

Billy. Shelly. Ally.

By

Sheldon Shaw

340 E.29th st. Apt. 4F
New Yor, NY 10016
646-824-6986
Sheldon.brand@gmail.com

Characters.

Billy Rosenberg. 70's. Early stages of dementia. Deteriorating body.

Shelly Ellis. Billy's Nurse. African American.

Ally Rose. Neice of Billy.

Place

New York City.

Act 1 Scene 1

Billy, in a wheelchair, is slowly getting his apartment ready for what it seems a date. Joyfully he makes the mood right for a significant other. Billy moves gradually, but the excitement has given him energy. He wheels over to a record player and goes through numerous records and decides on one. Billy takes it out of its sleeve and places it on the record player and what fills the room is *La Vie en Rose* by Edith Piaf. He gently rises out of his chair and with a hunch back, he dances. The sweet sounds of her voice overtake him, and he begins to weep. The song brings this deep emotion out of him that only a loved one from the past can bring. The sorrow passes, and he puts some finishing touches on his room. He puts on a little cologne and fixes his hair, making sure he looks, presentable.

(There is a knock on his front door.)

He jumps. His mood changes, He sits back into his chair, making it seem like he is sicker than we just saw.

Another knock. Followed by.

Shelly

Hello Mr. Rosenberg.

(Pause)

Billy is a little shocked.

Billy

Hello? Can I help you?

Shelly

Are you William Rosenberg?

Billy

Yes. Can I help you with something?

Shelly

Oh, hi, my name is Sheldon. Sheldon Ellis. I am the nurse the agency sent.

Billy

What? Really?

Shelly

Were you not expecting me?

Billy

I was expecting a nurse, but...

(Pause)

Oh...The door is open.

(Shelly opens the door. He doesn't fully enter the apartment as he surveys the situation. Billy doesn't know what to make of Shelly.)

You're Shelly?

Shelly

Yeah. It's short For Sheldon...Oh, I'm sorry, were you expecting a female nurse?

Billy

Well, yeah, I mean I'm used to having a female. I don't know about this...

Shelly

You could call the agency. Or speak with Alice. She is the one who set this whole arrangement up.

Billy

It's ok... I guess I will call her later. (Reluctantly) You can come in.

(Shelly steps into Billy's apartments. There are movie and Broadway theater posters lining the walls like wallpaper. The bookshelves are filled with scripts and books on art. Shelly is intrigued.)

Shelly

Wow. Were you a director or something?

Billy

Yes, sort of...I was more of a producer. Was.

(Pause)

Shelly

I used to do some acting. Actually, it's the reason I moved to New York.

Billy

Used to? Well, it's not for everyone...Listen, I do have some things for you to do for me today.

Shelly

Oh yes, no problem. That is what I'm hired to do.

(Shelly puts all his things down. He also takes this long black cord from around his neck with a battery pack attached to his body. Billy notices.)

Bill

That is some setup. Are you undercover or something?

Shelly

Oh, this? It's just a personal project I'm working on.

Billy

Are you still in school?

Shelly

No. It's just personal.

Billy

Ok. I will mind my business.

(Pause)

Ok. Then, since you are my new caretaker, this is what you need to do...see that chair over there.

Shelly

Um yes.

Billy

So, that is yours, sit there and if you see me about to die, then just wish me well. And turn off all the light before you leave.

Shelly

What?

Billy

I mean, what else can you do for me?

Shelly

Well, I was hired so that you wouldn't die.

Billy

How would you do that pray, tell?

Shelly

Well, I would check your vitals regularly during the day. I would make sure that you are eating healthy meals. I will give you all your meds on a timely schedule. And I also do magic tricks to keep you entertained. (Pause) I'm kidding about that last one... I don't know magic...

Billy

So you are a real nurse?

Shelly

Yes. That is not what you had before?

Billy

I had those nurse aides. They basically did what you just said. Do you need to be a nurse to do all that? I don't think so. It seems like a big waste of time with all that education you got, to just feed me pills all day...don't you think.

Shelly

Well, I had more responsibilities in working in the hospital...In case you fall I can handle picking you up off the ground.

Billy

Well, I don't fall.

Shelly

That's not the information I received.

Billy

What? What has Ally told you? (Pause) I fell one time...one time! I don't need you around for that!

Shelly

Well just in case. Listen, Mr. Rosenberg. I don't want you to die. In fact, I want you to live as good of a life as possible with whatever time you have left.

Billy

Why? What interest in my life do you have? Why would you care whether I lived or died?

(Silence)

It seems to me that the only interest you would have, is if I continue to live, would be to have a piece cake of a job, just watching me breathe every day, you would look at your watch and then feed me either food or meds. Easy as cake.

Shelly

Well, I do like cake...They say that you have been overtaking your medications, have you forgotten how many you've taken?

Billy

No.

Shelly

What do you mean, No?

Billy

Just like I said. No.

Shelly

Are you in so much pain that you need that much medication?

Billy

Yes.

Shelly

You can't do that, you might accidentally overdose.

Billy

Believe me, it will not be an accident.

(Pause)

Shelly

What?

Billy

That is right; I was doing it on purpose.

Shelly

So you are saying that you want to ...

Billy

Yup.

Shelly

But why. Why would you want to do that?

Billy

Why not.

Shelly

Cause it's good to be alive.

Billy

Really. Look around this place. This is all I do.... THIS IS ALL I DO EVERYDAY!

Shelly

OKAY...But if we can get you a little healthier, we could get you out and about and enjoy the sunshine.

Billy

I have enjoyed enough sunshine. I've experienced enough of this life. I have done everything I have ever wanted to do... well except have a child, but that was not my fault.

Shelly

Why didn't you have children?

Billy

I was sterile from disease when I was a child.

Shelly

I am sorry to hear. But please, why would you want to end your life? You don't really know what's on the other side you may be going down there.

Billy

Really? Do you believe that?

Shelly

Yes.

Billy

Do you really believe that nonsense?

Shelly

I believe that there is a place we go when we die, and it could be good, and it could be horrible.

Billy

Wow. You must be joking.

Shelly

Excuse me?

Billy

You know all that stuff was made up, right?

Shelly

What?

Billy

To control the masses.

Shelly

Come on...

Billy

So that the rich could make the poor subservient and easy to control.

Shelly

I think you're losing it.

Billy

I am NOT losing it! (Pause) An easy example would be your ancestor...the slaves.

Shelly

Say what now?

Billy

What better way to keep slaves a slave and not have them revolt other than have them believe that there is a right place for them to go when they die and if they just followed the rules and regulations, then good things will happen to them in the afterlife, and if they step out of line, then a good whipping is a necessary punishment.

Shelly

You can't really believe that, can you?

Billy

I don't have to believe it, it's a well-known fact, especially with the guys I used to hang around with. Oh, believe me, they used to laugh about you workers accepting all that they throw you away.

(Pause.)

Look, I have seen all the mess that goes on behind the curtain. I used to be buddies with Millionaires and Billionaires, they have this world in a stranglehold.

There is nothing there when you die, so just try and enjoy what you have and then you have to let it go. And that's what I want to do, It is time I let go of all of this... I am useless at this point. And I am tired. I'm tired of watching this god damn TV. I'm tired of reading these fucking books, I'm tired of eating this mediocre fucking food. It takes a lot of energy, and I'm tired, It is time for me to rest.

(Pause)

So would you help me?

Shelly

What?

Billy

Will you help me rest. Eternally.

Shelly

You can't be serious? On my first day...

(There is silence)

A beeping sound goes off in the area where Shelly placed his things.

Billy

I think someone is calling you or something.

(Shelly pulls out the battery pack and long cord that he had placed down.)

Shelly

Oh, it's just a low battery.

Billy

What the hell is that thing?

Shelly

It's a video camera.

Billy

That sure is small.

Shelly

Yeah, it's a hidden camera.

Billy

Who or what are you secretly filming?

(Pause)

Wouldn't that be an invasion of someone's privacy?

(Pause)

Shelly

No one has privacy anymore. Look, It's a black thing, and you wouldn't understand it.

Billy

Oh, come on, don't give me that crap. Shelly. Why did you start this mess of following people around videotaping them? You don't see anything wrong with that?

(Pause)

Shelly

No...I am just sick and tired of every time I walk in a public street white women are terrified of me. So I started filming them to show people this is a real thing happening to innocent black men, such as myself.

Billy

Are you just a little paranoid?

Shelly

Exactly.

Billy

What?

Shelly

It's exactly what I'm trying to disprove. That I am not paranoid. White women are terrified of me every day. It's very insulting actually.

Billy

I have heard some crazy stuff in my life, but this might be the craziest...

Shelly

Well, I know you hear it, but I want to show it. I film exactly what I see every day, while I'm doing what I do every single day and it usually involves just going to work, like here, or going shopping for food, going to the gym. I do nothing more than that. I don't even film at night time. I want to prove that it's happening in broad daylight and look, look at how I start every day before I step out of the apartment.

(Shelly presses a few buttons on his phone and brings up a video ... He pushes play, and the video plays. We see the same video on a big screen behind them...)

Shelly

(On the video.)

