

Into the doctor's den you go **Hi**. Nice digs. Gray hair, sweater, high back chair sit down across from him oh shit those Jerry Lewis glasses. So where's the TV set?

Sure, here. At least he's not wearing a lab coat and a bowtie. Bookshelf Magnavox 20 watts walnut cabinet speakers, nice. **Okay if I smoke?** What's that supposed to mean, *if you have to?* What do I call whatshisname Berwick? Mister Berwick? Doctor Berwick? I wonder how old the nutty professor is **Let me know if you find anything interesting.** Look at those portraits of his wife and the kids and dog and stuff. And those loafers and those socks **Up to you.**

You mean like seeing Ramirez my probation officer in Salinas once a month? And calling in to my caseworker every Monday morning before ten. Then there are the trips to the employment office and the ... whaddyacall it ... the resume writing center. I got zero blue stars for those. Or the PT, Physical Therapy.

Yeah.

It was.

Isn't there any coffee in here? **I'm just saying I've been pretty busy. I could never get it into Tom Fuller's head that just keeping up with my appointments like a fulltime job, you know what I'm sayin'?** **But that was never good enough for Mister Fuller. He like cut me zero slack, expecting me to land a fulltime job when I can't even get to job interviews.**

Hello, come in. No handshake today? There's a scar for life. **Have a seat.** Give him a few seconds to settle in. **Could I take a look at that questionnaire you've got there? I'll just have a quick look.**

Black jeans, black boots, black jacket. These sent-aheads are often pretty easy to read. **If you have to. I'll open this window.** A leather cord tying back his hair he must be about my age. **So let's see here....** First offense DUI possession marijuana, DMV suspension, probation. DOB 1926, single father **I will** unemployed. Fourteen sessions counseling. Six sessions left. **But why don't I look at all this later?** Palming the ashtray, twirling it. **I see you have six counseling sessions remaining in order to fulfill the probation requirement. On top of any other requirements.**

Cupping his cigarette. Staring at the spiraling smoke.

Not looking me in the eye again any time soon.

Probably once a good-looking guy.

Maybe even a lady-killer.

But these documents indicate that your physical therapy has ended. And the County Department of Health Services picked up the tab. So, what exactly is he whining about?

Wasn't the physical therapy of any benefit to you?

So, why would you expect to earn 'points' for receiving a beneficial service free?

Pausing to pull cigarette to his mouth like he's playing harmonica. The way he curls his fingers and drags. If he thinks he's signing on for six sessions of let's play kick the counselors he better think again.

Did Fuller headline that in my file?

Yeah, I know that much. That's it, it's that standard issue TV weatherman's voice. The man has his chops down. **But what are we supposed to do in here for thirty minutes, just sit around and talk?**

Why I'm here? We both know why I'm here.

Tell you why I'm here? Is that one of his trick question? **You mean, like why I'm here today or why I'm here at all?**

Okay ... Gerry Jerry Lewis maybe or Mister Rogers. He must be bluffin' with that poker face grin.

You've gotta be somewhere, you can't be nowhere. He's not laughin' **Just kiddin', Gerry. You know, a little joke?** Not even smilin'. Okay then, here goes **I'm here because I got in trouble with the law, that's why. I'm here to fulfill the terms of my probation and stay out of jail. Hey, doc, you really didn't get that joke?**

Tom Fuller didn't have a big sense of humor on him either.

Or whatshisname that Ramirez either.

Which means...?

A real opportunity for...?

I see. But you do understand that the same rules about tardiness and absenteeism apply here with me?

He did note it down. And so will I if I have to. And I am obligated to deny services to anyone who comes into this office under the influence of any alcohol or any drug. Better take a close look at his medicals later.

This blowhard cuts himself so much slack there's none left for the rest of us.

That's pretty much it, while trying to find out why you're here.

Then why don't you tell me?

Is he just playing hard to get?

The latter. What brought you to my office? Why are you on probation is what I was getting at ... may I call you Richard? You feel free to call me Gerry.

After all, I didn't come to see you. You came to see me. Why?

And I always told myself it should get easier hooking and landing these wayward souls.

When in fact I don't need to take him on at all.

But he needs me. Or someone like me.

Oh, I got it. I just didn't think it was very funny. Now, your counseling is part of a court-ordered diversion program. Nobody's fooling around about that. But as far as I'm concerned, we can go far beyond the letter of the law on mandatory counseling, if you'll let us.... If you're willing to give it a real chance, I think we can get a lot accomplished over the next six weeks. Don't rule out the possibility that this could be a real opportunity for you.

And whatever I say here, whatever I tell you ... it's between you and me?

'Cuz I sure hope you don't expect me to sit here and open up about the details of my personal life when maybe some of them haven't been so ... legal, you know what I'm sayin'? Then you turn around and phone it in and I get in deeper trouble with the judge.

No matter what I say?

Doesn't that make you like a double agent?

I'm sure there are police departments all over the State of California who'd just love to keep tabs on individuals in treatment for drug addiction.

And adding my name to that new National Crime Info Center they got goin' these head trips are not for me and where is the fuckin' coffee? What am I supposed to say if the guy keeps hammering me? Jerry Lewis glasses and those square pictures of the wife and family dog. I won't be tellin' this guy much. I don't even think the guy's a real shrink, just a crummy counselor who can't even write script. If I just split the state, cash out the Honda, part with some treasures from the vinyl collection. Get on the Greyhound. Take it for Oregon or Washington.

No, not me.

... you to tell me what's on your mind.

You're raising a very legitimate issue, Richard: confidentiality.

Now he's interested.

Now he looks me in the eye.

What a mean looking scar.

What goes on between us here will remain confidential.

No, I can't say that. That wouldn't be fair. There are some things I do have to report. Specific threats of violence, confessions to major crimes.

A double agent? How so?

But who said anything about drug addiction, Richard? I only noticed one citation for possession of an illegal substance. We can get around the bureaucratic nonsense. Your caseworker and probation officer are in position to track your attendance here. But they're not in position to monitor the minutiae of what we discuss in here. The arrangement protects both of us. I file vague reports on your progress, no real specifics. Nobody's a double agent here. You'll have to trust me on this one. He's holding out on me, lighting up another cigarette. Isn't sure if this is a level playing field and he's right about that. Huddling over his hand to light it as if there were a strong wind in here. Maybe another therapist would work better for him, one who could do a better job flushing him out. **Were you just about to say something?**

There is one thing. Do you think I'm a mental case?

You've got my file right there.

From what you have read.

The Department of Behavioral Health really means the Department of Mental Health, right? So how many times do you think you'd have to see me to straighten me out? If it weren't capped at six? Sixteen times? Sixty?

We've played that track, doc. I crashed a college van. I was loaded. I got caught with three sticks of weed in my pocket. I screwed up, okay?

Why. Department of Behavioral Health as in BEHAVE YOURSELF or go to jail. Why. Do not pass go. You definitely do not collect two hundred bucks. Why why why. That beefy security guard's sittin' in that waiting room out there for a reason. What a bunch of sad-ass creeps, the receptionist behind bars looking at you signing in, asking herself *And what kind of a nut case is this one?* No, I gotta to get out of this. If I violate probation would extra penalties apply if I'm like caught doing something else in another state? You can't ask Jerry Lewis that question. They'd never bother going after me up there, not unless I got caught doin' something else.

