

STOREFRONT

Written by

Rob Tobin

P.O. Box 286
714-717-4289
Scripts@earthlink.net
Robtobinwriting.com

WGA#: 1519484

EXT. SANDI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A middle class home, nice back yard. SANDI sits in a patio chair holding a branch over her little patio fire pit, cooking hotdogs and marshmallows shoved onto the branch. She's pretty, in her early 30s, and looks miserable. There's a rhythmic KNOCK at the yard's wooden back gate. Sandi smiles warmly. *

SANDI

Hey, Bill!

The gate opens and BILL, a man in his 70s, a Gene Hackman or Clint Eastwood kind of older tough guy, walks in, holding a covered plate. He walks up and stares down at the stick with the marshmallows and hot dogs on it.

BILL

I knew it.

SANDI

Knew what?

BILL

You're like a car mechanic.

SANDI

How do you figure?

BILL

Mechanics always drive crappy cars, and here you are, a professional chef for Christ's sake, cooking -- Marshmallows and hot dogs? On a friggin' branch, over a Home Depot fire pit? *

*
*
*

SANDI

Hey. It's brilliant. Dinner *and* desert, cooked on the same skewer. I'm thinking of selling the idea to Weiner Schnitzel.

Bill stares.

BILL

Right. Well, I brought you some real food.

He uncovers a steak dinner, obviously freshly cooked. She frowns, puts the skewer aside and takes the plate.

SANDI

This looks great. I can't believe you did this for me.

BILL

Are you kidding? How many times have you brought food over for me and Janet since we moved here?

Sandi tastes the food.

SANDI

Oh my God. This is delicious. Sit down, sit down! When did you learn to cook like this?

Bill sits.

BILL

Before Janet got sick, she taught me just enough to be dangerous.

SANDI

How is Janet?

Bill looks troubled.

BILL

She's hanging on.

SANDI

I'm so sorry.

BILL

(beat)

No, her illness has taught me a lot. I never realized how much she did. I should have done more to help her. I wish someone had shaken some sense into me and made me understand.

*
*

Sandi puts a hand on his, then takes another bite of food.

SANDI

(full mouth)

This is so much better than hot dogs and marshmallows.

(wipes her mouth)

But you did finally get it, and that's what's important. I wish someone would shake some sense into Darby. Maybe if I had brothers instead of just a slutty sister...

He studies her troubled face.

BILL

I can't believe I encouraged you to date him. It's my fault.

SANDI

Oh come on, Bill, it's not like he's Al Capone. He's just a jerk. A really, really irresistible jerk. How were you supposed to know? I mean he volunteers at a nursing home for Christ's sake, reading to patients, running errands for people like Janet when she was there.

*
*
*

BILL

The irresistible jerk.

SANDI

It's my fault. I knew he was a player, his store is two doors down from mine.

BILL

Yeah, but I'm the one who pushed you two together.

Sandi stares at him.

SANDI

You're right. It is your fault.

She points the skewer at him, semi threatening.

SANDI (CONT'D)

(mock angry)
Marshmallow?

BILL

(pointedly)
Still bringing him baked goods?

*

SANDI

Every morning at 9:30 sharp. I give him his stupid double glazed cinnamon bun with those freakin' little sprinkles...

BILL

You ever think of putting something nasty in it?

SANDI

Every day.

Bill looks thoughtful. He stands.

BILL

I gotta' go.

She looks up, surprised by suddenness of that. He turns to leave, hesitates, then comes back her.

BILL (CONT'D)

(a little too seriously)

Goodbye, Sandi.

She smiles, perplexed.

SANDI

Uh... okay. See you later, Bill.

She watches as he turns and walks away, through the back gate. She SIGHS and digs into the meal he brought her.

INT. DARBY'S APARTMENT - DAY

DARBY, in his early to mid thirties, tall, fit, carelessly handsome but dishevelled and hung-over, lies in bed, naked except for a pair of panties laid carefully over his groin. He groans and reaches down to scratch his balls. Instead his hand lands on the panties. He feels them, frowns, and brings them up to his face. He struggles to focus. There is a name embroidered on the panties and he frowns, trying to read it.

DARBY

"Eibbed?" I banged a creature from
Star Wars?

*

He realizes the panties are inside out.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Oh.

He turns them right side out.

DARBY (CONT'D)

(with a smile)

Debbie.

He lets the panties drop onto his face.

INT. BILL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

BILL is already dressed, shirt and tie, mug of coffee in hand. He's wandering around the impeccably neat house, touching various things -- photos of him and family, then stops in front of a photo of a younger Bill in a police uniform. He doesn't touch that photo.

INT. BILL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bill enters from a walk-in closet and places his "dress blues" formal police uniform on the bed.

BILL

We'll just put this here for later.

We now see JANET, a woman in her 70s, oxygen mask on her face, lying in bed, apparently asleep. He stares at her and his face begins to twitch in a way that indicates his otherwise calm demeanor might be a bit misleading. *

The phone RINGS. He pulls out his cellphone, glances at the screen, hesitates, then answers.

BILL (CONT'D)

Yes son.

(listens)

I'm fine.

(listens)

Your mother's the same.

(listens)

Don't worry, I'm sure she understands. You can visit her later. *

(listens, impatiently) *

Yes, I'll be starting the new round of chemo today. Listen, I want you to know that... I'm very proud of you, Jack.

He glances at Janet.

BILL (CONT'D)

Your mother sends her love. Right.
Goodbye Jack.

He hangs up, turns and goes to a wall safe by a dresser. He opens the safe and removes a service pistol and an ammunition clip. Bill closes the safe door and turns to face the bed. He loads the clip, staring at the gun for a long moment, then carefully places it on the bed atop his uniform. He reacts as if hearing something and glances at Janet, listening, though she doesn't say anything.

BILL (CONT'D)

Of course I'll help her, Honey.
Yes, I'll fix things.

He walks to the bedroom doorway then glances back. He twitches again, more noticeably now, and it's clear not everything's okay with this old guy. He turns to leave. *

We see a shot of the bedroom now and Janet lies, eyes still closed. *
*

INT. SANDI'S BAKERY - DAY

It's early but Sandi is busy setting up the store, placing fresh baked goods in the display cases. A set of little CHIMES RINGS, and Sandi turns to see TINA, a pretty college-aged young woman enter. Tina is definitely Gothic, complete with nose and eyebrow rings, tats on her exposed arms, Goth clothing, short jet black hair, etc.

SANDI

(warmly)
Hey, Good morning!

Tina stops, glancing at her watch then staring at Sandi in disbelief.

TINA

How early do I have to get here to be here before you?

Sandi LAUGHS.

SANDI

Yesterday.

Tina shakes her head.

TINA

I can't believe you.

SANDI

That's because you do this for the money. I do it because I love what I do.

Tina SIGHS and takes one of the trays out of Sandi's hands.

TINA

Stocking the display cases is *my* job. The one you pay me so much for, remember?

Sandi steps back and stares at the younger woman with great affection. Tina notices.

TINA (CONT'D)

Okay, stop that, you're looking at me like my *mother* does.

*
*

Tina finishes placing the pastries from the tray in the display case.

TINA (CONT'D)

I gotta' go get the rest of the trays.

SANDI

Tina, I'm going to drop off a pastry to Darby a bit early today.

*

Tina pokes her head out of the back, frowning and staring at Sandi who blushes.

SANDI (CONT'D)

What?

TINA

You're kidding, right? After what he did?

SANDI

Oh, he and I are going to have a little talk.

TINA

Let *me* bring him something special.

SANDI

(dry)

Yeah... no. I saw "Girl with the Dragon Tattoo."

Tina stares.

SANDI (CONT'D)

I can handle it.

Tina nods cynically and disappears into the back. Sandi looks at a tray of pastries and picks out the biggest and nicest one, putting it carefully into a small paper bag with "Sandi's Bakery" on it.

INT. DARBY'S CAR - DAY

Darby, wearing a suit, but looking hung over, is driving.
Frank, a man in his 60s, in a suit, is in the passenger seat.

FRANK

I really appreciate the ride, Darb.

DARBY

No sweat. I'll drive you back to the dealership after work if your car's ready. If not, we'll just carpool tomorrow.

FRANK

Thanks.

Frank glances at Darby with a mixture of amusement and concern.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Bit of a wild weekend?

Darby CHUCKLES.

DARBY

Nah, every day's Christmas, bro.

FRANK

Really? Cuz you look like you were out a little late with Mrs. Claus. How's business?

DARBY

Sucks. Every time "homeland insecurity" passes some new regulation it kills me. Believe it or not, a lot of people would rather stay home than get scanned down to their bare asses.

*
*

FRANK

Can't blame them, I'm not showing my fat naked butt to some five-dollar-an-hour airport mall cop.

DARBY

Yeah, thank God for trains. I'm making a killing on booking Slamtrack.

Frank nods. He hesitates.

FRANK
 Whatever happened between you and
 Sandi?

Darby SIGHS.

DARBY
 Who knows? We went out, had a good
 time -- hell, a great time, then
 it's the cold shoulder.

Frank nods.

FRANK
 She's a nice girl, Darby.

DARBY
 Maybe that's the problem; nice
 girl, bad boy, seemed like a good
 idea at the time, but...

Frank studies him for a bit. Darby notices.

DARBY (CONT'D)
 What?

FRANK
 You're so full of shit, that's
 what. You like her.

DARBY
 I like a lot of things. Not all of
 them agree with me. Sandi's an
 acquired taste that I just never...
 acquired.

Frank stares.

FRANK
 Did I mention you're full of shit?

Darby LAUGHS.

DARBY
 You remind me of my dad.

FRANK
 And you remind me that I'm fucking
 old. And you're not getting any
 younger yourself, you know.

DARBY

(mock serious)

That's why I've got to squeeze in as much fun as I can before I get old like you, you old bastard.

FRANK

I know you forced Stankowitz to hold off on my rent increase.

*
*

DARBY

He's an asshole. And I didn't force him to do anything.

*
*

(beat)

I just told him gave him a letter signed by every one of those tenants saying we'd all leave if he raised your rent.

*
*
*
*
*

(grin)

He folded like a cheap suit.

*
*

Darby pulls into a parking space in front of an older but well maintained strip mall.

FRANK

Thanks.

*

Darby turns the engine off and the two men emerge from the car.

*

Frank walks up to the front door of a small picture-framing shop and glances back at Darby.

*

FRANK (CONT'D)

But you're still an idiot for letting Sandi go.

Frank enters his shop. Darby hesitates, thoughtful, then enters his shop.

*

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

As Darby closes the door behind him, we see Bill leaning on an older model pickup truck across the street, staring grimly at Darby who does not notice him.

Darby starts turning on lights, switching on his computer, etc. He turns on the coffee machine and pulls a stale donut from a mini fridge that he cringes at but then shrugs and starts chewing on.

He turns on a bit of background MUSIC and does a funny little dance to some classic rock and roll.

SANDI

Hey.

Darby turns in mid-dance and sees Sandi standing in the doorway. She's smoking hot. He smiles, she doesn't.

DARBY

Hey. Kinda' early, huh?

She hesitates, then walks in and plops a "Sandi's Bakery" bag on his desk and pulls out a cinnamon bun which she places on the bag. She's doesn't look happy. She goes back to stand in the doorway. *

SANDI

What? I always bring something to the shop owners in the morning.

He grabs the cinnamon bun and starts devouring it.

DARBY

Oh Jesus, this is good.