Hey good morning whoever will be watching this video. It is a great morning, perfect weather, about 60 degrees. Today I am wearing 3 quarter length workouts pants and a wick workout shirt. I have this Adidas jacket because it gets a little chilly running by the river. The sneakers I will be wearing is the Hoka One One running shoes, which are not very attractive but damn are they comfortable! Oh and this hat and running sunglasses

to block that damn sun. (Pause) So do I look thuggish? I don't think so... Do I look like someone that would rob you? I think not. Well, let's see what happens today...

(Shelly goes around the room puts his keys in his pocket and wallet, etc.)

Oh yeah, let me take these vitamins I forgot yesterday.

(He opens a container of protein powder type stuff. He puts a scoop in a jar glass. He opens another bottle of powder and takes a scoop of that. Puts it in a jar as well. He then takes a bottle of water and pours the whole bottle covering the powder. He stirs it with a spoon. And he tugs the entire jar.)

Ok, that is that. Let's go and try to enjoy this day. I hope no one pisses me off.

(He leaves)

Billy

Well, that was exciting...

Shelly

Wait, it's coming.

(He presses "forward" on his phone)

I had to deal with this...

(It's a reaction of a white woman pulling their purses close to their bodies when they see Shelly.)

I have seen that woman in the neighborhood before!

(Then just moments later a white couple suddenly start holding hands like they are about to be abducted. Billy watches intensely. The next white

couple crosses the street when they feel Shellys presence behind them.)

Billy

Come on...this is not edited? This all happened in one day? In that short time, Shelly?

Shelly

I know I have just met you, but this is honest to God's truth. I swear on my grandmother's grave.

(He stops the video)

So did you eat yet?

Blackout

Act 1 Scene 2

Alice enters. She looks disheveled and looks older than her age of 50. Billy has stepped into the bathroom, and she comes face to face with Shelly.

Ally

Oh hello. How are you doing?

Shelly

I'm fine.

(Pause.)

Ally

Oh, I am Ally, Ally Rose, Billy's niece.

Shelly

Oh yeah, I'm Shelly his...

Ally

His nurse, right?

Shelly

Yes.

Ally

Yes. How is everything going?

Shelly

Well, to be honest, it was a rocky start at first. Did you know he was expecting a woman?

Ally

Yes, I know.

(Ally makes herself at home. She has brought Chinese food.)

It actually was a problem. Billy has always requested a nice looking female, and the agency always provided whatever he asked for.

Shelly

Really? How come?

Ally

Well, Billy has his ways.

Shelly

That is interesting.

Ally

Anything to report? Oh. A word of advise he really likes his pillows fluffed. Daily. He is like the princess and the pea when it comes to those pillows.

(Shelly goes over to the bed and fluffs the pillows)

I know it's not really your job, but if you don't want him to get all cranky on you...

Shelly

Yeah, I know I've had patients like that before. They will listen to you better if they're in a good mood. So a little pillow fluffing is no big deal.

Ally

Well, you don't have to do it now, but before you leave in the evening would be fine.

Shelly

Oh. OK.

Ally

Has he been mean to you?

Shelly

It's okay, I just think he really wanted a woman to look at, rather than my ugly mug.

Ally

I'm sure that's the case, but we need to get serious here because his health is seriously declining and he needs some real help, especially with his medications. Have you been monitoring his meds?

Shelly

Oh, yes, I have. But he tends to fight me on it and is always looking for more, as they usually do.

Ally

So, this is normal.

Shelly

What do you mean?

Ally

The overtaking of drugs.

Shelly

Yes. It's usually the painkillers, Oxycodone and such...some patients just forget how many they have taken. Others forget to take them, both are dangerous. But Billy...

Ally

Yeah, we had a severe problem with the other nurses, he almost died one time when he took 28 pills in one weekend.

Shelly

I know.

Ally

You did?

Shelly

Yeah. They informed me that before I took the job. It's one of the reasons I wanted to be here. It's actually one of the reasons why I became a nurse, specifically for older patients.

Ally

Why?

Shelly

Well, when my grandmother was alive, she was in so much pain that she took one too many pills and passed away in the middle of the night.

Ally

That is a shame. Well, I am glad you are here, then. I think he was overrunning the other nurses or something because for some reason they were letting him do whatever he wanted to do. And he was killing himself.

Shelly

But did he ever mention about doing it on purpose?

(Billy emerges slowly out of the bathroom.)

Billy

Hey, Alice, I didn't know you were coming over?

Ally

Really? I told you I would be here today around this time.

Billy

I don't recall.

Ally

Well, I brought you some Chinese...

Billy

I don't want any Chinese food. I don't like any Chinese food!

Ally

You always liked Chinese food.

Billy

No, I don't.

(Alice looks at Shelly as to say he is getting crazier and crazier.)

Ally

Well, I'm going to put it in the fridge just in case you do like it again and want to eat some.

Billy

What do you want, Alice?

Ally

I just wanted to see how you were doing. I always want to know how you are doing.

Billy

Don't you have someplace to be, a date or something?

Ally

No.

Billy

You should really be on one. You've been alone for so damn long. Aren't you tired of being alone?

Ally

I don't think we should be talking about my love life, especially in front of the new help.

Billy

He is a grown-ass man he can take a little chatting about someone else's love life, or lack of it.

Ally

Well, it was good to see and nice to meet you, Shelly. Shelly? Is that short for Sheldon?

Shelly

Yeah.

Ally

Oh. Ok. My grandfather was named Sheldon. You got yourself a beautiful Jewish name.

Shelly

So I have been told.

Ally

Well, I will talk to you soon...

(Ally heads for the door.)

(To Billy) I talked to Dr. Johnson, and she said you missed your appointment last Thursday.

Billy

I didn't have an appointment on Thursday.

Ally

You sure did, and you missed it.

Billy

Why the hell are you all in my business anyway?

Ally

I'm trying to help you, so you can enjoy the rest of your, (Under her breath) miserable life. OK. I will see you.

(She exits.)

Blackout

Act 1 Scene 3

Shelly enters Bill's apartment in a hurry.

Shelly

Sorry, I am late there was traffic...

(Billy snaps)

Billy

My Pain pills...Now!

(Shelly is surprised by the outburst, but does his job. Shelly goes to the closet and digs around and comes back out with 2 pills. He hands them to Billy with a glass of water.)

Shelly

Again, sorry about being late.

Billy

No worries just don't let this become a habit.

Shelly

Ok.

(Pause)

Billy

So how many this morning?

Shelly

Ok. I actually well let me check...

(Shelly sits and calculates in his head.)

Ok. So...I would say about 7 that I witnessed.

(He opens his phone and turns on the video)

At 8:10...that's just 1 hour and 10 minutes' after I left my apartment.

(Pause.)

One couple held hands quickly when she glanced at me....that does count and happens often, but it's hard to prove. Did you notice the disgusted look on her face? Another was a blatant one...An Asian girl. She glances at me while I'm behind her, I was just trying to get to the subway like everyone else, in this god awful city. She kept looking over her shoulder, you see that right? And then finally in the middle of the block, not at a corner, she crosses the street. Now maybe I thought her destination could have been in the center of that block, but she kept on walking another 2 blocks. She was going to the same subway station that I was... fucking people I can't believe it sometimes.

Billy

And the others?

Shelly

There were 5 more of them, you don't need to see it all, you get it. As soon as they noticed me coming, they hold their bags tight even though these women are already holding their bags, but they hold them so tightly as if I am an evil supervillain about to rip them away from them

Billy

So none of these women are Black or Latino?

Shelly

It usually isn't the case. They know who to be wary of, cause It's not just a black face but someone who seems to be an unsavory being. It's easy to tell if someone is up to no good and it has nothing to with the color of someone's skin, its character of a person's personality.

Billy

That makes sense. But where do you include Jewish women?

(Pause)

Shelly

Sorry, but Jewish women are just white women. They are included in whiteness. They clutch all the time, well if I can tell they are Jewish. One time I was walking back to my apartment in Murray Hill when a Hasidic Jewish couple was walking towards me, not holding hands and in a good mood. The husband took one look at me, right in my eyes, from one human being to another, he grabbed his wife's hand and crossed the street, in the middle of the block, NOT at a crossway. That is NOT a usual place to cross! Only kids and vagrants cross in the middle of the block!

Billy

But they are Hasidic, I wouldn't associate them with a modern-day Jew. They are stuck in the past. Also, they are so segregated that they probably think the segregation of blacks is still legal.

Shelly

What is a Jew then?

Billy

It is many different things, but it's not like we've all came together and divided up the Jews. It just happened over time. The Hasidic came to America and didn't trust anyone because of the Holocaust, they just decided to create their own communities with their own rules and regulations.

Shelly

Kind of like Move in Philly before the government bombed them.

Billy

What?

Shelly

This group called Move wanted to start their own way of living because they felt the American system wasn't fair to people of a black complexion, so they took over this apartment complex and started their own schools, eating habits, and basically small government. Are the Hasidic's something like that?

Billy

I guess.

Shelly

Except they were never bombed out of existence?

Billy

Yeah, I mean no, they were never bombed.

Shelly

Well, aren't they lucky?

Billy

I guess so...

Shelly

You white folks sure do get lucky a lot...

Billy

Come on Shelly don't call me white....

Shelly

Oh, you think you should get a pass?

