

Hurricane (By Bob Dylan & Jacques Levy)

Ani DiFranco

Pistol shots ring out in the barroom night
Enter Patty Valentine from the upper hall
She sees the bartender in a pool of blood
Cries out, "My God, they killed them all" Here comes the story of the hurricane
The man, the authorities came to blame
For somethin' that he never done
Put in a prison cell, but one time he could-a been
The champion of the world Three bodies lyin' there, does Patty see?
And another man named Bello, movin' around mysteriously
"I didn't do it," he says, and he throws up his hands
"I was only robbin' the register, I hope you understand I saw them leavin'" he says, and he stops
"One of us had better call up the cops"
And so Patty calls the cops
And they arrive on the scene with their red lights flashin'
In the hot New Jersey night Meanwhile, far away in another part of town
Rubin Carter and a couple of friends are drivin' around
Number one contender for the middleweight crown
Had no idea what kinda shit was about to go down
When a cop pulled him over to the side of the road Just like the time before and the time before that
In Paterson that's just the way things go
If you're black you might as well not show up on the street
'Less you wanna draw the heat Alfred Bello had a partner and he had a rap for the cops
Him and Arthur Dexter Bradley were just out prowlin' around
He said, "I saw two men runnin' out, they looked like middleweights
They jumped into a white car with out-of-state plates" And Miss Patty Valentine just nodded her head
Cop said, "Wait a minute, boys, this one's not dead"
So they took him to the infirmary
And though this man could hardly see
They told him that he could identify the guilty men Four in the mornin' and they haul Rubin in
Take him to the hospital and they bring him upstairs
The wounded man looks up through his one dyin' eye
Says, "Wha'd you bring him in here for? He ain't the guy" Yes, here's the story of the hurricane
The man the authorities came to blame
For somethin' that he never done
Put in a prison cell, but one time he could-a been
The champion of the world Four months later, the ghettos are in flame
Rubin's in South America, fightin' for his name
While Arthur Dexter Bradley's still in the robbery game
And the cops are puttin' the screws to him

Lookin' for somebody to blame "Remember that murder that happened in a bar?"
 "Remember you said you saw the getaway car?"
 "You think you'd like to play ball with the law?"
 "Think it might-a been that fighter that you saw runnin' that night?"
 "Don't forget that you are white" Arthur Dexter Bradley said, "I'm really not sure"
 Cops said, "A poor boy like you could use a break
 We got you for the motel job and we're talkin' to your friend Bello
 Now you don't wanta have to go back to jail, be a nice fellow You'll be doin' society a favor
 That sonofabitch is brave and gettin' braver
 We want to put his ass in stir
 We want to pin this triple murder on him
 He ain't no gentleman Jim" Rubin could take a man out with just one punch
 But he never did like to talk about it all that much
 It's my work, he'd say, and I do it for pay
 And when it's over I'd just as soon go on my way Up to some paradise
 Where the trout streams flow and the air is nice
 And ride a horse along a trail
 But then they took him to the jailhouse
 Where they try to turn a man into a mouse All of Rubin's cards were marked in advance
 The trial was a pig-circus, he never had a chance
 The judge made Rubin's witnesses drunkards from the slums
 To the white folks who watched he was a revolutionary bum And to the black folks he was just a crazy nigger
 No one doubted that he pulled the trigger
 And though they could not produce the gun
 The D.A. said he was the one who did the deed
 And the all-white jury agreed Rubin Carter was falsely tried
 The crime was murder one, guess who testified?
 Bello and Bradley and they both baldly lied
 And the newspapers, they all went along for the ride How can the life of such a man
 Be in the palm of some fool's hand?
 To see him obviously framed
 Couldn't help but make me feel ashamed to live in a land
 Where justice is a game Now all the criminals in their coats and their ties
 Are free to drink martinis and watch the sun rise
 While Rubin sits like Buddha in a ten-foot cell
 An innocent man in a living hell That's the story of the hurricane
 But it won't be over till they clear his name
 And give him back the time he's done
 Put in a prison cell, but one time he could-a been
 The champion of the world

Songwriters

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