

THE WHOLE SHEBANG

by
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Cast of Characters

BENTLEY: Male. Mid 30+. Recovering alcoholic. Emotional mess. Going through a nasty divorce.

TOM: Male. Mid 30+. Bentley's life-long friend. He owns a greenhouse and loves to talk about plants.

KELI: Woman. Mid 30+. Egocentric. Greedy. Manipulative.

KRYSTAL: Woman. Mid 30+. Recovering alcoholic. Detective. Smart. Calm.

ACT 1 - SCENE 1 - ZOMBIE MASSACRE

SETTING: Early evening in BENTLEY'S messy apartment. There is a TV facing away from the audience. Video game sound effects can be heard.

AT RISE: Lights up on BENTLEY who pours a drink into a shot glass and drinks it. He walks over to a desk, and pulls out a small handgun. He stares at it. There's a loud knock on his door. Bentley quickly puts the gun back in the drawer and picks up a video game remote.

Another knock.

Coming.

BENTLEY

Do Not Copy

BENTLEY opens the door, TOM enters.

Hey. Bent.

TOM

What's up, Tom?

BENTLEY

TOM walks around, then picks up a few video game boxes.

TOM

Just thought I'd check in on you. Chainsaw Cyborgs? Brain Eaters? Zombie Snipers?

BENTLEY

Yeah. What'd you expect? Happy-hour with Sally Sue?

TOM

Is that a thing?

BENTLEY

No.

TOM

Have you been wearing that shirt all week?

BENTLEY

What?

TOM

Just saying, you've been sitting around playing video games for weeks, and by the pungent aroma wafting about, it appears you haven't showered or changed your clothes.

BENTLEY sits down.

BENTLEY

It would have been eight years.

TOM

Eight years?

BENTLEY

Our wedding anniversary, Tom. Keli and I would have been married eight years, today.

TOM

Oh, yeah. Sorry man.

BENTLEY

What does it mean? For better or worse? Richer or poorer? Till death do you part?

TOM

I got nothin'.

BENTLEY

I worked my ass off for her. Gucci. Armani. Prada. Viking cruises. Organic fruits. Free-range chickens. Freakin' organic, free range chickens.

TOM

You know that's a scam? That whole free range chicken thing.

BENTLEY

Gave her everything she wanted. Top-of-the-line. And what does she do? What does she do, while I'm working nights, busting my ass? She's out. She's out, storming the sheets with Carlo, The Salsa Guy.

TOM

Generally speaking, showing up for a charity photo op, is hardly considered busting one's ass.

BENTLEY

Shut up.

TOM

Okay. Remind me again, why you married the she-devil, after knowing her for only six months?

BENTLEY

She was fun, sweet, and damn hot. We had a some great times. She loved to travel.

TOM

Right. Glitzy places. I remember. You always came back with more suitcases than you left with.

BENTLEY

We tried new foods.

TOM

Because she never cooked. Not that every woman has to channel Julia Childs, but-

BENTLEY

The first few years were amazing. Then, I don't know. Something changed. She changed. She got, distant. Cold. Controlling. No matter how hard I tried, nothing was good enough.

TOM

I remember. Your leash was short and tight.

BENTLEY

Now she claims she doesn't love me. Wants her freedom. Wants out. Out. With lots of money. No strings attached.

TOM

You said she's shackled up with Carlo, The Salsa Guy? How'd she manage that?

BENTLEY

I don't know, Tom. Would you like me to call and ask her?

TOM picks up a controller and sits down next to him.

TOM

Okay, here's what we're gonna do. Every disgusting, deformed zombie-

BENTLEY

They're all disgusting and deformed.

TOM

Right. Every zombie with black hair is now Carlo The Salsa Guy. Go!

They play for about 10 seconds, then BENTLEY stands up and tosses the control.

BENTLEY

Screw it. It doesn't help. Nothing helps. I love her. And, I hate her. I hate him. You know, she claims he's her "soul-mate."

TOM

No such thing.

BENTLEY

I thought we were happy. We were going to build a house. Modern industrial, with a big pool, and a huge backyard for...we were looking at puppies when she told me. Fuckin' furry, chin-lickin', puppies.

