



TIM LANE

# MASTER OR MONSTER?

**JOHN HAUFF STANDS ACCUSED OF A TERRIBLE CRIME.  
WILL HIS BONDAGE FETISH HELP SET HIM FREE?**

**BY JONATHAN KAMINSKY**

It was about 9:30 p.m. on Saturday, the second of April, the young woman recalled. She was working Aurora Avenue, at the corner of 82nd Street, next to a used-car lot filled with cheap rides for unreliable debtors.

A blue station wagon drove up. The driver had white hair, and looked about 70. She got in. He told her his name was John, and that he wanted to take her to his place in Tacoma. Once there, he said, he wanted to tie her to the bedpost and use an electric vibrator on her. The young woman agreed, but said she didn't want to be tied up too tightly. They settled on a price of \$100.

Whether out of routine caution or nagging suspicion, the woman decided it best to text

John's license-plate number to a man she later described to a police detective as her boyfriend. She asked if they could stop for some cigarettes. John pulled into the orange glow of the 76 station three blocks up Aurora. He gave her some cash for the smokes. Once out of his sight, she sent her text. They headed south on I-5. After exiting in Federal Way, it was John's turn to make a request. He wanted to put her in a blindfold, he said, so she wouldn't know where he lived. He also wanted to bind her wrists. She agreed. Within 10 minutes, the obedient but increasingly uneasy woman was stealing glimpses of his neighbors' houses through her blindfold.

After passing a patch of woods, the car stopped in front of a metal gate. John got out and unlocked it. As they rode the final few hundred feet down a gravel road, the woman discerned the outlines of a gutted tractor and a shed. She got out of the car, in front of a trailer. John led the woman inside, then through a second doorway a foot thick.

He put a chain around her neck and locked it. Pulling off her blindfold, she saw she was chained to the ceiling of a small room. All around, hanging from the walls, were whips, ropes, and chains. She screamed and pleaded for him to let her go, offering to walk home without payment.

"No," he replied, with a smirk.

She asked if he was planning to hurt her.

"Yes," he answered.

She asked if he was going to kill her.

"We'll see," he said.

John stripped the woman naked and strapped her to a table. She lay on her back, still chained to the ceiling. He told her that he was the master. Leaving her alone for 15 minutes, he returned to start plucking her pubic hair. He asked her if it hurt. She said it did. Using a rope, he tied her breasts so tightly she felt the flow of blood slow. Placing electrodes on her, he shocked her. This went on, the woman would later tell police, for three hours. John took out a speculum,

and with it opened the woman's vagina, then closed it. He did so repeatedly, for half an hour. Next he took out a catheter, which he used to pump her bladder so full of liquid she thought it would burst. While doing this, he used clamps to open her vagina, and pulled it farther open with wire or rope; she wasn't sure which.

He warned her not to fight back. "If you think I've been mean so far," he told her, "just try to hurt me." He's going to kill me and bury me in the yard, she thought.

John pulled out a paddle and hit the woman with it all over her body. This continued for what felt like hours and hours. Finally, the woman reached her breaking point. She told John about the text message. She didn't know how he'd react—if he'd kill her or spare her. After locating the text, John softened. He gave the young woman her clothes back and allowed her to dress. He asked where she wanted to go.

Blindfolding her one last time, he led her from his trailer. He took it off once they were close to the freeway, and gave her another \$100. Involving the cops, he told her, wasn't necessary. It had all been a game, he said, and besides, she hadn't been seriously hurt. He dropped her off on Rainier Avenue. Several days and one long talk with her mother later, the woman went to the cops, ready to give a statement.

On April 16, the police came to Hauff's door. They found him inside, where they arrested him without incident. In searching Hauff's home, they found the "torture room" as the woman had described it. They found instructions on how to bind a woman. They also found books—books that Hauff had told the woman about on their drive back to Seattle, in a conversation she hadn't really followed. They were sci-fi novels set on a planet called Gor. The detective, Harry S. James, went online and found an excerpt for his report, in which the alleged victim's name is redacted.

"'The Perfect Bondage' is said to be one man and one woman, the complete master, the complete slave, ideal and perfect for each other's needs," he quoted from *Slave Girl of Gor*. The quotation, wrote the detective, "seemed consistent with what the suspect had done and said to the victim."

He forwarded the case to the King County Prosecutor's Office. After prosecutors charged the 66-year-old Hauff with first-degree counts of kidnapping and rape and with second-degree assault, police asked women with similar stories to come forward. They announced a search of Hauff's yard for bodies. Along with his name, they released a photograph of Hauff, his Jack Nicholson gaze showing perhaps a hint of anger.

We search these eyes and plumb their depths in search of all the evil we can imagine. But is John Hauff a monster? Or is there, as some in the bondage community suggest, another way to interpret what happened between John Hauff and the woman he picked up on Aurora Avenue on April 2—one that makes Hauff less a cruel and sadistic rapist than a participant in a bondage session gone haywire?

On Father's Day in King County Jail, John Hauff is waiting on the wrong side of the Plexiglas window when his lawyer arrives with a reporter in tow. Hauff's hair is cut short, his forehead deeply lined, and his eyes softer and bluer than in his mug shot. His oversized, burnt-red jail outfit makes him look small, almost frail.

"Hi," he says quietly.

He has agreed to talk about his life and lifestyle, but not about the events that landed him in jail. According to Det. James' report, Hauff gave a statement to the cops after his arrest, acknowledging that he had picked up the 24-year-old prostitute on Aurora Avenue and taken her home. He also

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