

The Moon and the Tide

By

Derek Elkins

816-739-1316
derekwendi@yahoo.com

INT.BEDROOM.MORNING

(Slightly darkened bedroom. The sun is just beginning to shine in through the shades. The bedroom is neat and organized with every piece, including the window shade, in its place.)

A man's grunt is heard followed by a flying alarm clock that hits the shades, knocking it off the wall to fall on the floor.

MELVIN

Great.

Melvin Sommers, 60-70 year-old is lying in bed with his eyes staring at the ceiling. He glances toward the now naked window and winces at the light before returning to the ceiling.

MELVIN

Okay, Evelyn. It's your turn to make breakfast. I've done it for the last 525 days. It's about time to pull your weight around here so get those buns up and get hopping.

No response.

MELVIN

Yeah. That's about what I thought. Guess I'll get it. Again.

Pull back to reveal the other person in bed with Melvin is a CPR dummy in a long, blond wig with poorly scrawled lipstick over its lips. He kisses it on the cheek and struggles to sit up, feet dangling over the side of the bed. He looks back at the dummy.

MELVIN

You just get some rest, sweetheart. You're looking a little plastic these days. Better get your color back. I'll take care of breakfast, of course. Guess I'll need to take care of that shade as well.

Melvin gets out of bed, walks over to where the clock is resting on the shade and kicks the shade with one slippered foot.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Thank you, inferior Chinese products.

He moves off toward the bathroom.

INT.KITCHEN.MORNING

Melvin is frying some eggs on the stove-top in a particularly feminine-looking kitchen. The CPR dummy, or at least the top half of the CPR dummy, is seated at one of the chairs at the table.

MELVIN

I'm tired of being rat-holed up in this house all the time. 'Bout to drive me buggy. Think I'll head up to Nooma's after fixin' that shade.

He frowns.

MELVIN

No, I ain't gonna cause trouble. I just want to have some fun. Is that too much to ask.

He turns to smile at the dummy.

MELVIN

Maybe I'll pick you up some of that apple pie you're so fancy on.

He turns back to the eggs, frowning.

MELVIN

(mumbling)

Or maybe I won't. Dang apple pie costs more than a new car. Can't even enjoy an apple pie on this budget. Might as well die.

He turns back to the dummy.

MELVIN

What, dear? No, I ain't mumbling like a lunatic. I'm just clearing my throat. Can't a man clear his throat in peace for once?

Back to the eggs.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN
(mumbling)
Dang woman's gonna drive me to
drink.

Theatrically, Melvin clears his throat, glancing back at the dummy with squinty eyes.

INT. BASEMENT. LATER

Melvin is digging through his toolbox. Meticulously, he lays out a screwdriver, hammer and wrench on his workbench, grabs a tool belt and secures it around his waist. He places the tools in his belt, turns off the work light and heads up the basement stairs.

MELVIN
(yelling as he pauses by
kitchen)
I'll be in the bedroom if you need
anything, Evelyn.

Hearing no reply, he grunts and starts up the stairs toward the bedroom. Once in the bedroom, he stops by the window, untangles the clock from the shade and gently places it on the night stand. He picks up the shades and lays it out on the bed.

Bending down, Melvin picks up the piece that held the shade in place in the window well. While reaching for his screwdriver, he glances out the window and stops dead.

There is a four-year-old African American boy, Boudroy, pants around his ankles and no shirt on, standing on the back door stoop of the house next door and peeing onto the ground.

Melvin lowers the screwdriver and slowly places his hand on the dresser next to him.

MELVIN
Oh, Jesus...

Suddenly his hand touches something on the dresser and he looks down to see his hand resting on a bible. He rolls his eyes heavenward.

MELVIN
...deliver me from insanity.

Boudroy, urination complete, pulls up his pants. He immediately grabs a plastic bat and leaps off the stoop, swinging the bat wildly.

(CONTINUED)

Melvin slowly shakes his head as he again raises the screwdriver.

MELVIN

Gonna have to have a talk with that woman. Can't have those kids running around half naked, peeing on things. What's this world coming to when kids run around half naked, treating the world like its their toilet? Thank God it was only number one.

Melvin glances through the window again, finally catching sight of Boudroy again, chasing a big black dog with his bat.

MELVIN

Hope that dog eats him.

INT.FRONT DOOR.LATER

Melvin is working his way into a jacket.

MELVIN

It's getting late in the day and I need a new drill bit to finish the job. Gonna head to the hardware store, Evelyn. You sure you don't wanna come?

The CPR dummy is now seated on the couch with some soap opera playing on the television in front of it. Melvin nods.

MELVIN

I'll be back momentarily.

He grabs the keys off a hook by the door and exits. Closing the door, he takes a step forward and stops.

There are two college-aged boys on the front porch, looking at him apprehensively. They each take a moment to look one another over.

After the boys don't venture an introduction, Melvin rolls his eyes.

MELVIN

What do you want?

One of the boys, tall with blond hair, clears his throat.

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COLLEGE BOY 1
Professor Bronson, down at the
college...

MELVIN
...is an idiot.

COLLEGE BOY 1
No. He, uh, he sent, um...

College Boy 1 shrugs toward the second boy.

COLLEGE BOY 2
Professor Bronson sent us down to
see a Doctor Sommers.

Melvin stares at the boys for a few moments. COLLEGE BOY 2
stares back. COLLEGE BOY 1 examines the bushes for signs of
an escape.

MELVIN
Do I look like a doctor to you,
boy?

COLLEGE BOY 2
Well, I uh...hm.

COLLEGE BOY 1 shrugs again, apparently deciding that
shrugging is now his best response. After a second or two
of struggling ensues...

MELVIN
Well, why did he send you down
here? Need a prostrate exam?

COLLEGE BOY 2 looks at COLLEGE BOY 1, who quickly shakes his
head.

COLLEGE BOY 2
No. I think when Professor Bronson
was talking about a doctor, he
didn't mean a health doctor.

MELVIN
He didn't mean a health
doctor? How many kinds of stupid
is that, boy? Well, what kind of
doctor did he think I was?

COLLEGE BOY 2
I think he meant, um...a college
doctor?

MELVIN

A college doctor? I don't have
time for this. I've got places to
go.

Melvin takes a step past the boys and then turns back to
them. He points a finger at COLLEGE BOY 1, who shrugs.

MELVIN

Look, you go tell his highness that
I don't play those games
anymore. And I definitely don't
have time to babysit his
students...even the
mentally-challenged ones.

Boudroy comes bounding into Melvin's front lawn, still
chasing the dog with the bat.

Melvin points at Boudroy.

MELVIN

And don't use my back yard as a
bathroom!

Boudroy stops and stares, as do the college boys as Melvin
steps off the porch and moves toward his beat-up pickup.

COLLEGE BOY 2 yells after him.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Hey. We need to interview you for
a paper. For our class.

MELVIN

(not turning back)
Go interview him.

He points at Boudroy.

MELVIN

The college doctor needs to shove
off.

Melvin gets into his truck, starts it up and heads down the
street.

Boudroy holds his bat toward the college boys.

COLLEGE BOY 2 holds up his hand.

(CONTINUED)

COLLEGE BOY 2

Hey.

The college boys take off down the street as Boudroy starts chasing the dog.

EXT.TOWN CENTER.LATER

Melvin pulls into a parking spot in front of the hardware store and goes inside. As he enters, an older man, kinda round and behind the counter, immediately recognizes him

WALTER

Dr. Sommers. Hey

Melvin frowns at him but stops

WALTER

Hey, Dr. Sommers. How ya doing? I haven't seen you in forever.

Melvin stares back.

WALTER

Me and the guys from the group have been meaning to stop by and check on you. You doing okay?

MELVIN

I need a drill bit, Walter.

Walter steps out from behind the counter and walks toward him.

WALTER

That's aisle five, Dr. Sommers. Here, let me show you...

Melvin turns and walks off.

MELVIN

No thanks.

Walter purses his lips and turns his head, watching Melvin walk down the aisle.

EXT.TOWN CENTER.LATER

Melvin's truck pulls into a parking spot outside of Nooma's Coffee Shop, a college-town coffee shop with large over-stuffed chairs and overflowing bookshelves lining the walls. Toward the back of the shop, by the bathrooms, they are a boyfriend and girlfriend seated in front of a faux fireplace. There are also three business men in suits and open laptops. The rest of the shop is empty. Melvin watches as a young lady enters, backpack on shoulder. She gets a cup of coffee from the front counter and sits down next to a bookshelf marked "philosophy."

MELVIN

Well, what do we have here? Got a wanna-be philosopher in our midst.

The young student sets her backpack down next to her chair and pulls out a magazine.

MELVIN

Bah. World's gone downhill.

Melvin rolls down his window.

MELVIN

(Yelling)

Disappointing!

The young lady glances up and out the window. Melvin, in return, waves his hand in her direction in disgust and throws his car in reverse. He backs out of his space and takes off down the street. It's getting dark now. He reaches the edge of town square and heads out down the main road out of town. The road is void of buildings until Melvin reaches the outskirts of the city and passes a brightly lit strip club called Gentleman's Paradise. Melvin glances over, then back at the road.

MELVIN

Hmm. Gentleman's club. What kind of gentleman would go there?

EXT.GENTLEMAN'S PARADISE.SECONDS LATER

As Melvin passes the strip club parking lot, the door to the club opens and Casey, dressed in a long raincoat, exits. Two drunk college students loitering outside the club notice her

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DRUNK 1

Hey baby. Wanna give me a free lap dance?

DRUNK 2

Me first.

Casey turns around and cracks open the door to the club.

CASEY

Alex. Give a girl a hand.

The door opens wide and Alex, a huge bouncer in a wife beater, all muscles and grinning sadistically, pops out.

ALEX

What's the matter, Case? Can't find your car?

Casey nods her head toward the two drunk kids. Alex's grin drops.

ALEX

What are you two punks still doing out here?

The two kids take a step back.

ALEX

Didn't we already have this conversation? I distinctly remember telling you guys that you're both too drunk and need to get out of here before I whooped your butts.

The two kids glance at each other.

DRUNK 1

But, we're drunk.

ALEX

So?

DRUNK 1

So, we're not supposed to drive. We could get a ticket

ALEX

So, call an Uber.

DRUNK 2
But I don't have any money.

ALEX
How is that my problem?

CASEY
Thanks, Alex.

ALEX
Sure. Have a good night.

Casey begins walking toward her car.

DRUNK 1
Well, what do you want us to do,
man? Start walking?

Alex stares at him, so Drunk 1 turns to Casey as she's walking past.

DRUNK 1
Hey, can you give us a ride?

ALEX
Hey!

The two drunks turn back to Alex, allowing Casey to keep walking toward her car.

ALEX
You are not allowed to talk to her.

DRUNK 2
Why not?

ALEX
You're not good enough to talk to
her.

Drunk 1 looks as Casey gets into her car, a beat up Pinto with a huge dent in the driver's side door, and slams the door shut. Drunk 1 looks back at Alex with an eyebrow raised.

DRUNK 1
Are you sure?

ALEX
Oh yeah.

Casey pulls out into the main drag and heads toward town.

EXT.DARK ROAD.SECONDS LATER

Melvin slows down and pulls onto a gravel side road. He makes his way down the barren road, hedged in by trees and finally reaches a gravel circular lot. With no other cars in view, Melvin parks and gets out. He walks toward a clump of trees, pushes through them, revealing a bluff overlooking a cliff above a lake. Slowly, he sits down with his legs dangling off the side of the cliff. He picks up a rock and throws it, waiting for the plop to sound, but it never does.

Melvin sighs and looks out over the lake. There's just him and the lake and the sounds of nature.

Slowly, he gets to his feet and stands at the edge of the cliff, looking down. There are big rocks on the edge of the lake about 75-100 feet down. melvin draws a huge breath, then lets it out in a slow sigh. He raises his foot like he's going to take a step off the cliff

Suddenly, there's a rustling in the bushes behind him. Melvin turns his head and a squirrel pops its body out from the bushes, staring directly at Melvin. Melvin stares back and neither move for a few minutes.

MELVIN

What?

At the sound of his voice, the squirrel retreats, bouncing away into the foliage. Melvin collapses onto the ground and onto his back. He stares up at the clouds.

MELVIN

Okay, I get it. No easy outs for me. Eternal damnation starts now. Great. God I owe you one.

The sky doesn't answer.

EXT. MELVIN'S HOUSE.LATER

The street is dark. Melvin pulls into his driveway, parking. He looks toward his front windows and sees the glow from the television inside. He shakes his head.

MELVIN

Woman probably fell asleep watching her shows again.

Melvin enters the house. He enters the living room, switching on the light, and the CPR dummy is still propped up on the couch and the television is still on. Melvin sighs and turns off the television.

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MELVIN

All right, sweetheart. Let's get you to bed.

Melvin scoops up the dummy and heads up the stairs.

INT.BEDROOM.MORNING

The phone on the bedside table rings. Melvin pops his eyes open and turns to the dummy, which is staring up at the ceiling. He turns his head and looks at the phone, slowly reaching for it and picking up the receiver.

MELVIN

Yeah?

CASEY

(over the phone)

Mr. Sommers?

MELVIN

Yeah?

CASEY

Mr. Sommers, this is Cassandra Marsh. I'm your tenant at 510 West Beech. Mr. Sommers?

MELVIN

Yeah?

CASEY

Okay, I thought you were dead. Anyway, there's something wrong with the heater. I got home kind of late last night and it was freezing in the house. Thermostat said it was 52, but I have it set higher...I don't know...like on seventy-something. I checked the thermostat and it was on, but it ain't coming on. Do you think you could come over and take a look?

MELVIN

Uh...

CASEY

Look, Mr. Sommers, I've got two kids and they were literally freezing to death last night when I got home. Freezing to death. I need this heater fixed now.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Uh...

CASEY

Mr. Sommers!

MELVIN

Yeah. Um, sure. I'll be there about 11. Is that okay?

CASEY

Sure. That's fine. Thanks.

Click.

Melvin replaces the headset and glances back at the CPR dummy, which is still staring at the ceiling. Melvin groans, lays back down and throws the blanket over his head.

INT.FRONT DOOR.LATER

At his front door, Melvin straps on a tool belt and exits the house. He walks down the driveway, turns and walks up to the neighboring house. As he approaches the front door, the big black dog runs around the corner of the house and stops in the middle of the yard, staring at Melvin. Melvin stops walking and stares at the dog.

MELVIN

What?

The dog sits down and continues to stare. Melvin groans and walks the rest of the way to the door. He rings the doorbell.

CASEY

(from inside)

Just a minute.

The door squeaks open about a foot and Boudroy steps into the gap. He stares at Melvin. Melvin frowns down at Boudroy. Suddenly, the dog behind Melvin barks and Boudroy races out the front door and leaps onto the dog.

CASEY

Can I help you?

Melvin looks back at the front door and there is Casey Marsh, dressed in really short shorts, a tight-fitting shirt and high heels. She has a tattoo of a snake curling around her right thigh and a cigarette dangling from her mouth. His jaw hanging slightly open, Melvin's eyes travel

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up her legs, over her blouse and up to her face, where she is clearly frowning at him.

