1997

Confession

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Sara lifted her heavy eyelids to the bright flashing red lights dancing on her walls. She lay motionless and hypnotized by the quick circles of light painting her bedroom. She recognized the scraping of shoes against the tiles of the kitchen floor and the hushed whispers hanging in the darkness. Sara heard the faint clinking of metal and a final CLICK. She knew. It was over. He was lost forever. She knew it when the toothy, big haired woman on the television said it. She knew it when it stared back at her in black and white. Now they would all know it."

Cover Page Footnote
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From the top of the staircase she peered through the narrow doorway into the kitchen where she saw her brother huddled on the floor. His hair was wild and his hands were trapped behind him. Two men in crisp blue suits stood over him waiting. Waiting for the collapse of a family. The final blow.

"Brian, did you do this?" Sara recognized the weak, nearly broken voice of her mother. Brian cried huge tears. Heartbreaking, slow, sliding tears that formed gradually in the corners of his blue eyes--glistening, shapely tears before they collapsed and inched down his cheeks. He cried, quietly, almost privately.

"Jesus made me do it," he whispered as he tore at the mess of dark hair upon his head. Sara's mother's eyes widened as she gasped and quickly reached for her husband. Leaning on her husband and foolishly thinking she was sucking strength from him, she buried her aged face in his broad shoulder. Her thick, salty tears stained his cotton shirt.

"What the hell is he talking about? Tommy, please, do something," she whispered in quiet desperation. Gently, he placed his hand beneath her chin and lifted her face to his. Their eyes waged a battle. Tommy, defeated and drained, spoke first.

"Kate, there's nothing left to--"

"Don't you dare," she hissed turning her back to him. Tommy stood silent and felt the pain of too many words unspoken slap his body. He let out a low, agonizing sigh and looked down at the crumpled stranger on the floor. His son. For months he felt him slipping deeper and deeper into the formless darkness that now surrounded him. Tommy tried to fix him. He tried, but Brian only clawed at him, driving himself farther and farther away.

"Why?" The hollow word floated through the room like a bubble waiting to burst. Now it was their turn to wait. Sara, her mother, her father and the two men waited for a reply.

"Jesus made me do it." Sara found herself on her knees atop the staircase silently praying and slowly coming apart. The mask they had been wearing, that they all had been wearing, as much for themselves as for others, was beginning to splinter. She could hear ice cracking and seams breaking her face into pieces. She listened to her mother weeping and whispering hold on to herself as she rocked side to side. She closed her eyes and remembered the toothy, big haired woman telling of the boy who had been killed. She thought of the bloodied rock lying in the red soaked snow next to his young body. She thought of Brian. Her brother. He was lost in his own darkness. She knew. Now they all knew.

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