Billy

My Jewish family has fought for equal rights with blacks for many generations. We used to own clothing stores that sold to black families when whites would not. We stood side by side with people of color when others wouldn't.

Shelly

So what happened?

Billy

What do you mean what happened?

Shelly

If you were so gracious to stand by our sides and sell us goods, where did you go?

Billy

What do you mean? We are still here...

Shelly

I have never seen a Jew in any of my neighborhoods growing up. You have never come to visit our house for dinner or play games with me as a child.

(Pause)

Does your family still own that clothing store?

Billy

No.

Shelly

What happened?

Billy

They burned down during the riots.

Shelly

What Riots?

Billy

The riots of 68', when Martin Luther King was shot. The blacks just lost it, they started burning down everything. And our store was one of the casualties.

Shelly

Sorry to hear that happened to your family business.

Billy

So we were in your neighborhood, but you burned us out.

Shelly

Really? You call that being in our neighborhoods.

Billy.

Yes! You need clothes to wear, didn't you? And we, my family, provided those things!

Shelly

OK.

Billy

So don't you dare call my family White!!!

Shelly

OK. Sorry. I won't call you white. No problem. But one question...How did your ancestors get those clothes to sell to the black communities?

Billy

Some distributor, I'm not exactly sure how it all worked...

Shelly

So, you just benefited from the profits.

Billy

Of course, that is my family, and they supported me as a child, that is what family does.

Shelly

But you have no idea how you get your material to sell to all the black people of Harlem?

Billy

I told you I didn't have my hands in that type of business. But they were able to afford to send me to college because of it, so if you want to look at it as us against them, then I want to thank your people for helping my family pay for my college education.

Shelly

I'm not against anyone, but the people who you should be thanking is my slave ancestors.

Billy

What? Come on with this shit...

Shelly

My slave ancestors provided the free labor of picking cotton so the manufacturer and the “distributors” could then sell cheaply to your family and then sell back to the black people of the North...

Billy

This is some bullshit! This slavery stuff again? You really need to get over it...

Shelly

You celebrate slavery every year with Passover?... So how come you all have never gotten over it, actually, you use it often as an excuse for the way you live, don't you?!?!?

(Pause)

I'm sorry. I get a little excited about stuff like this, and working on this project has just amplified it, I guess...

Billy

You Guess? I think it's starting to drive you mad. Maybe you should try another way to deal with racism. Write a book or some poems or something...

Shelly

Maybe one day.

(Pause)

Billy

Listen, take me up on my offer, and I will make it worth you're wild...financially.

Shelly

You mean assisted suicide? (Pause) I just can't do it. I have turned my life to the lord. And I just can't.

Billy

Just think about it. I can offer you enough to take away a lot of this pain you are feeling.
(Pause) Just think about it. OK?

(Silence)

Act 2 scene 1

Billy's dining room day.

Shelly in enjoying a sandwich when Ally pops in.

Ally

Oh hey.... Where is Billy?

Shelly

He just hopped in the shower.

Ally

Doesn't he need help?

Shelly

With showering?

Ally

Yes. Shouldn't you be in there?

Shelly

No. He is fine. He is not that far off with his dexterity. Why do you ask?

Ally

I just thought he needed help taking a shower.

Shelly

Wait. Did you help him with getting a shower?

NO!

Ally

Shelly

Oh. I was about to say ...

Ally

But the nurses before you had always given him a shower.

Shelly

Home health aides.

Ally

What?

Shelly

Before me, he had home health aides. You keep calling them nurses. They are aides, caregivers, and I'm a licensed nurse.

Ally

Ok. Sorry. So yeah, before you, his caregivers gave him a shower.

Shelly

Oh. Really?

Ally

Yeah.

Shelly

Interesting.

Ally

Are you sure he doesn't need help?

Shelly

Listen, I have been a nurse for over 10 years now, and I know when someone needs a hand at taking a shower, and he does not need my help, yet anyways. He just wanted to be helped, I guess.

(Pause)

Oh.... Ally

Shelly
What? What is the problem?

Ally
Oh. Nothing. I guess the caregivers beforehand must have misdiagnosed.

Shelly
Yeah, that must have been it.

Ally
Yeah, that must have been it...

(Pause.)

I'm pleased you've helped out with Billy. He seems in much better spirits recently without all that medication.

Shelly
You mean hasn't been a crazy old cranky goat?

Ally
Yeah.

Shelly
He sleeps better.

Ally
He seems to be walking a little better too.

Shelly
Well, that is my job to make sure the rest of someone's life is manageable. I will always try and ease the pain for them.

Ally

Why?

Shelly

What do you mean, Why?

Ally

Why are you so lovely when the world treats black men so wicked?

Shelly

Whoa. I didn't know you were "woke" like that.

Ally

I would say I'm a woke person. My parents were radical lefties...

Shelly

Even though the racial stuff gets under my skin, I always think back to my grandmother. She was paralyzed since she was a kid, she had polio. With polio, if you can see a doctor in time, it can be managed. When she became deftly ill, she was taken to the hospital, but back then they wouldn't see her right away because my dear grandmother had to wait till all the white people were seen first before she could be treated and by the time she was seen, and not given proper care, she became paralyzed. She forgave. She went to church. She managed to live a happy life because she would never let anyone steal her happiness...Even though this racial divide and subtle racial hatred make my insides burn and feel like fighting violently every notion of discrimination, I take deep breaths and think of the forgiveness my grandmother gave. It's a struggle but I'm making it work...

Ally

That is sweet, but you shouldn't have to do that, that shouldn't have to be your everyday existence. It just shouldn't.

Shelly

I know, but here we are, and I must deal with it.

(Pause)

Ally

I was at this little coffee and food stand the other day, and I was looking at the paper, and it had a story about the Black Lives Matter movement on the cover. They had marched with the women's day parade. Which was fabulous by the way. The story was actually about how the Black Lives Matter movement conflicted with the Women's march ideologies...which is a shame, I mean can't we just all get along? (Pause) And the coffee stand guy makes this comment "ALL LIVES MATTER! I come here to this beautiful country with nothing and no police bother me. I make money and live a good life. My life matters too. The policeman's life matters too." Let me tell you, Shelly, I felt my insides just twist up into a big old knot, because I think this guy was Indian or Middle Eastern or something I'm not exactly sure, but he was definitely a man of color. And then he shouted at me "All Lives Matter!" Again. I calmly said to him that at this moment and all through American history black people have been getting treated like shit in the United States of America and when immigrants, such as yourself, come here you look down on and treat African Americans with disdain. You come here not knowing the history of the land of which you arrive with money pillaging in your heart. You don't really care about America....you only care about making money for you and your family, and that's it. You don't care about other people's struggle here as you probably did back for whence you came. He just sat there like a mope and said..."They should get over it and get with the program." What "program," I said. I think he felt like he could speak frankly with me because he thought I was a regular white, not knowing I was a Jew. But anyways. I said "what program," and he went on and said, "Maybe if these blacks would just put their heads down and do some hard work and stop complaining maybe more people would respect them and then we would treat them better." You mean like when they were SLAVES! OMG, you should have seen the look on his face, Shelly, it's like I slapped him with a side of pork. Haha. He first stuttered. And then said, "why does it have to be about slavery, huh?" Because that is the reason you can come to this precious country and enjoy the right to have this food cart and support your family. You would have been treated like garbage if you tried to sell this shit back in the '50s. Because African Americans are why you can exist in this space, don't ever forget that and you come here and scapegoat good black folk who only get bad press in the media. Then I asked him how many African American friends he had? And told him not to mention the ones who buy his bitter ass coffee...but how many he really knew? Ones he broke bread with? Did he know their children? Their mothers and fathers? He put his head down for a moment and then answers childishly, "None really." So then how can you even comment on Black Lives? "Well"...he says. "Well. Here are your damn bagel and coffee."

Shelly

Damn. You went in on him. Why are you into Black folk's lives like that?

Ally

Well, I did a minor in Africa American Studies when I was at Columbia and majored in Psychology...and then went on to get a Doctorate in Psychology. Have you ever had a therapist Shelly?

Shelly

No.

Ally

Really?

Shelly

The Lord provides everything I need now.

Ally

Interesting. Well, I just want you to know that you can always vent around me because I know that the black man doesn't have a voice in this country, well taken seriously anyway, and it can turn into depression, and if you don't get it out at some point you could explode.

(Pause)

Shelly

They only care for us when we get shot...

Ally

Interesting, go on...

Shelly

When everyday life is happening no one speaks about us in a good way, there is no caring about what our daily life existence is like, but as soon as we get shot, oh my god, these are great black men who had so much to give and you whites are horrible for hating them for no reason and you should provide them with some respect. And when the bodies are cold, and no more reports are happening on the television. It's back to normal of only respecting us for entertainment value, and that includes the sport in the

bedroom. I'm talking about all women. I wish I had better words to express how I feel, but I have lost all feelings.

Ally

That is OK, Shelly. You just express it the best that you can. As long as you get it out...

Shelly

I tried to respect all women, but the black movement which I appreciate and feel wholeheartedly with doesn't allow that. I have to only respect brown women, and when we go deeper... How could I date a light skin woman? Do you not like black women? How could you date that Mexican woman do you not like black women? How could you date that Indian woman don't you like black women? How could you date that African woman don't you respect your African American roots? How could you even look at that white woman like that...