CASEY

Get an eye-full, perv?

MELVIN

What? No. I'm...I'm Melvin Sommers.

CASEY

Get an eye-full, Melvin Sommers?

MELVIN

What? No! No, I'm sorry. I'm an idiot. I, uh, don't know what came over me. I'm not usually this rude. I didn't mean to...

CASEY

Don't have a heart attack, Melvin. I'm just giving you a hard time.

MELVIN

Yeah. Sorry. Again. I'm, uh, here to fix the heater.

CASEY

(looking over his shoulder)
Boudroy! You get off Duke right now!

Melvin looks back to see Boudroy riding the dog like a horse.

CASEY

Come on in. Don't mind the mess. We don't.

Melvin steps into a living room that looks as if a trash bomb had recently gone off. There are half-filled glasses everywhere. A plate of spaghetti, covered with fungus is on a book case shelf. There's a nine year old girl, Monkey, blond hair in a ponytail, lying on the couch, playing on a cell phone.

MELVIN

Y'know, as your landlord, I'm gonna have to...

Casey waves her cigarette in the air.

CASEY

Yeah. Sorry. I've been real busy. I'll get it back in shape. There's no structural damage.

MELVIN

Well that's...good.

Casey stops and turns back to Melvin.

CASEY

Sorry, I'm not being very neighborly. That's my daughter, Monkey.

Monkey looks up from the phone long enough to realize the old man isn't going to be very interesting and turns her eyes right back.

MELVIN

Is that her real name?

CASEY

Technically Maureen, after her grandma. But after I got over honoring her grandma, I realized it was an old woman's name, so it's been Monkey ever since. You already met Boudroy

MELVIN

What's a Boudroy?

CASEY

That's my son's name. And I'm Cassandra, but you can call me Casey.

Melvin extends a hand.

MELVIN

Melvin. Melvin Sommers.

Casey looks at his hand, before turning.

CASEY

Yeah. We already met. You remember that, right?

MELVIN

Yeah. It was two minutes ago.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Just making sure. Dementia, you know. My grandma Maureen had it real bad. Scared the hell out of Monkey. Right before she died, before Boudroy was around, me and Monkey would go see grandma Maureen at the home. And Grandma Maureen, she wouldn't know me, of course. But she'd get downright hostile toward Monkey. Last time I took her, Grandma Maureen grabbed Monkey by the hair and started dragging her, shouting, "Get these damn kids out of here. I don't want them and I don't want you!" I couldn't take her back after that.

MELVIN

It must have scared you too.

Casey pauses and takes a drag off her cigarette.

CASEY

Yeah, I guess. Just sad really. Especially remembering how she used to be.

Suddenly Casey stops in the middle of the hallway, in front of some folding doors. She gestures grandly with her hand.

CASEY

And here we are.

MELVIN

Yeah. I remember. Thanks.

As Melvin opens the door and starts peering around the furnace, Casey casually looks over his shoulder.

CASEY

So, did you used to live here? In this house?

MELVIN

No. Once upon a time, I came into some money and my neighbor, Professor Gottlieb, got a job at a college in Nebraska. So, I bought it up cause I could and have been renting it out ever since. I've got to say, however, that in the

(MORE)

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MELVIN (cont'd)
history of tenants I've had here,
none of them have ever had your
taste in decorating.

CASEY
Uh huh. So, what's the problem
with the furnace?

Melvin stands up, reaches his hand in between the furnace
and the wall and flicks a switch.

MELVIN
Kinda figured.

CASEY
What?

MELVIN
There's an on/off switch in the
inside wall. I'm betting your
Boudroy maybe flicked it off.

The furnace kicks on.

MELVIN
I'd fix that thermostat before it
gets too hot in here.

CASEY
Yeah. I'll do that. Thanks.

Melvin shuts the doors on the furnace.

MELVIN
If I were you, I'd tape a box over
that switch, just to make sure it
doesn't happen again.

He moves into the living room, followed closely by Casey.

CASEY
Yeah. Box. What kind of box?

MELVIN
Tell you what. I've got a box in
my basement that'll suit you just
fine. Give me a second and I'll go
get it.

CASEY
Sure.

Casey takes a seat on the arm of the couch as Melvin makes his way to the front door. As he opens the front door, Boudroy is standing in the doorway with a huge grin on his face.

MELVIN

Don't tell me. You killed the dog.

CASEY

Boudroy! Get out of the way

Boudroy obediently steps into the house, allowing Melvin to step outside. He walks back to his house, enters through the front door and heads down to the basement.

He moves to a shelf, digs around and comes up with an old nail box. He empties the nails into a bucket, looks around and grabs some duct tape.

Finished, he heads back up the stairs and out the front door. At the front door to Casey's house, Melvin knocks. No answer. Cautiously, Melvin opens the door and sticks his head in)

MELVIN

Hello?

Casually, Melvin looks around the living room and sees Monkey still on the couch.

MONKEY

Are you lost?

Melvin slips into the house.

MELVIN

Not that you know of. Where's your mom?

MONKEY

Oh, she took off. She said she was gonna see Drew before she had to be at work.

MELVIN

Who's Drew?

MONKEY

Her boyfriend this week.

MELVIN

Ah well, this'll only take a second.

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As he nears the hallway, he stops, recognizing Boudroy, who is on the top of the bookcase, eating out of a bag of Cheese Doodles. Melvin frowns, reaches up and grabs Boudroy, then places him on the ground.

Immediately, Boudroy extends his arms toward the bookcase and starts making grunting noises.

Melvin turns toward Monkey.

MELVIN

What's wrong with him?

Monkey shrugs.

MONKEY

He wants his chips.

Melvin reaches up and grabs the chips, handing them to Boudroy, who takes them and wanders toward the kitchen.

MELVIN

No. I mean, why doesn't he talk?

Monkey shrugs without looking up from her phone.

MONKEY

What's the box for?

MELVIN

There's a switch that turns the furnace off and on, which I'm pretty sure your brother switched to off. I'm gonna put the box over the switch so he can't do it again.

MONKEY

Uh huh. And how long do you think it'll take him to get through that box?

Melvin looks down at the box and considers.

MELVIN

I'll pick up something a little more secure tomorrow. So, does your mom often leave you two here by yourselves?

Monkey shrugs

MONKEY

Yeah. Pretty much.

Melvin turns toward the hall.

MELVIN

Don't let DFS find out.

MONKEY

I won't if you won't.

Melvin shakes his head and moves down the hallway, opening the folding doors.

MELVIN

So, what do you do for dinner when your mom isn't here?

MONKEY

What we do when she is here. Boudroy's eating his dinner right now. I'll probably make some soup or Mac and Cheese later.

Melvin breaks the sides of the box and places it over the switch on the wall. He takes the duct tape and begins ripping off pieces, fastening the box to the wall. Suddenly, he stops and frowns down at his hands, internally debating.

MELVIN

Hey, you kids want to come over to my house for dinner tonight? I mean, it's not much. It's just me. But I can make enough for all of us.

MONKEY

I don't know. What are you making?

Melvin continues to work.

MELVIN

I haven't given it much thought. I've got some fish in the freezer. Maybe some mixed veggies.

MONKEY

No thanks. Sounds like single old man food. Plus, mom says we're not supposed to go anywhere with strangers.

Melvin finishes up and closes the folding doors. He enters the living room.

MELVIN

Yeah. That's probably a good idea. Don't want to get kidnapped and forced to live in your own filth.

MONKEY

Solid burn, old guy.

MELVIN

So, what kind of food do you like? Besides soup and Mac and Cheese?

Boudroy casually walks into the living room, carrying a toy rifle over his shoulder and his other hand holding the bag of chips.

MONKEY

Boudroy like pizza.

MELVIN

I'm not supposed to eat pizza anymore. Gives me heartburn.

MONKEY

Sucks to be you. I like chicken and fries.

Melvin reaches for the door knob.

MELVIN

Looks like you're getting Mac and Cheese tonight.

He opens the door.

MONKEY

Uh huh. Hey, don't forget to close the door. Don't need Boudroy getting out.

Boudroy is seated on the floor next to the bookcase, looking at a comic book, with his hand still jammed in the bag of chips.

MELVIN

Tell your mom I'll be back tomorrow to put something a little more secure on that switch.

MONKEY

If she gets back early enough I
will. Otherwise, she'll find out
when you knock on the door
tomorrow.

MELVIN

(shaking his head)
Unbelievable.

Melvin exits, closing the door behind him.

INT.BEDROOM.LATER

Melvin is standing, looking out the window at the house next door. All the lights are on next door. As he watches, Casey's car pulls up in the driveway. She gets out and walks into her house, shutting the door behind her. The living room lights go out.

MELVIN

Yeah. I hear you. I'll be in bed
in a minute, dear.

INT.KITCHEN.MORNING

Melvin is in the kitchen, cooking breakfast. The dummy is seated at the kitchen table.

MELVIN

I've got to go into town this
morning, Evelyn. Tenants next door
need me to do a little work on the
furnace today so I'll be in and
out. I think they need someone to
look after them. Think that mom
doesn't have a clue how to
parent, not that we ever had the
chance. But looks like she may
need a little help. If our little
one would have pulled through,
she'd be that age by now.

Melvin pauses to stare out the window, then regains awareness and wipes his hands on a towel.

MELVIN

Well, I'm off. Won't be back till
later this afternoon.

EXT.TOWN CENTER.LATER

Melvin's car pulls into a spot in front of the hardware store and goes inside. Walter is behind the counter, reading a magazine. He looks up and recognizes Melvin, walking straight toward him.

WALTER

Dr. Sommers. Twice in one week. What a treat.

MELVIN

Walter, you got any of those switch pate covers? The box ones?

WALTER

Sure. Sure. Down aisle thirteen. Want me to...

Melvin takes off. Walter shakes his head and picks up his paper. After a moment, Melvin is back, but Walter doesn't notice.

MELVIN

Hey Walter. Wake up.

Walter puts up his paper.

WALTER

I'm awake.

He takes the box cover from Melvin.

WALTER

You know, Doctor Sommers, the group still meets on Wednesdays and we'd love to have you come by sometime.

Melvin grunts.

WALTER

Well, you're welcome whenever. That'll be \$2.33.

Melvin hands him the money then walks out without saying a word. Walter shakes his head and picks up the paper.

EXT. CASEY'S HOUSE.LATER

Melvin is at Casey's door and knocks. He hears a man's voice, Andrew, from behind the door.

ANDREW

Get it.

The door opens and out pops Monkey's face. She smiles broadly.

MONKEY

I forgot you were coming over.

Monkey opens the door wider, so Melvin can see the entire living room, which looks moderately cleaner. There's a guy, Andrew, covered with muscles, tattoos on his bulging arms and with a military buzz cut, sitting on the couch. He's sipping on a beer and has a cigarette burning in the ashtray. He grins.

ANDREW

And who might you be, stranger?

MONKEY

This was the guy...

ANDREW

Monkey, go to your room and let the adults talk.

Monkey leaves the room, heading down the hallway as Melvin takes a cautious step inside.

MELVIN

I'm Melvin Sommers. I guess you could say I'm the landlord.

Andrew smiles broadly.

ANDREW

Well then, welcome in.

Andrew stands up, setting the beer on the table. He extends a hand toward Melvin, who takes it and shakes. Just then, Boudroy comes in from the kitchen with a ceramic jar with something in it that he is rolling around and making noise. Andrew's smile drops.

ANDREW

(yelling down hallway)
Case, come get your boy.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY
(from bedroom)
I'm coming.

Casey enters from the hallway. She has a towel wrapped around her head and is in jeans and a t-shirt. She recognizes Melvin, but continues on toward Boudroy.

CASEY
Well, if it isn't my landlord.

ANDREW
Case, you need to move your butt and get ready. We got places to go.

Casey, without stopping, scoops up Boudroy and moves back to the hallway.

CASEY
I'm almost there, baby.

Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW
Women. Takes them forever to get ready, forever to make up their mind. You got a woman, Mel?

Melvin shakes his head. Andrew picks up his beer and sits back on the couch.

ANDREW
Probably a good thing. More trouble than they're worth. So, what's up, Mel? She late on rent again?

Melvin holds up a bag.

MELVIN
No. I'm gonna fix the heater switch. Her son probably tripped it the other day, shutting it off.

Andrew takes a drag from his cigarette, then points it at Melvin.

ANDREW
And what did I tell her? I told her that boy did something to jack up that heater. He needs a good whipping.

Casey exits her bedroom and enters the living room.

CASEY

You're not whipping my boy, Drew Cortage. Don't even think about it.

Andrew gives her a look like, "that's what you think", but just winks.

CASEY

Sorry, Melvin Sommers, but we gotta scoot.

Andrew leaves his beer on the table, cigarette smoldering in the ashtray and heads toward the door. As he reaches the door, he turns back to Melvin.

ANDREW

Now, don't you be touching my beer in the fridge, old timer.

MELVIN

Wouldn't dream of it.

Andrew and Casey leave. As soon as the front door shuts, a bedroom door opens. Monkey sticks her head out into the hallway.

MONKEY

Are they gone?

MELVIN

Yeah. They just left.

Monkey opens the door wider and shouts over her shoulder.

MONKEY

Boudroy, you can get out of my room now.

She stands by Melvin as Boudroy walks past them, dragging a large inflatable hammer. Melvin opens the door to the heater as Monkey looks on. After a moment, he looks up to see her standing over him.

MELVIN

You know, being as old as I am, I'm not fond of vultures looking over my shoulder.

Monkey casts a quick glance toward the front door then steps back.

(CONTINUED)

MONKEY

Sorry. I just want to see, in case there's an emergency or something.

MELVIN

If there's an emergency, you come get me.

He goes back to work.

MELVIN

You don't like him very much, do you?

MONKEY

No.

MELVIN

Yeah. He didn't seem like the nicest of fellas to me either. How's he treat your mom?

MONKEY

Oh, he's all right with her.

MELVIN

Has he ever hit her?

MONKEY

Casey? He wouldn't dare. She'd hit him back.

MELVIN

Kind of what I thought too. Has he ever hit you?

Monkey shakes her head.

MELVIN

Boudroy?

Monkey looks down the hallway.

MELVIN

Don't worry about it. How long has he been dating your mom?

MONKEY

I don't know. A little less than a year.

Melvin stands up.

MELVIN

Well, I wouldn't worry too much about it. These things have a way of blowing over before too long.

Melvin heads to the front door, then stops and looks down at Monkey.

MELVIN

Tell you what. You have any problems that you can't handle, you come over and see me. I'll take care of you and your brother.

MONKEY

And what if my problems take care of you?

MELVIN

Oh, I wouldn't worry too much about that. I can take care of myself.

MONKEY

Do you have a gun?

MELVIN

No. But I have the truth on my side...and the law.

MONKEY

And that'll protect you?

MELVIN

It has up until now. If not, God'll protect me.

MONKEY

Casey doesn't believe in God. She says there's too much pain in the world for it to be created by a loving God.

MELVIN

Well, maybe Casey doesn't know everything. I personally have very good reasons to think that there's a God.

MONKEY

Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Yeah. I'll share them with you
sometime.

Melvin reaches the door.