SANDI

And I'm not going to stop doing it just because of you.

DARBY

What *about* me?
(takes another bite)
Oh man, this is amazing.

He finishes the bun in record time, and grins like an idiot.

DARBY (CONT'D)

I love your buns.

SANDI

I heard about the weekend.

Darby stares.

SANDI (CONT'D)

The drinking. The girl -- sorry, the girls.

Darby SIGHS. He really is attractive in a very cool, understated way.

DARBY

Why would you care? I mean, we're not together, are we? Correct me if I'm wrong.

SANDI
You're not wrong.

He studies her.

DARBY
By the way... why wouldn't you go
out with me again?

SANDI
One date with you is enough, Darby.

DARBY
(smirking)
I thought you had a good time.

SANDI
You *know* I did.

DARBY
Then what's the --

SANDI
Until I woke up to an empty bed and
a note saying you had things to do.

DARBY
(smiles)
Was it... the handwriting?

She stares, eyes half-lidded.

DARBY(CONT'D)
The... grammar? Spelling? Should I
have used cologne-scented paper,
maybe put a smiley face or a little
heart at the end?

SANDI
I'm looking for something more than
just... a "good-time."

He frowns.

DARBY
What more is there?

Sandi stares.

*

SANDI

(quizzical)

You know, there might actually be more to you than you show the world... but I just don't have time to figure it out.

*

DARBY

What, you're mad because I didn't ask you to marry me after our first date?

SANDI

Marry me? You didn't even wake up with me.

DARBY

Listen, we avoided morning breath, the awkward chit-chat, rolling over onto the wet spot. Did you expect me to just cancel the rest of my life because sex with you was just so... damned... good?

She stares a moment longer, turns to leave, then stops and turns back.

SANDI

Oh, my sister says hi.

*

DARBY

(stares)

Sister?

SANDI

Debbie?

DARBY

Debbie.

SANDI

Debbie Brown.

DARBY

(surprised)

Debbie Brown is your sister? But... you have different last names.

SANDI

We have different fathers.

DARBY

Oh. I didn't know she was your sister.

(MORE)

DARBY (CONT'D)

Look, she was walking by the store
one day, she saw me, wanted to go
out, so we did.

*

Sandi stares.

DARBY (CONT'D)

You and I hadn't gone out yet.

Sandi stares.

SANDI

So you... haven't seen her since
you and I went out?

DARBY

I, uh... didn't know she was your
sister until just now...

Sandi stares. Darby stares back.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Damn, you girls must have had and
incredibly good-looking mother. And
I guess I can see a bit of
resemblance now.

(grins)

Even if you don't have that
birthmark she has.

(beat)

Down there.

He waves vaguely toward her bottom half.

SANDI

It's a tattoo you idiot.

DARBY

Oh.

SANDI

You really thought she just
happened to have a penis shaped
birthmark on her inner thigh?

DARBY

Well, when you put it that way...

SANDI

Debbie and I do have something in
common, though.

DARBY
 (Smiles)
 Oh yeah?

SANDI
 Your footprints across our hearts.

DARBY
 That's a little... melodramatic. It's
 not like I left either of you at
 the altar.

SANDI
 I just told you I found out you'd
 slept with my sister.

He stares, showing no sign that he sees anything wrong with
 that.

DARBY
 You're jealous?

She gives him a "yeah right" stare.

DARBY (CONT'D)
 You, uh... want a threesome? If
 that's it, I can --

The stare becomes a look of disgust, which stops him.

SANDI
 I'd say you were evil, but that
 implies that you actually care
 enough to be evil. You don't care
 about anything except getting
 yours, do you?

DARBY
 I care about you getting yours.
 First. Four times, as I recall.

SANDI
 (blushes)
 You care about every woman getting
 hers, as long as you're the one to
 give it to her!

DARBY
 And... that's a bad thing? Wanting
 women to get theirs, I mean. First.
 Four times.

SANDI
 I can count!

He stares. She realizes she's fighting a battle of sexual morality with an unarmed opponent.

SANDI (CONT'D)

You know, I'd hate you --

DARBY

(Amazed)

Hate me?

SANDI

But I don't think there's actually anyone in there to hate. You're just... empty.

DARBY

Who wouldn't be empty after four times? I mean, it takes time to reload.

SANDI

Is that all it is to you? A number? How many times was it with my sister? No, don't tell me! God, what a mistake.

DARBY

That's not what you told me that night. You told me I was the best --

SANDI

I know what I told you!

DARBY

So, were you just faking it?

SANDI

No!

(beat)

I've *never* faked it.

*

She stops, takes a deep breath, surveys the carnage on the battlefield, and realizes that all of it is hers. She studies his handsome face wistfully, then turns and huffs off, completely exasperated. Darby looks as if he wants to call her back.

DARBY

(to himself)

Darby... you're an asshole.

He resumes prepping the shop for the day's business. Across the street, Bill pops a couple of pills, then tosses the pill bottle into his truck through the open driver's side window. He pushes off the vehicle and stands straight, wincing.

Darby's reading through receipts. His cellphone RINGS. He answers, swiveling his office chair around to face away from the front door.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Darby.
(beat)
Kathy. Hey, baby.

Bill walks in but pauses just inside the doorway, hearing Darby on the phone. Darby GROANS.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Baby, you can't call me at work and say those kinds of things to me.
(beat)
Well, because I may have to stand up and the customers will see my chubby and I don't think that's the kind of trip they'd want.

*

Darby's desk phone RINGS.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Just a sec, Babe.
(beat)
No, "sec," not "sex." Hold on, the office phone is ringing.

Darby presses a button on the cell phone and lays it on the desk, swivelling around to grab the desk phone, and seeing Bill standing there.

DARBY (CONT'D)

(surprised, embarrassed)
Oh. Bill!

He LAUGHS at himself. He indicates the cellphone.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. Just a second while I grab this. Have a seat.

Darby points to a chair facing his desk. Bill points to a padded chair off to one side.

BILL

Do you mind? It looks more comfortable.

DARBY
Of course, Bill! *Mi casa es tu casa.*

The man sits, wincing slightly as he descends into the chair. Darby grabs the desk phone.

DARBY (CONT'D)
Darby's One-Stop Travel, how can I help you?
(beat)
Luanne!

Darby glances at Bill, smiles at him and turns his chair away and lowering his voice.

DARBY (CONT'D)
No, baby, of course I haven't forgotten about last Friday. It was great!

He LAUGHS, again glancing at Bill.

DARBY (CONT'D)
Oh. Well, I, was going to call you, but I was busy, you know? Business stuff, doing books.
(beat)
Right. No, listen, I have a client here, I'll call you later, okay?
(beat)
Right.
(beat)
Uh, me too.

Darby hangs up and turns his chair around to face Bill. Suddenly a woman's VOICE (KATHY) booms from Darby's cellphone where it lays on his desk.

KATHY (O.S.)
Who the hell was that?

Darby stares at the phone and, panicked, presses the "off" button. He turns to Bill, smiling.

DARBY
The speaker button is right next to the hold button.

Bill stares, eyebrow arched.

DARBY (CONT'D)

On the phone, I mean. The speaker
button is... Hey Bill, great to see
you! How's Janet?

Bill studies Darby for a long moment, Darby squirming a bit.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry about that. The --
the girls on the phone. Just a
little misunderstanding.

BILL

You overbooked the, flight... so to
speak?

*
*

DARBY

Exactly! I'm sure you understand.

Bill stares. Darby squirms.

BILL

I visited Sandi last night.

Darby stares. Bill studies his face.

BILL (CONT'D)

Darby, I'll never forget what you
did for Janet and me. Takes a
special person to volunteer like
that. A good person.

Bill twitches oddly, and Darby frowns, noticing.

DARBY

Thank you, Bill. I try to give
back.

Bill nods slowly, studying him intently.

BILL

I realize I don't know that much
about you, Darby. You're... Irish
Canadian, right?

Darby hesitates.

DARBY

On my father's side. French
Canadian on my mom's.
(smiles tightly)
They fought like cats and dogs.

BILL
Parents still living?

Darby hesitates again.

DARBY
My mom is. She's... not doing well.
Early onset Alzheimer's. My older
brother John's taking care of her.
She, uh...

Darby takes a deep breath.

BILL
It's okay, Darby. It's just... two
friends, getting to know each other
better.

Darby hesitates.

DARBY
My dad died last year. From
silicosis, it's a... lung disease,
he got it from working in the gold
mines... cuts up your lungs. He
died in an oxygen tent, drowning in
his own fluids.

Bill nods, grim.

BILL
I'm sorry.

DARBY
My mom didn't handle the loss that
well.

*

Bill twitches again.

DARBY (CONT'D)
Are you okay, Bill?

BILL
That's a shame. About your mom.
(beat)
You're divorced, right?

Darby pauses a moment.

DARBY
Bill, if this is about Sandi...

BILL
Two kids, right?

Darby stares.

BILL (CONT'D)
Sandi mentioned you had two sons.

Darby frowns.

DARBY
You didn't tell me how Janet is
doing.

Bill twitches again.

BILL
You couldn't make it work? You and
your wife.

Darby stares, getting pissed now.

BILL (CONT'D)
You fool around?

DARBY
(pissed)
That's none of your fucking
business, Bill.

Bill twitches.

BILL
You're a good guy, Darby. I saw the
way you were with Janet and the
others in the nursing home.

Bill twitches more strongly. Darby frowns, studying the older man.

DARBY
Bill... are you okay?

BILL
(emotional, angry)
I know you think Janet's frail,
but... she was always strong as an
ox where it counts -- her heart.
Never gave up, not on our kids, not
on me, even when we -- even when I
was a disappointment to her. Even
when I... even when I betrayed her.

Darby frowns, uncomfortable. Bill's twitching more badly now. He closes his eyes and forces himself to regain control of himself. Darby watches him, worried for the old man. Bill opens his eyes and forces a smile.

BILL (CONT'D)

I don't mean to pry, Darby, I'm just... trying to get to know you a bit better.

Darby seems conflicted.

DARBY

(blurts out)

We met when I got out of the navy. I was twenty-six, she was only nineteen. She was too young.

Darby shakes his head, upset, takes deep breath, trying to regain control.

DARBY (CONT'D)

She wanted to get back together a couple of times.

(beat)

My wife, I mean. But... when it's broken it always breaks again in the same place, you know?

BILL

(snaps)

No! I don't know!

Darby stares, surprised by the older man's anger.

BILL (CONT'D)

You get married because you want a steady lay, or because you don't think you can do any better, or because it's what everyone expects. All the wrong reasons, and it gives you the excuse you need to walk away from it later. But a man who makes a commitment doesn't walk away from it. You were in the military. Would you leave a man behind? Would you leave even a complete *stranger* behind?

*

Darby stares, wondering how the hell he got into this conversation with this angry, old man.

BILL (CONT'D)

But you'd abandon a young woman you swore to stay with, in front of the whole world, in front of her friends and family, in front of God? Because you saw someone else you wanted more?

DARBY
(irritated)
That's not the way it happened.

BILL
Then why did you leave her?

DARBY
I think you should leave, now,
Bill.

Bill pulls a pistol out of a shoulder holster under his jacket. Darby stares, stunned.

DARBY (CONT'D)
What --

Darby stands and turns his back to Bill about to walk around the desk and out of the store, but stops when he hears the COCKING of the gun's hammer.