Ally

That's how white supremacy spreads its ugly roots and maintains its power over everyone. It makes you feel conflicted. So who should you date?

(Pause)

Personally, I think you should date a strong black woman with her dedication to the black struggle. You should listen to what she has to say because black women have been at the bottom of the totem pole and can see without any interference from white culture what is right and what is destructive. This applies to all black men. If black men would listen to black women, then most of them would not end up in the streets and then end up in jail. If they would listen to the black women, then they would have their own piece of land right now growing their own food without the influence of white interests. It's what black women have envisioned because we, I mean they, can see clearly without the control of white man's stranglehold on everyone else's culture. Black people could be happy and debt-free if white people could take that foot off your necks. White people want the black man dead, broke, dumb, with no hope in the world. SO if you are alive, you are begging for jobs from them.

Shelly

Damn! That is a little much...

Ally

I am trying to help you! Trying to declutter your mind, from all that has been placed there to control every aspect of your life. EVERY ASPECT. It starts from as early birth when white people try and educate you into thinking that every way they feel is the right way of thinking. White women are usually the teachers, and they are taught by these white behemoths men, that they must obey a man, and everything he says is right. See that is why people think black women are bitchy, it's because we, I mean they, are not trained like white women to obey, and I'm sure most men would love to be like white men to have that control over them. It would make them feel really manly, but that is not going to happen anymore; white women have been waking up over the years to these insecure, jealous little-minded men, these Neanderthals, these beasts of creatures, who start wars and kill families just so that they could put sugar in their coffee. And then they have the nerve to call themselves civilized. They are the least enlightened "human beings" to ever walk the earth. Just because they have more "stuff," doesn't make them civilized. They are cruel motherfuckers with no regard to anyone other than themselves. So you are right, they only care about you when you are shot. It looks good on their human being resume. They have to at least look like they care about you here in America "The greatest country in the world" It's like when rich people, white men, donate, and they let you know that they gave, to St. Jude's or whatever. How can you vilify them of anything terrible after they donate a million dollars to help save children with cancer? Then they invest in companies that destroy villages of people of color so that they can have their minerals or put them in debt somehow so that they owe them for the rest of their lives. NO LIVES MATTER! Let's just get that straight. NO LIVES MATTER! That should be understood. And black lives matter less than that.

(Pause)

Shelly

Damn. That school you went to sure did a job on you...

Ally

Sometimes I need to vent as well.

Shelly

Yeah, you sure do.

(Pause)

Ally

You know what, you remind me of my Ex ...Jimmy.

Shelly

Really? He was black?

Ally

Yeah. He had these green eyes with this light caramel skin.

Shelly

But, I don't have any of that.

Ally

But your features remind me of his...

Shelly

Well, I hope that's a good thing.

Ally

Yes, it is...Well, I should get going...and don't forget about those damn pillows.

Shelly

OK.

(Ally Exits.)

Act 2 Scene 2

Shelly Enters Billy's apartment is in a hurry.

Shelly

Sorry, I'm late there was a lot of traffic on the streets today. So today I was walking, and you are never going to believe what happened.

Billy

Well, show me the footage.

(Shelly gets out his iPhone and finds the video.)

Shelly

So here you see I'm just dressed to come here in my regular workout outfit.

Billy

It shouldn't, but you know this ridiculous world we live in.

Shelly

Well, I'm walking down the street, and I even forgot that I had the camera on because I'm exhausted from the 5 miles I ran.

Billy

Did you run 5 miles?

Shelly

Yeah. I usually do something like that. I feel healthy now, better than when I was in my former unhealthy life.

Billy

Well, you are a better man than me. Shit, I never did anything for 5 miles.

Shelly

Oh here it comes, look! Do you see who that is?

Billy

Wait, who is that?

Shelly

You don't recognize your own flesh and blood?

Billy

Ally?!... What is she doing? Is she clutching and omg she crossed the street?

Shelly

Yup. She didn't say a word verbally, but as you can see,

(Shelly rewinds the footage.)

she was terrified of me for some reason. Was it the sweat pouring from my brow. Is she scared of sweat?

Billy

Did you confront her? Maybe you should have said hello. Perhaps that would have made her comfortable.

(Pause)

But wait, why should you have to do that?

Shelly

Right. I have to make her comfortable?

Billy

I wish I could say that she just didn't realize it was you, but why would she do this to anybody? Wait, can you play that again.

(Shelly plays...)

Can you go further back than that... I'm trying to see....yes right there. There are a white couple...a Hispanic looking guy...a white guy...another white guy, maybe Jewish looking, Hey I can say that cause well you know, then you. She only pays attention to you.

(Pause)

She has even defended herself to her family for dating black men, the relationships never really went anywhere, but she supported them. She is always talking about human rights for everyone.....and then...

Shelly

And then she acts like this.

(Pause)

Billy

Well, maybe it's the clothes? I mean you were really dressed down, and it intimidated her?

Shelly

Are you serious? Are you really going to defend her racist behavior?

Billy

I mean the clothes do make the man.

(Pause.)

Shelly

Let me show you something.

(Shelly google on his phone.)

Shelly

Here look at this...

Billy

What? I know what this is, I have seen it many times before. A black man being hung on a tree. It is devastating but...

Shelly

And this...

Billy

It's a group of black men and women getting food thrown on them for sitting at a lunch counter. I have seen this before, what is your point?

Shelly

So you tell me...What were they wearing?

(Billy looks at the photos again.)

Billy

Suits and beautiful suits I might add.

Shelly

Yup. These men, women, and children were wearing beautiful suits while they were hanging from those trees. Now those suits are decorated with blood. So do you think when they took him off the streets and drag him into the woods they were thinking “but he dresses so lovely, a suit, we can’t hang someone in a suit?”

Billy

Obviously not...

Shelly

Racism doesn’t care what you wear.

Billy

Listen Shelly...I’m sorry. I don’t know how to help you, except maybe talk to my niece. And not sure if that would help. How can she lay with black men and at the same time fear them?

Shelly

That is why I am doing this project. I don’t want to have kids growing up in this world feel the way I feel every day. Every fucking day. I’m made to feel like a criminal, and purse snatching has never been a problem. Ever. (Pause.) Everyone is made to be afraid of me, which bleeds into everyday things that limit my life.

Billy

Such as...

Shelly

Such as getting jobs. Racism limits my advancements in companies. They are so scared of me that they don’t even want to work side by side with me.

Billy

That can’t be...

Shelly

If they are even afraid to walk on the same street as me, how could they want to work side by side with me?

Billy

I guess you’re right.

Shelly
Admit we have a problem.

Billy
I can't do that...

Shelly
Admit we have a problem!

Billy
I don't think I can make that call.

Shelly
ADMIT WE HAVE A PROBLEM!

Billy
Take it easy, Shelly.

Shelly
That is what you keep telling us to do, but all these things keep happening.

(He show the lynching pictures again)

Blackout

Act 2 Scene 3

Shelly enters in with a bag of food. He empties the food on a little tray near Billy's wheelchair.

Shelly
They had that chopped liver today.

Billy
Oh, yummy.

Shelly

Hey, from your professional experience, what advice would you give an actor starting out?

Billy

Why. Are you thinking about pursuing? Again?

Shelly

I know, I pursue it for many years, but it never worked out for me.

Billy

You never really talked about your experience.

Shelly

I know. I'm a little embarrassed about it because it caused a lot of problems for me, but those problems did lead me to find my faith and my true calling of being a health care professional. I was just thinking of trying to direct some of this anger I'm beginning to feel into something creative. I'm in a better place to handle it now...I guess.

Billy

Well, you don't really have the eyes for it.

Shelly

What?

Billy

You don't have the right eyes.

Shelly

What is wrong with my eyes?

Billy

Too small

Shelly

That is a problem?

Billy

It's one of the things the actors don't think about when it comes to being represented. It's all about the eyes. If you want to find the soul, look deep into someone's eyes. But when it comes to casting directors, agents, managers, and whatnot, they don't want to have to look too hard to find that soul, so they hire actors with big eyes. It's easier to capture that moment with the camera. That is why, as a black actor, they usually hire those Nigerian actors, they always have those humongous eyes. It's like falling out of their heads..go ahead look at yourself carefully in the mirror.

(Shelly stands and looks at himself.)

You see the shape, the lack of roundness you have. Did you take acting classes?

Shelly

Yes. I spent thousands doing so...and nothing. Not even a meeting with an agent or casting directors.

Billy

Well, it's something acting teachers won't mention because they need to make a living. It's a sad truth but a truth...

(Shelly is looking deep into the mirror and after a few moments and begins to cry.)

What is wrong, Shelly. Was it something I said?

Shelly

No, I mean yes, well sort of. I can't believe so much depends on what a person looks like.

Billy

That is the nature of the business.

Shelly

Not just the business but all of my life. I sit here looking at the mirror and at my face. My eyes are small, and my skin is black. So black...they hated my skin being so black. "Not many roles for actors with such black actors." It is what I would hear sometimes, but nothing about the eyes.

Billy

But you have to love yourself no matter what others think about you.

Shelly

But in acting, just like you said, it depends on what you look like.

Billy

Yeah but...

