



### Tap And The Bitch; Part One

Every time the bitch moved I hit her again, and that was the problem; she was tough, and mean, a real motherfucker in a fight, and I knew it, and she was letting this shit happen. Maybe she knew something I didn't.

I was turning slowly sober, and along with approaching sobriety came a companion wave of fear. This bitch was spooking me, with her dead eyes and slack jawed smile, and I was about to abandon any pretense of male outrage or valor, hit her once for luck then put the haul ass on. Then her friends arrived and bad things happened so quick I couldn't even unleash Cutter. I survived, but I wasn't happy, nor was I even close to being master of my own destiny.

Then it all went dark.

A few minutes later I figured out that the spasmodic, jerking pile of pain-racked flesh laying on the dirty concrete was me, and the same crowd of doped up cretins who but moments ago were yelling "Kill the bitch, man! Just fuckin' kill the bitch!" were now hanging back, hoping to see her friends do the same to me.

There were three of them, big, tough, dressed in denims and leather, wearing big-assed boots. I knew the boots, 'cause they had just kicked the shit out of me. One was trying to bring the bitch around, his two henchmen watching the crowd, the darkened alley, and sparingly, me. They knew I wasn't going anywhere.

The jukebox thumped in the dive behind me, dingy light escaped the cracked door to bathe the scene in grim shades of dirty yellow and nauseous green.

Slap!

"Wake up, ya fuck'n little slut!"

Slap! The other hand hit unresisting flesh and came away covered with the bitch's blood. Maybe I was wrong, maybe they weren't her friends. They didn't seem to like her anymore than I did. With me it was just business, and in this business shit was never like it looked. I'd made a buy, she had my money, and thinking I was too fucked up to catch it, the bitch tried to fade. But I'm in the same business she's in, and I'm still alive so that means I'm fucking good at it, so her little fade away into the dark trick didn't work. My only failing, and it's a biggy, is I consume about as much of my product as I sell, which causes the occasional glitch in my affairs.

I closed my eyes against the pain and the sight of the vicious inquisition before me, and tried to figure out my options, or even if I had any.

The slapping and the obscene invective continued, with no response from the seemingly comatose girl. A sudden quiet fell upon the scene, and then a familiar pain from a boot heel licked across my back, and I knew they had tired of beating the human wreckage alongside me and turned their brutal quest for what the fuck ever to me.

A rough hand grabbed my hair, pulled me up, then it's mate slapped my face with a casual viciousness that pretty well evaporated any last vestiges of the substance that had landed me in this fracas to begin with. With eyes that threatened to disobey any orders of mine to open I gazed upon my tormentor. Like I already knew, he was a big ugly motherfucker, and I recognized the asshole, he worked for Gordo, a real nasty sort of chickenshit godfather type that preyed on the druggies about twenty blocks further uptown. I tended to avoid the area, as you could get whacked real quick, if not for the miserable few bucks you might have on you then just for kicks. I think his name was Milo, and in my new found state of clear headedness Milo was about to piss me off.

Milo slapped me again, I felt the liquid running from my nose, and I knew I was bleeding bad.

Milo pulled my head up so he could glare into my eyes.

Goddamn, he was ugly.

And his breath stank of beer and whatever that fishy shit was he ate for supper.

I was willing to bet that Milo never got no free pussy, unless he just took it. If I got the chance, I was going to enjoy killing the sonofabitch.

It would be a mercy killing, sort of.

"Ok, asshole, the bitch didn't want to talk, or shit, man, I don't know, maybe she couldn't, 'cause of the ass beating you was puttin' on her when we got here."

Milo was speaking in what he probably thought was his "good cop" voice, a whisky roughened croak that had no hint of "good" anywhere in it.

"So now I'm gonna ask you, motherfucker, where the fuck is it?"

His fingers tightened in my hair and he forced my head back into my spinal cord until the little lights starting flashing their warning that things were not going well in the live forever department.

"And don't tell me," he continued in a faux calm voice, "that you don't fuck'n know, 'cause you just bought something from the bitch and I got a feelin' I fuck'n know what it is."