Do you like have a bathroom in here?

Get up and go. I don't care what he thinks let him think what he wants to *so what?* No bars on the window in here either have a seat *oh so what?* Isn't so bad hanging out in here for a little while you can just see those trippy clouds out over Monterey Bay maybe

Well, what's on your mind?

Now how can I begin to answer that? A mental case? Sometimes you just have to send them on their way and wish them luck. But I haven't read it through yet, you know that. I hardly know you.

If you ever get your hooks into this slippery fish could you even reel him in?

Smoking his cigarette like an animal nursing a wounded paw.

Richard, I don't believe this line of inquiry will help us one bit. But I would like to hear more about what brought you in here.

Any notion why you *screwed up*, why you *got loaded*? What's he thinking? **About why you were carrying those joints? Hunching over his smoking hands. **About why you had the accident just then?** *I screwed up*. That scar on his face is bad. Come on, Richard, come on, open up. You're a big boy now, what's up? A man's mind does not go blank. Nope. He's not talking, snuffing out his cigarette. Maybe he'll get up and walk out on me. I write him up, dismiss him from treatment and that's that. He's staring at that invisible harmonica in his hand again, letting me watch him study his fingernails he keeps so neat and clean. **And the other question I have for you to think about, Richard, is: What do you hope to get out of our meetings?****

It's through that door right there. And he's off without a second look. Maybe I'm just getting stale. If the guy would show one sign he'd consider making a change. So let's see now just where is that file of his? This case may be a hard one. Richard ... Richard

go underground. Gettin' too old to play this rehab game *so what?* So maybe you'll just have to live outside the law *so what?* But if I went out of state could I cross back into California *so what?* I bet Chili knows somebody could help me out with fake I.D. You start messin' around with fake I.D.'s you *will* get your picture up in the post office. Alias this alias that oh *so what?* Maybe head back to NYC, score a little pad with some old beatniks still loafin' around the Village with their hash pipes up their butts and STOP THE BOMB buttons on their berets, talk about potheads. Or up off Riverside Drive. What a bunch of whussies not like the hardcore smackheads at the luncheonette who're all probably dead by now. *The Birth of the Cool*. Good thing I wasn't carrying talc or I'd be facing worse than thirty-minute sets sittin' out there in Mister Rogers' Romper Room oh *so what?*

Debruen. *The Consent for Release of Information* he signed. *The Court Order of Disclosure*. *The Consent for Request of Information*. So why's he wasting our time about confidentiality? Because that's what he does: he wastes time. I used to jump right in with these resistant individuals but those days are over. If he could admit he's fallen short of his own ideals but this evader couldn't drive through to any resolution of core conflicts in sixteen hundred half-hours let alone six thirty-minute sessions. How long will he be hiding out in there? In six million sessions he would not be able to resurrect the self-talk leading up to that progression of thought linked to thought setting him up to drive into a tree or a wall or a telephone pole or whatever got in his way when he had his big "accident." More like attempted suicide. Luckily he didn't kill somebody else. Maybe next time.

And right on time. So where's the coffee this time?

Guess I'll take my seat. And stay out of jail.

Does he think I'm going to start right off talkin'? **Sorry. I don't have any new jokes, doc.**

What does he think I'm thinking about?

I haven't like come up with some big idea, if that's what you mean. Just getting here on time and not getting dinged is the plan, man. **What do your other patients talk about, their dreams?**

Client?

I didn't think you were a real shrink. Bet he hears some good stories in here but I can't hack this bullshit. **I don't know what to say.**

Which were...? Remind me. No it's not goin' to happen in here I'll just have to take it for another city.

Oh right. Those sixty-four thousand dollar questions.

What do I care if he thinks I'm a loser? *Everything happens to me* that's one sweet heartbreaker the way Chet's slurs and smear his phrasing. I could see playing that cut at my funeral. **Should I talk about my childhood?**

Is that what people talk to you about in here, their childhood?

You're back.

And right on time. Dressed in black again collar turned up. **Of course, please do.**

So, how's it going, Richard? What's on your mind today?

I wasn't expecting you to entertain us, but I would like to hear what you're thinking about. I wonder if we can start off by your sharing some of your thoughts with me.

Maybe he's genuinely confused about what he's supposed to do **Not at all.** And waiting for me to rescue him with some fun and games.

Dreams? I don't work with dreams, Richard. And every time you start to use the word *patient* when you're here with me, try substituting the word *client*.

Yes, *client*. I'm not a doctor, Richard. I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm what we call a psychotherapist.

Ouch. Then the silence. The cigarette. He's not ready for talk therapy but can he ever learn the danger signals that predispose him to screw up? Silence **I wonder if you've come up with any answers to those questions I asked..** Knock, knock, who's there? **Richard?** I. I who? I-identity disorder. **Which are: Why are you here and what do you hope to get out of this?**

I think they're worth asking, in any case. More silence? Besides the drinking and smoking I wonder what other habits he's picked up along the way. The forty-five-year-old child no one taught to act his age.

Not necessarily. When what I'd want to hear most would be the parts he'd leave out.

I'm interested in your present situation.

You mean, like if I have a lady friend now or not?

Oh, yeah, sure, about my kid.

You got that right. Kate and Don live over near Davenport.

There is no arrangement.

No, I don't. Lately I don't even spend time with The Beck.

The Beck, Rebecca, my current lady. At least I think she's still my lady. Ever since this whole thing happened ... I don't know anymore.

On and off for a couple years. Off now.

At her place off Lighthouse Avenue in PG.

Right. The Beck became the head dance teacher at MPC last year but I knew her before that. Through my job working with the junior colleges in their performing arts departments.

So that's how we met. We hit it off, at first.

Oh yeah. She's got a good gig goin' over there. Tell you the truth? I'd like to get back in the groove with The Beck, if you know what I'm sayin'? I really miss those weekends, lazin' around with her and the Sunday paper in bed then the two of us struttin' on the wharf like an old married couple. I mean, nothing's perfect. Like she'd bitch about all the administrative

After looking over your questionnaire, I'm still not clear about your current living arrangements with your family.

Well, there's that. But first, what about the mother of your son?

No, Richard, listen to what I'm saying: about the mother of your child. You two do have one child together, right?

Oh, *Kate* and *Don*. I didn't know their names. So, what's the arrangement about spending time with your son?

You don't spend time with either one of them?

The Beck?

Does he realize his eyes keep fixing on the doorknob out? Have you been living with this Rebecca?

I see.

Oh. Right here on the Peninsula.

I remember seeing something about that.

And does she still work there?

Why does he have to talk like a black man?

It's all a masquerade with him.

Jive she had to out up with. And how sometimes she had to double as the head of PE without getting much extra pay. But what keeps her goin', besides the steady pay, is her dance crowd. There's this crowd of younger broads who eat her up. It's all about *The Dance*, you what I'm sayin'?

Whoa. *Do I still love her?* That's kind of a personal question, doc.

You think I'm going to start spilling my guts out to you, a stranger?

... do those *feelings* you're talking about have anything to do with ending probation, Gerry? Or getting a job? Or staying out of trouble?