Shelly

And when I look in the mirror, it reminds me of the first time I found out that I was black.

Billy

What?

Shelly

The first time I found out that I was really black... was when I was in 5th grade, and I was new to this school that was predominately black, I had always been at an all-white school in the suburbs beforehand. At the white school, I was just another kid, or I was too young to realize that kids were probably saying things about me behind my back. On the first day, at my new school filled with black kids, a girl said I was so black that no girl would ever like me, the other class members started laughing, and I really didn't know what she was talking about and I turned to this mirror and then I saw it. I was Black. Much blacker than most of the other kids. That day changed me forever. And I tried to do anything to hide my complexion. I even tried to bleach my skin and straighten my hair cause they made fun of my nappy hair as well. I would hide from the sun. The sun became my enemy, my real adversary. I would wear hats, long sleeves, long pants, and sunblock during the summertime. I always looked at that time period as the Al B. Sure Era.

(Billy has blank look like what are you talking about.)

Al B. Sure was this famous artist during the '90s who had this perfect light skin and waved curly hair that all the girls loved.

Billy

That is all such a shame but now that you are older, don't you see how they were wrong, so wrong? Everyone wants to have darker skin. Darker skin is beautiful.

Shelly

Really?

(Shelly pulls out the camera he uses to film women grabbing their belongings as they spot his complexion.).

The video says otherwise. And you even said it yourself, looks matter in the entertainment business. I thought my Al B. Sure era was terrible, but It was even worse when I started to study history and the discrimination that goes on at all levels in society, the redlining, Jim Crow, whatever...I'm sick of it all. But at least I have my faith.

Billy

Yeah, at least you have that...

Act 3 Scene 1

Shelly is fluffing pillows while Billy watches his wheelchair.

Billy

I think that's enough with fluffing the damn pillows. Jeez.

Shelly

How come your niece is single with no children? Do you think she's only attracted to black men? I think she is...but at the same time she's scared of them it sounds crazy but...

Billy

What? I'm getting sick of all this race talk.

Shelly

My theory is that something horrible happened to her with white men.

Billy

She grew up around a typical Jewish family with good money and a lot of Jewish men suitors. Nothing horrible happened that I've heard of...

Shelly

Huh, Well maybe something happened with a relative, sexual abuse with someone she really trusted and that could have just put this blind spot in her mind where she sees a particular type of man and it turns her stomach.

Billy

Are you a therapist now? Are you trying to say that the sight of a white man's penis will make her sick?

Shelly

Well, sort of, I don't even think it will get that far.

Billy

Ok. But what about Asian men or Indian men...Why would it have to be black men?

Shelly

Is that a problem.

Billy

No.

Shelly

Well, the way you said it seems like its a problem.

Billy

No, I'm just saying there are other types of men she could have dated, so your theory doesn't hold water.

Shelly

I'm not finished. Well, the last thing to do to rebel against white men is to date a black man. So what she is doing is taking a dig at who every abused her by rubbing it in their face that, not only does she not want to see your penis she is going to be with the one penis you hate or envy the most in all the world. No one race is hated or envied the most in all the world than a black man's penis.

Billy

You are ridiculous!

Shelly

Really? Am I? Really think about really think about it. Look at things that are around us. Look at the media, look at the newspapers, look at our pop culture, look at the porn industry, look at what you hire black men as...Doormen, trash men, delivery men, you won't even allow them to wait tables or bartend anymore.

Billy

First of all, stop including me in this group like I'm the problem and Second, I look at this issue often.

Shelly

Do you really look at it?

Billy

Yes, I do!

Shelly

Let me show you something...

Billy

Come on, Shelly, I'm old and brittle. Death is coming for me soon. So why don't you give me a break?

Shelly

OK. I'm sorry.

(Pause.)

Shelly

Personally, I don't care who Ally dates, but why do you treat her with so much hate? When there are other things to put your energy into hating more so...

Billy

What. I don't think it's so much hate.

Shelly

Well, the hate seems to come out of you whenever you talk to her.

Billy

I think you hear things. We do not see eye to eye sometimes, well a lot of the times. It's no big deal. It's just a family thing.

Shelly

Really?

Billy

She and I have a past that I really don't like to talk about. She is my only living relative left, and I have to deal with her because it's the law. If it weren't for the law, then I probably wouldn't have anything to do with her.

Shelly

That seems like a lot of hate.

Billy

Well, maybe we see, hate, differently.

Shelly

Maybe.

(Pause)

Billy

I just don't like some of her beliefs, is all. It just seems like she goes against her own people all the time, a little too much.

Shelly

Her people?

Billy

I mean I'm a Jew culturally, I don't believe in god as you know, and I don't do all the things a traditional Jew does like go to temple regularly and go to all the holiday events, there are too fucking many. But my mother and father tried to raise me as a good Jewish boy, and I respect that...her, on the other hand, she goes at lengths to distance herself away from anything Jewish.

Shelly

Is that a problem?

Billy

Yes! Jews have suffered so much in history, as we do today, just being a Jew and believing what we believe. She was raised by a strict, religious, traditional family. And she goes against everything they tried to instill in her. Everything!

Shelly

Well, maybe that is why she is rejecting them because they were a little too strict?

Billy

Come on at least she could join her family on the big holidays. Instead, they would cry on my shoulder about her "what is wrong with our baby girl? Why won't she even join us for Rosh Hashanah". It became too much, and I started to resent her. Isn't it funny that she and I are the only family members left in this world?

Shelly

But why is she so against her own people?

Billy

That is a question you would have to ask her. She introduced herself as Ally Rose, right?

Shelly

Yeah.

Billy

Did she emphasize the "Rose" part?

Shelly

Yeah. Something like that.

Billy

OMG...She is really an embarrassment.

Shelly

Why would you say that?

Billy

Cause she shortened her last name to Rose, and she tries to be all sexy with it, "Ally Rose."

Shelly

Oh, I see, she should have the same last name as you right "Rosenberg."?

Billy

Yup. She is a fake bitch!

Shelly

Easy Billy! Don't you think that is going too far?

Billy

Nope. She has been fake her whole life. She is a spoiled brat who needed to be spanked when she was a kid, but instead, she was given everything and never had to lift a finger, because our family had money. Don't believe everything you hear Shelly cause the more money you have, the more problems you see.

Shelly

I have heard that...there is a song about it.

Billy

No, there is not. I just made that up right now how could they made a song about it.

Shelly

Yes, they did The Notorious B.I.G had a rap song called "Mo' Money Mo' problems" back in the '90s.

Billy

That can't be, you mean to tell me your people complain about not having money all the time, and then your people write a song about having more money and having more problems? Jeez somebody needs to make up their minds.

(Shelly laughs.)

Well, I'm glad I could put a smile on your face. It's not too hard to smile and still fight the good fight, you know?

Shelly

I know. I am working on that, but sometimes I just get too sensitive about everything, and I don't know how to stop these feelings.

Billy

Have you tried therapy?

Shelly

No. That just isn't something we did in our family.

Billy

Well, my family and I mean Jewish family invented it Haha...

(Shelly laughs again.)

See, we are making progress already. But seriously you should try therapy for a while.

Shelly

Does it really work?

Billy

I think it does....but I will let you in on a little secret.

Shelly

What?

Billy

It works in the short term, I mean It could last a long time, but you know a therapist needs to make a living, so they need you to keep coming back. They have to manipulate you somehow.

Shelly

That's capitalism for yah...

Billy

Yup.

Shelly

Yeah. A lot of businesses must exist like that to continuously make money because they have to feed their family, send the kids to college, buy a home, have savings, and keep money around for a rainy day. By any means necessary...And no one's life matters other than theirs. So you're saying one of these therapists could make my head worse to keep me coming back for more of their "help"?

Billy

Possible. I know this is a cruel world, but you could find someone who really wants to help...Try a student in grad school, because at that moment in their life, they are really trying hard to make a difference and just finish school without failing. No money incentive.

Shelly

That sounds like a plan. I guess it would be better than getting into acting...Especially with these eyes.

Billy

And Shelly. Do it soon, because your negative attitude really bums me out. And who is this genius...What did you call him Notorious B.M.G?

Shelly

The Notorious B.I.G...Here...

Shelly opens his phone and plays "Mo Money Mo Problems" By Biggie Smalls...

Billy

It's that Hippity Hoppity music.

Shelly

Um Yes. I guess so...

"I got the dough, got the flow down Pizarro
Platinum plus like Thirza
Dangerous on the trizacks, leave your ass flizat
I don't know what they want from me
It's like the more money we come across

The more problems we see.”

Billy

I can dig that! Isn't that what the kids say?

Shelly

Yeah, in 1975.

Billy

You are just as mean as you can be. But he is right, the more money you come across, the more problems you see...

Blackout

Act 3 Scene 2

Ally

Hey Shelly, Billy?

Shelly

Shower.

Ally

Oh.

(Ally puts the food in the kitchen)

How is he doing?

Shelly

Much better. His mind seems clearer. He moves around a lot better.

Ally

Well, OK. That's good. Possible one day he can get out of this apartment for some fresh air?

Shelly

I don't see why not. (Pause) Did you grow up in this neighborhood?

Ally

I grew up on the upper east side. The same building as Billy's mother.

