

A work of fiction whose title says it all. The story features a sinister boat, which repeatedly tries to destroy itself and anyone around it.

IRRITABLE BOAT SYNDROME

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IRRITABLE BOAT SYNDROME

A WORK OF FICTION

BY GRADY E. McMEHAN

CHAPTER ONE

SHOOT THE WORKS

In the fall of 2003, the state of Florida was a wonderful place to live. The weather was good, and the economy was booming. Ignorance was bliss. 2004 was just around the corner. By the end of 2004, all of that would change.

Billy and Janet Bradley had lived in Florida for more than five years. They were a pleasant young couple, both in their late twenties. They worked hard and, generally speaking, they had a good life. They had their share of the normal money problems, but they were getting by. Their future looked promising. Looks can be deceiving.

Janet worked as a secretary in a law office which specialized in real estate closings. Billy sold real estate for a living. They met during a loan closing at Janet's office in 1997. It was lust at first sight. A year later they married and began their lives as Mr. and Mrs. Billy Bradley. They each had dreams. They each had plans for a rich and wonderful life together.

Billy Bradley had dreams of riches and success. Janet Bradley had dreams of starting a family and raising children. They each had their dreams, but they did not have the same dreams. Anyone on the outside could plainly see that trouble was brewing in paradise. They would have been correct.

To his credit, in the five years they had been married, Billy had successfully bought and sold a series of small houses. Each transaction had allowed them to move closer and closer to the coast. Billy was confident that their next purchase was going

to be on the water. It would not be on the beach. It would take several more deals, and more than a little luck to get a house on the beach, but Billy was motivated. As far as he was concerned, it was only a matter of time.

Janet was the family's financial officer. It was her job to keep Billy's boundless optimism in check. She watched their bank account rise and fall with each of his business deals. There were times when her only option was to cross her fingers and hold her breath. This latest deal had been one of those times. Everything worked out, but the process had taken a toll. Her nerves were raw and she still had trouble sleeping.

Janet was a natural red head, and true to casting, she could get more than a little emotional when the circumstances were right.

Billy was a salesman and a deal maker. His personality was perfect for his chosen profession. No matter how bad things got, Billy seldom showed his anger. That was not always a good thing. Janet frequently misinterpreted this personality trait as indifference. True or not, a person's perception is often their reality. So it was on that fine October day in 2003, that Billy Bradley brought home a bag of shiny new golf clubs when he should have brought home an anniversary present.

Janet had a bad day at work. Her boss was an asshole. The work schedule had been impossible and the second of three secretaries had announced that she was pregnant. Counting the office manager, three of the four women in the office were now pregnant. Janet was not one of the three. In fact, she was at the peak of her PMS cycle. It was not a good day to be Janet. It was an even worse day to be Janet's husband. It was the worst possible day to show up empty handed for their fifth wedding

anniversary, carrying an expensive bag of golf clubs which they could not afford.

Billy would have preferred to discuss the misunderstanding like adults, but Janet was more inclined to vent her frustration. These two approaches did not mix well. In the final stages of the discussion, the conversation had become heated and animated. You might even say that it had gotten out of hand.

"Janet, please give me the gun, and let's discuss this like adults!"

"You can have this gun, Billy Bradley when you pry it from my cold dead hand!" Janet screamed back in response.

"Jesus Christ woman, don't you think you're over reacting just a little bit?" Billy pleaded.

"Over reacting! Over reacting? I'll show you over reacting you son of a bitch!" With that statement, Janet swung the gun around and pointed it straight at Billy's private parts.

"Whoa woman! Let's back this down a little. I know you're mad, but for God's sake, take it easy with that thing," Billy cautioned. "You could kill someone if you are not careful."

"Kill someone if I'm not careful? Hell fire Billy, I intend to kill someone. That is exactly why I **am** being careful!"

"Janet, baby, that is a shot gun you are holding. If you shoot that thing in here, it is going to make a very big mess," Billy warned.

“Big mess? Good! That is exactly what I want to do. I want to make a really big mess! God knows that I have been on the receiving end of an awful lot of your big messes. It’s about time I got to be the one making the big mess.”

Billy looked for a place to hide. Some place to run. Some place to get his body out of the line of fire. Before he could make a move, the gun exploded. Billy heard a roaring in his ears, and everything went totally black.

“Damn,” he thought, “she really did it this time. Who would have ever thought she would actually pull the trigger?”

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