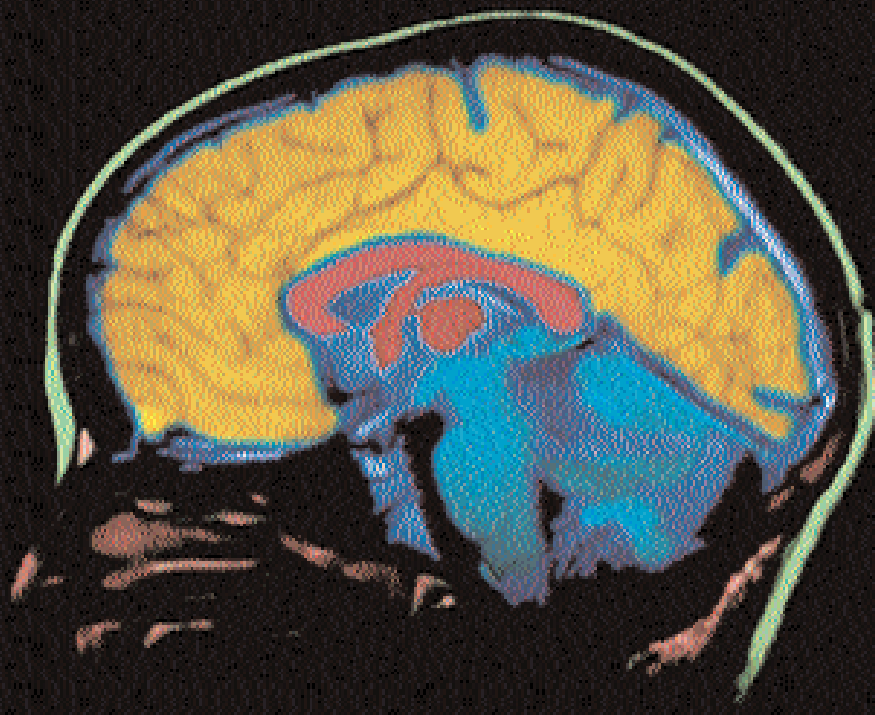


MIND CURE

ROBERT A. KLONER, MD, PHD



A LE JACQ MEDICAL FICTION BOOK

MIND CURE

by
Robert A. Kloner, MD, PhD

A Le Jacq Medical Fiction Book

Copyright© 1997 by LeJacq
Communications, Inc.
777 West Putnam Avenue
Greenwich, CT 06830
Telephone: 203-531-0450
Fax: 203-531-0533

All rights reserved.

ISBN 0-9626020-5-1

Printed in the United States of
America.

Dedicated to my children,
Alissa Jane and Suzy Elizabeth Kloner

Authors note: This book is one of pure fiction. Characters and events described in this book are imaginary. Any resemblance to actual persons, (living or dead) or events is purely coincidental.

Acknowledgments: I thank Judy Kloner, who edited and prepared the manuscript. I also thank Cathy Davisson, for her help in preparation of the manuscript.

R.A.K.
1997

Chapter 1

With briefcase in hand, Marilyn Becker walked swiftly up the dimly-lit ramp of the parking garage adjacent to the Intercontinental Bank Building in downtown Los Angeles. Her shadow danced across the gray cinder block wall to a pulsating crimson neon sign that read, "All Night Parking." Marilyn's white Lexus appeared orange in the artificial lighting and was the only car remaining on the end of level four.

It was 8:30 p.m. and downtown LA had already emptied for the evening. Most of the buildings were deserted and there was virtually no night life in the area. Besides the click of her high heels against the concrete floor, there was only the dull roar of the freeway and the whine of a distant police siren.

Marilyn Becker depressed the button on her key chain and heard the two high-pitched beeps disarming the car alarm. She opened the car door and flung her briefcase into the passenger seat. As the vice-president of McLaughlin Advertising Agency, Marilyn was accustomed to meetings which ran late into the evening. Today's had been especially anxiety-provoking. Her team's pitch to represent one of the largest fast-food chains was not quite persuasive enough and the company had demanded several major modifications of her plan before they would continue negotiations.

Marilyn swept her shoulder-length black hair off her high forehead and sighed deeply, inhaling the bitter smog-

2 / MIND CURE

filled air. The 37-year-old executive's mind was fixated on the proceedings of the five hour meeting. Why hadn't the company bought into her marketing strategy? Her charcoal-black eyes popped open. With one hand she started the ignition, with the other, she grabbed the cellular phone at her side and entered the phone number of Frank Goldsmith.

"Frank?"

"Marilyn ... What's up?"

"Frank, let's face it. It didn't go very well today."