BILL
(calm but menacing)
If you yell or try to attract attention, I'll shoot you. I'm dying, Darby, so I have nothing to lose.

MIDDLE AGE MAN (O.S.)
Good morning! *

Darby, startled, turns to see a tall, thin, MIDDLE-AGED MAN striding into the shop and stopping in front of Darby's desk. Darby glances at Bill who is sitting in his chair, smiling, one hand now hidden inside his suit jacket.

MIDDLE AGE MAN (CONT'D)
(jovial)
I'd like to book a short cruise.

DARBY
(forced enthusiasm)
Sure.

BILL
(pleasant)
I wouldn't if I were you.

Darby glares at Bill.

MIDDLE AGE MAN
What?

BILL
The cruise. Wouldn't do it.

DARBY
(forced chuckle)
Don't listen to him, he's always kidding.

MIDDLE AGE MAN
(to Bill)
Why not?

BILL
Disease, for one thing. Cruise lines hire employees who know less about hygiene than I know about nuclear physics, and there you are, trapped with crew members who take a crap and then don't even wash their hands before handling your food.

The Middle Aged Man frowns and takes a step backward.

MIDDLE AGE MAN
But all I want is --

DARBY
(forced pleasantness)
Bill, don't you have some medication you're supposed to be taking?

BILL
And sexual assault.

MIDDLE AGE MAN
(smiles)
Well, I think I can take care of myself --

BILL
Are you going alone?

Darby glances at the ceiling.

MIDDLE AGE MAN
No. With my wife and my... daughter.

BILL
There have been congressional investigations into the incidence of on board violence and sexual assaults.

The Middle Age Man turns to Darby.

MIDDLE AGE MAN
Is that true?

DARBY
Yes, but --

BILL
The cruise lines don't tell you about rape, or armed robbery. They don't tell you that you can fall overboard -- or be pushed, sometimes even by family members. You and your wife getting along?

MIDDLE AGE MAN
(doubt)
Of course.

BILL
Staycations are much more fun. Visit local sites you've never seen, blow money on fancy restaurants. Your wife and daughter will feel like princesses. It'll cost less than taking a cruise that could end up with you and your family sick, robbed, kidnapped or raped.

MIDDLE AGE MAN
You're right, thank you.
(nods vigorously)
Thank you very much.

He turns and walks quickly out.

DARBY
(calls after him)
You're welcome!

Darby, trying to get the drop on Bill, suddenly turns and steps forward to rush the older man, but Bill suddenly stands and whips his gun up to Darby's face.

BILL
(screams)
BANG!

Darby actually staggers backward as if shot, shocked by Bill's scream, and the black hole of the gun's muzzle suddenly staring at him.

DARBY
Please don't kill me.

Bill cocks the pistol.

BILL
This might be your shop, Darby, but
this is my gun. Do you understand?

DARBY
Bill, this isn't like you, you're
not like this!

Bill twitches like a motherfucker.

BILL
You know, when I first came in here
all I was going to do was to chat
with you. But after listening to
you talking to those two women on
the phones... I think you need a
little help straightening out your
life, Darby.

DARBY
Put the gun away, Dude.

BILL
A little help shaping your future.
In fact, I'm going to do you a
favor, son.

DARBY
Just put the gun away and you can
do any favor you want, Bill.

BILL
I'm going to help you create a life
for yourself, Darby.

Bill glances at his watch. The phone RINGS. Without
hesitation Bill picks up the receiver and slams it back down.
Bill sits back down in the padded chair, careful to keep
Darby in his line of sight. Darby stares at him in disbelief.

BILL (CONT'D)
You know I was a cop, right, Darby?

Darby stares.

BILL (CONT'D)
And I had to deal with a lot of
different kinds of people.
(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

People doing cruel things to people, people doing stupid things, and I always thought it would be great to be able to just pull out a gun and set them straight. But of course, I was a cop.

DARBY

(hopeful)

That's right, Bill! You were a cop. And as a cop you have to do the right thing, have to obey the law, right? And there's no reason anyone has to know about this, you can just put that scary gun away, leave the store and that'll be that. No-one needs to know.

BILL

(smiles)

Of course... I'm not a cop anymore.

DARBY

What the fuck do you want, Bill?

BILL

I only have one demand, Darby.

Darby's eyes are fixed on the pistol in Bill's lap.

DARBY

What -- what's that?

BILL

I want you to talk the next woman who walks through that door into marrying you.

Bill stares.

DARBY

What?

BILL

And if you don't, or can't, then I'll shoot you both. And I'm a very good shot.

DARBY

Bill... why are you doing this?

BILL

My wife asked me to.

DARBY

Janet asked you to shoot two strangers?

BILL

Janet and I have the perfect relationship.

Darby is stiff as a board, afraid to move a muscle and staring at the muzzle of Bill's pistol.

DARBY

That's nice.

BILL

And she told me this morning that I should help others have that kind of wonderful, fulfilling relationship. You know Janet -- always thinking of others.

DARBY

Thinking of others doesn't mean *shooting* them, Bill!

BILL

I'm glad you understand.

DARBY

I *don't* understand! This doesn't make any sense at all!

Bill twitches, but forces his voice to be sweet.

BILL

And since I'm dying anyway, I decided that I should honor Janet's wish, before it's too late for me, and spread the kind of wonderful happiness we had.

DARBY

This is how you spread happiness?

Bill glances at his watch.

BILL

Doesn't Sandi usually drop by about this time?

DARBY

Bill... you're completely fucking nuts.

Bill stares, his smile fading slightly. He twitches.

BILL

Do you really want to be saying
that to someone who's completely
fucking nuts?

The phone RINGS again. Bill stands again and puts the gun to
Darby's forehead, pulling the hammer back again.

BILL (CONT'D)

I know you can't see it, but my
finger is tightening on the
trigger.

DARBY

Oh God, please don't!

BILL

You believe in God? Well you'd
better hope God's in a good mood
and that He can stop my finger,
because if He doesn't, this gun's
going off and the bullet is going
to smash through your skull like it
was cardboard, and splatter it all
over the wall and floor and
probably all over me too.

DARBY

Okay, okay! You're completely
fucking sane!

Bill withdraws his gun and is suddenly calm again, though
he's still twitching and crazy looking. He sits back down.

BILL

You think I'm *sane*?

DARBY

(forced calm)

You're dying, and that has to be
upsetting, but won't it upset Janet
when she finds out you've killed
people?

Bill stares at a him a long moment.

BILL

(slowly)

Darby, I'm just trying to make you
understand the authenticity of the
threat here. I mean, you know me,
and you were kind to my wife.

(MORE)

*
*

BILL (CONT'D)

So you might think I couldn't
possibly be crazy enough to carry
out my threat.

*
*

Bill stares, twitching more frequently now.

BILL (CONT'D)

I am that crazy, Darby.

Darby stares, then suddenly lunges at Bill who quickly stands and sidesteps, then hits Darby in the gut with the gun, and when Darby bends forward he hits him on the back with the butt of the gun, knocking him to his knees. Bill then grabs the back of Darby's hair and jerks his head back and puts the gun muzzle into Darby's mouth. Darby freezes, eyes wide. Bill is twitching like crazy, eyes wide, spittle at the corners of his mouth, panting, THIS close to pulling the trigger.

*

BILL (CONT'D)

Do you taste the metal on your
tongue? I've heard that fear has a
metallic taste. Maybe death does
too. Would you like to find out,
Darby?

Darby squeezes his eyes shut. Slowly Bill backs down from his rage and sits down. Darby stays on his knees, opening his eyes and staring at Bill with a mixture of anger and fear. Darby tries to control his breathing and it's obvious he is very close to having a complete breakdown.

BILL (CONT'D)

Get back in your seat. We don't
want anyone seeing you there, and
then calling for help, do we? That
would just lead to dead bodies
everywhere.

Darby slowly, painfully stands and takes his seat again, holding his stomach where Bill hit him.

DARBY

I'm a good person.

BILL

I know you are, Darby. Somewhere in there. I've seen it. That's why, when that lucky woman walks through that door, you'll do everything in your power to convince her to marry you, because if you don't I'll kill her. I'll kill you too, so you may just be trying to save your own life, but for now it'll have to do.

DARBY
It'll have to *do*?

BILL
To show whether you really are a
good person or just another selfish
shithead. Pardon my French.

Darby stares. Bill stares back with complete equanimity,
despite the twitching.

BILL (CONT'D)
Trust me, you're going to learn
something here, about yourself and
about the way life really works.

DARBY
(angry)
And you think you can teach me
that?

Bill places the muzzle against Darby's chest.

BILL
I'm just... facilitating the
educational process.

At that moment a woman enters the store -- MARGARET, an
elderly lady using a walker. Bill adeptly hides his pistol
and smiles.

MARGARET
(pleasant)
Hello, gentlemen.

Darby stares. Bill, hiding his pistol, leans forward and
claps his hand on Darby's shoulder.

BILL
You can take a flyer on this one,
Darby.

The old lady sits down.

MARGARET
What a beautiful day.

BILL
(genuine, respectful)
It is, isn't it?

Darby glances at Bill, then back at Margaret, then finally
back at Bill.

DARBY

No, it's okay, I can handle it,
Bill.

Bill frowns, another twitch.

BILL

You don't have to --

Darby turns to Margaret. He smiles and suddenly we see what Sandi fell for.

DARBY

Hi.

Margaret smiles back, noticing perhaps how good looking and sexy he is, but too mature to fall for it that quickly.

MARGARET

I'd like to book a vacation.

Bill nods, still smiling, his amazing eyes studying her face in a way that totally implies he's fascinated by her. There's a pause, that stretches and stretches and he openly appraises her with obvious appreciation. Margaret squirms a bit -- partly at the awkwardness of the moment and partly because she may be old but she's definitely not dead. *

DARBY

God you are so... beautiful.

That startles Margaret. She blushes.

MARGARET

What are you doing?

BILL

(cocky)

Appreciating you. Complimenting
you.

MARGARET

You're embarrassing me. And
yourself.

DARBY

You said you wanted to book a
vacation.

MARGARET

I do but --

DARBY

Then book it with me. I'll pay for
it, all of it. Just you and me.

He puts his hands on the desk, palm upward, inviting her to
put her hands in his. She stares at his hands then back up at
him. Attracted but even more embarrassed. *

Bill stares, quizzical, a small smile on his lips. *

DARBY (CONT'D)

You know what, screw it! Marry me! *

Margaret pauses, then, using the desk, struggles to her feet,
leans across the desk, hooks her hand behind Darby's head and
jerks him into a full-out kiss. Darby is caught completely
off-guard, and even more so as Margaret, holding the kiss,
grabs his hand and puts it on her 84-year-old breast. Darby
stares wide-eyed as the kiss goes on and on. Finally Margaret
lets him go, and nearly falls. She manages to steady herself
by holding onto the edge of the desk, then lowers herself
back to her chair.

MARGARET

Shame on you!

He stares, stunned.

DARBY

Shame on *me*?

Bill LAUGHS. Darby casts him an annoyed glance.

MARGARET

Damn. It's been a while. Was it
good for you too, kid?

Darby, panting, wide-eyed, struggles to regain his composure.

DARBY

Uh, yeah! Yeah, it sure was. So
will you marry me?

Margaret starts to LAUGH. Darby smiles but blushes too,
suspecting she is laughing at him, not with him. Finally,
dabbing her eyes, her laughter peters out.

MARGARET

Now let me tell you where you went
wrong.

