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# The 24th Day

By Tony Piccirillo

I walk home...  
Im all scratched up, Ive got  
blood all over my face...  
Im crying my eyes out.  
My mother sees me and she runs up  
screaming, ''Who did this to you?''  
I tell her, ''Stevie Bellon jumped me  
from behind in the school yard...  
while his pals stood there and  
made sure no one broke it up.''  
So take a guess what  
my Mom does?  
She takes me back  
to the school yard...  
she finds Stevie and tells him  
that Im gonna fight him again...  
only this time it's gonna be  
a fair fight.  
Your Mom booked  
your fight.  
Well, me and Stevie, we stood  
there looking at her...  
like she was waiting for us  
to make up or something.  
Then she pulls me aside  
and looks at me...  
and tells me  
to rip his heart out.  
She said, ''Rip his heart out''  
to an eight-year-old?  
-And?  
-And I got him pretty good.  
Your mother just stood there  
and watched?  
Once things were evened up,  
she pulled me off of him.  
Good for your Mom.  
I salute her.  
lf more parents took those steps  
during child developmental years...  
we wouldn't have a country  
filled of emotional cripples...  
those touchy feely, angst-ing head  
cases afraid of their own shadows.

Exactly.

I say ''Buck up, baby.

its cold outside.''

I think it's time

for a cab home.

''Annie Hall''.

Denzel Washington?

Who could it be?

Julia Roberts?

Darryl Hannah?

Darryl Hannah...

''Blade Runner''.

''Blade Runner''.

Harrison Ford.

''Star Wars''.

James Earl Jones.

James who?

James Earl Jones,

Darth Vader.

You cannot use

Darth Vader.

I can't use Darth Vader?

Of course I can.

No, you cannot. He was a voice,  
some computerized echo chamber.

If he's in the credits,  
he counts.

He wasn't even on the set when  
they were shooting the movie.

Come again?

Bet you any money he was  
in Malibu the whole time...

sipping pina coladas by the pool  
with some 17-year-old girl.

James Earl Jones?

While some poor slob was sweating  
his ass off under the costume.

A few months later, he throws his  
voice and walks out with a check.

You're a cook

in a restaurant, right?

I wondered if you'd been invited to  
any James Earl Jones' pool parties.

I may not be

in the movie business...  
but I have cable.  
I know what a stand-in's for.  
They're called ''doubles''.  
Same difference.  
No Darth Vader.  
The only rule to the game is  
the guy appears in the credits.  
James Earl Jones's name  
appears in the credits...  
therefore he's  
a correct response.  
He's been in about fifty  
movies. Give me a second.  
''Star Wars Two''.  
What are you laughing at?  
You said sequels were good.  
There's no such film.  
Yeah, there is. Like, that smart  
little smurfy midget in it.  
-''Yogi''.  
-Yoda.  
Yoda.  
Same thing.  
The sequel wasn't called  
''Star Wars Two''.  
it wasn't?  
it wasn't called  
''Star Wars Two''?  
it was the ''Empire'' thing...  
the ''Empire''...  
the ''Empire''...  
the ''Empire''...  
''The Empire Fights Back''.  
''The Empire Strikes Back''.  
That's four-zip.  
Im kinda killing you.  
-How much closer can you get?  
-The correct answer would be closer.  
Let's see...  
''Cape Fear''.  
-Robert De Niro.  
-The original.  
What original?

its a classic film with  
two huge stars, major stars.  
Ill give you a hint:  
Nineteen Sixty-One.  
Nineteen Sixty-One  
is a hint?  
Kirk Douglas?  
Chariton Heston?  
Nineteen Sixty-One,  
Bing Crosby?  
-Bing Crosby?  
-Yeah, Bing Crosby.  
Bing Crosby in  
'Cape Fear'?'  
What? They made a lot of  
musicals back then.  
Gregory Peck,  
Robert Mitchum...  
and Telly Savalas  
in a small supporting role.  
I told you before.  
I work...  
Major film producer.  
I know. You told me.  
Don't be a sore loser.  
-Im not sore.  
-Don't worry, Tom.  
Im gonna do whatever it takes  
not to let this silly I.Q. thing...  
get in the way of our  
new friendship, all right?  
People can be cruel...  
to people intellectually  
challenged, such as yourself.  
I don't know  
your daily struggles...  
like trying to figure out  
which shoe goes on which foot.  
All right.  
-You give?  
-I give.  
-You give?  
-I give.  
-You give up too easy.

-I was being nice.

I didn't want you to feel inadequate after the mental bashing I gave you.

You know, how much can one person take in one night?

-Thank you for the compassion.

-its my fatal flaw.

Compassion?

-I just can't stop giving.

-And that's a flaw?

Well, people can take advantage of...

You have really beautiful eyes.

I need a...

I want a drink.

Do you want a drink?

Ive got some scotch.

Drink?

Ive got beer.

Do you want a beer?

Do you have a boyfriend?

-No, I have beer.

-Do you have a girlfriend?

No, I don't.

Shit, you're married.

No, Im not married.

So what's the problem?

What do you mean, there's no problem.

You didn't just notice the sudden change of subject occur?

-Can we just talk some more?

-Talk.

I just...I need a few more minutes with this.

Have you ever been with a guy before?

-Tell the truth.

-I am.

its totally cool if you haven't.

Well, I have.

its actually sort of

a turn-on if you haven't.

Well, I have.

-Im a little nervous.

-So am I.

-You're nervous.

-Im serious.

I may be a little slow  
with all this...

you don't come off  
as a rookie to me.

Look...

I can't ever remember  
making a move like that.

Im usually 'a big  
scared cat'', seriously.

You don't seem it.

Well, I guess Im good  
at hiding it, then.

You are.

Well, it's just you're easy  
to be with, you now?

That doesn't happen every day.

I guess I kind of went with it.

I got a sudden burst of courage,  
that's now quickly disappearing.

So you don't mind if we  
talk for a little while?

That'd be great.

Im gonna get us  
a couple drinks.

How long have you lived here?

I like your place.

its funky.

Can I ask you something?

What?

I don't want to say anything  
you might take the wrong way.

What is it?

How many men

have you been with?