Okay that's it. I'm not coming back in here. Sell the best of the wax, seal up the rest in a couple of crates and U-Haul them and the Beast up to Portland or Seattle or Vancouver BC. When I get outta here today I'm taking a walk on the wharf. *Your answer was goodbye.* Watch those seagulls circling around up there must be some soft brushwork in those wings getting higher and higher. *And there was even postage due.* Okay, Berwick baby, you are cut off, that's it for today, get it? I better not mouth off out loud in here. What was it Kate called me on the phone, *Dickhead?* Coming in here every week's better than facing the judge or arm wrestling with José Ramirez but I'm done listening to this clown. Maybe hit the road before the next set comes up again I swear just go underground. All alone. *Every.* Without a home. *Thing.* Sing my solo tone. *Happens.* Grease my lonely bone. *To me....*

He's not trying to talk jive talk, it's the way he talks.

I think I do know what you're saying. Do you still love her?

Yes, I suppose it is. But how do you feel about her now? I can see any moments of meaningful exchange may be few and far between. **Perhaps expressing your feelings—**

They might, Richard, they might. He hasn't given one thought to what brought him here and shows zero capacity for introspection. Doesn't he have a single clue about how he brought himself to this point in his life? Or what he hopes to gain in here? I must seem like a figure of monumental irrelevance to this pathetic rebel without a cause. There are times I feel irrelevant even to myself. If only I'd stayed with pre-med a little longer and then gone on to med school. I might be able to administer the latest truth serum to him and get something meaningful going on in here. If. The biggest word in the language. If. But if I did have that license right now I could alter his chemistry and these silent spells might turn out differently. And what genius on his probation team thought Richard Debruen would be a suitable candidate for CBT? Then I'd prescribe the pill to cure my own disappointment in myself. Better say something soon....

.... So, I've been thinking about what you said last time.

About feelings.

You want to hear?

Because I've got feelings, Gerry. It's just they're all in jazz, you know what I mean? There's nothing like jazz for me when all is said and done. It's like my medicine, know what I'm sayin'? Take the blues. Sometimes I hear one single note or a phrase or a number of bars and I feel so sad. But I know it's good for me to listen, to let the music take me like all the way down and out the bottom. Other times I'll hear an up-beat number and if I'm already feeling good it puts me over the top. Then I'm flyin' and I don't ever want to come down. You know what I'm sayin'?

What? Who said I do that?

If this guy knew about my dealin' coke but he doesn't and I'm not tellin' him. Well, that all happened during the festival, you know.

That's right. It's like the only real jazz festival out here, Gerry. Come on, you know that.

Said the blind and deaf man who probably thinks what Andy Williams sings is jazz. I grew up on jazz. Hey, you're like a counselor but that's still like a therapist, right? So how come you never ask me about my childhood, you know, stuff like that? Lemme—

What was that?

And...?

Of course I do. Now that you've got your smokescreen up. First, I'll just crack the window open a little ... there. Yes?

Sounds like some set speech he's made up.

Or like some alcoholic depending on booze to go up or down.

Depending on mood.

Depending on circumstance. So when did you first start using alcohol and marijuana as a way of handling stressful situations?

Now don't get upset, Richard. I'm just asking. Right before the accident in September, were you feeling the need to keep yourself up or down or however you just put it?

Which festival? The Monterey Festival?

I see.

And now you can bet you're about to hear all about jazz festivals. Does he think other people really don't see through all his *jive* talk?

... wait, Richard, hold on a second. Before you go on, I have a question for you. Have you ever seen a therapist before?

What'd you just say?

What past experience?

I don't know what you're talking about.

I should've left town **You already know I saw whatshisname Fuller, the career counselor.** I could be settin' up in Portland or Seattle by now. This fucker's like a pit bull on my leg. Why doesn't he just back off?

I'm sure he'd like to tell everybody every dirty little secret from his past. In the future I stay completely away from coke. A toke or two of grass with a morning cup of jazz is all you need to do.

Guess I'm not doin' so hot as a patient, huh?

Oh right, *client*. But I always think *patient* so isn't it sorta phony to say *client*, know what I mean? *Client* sounds like you're sellin' me insurance or something. This is like total bullshit rushing to catch a fuckin' bus for this crap. A little toke with acuppacacoffee and a cigarette's the way to start the day. A beer or two for lunch and maybe another bit of booh in the afternoon, wine with dinner but lay off the hard stuff an stay away from the snow. Snag some afternoon job in a music store up in Portland. Bag a little nighttime radio airtime oh what the hell? Is he still waitin' for me to answer him? **Alright. I saw a psychiatrist once. Yeah. I saw a shrink in New York City one time.**

That's right. One time. That's all it took.

You really want to know about it?

I think you heard me. I am inquiring about any past experience in psychotherapy.

That's my question to you.

No? You've never seen a counselor or a psychiatrist or anyone like me before now?

Of course you saw the career counselor but I mean a psychotherapist of any kind. He has, I know he has. I'm asking you pointblank because it could have an impact on our meetings here. He never indicated it during intake but you can see he's holding back. Silence. Just plain lying by omission. **We've already been over the issue of confidentiality so I hope that's not making you hold anything back.**

Do you remember how I encouraged you to use the word *client* instead of the word *patient*?

And I deluded myself into thinking we might be able to make a little headway today. How long before he'll be lighting up again? ... *sort of phony* ... did he of all people really say that? Is he suggesting that Richard Debruen Esquire could never be *sort of phony*? Or tire of telling the same stories twice? He's a textbook case. *Selling insurance*? He probably needs some. Let it pass, let him be, because he's back to the silent treatment and out comes the first cigarette. I thought so **So, you did.**

One time?

All it took for what?

It was to get out of the Draft.

Lemme think. That would've been ... like ... 1951. When they lowered the induction age to eighteen and a half.

And I was ... let's see ... twenty-four. Yeah, I was like twenty-four when I got the notice from the Draft Board. So, did you go to Korea?

How'd you get out?

In psychology?

Right. Makes sense to me. Like *career* instead of *Korea*. Get it? No? Well fuck you then. I got deferred with an 1-Y.

Something like that. Like a 4-F. I didn't care. I was not going over to kill somebody in Korea. And I couldn't buy that CO stuff, you know. Me, a pacifist? So, my dad asked around and one of his buddies came up with the name of this shrink who was, you know, game. I wasn't the only one who used that guy.

My mom? "Don't let those bastards get their hands on you!" About the only time I remember hearing my mother swear. "Don't let those bastards get their hands on you!" Something like that.

Not at all. He was the one who came up with the idea to write this note on his stationary saying that I was seeing him in ... whaddayajustcallit...?

That's it. So he wrote this letter and I

Yes, of course. That's why I'm asking.

When was this?

But weren't you already older than that in 1951? I was already twenty-six.

Me? No, I didn't.

I received a deferment while studying for my master's. Then the war ended.

Yes. A master's degree in clinical psychology.

1-Y. Medically unsuitable.

What did your mother think while all this was going on?

So, I'm curious how that worked. Did you have to act crazy for the psychiatrist?

Psychoanalysis?

delivered it signed and sealed to the army shrink at the Induction Center. I stepped out of line during the exams and passed it to him without a word.