With a sudden yank he brought my head forward, then down, until it hit his knee, and I felt more blood fly, and I thought, what the fuck, if I'm gonna die then let's have some fun. And just for a second I also wondered just what the fuck "it" was.

I'm a big guy, six two, two hundred forty pounds and a tad, and people see the size and never think about the quickness, which has saved my ass more than once. Milo was wearing jeans, but they was all cut up and frayed, probably like that when he bought'em, or stole off somebody's clothesline, or stripped off some dead guy, or wherever. There was a rip just above the knee, and it was there I bit the shit out of his leg, tearing a big chunk of Milo out with my teeth. He screamed, then went for his gun, but then discovered the real reason I wear long sleeve shirts even in July. It ain't for the needle tracks, because the shit I do, you don't need needles.

This time, I had time to get Cutter out.

I flexed my right forearm in a certain way and Cutter jumped from his spring-loaded holster into my waiting palm, and a split second later all six inches plunged deep into Milo's groin, through penis, scrotum and whatever lays under that little erogenous zone behind and just above the genitals. His initial scream of painful anger Doppler shifted down into a rich timbre born of pure horror.

So much for Milo, pretty much become a screaming non-issue, absorbed solely in the awful bloody mess that used to be his genitals. A fast decaying thought flared brief in my mind: No more pussy for Milo, ever.

Trouble aplenty waited, there were still two left. I heaved up into a shambling, weaving fighting stance, with Cutter in my hand, turning for the nearest of Milo's awe-struck associates, hoping for a quick strike before they realized they were even in a fucking war. No way I was going to outrun anybody, the shape I was in.

The guy was turning to face me, in belated realization that Things Were Changing, and that instead of beating the shit out of a couple of hulks, risk free, there was gonna be a serious fucking fight. Milo was down (still screaming like the stuck motherfucker he was) and a sudden painful grunt from my left drew the attention of both me and my target.

A few feet away stood the third member of Milo's assault team, transfixed, a speckle of blood on his swarthy cheek and a look of dumb animal surprise in rapidly glazing eyes. He bleated once, high pitched, like a lamb choking on a hot cigar.

He was not alone.

Behind him stood a bloody apparition, scraggly hair akimbo, her face covered in dirt, snot and blood, shirt ripped open and her breasts covered as well by the mess dripping from her face. It was the "Bitch", and she stood, swaying, but her right hand held a knife buried to the hilt in the man's side.

And that was pretty well the end of the war; her guy collapsed gurgling to the concrete, my guy hauled ass, and after a sweeping glance from the both of us the peanut gallery faded into the dark corners of the alley, from whence they came.

Milo's screams subsided to a snuffling whimper while he attempted a weird sort of sideways crawl, leaking copious amounts of blood and other, unnamed, body fluids from his nether regions over the concrete. I didn't think Milo was going to make it.

Fuck Milo.

We stood there, watching each other, both of us absently cleaning our respective blades. She was a little shorter than me, short brown hair all weirded out from all the shit, thin figured but at the moment looking pretty rough. An insane little smile worked its way across her battle scarred face.

"You didn't really think you could beat me that easy, did you?" Her voice was whisky rough and not helped by all the beating, both from me and Gordo's cavalry, her eyes bore hints of intelligence behind the battered fortress of her face. In a bizarre moment, I wondered idly how she would look cleaned up.

"What the fuck, you running a scam?"

"Yes, but you, big, dumb but sweet Tap, ain't the target. You were just handy, and I was improvising."

"Improvising?" Dumb question, but the "sweet Tap" remark pissed me off. I'm a lot of things, but sweet ain't one of'em.

"Yeah, but it's a long story, and I'm tired, I've had the shit beat out of me, twice, and quite frankly, I don't think either one of us needs to be out in the open for awhile. Gordo knows all my places, but I don't think he knows you, so if you got a place we can crash I think we need to get there quick. You spin?"

"Yeah, fuck, I spin."

But things were shifting, changing, faster than even I, who enjoyed knocking the ground out from under anybody I could, could track.

