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# TELL ME WHAT YOU DID

A NOVEL

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# CARTER WILSON



## **Also by Carter Wilson**

*The Father She Went to Find*

*The New Neighbor*

*The Dead Husband*

*The Dead Girl in 2A*

*Mister Tender's Girl*

*Revelation*

*The Boy in the Woods*

*The Comfort of Black*

*Final Crossing*

**TELL ME  
WHAT  
YOU DID**

*A NOVEL*

**CARTER WILSON**





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*For Damon*

I hear you, I hear you, whispering such gorgeous stories  
I see you, I see you, trying to break free  
You liar, you liar, you can't live the dreams you're spinning  
You liar, love to be deceived.

—James, “P.S.”



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## **Author's Note One**

Throughout the book, you'll stumble upon a smattering of hyperlinks. They link to iPhone footage recovered by the Vermont Forensic Laboratory and have been made available through a public records release by the Vermont Attorney General's Office. I'd like to thank them for their cooperation with my many requests in the process of writing this book.

# **Part I**

# One

## **Transcript of second live stream episode between Ian Hindley and Poe Webb**

**Date of recording: October 31**

IH: Let's begin, shall we? Oh, and happy Halloween.

PW: Do I look happy to you?

IH: We have a long conversation ahead of us. And you know what happens if you don't tell me the whole truth. I know the whole truth, and now it's time to share it with the world. So let's try again. What's your name?

PW: You know my name, asshole.

IH: Yes, I do. But these are *your* rules. The guest always has a name. What's yours?

PW: Poe.

IH: Poe what?

PW: Poe Webb.

IH: And that's your real name?

PW: You know it is.

IH: Okay, Poe. How old are you?



PW: Why does that matter? I never ask my guests that question.

IH: It matters because I say it does. Don't make me hurt him any more than I already have.

PW: Okay, okay. Jesus Christ. I'm thirty.

IH: Very good. Let's establish the ground rules, of which there are very few. I'm going to say five simple words, and when I do, the floor is yours. You start talking. Tell me your story. I won't interrupt unless I deem it necessary. You have as long as you want to talk. When you're done, and if I think you're being truthful, we'll have a chat. That sound okay to you?

PW: None of this sounds okay to me.

IH: You're testing my patience, Poe.

PW: Yes, fine. The rules sound okay to me. Like you said, they're my rules after all.

IH: Okay, well, then. This is all very exciting, isn't it? A very special episode indeed. Are you ready?

PW: Yes.

IH: Good. Here we go. *Tell me what you did.*

# Two

**Two weeks earlier**

**Burlington, Vermont**

**October 15**

I lean down to kiss Bailey on the head, and she tastes like dog. Doesn't bother me.

Bailey's my black Lab. Old, a tad overweight, and, to be frank, dumb as rocks. But she's been with me for a long time and has been the only constant in my life. Whenever I'm doing some soul-searching and find only a black hole, I think of Bailey.

I love this fucking dog.

"Gotta go to work," I tell her, adding a two-handed chin scratch to hold her over. She makes her signature grumbling sound and closes her eyes.

I head up the stairs of my house, down the hallway, and into my office. A fifteen-second commute to my job.

Before sitting down, I glance at the framed picture of my mom on the bookshelf. I'm compelled to go over and touch it, run a fingertip along the surface, circle her face. For the first time in a long time, I pick it up and kiss her cheek. She tastes like glass.

"Miss you."

I take a seat at my desk, nestle my iPhone into the arm of the fourteen-inch ring light that casts an amber glow on my face, and start recording a video. The angle is straight on my face, capturing everything I say. I always make a second recording of every interview with my phone, and though all it captures is my side of the conversation, I like to have it since I promise my guests to delete the webcast video. I've had my audio recordings manipulated by some unscrupulous listeners more than once, so I always want a copy of what I say that exists only for me.

I launch GoPod and click on the event set up by Kip. Kip's my producer, and he's also my boyfriend. I hate the word *boyfriend*; he's more to me than that, but I don't think we're at the *partner* stage of our relationship. We've been together for almost a year, and, well, hell, I love him. He lives in a loft in downtown Burlington, about five miles from me.

Moments later, my guest connects but hasn't yet turned on their video, leaving me to stare at a black left side of my screen.

And I wonder for the 312th time, what will this blackness become? Whose face will I see?

Sometimes I wonder if I'll see a ghost—the ghost of the man who killed my mother, making a very special back-from-the-dead appearance on my show, reliving the gruesome play-by-play that I remember all too well. Sometimes I think the whole reason I started the podcast was to lure that ghost onto my computer screen. And I'll admit to no one that, after every single episode, I'm left with a crumb of disappointment he didn't show.

I use GoPod Recording Studio software for my show, which is like Zoom on steroids. The screen says the user KOD4ever is connecting to audio.

There, audio connected. Still no video.

"Hi, this is Poe Webb," I say. "Can you hear me?"

Silence, silence.

Then:

“Hello, Poe.” A man’s voice. Deep and lush. Heavy.

Still no goddamn video.

“Can you turn your camera on?” I ask. “I can’t do this unless your camera is on.”

“Oh, yes, I’m quite aware of that.”

A few seconds go by, and then, as if I’m summoning the dead, he appears on my screen.

White, middle-aged, maybe fifty. Bald head, fleshy cheeks painted in chocolate stubble. Small eyes, as if they were created as an afterthought.

By the time a guest has reached the recording stage of my podcast, Kip will have secured their permission to record them. The guest will also have signed a waiver releasing me from all liability if my listeners form a lynch mob against them.

My guests are almost always despised.

A private message from Kip pops up on my screen.

Kid toucher.

But my amusement fades when I think it could be true. The guy *looks* like a kid toucher. What does a kid toucher look like? Well, as the saying goes, you know it when you see it.

I don’t talk to kid touchers. Or sexual predators of any kind. This guest—and all others—are informed of this before I agree to talk to them. Sure, I’ll talk to murderers, arsonists, con artists who rob your grandmother of all her savings. But I won’t have a conversation with anyone confessing to sexual assault. It’s a major trigger for me. Maybe because the dance of sex and violence once played a seminal role in my life.

“I’m going to begin recording in a moment,” I say, launching into the speech I’ve recited so many times. “You know this, but I’m going to tell you again—only the audio is ever released. The video is for me, for my security, and I destroy it after six months unless it’s subpoenaed before that. Which has happened before, so you need to be aware of that.”

“Okay,” the guest says.

“You’re accepting all risk associated with your appearance on my show, and I’m risking believing that what you are about to tell me is true. If I don’t believe you, if you confess to something I explicitly disallow, or if I just find you boring, this episode will not air. Furthermore, I have the right to send all recorded material directly to the police, FBI, Interpol, whomever.”

“I understand.”

People...they’ll sacrifice so much just to be on my show. I still don’t get it.

“Once I start recording, I’ll intro the show, during which I need you to remain quiet. Then we’ll just jump into it, okay?”

There’s a fresh sheen of sweat on KOD4ever’s forehead. He’s nervous. They always are. “Okay.”

“Relax,” I say. “You’re about to be on the top-ranked crime podcast in the country.”