"Now, I wouldn't say that, Marilyn. I mean, I think I got our major points across."

"No, you didn't. You mumbled. Your presentation wasn't crisp. Your visuals were second rate."

"Oh, for Christ's sake, Marilyn, my visuals were fine."

"They were not. Listen, Frank, I'm going to have Johnson pick up the presentation next Tuesday."

"Johnson? Come on, Marilyn, give me a break, will you? My presentations are better than hers."

"No, Frank. I've made up my mind. We need Johnson on this account. It's simply too big and her style is sharper. You do better in the background on these things anyway. Get the numbers on this account to her by tomorrow night."

"Jesus Christ, Marilyn. I can't believe this."

"Believe it, Frank. I will not lose this account."

"Look, Marilyn ..."

"See you tomorrow, Frank."

She hung up with a victorious smile and fumbled through her CDs. She popped a classical recording of Mozart into the CD player and headed down the ramp of the parking garage. By the time she reached the bottom, she was feeling better about the future. With Denise Johnson giving the presentations, the fast-food company would surely take notice.

The downtown streets were empty, and she was able to cruise through the maze of high-rise glass and steel build-

ings to the 2 Freeway on-ramp. The freeway traffic was fairly light, and her muscles gradually relaxed as she listened to the soothing music of Mozart. She merged into the third lane and glanced at the Verdugo Mountains, just visible against the purple sky. A ribbon of twinkling yellow lights wove up the hillside. Somewhere in that ribbon was her home, which overlooked the San Fernando Valley. Marilyn glanced at her watch—8:45 p.m. She would be home by 9:15. She smiled at the thought of being home, relaxing with a glass of Chardonnay and soaking in a warm tub, before rechecking the fast food chain's account.

As Marilyn Becker merged into the 210 Freeway, she thought that she heard something stir on the floor of the back seat of her Lexus. She glanced in the rear view mirror, but saw nothing in the darkness of the back seat. Perhaps the week of sleep deprivation preparing for today's meeting was taking a toll on her mind. She refocused on the nearly deserted freeway. Then it happened.

"Pull over, bitch," a voice as deep and cold as the Arctic Ocean growled from the back seat.

Marilyn screamed, as her body involuntarily jerked. The unseen man in the back seat pressed a gun tight against her temple.

"Pull off at this exit!" he hissed.

Marilyn's heart was pounding. "What do you want? Who are you?"

"I said, pull off at this exit, bitch. Pull off now."

She had lived in Los Angeles all of her life, but she never had been attacked before; never had been assaulted. Marilyn knew that she had to regain composure. She slowed the car and pulled off at the La Tuna Canyon exit. Her purse was on the passenger seat, in reach of her right hand. If she could maneuver her hand toward it, she might be able to reach it and grab her canister of pepper spray. She tried to look at her attacker's reflection in the rear view mirror but all she saw was the black silhouette of a large man's head.

4 / MIND CURE

“Turn right here.”

“I’ve got to distract him,” thought Marilyn. “Look ... if you want the car ... I mean if this is a car jacking ... you can have the car. I’ll gladly give you the keys ... You can have the car ... take it,” she said.

While talking, her hand reached for the purse, and she grasped the metal canister. The man didn’t see her; he was scanning the side of the road.

“Stop the car,” he said, jamming the end of the gun against her temple and squeezing her left shoulder with a painful grip.

Marilyn gasped. Her heart was racing; a numbing wave of fear constricted her throat. She managed to bring the car to a halt on the shoulder of the small dirt road which wound through the deserted canyon. There were no lights on the road, and because they were far from any residential area, it was nearly pitch black.

“Get out. And don’t do anything stupid,” growled the man.

Marilyn’s body began to tremble, making it hard to concentrate on a plan. She clutched the canister in her right palm, opened the door and slid out of the car. She could do this. She was strong. As soon as her attacker emerged from the car, she’d hit him with the pepper spray, hoping he’d be immobilized long enough for her to drive off. She aimed the canister at the opening back door, but before she could depress the spray button, the massive hand of her assailant shot out of the blackness and sent the canister flying through the air. Marilyn screamed. The hulking figure grabbed her arm. She swiftly withdrew it, turned and started to sprint. For a few seconds she thought it would be okay, thought that she could outrun this giant in the darkness. Suddenly her body came crashing down, face first into the gravel of the dirt road, as the man tackled her from behind. She was momentarily stunned. In that second, her attacker rolled her over, and with one sweep of his enormous hand, ripped off her blouse. Marilyn screamed and tried to kick him in the

groin, but her kicks didn't phase him. She swung wildly with her fists, trying to fend off the man.

"Stop! Get off me!" she screamed, still trying to push him back.