Just tell me it's none of  
my fuckin' business.

its none of

your fucking business.

Right.

Im playing with you.

Relax.

So, how many men  
have you been with?

Well, not a Lot.

How many is ''not a Lot''?

Whatever most people today consider  
a Lot, it's less than that.

Less than a Lot.

What about more than  
messing around?

Sex is a very  
intimate thing.

its the most intimate two people  
can be with one another.

And it's not something I feel  
right about with just anybody.

There has to be a certain trust  
a certain bond with that person.

-Nice observation.

-Yeah, it is for me.

Im starting to think that  
because I made some silly move...  
you now have this idea  
about me?

Maybe I misread things.

-Maybe.

-Maybe.

So how many men  
have you been with?

I just told you.

No, no. You said  
you needed trust.

-You said ''trust''.

-Doesn't that say it all?

Not really.

I know the exact number  
of men Ive been with.  
Most people don't or they  
can't keep track, but I do.

lf you don't want to  
tell me, or...

Six.



Six, just like that.  
Six, just like that.  
We are talking about  
intercourse?  
Okay, well, then, six.  
No way it could be seven?  
is it possible there is seven?  
I guess,  
but no more than seven.  
No way.  
it could be seven but not  
a chance there's eight?  
What is this? isnt this usually  
done by a guy named ''Rocco''...  
with a hot lamp in my eyes?  
Im sorry. Im sorry.  
Im getting all carried away.  
This is your personal business.  
Im being an asshole.  
Give me one second...  
and Ill tell you precisely  
how many men Ive done that with.  
Seven. Seven.  
Exactly seven.  
How's that,  
''Lieutenant Columbo''?  
What about you?  
-One.  
-One? Really?  
So, what was it, a one-night  
stand, a good close friend?  
Do you screw all eight of them  
or did they screw you?  
You're being silly and I told you  
it was seven and not eight.  
We don't have to play this  
twenty questions game.  
lf you want to know if  
Im safe just ask me.  
-Are you safe?  
-Very.  
That's a strong word.  
The simple truth is, I don't  
ever do anything that's unsafe.

The truth isn't that easy.  
The truth is confusing.  
Well, what's so confusing  
about it?  
Everybody has their own truth.  
And you got yours,  
I've got mine.  
But the only truth that matter  
is the ''true truth''.  
Not what you say...  
or what I say but  
what really is.  
Sometimes it isn't easy  
to figure out.  
What was the truth for you,  
what I just did there?  
You took a drink  
from the bottle.  
And that would be a lie.  
I took the bottle to my lips  
but I didn't drink anything.  
See, the truth is confusing.  
I think the ''true truth'' is,  
you're bombed.  
I think we've done enough  
talking for tonight.  
You're gonna take advantage  
of my drunken state?  
s that what you want?  
I definitely have to get drunk  
or I wouldn't be able to do this.  
You don't have to do anything  
you don't want to do.  
What is it you want?  
I want...  
I need to take a piss.  
Stay right there, okay?  
You're very lucky.  
Why is that?  
If I wasn't so horny, I would have  
been out that door ten minutes ago.  
Im totally kidding.  
No, you're not.  
You're right, Im not.

Hello, my love.  
You're still awake.  
I caught my second wind.  
You're up real late  
for a school night.  
Hey, did you try and leave  
a message?  
it doesn't sound like  
you're still at Winston's.  
Isabella, don't give me  
a hard time.  
is it the guy we were talking to,  
the cutie with the green eyes?  
Yes, the cutie.  
is he cute rich guy?  
He's a cook.  
He lives at Ninth and 'A' and  
from the looks of his place...  
if he is rich, he's done  
a splendid job of hiding it.  
-But he is a cutie?  
-Yes, he is.  
Ill be in your office by nine  
to go over the pitch?  
Dan, can you hear me?  
Yeah, nine, I got it.  
Ill call you tomorrow.  
-Who was on the phone?  
-I was checking messages.  
This isn't your apartment,  
is it?  
Why do you say that?  
Because Ive been  
here before.  
How can you be so sure?  
This frog... it's cracked.  
So?  
I broke it.  
I broke this.  
I knew this place  
seemed familiar.  
Wait a second...  
I just wasn't sure.  
it was dark and I think...

I was stoned or something...  
You were drunk, Dan.  
-You weren't stoned.  
-How do you know?  
Don't tell me that was you.  
-Was that you?  
-Yeah.  
Oh, my God, that was you.  
-Wasn't that, four years ago?  
-Five.  
Well, I didn't even...  
So, how have you been?  
When did you know  
that it was me?  
The moment I saw you.  
The moment you saw me.  
And you didn't say anything.  
I wanted to see  
if you'd remember me.  
-I mean, it was five years.  
-And you were drunk.  
I was very drunk.  
You don't remember anything?  
I remember  
breaking the frog.  
What about us?  
Well, I remember we... we had  
a good time, we had fun.  
Fun?  
Yeah, we had a Lot of fun.  
So you don't remember  
anything?  
No, I just...  
don't say that, you know?  
its all right.  
No, wait a second.  
We met at Winston's,  
like we did tonight, right?  
I got it now.  
We came back here...  
we sat down on the couch and  
I unbuttoned your shirt.  
And then we started kissing...  
I had a pullover,

no buttons.  
-Same thing.  
-Tell me more.  
More what?  
Details.  
Our details.  
Tell me everything you remember  
about our night.  
Why?  
I like hearing it.  
Start with my shirt.  
it came off and then what?  
I took off your shirt and  
I kissed down the back of your ear.  
No, that never happened.  
-Excuse me?  
-That never happened.  
You kissed the back  
of my ear...  
It was five years ago.  
Who can remember every detail?  
I can. I remember  
every minute.  
You didn't break that thing,  
I did. I broke it...  
when I was taking off my sweater  
my blue, striped sweater.  
I don't know what to say.  
Im sorry.  
Im sorry, I don't remember.  
And now Im realizing  
it was your first time...  
My only time.  
I must really like you...  
to have gone home a second time  
without remembering.  
This isn't gonna happen tonight.  
I should probably go.  
I really sorry.  
its not opening.  
-You need a key.  
-What?  
You need a key.  
-Thanks.