Something about how I was seeing the guy for trouble with homosexual tendencies.

Yeah.

Which was what? Of course it wasn't the truth.

What the hell? Neither was true. Don't start playing games with me, Gerry.

What *homosexual tendencies*? Come on, man. What are you talkin' about? I dig chicks.

Like a charm. That's all it took. The army shrink reads it without even looking at me. Then he asks me, *Are you active in this regard?* I had to think fast because that Manhattan shrink told me what he wrote but, you know, I might play the wrong note. And the US Army Induction Center in Newark New Jersey is not exactly the kind of place where a guy wants to play any wrong notes, you know what I mean?

He's the one who paid the shrink.

What? Oh that part. No. No, he didn't care about that part. He didn't ask.

Yeah, so that was my only experience in therapy, besides now. So how am I doing as a *client* now?

After I got out? Oh, I was in and out of SFSU for a while. Or you mean like right after I got escorted out of the building like

And what did the letter say?

The letter stated that *homosexual tendencies* had brought you into analysis?

Which was not the truth?

That you weren't seeing him? Or that you had *homosexual tendencies*?

So, you weren't having any trouble with *homosexual tendencies*?

And the letter worked?

And he's off on another prerecorded tape he has no doubt played before. Some psychiatrists are doing that today and many smart young men are getting out that way. And eighteen-year-olds still going to Canada who will not serve in Vietnam. What about the kids whose fathers don't know a Manhattan shrink? I wonder if Richard's father served in World War Two? **So, what did your father think of that?**

Did he know how the psychiatrist portrayed his son in the letter?

And that was that?

Ignore that. **What did you do after you were released?**

I was a queer or something? I had a few hours before I had to get back on the bus. Let's see.... I guess I hit the first bar I came across, walking smack dab into this black man's bar in Newark the middle of the afternoon with me the only white guy in sight. Everybody like stares at me, you know? *That's cool*, the bartender says so everybody went back to their business and I had a beer or two. They probably never saw white guys in that place except undercover cops. Or some poor junkie down on his luck. There were a couple of those noddin' out over the jukebox like moths drawn to light. And sailors goofin' off at the back door smokin' weed in broad daylight. You're goin' need another pack of smokes, Ricky baby. I kinda dig the way Chili calls me that. **So that was my only other experience with a shrink before you. That army shrink doesn't count, right? He wouldn't even look at me. Just signing off on it like he was relieved he didn't have to exam me with his hands or something. *Are you active in this regard?* I said, *Yes, I am, sir*, throwing in that *sir* just to sorta mess with his head. And then his rubber stamp came out and these two big dudes in MP uniforms whisked me out of the building as fast as possible, nobody touching me once. Do you even know what I'm talkin' about, Gerry...?**

We put a man on the moon.

.
Only white guy in sight.

Students rise up and close entire universities.

Which story allows him to play the outsider.

Junkie.

People join hands to do something about oil spills staining San Francisco Bay and meanwhile Richard *hits this black man's bar* which is somehow where he wants to be, where he's most comfortable as an outsider.

So that's how he got out of the Draft. So did I get out, so what? I can't blame anyone for getting out of the service today with the mess we've made in Vietnam. A losing cause. A lost cause. If only we could get out. But not fake our way out like the Wild One here who has definitely faked himself out of every conflict since day one. Faking himself out of a career. Faking himself out of parenting. And now just plain faking himself out of luck. Oh what he's jabbering about now? What time is it? Hickory Dickory Doc, the client runs out the clock.

Yes, I do, Richard. I think I do....

But don't you lead that group, Gerry?

Oh yeah, I'll be gone by then. Blah blah blah I only said it to say something. Blah blah blah I am not in the mood for his blah blah blah today *I left my heart in San Francisco* and my hard-on in San Juan Bautista *aye Chihuahua* what a crazy night that was in ye ol' no-tell Mexican motel. **Ramirez is his name.** Remember that waitress' name was Rosa. Or was it Teresa...? Rosarita! Showing me a bit of the back of her thighs through those slits in her skirt and those big teats she let me screw them before that night was over then stuffing them back into that horse harness she was wearing. When was that like two years ago? **Hey, I was just thinkin' what good does it do me to sit here and listen to you yak? Or vice versa like last time.**

Remember my telling you about gettin' out of the Draft?

That's still messin' up my head.

I don't know. Nothin' I guess.

About seeing that New York shrink and that letter he wrote. You know it was his idea to use homosexuality as a way to get me disqualified. I'm no homo, Gerry. That's not like why I went to see him, for homosexuality, you know what I mean? You understood that part, right? I mean, if anything I need help when it comes to whaddyacallit, heterosexuality. I go crazy over the ladies, Gerry, I really do. I got

It might be an option, Richard. I just don't know whether you could drop in the current group now or not. It may be closed to new participants. I just don't know.

A colleague and I rotate as facilitators. I'm not slated to begin a new group until November but that would fall outside your formal probation period, wouldn't it?

But if you think you might feel more comfortable in a small group setting then here with me, I can convey that information to Missus Hawkins. You and she and your probation officer—whose name I forget....

That's right, Ramirez. They can work on the details. However, I don't know that participation in group therapy would fulfill the terms mandated by the court in your particular case. You—or your case-worker—would have to check on that with the Department of Social Services. Richard?

Like what, last time?

Of course I do.

How so? Come on, Richard. You brought it up.

But what's still bothering you about it?

half a hard-on just remembering that broad spread out across the motel bed.

No, that's all. Just checkin' to make sure you got my number right. I'm like completely vulnerable to anything remotely feminine, you know what I mean?

Oh Gerry, come on. Like susceptible. Do I have to draw you a picture? They all turn me on. With this scar I'd probably even scare Rosarita away from a second go-round. Or get stabbed by her big brothers or her old man.

Is what any different for me?

The Beck?

If you'll call her *The Beck* I'll know who you're talking about.

Yeah they did. Is that so unusual? You must talk to a lot of dudes in here, Gerry. What do you think?

Any which way I can, tell you the truth. See why I didn't make a very good family man?

If anything it gets bigger, it grows.

Gerry, I'm goin' to tell you something I never told anybody else before. I was cheating on Kate when our kid was born. Even before he was born. Maybe that was

I see. Is there more you'd like to share about that?

How many more sessions do I have left with this maniac?

Vulnerable, in what way?

I see. But where did he get the idea he can make statements like that then just sit here in some safe silence? Next he'll be showing me his *I LOVE MOM* tattoo. **Tell me, if you can: Is it any different for you when you are maintaining a steady relationship with one woman?**

What you call your *vulnerability*. For instance, when you were living with the dance instructor—

Yes, with Rebecca—

Okay, I'll try to remember that, Richard. So, was it different when you were in a relationship with her? Or did other women continue to arouse you?

I don't know if it's unusual or not, Richard. I'm more interested in your situation, in how you get your needs met.

So, your sex drive—let's call it that—still gets stimulated by other women. It doesn't diminish when you're engaged in regular sex with one partner. Is that what you're saying?

What about when you were with Kate?

like the beginning of the end. I mean, she never found out but still. Pretty bad, huh?

Nothing serious. Just a little pick-me-up from time to time. There was a club just opening up on the Santa Cruz Mall where I used to hang out. Have you ever heard of the Catalyst?