MELVIN

Say, what are you and Boudroy
having for dinner tonight?

Monkey shrugs.

MONKEY

Whatever's in the fridge.

MELVIN

Tell you what, you ask your mom
before she goes to work if you and
your brother can come over and eat
with me. I'll get some pizza.

Monkey smiles.

MONKEY

Okay.

Melvin exits, leaving Monkey to stare at the door a moment
longer.

EXT.MELVIN'S FRONT DOOR.LATER

A delivery driver, holding a pizza knocks on Melvin's front
door. Melvin opens the door.

PIZZA GUY

Hey. What a night, huh?

MELVIN

How much?

PIZZA GUY

Not much for small talk I
see. That'll be \$15.23.

MELVIN

Fifteen dollars and twenty-three
cents? For a pizza? Am I getting
this right?

PIZZA GUY

Hey, things are tough all over. Am
I right?

(CONTINUED)

Melvin frowns and begins writing the check while the delivery driver gets the pizza out of the warming bag.

PIZZA GUY

Something tells me I'm not getting a tip.

Melvin takes the pizza and hands the delivery driver the check.

MELVIN

It's not your fault that your boss is a crook. I added a little something for your troubles.

Pizza Guy looks at the check.

PIZZA GUY

All right. Fifty cents. You just made my night. Now I can finally afford college.

MELVIN

You know, there's a pretty good reason you have this job.

PIZZA GUY

That's what mom keeps telling me. Have a good night.

Melvin grunts and closes the door. Inside, Melvin takes the pizza into the dining room, where Monkey is seated with a paper plate in front of her. Boudroy is on top of the serving hutch.

MELVIN

Boudroy, get off my hutch.

Boudroy gets down and sits next to his sister. Melvin opens the pizza box in front of the kids, who eagerly grab pieces and stick them in their mouths, chewing loudly.

MELVIN

How about you close your mouths when you eat, so I don't have to see your food?

They obey...to a degree. Melvin shakes his head.

MELVIN

So, your mom said you could come over?

MONKEY

Casey hasn't been home since she left. She probably went straight to work.

MELVIN

Why do you call your mom by her first name?

Monkey shrugs.

MONKEY

She calls me by my first name.

MELVIN

That's different. She's your mom.

MONKEY

How is that different?

MELVIN

I don't know, but I'm willing to make something up if you'll buy it.

MONKEY

No thanks.

MELVIN

Yeah. Didn't think so. So your mom started to rent from me about a year ago. Were you guys living in Richland before then?

MONKEY

Yeah. We moved around a bit. But I've been living here since I was born. Case...mom says she used to go to school here and then hung around after she had me.

MELVIN

And do you have grandparents?

MONKEY

Well, Grandma Maureen I met twice. I don't think Casey got along too well with her parents. I heard them talking on the phone once...well, screaming on the phone. So, what about you? Have you been around here for long?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

I used to teach at the college. Oh, for a good twenty years or so.

MONKEY

What did you teach?

Boudroy finished, leaves the table and heads toward the living room.

MELVIN

Oh, I taught quite a few things in my time. I had a class in bible study, New Testament History. I even taught a class on how to write research papers. But my main area was in Christian Apologetics.

MONKEY

You had to teach Christians how to apologize?

MELVIN

Yeah, you'd think. But really apologetics just means having a defense for what Christians believe. Y'know, giving people reasons and proof for why I believe there's a God and why I believe the Bible is true.

MONKEY

Casey...mom says the Bible is just made up from men a long time ago and isn't really worth much anymore.

MELVIN

Well, my job was to train others how to prove your mom wrong.

MONKEY

And why don't you teach anymore? Did you find out the Bible was wrong?

Melvin laughs.

MELVIN

No, I just...my wife got sick.

Boudroy enters the dining room, dragging the CPR dummy behind him. Melvin stands up, angry.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Hey! Put her down!

Boudroy, shocked at getting yelled at by Melvin, stops and drops the dummy on the floor. Melvin rushes over and gently picks up the dummy.

MELVIN

Oh Evelyn, are you all right? What did they do to you?

Melvin begins to take the dummy into the other room and is stopped by Monkey.

MONKEY

Is that your wife? I don't think she's doing well.

MELVIN

What? No, this isn't my wife. I buried my wife.

Melvin walks into the other room, leaving Monkey and Boudroy alone. The minutes drag on.

MONKEY

Mr. Sommers?

Nothing. She begins to cram all the pizza back into the box.

MONKEY

(yelling)

Hey, we're gonna take the rest of this and split, okay? C'mon Boudroy. Let's go home.

Boudroy nods and follows his sister, who has grabbed the pizza and is heading to the door. She exits, and just as Boudroy is closing the door behind them, he shows one of the dummy's arms in his left hand. He closes the door.

INT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.MORNING

Melvin is carrying the dummy down the stairs.

MELVIN

Evelyn, I'm so tired today. Think I'll stay away from that woman and her kids today. They just wear me out. Yes, I know dear. But I don't care. They're not my

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
problem. They can take care of themselves. Yes, dear. Of course, you're right dear...But you're just imaginary so I don't have to listen to you. Of course, dear. I didn't mean it.

He reaches the living room and places the dummy on the couch. He places one of its arms in its lap and reaches for the other one but can't find it.

MELVIN
Evelyn, you're falling apart. Why couldn't you take better care of yourself.

He looks around the living room and, seeing nothing, heads back up the stairs. He reaches the bedroom, checks on the bed, on the floor, under the bed. He begins to get a little frantic. He rushes down to the living room and starts to go from one piece of furniture to the other, looking and not finding.

Suddenly, he stops and looks out the window to the house next door. His eyes narrow.

MELVIN
I'm gonna kill that kid.

EXT. CASEY'S HOUSE.LATER

Melvin knocks on the front door of Casey's house. The door opens to reveal Casey. She looks a wreck, bloodshot eyes and hair a mess.

CASEY
Mr. Sommers?

MELVIN
Where is it?

CASEY
What?

MELVIN
Your son took my wife's arm and I want it back.

Casey closes her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

You're making my head hurt more.

MELVIN

That's not my problem. Now,
where's that son of yours?

Casey shakes her head, backs up for a moment and then swings the door wide open. She shoves Boudroy in front of Melvin and takes off to her bedroom.

CASEY

You figure it out. I'm going back
to bed.

Melvin drops down to look Boudroy in the eyes. He points a finger into his face.

MELVIN

Now look, I know you've got
Evelyn's arm. What did you do with
it?

Boudroy stares at him, silently.

MELVIN

Oh...kay. Look, I can get really
nasty if I need to. You don't want
me to get nasty. Now where is it?

Boudroy keeps staring.

MELVIN

You wanna play the silent game,
huh? Well, I mastered that game a
long time ago.

They stare at each other. Finally, Melvin stands up.

MELVIN

Okay, that's it. I'm...

Boudroy looks past Melvin to the lawn, smiles and barks. Melvin looks around and sees the dog, which is standing in the middle of the lawn and has the CPR dummy's arm in its mouth. Melvin's eyes casually scan the surrounding houses. Seeing nothing, he takes after the dog.

In the kitchen, Casey enters, grabs a glass and begins filling it with water. She swallows two ibuprofen and washes it down with the water.

(CONTINUED)

Looking out the window, Casey sees Melvin playing tug of war with the dog. The dog pulls really hard, knocking Melvin down to his belly, where he loses a grip on the arm. The dog grabs the arm again and takes off with it.

CASEY
(yelling)
Boudroy!

Boudroy steps into the kitchen.

CASEY
What did you do to that poor man?

Boudroy shrugs as Casey looks out the window again to see Melvin running after the dog with the CPR dummy's arm in its mouth.

CASEY
Boudroy, go help him get that arm
back.

She looks back and Boudroy has disappeared.

CASEY
Boudroy!

In the back of the house, Melvin is walking around the corner. The dog is nowhere to be found. He rounds the corner and the dog is lying on its back while Boudroy is scratching its belly. The arm is nearby in the grass. As Melvin approaches, Boudroy reaches over and picks up the arm. He offers it to Melvin, who grabs it as he passes.

MELVIN
I'll take that.

Melvin walks over to his house with the CPR dummy's arm clutched in his hand, shirt ripped, mud on his pants, to see the two college kids back on his porch. They look surprised at his appearance.

COLLEGE BOY 2
Dr. Sommers. Hi. We brought you
something.

College Kid 2 nudges College Kid 1, who brings out a cake from behind his back.

MELVIN
No thanks, I'm diabetic.

College Kid 1 shrugs at College Kid 2.

COLLEGE BOY 2
Sorry. If we could just have five
minutes of your time.

Melvin walks past them toward the door.

MELVIN
Too busy. Can't talk.

COLLEGE BOY 2
But Professor Bronson...

MELVIN
...is an idiot. I
remember. Thanks.

Melvin opens the door.

COLLEGE BOY 2
But this is for a class.

Melvin shuts the door on them.

COLLEGE BOY 1
Now what?

College Kid 2 gets a piece of paper from his back pocket and
unfolds it.

COLLEGE BOY 2
We could try Dr. Sparks again.

COLLEGE BOY 1
No thanks. I could not stand that
smell twice. Hey, do you mind if I
have the cake?

COLLEGE BOY 2
We'll split it.

They walk off the porch

INT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.MOMENTS LATER

Melvin is sewing the arm back on the CPR dummy. The arm has
a bunch of bite marks on it and one of the holes has
stuffing coming out of it. Also, there's a finger missing.

MELVIN
Oh Evelyn, what did that monster do
to you?

There's a knock at his door.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

What is it now?

Melvin strides to the door and yanks it open, glaring. On the front steps is Monkey.

MONKEY

Hey.

MELVIN

What do you want?

MONKEY

Casey wanted to make sure you were okay. Wanted me to check on you.

MELVIN

As long as that brother of yours stays away, I should be fine.

Monkey enters, moving around Melvin, heading toward the living room.

MONKEY

So, how's your doll?

MELVIN

It's not a doll.

She stops in front of the couch, where the CPR dummy is seated.

MONKEY

Looks like a doll. You know, we had one of those at our old school. It didn't have arms or legs though.

MELVIN

Look, isn't it time for you to go home?

MONKEY

Drew's at home, so I'd rather not be there.

MELVIN

Well, can't you go somewhere else?

MONKEY

Why do you act like that dummy's your wife? Do you think it's your wife?

(CONTINUED)

Melvin collapses on the couch.

MELVIN

No, I know it's not my wife. I just kind of...it used to be my wife's. She was a nurse and she'd travel around to elementary schools with it. She had this thing she did...a little presentation where she'd teach all the kids CPR and some other stuff. She took it with her all the time. Heck, it's been around here for the last fifteen years. Always had it sitting in some chair or the other. After Evelyn died...

MONKEY

Her soul went into the doll?

MELVIN

No, her soul didn't go into the doll.

MONKEY

It happened with Chucky.

MELVIN

Your mom shouldn't be letting you watch those movies.

MONKEY

Why?

MELVIN

Because it's not right.

MONKEY

I like scary movies.

MELVIN

Good for you. Anyway, no. After Evelyn died, I had to have someone to talk to and that dummy was there. Funny thing was, after a while, it started to answer me just like Evelyn would have.

MONKEY

It started talking? Are you sure it's not Chucky?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

It's not Chucky. I just meant in my head. I heard her voice in my head.

Monkey tilts her head, like a questioning dog.

MELVIN

And no, it's not telepathic.

MONKEY

I was wondering.

MELVIN

No, I was probably just trying to remember my wife, so I'd imagine what she said.

He looks over at the dummy.

MELVIN

Anyway, I probably took it too far. Should take it down to the basement before people think I'm weird.

MONKEY

Too late.

MELVIN

So, yeah. I'm okay. You can go home now.

Monkey moves to a side table where there's a picture of Melvin and his wife. She studies it.

MONKEY

When did your wife die.

MELVIN

I...about a year and a half ago.

MONKEY

She has a nice smile. I bet the kids liked her.

MELVIN

Yeah, they did.

MONKEY

So, how did a nice woman like that wind up with an old, dried up guy like you?

(CONTINUED)

Melvin's mouth falls open as he struggles to find an answer.

MONKEY

Maybe you were a nicer guy when you were younger.

MELVIN

I was a nicer guy a year and a half before God took my wife.

MONKEY

So, you hate God because God killed your wife?

MELVIN

What are you, my therapist?

MONKEY

Do you need a therapist?

MELVIN

No. Look, God didn't kill my wife. She just died. And I don't hate God...I'm just not too fond of Him right now.

MONKEY

But it's been two years.

MELVIN

A year and a half. Seemed like it just happened. And so what if it was five years ago? That doesn't mean anything.

From outside, the sound of a motorcycle starting up.

MONKEY

And there goes Drew. Guess I can go home now.

MELVIN

How much do I owe you?

MONKEY

I'll send you my bill.

Monkey leaves as Melvin shakes his head. He waits a moment, thinking. Finally, he stands up and considers the dummy.

MELVIN

Okay, dummy. I think it's high time you went into

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
storage. Besides, your chewed up
arm makes you look like some kind
of monster.

He grabs the dummy, treating it a but rougher than before
and heads down the stairs to the basement. He stops and
looks around the basement, before placing the dummy on a
stack of boxes. He sighs.

Just then, the doorbell rings.

MELVIN
(yelling)
I'll be there in a minute!

Melvin starts up the stairs as the doorbell rings again.

MELVIN
If it's those kids from school
again, I'm getting a restraining
order.

He opens the door to find Casey, holding her eye and leaning
on Monkey, who's struggling to support her weight.

CASEY
Look, I didn't want to bother you,
but Monkey made me.

Melvin grabs her arm and leads her inside.

MONKEY
Your hurt, mom.

MELVIN
What happened?

Melvin gently guides her into a chair in the dining room.

CASEY
He hit me.

Melvin goes into the kitchen

MELVIN
Who hit you? Boudroy?

CASEY
No, Drew. He got mad cause I
wouldn't...whatever. He got mad
and after telling him "no" one too
many times, he punched me and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)
left. I hope he crashes his bike
and dies.

Melvin comes back in with a glass of water and hands it to Casey.

MELVIN
Here. Now, let me see what we've
got.

CASEY
It really hurts.

MELVIN
I'll get you some aspirin in a
minute.

CASEY
Already took some.

Casey removes her hand to reveal an eye that's already beginning to turn black and blue. Melvin winces.

CASEY
How bad is it?

MONKEY
It's huge.

MELVIN
Monkey! It's uh...it's pretty
big. No cuts though. That's a
relief. A big guy like
Drew. You're lucky he didn't take
your head off.

CASEY
I'll take his head off...next time
I see him. Crap!

MELVIN
What's the matter? Besides the
black eye and getting hit in the
face and the boyfriend thing?

CASEY
I've got to work tonight. If Irma
sees me like this...I'm so fired.

MELVIN
Wait. Where's Boudroy?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Monkey, honey, can you go back and watch your brother?

MONKEY

How much?

CASEY

Just do it.

Monkey leaves.

MELVIN

Who's Irma?

CASEY

My boss. I hate to ask, but do you have, like a big steak I can put over my eye?