-Wait a second.  
Im just curious  
about one thing.  
Im not curious,  
Im confused.  
-About what?  
-I don't know how to put this.  
Just put it.  
lf you don't remember  
that night...  
then why did you tell me  
you were safe?  
Im sorry, ''very safe''.  
-Open the door.  
-Answer me.  
-Open the door.  
-I will.  
-Open the door now.  
-Just tell me why you said that.  
Because Im always safe.  
But you don't remember.  
You said, ''I don't remember''.  
I said I don't remember  
every detail...  
I don't have to remember  
being safe. Im always safe.  
-Always.  
-Always.  
Now is that the ''true truth''  
or is that your truth?  
God damn it!  
They don't work!  
These don't fuckin' work, man!  
Shit. I gave you  
the wrong set. Im sorry.  
I screwed this up.  
I didn't mean to get weird.  
its just when you  
didn't remember me...  
that being my only time...  
I got embarrassed.  
Maybe even a little pissed off  
with the booze.  
The booze has a way of being

an asshole when Im hurt.  
Just open the door, okay?  
Can I have a hug  
before you go?  
I should leave.  
Just one hug so there's  
no bad feelings.  
I should leave.  
I didn't mean to get weird.  
Unlock the door first.  
You should have left.  
Why didn't you just leave?  
The door has a dead bolt  
which I locked from the outside.  
The windows are boarded up.  
The next door neighbors  
are all away with the family.  
The apartment downstairs  
is empty.  
if you fight me, it will hurt.  
Stay still.  
Try and stay still.  
is there a problem?  
is there something burning  
in there?  
I overcooked a steak.  
its all right.  
I just need to open a window.  
its all right.  
-You're sure?  
-Yeah, it's fine, thank you.  
Thanks for the concern.  
Im not crazy. I know what I did  
and I know why Im doing it.  
I want you to know that.  
Im not crazy.  
I don't care why you did  
what you did...  
what you gotta do right now  
is let me go.  
My roommate knows where I am.  
Remember Isabella from the bar?  
When I was getting the messages,  
she picked up.

I told her you lived  
on Ninth and Monroe.  
Now, when I don't  
come home tonight...  
and I miss my very important  
meeting in the morning...  
she's gonna wonder where I am,  
she's gonna knocking on your door.  
There's a big difference between  
telling her I live on Ninth Street...  
and telling her I live  
at 453 East Ninth Street.  
I told her 453 Ninth Street.  
I made a mental note when  
we walked inside the building.  
Four-five-three.  
She knows exactly where I am.  
You should start writing things  
down. We're in Building 412.  
What do you want?  
Dan, have you ever been tested  
for the AIDS virus?  
-What?  
-HIV, AIDS, you've heard of it?  
-Of course.  
-Have you ever been tested?  
-Have you ever been tested?  
-As you know. Are you...?  
I'm positive and  
you gave it to me.  
I knew it'd be like this.  
You say 'no', I say 'yes', which  
leaves us in the same place.  
The blood I took is being tested  
at a very reliable lab.  
We'll have the result the morning after  
next and we will go from there.  
Go from there?  
If it's negative, then I'm sorry,  
and I will let you go.  
You're sorry?  
This wasn't an easy decision.  
It's not even a decision.  
It's a way



to set things right.  
Well, Ive been tested  
and it was negative.  
-When?  
-Two months ago.  
Ive been tested three times  
in the last five years.  
That's a Lot of tests.  
-I told you, Im very safe.  
-It is what you told me.  
It couldn't have been me.  
This isn't something you can talk  
your way out of, act all smug.  
Call my doctor. You ask him.  
I can't give you something  
that I don't have.  
I can't give you something  
I don't have!  
lf your doctor told me  
that you were negative...  
I would tell him  
to go fuck himself!  
We're waiting on the lab!  
Im compassionate to your  
situation, but I don't have AIDS.  
-I don't have HIV.  
-Then you'll be out of here soon.  
Soon enough isn't good enough.  
I want out of here now! Now!  
Shut up fucking now or Ill cut  
your throat right fucking now!  
You understand me?  
I could be a real fuck and did one  
of those do-it-yourself HIV tests...  
but you deserved something more  
dependable than a ten dollar kit.  
Do you realize the longer  
you keep me here...  
it's just making it worse  
on yourself? Do you realize that?  
Now you've got me worried.  
This isn't right.  
Tough to be held accountable,  
isn't it?

Held accountable?  
We fooled around 5 years ago.  
What do I have to be held for?  
You tell me.  
You couldn't tell me earlier what we  
did. Maybe you could tell me now?  
You've got no idea, do you?  
You have no idea what we did  
or what we didn't do.  
Well you're responsible  
for what you did.  
You've got no clue.  
I may not remember what color  
your goddamn shirt was...  
but one thing I am certain  
about is that I wore a condom.  
You were blind drunk.  
You have no recollection of me,  
but somehow you remember a condom?  
I don't have to remember  
wearing it. I always wear one.  
You lie with such confidence.  
Im impressed.  
But Im not lying,  
am I? Am I?  
Yes, there was a condom.  
You had one.  
Did you use it?  
Given the circumstance,  
Im guessing you didn't.  
Where the fuck where  
are you getting this?  
Maybe it didn't feel good so you  
slipped it off halfway through?  
Maybe at the last minute  
you decided not to put it on?  
I would never do that.  
Never.  
How you would never fuck anyone  
without having that certain trust.  
And why do we need that trust?  
You never ''feel right about doing  
an intimate thing with just anyone''.  
That was you who said that.

