I remember being taken to the General's large house, waiting in the kitchen as staff whisked in and out, for later when he and his guests would rape me. This is the most common form of child trafficking, and the least acknowledged, parents who sell their own children within small networks of perpetrators. It was simply my family's way of life, as were the practices that maintained the great experiential and social divide between the family facade and family reality. I was inculcated with these practices from before I was fully able to speak. My mother was careful to address me by a different name as we descended the stairs for a ritualized orgy, or as she put me in the car for another trip to the General's house, reinforcing the distinction between normal life and the great family secret. The General wasn't the only pedophile I was sold to outright, but I believe it was this connection that led to far worse experiences.

Before I turned 4 years old, my mother began taking me to special appointments at the doctor. I saw there some of the same men who attended the General's parties, and they did similar things to my body, and far worse. They strapped me into a chair. They placed devices on my head and other parts of my body. They tortured me. There were several doctors, and at least one nurse involved at various times. My mother would sit in the waiting room, or she'd go have her hair done while they were working on me. Sometimes I could hear her voice outside. Of all the things I endured at that age, hearing her voice outside the room where I was being tortured is what truly broke me.

These visits became quite frequent for awhile, every other week or so. Sometimes my mother would drop me off at a hospital, rather than the secret side of the pediatrician's office. They tortured me primarily with electroshock, but also confinement, stress positions, sexual assault, and humiliation. They wanted to reinforce the ways I was already learning to divide my conscious experiences, to encourage and guide my dissociation and amnesia for incidents of abuse. They asked what name my mother called me when she walked me down the stairs for family rituals. They trained me not only to tolerate the pain of sexual assault, but to associate it with pleasure, when directed to do so. They put me through intelligence and behavioral assessment tests and by the time I was 6, I was chosen for a special program run out of military research facilities in northern Alabama and Tennessee. In the summer of 1969, with no prior connections in the region, my family moved to Birmingham.

With the move, the size of my father's salary and the size of our house tripled. Over the next 9 years, four to five times per year, during the summer, on holidays and weekends, I was transported to highly specialized lab facilities where I was subjected to sophisticated forms

of torture and medical experimentation. Medical experiments served a dual purpose, to test the use of new procedures or apparatuses on a child's body, and as a means to terrify and cause pain. The torture techniques were designed to inflict pain and terror without leaving any obvious physical injury. Each torture session was accompanied by a narrative scenario, and bolstered with props and imagery. Some were as simple as showing me movies of war zones or murders while they threatened and shocked me, most were more sophisticated. The narratives were enhanced with hypnotic suggestion. They were designed to push fear and pain to overwhelming levels, and to break any and all possible healthy attachments to carers outside of the labs. They used brain wave monitoring equipment as a form of biofeedback, to make certain they were getting the behavioral results they wanted.

Any unwanted behavior, including dissociating incorrectly, or putting up any kind of resistance to carrying out what they wanted me to do, was immediately punished with crippling pain and/or overwhelming fear. Alternately, they used cessation of pain, tenderness, compliments, inclusion, and ironically, sexual arousal, as rewards. They also worked to ensure that I dissociated out of awareness everything that happened in the labs. I returned home to normative life and experienced most of my own conditioned behaviors as natural and spontaneous.

When I was a very young child, the effects of the trauma sometimes seeped and leaked out in my behavior. There are several incidents where I tried to tell or where I acted out quite strangely, but this didn't last long. At home, I was severely punished for crying, for drawing, and drawing attention to myself in any way. In the labs, I was tortured if I didn't maintain functional amnesia. As I grew older, the separation between the normal, daylight world and the dark world of the labs, the trafficking, and incest became more and more opaque until all I knew of myself was the mysteriously troubled, socially awkward child who went to school and tried to fit in. I always knew something had gone horribly wrong, even though by the time I was able to consider it with any amount of reason, I had no memory of the horrors I was being subjected to. However, there were some incidences of family abuse I never dissociated, and as a young adult, now free from the family home, I took myself to therapy. I was in my 30's when the dissociative amnesia began to wear down, and glimpses from the other side of my life broke through. Gradually, with the help of trauma therapists, I took my first major steps down a long, and complicated journey of recovery. The journey continues.





The Story of Twee

It is common for perpetrators to track victims and to make regular contacts in order to trigger torture-conditioned responses, to test their continuing efficacy, to cause PTSD symptoms, and to generally derail therapy. This is called interference. Modes of contact range from phone calls to abductions. Until there are safe houses for survivors, efforts at recovery will be subject to incessant interference, prolonging, even preventing progress. The following is an example of the fallout of one such contact in the spring of 2005.

It's 7 am, I pick up the phone. Half asleep, "Hello?"...An oddly familiar male voice says: "Is Twee there?" "Who?" slowly, enunciating, he says: "Twee". "No!" I half yell, not knowing why. Who is this person waking me out of a sound sleep and asking for, did he say Twee? Yes. Asshole. I look at the screen, there is no number listed, it says "Restricted". Oh, great. I roll over and go back to sleep.

"Twee" I start to raise my voice. "I know who Twee is, oh God, I know who Twee is!"

That phone call, it was no accident, no wrong number. I am "in session" with my therapist. My

head has been spinning and I can't get clear, I can't get out of whatever has turned my thinking to mush for over a week. Finally, near the end of my hour, it starts to come. Twee is 3. Corroboration from narrative memory: mother never let me forget how I couldn't pronounce my r's and l's as a child. How clever. I remember the doctor asking "And how old are you?" Holding up 3 fingers I say, proudly, "Twee". "Ah, then, that is what we will call you."

"Lie down here now little girl." He says, guttural, thick, German.

His stubby fingers point. I am on the table and my arms are being clasped in the leather buckles. "What is your name?" He asks. I am so young, but somehow I know to say "Twee". "Watch." He points to the ceiling. I see a picture above me, it is just a black line on a white background, it is like a movie, it is made with light. There are wires on my head. I am terrified. The table begins to turn. I do not know how it is done, how is the table turning? "Watch!" He yells. I stare at the ceiling as it begins to turn around too. If I try to look away the pain starts, searing pain in my temples, down my legs, my toes? I can't really feel them. I don't know where they are. The black line begins to make a blurry picture. It is all I know, it is all I can see, the tornado. There is fatigue, and nausea, and I want it to stop, please stop. I cannot make my eyes stay anymore. I start to cry, but I know better because the searing pain comes quickly again.

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