MELVIN

I don't have any steak. Doctor's orders. I've got some frozen peas though. That should help with the swelling.

Melvin goes into the kitchen.

MELVIN

Why would your boss fire you for getting a black eye? It wasn't your fault.

CASEY

Doesn't matter. I'm in the image business.

MELVIN

You are? And what business is that?

CASEY

I'm an exotic dancer.

MELVIN

An exotic...you're a stripper?

CASEY

An exotic dancer. I work down at Irma's Club on Outer 50.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Oh, that Irma. That makes sense.

CASEY

You've been there?

MELVIN

What? No! I've just...seen the sign..from the road.

Casey smiles and then winces.

CASEY

Ow.

MELVIN

Sorry. Aspirin. Right.

Melvin takes off into the kitchen again.

MELVIN

Can't you call in sick?

CASEY

If I don't work, I don't get paid. If I don't get paid, I can't afford your hefty rental fees.

Melvin comes back in with a jar of aspirin.

MELVIN

Don't worry about it. I think I could let you go for one month.

He removes the cap, gets out two aspirin and waits until she swallows them.

MELVIN

It may take a minute to kick in.

Casey's hand reaches back to cover the eye.

CASEY

Can I get those peas from you?

MELVIN

Sure.

Melvin goes back into the kitchen.

MELVIN

So, when you get to feeling a bit better, I'll drive you to the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
police station. We'll have to take
the kids...

CASEY
I'm not going to the cops.

MELVIN
What are you talking about?

CASEY
Look, he's gone now. I like him
better that way. If I tell the
cops, they'll drag him in and...

Melvin comes back into the dining room with a bag of frozen
peas and a dishrag.

MELVIN
And what? You can't just let him
get away with hitting you.

Casey takes the peas and rag from Melvin.

CASEY
And what if me calling the cops on
him gets him even more angry? When
he comes back to my house late at
night and beats me till I can't
move? Or kills me? Or hurts one
of my kids? No thanks. It's
better that he's gone.

MELVIN
And what happens if he comes back?

Casey stands up, peas covering her eye.

CASEY
He won't. And what's he gonna
say? I'm sorry for punching you in
the eye? Look, thanks for the
aspirin and the peas,
neighbor. And thanks for feeding
my kids last night. They told me
what you did. That was really
nice.

Melvin shrugs as Casey heads to the front door.

CASEY
If he comes back, I'll call the
cops. You better believe it. But
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)
I'm not gonna do anything right now
to tick him off again. That hurt
too much the first time.

They stop at the front door.

MELVIN
If he comes back or threatens you,
come over here.

CASEY
Thanks, Melvin. I appreciate the
help. Don't worry. He won't be
back.

Casey opens the door and steps through. She stops and holds
up the peas and rag.

CASEY
Hey, do you mind if I hang onto
these for a while?

MELVIN
Go ahead.

Casey heads back over to her house. Melvin closes the door.

INT.MELVIN'S KITCHEN.NIGHT

Melvin is in his kitchen, washing a small amount of dishes,
when there is a ring on his doorbell. He carefully dries
his hands, heads to the door and opens it to reveal Casey,
holding a cake.

CASEY
It's slightly diabetic, but I
couldn't stand making a cake with
absolutely no sugar in it. It just
didn't sound right.

MELVIN
Well, you didn't need to do that.

CASEY
I know. I was bored. Didn't have
work. Don't currently have a
social life.

Melvin holds the door wide open.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Well, thanks.

Casey carries the cake into the dining room as Melvin closes the door.

MELVIN

But you and the kids will have to help me eat it. Afraid I don't eat a ton of sweets these days

CASEY

I just wanted to thank you again for everything you've done, but I've got to get back. The kids, you know.

MELVIN

Yeah. Who knows what they'd do if they were left alone. Sorry, that was inappropriate. I'd blame it on the fact that I haven't had human interaction in a while, but that'd just be a cheap excuse. Tell you what. Sit with me on the porch for a moment. You can listen for the kids better out there.

CASEY

Okay. Hate to ask, but do you got anything to drink?

MELVIN

Do you mean liquor...

CASEY

No, just water'll do. Unless you have a beer or soda.

MELVIN

Never was much into beer. Thought it tasted a bit like urine.

CASEY

And you know that how? Sorry. Now, I'm sounding like Monkey.

MELVIN

It's all right.

(CONTINUED)

Melvin goes into the kitchen and brings out two bottles of soda. He leads Casey out to the porch, where he takes a seat in a rocking chair. She sits on a bench. They sit in silence for a moment.

MELVIN

So, Monkey tells me that you used to go to school at the college. What was your major?

CASEY

It started out in the culinary arts, then led to journalism.

MELVIN

That's quite a switch. Find out you weren't any good at cooking?

CASEY

Actually, I got into a few arguments with the instructors. They tried to tell me how to cook one way and my grandma had taught me something different. It all came to a head in this class on meringue. He was trying to tell us his way and I kept arguing on how to hold the whisk. He got real quiet at one point but I just couldn't let it go. I mean, I wanted to stop. I could see he was beyond ticked. But I just couldn't keep pushing him. Eventually, I had to talk with the dean and one thing led to another.

MELVIN

So, onto journalism.

CASEY

They suggested it. Actually Professor Spradley suggested it.

MELVIN

I remember Jerry Spradley. Smug little turd.

CASEY

Yeah. That's him. He said, with my inquisitive nature and persistence, I'd be better off in journalism or being a lawyer. I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)
got one look at the number of
classes I'd have to take to be a
lawyer, and it was off to
journalism. That wasn't too far
out of high school. Didn't know a
thing but boys.

MELVIN
Seems like a lot of girls come here
just so they can get a husband.

CASEY
Not me. I wanted to leave my
mark. Boys were just a
hobby. First semester in
journalism school and I got bored
and pregnant with
Monkey...Maureen. Of course, my
parents practically disowned me
after that. They stopped helping
me anyway. Couldn't even afford an
abortion. Of course, at that time,
I probably wouldn't have gone
through with it anyway. I was too
angry at my parents. A baby seemed
like the perfect way to get back at
them. Of course, that kind of
backfired.

MELVIN
Bet it was tough.

CASEY
Did you ever have kids?

MELVIN
No. Evelyn and I just...well,
Evelyn couldn't. Didn't find out
until after the first
stillborn. After that, we just
kind of put it on the back
burner. We were both kind of busy
with our careers. We never got to
the point where we weren't.

CASEY
And what did you do?

MELVIN
I don't know. We got along. It
was tough...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

No, I meant what was your job?

MELVIN

Didn't Monkey tell you? I taught in college. No the one you went to, but the smaller one up the road a ways. August Bible College. I taught a lot of things, but mostly apologetics.

CASEY

You taught...

MELVIN

No, I didn't teach people how to apologize. It's from the Greek word Apologia, which means to speak in defense. Basically, I taught young pastors how to defend their faith.

CASEY

Hmmm.

MELVIN

It's not that bad. It was interesting for a time.

CASEY

No...it's my parents. They're the die hard Christians. They're the ones that basically ex-communicated me after I got pregnant in college.

MELVIN

Well, don't let your parents leave a bad taste in your mouth for Christianity.

CASEY

Too late. Do you know how long I had to struggle with absolutely no support, how long I had to live all by myself because they didn't want to be tainted by their daughter's sin? They abandoned me...all in the name of their God of love. And they abandoned their own grandchildren, who they've only seen once...and by accident. I've got a good image of Christians in my head...no offense.

(CONTINUED)

Silence

MELVIN

Well, I'm a Christian, but I'm not gonna offer any apologies for their actions cause frankly they weren't acting very Christ-like. Jesus never told us to abandon anyone just because...look, everyone makes mistakes, right? So what right do I have to make your mistakes worse than my own? I am sorry for what they did to you. It wasn't right. But don't start judging all Christians by the actions of a few. After all, anyone can call themselves a Christian, but that doesn't make them one any more than me calling myself a chicken can turn me into a bird. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian.

CASEY

Is that your textbook apologetic response?

MELVIN

Actually, I just made that up. Pretty good, huh? No, your classic apologetic response runs a little more in the lines of defending doctrine against heretics and providing reasons for why it's logical to believe in God. That kind of thing.

CASEY

So, is it logical to believe in a god?

MELVIN

Not a god, but "the" God. It's not logical to believe in just any god. But yeah. Would you like to hear the spiel?

CASEY

Not tonight. Thank you.

Casey stands up, stretching.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Well, I better get going. It's been too quiet, too long.

MELVIN

Probably just means Boudroy has Monkey tied up.

CASEY

Probably.

She steps off the porch and toward her house.

CASEY

Thanks for the soda. You have a good night, Melvin.

MELVIN

You too, Casey.

Melvin sits in the silence and darkness for a bit

EXT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.WEEKS LATER

Melvin is huffing, shoveling snow from his driveway. He stops for a moment, leaning on his shovel to catch his breath. At that moment, a school bus pulls up to the neighbor's house and stops. Monkey gets out, backpack and coat on, holding onto Boudroy's hand. They get to their driveway and stop.

MONKEY

(to Melvin)

Hey. You gonna do our driveway next?

MELVIN

Why don't you tie a shovel to the back of that dog of yours and have Boudroy ride him around a bit?

MONKEY

Yeah. That's a good one.

Monkey and Boudroy go inside their house. Melvin resumes shoveling and, after a bit, Monkey comes back outside.

MONKEY

Hey. Mom wants to know if you want a cup of hot chocolate.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

I don't know. Is that living room cleaned up yet?

MONKWY

Look, do you want the hot chocolate or not?

MELVIN

Don't care to banter out in the cold, eh? Yeah, sure. I'd love a cup. Let me get this last bit cleaned up and I'll be right over.

Melvin finishes up the row he's shoveling, sticks the shovel into the snow and hobbles over to Casey's house. He knocks on the door and Boudroy answers, smiling broadly at him.

MELVIN

Well, hey Boudroy. How was school today?

Boudroy grunts and lets Melvin in. The living room is a noticeable improvement over last time. Just a couple of Boudroy's toys on the floor. Monkey is sitting on the couch, with a steaming cup of cocoa.

Casey comes from the kitchen, holding a second cup of cocoa.

CASEY

You look like you need to warm up a bit.

MELVIN

Well, thanks.

She hands him the cup, then takes a moment to look him over.

CASEY

Are you sure your doctor's okay with you doing all this shoveling?

MELVIN

Yeah. Why wouldn't he? Doctors always tell you to exercise and eat right. This is exercise.

CASEY

But maybe you're over-exerting yourself.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

As un-chivalrous as this sounds,
you're welcome to start on your
driveway while I warm up if you'd
like.

Casey whips out a hat and gloves from her pockets and begins
to put them on.

CASEY

And as un-chivalrous as that was, I
was just about to suggest it. Warm
up. I'll probably be back in five
minutes.

Casey leaves by the front door. Melvin sits on the couch on
the opposite side of Monkey, while Boudroy wanders into the
kitchen.

MELVIN

Did the school start Boudroy on a
plan for his autism?

Monkey looks up from her phone, but doesn't put it down.

MONKEY

Yeah. They said they don't usually
start them so young, but since he's
in the preschool program, they're
gonna make an exception.

MELVIN

They don't usually start them so
young? What are they waiting
for? When he's graduated?

MONKEY

Hey. I'm just a messenger. I
didn't say it.

MELVIN

Yeah, I know. It's just
frustrating.

MONKEY

Mr. Jackson seems like a real nice
guy. I think he'll help Boudroy.

MELVIN

Oh, I'm sure he'll help him. I
just hope it's before he has to go
into kindergarten.

(CONTINUED)

Boudroy comes back in from the kitchen, leading the dog by the collar. He sits the dog down on the floor and covers him with a blanket. He grabs a book.

MONKEY

Hey, Boudroy, you learn anything from that Mr. Jackson?

Boudroy frowns and shakes his head.

MELVIN

Well, that's a relief.

Casey enters, cheeks bright red.

CASEY

Holy crud, it's cold out there. What was that? Like 30 minutes?

MELVIN

More like five.

CASEY

Seriously?

Melvin shrugs and stands up.

MELVIN

No worries. I'm warm enough.

Casey puts her hat and gloves on the table.

CASEY

Had to be done anyway. I've got work tonight.

MELVIN

I feel like I'm pestering you about this, but you know I've got connections up at the college. I could probably get you a better job...

CASEY

Not one that pays better.

MELVIN

Well...yeah.

CASEY

Melvin, I appreciate your offer, but I've got to find my own way. Don't start judging me now.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

It's not judging you. I'd feel better if you were in a job that wasn't so hazardous.

CASEY

Don't worry about me. I've got Alex to protect me. We haven't had any trouble that he couldn't take care of.

MELVIN

And what if this Alex...

Casey frowns and heads back to the kitchen.

CASEY

You're like an old mother hen. Stop smothering me.

MELVIN

Sorry. (under his breath) Maybe you need a mother hen.

CASEY

(from kitchen)

I don't and I heard that, I may add.

MELVIN

(to Monkey)

That mother of yours has ears like a blind rat.

MONKEY

You know, she heard you that time as well?

CASEY

(from kitchen)

I did.

MELVIN

These walls have too many ears. I'd rather be out in the cold.

He pauses at the door.

MELVIN

What time?

Casey sticks her head out of the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

The kids'll be over at 6:30. And Melvin...thanks as always for watching over them.

MELVIN

The deal was that you'd take care of me in my old age.

MONKEY

I think we passed that.

MELVIN

Nice one.

Melvin exits.

MONKEY

Mom, why don't you take him up on that and get the job at the university?

CASEY

Don't you start nosing around in my life as well, Monkey Maureen. There's room for only one father figure and it sure ain't you.

MONKEY

So, does that make Melvin your dad now?

Casey doesn't answer but goes back into the kitchen. Boudroy pats the dog's head, adjusts the dog's blanket and turns the page.

INT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.LATER THAT NIGHT

Melvin is cooking in the kitchen when the doorbell rings. He dries his hands and goes to the front door, opening it. There is Casey holding Boudroy with Monkey standing next to her. Monkey walks in as if she owns the place. Casey sets Boudroy down, who promptly wanders off. Casey hands Melvin a dvd.

CASEY

And here it is.

MELVIN

We are not watching that monstrosity again.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

You know it's his favorite. Plus, it'll give you time to play a game with Monkey.

MELVIN

If you come back and it's slightly burnt, you'll know why. What time?

Casey lifts up her phone.

CASEY

It's 6:40.

MELVIN

No, what time will you be back?

CASEY

Midnight at the latest.

MELVIN

We'll probably move this party over to your house at about 10.

CASEY

Okay. Gotta go.

MELVIN

Be safe.

CASEY

Yes, mother hen.

Melvin closes the door. Monkey is standing right behind him.

MONKEY

What's that horrible smell?

MELVIN

It's called dinner. You hungry?

MONKEY

Not for that.

MELVIN

We'll see.

Melvin leads her into the kitchen.

INT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.LATER THAT NIGHT

Melvin and Monkey are playing a game of Go Fish with a regular deck of cards at the dining room table.

MONKEY

...and she pushed me down the slide, head first. Go fish.

Melvin takes a card from the deck.