I wore a condom.  
End of story.  
Well, considering one of us  
is HIV positive...  
and the other is having a great  
deal of difficulty remembering...  
the last lie they told  
two minutes ago...  
I got serious doubts about  
where that rubber ended up...  
and serious doubts about you.  
You tie up all the other guys  
you've been with?  
-There were no other guys.  
-Women?  
You don't think you can  
get this from a woman?  
You think the only people who  
have this disease are gay men?  
Wait a second!  
You got this from a woman.  
You got this from a woman, now  
you're trying to blame me for it!  
You are sitting there because you  
are the only possible reason...  
why I am here doing this.  
The only reason.  
I want to see some proof.  
You want to see some proof. What  
the fuck are you talking about?  
They gave you something  
to tell you that you got it.  
-Didn't they?  
-They don't give a membership card.  
Im starting to think  
you don't have shit.  
-You made this AIDS story up.  
-And why would I do that?  
Because you're pissed  
because I fucked you...  
because you like men...  
or that maybe this turns  
you on, is that it?  
Or maybe you're just

fucking crazy?  
You want to know something?  
I wish you were right.  
I wish it would end tomorrow.  
And Im not here  
to torture you.  
I don't want to make this  
any worse than it has to be.  
You can pass the blame around forever  
but we don't have forever.  
We need to do  
the right thing.  
What is that?  
What is it?  
is that you?  
-When the hell did that happen?  
-About four hours ago.  
Why didn't you wake me up?  
Believe me, I tried.  
You're a deep sleeper.  
Well, once is not enough.  
its no wonder who could hear  
anything over that incessant snore.  
I have a deviated septum.  
My snoring is a medical condition.  
Whatever. You know what,  
can we just...  
can we take care of this?  
its been a long night.  
Just give me a wash cloth  
and some clean clothes.  
No, I can't do that.  
-You can't?  
-No, I can't take the cuffs off.  
Ill be five minutes.  
No, I can't do it.  
-What is this ''can't'' business?  
-The cuffs stay on!  
Im asking for  
a wash cloth, not a gun.  
Im sitting in shit.  
Ill figure something out.  
What's there to figure?  
Are you gonna do it?

No, Im not gonna do it.  
lf you're not gonna do it and  
I can't do it with hand cuffs on...  
that doesn't leave us with  
a Lot of options, does it?  
Give me a second.  
You should have had  
this covered.  
Well, take points off.  
its not my career!  
What, did you expect me  
to hold it all night?  
You take someone hostage and  
their bodily functions just stop?  
Sure, you thought of the tape  
and the hand cuffs...  
-and the board on the window...  
-Shut up, shut up.  
I will take off the cuffs,  
you don't move.  
I take off the cuffs,  
you don't move.  
You want to leave  
the toilet in there?  
I step outside the bathroom and  
I shut the door, you don't move.  
You don't move unless  
I say move, you understand?  
I got it.  
Put your dirty clothes  
in the garbage bag...  
you take a shower,  
you towel off...  
How's it going in there?  
Put on your clean clothes.  
You take your chair  
and you put it in the tub.  
You lie face down on the floor  
with your hands behind your back.  
Again, you do not move.  
I will come to you...  
I will cuff you and  
I will take you out.  
You're lying face-down, on the floor

with your hands on your back.  
Now, Ive never been  
in your situation before.  
It will be impossible for you not  
to think of a way out of this.  
And I understand that.  
its human nature.  
But it's acting on these thoughts  
that will lead to trouble.  
Are you on the floor?  
is your face down?  
-And your hands?  
-On my back.  
You're lying face-down on the floor  
with your hands on your back?  
Tell me where the keys are.  
Where's the fuckin' keys?  
Pocket, rear pocket.  
its done, it's finished.  
Move aside.  
Move!  
Ill fucking kill you  
if I have to.  
I have a fucking knife, Tom.  
All right, you're gonna die.  
Im gonna drive this right through  
you. is that what you want?  
is that what you want,  
you want to die?  
Im gonna drive this thing  
through your fuckin' heart.  
How many years you thought  
I was gonna make today?  
Lunch smells good.  
What are we having?  
Come on, are you  
still mad at me?  
Im a hostage. You gotta expect  
that sort of behavior from us.  
What do you expect me to do?  
What would you have done?  
You don't have to hold  
a grudge over it.  
Also consider that I could have

strangled you with the TV cord.  
You should be thanking me.  
So, did you decorate  
this place yourself?  
My granddad's place.  
So he let you use it  
for special occasions.  
One-night stands,  
kidnappings?  
He died ten years ago.  
The family kept it.  
How much do you pay rent?  
Trying to watch the game  
in here.  
Im watching the game.  
Which team you rooting for?  
You want me to put the tape  
back on your mouth?  
I was just asking  
a question, man.  
Besides, you haven't  
fed me yet.  
I went to the University  
of Michigan.  
We've got a great athletic program.  
Football, baseball and basketball.  
Really?  
You're being sarcastic.  
What's Michigan's nickname?  
Im just gonna take your  
silence to mean that you...  
Wolverines. Wolverines.  
-What are the team colors?  
-Blue and yellow.  
Wrong.  
its ''maize''. its not yellow,  
it's ''maize''.  
its a pale yellow.  
''Corn-ish''.  
So, you're one of those sports  
guys. You know all the stats.  
You think there's  
something wrong with that?  
Not enough brain space,

maybe?

I'd say it's enough wasted space  
that it takes to know...  
that Telly Savalas had a small  
role in the original ''Cape Fear''.  
I was a huge sports fan  
when I was at Michigan.  
The best were those Saturday  
afternoon football games.  
The whole school,  
the whole town...  
would just get pumped up like,  
about three hours before.  
We had barbeques  
in the parking Lot...  
turning out pep rallies.  
Touch football on the lawn.  
I never understood the whole sports  
thing before I got to Ann Arbor...  
but once I was there,  
I was hooked.  
During the last year, I actually  
what they were doing on the field.  
punting,  
first-down conversions...  
quarterback snoops...  
Sneaks. its  
''quarterback sneaks''.  
its completely different when  
you realize why you're cheering.  
Without a doubt the highlight  
was the last game, senior year.  
Ohio State was driving down  
the field for the win...  
and everyone was screaming  
at the top of their lungs...  
but it was all over  
the place, you know?  
It was like, a ''Let's stop 'em''  
from this group...  
and a ''Go, Wolverines''  
from that section.  
That's just...  
here was no unity.



I stood up, and I just started yelling.

'Defense! Defense! Defense!'

I stood there for a long time before I sit back down.

And then it started.

It was like a hundred people in my section.

And then it turned into a thousand.

And then it was...

'Defense! Defense! Defense! Defense!'

A hundred thousand fans screaming at the top of their lungs.

It was pretty cool.