DARBY

Was it before or after you slipped
me the tongue?

MARGARET

It was the second I sat down, you moron. Instead of caring about me as a person, you smirked like you were God's gift to old women. You weren't there for me. Shit, you weren't even there *with* me. You *disrespected* me.

DARBY

Ma'am, I *complimented* you.

MARGARET

And how did that work?

Darby stares, then shrugs.

DARBY

Well, not quite as well as it usually does... except for the kiss... which, by the way, was *unusually* hot for someone your age... and getting to fondle your surprisingly large breast...

*
*
*

MARGARET

Kid, I've seen guys like you my whole life. They end up wearing plaid pants and bow ties, coming on to women in nursing homes.

Darby reacts to that -- she struck a nerve. He glances at Bill, who stares back grimly.

*

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Do you want to know who you just felt up?

Darby stares.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Of course you don't, you don't give a *shit* who I am, but I'll tell you anyway. I marched in the 60s to protest the Vietnam War. I dropped acid and fucked my way from one coast to another.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Damn near died from a heroin overdose, lost my boyfriend to the Viet Cong, a son in childbirth, a husband to stroke, my house to this fucking "economic downturn," and the only reason I came in here today was to plan my last vacation because it's a toss-up whether I run out of money or life first.

(beat)

I was hoping for somewhere nice, maybe Cancun or Puerto Vallarta, because I can't really afford Europe.

Darby is speechless, and so is Bill. Margaret suddenly starts to CRY.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

So what gives you the right, you arrogant little shit, to disrespect me? To disrespect anyone? To think that you have any value to give anyone except for your dick and that stupid smirk of yours?

By now Darby is pale. There is a long silence.

BILL

You remind me of my wife.

She turns to him and studies his face. She daintily wipes her eyes, careful not to smear her perfectly applied mascara, and dabs the back of her hand against her nose.

MARGARET

I assume that's a compliment.

BILL

You have no idea, Ma'am.

She nods, then stands with difficulty, and positions herself behind her walker. She glances at Darby.

MARGARET

(to Darby)

Do you want people to dislike you?

Darby stares. She shakes her head and walks away. Darby sits back, stunned and ashamed.

BILL

Now *that* was a woman.

DARBY

(softly)

Are you going to shoot me now?

*

BILL

That was so entertaining, I'm going to give you a break. Who knows, maybe you learned enough from that to handle the next one.

Darby turns to face him.

DARBY

What the fuck is this about?

BILL

Whether you live through the day, son. And if I could, I'd take your wasted life and give it to that old woman. She'd get much more out of it than you.

*

Bill pulls out his gun again and cocks the hammer. Darby stares, trying to judge Bill's sincerity. Bill stares back a little too dangerously for Darby to risk it.

DARBY

The next woman to walk through that door.

Bill nods.

DARBY (CONT'D)

What if she's married?

BILL

You don't mess with the sanctity of marriage.

DARBY

But you mess with the sanctity of life?

BILL

Some lives are begging to be messed with.

DARBY

And ended.

BILL

Some of them, yeah.

DARBY
What if she's ugly?

BILL
(snaps)
There are no ugly women! Except
that some man made them that way.

DARBY
Old?

BILL
I think the old ones are onto your
bullshit.

Darby buries his face in his hand.

BILL (CONT'D)
Look, son, you're almost halfway
through the journey of life, and
you're travelling blind. The only
map is the one old farts like me
have, and you're not willing to
listen to us because how the hell
would we know anything? You're
watching Blu-ray and downloading
Hulu and we're still trying to set
the clocks on our VCRs. You think
you know everything, and the funny
thing is... you're not even headed
in the right direction.

The two men stare at each other. There is a long silence.

DARBY
So the next one through the door
not married, not old but it's okay
if she looks like Ozzy Osborne.

BILL
Pretty much.

Darby nods and turns to face the door. Nothing happens.
Finally he turns to face Bill.

DARBY
What happens if no-one else comes
in today? We come back for another
try tomorrow?

BILL
I kill you anyway.

Sandi pokes her head in.

SANDI
And furthermore --

DARBY
(horror)
Nooooooooooooo!

SANDI
Fine.

She leaves.

DARBY
No!

Darby stands. Bill pulls out his pistol and cocks the hammer.

BILL
Sit down!

Darby glances at him, in a panic.

DARBY
She's gone!

BILL
Then so are you. Sit down and wait
to see if she comes back.

Darby hesitates, glancing at the empty doorway. Bill is twitching again.

BILL (CONT'D)
Sit down now, or I'll shoot you and
to hell with whether she ever comes
back.

Darby slowly sits. He stares at the empty doorway from his chair and a tear runs down his cheek.

DARBY
Sandi.

Sandi pops her head back into the doorway.

SANDI
Look --

DARBY
Sandi!

Darby stands again, immediately glancing at Bill who stares, pistol hidden but obviously at the ready.

SANDI
(suspicious)
You okay?

DARBY
Yes!

Darby indicates the chair across the desk from him.

DARBY (CONT'D)
Sit!

SANDI
(offended)
What?

DARBY
Please. Pretty please. With sugar
on top.

Sandi moves fully into the doorway, and at that point sees Bill. She smiles with uncertainty.

*

SANDI
Bill?

Bill smiles without replying. Sandi frowns, confused by Bill's presence and Darby's strange behavior. Darby continues to indicate the chair.

DARBY
Please.

Sandi hesitates, then sits in the chair, hands primly in her lap. She's very pretty and very feminine, but also obviously very much her own person.

SANDI
(to Bill)
What are you doing here, Bill?

Darby stands again. Bill twitches.

DARBY
You know, Sandi, I had a really
good time when we went out that...
one... time and...

*

Sandi continues staring at Bill.

SANDI
We already covered that, Darby.

DARBY

No, I mean we had a really, really,
really good time!

She turns to Darby.

SANDI

What the hell is wrong with you?

DARBY

Marry me!

Sandi stares, then finally sits back down, crossing her legs
and leaning forward a bit. Darby sits too, petrified.

DARBY (CONT'D)

I love you.

She stares for a long beat.

SANDI

(sarcastic)

Does Bill have a gun or something? *

Darby's eyes go really wide now.

DARBY

What? Why would you say that? A
gun, that's a good one, Sandi.

BILL

As a matter of fact I do.

Sandi turns to Bill, studying the older man's face.

SANDI

Show me.

Bill hesitates, then pulls out his pistol, laying it casually
on his lap. Sandi gets up and turns to leave.

DARBY

Sandi!

BILL

It's okay. I've changed my mind.

DARBY

What? Really?

BILL

(to Sandi)

Go ahead.

Sandi frowns, confused, then leaves. Darby sighs, grinning. Then he frowns and turns to Bill.

DARBY
You've really changed your mind?

BILL
Yeah. I won't shoot her.

Darby waits for the other shoe to drop. It doesn't.

DARBY
And?

BILL
I'll still shoot you. Unless you convince her to marry you.

DARBY
But she's gone! You.. you let her leave! God, you practically chased her out of here with your fucking gun.

BILL
I like Sandi.

DARBY
Aren't you afraid she'll go to he cops?

BILL
Sandi wouldn't do that. And if she does... I don't care.

DARBY
What's so fucking special about Sandi?

BILL
(disappointed)
You're going to throw her under the bus to save your own ass? Fine. Call her back in and I'll shoot you both.

Darby stares, studying Bill's face.

DARBY
Shoot me. Just spare Sandi.

*
*
*

*
*
*

BILL

How heroic. A second ago you were begging me to drag her down with you.

DARBY

I wasn't --

(hangs his head)

I just didn't understand why you were willing to save her and not me.

BILL

Maybe she'll come back. Give you another chance.

Darby LAUGHS bitterly.

DARBY

Right.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Hey, stud.

Darby and Bill, both surprised, turn to see DEBBIE standing in the doorway, holding the door open. She's a sexy, slutty and definitely not sweet version of Sandi, dressed in something provocative that she definitely pulls off with a killer body. Bill hides his pistol, frowning, not knowing who this person is.

DARBY

Debbie!

Bill starts twitching again.

BILL

She's not the one.

Darby glances at Bill.

DARBY

What?

BILL

Sandi's the one.

DARBY

But she's gone, Bill. You chased her away.

Debbie enters, swaying seductively.

DEBBIE
Sandi as in my sister Sandi?

Darby turns back to her.

DARBY
How could you do that?

Debbie plops down onto the chair beside Bill, giving him a sexy little smirk, her skirt riding up high on her thighs.

DEBBIE
Do what?
(to Bill)
Heya', handsome.

DARBY
Sleep with me, knowing that your
sister --

DEBBIE
My sister what? *Bakes* for you?

She LAUGHS. Darby frowns, Bill twitches.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Oh, she told me all about you,
Darby. How handsome you are, how
nice, volunteering at that old age
home and all. And how she started
bringing you pastries and stuff,
hoping you'd be so horny over
her... *éclair*s.. That you' want...
well... her *éclair*.

BILL
I think you'd better leave, Miss.

Debbie smiles seductively at him.

DEBBIE
Oooh, honey, don't be like that.

She gets up and sits on his lap, startling him. He whips out his gun and points it up at her face, causing her to start and fall off his lap and onto the floor.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ, why didn't you just
say so?

She sits on the ground, looking up at him.

DARBY

He's right. You'd better leave.

She gets up and glances from Darby to Bill and back again, then stubbornly sits back down in the chair beside Bill and across the desk from Darby. *

DEBBIE

Is this some kind of joke?

Darby stares at her.

DARBY

Yeah, we set this whole thing up just in case you happened to come by.

DEBBIE

Well whatever, I'm not leaving until you tell me what's going on.

DARBY

If he tells you, then you can't leave.

DEBBIE

Does this have something to do with my mousy little sister?

BILL

Your breast is hanging out.

DEBBIE

What?

DARBY

Your, uh... boob is hanging out.

She looks down and realizes that during the fall onto the floor, her low cut top had spit part of her breast out so that her nipple is showing. She expertly pops it back inside her bra. She looks up to see both men staring at her breast where the nipple had been showing. She smiles.

DEBBIE

Never seen one of those?

DARBY

Not in my office.

Debbie stares at him skeptically.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Well... okay, maybe a few times. I still don't know how you could hurt your sister like that.

She waves it off.

DEBBIE

Oh poo. Sandi's ruining her own life just fine. Besides, she had it all her own way when we were kids. It's about time I get the upper hand. Or... upper nipple.

She smiles even more broadly and lightly runs the tips of her fingers down from her collar bone to the first button of her low cut blouse, holding Darby's gaze.

DARBY

(blurts out)

Bill is going to shoot me if I don't get Sandi to marry me!

Debbie freezes, her hand still at her cleavage. She purses her full, red lips and turns to Bill.

DEBBIE

Is that true?

She intentionally allows her legs to come open just enough to make it difficult for Bill to concentrate, but he manages.

BILL

Actually I said I'd shoot them both. Darby wasn't supposed to tell you that, and now that you know, I think you should leave before you get hurt.

*

She considers that, her thighs coming open just... a... bit... more. Then she snaps her legs shut and swings back around to face Darby.

DEBBIE

Nope.

Darby SIGHS.

DARBY

Debbie, listen --

DEBBIE

When we were little girls, Sandi did everything right.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Little miss goody two shoes and all I ever heard was "why can't you be like your sister?" Well, now I've got you and she's got... bupkiss.