Shelly

Harlem?

Ally

No, not that far upper...

Shelly

The times must have been different then, a lot more authentic.

Ally

It definitely was more affordable, and the upper upper east side was...

Shelly

Ghetto?

Ally

Something like that, now it's like the upper east side. And tourist central.

Shelly

Did you hang out in Harlem a lot?

Ally

Sort of.

Shelly

So you know about that Harlem style? That black Harlem style. I grew up in Philly, so I don't know much about that...

Ally

When I was young I used to have this hair it was long on top, but short on the side, a fade is I guess is what you call it, and I had 3 parts shaved in, and would wear these big baggy pants and sometimes these overalls with a big shirt and some Timberlands...Oh my goodness I used to think I was the shit. All my friends were either Latino or black, but none of that mattered back then, it seems like it matters a lot more now. I would sneak out with my friends, especially my best friend Brenda she used to live in what you

would call the hood...and sometimes she slept over my house and we would have the best times. And we would go to these concerts...

Shelly

Really? What kind of music was you into?

Ally

What? We used to listen to some good music then...New Edition, Al B. Sure, Troop, Black Street...That was when music was music, and the slow songs were about making love and not just about fucking as the young folks listen to nowadays...

Shelly

Yeah, it sure was...

Ally

And I remember I used to dance with Bobby all the time...He was my crush, and he actually pursued me. I couldn't believe it...I had the most profound crush on him, but he came after me. We would dance at school dances to Troops songs, all night long. It was our go-to group for slow music. He had this hi-top fade, and we would wear matching outfits...he had the matching overalls too! Oh my God looking back we were crazy with those outfits. But I wouldn't change those days for anything...I wish I had more experiences like that now.

Shelly plays something on his phone its Al B. Sure song.

Shelly

Does this remind you of anything?

Ally

It sure does. Oh, my-my I had the biggest crush on Al B. Sure...he had that perfect hair, and that light skin I mean all the girls had a crush on him. Brenda and I snuck out one day to go to his concert when she stayed over my house...

(Ally starts to dance to the song.)

It was a magical night. New Edition and Al .B Sure were performing...but when we tried to sneak back into my house, we were walking down my block the cops pulled us over

and asked Brenda, not me, what was she was doing around my neighborhood, Not even caring for her well being, cause we both were like 15 and it was after 10. Dark. He was wondering what the hell she was doing in that neighborhood...I yelled at them "She's staying over my house!"... and told them that they can even ask my mother. But they didn't listen and grabbed Brenda and put her in the police car and took her away...that was the last time she stayed over at my place, actually, that ended the relationship. She didn't want to hang out with any white people after that.

(The music stops.)

Shelly

So, was that the last time you hung around black people.

Ally

No. I dated mostly black men my whole life.

Shelly

Oh? So, you dated black men, but you didn't hang around black people? The women? The families? Did anyone invite you to the barbeques?

Ally

No. But it's not because I didn't want to. I wasn't invited.

Shelly

So, you slept with black men but hung around white people.

Ally

I wouldn't put it like that Shelly. I wanted to, but no one ever invited me!

Shelly

Are you sure?

Ally

Well...

(Shelly plays a video on his phone and shows it to Ally)

Shelly

Do you recognize yourself?

Ally

Wait. Did you film me?

Shelly

Not just you but other women as well. I am doing an experiment on racism in what is supposed to be a liberal area, and you turned out to be a prime example.

Ally

You filmed other women like that??? So, you think I was rude to you because you are black? Are you kidding?

Shelly

No, I'm not kidding...

Alley

Do you know what it's like to be a woman? Uh, do you know what it's like to be a woman living in New York City? HUh.

Shelly

Not really, but I understand somewhat about women from what my mother, my grandmother, and my sisters have experienced. But these are Black women. Their experience is different. So don't pull that bullshit with me.

Ally

Well, I have been around many black men, and black men do not scare me! But what does scare me is a creepy man who leers at me as I walk down the street. So maybe that is what you feel, you feel my scared instinct of a possible rapist eyeing me.

Shelly

I think you are full of shit. I don't care how many black men you have been around, you look down on us as you were taught, unconsciously, since your birth and you can't even recognize it.

Ally

I think you are putting women in these positions where we feel uncomfortable, and you see it as fear, cause it's not all black men it's just some.

Shelly

Man, you are the worst kind of racist. You see us on the street, and if you don't recognize us, you cross it, kind of racist. The smile on your face after we fuck type of woman, but when you see us in an interview, you won't even hire us kind of racist. Or, You're really gracious when we take out your trash, but if we are trying to buy a house, you will only take us to the black side of town with the lousy school kind of racist. You are the worst kind of Racist!

Ally

You are mentally ill... you really need to get some help. You know I am nothing like that!

Shelly

You all made me this way.

Ally

The hell I did!

Shelly

Well someone like you anyway...

(Pause)

I was seeing this white girl, one time we got drunk and had sex, and one week later she texted me that she was pregnant and want to know if I wanted to have the baby...We met one night at her place, and we discussed it, we had our pros and cons. My pro, I always wanted a baby, and my negative was that I didn't really know her that well... Her pro was that she was getting old and always wanted to have a baby, but she dedicated her life to becoming a good lawyer. And you know what her negative was?

Ally

(Reluctant)

What?

Shelly

She didn't want to have an interracial baby. She felt the baby would have too harsh of a time in life being a mixed breed...

Ally

Really?

Shelly

Yup. And her negative number two was that she wants her children to go to private school, and she would have the burden of paying for everything.

Ally

I mean I guess she is thinking ahead...

Shelly

Really?

Ally

Yeah, I mean these are things you have to think about.

Shelly

You don't think that is racist and classist?

Ally

It's just planning ahead is all...

Shelly

That is bullshit! Why would she sleep with me if she never had any intention to, maybe one day, if things went right in the relationship, have a child with me? Huh?

Ally

Maybe if you had a regular relationship with her, you could have worked that out during the time you spent together.

Shelly

But I would never sleep with let alone date a woman who would not have a baby with me because she would be afraid to raise a mixed breed child! What kind of fucking relationship would that be??? You white women are a trip. You are racist and will sleep with the enemy. It's a fucking shame!

Ally

That is a nonsense statement. I really cared about the men I slept with, black and white...

Shelly

So would the thought of having mix breed baby come into the question of whether not to have a kid? Especially with a black man? A working-class black man?

(Pause)

(Pause)

(Pause)

Well...

Ally

You know what...I have to..um. I almost forgot about...um the thing I had to go pick so I...Um, I need to go.

Shelly

OK. Yeah. I think you should go pick up that thing. Yeah, you need that thing...

Ally

Ok. Yeah. Well, it was good talking to you...about all of that.

Shelly

Yeah. It was good.

Ally

How dare you speak to me like that. I pay your fucking bills.

(Shelly is quiet.)

That sure did shut you up.

Shelly

You said I could vent and that this was a safe place...so I'm venting.

Ally

Yeah, but I'm on your side.

Shelly

You can only have a conversation that is convenient for you? Easy for you? One that makes you look like some kind of savior. Hero. Princess warrior of race talk. If you are unconsciously racist, I think you should know it, and then you can have an honest discussion with yourself.

Ally

I'm the therapist Shelly. I'm the one who gives the diagnosis. You are a low-level nurse. You need to stay in your lane.

Shelly

What privilege you have. You are allowed to give out all the diagnoses of other people's minds however you seem fit, but when the tables are turned I need to stay in my lane...

Ally

I am a professional. I do this for a living. I get to say whose brain is fit or not, and I'm starting to believe that yours is not...

Shelly

And I say yours is not! But you won't take my diagnosis because you think, believe, that you know it all and nothing applies to you cause you got your doctoring in, mind control, I mean Psychology, which makes you some kind of god, well there is only one god, and he is in heaven...

(Pause)

Ally

Look, you obviously don't want to be around me anymore, or white people for that matter so just do what Billy asked you to do, and move on with your life. Think about it as reparations. So your sorry ass can be happy for once.

Shelly

You know about this whole thing? With him dying?

Ally

Yes. And just do it. OK. We will all benefit. It's a win-win.

Shelly

And you are really OK with this?

Ally

If that's what Billy wants... That is what Billy always gets.

(She exits.)

Blackout

Act 3 Scene 3

Shelly is walking around Billy's apartment staring at all the old Broadway and Hollywood posters on the wall. Shelly looks down and sees a locked box left undone and a book of photos inside. He looks around and listens carefully to hear if Billy is still in the bathroom. He is. Shelly grabs the book, and when he opens it, he squirms... Shelly looks like he's seen something so horrid that he almost vomits. After each turned page, he felt worse. Finally, he can't take anymore, and he puts the book back exactly how he found it. He does an air cross as a good Catholic would... He quickly sits... Billy enters the bathroom. He knows something is different about Shelly's demeanor, and even the room feels different. But he's not going to let on...

Billy

Oh, hey, Shelly. I didn't hear you come in. You're here early...

Shelly

This is our usual time...

Billy

Oh, OK... So how is your little project going?

Shelly

The filming? Frustrating...

Billy

Let me give you a little advice, life is short, and you need to enjoy it as long as you can because if you nitpick at everything, you will go insane.