What about you?

Did your college have a pretty good football team?

Where'd you go to college?

-No, we're not gonna do this.

-Do what?

Maybe removing the tape for some water gave you the wrong idea.

We're not two pals sitting here watching the ballgame.

-I thought, I was just trying...

-Im not an idiot.

-I know that.

-its not gonna work.

-Look, I just want...

-its not going to work.

I just want to talk.

Just talk.

It could be as simple as me putting the tape back on your mouth.

All right, please don't.

Ill shut up.

You said that you don't want to torture me, you remember that?

Well, if you really meant it, then...

you got to talk

to me because...

just let me babble  
at something, because...  
if you just let me sit here  
in silence...  
I left only to think  
about this...  
then that would be crueler than  
anything you could ever do to me.  
Did you stop them?  
Football cheer, Ohio State.  
Did you stop them?  
No. They threw  
a forty-yard touchdown pass.  
They went to the Rose Bowl.  
And we went to the ''Heinz  
Ketchup Bowl in Missoula''.  
So where'd you go to college?  
I did two years  
at Liberty Community College.  
Liberty they had  
a good reputation.  
Liberty's got a great  
science department.  
You heard about that?  
One of the best science  
departments in the country.  
In the world, in fact.  
That's where NASA gets  
all of their astronauts...  
from they're all  
Liberty College graduates.  
I got good grades in high school.  
I didn't have to go to Liberty.  
It was in the neighborhood.  
In the neighborhood  
of Saint Pete's.  
-That makes sense.  
-Does it?  
You get lost  
at those big schools...  
you get a better education  
at the smaller ones.  
Michigan  
was just one long party.

Really?

I was eighteen, on my own...

practically my first time

out of Jasper, Illinois.

And you just get distracted.

That's why it took me

six years to graduate.

You have too good a time.

-I wouldn't have done that.

-You'd be surprised.

If I'd gone away, I would

have worked my ass off.

But I didn't. I don't want

to talk about it.

is there a school

you wanted to go to?

Come on,

tell me about college.

I got into Arizona State

and I didn't go.

Why Arizona State?

I liked

the football team colors.

What's the big secret in Arizona?

Who am I gonna tell?

It was a stupid idea.

Well, I work for a movie producer.

I hear twenty stupid ideas a day.

Im gonna need

a little help with this.

Thanks.

So, you and Arizona State?

-its long ago, years ago.

-Come on, please.

I wanted to study

archaeology.

Archaeology?

Growing up I wanted to be

like Donald Johanson.

Who's that?

In '74 he discovered the missing

link between humans and apes.

He was teaching

at Arizona State.

Everything works out  
for the best.  
How's that?  
My girlfriend  
didn't want to leave home.  
I was learning to be a cook  
in my uncle's restaurant.  
That was better than  
Archaeology at Arizona State?  
It was reality.  
Do I look like an archaeologist?  
Do I talk like one?  
I don't know.  
I've never met one.  
I got a brain full of  
football stats and recipes.  
Donald Johanson mind that  
Iowa State is called the Hawkeyes...  
and or that oregano  
tastes great in gaspacho.  
How do you know what  
stupid shit he knows?  
Certain people aren't  
supposed to do certain things.  
I don't believe that.  
All I know is where I grew up,  
it was the same for everybody...  
your favorite team  
was the Flyers.  
Your favorite group was Kiss.  
Your favorite ''Charlie's Angel''  
was Farrah.  
You wore Adidas sweatsuits  
and Puma sneakers.  
You smoked Marlboros  
by twelve...  
you wanted to look like Travolta  
and act like Serpico.  
I wanted to go on excavations  
to find lost cities...  
that's for  
geeks and weirdoes.  
I was afraid to tell Kate Jackson  
was my favorite ''Charlie's Angel''.

I don't think people  
would have cared.  
Well, maybe not in Jasper,  
but in my neighborhood...  
you got to a certain age, when you  
see that Missus Zito's backyard...  
wasn't fucking Cairo.  
Missus Zito?  
I used to stuff  
my knapsack with...  
shovels and notebooks and I'd go  
wherever there was some dirt.  
And I go to parks and playgrounds  
and I go to backyards.  
I'd just start digging.  
I'd pretend it was Egypt, Asia,  
the middle of South America.  
I filled up notebooks  
with diagrams...  
of where I'd been  
and what I'd found.  
It was all junk.  
It was just chicken bones,  
pieces of broken cups.  
But I would treat those things  
like precious artifacts.  
I'd treat them like they were  
bones from some prehistoric bird.  
And you grow up...  
you get older.  
You understand life better.  
You see things and people  
for what they are.  
And you realize those bones  
are chicken bones.  
Just leftovers  
from someone's lunch.  
Did you mean Jacklyn Smith.  
Your favorite 'Charlie's Angel',  
Jacklyn Smith?  
No, Kate Jackson.  
Kate Jackson?  
That's really?  
What's wrong

with Kate Jackson?  
Nothing. I just...  
I can see you not being into  
Farrah and all that perfection...  
but Kate Jackson...  
Sabrina over Jacklyn Smith?  
That I don't get.  
Sabrina was very athletic.  
I liked that.  
Jacklyn was athletic.  
Remember the opening credits?  
She knew all the karate.  
You don't think Sabrina  
knew karate?  
She was the smartest one.  
Yeah, of the ''Charlie's Angels'', but  
that's a hell of a sliding curve.  
Who would you choose?  
Starsky  
from ''Starsky and Hutch''.  
I liked the other guy.  
Hutch didn't have  
half the sex appeal.  
Im not talking about sex appeal,  
Im talking about cool.  
Hutch was cool.  
Not as cool as Crocker on  
''Miami Vice'', but he was cool.  
Crocker was cool.  
Not my type,  
but definitely cool.  
You know what I never got?  
How did Doc from ''The Love Boat''  
get so many women?  
Women go for doctors.  
Because a doctor on the Love Boat,  
how impressive is that?  
It didn't make any sense.  
About as much  
as Fonzie scoring.  
What do you mean?  
-He wasn't what you'd call a stud.  
-What do you mean?  
Well, he's kinda