Kate, at the Catalyst? Oh no, she was way too underage for that. I mean she was too young to be out drinking in any clubs back then. She was drinking but not that way. I met her when she and her girlfriend were *doin' their thang* with guitars on the beach, singin' folksy stuff. I tried to wean her off that shit and get her into jazz. She was one wild child. I can remember this cool saddlebag she used to carry instead of a purse. She could be one very sexy little crossed-eye country girl. Maybe most "gentlemen" wouldn't admit it but when I see a skinny young thing like that...? Tell you what, Gerry. I wanted to bed that cowgirl down the first time I laid eyes on her. You're not going to like hearing this. Call me a cradle robber or something, but Kate was like sixteen when I met her, sweet sixteen. Or just turned seventeen...? No, no, she was sixteen when we first hooked up and ... well, you know..

Me? I was like twenty-six. Pretty bad, huh? But I couldn't help myself. There was just something about her. She was skinny and nervous and so sexy. To me she was sexy anyway. Lemme think for a sec'. The doc's got himself a nice little piece of cheesecake in that picture there, looks like one of those sporty types runnin' around Carmel Village in a tennis skirt. A cook in the kitchen, a lady in the living room, a whore in bed. Is this thing even lit? So, Kate and me, we hooked right up but her mother wasn't too happy about it. Let's

Good or bad, that's not so unusual. It does sometimes happen among new parents.

Is that where you met her too?

And off he goes, wandering blithely across emotional minefields.

Unfazed.

Insulated against all pain.

Don't get any ashes on your silk shirt, Señor Zorro.

When was the last time this narcissist ever noticed any female except as a reflection of his own animal needs?

And just how old were you?

And once I believed I could hit anything they'd pitch me. I bet six trillion sessions of adjudicated cognitive behavioral therapy wouldn't keep this mad dog on a shorter leash. Or out of the penal system. Richard whatshisname examining the relationship between what he thought and what he did...?

I don't think so.

face it, she never liked me. But, Gerry, like I was saying. What good is diggin' up the past?

Patterns?

Yeah? Well, like I'm telling you, the mother had it in for me from the beginning. I guess that was a pattern and—

... hey, you cut me off, Gerry. I was telling you about the grandmother of my kid. If that isn't important, I don't know what is. With Missus Lowrie, I was ... what do they call it someone who's not welcome...?

That's it, man, you got the lingo down. Grandma Lowrie thought I was just bad news for her daughter and she was right: I *was* bad news for her daughter. But like I just told you, I can't control myself and little Kate Lowrie was hot to trot. She had this little local rumble goin' on around her wherever she went. High school guys, surfers. And she was—well, she was hot. Let's leave it at that.

He was out of the picture by then. I never met the guy. He just wasn't around. It was just Kate and her mom, the librarian. Missus Lowrie. And their animals. Her mom was like this serious potter type from the Middle Ages, you know what I'm sayin'? I'm glad I'll never see that Old Maid again. Practical, down to earth. But what about DD? Isn't that what she called him over the phone, *DD*? What the hell is *DD*? Sounds like a fuckin' girl's name. It's like she took my boy away from me. Are we done yet? I'll get an unlisted number. Get a PO Box and an unlisted number in Vancouver BC if I could get into Canada. Okay by me. But that'd make it tough to get back into

Oh, it might help us discover some ... patterns, if you know what I mean.

None of our behavior is entirely random, you must know that. There are usually patterns that get repeated.

... but you can understand her mother's attitude. I suppose your romance with her daughter didn't really fit into the mother's—

You cut me off. Did he really just say that to me? *Hey, you cut me off, Gerry....*

Persona non grata.

Okay, let's leave it at that. And her father?

How do you rehabilitate a man so full of himself there's no room for anyone else? I have to wonder if I'd put in more years for a doctorate or even become a psychiatrist, would I have more to offer in cases like his? Other than prescribing medications to change his—oh yes, please do chain smoke, Señor Brown, it's so debonair. Is he done now? Got it lit? Run out of tape? How many sessions do we have left, two, three? I'm starting to count down the time like a prison term. How do you begin to change people like him? Well, Richard, this seems like a good place to stop for today. Do people ever really change? And between now and

the States? What makes him think they'll be a next meeting? I might split for BC before then. **There's not really going to be much to say about that, I can tell you now.**

I'm not exactly in touch with my parents anymore.

How many more sessions do I have in here?
You know what I'm sayin'?

They're both dead.

Same time, same station.

That shut the guy up. *They're both dead.*

Sure Gerry.

Bye now.

If you're lucky you will.

See you.

our next meeting, I'd like you to give a little thought to your own mother and father. Or do they just become more themselves?

About your relations with your parents.

No?

Not really.

Oh. Okay, Zorro, you win. **Now I see what you mean. Okay then, we've run out of time for today.** Thank God. **But let's talk about it next week.** If I had the skills. Or if I still cared. *They're both dead.* **Same time, same station. I'm sure we'll have lots to go over.** Now make the sign of the Z and get the hell out of here. **See you then.** Thank God for these thirty-minute county hours. **Goodbye now, Richard.**

... so my mom was leasing this carriage house a hundred yards from the big main house where the owners lived on this big Westchester County estate. I guess the bottom floor had been the horse-stable first then the garage for fancy cars with the servants quarters upstairs. So that's where we lived. I had a room of my own but I was never like raised there, you know what I'm sayin'? That place was never like home.

Oh, mostly movin' around the boroughs of New York City. He let me stay with him whenever I wanted to when he was away. Gave me the keys, cash, stuff like that. When I got kicked out of high school I got sent to this special private school for problem kids in Western Massachusetts nobody's ever heard of. I remember my first Thanksgiving comin' back to my mom's place on that estate. I lay around my room with my records. They were like my only friends, you know what I'm sayin'?

You got that right, all my life. Without the music I don't know what would've happen to me. By then my mom was pretty much stayin' drunk. That was the first time I realized she was sloshed most of the time.

Beer? Anytime. Wine? At dinner when there was dinner. Are you kiddin'? Whatever beer was in the fridge or red wine was on the table, that was cool. What could she say, given her condition? And at my mom's place there was always beer in the fridge and always wine on the table. One time she tried to stop me, told me I couldn't stay at her place if I did drink too much, you know what I mean? So that like was the first and last time I

And if he doesn't clam up soon it's your job to intervene.

By listening to his monologues you only enable him to chase his tail. But where is the button to turn him off without hurting his false pride?

So, where was your father during this period when you seem to have been *floating* as you called it a few minutes ago?

And he's off and running at the mouth again. A little too much caffeine or...?

If you stop him be ready for some real resistance. Remember, *you cut me off, Gerry*.

If you're not ready to handle resistance, you're in the wrong business.

Sure I do. Maybe I am in the wrong business. **So the music has been with you for quite a while by now.**

Ugh. How can I opt out of these court referrals when the county signs half my checks? **And did she let you drink alcohol? Did you drink at home?**

How is someone like him ever going to connect some dots?

Have you completely given up on him?

Let's see if we can't discern any patterns here.

told her to fuck off my life.

Yeah, pretty much. Pretty bad, huh? But that was pure bull comin' from her.