MONKEY

Any sevens?

Melvin shakes his head.

MELVIN

Go fish. And where was your teacher during all this?

MONKEY

I don't know. I was too busy falling down the slide.

MELVIN

Any sevens?

MONKEY

I just asked that, you cheater.

MELVIN

You did? Are you sure?

Monkey nods her head, so Melvin throws a couple cards over to her.

MELVIN

There. There's an eight in there for your troubles.

MONKEY

I don't want your useless eights.

Melvin looks over at the clock on the microwave, which shows 10:05.

MELVIN

You win anyway. We gotta go.

MONKEY

You gonna fall asleep on our couch again, grandpa?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

I'm not your grandpa and I will if
I feel like it. Wait.

Silence in the house.

MELVIN

Where's Boudroy?

MONKEY

I haven't heard him in forever.

He looks around.

MELVIN

The house is still standing.

He sniffs the air.

MELVIN

I don't smell anything burning. If
he started a fire, it's still
pretty small.

MONKEY

We'd better go have a look.

They get up and move into the living room. The movie is playing on the television and Boudroy is asleep on the couch. He is curled up around the CPR dummy's arm. Melvin and Monkey stand over him.

MONKEY

I don't think I've ever seen him
asleep before ten before.

MELVIN

Where'd he get that thing? I
thought I hid it well since last
time. Okay. Better get you two
home.

Melvin picks up Boudroy, while Monkey places his coat on top of him. Monkey gets on her coat and they all leave the house. Halfway to their house, Monkey stops.

MONKEY

Hey, you forgot your coat.

MELVIN

Too late now. I'll warm up at your
house.

(CONTINUED)

They get into Casey's house and Melvin walks Boudroy back and places him in his bed, covering him up. Melvin walks back into the living room. Monkey is on the couch.

MONKEY

So, you want to play some more cards?

MELVIN

Sorry. You've got school tomorrow. Time for bed.

MONKEY

30 more minutes.

MELVIN

No more minutes. Come on. Don't make me be the jerk.

MONKEY

But you're such a good one.

Melvin frowns.

MONKEY

Okay, I hear ya.

Monkey retreats to her room, leaving Melvin alone in the living room. he sees a comic book on the table and picks it up and looks it up. His eyes start to droop. He stares at the clock on the dvd player. 10:30

He starts reading the comic again. His eyes start to droop. They close. He wakes up with a start. 12:40.

He looks around the living room but there's nothing out of place. Melvin gets off the couch and looks out the window. No sign of Casey's car. He looks up at the snow beginning to fall and down the street where there are no signs of life.

He steps away from the window and feels in his pocket as if looking for keys but doesn't find them. He glances again at the window and hears a vehicle approaching.

Walking to the window, he sees a plow driving by and frowns. He turns back to the table, looks down the hallway, nods and turns towards the door. He opens the door, just in time to see Casey's car pull into the driveway.

Her closes the door and looks out as Casey gets slowly out of the car, pulls some items out and makes her way to the front door.

(CONTINUED)

She opens the door to Melvin waiting two feet away. She looks up at him and quickly down.

MELVIN

What do you think you're doing coming home this late? I was worried that you had driven off the road or...

Casey pushes past him and walks down the hall, mumbling as she passes.

CASEY

Look, I'm sorry. I...I gotta go.

Casey walks down the hall and into her room. Melvin stares after her, but seeing no sign of her. He sighs.

MELVIN

Well, don't let it happen again.

After a few more looks down the hallway, he leaves the house, turning off the lights as he goes.

INT.BEDROOM.MORNING

Melvin is asleep in bed when there is a loud knocking on his front door. He opens an eyelid. More loud knocking. He opens both eyes and eventually sits up.

MELVIN

Okay! I'm up!

More loud knocking. Quickly, he gets on a robe and goes down the stairs. Looking out the window, he doesn't see anyone, so he yanks the door open.

MELVIN

Look, I don't know...

He looks down to see Monkey in a coat covering her pajamas.

MELVIN

Monkey, what's the matter?

MONKEY

Mom won't come out of her room.

MELVIN

Is this unusual? Aren't you supposed to be at school?

She barges in past him.

(CONTINUED)

MONKEY

Yeah, I usually catch the bus, but mom didn't wake me up. She usually wakes me up and then goes back to sleep when I'm ready to go. But she didn't. The bus woke me up as it was honking outside. I waved it on and then tried to find out if Casey was sick or what, but she wouldn't answer when I knocked on her door. And it was locked and she never locks her door. I always thought she didn't know how.

Melvin wipes the sleep from his face.

MELVIN

Well, I'm sure it's nothing. Have you eaten yet?

Monkey shakes her head.

MELVIN

GO into my kitchen and eat and that'll give me time to get dressed.

She goes into the kitchen and he heads up the stairs, talking to himself as he goes.

MELVIN

I'm usually up at this hour anyway. Don't know why I slept in. Oh yeah, there was this lady that needed me to watch her kids...

INT.KITCHEN.MOMENTS LATER

Monkey is eating cereal at the kitchen table as Melvin comes in.

MELVIN

What's Boudroy doing? I assume he's awake.

Monkey shrugs, sticking another spoonful into her mouth. Melvin looks out the window to Casey's house.

MELVIN

Well, it hasn't exploded, so that's good news. Come on, we better find out what's what.

INT. CASEY'S HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER

Melvin is in the hallway, knocking on Casey's door. No answer.

MELVIN

Casey?

No answer. So, he bangs louder on the door.

MELVIN

Hey Casey, are you dead in there or alive? Better be alive. You have rent due.

Distant groaning comes from behind Casey's door.

CASEY

(from behind door)
Melvin?

MELVIN

Yeah, it's me. Monkey was a bit worried so she came and got me. Everything all right?

CASEY

(behind door)
I...I'm sick.

Melvin looks at Monkey, who is right next to him. He raises a questioning eyebrow.

MELVIN

Look, Casey, I'm gonna come right out and say this: I was married and a teacher for a heck of a long time and I can pretty much tell when someone is lying to me.

CASEY

(behind door)
Please just leave me alone. Can you take the kids to school for me, please?

MELVIN

I can take them to school, but I'm gonna come right back here and you're gonna let me know what's going on. And if you don't, I can take the hinges right off this door and let myself in.

(CONTINUED)

Without waiting for a reply, Melvin turns and walks into the living room. Boudroy is on the floor by the bookcase, holding onto the dog. Melvin turns to him.

MELVIN

Boudroy? You ready?

Boudroy looks up quickly at Melvin. He doesn't say anything but points his finger like a gun at him. Melvin nods.

MELVIN

Monkey?

She grabs her backpack.

MONKEY

Now, I'm ready.

EXT. MELVIN'S CAR.LATER

MONKEY

What's the matter with Casey?

MELVIN

I don't know. She was acting a little strange last night. I'll get to the bottom of it.

He parks in the school parking lot and they walk into the building and directly into the office. The secretary looks up.

SECRETARY

Yes?

MELVIN

I'm bringing Monkey and Boudroy to school. They're late.

SECRETARY

And you are?

MELVIN

Melvin Sommers.

SECRETARY

No, I mean, are you the grandparent?

MELVIN

No.

(CONTINUED)

After waiting a moment longer for Melvin not to supply any additional information, she points to a nearby clipboard.

SECRETARY

They'll need to be signed in.

Melvin looks at the clipboard and then takes off.

MELVIN

Okay. Have fun.

They watch him leave and then Monkey moves to sign herself and Boudroy in.

MONKEY

I'll do it. Sorry. He's not used to dealing with people.

The secretary nods and the kids take off for their classes.

INT. CASEY'S HOUSE. LATER

Melvin enters.

MELVIN

Casey?

No answer. He goes down the hallway and carefully knocks on her door.

MELVIN

Casey?

CASEY

(behind door)

Melvin, I appreciate your concern, but I just want to be left alone.

MELVIN

Is there anything I can do? I don't know what's going on, but I want to help.

Footsteps rapidly toward the door and it swings open. Casey is in her pajamas, her eyes look like she's been crying all night and she has a swollen bottom lip.

MELVIN

What happened to you?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

You want to help, Melvin? Fine. I was raped last night. Right outside Irma's by a couple of college kids. They were laughing and having a great time right as they raped me in my own car. Right in my own car.

She breaks down and Melvin awkwardly draws her in for a hug.

MELVIN

I am so sorry. I don't even know what...

CASEY

Me neither. I don't even know what.

They stay there for a moment before Melvin begins to lead her down the hallway.

CASEY

Where are we going?

MELVIN

We're gonna sit on the couch for a moment until I figure out what to do.

CASEY

What to do about what?

MELVIN

Well, you need to file a police report, right?

Casey stops.

CASEY

There's no way.

MELVIN

What? Of course, you're gonna file a report. Why wouldn't you?

CASEY

What good is that gonna do?

MELVIN

What good? Casey, they...they violated you. Do you want them to get away with it?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Melvin, this is a college town. And I'm a stripper...

MELVIN

Exotic dancer.

CASEY

I'm a stripper. Whose word are they gonna believe?

Melvin struggles with something to add.

MELVIN

Did anybody else see it? Where was that doorman...Alyx?

Casey throws herself down on the couch.

CASEY

Alyx took the week off and there was this new guy. He stayed inside a lot. He didn't even follow me outside when...

She begins softly crying again.

MELVIN

Look, I'm gonna get you something to drink. Do you want a hot chocolate or something?

Casey nods.

CASEY

Something warm would be good.

Melvin goes into the kitchen and starts fumbling around the cabinets, getting a mug and filling it with water before looking for the packets of hot chocolate.

MELVIN

Casey, I know a guy...a detective...maybe I should go talk to him and see what he says. It just doesn't feel right to let this go. At least I *knew* this guy. Hopefully, he still works there.

CASEY

This is too much. And I've already been through...too much. Just drop it, Melvin.

(CONTINUED)

Melvin comes back into the living room with the hot chocolate.

MELVIN

Well, what if they do it again to some other woman?

Casey sips her hot chocolate but doesn't answer.

MELVIN

I know this is still fresh for you...

CASEY

You have absolutely no idea what this feels like and I hope you never do. I just want it to go away.

MELVIN

But the sooner...

CASEY

Melvin, do you have idea of the looks I'll get when I go into that police station? And what about when they send me to the hospital later? It's bad enough the looks I get now when someone finds out what kind of work I do. That would be a thousand times worse.

MELVIN

How about if I go and talk to my friend? I won't tell him your name and I won't make you go in there if you don't want to. But it just doesn't seem like a good idea to just let this go.

Casey takes a long sip from her hot chocolate.

CASEY

You can go talk with your friend. And after he tells you the exact same thing that I just told you, I'd like you to drop it once and for all. Don't tell this to my kids. Don't ask me how I feel. Nothing. It's dead.

Melvin walks toward the door, then stops.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Casey, I'm sorry...

CASEY

You can't fix this, Melvin. And even if they got the kids responsible and they took them to court, it'd still be worse for me. My name and face would be all over the papers and news and I'd just be known as the stripper that got raped.

She puts the hot chocolate down and slowly begins to cry as Melvin exits.

EXT. POLICE STATION. LATER

Melvin pulls up and parks the car, gets out and walks into the station. Behind some bullet proof glass is a receptionist, who looks up as Melvin enters.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

MELVIN

Yeah. Is there a detective Desault that works here still?

RECEPTIONIST

Jerry Desault?

MELVIN

That's right.

RECEPTIONIST

As a matter of fact, he just walked in about 15 minutes ago. Want me to tell Jerry you're here?

MELVIN

Sure. That'd be great.

RECEPTIONIST

And you are?

MELVIN

Sorry. Melvin. Melvin Sommers.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay. Thank you.

She picks up the phone and hits three buttons.

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST

Hey, Jerry...Yeah, there's a Melvin Sommers to see you. Okay. Sure will.

She hangs up the phone and smiles at Melvin.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, he's got a few minutes right now, if you'd like to head on back.

She reaches under the desk and pushes a button that makes the door next to her buzz. When Melvin doesn't move, she smiles again.

RECEPTIONIST

You've got to push the door if you want to come in, honey.

MELVIN

Sorry. I don't have buzzers on my doors at home.

RECEPTIONIST

Just push the door open, please.

MELVIN

Sure.

He pushes the door open, takes a step inside and stops. She motions down the hall.

RECEPTIONIST

Jerry's office is down the hall, then take a left. It's the third door on the right.

MELVIN

Got it.

Melvin wanders down the hall and eventually finds Jerry's office, which is a small room with a big desk and an extra chair. When Melvin enters, Jerry sees him and smiles.

JERRY

Melvin Sommers. How you doing?

MELVIN

Well, hey Jerry. How you been?

(CONTINUED)

JERRY

Real good. Come in and have a seat.

Jerry closes the door behind Melvin.

MELVIN

(Struggling)

So, how's...the wife?

JERRY

Becca? Well, she's doing great. Say, how are you getting along? The guys at the bible study all miss you there.

MELVIN

Yeah, I've been really busy.

JERRY

I'm sure. Retirement's a chore. Definitely not for everyone.

MELVIN

Yeah. Hey Jerry, I have a business question for you.

JERRY

Kinda figured. But no problem. What can I do for you?

MELVIN

Well, I know this young lady and she got into some trouble, so I need your professional advice.

JERRY

Go for it.

MELVIN

Well, last night, just when she was getting off work, some college kids sexually assaulted her.

Jerry reaches into a drawer and gets out a pad of paper and a pen

JERRY

And when did this happen?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

About midnight, I think.

JERRY

And where does your friend work?

MELVIN

Well, uh, she works at Irma's.

Jerry stops writing for a minute.

JERRY

So, she's a stripper.

MELVIN

An exotic...yeah, she's a stripper.

JERRY

And does she think she can identify any of the men that attacked her?

MELVIN

I don't think she wants to.

JERRY

Why not?

MELVIN

Well, she thinks it'll turn into a he said/she said sort of thing and it won't go to court and if it did, it'd be worse off for her.

Jerry sighs and puts down the pen.

JERRY

Okay, I'm definitely not saying that she shouldn't report this. If there was a crime committed, and it sounds like there definitely was, then it needs to be investigated.

MELVIN

But?

JERRY

But in a way, she's right. This is a college town, Melvin, and there's been a ton of rapes committed in the past ten, twenty years. But most of them don't get reported.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Why?

JERRY

Because it was usually a friend of theirs that did it or someone they met at a party while she'd been drinking. And most of the time...yeah, the assailant claims it was consensual, so it does turn into a he said/she said thing. About the only time I've seen these things play out well for the victim is when there were witnesses. Were there any witnesses?

MELVIN

Well, there was a door guy.

JERRY

The bouncer? Alan, right?

MELVIN

Alyx. But he was on vacation. It was a new guy and...he was probably inside when it happened.

JERRY

So, no witnesses except the victim and the perpetrators.

Melvin shrugs.

JERRY

Yeah, I hate to say it, but I pretty much agree with her.

MELVIN

Pretty much?

JERRY

Unfortunately, you get a little used to disappointment in this profession. Unless one of the perps has a change of heart, or unless another witness should miraculously appear, it'll devolve into a story verses story thing. And if she won't even press charges...