DARBY

Uh, Debbie... we had sex. That's all.

BILL

No, that's not all.

Darby turns to him.

DARBY

What?

BILL

I've been thinking, maybe you're not the best person for Sandi.

DEBBIE

Oooh, I like this old guy.

*

BILL

Maybe the best thing for a slut like you, Darby, is another slut. Like her.

Debbie glances at Bill.

DEBBIE

Okay, maybe "like" is a strong word. But hey, why not? He's right, we're two peas in a pod, Darbs. We both like sex -- a lot. We're both really good at it, and there's no reason we can't get married and keep on getting all the sex we want -- with each other and with others, if that's what we want. After all, we'll be married, not dead, right?

SANDI

Hey.

Darby looks up. Sandi walks through the doorway, then stops, stunned at seeing Debbie.

BILL

I think we have it handled, Sandi. No need to stay.

Sandi glances at Bill, then back at Darby and Debbie, then storms into the store, grabbing a chair and plopping it down beside Darby on his side of the desk, facing Debbie with a wild expression on her face.

BILL (CONT'D)
Did you call the police?

SANDI
No.

DARBY
Why not?

SANDI
(pissed)
I'm safe, he said so.

DARBY
You're safe.

SANDI
Yup.

YOUNG COUPLE (O.S.)
Is this the travel store?

All turn to see a YOUNG COUPLE standing in the doorway.

BILL
No.

DARBY
Yes.

The Couple glance from person to person.

WOMAN
Well, which is it?

SANDI
Closed for lunch.

The woman glances at her watch.

WOMAN
It's 9:30.

SANDI
Brunch.

The young couple stare.

WOMAN

I, uh, think we'll find another travel store.

SANDI

Good. This one sucks anyway.

The couple can't leave fast enough.

*

DARBY

What do you mean my store sucks?

Sandi turns back to him.

SANDI

Do you owe Bill money? Is that it? Are he and Debbie blackmailing you somehow?

DEBBIE

That'd be *exactly* the kind of thing she'd do.

DARBY

I, uh...

Darby glances at Bill.

SANDI

How much are they demanding? Because if it's more than ten thousand, I'll need a day or two.

Darby shakes his head, confused.

DARBY

What?

SANDI

Try to keep up, Darby. I said I can come up with ten grand right now. I can write a check for that much right now and it won't bounce.

BILL

(calm)

Do you have identification?

SANDI

Yeah, I have a driver's license that says kidnap victim on it.

BILL

Good enough.

SANDI

But if it's any higher than that
I'd have to take a second mortgage
out on the house. Or the store.

She turns to Bill.

SANDI (CONT'D)

I'm good for it though, Bill. I
mean, if you need this for Janet's
medical bills, I understand. I
don't know how you got hooked up
with my crazy sister, but --

Debbie tilts her head, smiling, enjoying the whole thing.

DARBY

Give me a break, Sandi. You have no
intention of mortgaging your bakery
to save me from this crazy
motherfucker.

*

BILL

Darby, are you sure you want to be
talking about me like that?

DEBBIE

Yeah, Darbs, old Bill here may have
snow on the roof but I bet he's
still got fire in the furnace,
right Billy Boy?

Debbie playfully lets one of her legs swing back and forth a
bit, flashing her crotch at the others.

SANDI

(re: Debbie's flashing)

Jesus.

(to Darby)

I'm offering to mortgage my house
to save you and first you tell me
I'm full of shit and then you call
Bill -- the guy with the *gun* -- a
crazy motherfucker? I mean, if he
isn't a crazy motherfucker you
shouldn't be calling him that and
if he *is* a crazy motherfucker you
really shouldn't be calling him
that. So don't call him that, for
Christ's sake.

BILL

It's not about money.

DARBY

That's great, Bill. Now I can die
happy.

BILL

Okay.

Bill raises his gun.

SANDI & DEBBIE

No!

Darby sees a COUPLE on the street outside stop and stare through the glass door at them. Bill sees them and quickly turns his body to hide the gun. Darby smiles weakly and waves at the couple outside.

DARBY

(under his breath)

Hi, just having a conversation with
a deranged killer in here, just... go
on about your business...

*

The couple outside go on their way. Darby turns to Bill. Debbie and Sandi are staring at each other, realizing they'd both shouted out to protect Darby. They suddenly turn to Bill again.

DEBBIE AND SANDI

Please don't shoot him!

Sandi turns on Debbie.

SANDI

Will you shut up?

DEBBIE

Why? Do you want Bill to shoot
Darby? You do, don't you? Darby --

SANDI

I do not! I --

She glowers at Debbie. Bill lowers his gun.

BILL

Okay.

DARBY

You're not going to shoot me?

Bill glances from Darby to Debbie to Sandi and then back to Darby.

BILL

I don't know how you did it, Darby,
but now you have two beautiful
young women willing to marry you to
save your life. Okay.

(beat)

Okay, I'll allow that.

*
*
*

SANDI

What? I didn't say I wanted to
marry him.

DEBBIE

I do! Marry me, Darbs! She doesn't
care enough about you to try to
save you, but I will. Marry me and
we can fuck our brains out for the
rest of our lives! *Especiallly* with
each other!

SANDI

(exasperated)

I didn't say I *didn't* want to save
him! What the hell is going on
here?

BILL

Sandi...

DARBY

Bill is going to shoot all of us
unless I get one of you to agree to
marry me.

Debbie smirks. Sandi glances in disbelief at each of them,
then finally back at Bill. She hesitates a moment longer.

SANDI

Fine! I'll marry the stupid jerk!

Bill glances from one woman to the other.

BILL

Okay... Darby, like I said, you
have two women who want to marry
you. Pick one. If you propose to
one and I think you really mean it,
and she accepts, then I'll let you
all go. If you *don't* mean it, then
I'll shoot all three of you.

DEBBIE

Hey!

Bill swings his pistol to cover Debbie, who freezes, staring at the pistol and Bill's twitching, crazy face.

BILL

Why don't you flash me another
crotch shot and see how far it gets
you?

Sandi, still frightened, brings a hand to her mouth to hide a smirk, but Debbie takes it literally, flashes Bill a seductive smirk of her own and starts to slowly part her thighs.

DEBBIE

Sure, big boy. Feast your eyes.

Bill stares disbelievingly at Debbie's expression of fake ecstasy. Sandi gasps, staring at Debbie's exposed crotch (which we can't see).

SANDI

Debbie, you have no panties on!

Debbie smirks, still flashing Bill.

DEBBIE

I know. I left them at Darby's this
morning. Whadaya' think, Bill? Like
what you see?

Bill rubs his head as if he's got a headache. Sandi is glaring at Darby who raises his hands palms up in a gesture of complete helplessness.

DARBY

I didn't know she was your sister!

Debbie smirks, Sandi glares, Bill continues to rub his forehead.

EXT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

The COUPLE, YUAN and LI, stop several yards down from the travel agency.

LI

You know, Darby didn't look right.

YUAN

Darby hasn't looked right to you
since he dated your sister.

LI

A one night stand isn't dating. But if there's one thing Darby knows how to do, it's smile, and that was not a Darby smile. Did you see that old guy in there? Was it just me or --

YUAN

It was a gun, wasn't it? Shit, I *thought* it was, but how often do you see a guy with a gun booking a trip to Pittsburgh?

*
*

Li pulls out a cell phone and dials 9-1-1.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Darby is pleading with Sandi.

DARBY

You should go. I'll be fine.

SANDI

No you won't. Not that I care.

DARBY

He said he'd *shoot* you!

SANDI

Bill would never shoot me, I'm like a daughter to him. Besides, men don't like to shoot sweet and pretty women, because they don't want to deplete the breeding stock. Unless of course they're crazy.

She immediately turns to Bill.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Which you're not, of course, Bill, since you haven't shot me yet.

DEBBIE

I vote for shooting Sandi.

They all glance at her.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I'm just saying...

BILL

Sandi's right. She's sweet and pretty and you don't shoot that unless you have to.

DEBBIE

I can be sweet.

They all turn to stare at her.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

What?

SANDI

(to Bill)

You don't have to, Bill, right? Shoot me?

BILL

(winces)

Well...

DARBY

What?

BILL

Look, I've always liked Sandi. I'm happy to have her leave and then I'll just shoot you and Debbie.

DARBY

Gee thanks.

DEBBIE

Bill, I think we need to talk. Or fuck. One of the two.

BILL

(to Darby)

Unless of course you decide you'd like to propose to Debbie and mean it enough to convince me.

SANDI

This isn't funny, Bill! You're talking about killing someone here.

DARBY

But not you. So why don't you just leave?

SANDI

Shit no.

*

Darby flinches.

SANDI (CONT'D)

What? I can be sweet and foul
mouthed. Here, I'll prove it.

(sweet smile)

May I fucking help you? Will that
be cash or motherfucking credit?

Bill can't help but LAUGH. *

BILL

I love this woman.

DARBY

Will you stop encouraging her?

BILL

Sandi's free to go, but if she
chooses to stay, then she becomes
part of the conditions and we move
forward.

DEBBIE

I think you should go, Sandi. For
your own good, of course.

SANDI

Fuck off, Debbie.

She sees the men react to that.

SANDI (CONT'D)

I told you -- sweet and foul
mouthed. And if you think I'm going
to let my whore sister take Darby
from me, you're all fucking nuts.

DEBBIE

Nice way to talk, Sandi. *

Darby sighs.

DARBY

Sandi, just... leave.

SANDI

No.

Darby glances at Bill who shrugs. Darby turns back to Sandi.

DARBY

We had fun that one night together.
But that's all it was.

(MORE)

DARBY (CONT'D)

A one night stand. To be honest,
the sex wasn't even that good.

SANDI

Which time?

He stares.

SANDI (CONT'D)

I'm just wondering which time
wasn't that good. Or are you saying
that none of the four times were
that good?

Darby puts his face in his hands. Debbie frowns.

BILL

Four times?

DEBBIE

Darbs? Really? Four times?

BILL

(Face in his hands,
muffled)

Five.

SANDI

Four.

Darby raises his head and stares at her.

DARBY

Once from behind while you were
asleep.

*

SANDI

Ewww.

*

DEBBIE

Yeah, Darbs. Ew. Five times with my
dweeb sister?

BILL

Five times?

Sandi glances at him,. Bill puts up his hands.

BILL (CONT'D)

Sorry. But five times... that's
pretty impressive.

Sandi turns back to Darby.

SANDI

Well?

DARBY

It's not like that's a record or anything.

SANDI

It's not?

DEBBIE

(pissed)

Beats *our* record.

DARBY

(hesitates)

Okay, it's a record. For me, anyway.

SANDI

So...

DARBY

So we have an animal attraction to each other. So why didn't you want to go out with me again?

*

She sits back, considering that.

SANDI

I don't want to hurt your feelings.

BILL

See, she's still sweet.

DEBBIE

She's a cunt!

The men react.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I grew up with her! I *know*! She's a full fledged vagina!

Darby glances at Bill.

DARBY

Are you sure you don't want to just shoot me now?

Bill raises his pistol.

SANDI & DEBBIE

No!
 (to each other)
 Will you shut up?

Bill glances at Sandi.

BILL
 He said he wanted me to shoot him.

SANDI
 I don't care what he said! He
 doesn't know what the fuck he's
 saying.

DARBY
 There's that sweetness again.

BILL
 She's trying to save your life, you
 big jerk.

DARBY
 Maybe you two should get together.
 I mean you have so much in common.

