

Bob Dylan - Hurricane

Pistols 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 something that he never done
Put him in a prison cell but one time he could've been
The champion of the world.

Three bodies lying there does Patty see
And another man named Bello moving around mysteriously
"I didn't do it" he says and he throws up his hands
"I was only robbing the register I hope you understand
I saw them leaving" 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 flashing
In the hot New Jersey night.

Meanwhile far away in another part of town
Rubin Carter and a couple of friends are driving 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 Patterson that's just the way things go
If you're black you might as well not shown 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 prowling around
He said "I saw two men running 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 morning and they haul Rubin in
Take him to the hospital and they bring him upstairs
The wounded man looks up through his one dying eye
Says "Wha'd you bring him in here for ? He ain't the guy !"
Yes here comes the story of the Hurricane
The man the authorities came to blame
For something 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 fighting for his name
While Arthur Dexter Bradley's still in the robbery game
And the cops are putting the screws to him looking 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 you saw running that night ?"
"Don't forget that you are white".

Arthur Dexter Bradley said "I'm really not sure"
Cops said "A boy like you could use a break
We got you for the motel job and we're talking to your friend Bello
Now you don't wanta have to go back to jail be a nice fellow
You'll be doing society a favor
That son of a bitch is brave and getting braver
We want to put his ass in stir
We want to pin this triple murder on him
He ain't no Gentleman Jim".

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 DA 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 him in a prison cell but one time he could've been
The champion of the world.

Artist: Bob Dylan

Genre: Folk, Rock, Blues, Country

Year: 1975

Information: "Hurricane" is a protest song by Bob Dylan about the imprisonment of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. It compiles alleged acts of racism and profiling against Carter, which Dylan describes as leading to a false trial and conviction. On February 9, 1976, Carter was sentenced to two consecutive life terms. Dylan, and the other high-profile supporters, did not attend the trial. Carter was released on parole in November of 1985. Dylan has not performed "Hurricane" since January 25, 1976.