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Well, can't hey, um, this is gonna sound stupid, but dust her for prints or whatever the dna thing they do nowadays?

JERRY

Would she be willing to submit to the required tests?

MELVIN

At the moment? No. But if I can get her to submit to it...

JERRY

Keep in mind that the longer we wait, the less chance we'll be able to detect anything. Now, don't get the wrong opinion, Mel. A crime was committed and I would heartily encourage your young lady friend to report it to my office as soon as possible.

Melvin rises from his chair.

MELVIN

But what's the point? I appreciate this, Jerry.

JERRY

No problem at all, sir. You know, Mel, all of us would still love to have you over to the study and if there's anything especially I can do...

MELVIN

You know, I'm getting there, Jerry. It's gonna be a bit.

Jerry nods.

JERRY

Gotcha. Well, like I said...if you need anything...

Melvin nods and leaves. He drives back to his house, occasionally frowning out the window.

MELVIN

You know, life was a whole lot easier when I had someone to talk

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
to, even someone who didn't really
talk back.

He pulls onto his street and stops. There is a strange car
parked in front of his neighbor's house.

MELVIN
Now, who is that?

He pulls into his driveway and walks over to Casey's
house. He knocks on the door and without much hesitation,
it opens to reveal Drew, smiling broadly.

ANDREW
Well, look who it is. Mel, right?

MELVIN
Right. Where's Casey?

ANDREW
Oh, she's taking a nap now. Had a
very rough night, in case you
haven't heard.

MELVIN
I heard. So, did she call you or
did you just happen to show up?

Andrew winks at Melvin.

ANDREW
Well, she called me, of course. A
woman needs to feel
secure...especially after something
traumatic happens. Know what I
mean?

MELVIN
The devil you know.

ANDREW
Yeah. You got it, Mel.

MELVIN
You just make sure you don't give
her another traumatic
experience. Know what I mean?

ANDREW
Or what? gonna have a heart attack
all over me, oldie? Is that the
plan? Look, Melvin, you wanna hear
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW (cont'd)
a good story? Well, I work at
Valley Machine Shop, over on the
West side of town. Know where
that's at?

Melvin nods.

ANDREW
Good. Anyway, there's a guy just
started working there a few months
ago, name of Tom, but he wanted
everyone to call him T cause that's
the kind of guy he was. But see, T
was the kind of guy that liked to
get into everyone else's
business. You know any guys like
that, Mel?

Melvin stares.

ANDREW
Yeah, we all know guys like
that. I'd be sitting in the break
room with a buddy and we'd be
talking about some stuff, and there
was old T at the next table, trying
to butt into our conversation every
couple of minutes. Now, I'm a
polite fella but he was starting to
get on my nerves a bit. So, after
the fifth time of offering his
advice where it wasn't wanted, I
turned to T and I told him that if
he goes around sticking his hand in
places where it don't belong, well,
if you're not careful, one of those
places might just take your hand
clean off. But I don't think T
took the hint too well, cause the
next day, he was back sitting at
the next table, butting into my
conversation like we'd been buddies
all my life. Well, I didn't say
anything then, cause if a fella
can't take a hint the first time,
maybe he's the kind of guy that
needs to learn how to take
hints. Know anybody like that,
Mel? When I was in the Army, there
were a whole lot of guys like that.

Melvin nods.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

So, like I said, I work at the machine shop and one of the machines in the shop I like to call the Chopper cause we feed tin through one side and the machine chops it at an angle just so. Well, it just so happened that T was working the chopper that day and in the middle of feeding the tin, the Chopper just turns off. Now, any of the rest of us know that even if a machine doesn't look like it's got power running to it, it always does and you never ever stick your hand inside without pulling the cord, cause any moment it could turn back on and there'd you be, minus a hand. I'm guessing that T, because he was so new, maybe didn't quite get that principle, cause he went and stuck his hand right into the chopper to maybe free up that tin. And what do you think happened then, Mel?

MELVIN

The chopper took his hand?

ANDREW

You are a quick one, Mel. The Chopper sprung to life and took his hand clean off. And you should have heard the squealing and saw all that blood. It was a mess. Just a plain mess. Well, the moral of the story is that the rest of us got to go home early that day. Three-day weekend. But that kid...T, we never did see him again. I bet he learned his lesson though. Know what I mean, Mel?

Melvin frowns, turning slightly white.

ANDREW

You have a nice day, Mr. landlord.

Andrew shuts the door.

INT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.MOMENTS LATER

Melvin enters and heads toward the kitchen.

MELVIN

You have a nice day, Mr.
Landlord. I'll show him nice day.

He moves to the sink, gets a glass of water and puts it on the counter, without looking at it. Instead, he stares out the window at the house next door.

MELVIN

Oh, Evelyn, if there ever was a
time I needed to talk with you,
this is it. I want to be there for
her, but he's in the way.

He stops, as if listening.

MELVIN

Yeah, I know. I know what I gotta
do. I just don't want to do it.

Slowly, he turns and makes his way into the living room. Very slowly, he lowers himself to the floor in front of the couch

MELVIN

If I get down, I ain't coming back
up again. Lord, you're gonna have
to raise me up. Oh, I'm gonna feel
this in my knees for a week.

He closes his eyes.

MELVIN

God, please help my friend
Casey. I know it's been a long
time since we talked but I need
your help right now. She's in a
really bad place and I could really
use you to intercede for me. Just
get in there and rive that Drew on
out. Or not. Your will be done,
no mine. Just please, God, wrap
your arms around Casey and love opn
her during this time. Love her
cause she really needs to know that
life isn't all about people taking
things from you and beating you
down. Teach her that you love her
and that no matter what anybody

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
else does, she can always trust
you. And Father, bring me back to
where I need to be. Help me to be
the man that you made me to be and
help this family you dropped in my
lap. Amen.

He stares out the window for a long time.

INT. MELVIN'S HOUSE. WEEKS LATER

There is a knock on Melvin's front door. Melvin, fully
dressed and sporting a ragged white beard, is carrying a
hammer. He opens the door to reveal Monkey. She has a
paper hat on her head.

MONKEY
Woah. Santa Claus. Nice beard.

She walks in around him.

MONKEY
Mind if I come in?

Melvin shuts the door behind her.

MELVIN
Yes, I mind. Go away.

MONKEY
Now is that any way to treat your
favorite neighbor, who you haven't
seen forever.

MELVIN
I didn't tell you to stop coming
around. So, what can I do for you?

MONKEY
Look, me and Boudroy...and mom, we
miss having you around. But
Drew...he runs a pretty tight
ship. And mom's not fighting him
anymore, so it's pretty much
whatever he says goes. But
Boudroy...he beats Boudroy...all
the time. And mom...

MELVIN
Hold on. What is that thing on
your head?

(CONTINUED)

She reaches up to touch her hat.

MONKEY

Oh hey, it's my hat. You like it? I made it in art.

MELVIN

That is a hat.

MONKEY

Yeah. It's a hat.

MELVIN

Are you sure?

MONKEY

I didn't come over here to talk about my hat.

MELVIN

The best I can do is call child services, but they may just take...

MONKEY

No, it's not that. Boudroy can take whatever Drew dishes out. He's tough. And Drew doesn't touch me at all. I stay out of his way. Mom needs your help with something. She wouldn't tell me what but she sent me over to get you.

MELVIN

I don't know if I can help your mother. I don't think I can help myself. Is Drew still there?

MONKEY

No, he took off last night. Said he needed a break. Said he'd be back in a few days.

MELVIN

Okay. Let me get my coat. I'm sorry I haven't been around...

MONKEY

It's okay. I don't think Drew would have allowed it anyway. He doesn't like you.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Good. I don't like him much either. Never was a big fan of bullies.

MONKEY

Is that what Drew is? A bully?

MELVIN

He threatens people and beats them up. What do you think?

MONKEY

Yeah. Sure sounds like a bully. But I thought bullies were only at school. I thought when you grew up, you had to quit being a bully.

MELVIN

Yeah. That'd be a nice world. Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. They even have adult ones these days.

INT. CASEY'S HOUSE. MOMENTS LATER

Casey is sitting nervously on the couch, fumbling with a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. Boudroy is quietly sitting on the floor next to the bookcase, playing with some toy cars., Monkey enters, leading Melvin, who shuts the door behind them. He smiles warmly.

MELVIN

Why hello.

Boudroy lights up, rushes over and hugs onto Melvin's leg. Melvin bends down and picks him up.

MELVIN

Hey there, Boudroy. How you doing?

Boudroy doesn't talk, but places a car on Melvin's head, driving it back and forth.

MELVIN

About as much as I expected.

Melvin looks to Casey, but she doesn't smile, only frowns deeper.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Monkey, do you think you could take Boudroy back to his room for a minute? I really need to talk with your mom and I think we need some alone time.

MONKEY

Between you and Drew, I never know what's going on around here. Okay. Come on, Boudroy. Let's go watch something. As usual.

They exit, leaving Melvin and Casey in an awkward silence.

MELVIN

Casey?

Casey looks up with tears in her eyes.

CASEY

I needed your help and you abandoned me.

MELVIN

I...You let that monster back into your life. You put him in charge of your house. What was I supposed to do: barge back in here and demand to be a part of your life?

CASEY

No, I just...I was hurt and you just left me. You had to go to the cops. You just had to prove that I was right. I just needed someone with me. I needed you with me and you just left me.

MELVIN

You're right. I'm sorry. That wasn't the smartest I've been. But why him?

CASEY

Who was I supposed to go to? Who do I really know around here? At least he acted sympathetic. That's what I needed. And now...now, I'll never get rid of him. And he knows it.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Well, maybe you could...

Casey screams in frustration.

CASEY

Quit trying to fix everything. I'm not a broken furnace or a leaky sink. I don't need a handy man. I need a father.

She places her hands on her face.

CASEY

A friend. I needed a friend. I need a friend.

MELVIN

You're right.

CASEY

And I don't need to hear that I'm right.

MELVIN

Holy crud. Okay, I get it.

CASEY

You don't, but that's okay.

MELVIN

So, what's going on, besides Drew?

CASEY

I'm pregnant.

MELVIN

With Drew?

CASEY

No, not with Drew. That would be easy. This...this is not easy.

MELVIN

I don't...

CASEY

That one night. I'm pregnant from that one night.

MELVIN

Casey, I'm so sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Yeah, well, I wish sorry could fix everything but it can't. So, I'm gonna have to.

MELVIN

What are you gonna do?

CASEY

What do you think? I'm not gonna keep it and have that night looking at me every day of my life. One night was bad enough.

MELVIN

So, you're giving it up for adoption?

CASEY

Oh, no. Do you think his highness would go around big with someone else's baby in me? Plus, it would stop me from bringing money in.

MELVIN

So, you're just gonna kill it?

CASEY

Well, what do you want me to do?

Casey slams the lighter on the table.

CASEY

I didn't ask for this. I didn't ask for any of this and I sure as hell don't deserve it. I didn't do anything wrong here.

MELVIN

Well, what about the baby? Did it do anything to deserve this?

CASEY

No, but it's father sure did.

MELVIN

IS that how we treat the children of criminals? Make them pay for their father's crimes?

CASEY

I thought you'd be on my side. Why are you acting like this is my fault?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

I am on your side.

Melvin moves to sit on the couch, before being stopped by a look from Casey.

MELVIN

Okay. It's not your fault. None of this is your fault. But you have to deal with it. And it's not fair and it's not right. But you have to deal with it. And I don't think taking the life of that baby is gonna make up for what happened to you. I just think it'll make it worse.

CASEY

What do you know? Have you ever been raped?

MELVIN

No.

CASEY

As a professor or whatever...did you ever have to put up with drunk college girls sticking ones down your underwear?

MELVIN

What?!

CASEY

Did you ever see any of your students with spit coming out of their mouths, leering at you with those eyes that not only already undressed you but had you in the sack as well, yelling, "Take it off. Take it off."

MELVIN

No.

CASEY

Right. So don't come talking to me about tough decisions. You don't know tough decisions.

MELVIN

You're right. I've never been in those situations. I've never had

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)

to deal with guys looking at me or treating me like that and I honestly hope I never do. Cause that'd be weird. That's not fair to anyone. But what if that was Boudroy in there or...

CASEY

Boudroy was my child.

MELVIN

That child in there is your child too.

CASEY

But, I never asked for this one. It's like...It's like instead of someone stealing something from me, they came in the middle of the night and gave me something I can't get rid of. Like someone crept into my room one night and gave me a disease. And now, you're telling me I just need to what? Deal with it? Accept it? Why should I? Now, I've got an appointment in just under forty minutes at a clinic on Smart Street and I need someone to take me. Can you please just help me, Melvin? Don't fix it. Don't try and figure it out. Just help me.

Melvin sighs.

MELVIN

You are never going to convince me that killing...

CASEY

Abortion.

MELVIN

Whatever. Stripper/exotic dancer. You're never going to convince me that it's the right thing to do, cause it isn't. And if I take you, I'm gonna try and talk you out of it the whole way and will probably follow you into the clinic.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Embarass yourself all you want. Just don't get violent. I've had enough violence.

MELVIN

And yet, you're choosing to solve your problems with...nevermind. I won't get violent. Now, what are we gonna do with your kids?

CASEY

What do you mean?

MELVIN

You can't just leave them here, all by themselves.

CASEY

They're here by themselves all the time.

MELVIN

That doesn't make it right.

CASEY

Then you find a place for my kids.

MELVIN

Let me go home and see what I can come up with.

He heads toward the door.

CASEY

You do that. And hey Melvin...thanks.

MELVIN

Don't thank me yet.

EXT. MELVIN'S HOUSE.SECONDS LATER

Melvin is walking back to his house when he spots College Boy 1 and College Boy 2 up on his porch. He smiles broadly as he approaches them.

MELVIN

Is this fortuitous or what? What do you say, boys? Back to try again?

(CONTINUED)

COLLEGE BOY 2

Dr. Sommers, I swear we'll make this quick. We've got it down to just one question. And, if you could help us...

MELVIN

I'll help you.

COLLEGE BOY 2

What?

College Boy 2 turns to College Boy 1, who shrugs. Melvin walks the stairs to the porch.

MELVIN

I said I'd help you. But I need a quick favor.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Sure, anything.

MELVIN

Anything?

COLLEGE BOY 1

Within reason.

MELVIN

Reason can go a long ways sometimes. Okay. I need you to watch my next door neighbor's kids while I take their mom to...a doctor.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Is that the one with the dog?

MELVIN

Yeah.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Can the dog go outside while we watch them?

COLLEGE BOY 2

Are you afraid of dogs?

COLLEGE BOY 1

I'm afraid of that one.

(CONTINUED)

COLLEGE BOY 2

Fair enough.

MELVIN

Let me grab my keys and we'll be off.

Melvin goes into his house.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Do you think he's gonna do it this time?

COLLEGE BOY 2

I don't know. Maybe it's some elaborate trick.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Maybe we should get paid in advance.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Maybe we should go back and beg Professor Bronson for extra credit instead. Maybe he'll let us go interview someone in prison or a crack dealer or something.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Yeah. That'd be nice.