short and pudgy.  
He was ''The Fonz''.  
I mean, he was ''The Fonz''.  
All right.  
He was ''The Fonz''.  
I got a question for you.  
If you had to go on a stakeout  
with a female cop...  
-who would it be?  
-Besides ''Charlie's Angels''?  
Remember,  
the Angels don't count.  
They quit the force  
to work for Charlie.  
I'd have to say  
Angie Dickinson.  
''Policewoman''. Very good.  
Besides being hot, she was the  
toughest, kick-ass thing going.  
Tom, what are you doing here?  
You know, even with all this  
stuff that you've done...  
it's easy to see you're not  
a killer. You're a good person.  
Why don't we just end this  
before it goes any further?  
You know, you remind me of these  
guys who eat at the restaurant.  
They came in and talk about how  
they want a thick, tender steak.  
And once the waiter comes over  
and tells them the special...  
this big debate starts.  
''Boy, that lobster  
sounds good.''  
''Geez, do I really want  
such a heavy meal?''  
Me, I just want a steak,  
I eat a fucking steak.  
I don't want to see the menu,  
I don't need to hear the specials.  
If that test comes back  
positive, I'm gonna kill you.  
Killing me is going to be more

complicated than ordering a steak.  
We'll see.  
How you gonna do it?  
Strangle me?  
You gonna put a bag  
over my head?  
Come on, tell me.  
My morbid curiosity  
wants to know.  
Im gonna cut your throat and  
you're gonna bleed to death.  
You're gonna stand there and watch  
the blood spill all over the floor?  
You have that in you?  
You could do that  
to another human being?  
I couldn't do it  
to another human being...  
but I can do it to you.  
I can kill you.  
I hate to ruin your plans, but  
that test is coming back negative.  
-You don't know.  
-Better hold onto that thought.  
-its all you have.  
-Fuck you.  
You can talk all you want about  
TV and college football rallies.  
you can tangle that smart tongue  
of yours around anything you want.  
You're just having  
a difficult time getting it.  
Nothing else matters to me.  
If it comes back positive,  
Im gonna kill you.  
The only thing that'll be easier  
than that will be killing myself.  
So who else knows you're gay?  
Im not gay.  
You're not gay...  
Who else knows you're ''bi''?  
Im not ''bi''.  
-I like women.  
-You're straight?



You like women,  
okay, all right...  
You're a good looking guy...  
who's probably screwed every Teresa  
Maria and Gina you've ever met.  
And how many women  
have you screwed?  
Tell me.  
Not a Lot.  
Whatever you consider a Lot,  
Im less than that.  
-Less than a Lot.  
-Fuck you.  
You've had loads of women  
in the back seats of cars...  
You see, intercourse  
is such an intimate thing...  
Im not the only one...  
I can't just fuck anyone...  
-I need a bond.  
-Admit it!  
I need to trust.  
Our night was a one time deal.  
One night doesn't make me anything.  
You are absolutely right.  
Just like if I spent  
one night with a woman...  
it wouldn't make me straight.  
You could sleep with Playmates  
and it wouldn't make you straight.  
Ive had my share of girlfriends.  
In high school.  
Even now, when I meet a woman  
that Im sexually attracted to...  
that I want to sleep with...  
but does that mean that Im gonna  
go get married and live happily...  
-never to sleep with another man?  
-What's your fucking point?  
Putting people in fucking boxes,  
you're straight or you're gay.  
its nonsense.  
Human beings are too  
complex.

Being with a man or wanting to be  
with a man doesn't make you gay.  
its totally messed up.  
lf a girl goes  
to her boyfriend and says...  
she wants to fuck around  
with another girl...  
you think he's gonna be ''weirded  
out'' by that? Of course not.  
He's gonna wanna watch,  
maybe even join in.  
But if a guy asks his  
girlfriend the same question...  
she'd fuckin' flip her lid.  
That's totally messed up  
for guys who prefer women...  
and have a slight curiosity  
about men.  
They're forced  
into repressing it.  
They're made to think like there's  
something's wrong with them.  
It isn't the act that is wrong.  
That's what's natural.  
What's wrong is how society  
makes you feel about it...  
because nobody can admit...  
that people aren't completely gay  
or completely straight.  
its nonsense.  
Where'd you get that, from ''Guide  
To How To Make Straight Men Gay''?  
You have nothing  
to be ashamed of.  
You're not here because  
I was with a man.  
I know.  
You think Im responsible  
for your...  
are you absolutely sure  
that you have it?  
Tests could be wrong.  
Mistakes can be made all the time.  
I tested it twice

the last three weeks.  
Three weeks?  
That's how long you've known?  
Twenty-four days.  
That's nothing.  
No wonder you're acting  
the way you are.  
You're in shock  
over finding out.  
-Im in shock?  
-Yes, you're in shock.  
And you're reacting with an anger  
that anybody would have...  
but most people  
wouldn't take it this far.  
You gotta think about this. Just  
take the time to think about this.  
This won't accomplish anything.  
This is nobody's fault.  
And later on and I still feel this way,  
you'll have no trouble coming back?  
You don't realize here  
you're in deep trauma.  
Trauma? I thought I was in shock.  
This gets worse by the minute.  
Look, I realize you're upset.  
But you've got to put  
some perspective on this.  
Perspective...  
People with HIV  
lead happy, healthy lives.  
its not a death sentence  
anymore.  
You don't have AIDS, Tom.  
You are HIV-positive.  
There's a difference.  
Do you know the difference?  
For someone who just had  
a negative HIV test...  
you seem overly concerned.  
Im not gonna lie to you, Im  
gonna get the fuck out of here.  
What are you gonna do to yourself  
when I walk out that door?

Thank you for the concern,  
but at twenty-four days...  
this is how I feel and  
nothing's gonna change that.  
Why did you pick me  
that night?  
Why'd you let that night  
ever happen?  
I have just one life.  
I chose one set of  
feelings over another.  
And denied part of yourself.  
I denied a part of myself so  
I could keep the most important.  
And what was that?  
Your tough guy image,  
your neighborhood pals?  
My wife.  
You said  
you weren't married.  
High school sweethearts.  
Does she know?  
Know what?  
That I was with you?  
The only time I was ever  
unfaithful was with a man?  
That I'm HIV-positive?  
I don't know.  
She might have figured...  
some of it out after a doctor  
told her she had a Lupaninopathy.  
There's a word a lot of  
Harvard guys don't know.  
You're smart. Any idea?  
Swollen glands.  
It started causing  
her pain under her arms.  
She had night sweats  
and she lost a few pounds.  
We thought she was just worn down.  
She always worked too hard.  
They ran a lot of tests.  
It was just one test  
to cover the bases.