Right on, Ger'. Hey, that's it, man! You know, when I was a kid my mom and I got along. I thought the world of that lady. But then something happened. I don't know what it was. It's like she turned on me. She became this weird policeman.

And before that. My dad and me always got along. He always let me crash at his pad, wherever it was at the time. He was always moving around. Sometimes I went out screwin' around with him in New York City, when I got to be a teenager.

I don't know. I used to tag along with him when he went about his business.

Good question. He never did really tell me straight out. When I was a little punk he'd take me along with him running back and forth from Canal Street to the Financial District on Nassau. But I never went out to the boroughs with him. Or on his appointments out on Long Island when he told me he had something to show someone. But all over Lower Manhattan. Some bar somewhere, some hotel lobby or restaurant somewhere. Some days we went down to the Customs House, don't ask me why. When I asked him what it was all about, he wouldn't say much. The old man must've been dealing diamonds, I figure.

He told me he didn't want me to know.

Not directly from him but I concluded it was some shady dealin' in diamonds, you

Wait now. You told your mother that?

How to reflect back to him how deeply offensive he can be? And repulsive. **Did you feel your mother had somehow betrayed you?**

I set out on this path thinking I could save the world one person at a time and now I don't believe I can do a thing with this one.

And you stayed in communication with your father after your mother died?

Screw in' around, doing what?

Which was?

It will be a cold day in hell before motivational analysis takes place with this guy.

In here or anywhere else.

What did he say when you did ask him?

Did you ever find out?

know what I'm sayin'? Because years later a couple times I came in from the West Coast to say hello, he told me to meet him in Times Square and why? 'Cuz he was workin' some monkey business in the Diamond District. You know where I mean? In Manhattan, where the Black Hats do their thing. The Jews in the jewelry trade. Everybody knows where 42nd Street at 7th Avenue meets Broadway, right? It was right around the corner from where he was conducting business in those days. So, it made sense for us to meet at the Horn 'n Hardhart's Dine-o-Mat. We met there a couple times. Or I went to a movie, walked around.

Then? Maybe twenty-five. You know why I think it was diamonds? I must be blowin' this guy's mind. Because I stayed at his apartment one visit when he went on this big business trip abroad. Amsterdam, Antwerp, Cape Town. Doesn't that sound like the diamond circuit to you?

No? Tell you the truth, I always had a hunch my dad was into some shady merchandise. Anyway, after that trip he was flush. Just when I was permanently relocating on the West Coast, he suddenly had money, at least for a while. I met with him a couple times, like when he helped me connect with that shrink, right? To get out of the Draft.

Anyway I didn't mind meeting up in Times Square because there were lots of old camera stores, radio stores, equipment stores there. Get it? I could try out all the latest gadgets. He went to his business meetings while I picked up some know-how. How to jack different systems together on the cheap. That was like continuing education for me, know what I'm sayin'?

Is that near Times Square?

Everybody knows....

And you have to be somewhere.

You can't be nowhere.

How old were you by then?

Oh no, not another cigarette!

I'm not familiar with that business.

You're letting him waste our time here.

When it's your job to intervene.

Right. I remember.

To understand.

To predict.

To control.

Know-how?

Anything else you remember about special times with your father? What do you remember doing as a family?

Not much. We never did anything *as a family*, Gerry. It was either mom and me or me and my dad. Don't you get it? I'll never forget the first time he took me to the Garden to see the Rangers play the Toronto Maple Leafs on my sixteenth birthday. That was cool. He and his buddies always had great seats at Madison Square Garden. Lemme think. Oh yeah, there was the 1936 World Series. The Yankees were up against the Giants. Now that was a very big deal all over New York City. So he took me out of school for all the games, great seats there too. New York Yankees over the New York Giants in six games.

That's right.

1936? I must've been like ten. I mean, my Giants lost but dig it, like a full week of baseball and running with my dad? That was great. When my mom heard about that she got pissed off, if you'll pardon the expression. They fought hard on the phone over that one. They were already living apart—ahh, what difference does it make now?

Wait, first listen to this, Ger'. My dad was okay. Kinda loud sometimes. New York brash—you know what I mean? Probably should never've been a father, just like me, you know what I'm sayin'? But he left me some good time memories and, well, I do still have his fantastic big band records. I bagged that collection of perfect 78's. Coming up I spent a lot of time listening to his records on whatever player he had in his place. Dad took me to Birdland after it opened. 1949 I think it was. Count Basie and his Orchestra. Now they were smokin'!

Yeah, you know, they were hot, they were great, okay? Count Basie at Birdland.

By listening without interruption I'm avoiding my responsibility but I just don't care.

And I let him evade responsibility for absolutely everything else.

Your father took you out of school for a week to go to the World Series?

What age were you?

How did you feel about their fighting?

Wait, first listen to this.... Was that an order? You cut me off, Gerry.

Smokin'?

Cool, huh? That was about the last time I spent any time with my dad. I was out on the West Coast fulltime after that. We drifted apart. Then he died.

Twenty-seven, twenty-eight.

She went under way before he did. She couldn't take it, Gerry. She hit bottom and never bounced back. I must've been around seventeen when she kicked the bucket.

You mean when she died or about the stuff she left me? She died like ... 1942. Or was it '43? Anyway, there really wasn't much for her to leave me. I mean, when she was on her own she tried to start a little antique trade. She'd drag me around to the state fair and auctions, estate sales, places like that. I could carry stuff for her. Tables, lamps, chairs. Furniture, you know. When she died there was some nice stuff in the carriage house that Missus Oppermann turned into cash for me. Sold it to her rich friends, people she knew. But I got to stay in that carriage house free until the lease ran out. That was my inheritance, kinda. Gerry, you want to hear a good story?

... anyway, I think it's good. I think you will too, I mean, if you're interested in knowin' where I'm comin' from. We have a few more minutes, right?

It has to do with losing my cherry, okay? Now if that's not an important part of a guy's life, I don't know what is, you know what I'm sayin'? You want to hear it or not?

Anyway, I'm goin' to tell you. So, that summer after my mom died I spent a lot of time hangin' out in the main house. When the Oppermanns weren't around—

How old were you when your father died?

And your mother?

And how did you feel after your mother's death?

Is he serious?

This is how he feels...?

Or is he putting me on?

Just shut him up and let him go early.

Is he delusional?

Or disingenuous?

Or both? **Do I want to hear a good story? Does it have to do with your childhood and coming of age? Does it relate it to—**

A very few more minutes, Richard.

I've just gotten lazy.

Or jaded.