Melvin exits the house, locking the door behind them. They follow him as he leaves the porch.

MELVIN

What class is this for?

COLLEGE BOY 1

It's part of our Intro to Philosophy class. The section on philosophy of religion.

MELVIN

Ooh. How fancy. Gonna have a nice degree with that someday.

COLLEGE BOY 2

I don't think it's worth it.

They reach Casey's house and stop.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Dr. Sommers, I don't mean to be disrespectful, but can we get paid beforehand?

MELVIN

Paid? in what? Answers?

COLLEGE BOY 2

Um, yes.

MELVIN

Well, boys, how do I know I can trust you to uphold your end of the bargain? What if I answer all your questions and you just dart out of here while I'm gone, leaving those two poor kids high and dry?

COLLEGE BOY 1

We wouldn't do that.

MELVIN

But how do I know you wouldn't?

COLLEGE BOY 2

We could give you our word.

MELVIN

And I could give you my word that I'll answer all your questions when I get back.

He opens the door and walks in with the college boys following. Casey is in her coat, waiting.

MELVIN

Casey, these are, um, some students of a colleague of mine. They'll be watching your kids while we're gone.

Casey shrugs.

CASEY

Good luck.

Casey and Melvin leave. The college boys look around.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Now what?

(CONTINUED)

Monkey comes out of the bedroom and down the hall, followed by Boudroy, who is dragging a toy rifle. They stop at the end of the hall and stare at the boys.

MONKEY

Who are you and where's our mom?

COLLEGE BOY 2

They, um, went somewhere and we're gonna watch you.

MONKEY

(she motions to Boudroy)

Yeah. Okay. Watch him.

Monkey heads to the couch. Boudroy grins and heads toward the kitchen. The college boys follow him.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Hey. Want me to read you a story?

EXT. MELVIN'S CAR. MINUTES LATER

They drive in silence for a long moment.

CASEY

I thought you were gonna try and talk me out of this. Although, technically you've already tried and failed.

MELVIN

I haven't argued in a while. I'm rusty.

CASEY

Uh huh. Take a right here.

MELVIN

I know how to drive. Thank you. What if that baby were Boudroy or Monkey? Would you still want to get rid of it?

CASEY

We've been over this already. But, it's not. Boudroy and Monkey are at home being watched by some kids you hardly know.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

I know them. Kinda. I'm just trying to point out that the baby you've got in you has nothing to do with the guy or guys who did that to you...

CASEY

...to the guys who raped me and impregnated me without my consent, you mean.

MELVIN

That baby has nothing to do with the guys that raped you. Yes. It's innocent.

CASEY

So was I, before I was raped. Left.

MELVIN

I know where I'm going. Thank you. If you give the baby up for adoption, I'll help with the costs. Heck, I'll pay for it all myself.

CASEY

Why is this a big deal to you?

MELVIN

Cause that's a human life inside of you. It's not just a sperm or an egg. It's a living, breathing human life and killing it now won't do anything to fix the hurt those men did to you. It'll just make it worse.

They pull into the clinic parking lot and Melvin turns off the engine.

MELVIN

Please take one more second to think this through.

CASEY

I've thought about it more this week than I've ever thought about anything. If I'm pregnant, I lose my job. Or, I'll lose enough time off work that I can't pay my bills.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

You live in my house. I can help with that.

CASEY

It's not only that. It's Drew. Do you know he killed the dog?

MELVIN

What?

CASEY

The dog wouldn't stop barking, so he kicked it until it stopped. It whined a lot and then, in the morning, it was dead. Boudroy would have stayed with it all night, but Drew wouldn't let him.

MELVIN

Casey, you've got to get out of there before he...

CASEY

Do you think I haven't thought about all that? I know. Next time it could be Boudroy or Monkey or me.

MELVIN

You could get a restraining order. Or go to the police.

CASEY

You have a lot of faith in the law, don't you? Drew isn't a dog with rabies. You can't just fire a shotgun in the air and he'll take off running. He nuts but he's not stupid. And the cops can only do drive-bys. They can't give any real help. He'll just wait until they're gone, come back some night and kill all of us.

MELVIN

You could move in with me.

CASEY

What are you gonna do, Melvin? Got a gun, do ya?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

No.

CASEY

Right. I'm gonna do what he wants for now and wait. He'll get bored. He'll leave. His kind always do.

MELVIN

There's got to be another way.

Casey opens the door.

CASEY

This is the way I'm taking. I'm sorry. I feel like I'm causing you to do something you don't wanna do. Which is stupid. You're not pregnant.

She slams the door and heads into the clinic. He can hear her talking to herself as she walks. He watches her go into the building.

MELVIN

Okay. Now what? I should just drive away. But I can't leave her here. Evelyn, what would you do? Jesus, what about you? I'm too old for tough decisions. I should have stayed in my nice, comfy house and left everyone else alone. Relationships are too messy. Family is too difficult.

He opens the door.

MELVIN

Oh well, time to get messy.

Melvin gets out of the car and heads into the clinic. Just inside the door is a small waiting room, which is empty. There is a stern-looking receptionist, who eyes him as soon as he walks in and doesn't take her eyes off him.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Yes?

MELVIN

There was a young lady that just came in here. I'm with her.

(CONTINUED)

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

We don't allow anyone but patients back in our examination rooms. You'll have to wait here.

MELVIN

But I need to tell her something. It's extremely important.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Oh, let me guess. Don't go through with the procedure because God wouldn't want it. Or maybe, don't go through with it cause you'll regret it. Did I guess right?

MELVIN

Wow. You seem a bit...jaded.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Well, maybe it's because I've had to deal with sanctimonious morons on a daily basis who get in the way of a woman and her legal right to do whatever she wants with her body. Maybe it's because I'm tired of seeing people like you picketing in the parking lot, holding up disgusting pictures and calling me the devil.

MELVIN

Do you need a hug?

A large man in orderly whites appears at the door leading to the back rooms.

ORDERLY

Yeah? You got another one?

Melvin shrugs.

MELVIN

What? I haven't done anything. I just want to talk with Casey for a moment before she has the...procedure.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

And I told you that you can't go back there. You'll have to wait up here until she's done.

(CONTINUED)

Melvin shrugs again and takes a seat. The Orderly looks a question at the receptionist, who motions with her head to the back. The Orderly disappears. There is silence for a few moments.

MELVIN

So, read any good books?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Would you like to set up an appointment?

MELVIN

What? Why?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Because I'm a receptionist. I setup appointments. That's what I do.

MELVIN

And you're not allowed to talk?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Look, every time someone comes in that's not a patient and wants to talk, they want to argue about abortion. You know, we do a lot more than women's health than just abortions. We do health screenings. We discuss sexual health with women, like your friend, that wouldn't be able to get these benefits anywhere else.

MELVIN

Why do you automatically assume that I'm against abortion?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Aren't you?

MELVIN

I am, but that's beside the point. There's nothing in my demeanor or appearance that should lead you to believe that I came in here to argue about abortion. Have I said one thing about abortion?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Well, you just said it like eight times. But why else...

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

...would I be in here? There could be a million reasons. I could be coming in here to tell my friend that she left her purse in the car or that she forgot to fast before the procedure. I could be here for emotional support and that's true enough. Just because I came here doesn't especially mean I came in here to talk her out of an abortion.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Okay, well, I apologize. I didn't mean to jump to conclusions. Are you the young lady's father?

MELVIN

Well, no, I'm her landlord. She needed a ride up here and I didn't want her to go alone. Now, it just so happens that I was going to talk with her a bit about not going through with this...but I kinda had my say in the car over here and she didn't look like she was going to budge.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

So, why did you come in here? You know why she was going to have the abortion, right? I mean, she told me and I can't believe that you'd want to talk her out of it. I know you can't understand, but how would you feel if you had someone else's baby inside you? You wouldn't want to live with that every day of your life.

MELVIN

You're right. It was horrible what happened to her.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

It was beyond horrible. It was evil.

MELVIN

Okay. Yeah, it was evil. I think anybody would agree with that.

(CONTINUED)

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

And what happens to that boy if he isn't caught? Nothing. She gets stuck with a baby and he gets away without paying for his crimes. Where's the justice in that?

MELVIN

You're right. It's not fair.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

So, it's a good thing these ladies have a place to go to get a legal abortion. Otherwise, they'd have to live with what's done to them for the rest of their lives.

MELVIN

So, is every woman who comes in for an abortion a victim of rape?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

No. It's the same principle though.

MELVIN

Okay, it's a bad world. But what did the baby do to deserve not to live?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Until it's born, it's not really a baby. It's just a fetus.

MELVIN

Well, technically a fetus is a baby.

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

A potential baby. Not a real one.

MELVIN

Hold on. I think if you'd take that baby out of the womb, , I think you'd find that it's pretty much a baby, just like one that was born. So, is the fact that it's still in the mother's womb make it a fetus instead of a baby? And does that make it not a person with a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

(CONTINUED)

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Well, sure. If it's in the mother, then it's all just the mother's body. It's not technically a person until it's a separate person.

MELVIN

Even if it has a completely separate dna than the mother?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Well, doesn't a virus that's inside a person have a completely separate dna?

MELVIN

True. but a virus will never have the potential to be a human either, will it? And what if a stranger came up and hit a pregnant woman, who wanted to keep her baby, and it ended up killing the baby? Do you think there would be any court in the land that would dismiss the charge because all they really did was kill a fetus?

CLINIC RECEPTIONIST

Well, no.

MELVIN

So, are you telling me, then, that the only real difference between a baby and a fetus is whether it's wanted?

CASEY

It's over.

They both look over to see Casey standing at the entrance to the back rooms. She's dressed in her regular clothes. Melvin rushes over to support her , but she shrugs him off. Then she leans heavily on him.

CASEY

Thanks for staying around. I know you didn't agree with this but I didn't really want to call Drew to pick me up.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Yeah. That wouldn't have been good.

As they pass the receptionist, Melvin nods at her.

MELVIN

It was good talking with you. If you ever want to finish our conversation, the name's Melvin Sommers. Come look me up.

Receptionist nods as they exit. As they move to the car, Casey groans.

MELVIN

Are you okay?

CASEY

I just had an abortion. What do you think?

MELVIN

Did they give you any medicine or anything?

He opens the door for her. She gets in.

CASEY

A local anesthetic.

He goes around the car and gets in the driver's side.

MELVIN

No. I mean for after.

CASEY

No.

They ride in silence before Casey begins to cry softly.

CASEY

I'm sorry. I know you didn't want me to, but I did anyway. And I just...

MELVIN

Shh. What's done is done.

CASEY

Don't hate me.

Melvin smiles.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

I would never hate you. You know, for the first five years of our marriage, Evelyn and I tried desperately to have a baby. But nothing worked. We were so frustrated and, I've got to admit, that we were both a little mad at God.

CASEY

And I just got rid of one. So, you hate me.

MELVIN

Shhh. Let me finish. If we'd had a baby, she would have been about your age. And I guess that's what I feel you're like to me. You're like my daughter.

Casey wipes her eyes and stares straight out the windshield.

CASEY

I must be such a disappointment...as a surrogate daughter.

Quiet...then Melvin begins to softly laugh.

CASEY

What?

MELVIN

Sorry. The surrogate daughter part. That was funny. No, if I had a daughter, she'd have made mistakes, done things her way. She would have done things I don't like, not taken my advice. Kids are like that.

CASEY

So I am a disappointment.

MELVIN

And no matter what she said or did, I would have loved her no matter what cause she's my daughter.

Melvin reaches one arm over and hugs Casey.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

So, no. I would never hate my child no matter what she did, no matter what choices she made. I may have been disappointed at times, just like she'd be disappointed in me too. And I may have allowed her to face the consequences of her actions, but I would never, ever hate her.

After a moment, he releases the hug and gets two hands back on the steering wheel. Silence for a moment as they drive.

CASEY

What am I gonna do about Drew?

MELVIN

Now, that is gonna be a problem. He's dangerous.

CASEY

I know.

MELVIN

And he's not gonna leave easily.

CASEY

Yeah.

MELVIN

Tomorrow, I'll go talk with some friends and see what we can do about Drew. When's he due back?

CASEY

Who knows? Sometimes bullying takes a lot out of him, so he needs a break.

They pull into Melvin's driveway.

MELVIN

Last time he left, how long was he gone?

CASEY

Two days. But this time...Well, he lost his job at the machine shop, so he doesn't have to be back to work on Monday. But he has to go to the unemployment office sometime next week. I don't know. Two, three days.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Maybe you and the kids can move in with me...

CASEY

And how is he not going to find us? You're right next door.

MELVIN

I'll think of something.

He gets out, goes over to her side and finds that she's already opened her door. He helps her out.

CASEY

How will we get all our stuff moved over?

MELVIN

I'll get some help. Maybe I can get those college boys. They owe me.

CASEY

For what? For making them watch my kids?

MELVIN

Okay. They will owe me. Or maybe I can get some help somewhere else?

They make it to Casey's front door and open it to find chaos. College Boy 1 is sitting on the floor, reading a book to Monkey. College Boy 2 is chasing a half-naked Boudroy, who has grasped in his hand a book. They run into the kitchen.

COLLEGE BOY 2

I need that for school. Come on.

College Boy 1 looks up as they enter.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Well, that took forever.

There's a small crash in the kitchen.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Ow! Dang it!

Melvin looks over at Casey and motions toward her. She nods.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Boudroy, give it back to him now!

College Boy 2 enters the living room, clutching the book.

MELVIN

All right, boys, what do you say we give this lady a little peace and go back to my house so I can give you your precious answers?

COLLEGE BOY 1

About time.

MELVIN

Casey, we'll see you later.

CASEY

Okay. Boudroy, clean up this mess!

They head over to Melvin's house.

MELVIN

Now, do you gentlemen remember the questions you were supposed to ask me?

COLLEGE BOY 1

You know, sir, we would have picked someone else if we could but Dr. Bronson was very insistent that we ask you. He said he didn't want inadequate replies.

MELVIN

Oh, I bet he said that. He's been itching to debate me since before I retired.

Melvin steps up on the porch and stops in front of the door.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Dr. Sommers, are you all right?

COLLEGE BOY 1

Please tell me you're not having a heart attack.

MELVIN

No, I'm not having a heart attack. Why does everybody say that?

(CONTINUED)

COLLEGE BOY 1
Cause you're old.

College Boy 2 elbows College Boy 1.

COLLEGE BOY 1
Ow! What?

COLLEGE BOY 2
Don't tell him he's old. That's
rude.

Melvin fumbles for the key in his pocket and opens the front door.

MELVIN
Although it is true. Your friend's
right. Never tell a man he's
old. It's rude. I was just
looking for my keys.

COLLEGE BOY 1
Sorry.

He leads them into the kitchen and motions at the chairs. they sit on one side of the table, he sits on the other.

MELVIN
Here you go, boys. Now, anybody
want anything to drink?

COLLEGE BOY 2
I think I'd rather just get this
over with so I can go back to
playing video games. Plus, I've
got a test in Economics on
Wednesday I've got to study for.

COLLEGE BOY 1
Yeah.

MELVIN
Okay. Whatcha got?