"Uh, I don't think..."

"Don't think asshole, just move. If this is a problem, here."

Both hands out, turned up, opened, one hand with my cash, the other held the stash I'd attempted to buy.

"Keep this shit, man, we'll probably need it before it's over with."

She looked at me, shrugged.

Surrendering to what appeared to be the inevitable I pocketed the shit, shrugged back, then started limping painfully out of the alley.

"Just what do they call you?"

"Most people, when they get to know me, just call me Bitch."

"Might be, but right now you better be a slick bitch."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means we need to get the fuck out of here."

I tend to stay close to "Home", the joints, the losers, the dopers, the pushers all convenient and I ain't fucking much for traveling anyways. My time sense told me it was probably a bit after midnight, it was the middle of the week and I could feel the tempo slowing in these few blocks that I thought of as my hunting grounds.

It was a fucked up place where I could make a killing and be nearly killed, all in the same hour.

My place, if you could call it a "place", was a back alley lean-to slapped together against the back wall of a used to be convenience store but now nothing but a crash pad for unlucky, unsavory and generally unloved fuck-ups like me. Somebody had hacked a powerline and left a big-assed breaker box hanging loose from what used to be a window sill but was now just a gaping hole in the wall.

If you were real careful you could run a connection from the box to wherever. I had a hot water heater, a little shower and sink rigged up that drained somewhere down the street and one small lamp, well shielded, as it could be hazardous to one's health to allow light to splash about as it could draw unwelcome attention from the local scum. I never ate there as I was mostly too fucked up to eat anything anyways.

In one of my more lucid moments I'd rigged a stolen CCTV camera to a stolen laptop, kind of an early warning system, when I remembered to turn the fucking thing on.

We staggered from shadow to shadow, supporting each other as needed, down a darkened alley with a bad smell to it. I suspected some poor fuck had died back in there a week or so ago as that's when the stink ripened into the full blown smell of death. Dog, dude, bitch, no matter, no love and no mourning.

Fuck it anyways.

Maybe the stink would keep the assholes out.

My front door didn't look like a front door, it appeared to be just another piece of the wall. I stopped, she stopped, I made the "hold here" signal and then simply stood stock still for a few moments, listening. More than once that little listening pause had saved my ass, you can hear the dumb fucks breathing if nothing else.

But it was all quiet, again I signaled for her to stay put while I shambled a few steps past the door before reaching for the little hidey hole where the electronic lock hid out. With a barely audible snick the lock released, I made my way back to the hidden recess where a slight bulge afforded sufficient grip to slid the door back on well-greased rollers.

No, it didn't look like much but it did have some refinements that helped me stay alive.

Inside I relocked the door, turned the lamp on low and was going to offer her the one chair but she was already on the bed, sitting on the side before sort of collapsing on her side, her eyes on me, calculating, defining me as some kind of wild-assed variable and wondering how she could use me.

I sat on the chair, returned her look.

"OK, kid, we're safe for now. How safe, and for how long, I don't know, as I don't know who's gonna be looking for us and how bad he's gonna want to find us."

I leaned back in the chair, taking a casual sort of male look at the girl laying tense on my bed. A long bath, a bandage or two, a good night's sleep, some decent clothes (or none at all) and she could pass for passable. But first we needed to talk.

"What the fuck is 'it', and where the fuck is it?"

She answered, voice rough, husky from drugs, whisky and getting the shit beat out of her (twice) tonight.

"It's the key to the outer door of Gordo's safe"

She sat back up, hands on the bed, looked me in the eye.

"It's in my pussy."

I shook my head, unable to beat down the grin that came unbidden. Fuck, this was one crazy Bitch, and a million weird ass scenarios on just exactly how she had come to have the key to the safe of one of the baddest motherfuckers in the city stuck in her pussy played rapid fire through my mind.

"It's an electronic key, can't be copied." She continued. "He knows I got it, I was super fucked up, I was with this guy, he was flashing serious money, I wanted some of it, next thing I know I was alone on an elevator going way the fuck up. The door opened, there was Gordo, glassy eyed, naked."