Sure, Richard, sure. If it's that important to you.

and they were like always not around—vacationing in Switzerland, vacationing in Bermuda, you know: vacationing from vacation—shit, they had it made. I'd go up to the main house to hang out in the maid's quarters. Good old Elythea, that was her name. She was their live-in maid. She lived there, took care of all the dirty work. The cleaning, laundry, cooking, you know what I mean? Those Oppermanns had their money and they had their darkie—

Yeah, hey, sorry about that. Anyway, sometimes I'd jump into their swimming pool or play with the owner's dogs—hey! I just remembered something. Sometimes I'd sneak into the music room in the main house and mess with their RCA Victor M Special, which was the way to go if you had the dough. But Elythea, she didn't like that. She'd shoo me out of the main part of the house to wherever she was workin'. And that old gal always had her radio tuned into black music. Sometimes it was the *Blueses* she called it. Crack me up: the *Blueses*. Since the plantation masters weren't home, she'd crank it up loud. Ironing, polishing silverware, mopping the floors. I can still see old Elythea smoking her menthol Kools while she worked. And that old gal always worked. So she let me hang around. I think she kinda liked my company. I mean, it wasn't her job to look after me or anything. I was just the son of the woman who rented the carriage house but upped and died, you know what I mean? I bet she put up with a lot of shit from the spoiled Oppermann kids when they came home from their boarding schools and all. Probably put up with a lot of shit from me too, come to think of it. But man, she was a nice person, you know what I mean? And I went behind her back.

Here's the part I want you to hear so

Who's he talking about?

Oh, the owners of the estate.

If I went completely into private practice I'd meet up with fewer of these really creepy types. Joyce would go in for an arrangement like that, having some maid do the dirty work.

Their darkie, did you just say? Ugh.

If this sociopath has any charms they're certainly lost on me.

Maybe I'll take early retirement.

Or partner up with somebody like Abe.

Or maybe Fred Wasserman with all his school district connections.

Lease a little cottage in PG with someone like Abe or Fred, lay it out to suit our purposes, hang out the shingle one last time.

But would either of them go in on that with me?

What's he jabbering about? Who *upped and died*?

Better stop taking any more of these sent-ahead's but what if I couldn't keep a full clientele on my own? I better say something soon. I'm not listening to a word he says. He's even looking at me right now and wondering.

Doing what *behind her back*?

maybe you'll dig where I'm comin' from, how I've always been like more or less an outsider. So that summer my mom died I was waiting for the lease to run down and Elythea had this niece staying with her. I think it was her niece. Yeah, it was her niece. Anyway, sometimes I think it was her daughter or her granddaughter but it must've been her niece. Yeah, her great-niece. Now Berta was like probably fifteen at the time or goin' on fifteen. She was there for some reason but I didn't know her story. I do know that she was young and lonely and horny and so was I, so was I. And she was ripe. So, I started, you know, slippin' into Elythea's room back of the kitchen and listenin' to the radio with cute, quiet Berta. At first we kept the door wide open, of course. And gradually Elythea ... she starts notifying me about what she sees—

You know, lifting her eyelids, checking me out. Giving me the evil eye like: *Don't you mess with that child, child! White boy, I can see your stoner red eyes.* So, she sees that I'm watchin' her niece's moves and all the little changes in that girl's behavior towards me. I mean, Elythea was no dummy, alright? But what could she do? Lock the girl in her room? Put a collar and a leash on her? So, at about that time I was starting to take the train into the City to score small amounts of Mary Jane in the Village. Or up on Morningside Heights. You know, in Upper Manhattan.

That's right. By then I knew where to score a little on my own and I started passing Berta joints. One thing led to another and that sweet young thing starts comin' to meet me about halfway down the gravel lane to the carriage house and sittin' on this rock, outta sight of her

An outsider.

On the outside, where he feels safe.

On the outside, never within.

A young girl.

A very young girl.

A fifteen-year-old female.

As long as he has some sex to prop up his feeble self-esteem.

... notifying you?

I'm failing both of us here.

So much for psychotherapy as a handmaiden to human growth and development.

But how can you appeal to a higher sense of self-esteem when the man has none to begin with?

That's marijuana, isn't it, Mary Jane?

It usually does that, Richard, but most of the time we don't pay attention.

Or listen to ourselves think.

keeper but in my sight, right? She got out late at night when Elythea was conked out asleep. So there she was, sitting and puffing on one of Elythea's Kools and—

Can't I finish this? Lemme finish this one.

So we got brazen, that little girl and me. She'd come down to the place, my mom's place, right? Well, it was my place by then until the lease ran out. Two teenagers in an empty house with a certain curiosity, shall we say? We broke every rule in the book on those hot summer nights and tell the truth, I've been breakin' rules ever since. I guess the difference this last time is, I got caught.

Yes, you did get caught.

That's all the guy can say after that great story I just told him?

Between now and then. Is he for real?

Tell you the truth, Gerry? I can't even remember what those questions were.

I'm fuckin' callin' in sick next week.

Call in after hours and tell the answering service you don't feel well.

... see you then.

So we don't even know what we think.

Or even that we're thinking. ... **Richard, finish up now. We're running out of time.**

Yes, finish up but we're almost running over now, as we say.

I give up.

Just let him get to the end of his story now, his climax.

Yes, you did get caught. Is he done? Will he shut up now? It's been one helluvah long half-hour in here today. **So, we have one more meeting on the books next week. And between now and then you might give some serious thought to the questions I asked you when you first came in here.**

Then use any questions you can come up with, the answers to which might bring you closer to an understanding of what brought you to this stage in your life and your overall situation. Your probation, this counseling, any habits you might own up to and—

Goodbye, Richard.

.... The bus was late, I was late for the bus. *So what? What difference does it make now? Mark my report card tardy. I don't care.*

So what are we debating about today?

What idea is that?

It's such a drag when Mister Rogers talks like this.

Maybe I don't have fuckin' *interpersonal relationships*. **Do I think what might be so? Maybe yes, maybe no, but I don't see what this has to do with finishing my probation.**

Whoa, is Ger'callin' me a liar now? Fuck you doc. My *interpersonal relationship* with The Beck is sure over. Blah blah blah. The Beck gets her big break with that dance company and leaves me in the dust. *Her answer was goodbye.*

Yeah? You could be right, so what? And no chance she'll let me back in the door when that tour's over either. *And there was even postage due.* One last date with this guy and we're done. Better say something. **And what proposition is that? I guess we have time left.** That early dinner on the wharf was our last date. The whole place empty except for us. Two waitresses and that Mex-ican bus boy gawkin' at beautiful Beck. She used to dig times like that with me in the beginning, drawing hearts on steamed-up windows, doodling on paper place mats. Chicks eat that shit up. **So?**

No, not really. What are you getting at? White wine, sourdough bread, abalone—that was one great meal. How did we end up on that very last date? Just walkin' out to where

Oh come on, Richard. Don't you think what little time we have left is too valuable to sacrifice debating tardiness?

How about not debating at all? How about we use the rest of our time together to consider an idea I have?

The idea that attitudes acquired while growing up influence our behavior as adults. Especially in our interpersonal relationships. Do you think it might be so?

Whether it's an angry flare-up, or avoidance of contradictions, avoidance of challenging situations. Chronic lying, dependence on substances—now I'm not talking about you in particular. I'm talking about widespread human behaviors. Do you see how they could all be largely learned behaviors? Is he even listening to me? Richard?

Take your outbursts of rage. You once mentioned that sometimes you just go off. Can we entertain a proposition, just for a moment...?

Can you chew on the possibility that adult explosions of anger, which seem to be the best we can do to control otherwise uncontrollable situations, might be seen as variants of the temper tantrums we learned when they were the best we could do to get our way as infants, as young children? Do you know what I am getting at at all?

Say a child learns that throwing a fit gets him what he wants—or gets him out of a situation he doesn't want to be in. Can

those big freaky pelicans sit on top of the piers. And those trippy pink sunset clouds strung out on a line like lady's lingerie over Monterey Bay.