Was she HIV positive?  
Twenty-seven years old.  
Have you told her about this?  
I can't.  
You have to.  
Tom, you have to  
talk to her about it.  
She was a mess when  
she left the doctor's office.  
Son-of-a-bitch  
just let her go...  
like he just got through telling  
her she had a fucking cold.  
How do you tell somebody that  
and just let them leave?  
Wouldn't even call me.  
She was confused.  
She was upset.  
How do you tell somebody that  
and just let them leave?  
She ran a light.  
She was alive when the ambulance  
got her to the hospital.  
What must have been running through  
her mind when she missed that light.  
And what if it wasn't  
an accident?  
What if she ran it...  
because of the pain it caused her  
knowing I'd done something wrong?  
Maybe a prostitute,  
maybe another woman?  
Maybe the truth?  
Not being sure what to think,  
not wanting to hear the truth...  
so she runs a light and doesn't  
have to hear it with her own ears.  
Doesn't have to hear...  
how the man she's  
devoted her life...  
to isn't the man  
she thought he was.  
And that's my biggest fear...  
that when she went up

to heaven, she found out.  
And right now she's  
up there watching.  
And she's so hurt. She so hurt  
by what she knows about me.  
I tried so hard  
to keep it from her.  
She wouldn't understand.  
How do you explain that?  
That you can be killed by  
the person who you love most?  
You just, you can't.  
Now you ask me again  
about perspective.  
Doing this isn't  
going to change anything.  
We owe her.  
What if she had it first?  
its possible. She was showing  
symptoms before you were.  
She was showing symptoms  
before you.  
Swollen glands.  
It makes sense  
she had it before you.  
It could have happened that way.  
-It could have happened that way.  
-Shut your fucking mouth.  
You're a real fuck,  
do you know that? Fuck you!  
What do you say  
we get out of here?  
Go back to your place?  
You want to go back to my place?  
No, we can't do that.  
You know, it's true what  
they say about older women.  
What is that?  
We do try harder.  
No, I can't. I can't do it.  
Im sorry.  
its not personal.  
I mean, you're cute,  
but you're nothing special.

Sometimes you're just lonely.

You need to not be alone.

-You know?

-Yes. I know.

Open your mouth.

Open your mouth.

Fuck you.

Hey, do you know why  
most beer bottles are dark?

Sunlight.

The beer sits in the sun too long,  
you get that ''skunky'' taste.

Do you know the purpose  
of a skunk's scent?

A defense  
against other animals.

That's right.

Very good.

Do you know how many  
sonnets Shakespeare wrote?

A hundred and fifty-four.

I don't understand Shakespeare.

I have no idea what a sonnet is.

its a lyric poem,  
fourteen lines.

Oh, I don't give a shit.

There was a time I did.

I got all those books  
on strange facts.

A thousand and one things  
to know.

Pretty stupid, huh?

There's something only a dumb person  
does and that's to feel so dumb.

You know what that stuff is?

That's not no smarts.

its just dog tricks.

You roll over, you play dead,  
that's not no smarts.

I'd go to the museums, I walk  
around, I study the paintings.

But I never got it.

I tried.

I made an honest attempt

to make myself better...  
to improve who I was.  
And then this happens.  
One night and it  
destroys lives.  
Send everything else away and  
leave behind nothing but pain.  
its all I have now.  
Pain like nothing  
Ive ever known.  
It doesn't leave,  
it never leaves.  
There's so much...  
I have so much pain...  
So much...  
I just want it to stop.  
Im so sorry.  
Im so sorry for everything.  
its gonna be okay.  
-its not gonna be okay.  
-Im sorry.  
Im sorry.  
I wish I could hold you.  
Just tell you  
everything's gonna be okay.  
It'll be okay. Everything.  
-Son-of-a-bitch!  
-No, Tom...  
You son-of-a-bitch.  
No, I was holding you,  
that's all.  
is this what you want?  
You fuckin' sneak!  
You can't do this, Tom!  
There's too many ways  
this could have happened.  
We killed her!  
What if you're wrong?  
All you have to do is pass  
the test. Just pass the test.  
Tests aren't fool-proof.  
Mistakes are made all the time.  
You are a perfect example of  
what's wrong with this world.



No one will stand up and say  
'its me. Im guilty, I did it.'  
You live by your own rules...  
and now you have to  
pay for that.  
Because I met you at a bar...  
and I came back with you  
that I deserve this?  
You came home with me twice.  
And that makes me  
some kind of a monster?  
By the way, if you remember,  
you invited me back here.  
You set me up.  
You're always gonna play it  
like you're the innocent one.  
You think because we came back  
here we were gonna fuck?  
is that who you are?  
You fuck every guy you meet?  
Trust me, you don't  
want to get into this.  
You've got this  
idea about me.  
And you're wrong.  
You want me to be the evil one  
'cause that makes it easier for you.  
You really think you're a victim?  
You're convinced of it, aren't you?  
You know I am.  
Dan, when was the last time  
you had sex?  
I don't see how that  
has anything to do with this.  
What is it, a secret?  
Some danger to national security?  
Well, if I just knew  
the relevance of the question...  
Listen to yourself.  
You sound like a lawyer.  
I only want to know when was  
the last time you had sex?  
I had sex four months ago  
with a guy named Bob.

-Bob.

-Bob Taylor.

Bob Taylor.

-You're sure of that?

-Very.

its always ''very'' with you.

Very sure, very safe.

Yeah, I like the word.

You know what the worst thing  
about adultery is?

Once you do it,

you're always an adulterer.

-Life is harsh like that.

-You're a fuckin' saint, aren't you?

You fuck once, you can never  
be a virgin again.

You steal once,

you're always a thief.