DEBBIE
 Good idea! Bill, you take the
 sweet, foulmouthed cunt and I'll
 take Darby!

BILL
 That's not the point.

SANDI
 What is the point then?

DARBY
 (pissed, shouts)
 Yeah, Bill, what's the fucking
 point?

Bill springs out of his chair, aims the gun at Darby who
 cowers.

Sandi leaps to her feet.

SANDI
 No!

Bill fires. There is a loud CLICK. There is a long pause and
 Bill slowly smiles. Darby slowly "uncovers" and sits
 straight.

BILL
I hadn't chambered a round.
(Beat)
You should never chamber a round
until you're ready to use it.

Bill chambers a round.

BILL (CONT'D)
I make the rules.

Sandi puts her hands up.

SANDI
Okay. You make the rules.

Bill swings the gun around to cover Sandi.

BILL
Shut up!

Sandi nods, without saying a word. Bill returns the pistol to Darby's face. Bill is twitching like crazy, and wipes the back of his sleeve across his mouth, wiping away drool and spittle, his eyes wide and he is *not* doing well. Twitch... twitch... motherfuckingtwitch...

BILL (CONT'D)
You do what I say. Do you
understand me?

DARBY
I understand.

SANDI
We understand.

She slaps her hands over her mouth as Bill swings the gun back to her. Sandi stares wide-eyed from behind her hands.

BILL
(to Sandi)
Sit down.

Sandi quickly obeys. Bill returns to his seat, holding his gun at the ready.

BILL (CONT'D)
Get back in your chair.

Darby slowly, carefully, gets back in his chair. There's a long pause, then Bill nods slowly.

BILL (CONT'D)

Let me lay out the rules here. I've got the gun. I intend to use it at least once today.

Both Sandi and Darby frown at that. Bill turns to Debbie and Sandi.

BILL (CONT'D)

I gave both of you the chance to leave, but since you've chosen to stay, then that's what you'll do. Until either Darby convincingly proposes to one of you, or until I shoot all of you.

SANDI

What --

Bill whips the gun around to point at Sandi.

SANDI (CONT'D)

No, no, no! You tell me something like that, I get to say something.

Bill cocks his gun and raises it so that he's holding it straight-armed, pointing at Sandi's head.

BILL

I like you, Sandi, but I'm getting tired, and I'm not sure I have what it takes to go through with this, so if you'd like to cut it short by not listening to me, you'd be doing me a favor. So just go ahead. Say something else and I'll forget all about liking you so much.

Sandi stares, considering that. Bill nods, satisfied, and begins to lower his weapon, uncocking it.

SANDI

(calmly)
Actually....

Bill whips his pistol back up and re-cocks the hammer.

EXT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

A police cruiser pulls quietly up, stopping just down from the travel agency. The Couple, Yuan and Li, walk quickly up to the driver's side window, which lowers, and they begin speaking quickly and gesturing toward the travel agency.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Sandi faces Bill.

SANDI

Janet would never approve of this.

Sandi stares straight at the barrel of the gun, defiantly.
Bill stares wide-eyed, enraged, finger on the trigger.

DARBY

Shoot me, not her.

*

DEBBIE

No! Shoot her! Shoot her!

SANDI

(to Bill)

I'm just saying that I don't think
your wife would want you to shoot
anyone. Not even Debbie.

*

BILL

Don't talk about Janet.

SANDI

That's why you're here, isn't it?
Something to do with Janet? Why
else would you be here? She's all
that matters to you, right?

BILL

You don't know me.

He shakes his head, twitching.

BILL (CONT'D)

You think you know me, Sandi, and
you don't. You don't know the
things I've done, the things I'm
capable of doing.

*

DARBY

Of course she doesn't know you,
Bill, no-one really knows anyone
else. Now please put the gun down.

SANDI

Tell me Janet would be proud of
what you're doing here.

DARBY

Sandi...

Bill's hand starts to shake.

DARBY (CONT'D)

(softly)

Bill, why don't you point that at me while you're thinking about an answer.

*

Bill slowly lowers the pistol, laying it back down in his lap. Sandi stands.

SANDI

You don't want to shoot us. I know Janet wouldn't want you to.

Bill stares at her, shaken but slowly recovering his poise.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Darby and I are going to leave now.
(beat, reluctant)
And Debbie.

BILL

(once more calm)

Go ahead. I'll shoot Darby first and then decide whether to shoot you. And Debbie.

DEBBIE

Enough with the "and Debbie!"

She stands.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Okay, that's it!

She points at Darby.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You are not worth it! Christ, five times with my Sound of Music motherfucking sister and only *twice* with me? Fuck you!

She turns and jabs a finger at Bill.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

And you, old man, you'll never know what you turned down! I flash my pussy at you and all you can do is rub that bald old head? Fuck you too!

*

She turns and storms out of the store. Sandi and Darby glance at each other and turn to leave.

BILL

Don't.

They freeze. Sandi turns back to Bill and looks shocked at what she sees there -- a man on the edge, trembling, sweating, twitching, the muzzle of the gun, moving in small circles, but pointed directly at her. She takes a deep breath, then sits down again, carefully, so as not to startle Bill. Darby hesitates, then follows suit, sitting.

SANDI

So what do we do now, Bill?

BILL

It's Mister Vasquez to you, Sandi.

SANDI

I didn't mean to be disrespectful.

BILL

I know you didn't. You're a good person. But we're not neighbors in here, Sandi. And I'm not the friendly old Bill you knew. Things have happened. You can't go back on certain things, you know?

Sandi shakes her head, feeling sorry for the old man but realizing that he's right -- this isn't her kindly old neighbor anymore.

SANDI

We're both good people, Bill -- I mean Mr. Vasquez. Darby here was willing to have you shoot him in order to save me.

BILL

That's true. How does that make you feel, Sandi?

SANDI

What difference does that make, Mr. Vasquez? You're holding us at gunpoint. Once the police find out what you're doing, they're going to come in here and we may all die.

Bill nods, realizing the truth of what she's saying.

KEN, a burly middle-aged man, walks into the tiny shop, standing near the sliding glass doors, obviously waiting for Darby to finish with Sandi. Darby glances nervously at Bill, who's quickly hidden his gun again, and then back to the newcomer.

DARBY

I'll be with this client for a bit, sir. There's another travel agency on the corner of -- .

KEN

I'll wait.

Bill pulls out his pistol, aims it at Ken and cocks the hammer. Ken freezes.

DARBY

What are you doing, Bill?

BILL

I was on the job for thirty five years. I know a cop when I see one.

Ken nods, careful to keep his hands away from his body.

KEN

I'm going to turn toward you. Is that okay?

BILL

Sure.

Ken nods again and slowly turns so that he's facing Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)

You carrying?

Ken man nods.

BILL (CONT'D)

What's your name?

KEN

Ken Vukovich.

BILL

Sandi, you said you didn't call the cops.

KEN

A couple walked by and saw you holding a gun.

BILL

I want you to back up out of the store, officer Vukovich, keeping your hands nice and loose.

KEN

We should talk about this.

BILL

Do I sound like I'm ready to talk?

KEN

(studies Bill)

No.

BILL

I don't want to kill a fellow officer, but I'm willing to do that.

KEN

We should talk.

BILL

Ken....

Ken takes a deep breath.

KEN

We need a way to reach you.

BILL

I'm sure you already have the store's phone number.

DARBY

Take Sandi with you!

KEN

Can I take Sandi with me?

Bill considers that.

BILL

Too late for that, Ken. I need her.

KEN

Why do you need her?

BILL

Do you have a family, Ken?

KEN

Three kids.

BILL

And a wife?

KEN

Divorced. I see my kids on weekends.

BILL

(nods)

The job's hard on family. It's time to go, Ken. Before something goes wrong and you don't get to see those kids this weekend.

Ken nods and slowly backs out of the store, keeping his hands in sight, away from his body.

BILL (CONT'D)

Oh and Ken?

Ken stops.

BILL (CONT'D)

You're going to find out anyway, so... the name's Bill. Bill Vasquez.

Ken nods, then resumes backing away. Bill tracks him with the pistol until Ken is out of sight.

DARBY

You can't escape.

BILL

You think?

SANDI

You never intended to escape. This is death by cop, isn't it?

*

BILL

I shot an unarmed man once. He pulled out a gun and started walking toward us. We yelled at him to put it down. Ballistics proved it was my bullet that killed him.

Everyone's quiet.

BILL (CONT'D)

His gun was empty.

SANDI

Mr. Vasquez. Why do you want Darby
to convince me to marry him?

BILL

(snaps)

Because --

Bill takes a deep breath, forcing himself to be calm.

BILL (CONT'D)

Janet and I... we went through hard
times, and we never got to live the
life we thought we would. But we
never stopped loving each other.
This morning...

Bill struggles to maintain his composure. His twitching gets
worse and he wipes quickly at his eyes.

BILL (CONT'D)

She made me promise to help you two
have even half of what we had.

DARBY

To force us at gunpoint to be as
happy as you were with your her?

*

SANDI

You know that's...

The phone rings. Everyone stares at it.

BILL

Answer it.

Darby picks up the phone.

DARBY

Hello.

(Pause)

Darby Hogan.

(glances at Bill)

Yes, Bill is here.

BILL

Where the hell else would I be?
Honolulu?

DARBY

Okay.

(turns to Bill)

Detective Vukovich wants to know
what your demands are.

BILL
I want the Americans out of
Afghanistan. And Korea.

Darby stares at Bill.

DARBY
Bill wants the Americans out of
Afghanistan and Korea.
(Listens, then to Bill)
He wants to talk to you.

BILL
Tell him we'll be done here by
three o'clock. Tell him to hold off
on SWAT until then and
everything'll be fine.

DARBY
Bill says to hold off on SWAT until
three o'clock and everything'll be
fine.

BILL
Now hang up.

DARBY
I have to hang up now.

Darby hangs up.

SANDI
(to Darby)
I'll marry you. I said I would and
I meant it.

DARBY
You did?

SANDI
Yes.

BILL
Sure you will. Right after I let
you walk out of here, right?

SANDI
Have the cops send in a minister.
He can marry us right here.

DARBY
(to Bill, dry)
You can be my best man.

SANDI

And my maid of honor.

Bill considers that a moment, studying Bill and Sandi. *

BILL

A marriage under duress can be undone. It wouldn't even be legal to begin with.

SANDI

(exasperated)

How are we going to meet your demand unless you let us get married?

BILL

I want you two to agree to marry each other, and actually *mean* it.

Sandi and Darby stare at Bill.

SANDI

Who decides whether we mean it?

BILL

I do.

SANDI

We can't fake love.

BILL

Tell that to the Clintons. But I don't want you to fake love, that's the point. I want you to genuinely want to marry each other, so that as they're dragging me out of here in a body bag, you two will realize that you actually do want to be with each other and that I did you the biggest favor of your lives.

Sandi and Darby stare at each other.

DARBY

(to Sandi, unconvincing)

I love you. I always have. That night when we made love it was the most special -- *

Bill slaps Darby on the back of the head, hard.

DARBY(CONT'D)

Ow! What'd you do that for?

BILL

You're treating me the way you treated that old lady.

SANDI

What old lady?

BILL

You're treating me like I'm an idiot just because I'm old. You're not even committing to the bit, for Christ's sake!

SANDI

What old lady?

Darby rubs the back of his head and glares at Bill.