What does this clown want from me now?

Maybe. So what? What do you want me to say? That I agree? That I disagree? Those dumb brown seals lying on the docks. It always smells like bird shit with so many seagulls out there it looks like snow on those rocks. Now I've pissed him off but *so what?* We're both just running out the clock *so what?* We don't even speak the same lingo *so what?* Gerry's probably never done a number in his life. Ten fifteen minutes to go. Is he goin' to dock me for bein' late my last time?

Okay. So what? Tellin' her I was gonna get myself a stupid net someday and bait for crab. Hell, at least everybody leaves a guy alone out there workin' down a six-pack pretendin' to be fishin' for crab, catchin' some sunlight when the sun does come out. **Tell you the truth, I don't buy it. You learn to play a guitar. You learn to ride a motorcycle. How do learn temper tantrums? That's nuts. Those just happen.**

When I go off like a firecracker, that's nothing I learned, I just go off. I'm pissed off, that's all. Nobody had to teach me that?

There he goes again runnin' down my dad. **I forget. I don't remember, all right? And you never knew my dad so how would you know? I can't believe an educated person like you can con yourself into thinkin' you can figure out everything about everybody, like people all make complete sense to you. It must be easy for people like you to sit in here come rain or shine, kickin' back and collectin' your paycheck from the county.**

you see how, as an adult, that same individual might take recourse to similar behaviors? When he can't express his desires and frustrations in any other way? Rightly or wrongly, the child has learned that explosions are effective. They may even feel natural. Do you see what I mean?

So much for values clarification. What a waste of time. He might as well not be here. **Not at all. This is not a debate. I want you to be listening and thinking. Later in life some of us luckily enough make the difficult but liberating discovery that we'd be better off—and more in control of our lives—if we could un-learn certain fixed attitudes and habits, and replace those maladaptive behaviors with more appropriate, updated ones. Okay?** And when in doubt light up another cigarette. Turn your anger in upon yourself, turn the punishment inward and pummel your lungs, cough now, cough. I've pitched him a curve ball, a desperate pitch on my part but not a wild one. **So what do you think of all that?**

When we lose control they do.

He's got to be kidding.

Was your father at all prone to explosions? Did your father exhibit fits of rage?

He's snarling now.

Showing me his fangs.

Oh yeah, do you?

What point is that? If I knew you were goin' to start in on my dad on my last day in here I never would've showed up. I'm goin' to Canada. I could've called in sick, you know? I'm goin' to BC. Why'd you even take me on if you had it in for me in the first place?

Sure you were. So, Gerry—

After this is over I'm goin' back down to the wharf and blow one big number to celebrate the end of all this bullshit.

Yeah? I could've used some help finding a job. But with you always putting me down about coppin' an attitude and not taking advantage of rehab—

With this scar on my face? Well, how would you feel?

Tonight I'll get Chili to set me up. You can still get laid, if you want to, if you're not picky.

What's he talking about now?

Blah blah blah *happy happy happy*. What I could really use is some help getting back in the sack with The Beck. O fuck everything you ever heard about true love and get some slut tonight back to the motel at closing time. Some old nympho at the Side Car I don't care. Or maybe pay some young dumb thing still in love with sucking dick.

That's a rather convenient stereotype, isn't it? But I resent being caricatured that way, Richard.

Still, my resentment is beside any point I'm trying to make.

Will he start actually foaming at the mouth soon?

I've failed to teach him one thing in here.

And he has failed to learn. **Wrong, Richard, wrong. I had no predisposition against you. If anything, I was predisposed to be on your side and—**

... now you let me finish my thoughts! I have tried to work with you because I believe it would be worth your while to get through this probation—through this difficult period in your life—and move on with some new skills.

... oh come on, Richard! Did you really give this or the career counseling program a chance?

Okay, I'll grant you that. But in here I've tried to take you as who you are, which I think is someone in a very tough spot, including that scar. But more importantly, you and I have not managed to come up with ways to help you bridge the gap between how you see yourself as a happier person and what you can do to become that happier person. I am not suggesting that this is a short-term project, Richard, or an easy one. In fact, I believe it's a lifetime project: a lifetime of learning, un-learning, re-learning. So, you may still want to take advantage of any options for group therapy, if you can't afford private therapy. There's no shame in asking for

You mean your dreams for me?

Right about now my dream is puttin' that redhead Ginny up in the Anchor for just one night and pay her to walk around in high heels, candy panties, some party bra. If not her pick up that other roly-poly piggy-pooch always sittin' at the other end of the bar.

What's this now? What's he talking about now my boy?

Now I suppose the son of a bitch thinks he knows all about my son too. **Listen, doc, about my boy. His mother won't let me see him, okay? I know that for sure. I checked her out. She still blames me for everything that went wrong. So the whole kid's life he's goin' to think I'm a fuck-up, his own dad.**

... what'd you just say, I owe you something special?

Then what'd you say?

Oh. Okay. Guess I'm hearing things.

Fuckin' Chili won't loan me more money or let me start up another tab at the Side Car. But he could help me pick up some pussy, the raunchier the better, you know what I mean? Score a few lines from Kenny that cabman and take some cunt back to the Anchor, just don't tell her your real name. **Listen, can we take it out talkin' about something else?**

You know, close it down, break down the show. Time must be over by now. Then if we're done here I'm goin' for a walk off

help trying to live up to one's dreams.

No, not my dreams for you, Richard. Your dreams for you. Every time you've mentioned your boy, for instance, while you've been here, I have had to wonder what it must feel like to be estranged from him. Especially on holidays and special occasions—I know it must hurt. Can you admit that the separation from your son has been eating at you for years? The way you spoke about your relationship with your own father—you know that a special kind of affection between a father and son is possible.

I'm sorry to hear that, Richard. And there's your break-up with that Rebecca, when we all need someone special who—

I didn't say that.

I said, we all need someone special in our lives.

On several occasions you've let it be known—or at least it seemed to me—that you are profoundly sorrowful to have no active relationship with your son. You seem to me to feel deep grief because you are not living up to your own dreams. Maybe when your son's an adult. Maybe when he can make such decisions on his own....

Take it out?

the end of the wharf. You know I can't swim, right? Or maybe I'll take a number on the Golden Gate Bridge. Just another little joke, doc'. I'll get the vinyls out of storage then start over in another state under another name what the hell have you got to lose? *Every time we say goodbye* I'll go open up the Side Car with Chili and get on the jukebox before those idiots show up when I'm playin' Sassy singin' *how strange the change from major to minor.*

So, that's it? Any more forms I have to sign?

What are you thinkin'? That's not Sassy that's Chet on his killer rendition of "Every Time We Say Goodbye." **Then I guess we'll be seein' you, doc'.**

If there's one virtue to working with narcissists it's their suicide talk is a hoax, this one's much too taken with himself to do something that drastic. Unless he were under the influence, then he might do it. When he gets into a mood to put himself under the influence, that's when the alarm bells ought to go off but he didn't learn the first thing about it here. **It is in fact time for us to end.**

No, I think you've signed all the forms. I'll be sending your file back to Mrs. Hawkins later today.

Goodbye, Richard.