And if you've lied once,

then you're always a liar.

But Im not a liar, am I?

When was the last time  
you had sex?

Bob Taylor. Last summer.

You fuck once, you can never  
be a virgin again.

Bob Taylor.

Lie once and

you're a fucking liar.

When was the last time

you had sex?

Im fucking telling you!

What about that guy you met  
at Shampoo the other night?

-You know, the skinny blond kid.

-What?

What about him?

How do you know about that?

That wasn't Bob, was it?

You were following me?

How long have you been  
following me?

When you were all over him...  
are you telling him how

you were a 'big scaredy cat'?

You fucking followed me.

When you went to his place did you tell him how you were 'safe'?

'Very safe'?

We kissed. Nothing else.

That's it.

You were up there a pretty long time.

We watched TV.

-Oh, yeah, what did you watch?

-I don't know, I don't remember.

But nothing happened.

That's it, nothing happened.

I mean, we were up there only kissing, you're sure?

You weren't in the room.

That's not the story I caught Blondie telling at the bar a few nights later.

Ronald was pretty graphic.

Well, he's lying.

He's a liar.

-Who?

-Ronald.

is that his name?

I made that up.

Well, he's lying.

You know kids, you buy them a few drinks, they'll tell you anything.

You're lying.

its so hard to get the truth around here.

-I did nothing wrong.

-You see this lie?

You could have said this last Tuesday...

but you wanted to appear pure.

But you're not, are you?

You're not pure.

I watched you for a short time...

and I caught you in a lie.

I didn't come looking to do this,

but after seeing the way you are...  
it only made sense  
what I had to do.  
I can imagine the other five years.  
How many Blondies have there been?  
I never forced anyone  
to be with me.  
What about all the others  
you got sick? They don't count?  
Im not sick!  
You played God with that kid.  
Why would you want to do that?  
You do whatever you want...  
and if people get hurt,  
too bad for them.  
Oh, so now Im responsible  
for everyone?  
-Why not?  
-Fuck you. People make choices.  
You made a choice.  
I owe you nothing.  
Then why so many tests?  
If you felt no responsibility  
to protect other people...  
-then why so many tests?  
-For me. For me.  
If I was sick, I'd want to know  
so I could take care of myself.  
But how is it possible for someone  
who's always safe to get sick?  
A Lot of safe people  
get tested.  
And a Lot of unsafe  
people don't.  
Why is that?  
I didn't trick anyone.  
You cheated on your wife.  
No one but you.  
You said you needed a bond,  
you said you needed trust.  
We fucked after only two hours  
after meeting each other.  
That's not a deception,  
that's not a trick?

You just gonna keep  
twisting it around?  
I followed you. I saw you.  
Yeah, I'd like to follow you,  
you fuckin' cretin...  
see where you go, what you do.  
See how much of this shit  
is ''the true truth''...  
and how much of it  
is your truth.  
How many guys have there  
really been, Tom?  
Five, ten?  
How many drunken nights did you stop  
at the park and give someone head?  
And am I here because  
Im the only one...  
or because Im the only one  
you could find?  
And now you want to know  
how many men Ive fucked.  
What about five years ago? You  
didn't give a shit then, did you?  
All you cared about was  
one dick up your ass...  
before you slipped into  
your pretty little wife's bed.  
Im ready to let you go.  
I will. Ill let you go...  
but I want you once, I want this  
one time, you tell me the truth.  
Ive told you the truth.  
No, no. Not some bullshit  
you think I want to hear.  
Admit to me that  
you've made mistakes.  
You haven't worn rubbers  
sometimes, maybe a Lot.  
You've gotten drunk  
and can't remember.  
Tell me always means sometimes  
and Ill let you go.  
its not true.  
Ill end it

but I need the truth.  
Tell me you never took a test  
before and you walk.  
-I can't do that.  
-Tell me how sorry you are...  
that you didn't realize  
what you were doing.  
Tell me you were  
with all those men...  
because you were lonely.  
I could understand that.  
Tell me that.  
Ill let you go. I will.  
No, it's not true.  
You're lying to me.  
Lying.  
You're lying to me.  
That's one more lie.  
Tell me you've killed people.  
Tell me you never took a test 'cause  
you don't give a shit about anyone.  
Tell me you killed me.  
Tell me you killed my wife.  
I should kill you right now.  
I should.  
You don't fuckin' care.  
You don't care.  
I don't care?  
Every day of my life I think  
about this. Everyone I touch...  
and you sit there  
and say that I don't care?  
When every day...  
every day someone says, ''You've  
got to be safe and careful, Dan.  
Don't make a mistake, Dan.''  
And you think you understand?  
You don't understand anything.  
I just want to be with someone  
and don't think about it.  
For one second, I want to know  
what it feels like not to care.  
You sit in your little fuckin'  
house with your little wife...

and your baseball games and you think nothing's gonna touch you. Well, fuck you, it did. What do you think's gonna happen now? Even if it comes back positive, there'll be doubt if it was her. And that's the good news. Because when that comes back negative there will be no doubt. She ran that red light because she couldn't live with what she'd done. She gave it to you, Tom. She gave it to you. And your whole world is over. You're free to go. Dan, before you go I need to know something. Were you ever really tested before? What does it matter now? It doesn't. -No, I wasn't. -Why? -I guess I was afraid. -You guess? I was afraid. -You didn't want to know. -No, I didn't. I just knew... I just knew I didn't have it. I really am sorry about your wife. I hope you find some help. It was positive. The test was positive. No, it's not possible. Im sorry. Why are you doing this? Why are you lying to me, Tom? You wouldn't have let me go. Today is Day Twenty-six and it seems different. Stacey would have every right to

do to me what I did to you.  
I promised things to her,  
I loved her.  
And I was supposed to  
protect her...  
and in the end Im the responsible  
for what happened to her.  
But with you, I put my life  
in your hands...  
someone I didn't even know,  
and I got what I deserved.  
And you're probably  
getting what you deserve.  
No, you don't deserve this.  
No one deserves this.  
Why are you doing this?  
Why are you doing this?  
Why are you fucking with me?  
Im healthy.  
Look at me.  
Will you look at me?  
Look at me!