Shelly

I need to complete this project. It will heal me in some way, and at the end of it, I will have a viewing, and it will show everyone that I'm not crazy, feeling what I feel.

Billy

I'm just saying, don't let it run your life.

Shelly

For now, it will...eventually I will let it go. (Pause). So what made you want to become a producer?

Billy

Well, first, I wanted to be a director. It seemed like such a cool and glamorous job. But it was a lot harder than I expected... I would try and give a direction, and the actors would ask so many questions, that I didn't know how to answer, and eventually I would get mad and yelled at them. Well, let me tell you that it didn't go well for long. So just being a producer stuck.

Shelly

With directing, I'm sure the young actresses would be all over you, offer things to get jobs?

Billy

And Actors... I couldn't count how many men would offer me things for parts.

Shelly

What about producing?

Billy

That was worse! Cause they knew I had the money to say yes or no on projects and if I liked or didn't like an actor I could change things...

Shelly

So actresses would do anything for you?

(Pause)

Billy

Yes. And the men...

Shelly

Would you act on them?

Billy

Shelly, what are you trying to get at here?

Shelly

When I was attempting to become an actor, I never put myself in that position.

Billy

Well, maybe you should have.

Shelly

What?

Billy

Maybe you should have put yourself in better positions to get parts. Were you talented?

Shelly

Yes, I think so. Why?

Billy

Well, many talented actors came through my doors...

Shelly

I bet... And what did you do for them? The ones who put themselves in better positions?

Billy

It depended on whether they were right for a part, some would offer certain things, but I knew they were not right for the role and I would just reject them simple as that...

Shelly

And the others on the fence?

Billy

Talented and possibly right for the part, well now that's where things got sticky.

(Pause)

Shelly

What would you do to them? What would you do to the actress on the fence?

Billy

And actors...

Shelly

And actors? You had sex with boys too?!?

Billy

Whoa, whoa, whoa! Who said anything about sex?

Shelly

What? You didn't sleep with actors for parts?

Billy

Where the hell did you get that idea...

(Billy notices his book looks out more than usual... He goes over and takes the book out.)

You mean this, Have you been going through my things?

Shelly

No. I mean I just saw it sitting there, and it was already open...

Billy

This is bad Shelly. You shouldn't go through your employer's things. I should fire you...

(Pause)

But you are a good man, and I could see how you would be worried. These types of photos were typical back in the day. I'm not kidding. These are the type of photos we needed to see if the actors were right for our films. I swear there is nothing sexual about it.

Shelly

So you're saying this was for work?

Billy

Yes!

Shelly

But these young girls are practically naked!

Billy

We needed to see what different angles worked in various types of lighting. How comfortable they would respond in front of the camera. Young people are not easy to work with. Usually untrained. Raw. These were tests...

(Pause)

See look, if you had gone back a few pages, you would have seen the boys. Do you see how they are barely wearing anything?

Shelly

Yeah, but that's different...

Billy

How is it different? They are both wearing the same clothing....

Shelly

But those young girls are showing their breasts. And those underwear are practically see-through...

Billy

And so are the boys...but you don't see that as the same, do you?

Shelly

No, I do not...

(Shelly gets up to leave.)

Billy

Where are you going?

Shelly

I think I need to go home...

Billy

If you leave, then don't even come back.

Shelly

That was the plan. I don't think I can work here anymore...

Billy

I didn't do anything wrong. This is just a matter of opinion. This is art and nothing sexual! It's nothing different than your racist project!

Shelly

What?

Billy

Not only racist but an invasion of people's privacy. You could probably go to jail...

Shelly

That is bullshit!

Billy

Well, from my position that's how I see it...

Shelly

These people are negatively judging me and making me feel unwanted, and I need to feel comfortable in my own neighborhood.

Billy

By secretly filming all the white women? At least all the pictures I took were consensual with the actors involved. I'm not some creep...

Shelly

Are you fucking serious! You manipulated these young, innocent girls and boys with the power you hold over their heads for jobs...there is no one more fucking creepier than you!

Billy

You see this is all a matter of opinion... You film white women who you claim are clutching their purses or crossing the street when they see you, but if I show, let's say a police officer, the footage with no other information than they would think you are some creep filming women for your own pleasure....

(Pause)

But I wouldn't do that to you, I'm just saying people perceive things differently without context.

(Long pause)

Shelly

I'm getting sick of this little project anyway. I'm getting sick of everything!

(Pause)

The other day this couple saw me and the man grabbed his wife's hand and suddenly crosses the street...

Billy

Come on Shelly...

Shelly

The real problem is... I knew this couple, well I had seen them often in my church. On many occasions, I had sat behind them, giving thanks to the lord. And when I saw them that day on the street...it affected me.

Billy

Maybe they didn't recognize you...

Shelly

I don't get it. It was not long ago that the wife said "God bless you" to my face when I was about to leave the church. I know you don't believe in this church stuff, but for me it's everything, and when something like that happens it makes me question...

Billy

Question what?

Shelly

God.

Billy

Really? This little incident is making you question your whole belief system, I mean I would agree with you if you came to the conclusion that nothing is out there, but don't let these people affect you like that...

Shelly

I can't help it. Every day these perfectly well put together people walking around happy with their children, dogs, and Starbucks lattes and once they get a look at me their whole demeanor changes. Like I'm the devil or something...

Billy

Come on Shelly....

Shelly

But you made a lot of money from producing stupid ass films, and people have respected you all these years... when you are probably a pedophile or sex addict who uses his power to manipulate others...

Billy

SHELLY!

Shelly

Tell me, Billy, why is it that now you can take a shower by yourself?

(Pause)

Because I had a discussion with your niece, and she said the two previous aides, which so happened to be women, had to give you a shower. Then I come along and all of a sudden you are fine to do it all by yourself.

Billy

You don't know what you're talking about Shelly.

Shelly

You had walked on this earth with no one living in fear of you when you were the predator. The devil. The rapist. You will die with getting away with it too...

Billy

You are looking at this all wrong. I think you're losing it. You should take some time off of work, and think about moving to another neighborhood, one that you feel more comfortable in...

Shelly

You would like that, wouldn't you? All the white people in this "nice liberal" Neighborhood would like that, wouldn't they...

(Pause)

You know what Billy?

(Pause)

I'm going to take you up on your offer.... and help you with your suicide. You still want me to make that happen, right?

Billy

Yeah. But, maybe you are not in the right state of mind to do it...and you quit.

Shelly

Oh no, I'm in the perfect state of mind. I want to make this happen... This will be my departing gift to you. But I want one thing from you.

Billy

What's that?

Shelly

I need you to repent for your sins.

Billy

Repent?

Blackout

Act 3 Scene 4

Shelly is reading from a list.

Shelly

Ok, here is Billy's Extravaganza Bucket List Weekend. Fancy title...

One last Broadway show.

An Off-Broadway show.

And an off-off-Broadway show.

Go to the opera

That's a lot of shows. You know I have never been to a Broadway show?

Billy

That is the problem with actors nowadays! They don't study theater. How were you going to be a good actor if you don't see what good acting is?

Shelly

I just couldn't afford it. Ok. So next on the list is...

Ecstasy-Molly

Cocaine

Viagra

Stripper club

Get a prostitute

You don't have to do all that cause a stripper is a prostitute. We can go to the strip club, take your time and see the girl you like and choose the absolute best since this will be your last time.

Billy

And my first time.

Shelly

What?

Billy

I've never had to pay for sex.

Shelly

Well, that's great...so you pick out a girl you absolutely love. Get a lap dance maybe two...to show her your not playing around, then she will ask if you want to go to the champagne room...

Billy

The champagne room?

Shelly

Don't worry, more things are going on in there than the champagne. There she will give you another dance and offer a blow job which you will say "yes"...

Billy

Yes?

Shelly

Are you going to say "no"?

Billy

No, but what if I did?

Shelly

There is no reason to be in the champagne room unless you are getting a blow job, her asking is just customary...

Bill

Oh, I see...

Shelly

Ok, now you know where this is going...

Billy

Where?

Shelly

What? Ok, after the blow job, well, before you actually finish she will whisper in your ear..." do you want to fuck?" And by that point, it will be impossible for you to say no...

Billy

Why would I say "no" at that point?

Shelly

Some people can only afford to go that far...

Billy

Oh, I see, so how much is this going to cost me...this stripper sex?

(Shelly calculates in his head.)

Shelly

Let me see.. 20 times 3...the champagne room...150. Sex another 1000 depending on the girl...lets be safe and say 1200 cause we want the best. So the total will be around 1400.

Billy

For stripper sex?

Shelly

Yup.

Billy

Is there tax?

Shelly

Tax?

Billy

Is the tax included in that price?

(Shelly laughs.)

Shelly

Yes, I do believe the tax is included. I haven't been to one in a while, it's possible things could have changed. We will adapt. These are rough estimates.

Billy

Ok. Let's just add a tax because I don't want surprise charges...

Shelly

Don't worry, I will take care of everything.

Billy

Wow for a good religious boy you sure do know about the sexual underworld?

Shelly

Well, I wasn't always this devoted to the faith. I've had dark times. Mainly the acting lifestyle and hanging around knuckleheads lead me down a wrong path. I did so much cocaine one night that the police found me passed out in the women's room of a McDonalds...Also, I work for a short period as a barback at an upscale strip club.