The man laughed. "Shut up bitch, or I'll kill you right now." His powerful fist came smashing into Marilyn's face. The bones in her nose shattered, accompanied by a blinding flash of light. He struck her again in the face. Everything went black.

When Marilyn awoke, she was naked, lying on the cold gravel, with the oppressive weight of the man bearing down on her. She opened her eyes and saw his hulking faceless silhouette looming above her in the blackness; his sour-smelling sweat dripped into her face.

"No ... no. Get off me. Get off me. Oh God, please ... no," cried Marilyn.

The man's fist struck her face again. The warm, salty taste of blood filled her mouth. She nearly lost consciousness; her body felt paralyzed.

"No," she yelled as she felt the burning pain of his forced penetration.

Her assailant repeatedly slammed his massive body against her. "Not so fucking smart now, huh? Are you, bitch?" he snarled. He wrapped his hands around her throat and began to squeeze. Marilyn's chest heaved upward, trying to breath; there were several long raspy breaths before her vision became a gray blur and her body went limp. Somewhere in the back of her mind she knew she was suffocating ... knew that she was dying.

"I'll teach you. I'll teach you, bitch!" he hissed as he ejaculated. His body stopped moving; he peered down at the half conscious woman with his hand still around her neck. "Yeah ... should kill you, bitch ... kill you."

The man stood up, and while laughing, pulled up his pants. As he stared at the still, battered woman, his mocking laughter faded. A scowl crossed his face and he spit on his victim before disappearing into the darkness.

6 / MIND CURE

About 15 minutes later, Marilyn regained consciousness, her breathing still labored and rapid. Her face burned with pain, her throat ached, and her eyes were nearly swollen shut. Her hair was knotted and covered with dirt and gravel. She wiped the spit from her face and then felt the mix of sticky semen and blood on her inner thigh. She quickly withdrew her hand and was gripped with a sense of horrible revulsion. "Oh, God ... help me ... Oh, God," she whispered, as tears streamed down her face.

A wave of nausea came over her and she vomited into the bushes. Marilyn took in a few deep breaths, trying to regain her composure. She felt around on the ground for her ripped clothing. Her body began to shiver in the cold of the desert night.

"I'm not finished with you yet," laughed the voice as the man's boot kicked her savagely in the stomach. Marilyn shrieked in pain and terror as the man grabbed her by the hair, pulled her head back and flattened her naked body against the gravel. She struggled to get up, but his weight was overpowering. Again she smelled the stench of his sweat; he smashed her face into the gravel, and again Marilyn was dazed. There was a sudden searing pain; she felt as if her insides were being ripped apart. "Gonna kill you ... gonna kill you," he said. Marilyn passed out. The man stood up and kicked her body over with his boot.

Then with a bellowing laugh that reverberated off of the canyon walls, he pulled out his hunting knife. "Should kill you ... kill you right now." He snapped her head backward and playfully rolled the razor-sharp edge of the knife against her neck. He pressed the blade inward ... then hesitated. He reached down, grabbed Marilyn's right breast, and with two rapid stabs of the knife, carved an "X" into her flesh. "Bitch," spat the rapist. Using his sleeve, he wiped the fresh blood from his knife and strode away into the night.

The burning pain of her wound snapped Marilyn back to consciousness. She screamed as the warm blood oozed

from her right breast. "Oh, God ... Oh my God." She grabbed the remains of her ripped blouse and pressed hard against the wound to try to stop the bleeding.

She struggled to sit up ... the canyon was silent. Had her assailant really left this time or was he waiting in the bushes again to finish her off? Marilyn fell back on the gravel, curled into a ball. Her breathing gradually became less labored as she desperately tried to regain her senses. While holding her bloody blouse tightly against her breast, she managed to put on the shredded remains of her suit.

Marilyn saw that she was in a small clearing adjacent to the shoulder of the road. She tried to stand up; at first feeling dizzy, but then adjusting to the sensation of light-headedness.

She began walking back toward the car, but it was gone, and apparently, so was her assailant. The woman was only vaguely aware of the sound of the crickets and the cold night winds blowing through the canyons. She walked back toward the freeway, her left hand still applying pressure to her flesh wound. She thought that her best bet was to try to flag down a car.

Although the freeway was only about a quarter of a mile away, her trek seemed interminable. Her body ached and every step was painful, but she knew that she had to find the strength to finish her journey. Then through the slits of her swollen eyes, she felt a sense of relief. A blue call box stood on the shoulder of the freeway off-ramp. She walked up the ramp to the call box, pressed zero, and heard the friendly sound of another female voice.

"Hello? How may I help you?"

"I need help ... I need help. Please help me. I've been raped."