

# Homicide: The Game

Presents

## Painseeker

### "Sabotage"

by Geoffrey MacIntyre

Conventional wisdom dictates that an artist's first album is completed quickly. The artist's creative force melds with the excitement of entering the studio for the first time to propel the recording process through a blizzard of activity ranging from inspired and careful planning to absolute serendipity.

Conventional wisdom, however, has not met either Kyle McAllister or Ken Kincaid. With those two creative drains pulling down Raychel's recording sessions, conventional wisdom didn't have a chance.

Perhaps I'm better off backtracking.

I had been receiving offers to work with Ken Kincaid at Terror Trax for over a year before I met Raychel. I had demurred based on a combination of my instincts about him and the rumors that Ken was slowly burying the company under a flood of red ink. Ken said that he had an act I had to hear, but refused to tell me more. I'm used to hearing pitches of that nature from studio execs. Usually it means that the act is laying the studio exec.

To no one's surprise, Ken's company flirted with Chapter 11 until Cain International rode in as a white knight to save the day. While Cain allowed Ken to maintain his title as CEO, his real power in the company had been hollowed out beneath him. The position was not without responsibility, the daily operation of the company remained under his control, but he had lost two key aspects of his company's previous incarnation.

First, financial control was gone. Cain International installed a Chief Financial Officer of their choosing to ensure their investment remained solvent. That position is helmed by Nick Kosich, who is decidedly more boring than his name indicates. No offense, Nick.

Second, and key to the situation, was the removal of Ken Kincaid from the creative process. While Ken was allowed to oversee the hiring and firing of secretaries and middle management, he was not allowed control over the acts signed by the label or to interfere directly with the Chief Creative Officer. To fill this new position in their new “alternative” recording label, Cain went looking for an independent producer they could entice with total creative control. Perhaps they were looking for a Napoleon who could combat head-to-head with Ken Kincaid, but they neglected to mention it. What they found was a young, independent, producer with 15 years in musical production and a strong reputation for working with talent.

Yes, you’ve guessed it. They found me.

When I first informed Ken Kincaid of my decision to accept the CCO position, he was overjoyed. While I had kept him at a distance during his shower of offers, Ken considered me a friend. Unfortunately for him, I did not come to the position to “share power” as he indicated during our first meeting. I came to run the company the way I had always wanted to.

I began running Terror Trax in January of 2000. I had met Raychel Taurus the previous month and struck up an immediate close relationship. I think we shared a musical soul. I would be lying to say that my choice to accept a three-year contract as CCO had nothing to do with the fact that Raychel was already on the Terror Trax label. I thought it would be a dream match-up.

Contrary to Ken Kincaid’s assertion, I did not go into his office and ask him to let me record Raychel’s sessions. We were having a discussion in his office and, when asked, I told him that I chose myself to record Raychel’s sessions. To Ken’s credit, he warned me that Kyle McAllister would view my decision as an intrusion against an

agreement that Ken had made with Kyle. Kyle had stated clearly to Ken that no “outsiders” would be tolerated in his recording process. Ken had agreed. I did not, and I was running the company now.

My hard-line stance against Kyle McAllister’s order was a calculated risk. While I had a good relationship with Raychel, I understood that Kyle had a strong hold on Raychel. I balanced that against the fact that Kyle had no real experience in a studio before, and I stated my “concern” to Raychel. Thankfully, Raychel agreed and was able to convince Kyle to accept my assistance. I am sure my reputation as an artistic collaborator made my inclusion more palatable to Kyle.

I told Ken Kincaid to schedule time in the studio for us from February until the end of March. I expected we would only require six weeks, but I built in two extra weeks just in case. Ken told me that he would block out time until the end of April, just in case.

Ken Kincaid’s instinct proved to be more accurate as every minute in the studio seemed to take a year with Kyle McAllister’s constant whining about everything from the direction of the music to the position of microphones. Again, I remind you, Kyle had never entered a professional music studio before. My years of experience in the studio seemed to matter little to Kyle.

On a personal note, I would like to suggest that Kyle’s insurgent behavior during the recording process was the result of his feeling of inadequacy in the studio. I believe he felt threatened by the combination of his inexperience in the studio and my position as an experienced producer who also happened to be the person in charge of the record label. To compensate for his inadequacy, Kyle spent the entire time contradicting me, questioning me, and bullying Raychel into agreeing with him.

Regardless of Kyle’s motives, his results stagnated the creative process. The most significant obstruction placed by Kyle was his emphatic belief that no one else be allowed to contribute to the recording process. Most notably, he refused to allow me to hire extra musicians. He demanded that I allow him to play all instruments on the

album. While I had previously convinced Raychel to convince Kyle to see things from my perspective in the past, Raychel was unable to get Kyle to agree to this aspect of recording. I believe that he feared completely losing control of the project if I could record without him.

There was also another component rolled into this stance of Kyle's. While Kyle proved to be an extremely capable musician on all fronts, I was unable to record a note without Kyle's complete understanding and cooperation. He knew that, and exercised this knowledge of that control extensively. Sometimes I think he did it just to let me know that he felt he was in control of the process.

Kyle's control over Raychel did not go unchecked by her, but that did not benefit Raychel. While I never saw him physically assault Raychel, I know that they came to blows several times outside the studio. I know for certain that in June, just before the recording sessions shut down, Kyle beat Raychel within an inch of her life for no apparent reason. During that beating, Sharon Wolfe, Raychel's suspected bodyguard, was on an errand for Raychel. In retrospect, it bears a significant resemblance to Raychel's murder.

The June incident between Raychel and Kyle effectively killed the recording process for all of us. Raychel called me to let me know that she wanted to put the recording on hold until she was able to sort a few things out. She also informed me that she would be staying with Laura Douglass for a while. That was a benefit for me, as Laura and I are very close. I discreetly made inquiries regarding Raychel's health and state of mind through Laura. She let me know that Raychel had been beaten badly by Kyle McAllister, but she was slowly recovering with the help of a new friend named Anna Fantiani.

Near the end of July, though, the information stopped flowing from Laura. I understood immediately that something was amiss; however, I did not blame Laura. Laura was trying to be a good friend to Raychel by steering me out of the loop. My blame in this situation lies solely on one person.

Ken Kincaid.

A significant part of Ken's responsibilities include the allocation of studio time at Terror Trax. For an independent label, we have the luxury of high-quality, professional studios on the premises. Ken manipulated the studio records to mask the presence of Raychel and Kyle in the studios. There is no doubt that Ken knew they were in the studio without my knowledge or support. By doing so, Ken allowed Kyle to waste the last month of Raychel's life by making second-rate recordings which are unusable in any professional format.

I am a person who forgives a great deal. However, Ken's actions were clearly traitorous to Terror Trax. While I have allowed him to stay on with the company without punitive measures, I am aware his allegiances do not lie with me or Cain International. Had they, I would have been informed immediately. Perhaps he believes his allegiance was with Raychel, and that he was doing her a favor by allowing them to record without me. I believe that he did Raychel a disservice by doing so.

I still wonder sometimes what Raychel was thinking after June. Raychel never tried to contact me again after she shut down her recording sessions. With only one finished song to her credit, I wonder if she felt ashamed of her decisions in the recording process and the havoc that they wreaked. She didn't owe me an apology. Inexperience can be forgiven. It's the repeated mistakes that cause real regret.

Unfortunately for all of us, Raychel never had the opportunity to learn from her mistakes.