POST SERIAL

Girlfriend says she wants to get married

My personal trainer, Jordan, with whom I'd been having an affair, was happy that my wife had died.

"Now we can get married, Lammie," she said. Lammie was her nickname for me. Like a lamb, because of my curly hair.

"Whoa," I said.

"Not now, Lammie," she laughed. "But soon. You are the true love of my life. It was so stressful for me that you were married to Carla. I didn't know what to do about that. I love you."

"But, Jordan," I said, "Carla has been dead only two weeks. We can't get married, or even think about getting married."

"No, silly," she said, "Not now. But maybe in a few months, after the case is solved, and the killer is caught. Life goes on. You can't live in the past. That won't be good for you."

Hard to say 'no'

I've never been adept at saying "no" to women, so I let that one slide. I love and respect women. They've gotten a rough deal, culturally, in the evolution of our species, and they are trying to change that these days. Trying to find their own identities, separated from the identities of men.

The old mythological stories of the Bible, and elsewhere, describe God as making man, and then from those pieces of man making women.

A Deadly Secret

Homicide in Palo Alto

A fictional serial by John Angell Grant

A lot of bad stories, written by men, control the world these days.

So it's been tough for women to scrap for their own identities, their own stories, their own territories.

That's why I loved Carla. She didn't stand for any of that. She pushed forward, and took no guff. She was great.

She also had a practical view of the world, and knew she had to negotiate and compromise along the way — in business dealings with men, and in other dealings with the world, and in scenarios created and run by men.

Regrets

She was a realist about that. I loved her for it. She was a wonderful woman. It's just that there were times when she got under my skin. And the frequency of those times had been increasing.

So in a moment of angry impulse, one day, I hit her in the back of a head with a rock, and killed her.

But, honestly, I am sad that she is gone. Really. It was a heinous act, and not premeditated. I want to be clear about that. I did not plan my wife's death. I'm not like Kenneth Fitzhugh, another Palo Alto murderer. It was an outburst of the moment.

And I regret it now. Truly. I wish I had not done it. But I am not spending the rest of my life in jail, or going to the gas chamber. That I know for sure.

But Jordan felt differently about Carla. "I'm happy that she died," Jordan said again, reviving the conversation. "I can't help it. Now you and I will have a chance to be together forever." My stomach turned.

A nightmare

"Jordan, please," I said. "Don't talk like that. It's a terrible thing to say."

"I know it is," she said, "But it's what I feel. I can't help it if I'm happy now. You've always told me you like women who say what they feel, so I'm telling you what I feel."

"From what you told me." Jordan continued, "Carla sounded like the bitch of the century. Now you and I can get married. When will we get married, Lammie?"

I felt like my new dream world was turning into a nightmare.

Tomorrow: Episode 16. To catch up on previous episodes, go to johnangellgrant.com.