DARBY

The old lady I tried to seduce before you walked in.

Sandi stares.

SANDI

Oh. *That* old lady.

BILL

Why did you two have sex?

Sandy and Darby glance at each other.

SANDI

To have an orgasm, Mr. Vasquez. You should try it sometime.

*

DARBY

Yeah. It might chill you out.

BILL

(gesturing to Darby)
But why him?

Sandi actually stops to consider that.

SANDI

He's sexy.

DARBY

(grins)
I am, aren't I?

SANDI

My sister thought so.

Bill shakes his head.

BILL

I can't believe you had sex with her *and* her sister.

DARBY

Well it wasn't *together*.

SANDI

Not that he hasn't suggested it.

Bill shakes his head in disgust.

*

BILL

Jesus. Do you think there are any other shopkeepers I can hold at gunpoint around here?

DARBY AND SANDI

Yes!

BILL

Yeah well I don't think the police snipers outside are going to let me move to the bagel shop, do you?

They sit there for a long moment.

DARBY

(to Sandi)

Look, it's not an impossible situation.

*

*

SANDI

Right.

DARBY

He's not asking us to build a space shuttle out of paper clips. I mean, it's physically possible we could fall in love and want to get married.

She stares, eyes half-lidded.

DARBY (CONT'D)

It's at least within the rules of physics.

Sandi considers that too.

BILL

He's right.

Sandi and Darby glance at Bill and shake their heads and it's suddenly as if they are on the same page for the first time. *

SANDI
(to Bill)
Tell us about your marriage.

BILL
What?

SANDI
You had a perfect marriage. So give us some pointers.

Bill considers that, but seems oddly reluctant. *

BILL
Sandi...

SANDI
(angry)
No, no. You go from being my next door neighbor to being this crazy gunman wanting to shoot me, so tell me about your perfect marriage.

BILL
She's dead, Sandi.

Sandi stops.

SANDI
What?

BILL
Janet's dead. I woke up this morning and she was lying there. Dead.

SANDI
Oh, Bill, I'm so sorry.

Bill shakes his head, then suddenly smiles.

BILL
No. No, it's okay. Just... telling someone about it feels good.

He starts LAUGHING. The laugh of a man who's just slipped off the edge from having to admit the most horrible truth possible.

DARBY

So she didn't tell you to come in here with a gun.

Bill glances at him, grinning.

BILL

Oh no... we spoke, and she definitely told me to help you two.

Bill glances up as if listening to someone unseen. *

BILL (CONT'D)

What?

Darby and Sandi glance at each other.

BILL (CONT'D)

Yes, Honey, of course.

He glances at Sandi, smiling, and for a moment he's once again the sweet old Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)

Janet says hi.

Sandi stares at Bill, realizing just how crazy he is.

BILL (CONT'D)

(almost giddy)

And now you two have to fall in love and agree to get married, or I'll kill you.

Darby stands up.

DARBY

I've had enough.

Bill SHOOTs the monitor on Darby's desk, the bullet travels through the monitor and into the wall. Darby recoils in shock.

EXT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Three police cars are parked several yards down from the travel agency, out of sight of the inside of the shop. COPS in Kevlar vests and rifles stand ready. Ken is obviously in charge, and speaks into a cell phone. The GUNSHOT goes off in the travel agency and they all pause, waiting for another gunshot that doesn't come.

KEN
Just keep the block clear, make
sure the other shopkeepers and
employees are kept out of the area,
understand?

A younger cop walks up, holding an iPad.

KEN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
No, we can't risk getting the
hostages killed. We'll wait him out
for now. Right.

Ken hangs up and turns to the younger cop.

YOUNGER COP
Look at this.

Ken takes the iPad and starts reading.

KEN
Shit, he really was a cop.

YOUNGER COP
Keep reading.

Ken does.

KEN
Christ.

He looks toward the shop.

YOUNGER COP
What do we do?

Ken shakes his head.

KEN
The guy was fired for beating a
suspect to death after suffering a
nervous breakdown. We avoid pissing
him off, that's what we do. Get
someone over to his house. See if
there are any family members who'll
help us get him out of there
peacefully.

The younger cop nods and walks away. Ken returns to staring
at the shop.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Bill holds the gun on Darby who is staring at the computer
Bill shot. Bill's twitching, but still smiling.

BILL
(pleasant)
Sit down, Darby.

Darby sets his face and takes a step toward the glass doors.
Bill cocks his pistol and aims it at Darby's leg. Darby
stops. He and Bill stare at each other. The phone RINGS.

BILL (CONT'D)
A .45 can tear half your leg off
with one shot. The bullet rips
through the flesh, smashes the
bone, destroys the muscle, and
sends pain to the brain so
excruciating --
(beat)
But don't worry, I'll finish the
job by shooting you in the head,
eventually. And I should still have
time to kill Sandi before she makes
it out the door.

Darby stares at Bill who is *obviously* not bluffing.

BILL (CONT'D)
But who knows, maybe the old ex-cop
is bluffing. *

Darby still hesitates, obviously torn. Perspiration drips
down his face.

SANDI
(to Bill)
Look, Bill, I'll tell the police -- *

The phone finally stops ringing.

BILL
Tell them what? That this was a
practical joke? That they should
forget I pointed a loaded pistol at
a cop? *

Sandi glances at Darby. Darby hesitates a moment longer, then
sits back down.

DARBY
Now what?

BILL

Court her.

Darby stares at him.

DARBY

In front of you?

BILL

(chuckles)

Heck, you two can even have sex again if you'd like, since it seemed to go so well last time. I promise not to look.

(giggles manically)

You know, I haven't felt this alive in years. I have you to thank for this, Sandi.

*

Darby shakes his head, but turns to Sandi.

DARBY

So... tell me about yourself.

*

SANDI

You're kidding, right?

DARBY

I'm open to other suggestions, but...

SANDI

If you'd stuck around that morning you could have found out a little about me other than I don't have a penis tattoo.

BILL

Penis tattoo?

Sandi glances at him.

BILL (CONT'D)

(pleasant)

Sorry, sorry, I'm shutting up.

DARBY

(to Sandi)

I'm sorry. But our lives do depend on this.

*

Sandi hesitates, glaring at Darby, then sighs and nods.

SANDI
(exasperated)
I, uh... I was fat.

DARBY
What?

SANDI
In high school. I was fat, really
fat, over two hundred pounds.

DARBY
That *is* fat.

She glares at him.

DARBY (CONT'D)
And you had a lot to offer. *

SANDI
Shut up, Darby.

He nods, compressing his lips.

SANDI (CONT'D)
Everything was easy for you in high
school, wasn't it? Always the cool
kid. Never fat, never ugly,
probably never shy or awkward.
(shouts)
I was fat! Do you understand? I was
fat!

Darby holds up his hands as if to ward off an attack.

DARBY
Okay, okay. You were fat.

SANDI
Do you know what it's like to be a
fat girl in high school? And I had
acne!

He stares, wide-eyed, intimidated by her hysteria.

SANDI (CONT'D)
(shouts)
It was... horrible!

DARBY
I'm... uh... sorry?

She tries to calm down.

SANDI

It was the worst time of my life. I didn't date. I missed the prom, all the school dances. Four years of watching everyone else date and be 'boyfriend and girlfriend' and I was just... fat, zitty Sandi. They used to call me Sandipaper.

DARBY

That's harsh.

She stops, seeing that he really is sympathetic.

DARBY(CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I really am. How did you go from that to...

(he indicates her)

This? I mean... you're beautiful.

SANDI

Thank you.

DARBY

Even without the penis tattoo.

She stares, eyes wide in sudden fury.

*

DARBY(CONT'D)

Just kidding.

SANDI

God, you can be such a putz.

*

DARBY

I'm sorry. I was just trying to make you smile. Smiling makes you look even more beautiful.

SANDI

Even without the tattoo?

DARBY

Tattoos are overrated.

SANDI

You really didn't know Debbie was my sister?

DARBY

She never mentioned you. How did you even find out about us.

*

SANDI

(blushes)

When you left me that morning, I called her. I mentioned your name, and she asked if you were the guy who ran the travel store and..

DARBY

(surprised)

And she told you we'd slept together. Wow. Why would she do that?

SANDI

She's always been the pretty one. I guess she needs to remind me of that.

DARBY

Because she's jealous.

Sandi stares.

DARBY (CONT'D)

You're so beautiful now. And all the shop owners love you.

SANDI

(anguished)

Then why did you leave? Maybe to you it was just another fuck but I can't feel that way about it, not after the way I felt when I was younger. I can't just jump in bed and not have it be... *important*.

DARBY

I'm so sorry. I'm such a jerk.

SANDI

(wiping her eyes)

No you're not. You're an asshole.

DARBY

Really?

SANDI

(shouts)

You're an asshole!

DARBY

Okay, okay, I'm an asshole.

BILL
You really are.

Darby glances at him.

BILL (CONT'D)
I call it like I see it.

*

Darby turns back to Sandi, who sits up straight, wiping her face.

SANDI
Your turn.

DARBY
Oh.
(He takes a deep breath)
I was born in a small gold mining town in northern Canada.

SANDI
(surprised)
Really?

He stops, studying her face.

DARBY
You're beautiful. No, you're...

He stops and for the first time really looks at her and looks startled.

DARBY (CONT'D)
You're... wow.

There's a long silence as Darby stares in wonder at Sandi, who stares back, as surprised as he is.

BILL
That's good.

Sandi and Darby slowly turn to stare at him.

BILL (CONT'D)
Sorry, sorry.

SANDI
Did you work in the mines?

Darby suddenly looks grim.

DARBY
Yeah. It was pretty bad. People getting hurt, even dying.
(MORE)

DARBY (CONT'D)

I got out after a couple of years,
joined the navy, but...

He takes a deep breath.

DARBY (CONT'D)

But my dad died from silicosis --
it's a lung disease you get from
working in the mines. The quarts
cuts up your lungs from the inside.
You end up drowning in your own
bodily fluids.

Darby looks down, remembering.

SANDI

I like this, talking to you like
this. Even if you used me like I
was a rubber fucking sex doll.

DARBY

I'm sorry for leaving.

She stares, looking a little mollified.

DARBY (CONT'D)

I had a good time with you.

SANDI

Four good times.

DARBY

Four *great* times.

(Beat)

And one good one.

She slaps his arm but then LAUGHS and he joins in.

DARBY (CONT'D)

But I meant I had a good time
before we had sex.

SANDI

You could have had a good time
after the sex too, if you'd stuck
around.

DARBY

I know.

SANDI

So why did you leave?

Darby hesitates.

DARBY

I was scared that it wouldn't be as perfect as it had been all night. That I would say something stupid, or that we'd wake up and find out we had nothing in common.

SANDI

Do you overthink everything this much?

Darby LAUGHS.

DARBY

Pretty much.

SANDI

Tell me about your dad.

Darby takes a deep breath, jaws clenched, staring into some other time and place. Sandi squeezes his hand, studying his face set in hard lines of memory.

DARBY

Years after I'd left the mines, I got a call. I was married at the time.

Sandi reacts to that.

DARBY (CONT'D)

It was from my mom. She told me my father had silicosis.

(deep breath)

He took years to die. He ended up in an oxygen tent, not able to breathe deeply enough to speak. And my mother... I saw her grow old taking care of my father, watching him die, losing him one breath at a time.

He pauses again, this time for good, looking tired, his jaw muscles flexing. There is a long silence. Then he smiles, tightly..