College Boy 2 unwraps a piece of paper and reads directly from it.

COLLEGE BOY 2
David Hume, the Eighteenth Century
Scottish Philosopher said...

MELVIN

Oh my gosh. Are we seriously going to do Hume right out of the gate? He's supposed to be your big guns. What kind of strategy is this?

COLLEGE BOY 2

But...it's the first question.

MELVIN

Oh, so this is your professor's fault? Is that what you're claiming?

College Boy 1 and College Boy 2 speak at the same time.

COLLEGE BOY 1

No.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Yes.

MELVIN

Okay. Doesn't matter. Hit me with your Hume quote.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Okay. But its not a quote. He said that we shouldn't be surprised that the details of this universe are especially advantageous to life on earth as human are here to observe them. If the details were not advantageous, we would not exist. How does that correspond with the Anthropic Principle and what conclusions do you...

MELVIN

Yeah, I get it. Don't hurt yourself. Well, what do you fellas think that means?

The boys look at each other and then back at Melvin. They are lost, but College Boy 2 tries anyway.

COLLEGE BOY 2

It means that we should expect the Anthropic Principle to not reflect the state of the earth as it is not...um...

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Yeah. Here, I've got a crazy idea. Let me see that paper.

College Boy 2 hands him the paper.

MELVIN

And the pen.

They hand him their pen. Melvin starts writing down answers, then suddenly stops, looking directly at them.

MELVIN

Hey...

COLLEGE BOY 1

What? We didn't do anything.

MELVIN

No, I've got an idea. This is gonna take me a bit to write my answers down. When's your Intro to Philosophy class next?

COLLEGE BOY 2

Tomorrow at 9 to 9:50.

COLLEGE BOY 1

In the morning.

MELVIN

Well, yeah. That's a given. And that's in the Schaefer building on campus?

COLLEGE BOY 2

Uh huh.

MELVIN

How about you let me finish this tonight and I'll bring it to class tomorrow? I need to talk with Professor Bronson. Maybe I can earn you two a little extra credit.

COLLEGE BOY 2

That would be great, Dr. Sommers. I'm not doing so hot in that class.

COLLEGE BOY 1

Yeah. Me neither.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Okay. That sounds like a
plan. Well, I'll see you tomorrow.

The two stay at the table for a minute while Melvin writes. After a moment, he looks up to see them still there.

MELVIN

Do I need to show you where the
door is?

COLLEGE BOY 1

No, we saw it on the way in.

MELVIN

Then why don't you use it? I'll
see you tomorrow at 9.

COLLEGE BOY 2

What if you don't show up?

MELVIN

Bring the class here.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Okay.

They exit. Melvin thinks a bit, then starts writing.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM. NEXT MORNING

College Boy 1 and College Boy 2 enter, taking seats. The room is already half-filled with students. After a moment, Dr. Denny Bronson enters, carrying a load of books which he places on the table next to the podium. He looks up to the clock on the wall as a few more students wander in.

Dr. Bronson walks up to the white board and writes "REASON" and below it writes "FAITH".

BRONSON

It's 9:00 sharp so let's get
started. As we saw a couple days
ago with the empirical
philosophers, the reason of the Age
of Reason supplanted the
dictatorial control of the
church. No longer would faith
dictate the confines of reason...

Bronson draws a circle around faith and reason and then a smaller circle around reason.

(CONTINUED)

BRONSON

...but reason and faith would be contained in what Stephen Gould calls Non-Overlapping Magisteriums. They were separate but not entirely equal.

He erases the big circle and draws circles around each word.

BRONSON

No, what Kant, Hume and the others were trying to tell us was that only what could be confirmed by the senses, only the empirical could justify knowledge. In other words, the natural could never justify the supernatural.

MELVIN

By definition, the natural will never be able to justify the supernatural as the supernatural cannot be proven through empirical methods. It is other than natural.

Bronson looks over to the door to see Melvin in the doorway. A large smile crosses his face.

BRONSON

Dr. Sommers. Thanks for gracing us with your presence. Class, this is Dr. Melvin Sommers, retired professor of Theology and Philosophy.

Melvin enters the classroom and shakes hands with Denny.

MELVIN

It's good to see you, Denny. You look like you're doing well.

BRONSON

I am. Thanks. And it's good to see you out of your house and back on your old stomping grounds. I see my plan worked.

Melvin motions to the two college kids.

MELVIN

So, you sent those two to wake the sleeping bear cause you wanted to see what would happen?

(CONTINUED)

BRONSON

No, I wanted to wake the bear from its slumber because hibernation time had long past. Time for the bear to come awake again.

Melvin shakes his head and smiles.

MELVIN

You were one of my favorite students.

BRONSON

I worked hard to be.

MELVIN

But your thesis was trite and full of unnecessary assumptions. You did your best.

Melvin turns to the board.

MELVIN

Now, let's see what you have here. Oh see, here's your problem.

He erases the circles then draws a circle around each word so that the circles overlap one another.

MELVIN

See, I have excellent reasons to justify my faith.

BRONSON

Excellent empirical reasons?

MELVIN

Sure. I can not only use logic to argue for the existence of God, but I can point to the appearance of design in the universe as well as the Anthropic Principle.

BRONSON

And I can point to Evolution, which provides the appearance of design.

MELVIN

Appearance of design? So, you're saying that a completely random process could produce a watch or a laptop or a cell phone?

(CONTINUED)

BRONSON

Two things. One, it's not a completely random process if it's guided by Natural Selection. Two, I didn't say it could produce things that are designed, I said it could produce things that looked designed.

Melvin smiles broadly.

MELVIN

Professor Bronson, it's good to be with you once again. I've misused your assumptions.

BRONSON

Same here, Dr. Sommers.

Melvin turns back to the board.

MELVIN

Now, as to Natural Selection. Let's consider that Deus Ex Machina...

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM. LATER

Melvin and Bronson are sitting in the first row of the class. The students have left.

BRONSON

I thought we'd never see your ugly mug around here. I was so sorry to hear about Evelyn. I know it must have been a shock.

MELVIN

Knocked me off my feet for the last year. Denny, I'm in a spot of trouble and could use your help.

BRONSON

Well, I don't have much I could lend you. Unfortunately, college professors don't get paid much.

MELVIN

No, it's not that. Evelyn had life insurance, so I'm in no danger of being evicted any time soon. I've got a friend who's in an abusive relationship...

(CONTINUED)

BRONSON

And you need me to rough up the abuser? Well, I'm not much to look at, but I'm wiry.

MELVIN

No, I need your help with a solution. Shoot. You ask me any question about defending the existence of God or the veracity of the Bible and I'm all over it. Heck, you ask me how to unclog a sink or fix a dishwasher and I can handle that too. But you start me on interpersonal relationships and I'm drowning.

BRONSON

Well, I'm hardly your senior when it comes to relationship issues. Shouldn't you just call the police if it's that bad?

MELVIN

That's what I thought. And they could issue a restraining order, but I don't think it'd be much use against this guy.

BRONSON

Okay. It's just like building an argument. Let's start with the foundation. Who's this friend of yours?

MELVIN

You remember I rent the house next door to me?

BRONSON

Sure.

MELVIN

Well, currently I'm renting to this woman and her two kids. Sweet kids. A handful, but sweet.

BRONSON

And what's this woman do for a living?

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Ah, well...um, she's an exotic dancer.

BRONSON

An exotic dancer? Yes, she takes her clothes off. How exotic.

MELVIN

Well, I didn't want to say stripper. That makes it worse.

BRONSON

I'm sure it does.

MELVIN

Well, she was originally dating this guy and he ended up being a bigger jerk than most. But after he hit her once, she kicked him out.

BRONSON

Problem solved.

MELVIN

Kinda. But no. Something really bad happened and, in a moment of weakness, she let him back in. Now she can't get rid of him. He's beating her kids and maybe her.

BRONSON

So, why doesn't she just kick him out like last time?

MELVIN

I don't think it's that simple. I don't think he'll stop at just hitting her next time.

BRONSON

And the police are not an option why?

MELVIN

Let's just say they're a little limited in what they can do. They can issue a restraining order, but they can't always be there to protect her. All he has to do is wait and come at night and do what he wants to her and the kids. I've

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)

asked her and the kids to move in with me...

BRONSON

What? You asked a strip...an exotic dancer and her kids to move in with you? Apparently, you've changed...

MELVIN

No, it's nothing like that. She's just...she's kind of like a daughter to me. I figure if she moved in with me, then at least I could protect her.

BRONSON

Have you been working out?

MELVIN

I know. I realize I'm old and can only do so much. That's why I need your help.

BRONSON

You don't ask for much, do you? Okay, let me think about this for a bit and see what I can come up with. I'm thinking of these two guys that give tough love a new meaning. You know, I had an ulterior motive for siccing those two students on you. We've had a gap in our philosophy of religion department for awhile now. Can't seem to find anyone capable enough to fill the hole.

MELVIN

Yeah, it's a tough academic world out there.

BRONSON

Melvin, you were the best. Still are the best. Do you think you could fill a couple spots for us until I can get somebody permanent?

MELVIN

Tell you what, you help me with my problem and sure. But I need an extra favor.

(CONTINUED)

BRONSON

Anything.

MELVIN

Well, I told a certain friend of mine...

BRONSON

A certain exotic dancer friend?

MELVIN

Sure. I told her that she didn't have to keep working where she was. That there were other jobs out there.

BRONSON

I see. Well, if you took the position, I'm sure you'd need an assistant. Plus, I was needing another academic advisor for the department. Think she'd be any good?

MELVIN

I think she'd be the best.

EXT. CASEY'S HOUSE.DAYS LATER

Drew pulls up between the two houses and stares at Casey's house. Slowly, he gets out of his car and walks up to the door. He grasps the knob, opens the door and stops.

Two burly men are sitting on the couch, watching tv. They look up in surprise at Drew, standing in the doorway.

BURLY MAN 1

Do you need something?

DREW

Yeah. I'm...where's Casey?

BURLY MAN 2

You must be Drew.

They both rise off the couch to reveal that they are a lot bigger than what they first appeared. Drew takes a step back as they move toward the door.

DREW

Hey, look. I don't want any trouble. I'm just looking for my girlfriend.

(CONTINUED)

BURLY MAN 2

Why? You want to beat on her some more?

Drew stares for a moment before composing himself.

DREW

Look, I don't know what she told you, but it's a lie.

BURLY MAN 2

Sure it is.

BURLY MAN 1

I'm pretty sure she never wants to see your face again. SO, why don't you just beat it?

DREW

Where is she? And why doesn't she just tell me that herself?

BURLY MAN 2

Maybe she's afraid all you're gonna do is hit her again.

BURLY MAN 1

I don't know. Maybe it's how he covers for his insecurity.

BURLY MAN 2

Didn't get enough love as a child, so you've got to resort to your fists to regain control, is that it?

BURLY MAN 1

Classic maladaptive behaviour, based on false assumptions and learned with a false social structure.

BURLY MAN 2

It's sad really. So, what you need, pal, is to break free from your false social constructs and this cycle of violent problem solving.

DREW

Where's Casey again?

(CONTINUED)

BURLY MAN 2

Forget about Casey. You need Casey about as much as an alcoholic needs another bottle of whiskey.

BURLY MAN 1

Or like an addict needs his next fix.

DREW

I don't understand.

BURLY MAN 2

Then come in. We'll be glad to share a bit with you.

DREW

Okay?

Drew and the two burly men step inside, closing the door behind them.

INT. MELVIN'S HOUSE. WEEKS LATER

Melvin is sitting in a chair, reading a paper, while Boudroy drive hot wheel cars up and down his arm. The doorbell rings. Melvin gets up and goes to the door.

He opens the door to find Professor Bronson and his wife, Julia

MELVIN

Denny. And Julia, you look stunning as usual. Thanks so much for coming over. And thanks for all your help. Come in. Come in. Can I take your coats?

Bronson and Julia remove their coats and hand them to Melvin.

BRONSON

Yes. Thank you.

Bronson hands Melvin a bottle of wine.

BRONSON

Here. I brought over this for dinner. A guest never arrives empty handed.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Thanks. Although I don't drink.

Bronson grabs back the bottle.

BRONSON

Excellent. More for me.

JULIA

Denny!

BRONSON

Okay, maybe I'll save it for another occasion.

Bronson looks up to see Boudroy staring at him. He turns to Melvin.

BRONSON

What's the matter with him? Never seen a philosophy professor before?

MELVIN

He always gets that way around people who argue around logical incompatibilities.

BRONSON

So how does he ever put up with you?

Casey enters and smiles at Bronson.

CASEY

Professor Bronson, thanks for coming.

He kisses her cheek.

CASEY

And Julia. Keeping the good professor in line as usual?

JULIA

Is Denny on a short leash? Of course. Now, tell me, is that Professor Langston giving you any more trouble? Denny told me that he was waiting forever to hand you the attendance files.

CASEY

Nothing I can't handle. The professors are like children. You just need a warm blanket, some hot milk and they won't give anybody any trouble.

MELVIN

I could use a nap right now.

Monkey sticks her head around the corner from the kitchen.

MONKEY

Time to eat.

They all enter the kitchen and get seats around the table.

MELVIN

Denny, would you like to say grace?

BRONSON

No thanks. I'm good.

MELVIN

Monkey?

MONKEY

Sure. God, thanks for this food and these people. God, please help my teacher not be mean to me anymore and help Boudroy stay out of my room. Amen.

They load up their plates with food.

JULIA

And why is your teacher so mean, Monkey?

MONKEY

Oh, she makes me sit next to Harley.

BRONSON

And what's a harley, besides a bike?

BOUDROY

A boy.

Monkey glares at her brother.

(CONTINUED)

MONKEY

You better just stop right there.

BOUDROY

A boy she likes.

Monkey screams and jumps at Boudroy, who gets out of his seat and runs. Monkey runs after him.

MELVIN

Monkey and Boudroy stop that right now.

CASEY

Give them a minute. Denny, I was going to wait till later to ask, but have you heard anything about...you know?

BRONSON

Our favorite patient? He was actually volunteering to get a lot of counseling and it was going pretty well...until a few weeks ago. Doctor Glieme was discussing Drew's parents and the boy just shut down. He wouldn't say another word. Just closed up. Whatever happened, it must have been traumatic. Anyway, no one's seen or heard from him since. He missed his next appointment and doesn't answer his phone.

CASEY

Well, that stinks. And he was making good progress up to that point.

JULIA

And Melvin, Denny tells me you're ready for a change.

MELVIN

Well, I wasn't gonna say anything until after the holidays, but yeah, I think I'm a bit ready to retire now. After serving a couple semesters in the college penitentiary, it suddenly dawned on me that I don't like college students at all. All those

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
questions and brown nosing. It
makes me just want to throw up.

BRONSON
Well, speak your mind, why don't
you?

MELVIN
I just did.

JULIA
And Casey, are you content to be an
academic assistant after Mel
retires?

CASEY
You know, I was thinking about
going back to school to finish my
degree. Maybe I'll go after my
Masters and Doctorate and be a
professor. It doesn't look that
hard.

MELVIN
And what subject were you
interested in teaching?

CASEY
Anything but philosophy

Fade Out.