"He looked me over, then slurred "Goddamn, I told the fucker I wanted somethin' just a little older than the little bitches I been fuckin', but fuck, bitch, I think you're way overdone."

She grinned, but there was no humor in the battered face.

"The motherfucker."

She took her eyes off the floor, looked deep into mine.

"The motherfucker." She repeated, then went on in a dead sort of voice.

"He knocked me around for a few minutes, just to get in the mood, so the motherfucker said. Then he rips my clothes off then had me undress him. Yeah, the little cocksucker wanted me to give him a little head before the main event."

She paused a few moments, then went on.

"And so I did, until he grabbed my hair, pulled me up then said it was time I earned my money."

The Bitch smiled in a private memory.

"As he was pulling me up I saw the key hanging from a gold chain around his scrawny little fucking neck. And, fuck, I don't know, just seemed like the thing to do; I kicked the motherfucker in his balls, ripped the key from around his neck then did one of my little spins and kicked the little fuck in his head and he went down and quiet. I grabbed my clothes, dressed best I could in the elevator and walked out like I was somebody."

"Next thing I know it's fucking morning, my cell phone is ringing and it's Saj, a friend. He says don't stop, don't think just get the hell out of town and don't come back and I ain't never heard of you, he says. Then Saj, one of the most gentle, polite little faggots I ever knew, just hung the fuck up."

"I drifted down this way, no plans but I know a guy in Southside and I was thinking maybe shack with him until shit cooled down but when I called him he said just who the fuck are you and don't call back. That's when I knew the word was out and this shit was as serious as it gets so it was time for me to go far and like right fucking now but fuck, I had no money."

"Then I saw you, remembered you from seeing you around, didn't know you all that good, figured just another dooper and that's when I tried the thing that did not fucking work and you know the rest."

The Bitch laid back down, stretched fully out on her back and began talking with a voice that faded into gone long before she was finished.

"You can fuck me, kill me, what the fuck ever, I'm way past giving a fuck."

The next sound from the Bitch's mouth was a gentle snore; she was gone.

Cell phones: If you got the money and connections they can be tracked, but after a thorough, not all that respectable search it was clear she hadn't one on her. Probably threw it away, or lost it during one of her ass beatings.

I needed a shower, some bandaids, some other stuff but fuckit, I was beat. After crawling over her I laid down on the other side of the bed and it wasn't long before I was gone as well.

Something was not quite right, something out of place, some alien sound and I was wide awake. Footsteps, hard sole shoes, several of them, just on the other side of my little wall. Barely heard back and forth murmurings, a group, all male, searching.

I looked to my side, she was looking at me, wide awake as well. Finger to lips I moved off the bed, booted the laptop and accessed the CCTV monitor. Early morning light showed a bunch of guys, one I knew, he belonged to Gordo. I looked at her, she mouthed one word: Gordo.

Sometimes you just think, and sometimes those thoughts just sort of click together. Gordo had all his troops looking for us and his little key, so who was guarding the fort?

The searchers moved off, the alley went slowly quiet and so I asked her a question.

"Who's there? Fuck, I don't know. FlipTop for sure, he managed who got to see Gordo and who didn't. Always somebody hanging around, but if Gordo got'em all out hunting us then fuck, probably just FlipTop."

"How much money in the safe?"

"Lots and lots and lots, but it's got two doors, the one that opens with the key, and then the second door opens with a combination. So we're sorta fucked."

"I don't know, how many fingers would we have to chop off before Mr. Gordo is happy to give us the combination?"

"Don't even go there, are you just fucking crazy? Even if we get in we're dead coming out. Man, let's just go roll some dopers, a couple hookers and some faggots, get us enough to get out of town, start over somewhere else where don't no fucking body knows us."

I looked at The Bitch, smiled, then said "Yeah, that's the plan. Sort of."

Yeah, I saw fear in those eyes but I also saw something else: Attitude, like, fuckit, roll the dice, see what happens.

So we commenced to roll the dice.

End Part One, Tap And The Bitch