DARBY (CONT'D)

I'm a hell of a first date, aren't I?

She smiles, then suddenly Darby is SOBBING. Sandi suddenly stands, startling Bill who raises his pistol, but she ignores him and hugs Darby.

Darby slowly stops sobbing, and he and Sandi slowly release each other, but as they pull apart, they stop, staring at each other, and suddenly they're kissing, passionately, then, as if together, they realize where they are and who is with them and they stop and turn to stare at Bill.

Sandi takes a deep breath, straightens up and goes back to her chair, sitting with her hands primly in her lap.

SANDI

Tell me about your wife.

Darby looks uncomfortable.

DARBY

That's not exactly a romantic conversation.

*

SANDI

This was your idea.

Darby frowns, uncomfortable. Sandi stares.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Okay, tell me one thing, one thing you remember about her. One... *incident.*

DARBY

I, uh...

SANDI

(irritated)

Jesus, you were married how long?

DARBY

(reluctant)

Four years.

SANDI

(loudly)

Four years! Surely to God, sometime in that four years something happened that you can tell me about. There's something, isn't there? I can see it in your face. What is it, tell me.

DARBY

Panties!

Darby blushes. Sandi stares.

SANDI

What?

Darby shakes his head, blushing.

DARBY

It... was about panties.

SANDI

(dry)
Of course it was.

DARBY

You asked.

Sandi takes a deep breath, trying to be patient.

SANDI

Yeah, I did. So... tell me about
the panties.

DARBY

I don't think so.

SANDI

(louder)
The panties, Darby. Tell me about
the damned panties.

*

DARBY

Look, this is just stupid.

Sandi loses it.

SANDI

(screams)
TELL ME!!! TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EX-
WIFE'S PANTIES!!!

Darby stares at her, wide-eyed. Sandi blushes.

BILL

Tell her about the panties, Darby.

Darby glances at Bill, then at Sandi, who is looking
flustered but determined.

DARBY

Fine. But you asked.

Sandi waits. Darby sighs.

DARBY (CONT'D)

We'd been dating for a few months. She came over to my apartment all the time. One day she comes over in this skimpy little mini skirt, and she tells me she's not wearing panties.

(Darby LAUGHS)

It was the sexiest thing I'd ever heard. I mean, I'd had sex with God knows how many women, and I'd had sex with her God knows how many times, but she tells me she'd driven all the way over to my place without panties on and it turned me on like I was a thirteen year old with my first copy of Penthouse.

(He LAUGHS)

It was like that. Just fun and exciting and she was so funny and sweet and cute. It was... fun. It was actually fun.

SANDI

You sound surprised by that.

He considers that.

DARBY

My parent didn't like each other much. They taught me that being married meant disappointment. And resentment.

SANDI

So when you were with your wife and you had fun, you were surprised that it wasn't anything like the only other marriage you knew.

DARBY

(stares, she's right)

I can't believe I just told you a sex story about me and my ex-wife.

Sandi shakes her head and speaks to him like he's a three year old.

SANDI

Darby, it wasn't a sex story.

DARBY

It wasn't?

SANDI

It was an intimacy story. You were excited by your ex-wife because you were in love with her.

Darby stares, realizing she's right again.

BILL

What happened then? Between you and your ex-wife?

Darby is still thinking about what Sandi said.

DARBY

One day we were suddenly talking about getting married. I remember we were sitting on the floor in my living room, and it felt like we were planning a funeral.

SANDI

You'd had all this fun, , and suddenly you were making plans to become like your parents.

Darby studies her face, surprised.

DARBY

Why didn't I see that?

SANDI

Something about the forest and the trees.

BILL

Did you fight for her?

DARBY

What?

BILL

Your wife. Did you fight for her?

DARBY

Fuck you, Bill. You and your perfect fucking marriage.

Bill stands, pointing the pistol at Darby. Darby stands, angry.

SANDI

Did you? Fight for her?

Both men stop, glancing at her. Darby SIGHS and sits down again, followed by Bill.

DARBY

No. I didn't. We'd moved to Iowa so I could finish my graduate degree. We were broke, unhappy, we had two small kids, we'd stopped having sex. So one day I asked her if she loved me. She said no. Her mom came down from Canada to get her. They threw everything into our Volkswagen, including my two sons. I'll never forget the look on my boys' faces as she drove them away.

Darby stops, and looks like he's in shock. Sandi places her hands on his.

DARBY(CONT'D)

When they were gone I walked into my bathroom, staring at myself in the mirror, and suddenly started sobbing and wailing.

Darby pauses, staring back at the horror of that memory.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Like I had lost everything.

Darby sits. Bill and Sandi stare quietly at him.

SANDI

So ultimately marriage is about loss to you. Your mother losing your father, you losing your sons.

*

Darby stares at her.

DARBY

Yeah. I guess. Wow, am I husband material or what?

BILL

You're any type of material you decide to be.

Darby slowly stands and faces Bill, who raises his pistol just enough to remind Darby of it. Bill's twitching gets more frequent and violent.

DARBY

You want me to get married and you're standing there dripping pain because you lost someone you committed to. Are you fucking crazy? I don't need that. I don't want that. I have a good life. And don't give me that "it's better to have loved and lost" bullshit because I'm looking at you and I'm seeing the living breathing argument against that. Look at you. You're dying from more than just cancer, buddy, you're dying from the pain of losing someone you should never have committed to in the first place, not if you wanted a good life, an easy life, a happy fucking life.

(beat)

Okay, so I have feelings for Sandi.

*

Sandi reacts.

DARBY (CONT'D)

So what? We had a good night, maybe we could have others, but not if we depend on someone else for our happiness, a person who can die, or...

*

*

BILL

Or drive away in a Volkswagen?

That stuns Darby, and he sits heavily back down in the chair. Sandi steps forward, near tears herself, and places her hand on his face. He looks up, hesitates, then stands back up.

DARBY

Let's get out of here.

She glances nervously at Bill.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Forget him.

SANDI

Really?

DARBY

I want to be with you. I want to make love to you four times a night every night for as long as my body can do it.

She blushes and LAUGHS.

DARBY (CONT'D)

And find out how far we want to take this. I really feel something for you, but we're not going to be able to convince this lunatic here that we actually want to get married anyway. So let's just figure out a way to get out of here.

SANDI

Darby, he's sitting right here. Watching us. With a gun.

DARBY

Yeah, I know.

SANDI

You want to plot our escape while our jailer is listening to us and we're not even going to try to use, like... code or something?

Darby LAUGHS.

DARBY

Like what? Pig Latin? Un-ray, way-aay, rom-fay, utjob-nay? I'm sure that'll fool him.

BILL

(irritated)
Nutjob?

DARBY

Unless you know Morse Code.

BILL

I do.

SANDI

I don't. How about Esperanto?

Darby stares at her.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Just asking.

DARBY

Right. Well, then, I'd say our only choice is to take on the utjob-nay.

BILL
 (pissed off, twitching)
 I'm not an utjob-nay.

SANDI
 Don't forget the un-gay.

BILL
 Yeah.
 (lifts the pistol)
 Don't forget the un-gay.

DARBY
 (to Sandi)
 You ready?

BILL
 Uh... okay, but... what do we o-day?

DARBY
 (smiles)
 Damned if I know.

She takes a deep breath and nods.

DARBY (CONT'D)
 Okay, we're going to face the utjob-
 nay on three. One... two... three!

Darby and Sandi turn to face Bill who has the gun leveled at them.

BILL
 (straight faced)
 The un-gay. Emember-ray?

DARBY
 (dryly)
 Uck-fay ou-yay.

Bill smiles, still the smile of someone who has slipped off his trisket.

BILL
 I'll give you one thing, you're
 either gutsy or tupid-say.

The front door opens. Bill swings the gun to cover it and Ken walks in, hands up.

BILL (CONT'D)
 What the fuck are you doing in
 here?

Ken stops a few feet away, his gaze on Bill's gun.

KEN

You wouldn't answer the phone,
Bill.

BILL

Get the fuck out.

Ken moves slowly forward.

KEN

We know you killed your wife, Bill.

Darby and Sandi are stunned. Darby glances at them and at that moment Ken rushes forward. Instinctively Bill raises the gun just as Ken plows into him. There's a struggle and the gun FIRES. Ken slumps to the floor and Bill falls as well. Ken's groaning, shot. The phone starts RINGING. Bill, shocked, glances up at Darby and Sandi.

BILL

Get out!

Darby glances at Sandi, then back at Bill.

DARBY

Why did you kill your wife?

BILL

They're going to come in here
shooting, get the fuck out!

DARBY

Why did you kill your wife, you
crazy old fucker?

Bill starts sobbing uncontrollably, shaking his head.

DARBY (CONT'D)

You're a murderer, Bill.

SANDI

Darby...

DARBY

You murdered the one person you
should have been protecting.

BILL

(sobbing)

She woke up this morning, she was
in pain, she was always in pain,
she couldn't breathe, she begged me
-- she begged me every morning.

(roars)

Get out!

Sandi begins CRYING.

SANDI

You'll go to jail for this.

Bill looks up at her with such a look of love.

BILL

Sandi, I have stage four esophageal
cancer. I'll be dead in two weeks.

SANDI

I'm so sorry.

Bill shakes his head, tears streaming down his ruddy old
face.

BILL

It's okay. I'm tired of cooking for
one.

Sandi brings a hand to her face, crying.

BILL (CONT'D)

Look, they're going to come in here
and kill me. You're the only ones
who can save me. Just... go out
there and tell them I'll be right
behind you, unarmed. Maybe they
won't shoot me full of holes.

DARBY

(hesitates)

I can't believe I'm doing this but..

Darby steps forward and offers his hand, which Bill takes.

BILL

Lennon was right you know. Life is
what happens while you're making
other plans.

Darby stares, then glances at Sandi, who smiles at him,
though still CRYING. Darby turns back to Bill.

DARBY

Yeah, I guess he was right.

Bill smiles and steps back. Darby and Sandi hesitate, then they turn to leave.

BILL

Wait.

Bill and Sandi stop and turn to face him. Bill takes out small number of photos. He stares at them, smiling, then suddenly holds them out to Sandi. Sandi hesitates, then takes them.

Still CRYING, she starts going through the photos. Darby steps up beside her, staring at the photos.

SANDI

It's you. And Janet.

BILL

My perfect fucking marriage.

Darby is affected by what he sees.

BILL (CONT'D)

It *wasn't* perfect.

(beat)

Just... happy.

Darby looks up from the photos at Bill, holding the older man's gaze. Darby puts his arm around her shoulders and guides her out the door.

Bill winces in pain, holding his abdomen. We slowly close in on his cringing, wincing face as we hear:

DARBY (V.O.)

Don't shoot, we're the hostages!

(beat)

The kidnapper is coming out right behind us, unarmed, don't shoot him either, okay?

SANDI (V.O.)

Esophageal cancer. Isn't that the really painful kind?

DARBY (V.O.)

Yeah. It is.

We're now completely closed in on Bill's face. There's a GUNSHOT and Bill's face disappears from screen, replaced by blood on the lens.

EXT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Sandi, walking with Darby away from the travel agency, surrounded by police, hears the GUNSHOT and twirls around. She stares in shock and begins to SOB. Darby pulls her against him and she buries her face against his chest. He stares at the travel agency. Ken and several other cops run toward the travel agency, weapons at the ready.

DARBY

It's okay. He did it for us.