Billy

Barback?

Shelly

They are the one who assists the bartender....you know getting ice. Cleaning the bar... All the things that make a bartender's life easier.

Billy

Pay good?

Shelly

It was good. Not as good as a bartender, which I tried to become, but they wouldn't allow it...

Billy

Why not?

(Shelly point to his skin)

Billy

Look, you got paid well and were able to look at titties all night. I say that's a win-win situation...

Shelly

I guess so...

Billy

Look. This weekend you will be experiencing "Billy's Extravaganza Bucket List Weekend," and I will treat you to the girl of your choosing.

Shelly

No, no, no, I will just watch. I mean...

Billy

That's a great idea!

Shelly

I mean, I will wait till you're done...I mean...you know what I mean.

Billy

If you change your mind. It would be fun to do it together...I mean in separate rooms but at the same time.

Shelly

I guess. It's just strange. The money for sex thing...

Billy

SHELLY!

Shelly

Ok ok, I'm sorry it's your "Billy's weekend before he dies extravaganza!"

Billy

That's right, and after I'm gone, you can be an activist and change things, but not now...

Shelly

Alright

Billy

Alright. Lets party!

Act 3 Scene 5

Shelly rolls Billy in from off stage in a wheelChair. Billy is covered in glitter...

Billy

WOW WOW WOW ...I feel amazing! That was some wild ride.

Shelly

I bet. Those were some beautiful women you selected.

Billy

That's right, plural! I had two women. Amazing. These drugs are amazing.

Shelly

Yeah. I'm surprised you haven't done this before...

Billy

I never needed to, but this was fun.

(Shelly take the the hidden camera off his body and
places it on a chair)

But did you have to film it?

Shelly

I thought it would be an interesting memory I can have forever.

Billy

You are one odd duck!

Shelly

Well, that's it. I gave you what you wanted, and now it's time.

Billy

For what? Oh yeah, right.

Shelly

So how do you want to begin this...

Billy

First, put me in bed...

(Shelly lifts Billy up in one big swoop and paces him in bed.)

You're true to your word, right?

Shelly

What?

Billy

Are you a man who is true to his word?

Shelly

I guess so.

Billy

Say, "Yes!" I'm true to my word Billy.

Shelly

Yes.

Billy

Say "I'm true to my word."

Shelly

Yes! I'm true to my word.

Billy

Ok.

(Billy reaches over to his side table and pulls out a key.)

Do you see this? It opens a safe in that closet there.

(Billy puts the key under his body.)

You are going to make sure I'm entirely dead. Remember you're true to your word, right?

Shelly

Yes!

Billy

250,000 dollars of cash money in that safe, and it's yours. I don't want you to take that money, and then I'm still alive in the morning

(Pause.)

So you're still in, right?

Shelly

\$250,000!!!!.

(Pause)

But what about Ally? Does she know you're giving away that much?

(Billy laughs.)

Billy

Don't worry about her.

Shelly

How can I not worry about her?!?!?

Billy

She is the head of my estate, and she will be receiving a large sum of my money as well. And I would have to die first for her to get it. So...

Shelly

Wow.

Billy

Listen, you're doing me a huge favor, and I hope the money can change the course of you and your family.

(Pause)

You know therapists say that they could fix 85 percent of their clients' problems if they could just give them a quarter of a million dollars. Just enough to solve most of their family's financial situation but not too much where they become lazy and arrogant.

(Pause.)

Take the money and help your family and then build a safe space for yourself. Maybe you could move to Africa, or something, where it's all black people all the time and then you won't have to deal with these issues you're experiencing. But whatever you do, just take care of yourself.

Shelly

Wow, this is a lot to take in...But thank you. I think this could change a lot, but you remember what you needed to do for me?

Billy

Oh yeah. Do we have to? You are killing my buzz...The money isn't enough?

Shelly

Money is not enough. You need to repent for me, tell me you have done. Outloud.

Billy

OK. So, how do I do this?

Shelly

I will guide you through. So, give me an example of what you did with these young actresses to get parts?

(Pause)

Billy

I would have fun with them, and being in the position I was in most of them let me do whatever I wanted. I mean, maybe not everything... It was mutual most of the time. These girls took things seriously, they thought it was just their talent that was going to get them jobs and thought coming back to my place was just a meeting to talk about a project. But what did they think "how about we go back to my place to discuss things further" meant? So I would get to my place, pour some wine and start chatting. I would play some romantic music, and we would be having a good time, and I would make a move, nothing serious, just go in for a kiss at first, but one, in particular, jumped up and said 'what are you doing?' and I said I wanted to kiss you and maybe other things. She said, "are you serious?" and I said, "yeah, what do you think all of this was about." She said, "a possible job, I mean I was Miss Brazil 2005!" I told her, "what does that mean?" and she said, "It means I have talent." I laughed. And for some reason, I could not stop laughing, and then she slaps me and then she tries to hit me again, and I grab her hand before it reached my face. She screams, and I cover her mouth and...

(Pause)

Shelly

And then what happened?

Billy

Ok, so maybe I pushed myself on her, but listen I didn't go into it to do what I did. When I pushed up on her and held on tight. All of a sudden, she loosened her grip and stopped fighting. When I looked in her eyes, I could tell she was giving up. Maybe she had been in this situation before and decided to stop fighting. She then allowed me to go inside of her. Then years later she claimed I raped her. But is that rape?

Shelly

Billy!

Billy

Yeah. I know. Repent.

Shelly
But What about now?

Billy
What?

Shelly
What about the Jamaican home health aides? Huh?

Billy
Oh yeah, that...Yes. I made them touch me in the shower.

Shelly
Did you have sex with them? Or try?

Billy
No. It was just touching. I swear...

Shelly
That is bad enough.

Billy
OK, I admit it. I had a severe problem.

Shelly
A problem that you got away with your whole life...

Billy
Yes.

Shelly
Do you repent?

Billy
But I paid them well, extra even...And I got those young girls' jobs. Does that count for anything?

Shelly
Are you kidding me???

Ok. I repent.

Billy

LOUDER!

Shelly

I repent!

Billy

LOUDER!!

Shelly

I REPENT. I REPENT. I REPENT!!!

Billy

(Shelly goes into a closet and digs through for a while. Returns back to the bedside with a medicine bottle. He dumps a pill onto a napkin. Shelly goes to the kitchen and brings back a big glass of water. Shelly watches Billy take the pill.)

(They have a moment.)

Sleep well...

Shelly

(A long pause)

(He takes a moment and then looks up to the sky.)

Haha I beat you, cancer!

Billy

(Pause)

If there is an afterlife I hope I can be forgiven for the things I have done. Shelly, would you pray for me?

Shelly

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

(Shelly turns off the light and slowly exits the apartment. Billy sits in darkness, almost like he is waiting for death to fly through the window and fly him away. A long moment goes by. Slowly the door to the apartment opens. Someone enters. We don't know who. till...)

Billy

Hey Alice, what are you doing here?

Ally

You look so peaceful.

Billy

I took the pill, so I'm actually dying.

Ally

But you look so peaceful.

Billy

Yes, That was the whole idea...

(Ally goes over to Billy's album collection goes through them. Chooses one. We see she's wearing leather gloves.

What is going on?

Ally

I just thought you would like to listen to your favorite artist one last time.

(Ally places the record on the player.)

Billy

I guess that would be nice.

Ally

I know. I know.

(Streaming out of the speakers is Edith Piaf's "Non, Je re regrette rien.")

You wanted to die peacefully.

Billy

Yes....

Ally

But all your life you have disrupted so many others peace...Including me. All those times you would come over our house when I was a little girl and you would give me a gentle little tap on my backside. I was living in peace at that point in my life. Then your little taps became more frequent and rougher ...and then my peace, my innocents, my life started to evaporate and change into something else when your hands began to linger on my backside and eventually moved towards my frontside...and remain there for an awfully long time...

Billy

Listen, I am sorry about that. I have begged for your forgiveness already...

Ally

But, peace? Peace. Peace!

(Ally grabs one of Billy's "special" pillows.)

This pillow reminds me of that peace because it's the only time there is true peace on this earth, There's no war. No race fights, no religious turmoil, no culture clashes, and no adult men fondling young girls vagina's from the time she was 4 till she turned 8, and the only reason he stopped is that he got this big movie job in Hollywood. The only

peace on this earth is when men are laying on this crisp white feather-filled pillow.
Asleep.

Billy

And that's what I will be doing for the rest of eternity! So you won't have to deal with me anymore...

Ally

Peacefully? You've never had to struggle in your life, so how are you going to understand the peace without the STRUGGLE?

(Ally takes Billy's precious pillow and slams it on his head and lets it linger there while Billy struggles and struggles and struggles to breathe for air. The key that was under Billy falls to the ground. But the struggle continues for Billy until there is no more movement. Ally breaks down from the trauma of it all....until she notices the key. She knows exactly what it's for. She opens the safe and quickly takes out all the money. She takes a moment and then exits. As soon as she's gone, we hear a beeping sound similar to the sounds we heard earlier when Shelly's camera was low on batteries. Shelly left his camera on the chair, still capturing footage. The beeping continues as we go to blackout)

The End