TOM sees a bottle of whiskey and the shot glass. He picks up the bottle.

TOM

Damn it Bentley. What's this?

BENTLEY

That? That, is my good friend, Jimmy B.

TOM

What the hell were you thinking?

BENTLEY

I was thinking I needed a drink.

TOM

How long you been dry?

BENTLEY

I dunno. Wait. Six years, five months, 13 days.

TOM

Right. That bitch, Keli, is not worth this. Carlo, The Salsa Guy, is not worth this. Bentley, this, is not the frigging yellow-brick-road you want to go skipping down.

BENTLEY

Why not? Why the hell not? I feel like someone ripped my guts out, and stomped 'em into a pile of shit.

TOM

Yeah, okay. I get it. But this? This, will not help.

BENTLEY

Couldn't hurt.

TOM

Let me refresh your memory. Over the last eight years, who insisted that you celebrate all of the holidays with her disfunctional family?

BENTLEY

Keli.

TOM

Right. And, when your mom fell, broke her hip, and was in the hospital, who hissed like a barn cat when you went to visit her?

BENTLEY

Keli.

TOM

Exactly. And how much money did she insist you give her, whenever you wanted to go visit your Grandma, Little Gerta in the nursing home?

BENTLEY

500 bucks.

TOM

I believe it was 500 bucks, plus stock options...for visiting your 96 year old grandma in a nursing home. And you're telling me you actually miss that bitch's bat-shit-crazy-drama?

BENTLEY

She does have some redeeming qualities.

TOM

Such as?

BENTLEY

She walked Beanie.

TOM

She walked Beanie. Your wiener dog. How very righteous of her.

BENTLEY

I loved that dog.

TOM

Seriously? That thing was a fount of drool.

BENTLEY

He had a glandular issues.

TOM

Listen Bent, this is your chance to start over. No strings attached. You my friend, are financially golden. Go where you want to go. Do whatever the hell you want to do.

BENTLEY

You know what I want?

TOM

By all means, enlighten me.

BENTLEY

I want it all. Wrapped up pretty, with a cherry on top.

TOM

I have no idea what that means.

BENTLEY

It means, I want a forever wife. A bunch of kids. A few dogs. Someone to travel with. I want to smoke a brisket in the backyard. Coach Little League games. Toast marshmallows over a campfire.

TOM

Sounds like you want June Cleaver.

BENTLEY

Who?

TOM

A 60's TV version of the perfect wife. Sorry Bent, they don't exist. Never did.

BENTLEY

And, she should be sticky.

TOM

Sticky?

BENTLEY

Yeah. Someone who sticks with you. Peaks and valleys Tom, peaks and valleys.

TOM

Sticky, right. Let's start with getting you sober.

BENTLEY

I'm not drunk. I only had one shot.

TOM

Where's your coffee?

BENTLEY

All out.

TOM

Okay. Forget coffee. You know what you need?

BENTLEY

A puppy. An excited, puppy that will lick my chin and jump on me when I walk in the door.

TOM

No. Stop. You need a diversion. A night out. A night out, with a lovely lady.

BENTLEY

No. Nope. Nadda. Nein. Not interested.

TOM

You think Miss-Sticky-Whole-Shebang, is just gonna walk through your door?

BENTLEY

I'm not ready. Not yet.

TOM

They're not all like Keli. Come on, think of women like, like...vintage wines. Some are full-bodied, robust reds. Others are, light and fruity.

BENTLEY

Great analogy for an alcoholic.

TOM

Right. Forget wines. Think of women like, some of the flowers at my greenhouse.

BENTLEY

Explain.

TOM

When you plant up a porch pot you want three types of flowers. Thrillers, fillers and spillers.

BENTLEY

What's a porch pot?

TOM

Remember Ashley? She, was a thriller. Fun, spontaneous. I never knew what was going to happen when we went out.

BENTLEY

Okay.

TOM

Then there was Shauna, the filler. Strong, dependable, always had a plan.

BENTLEY

Nothing wrong with that.

TOM

Of course not. But she had a hard time when our plans had to change, and when it's spring in the greenhouse, things can change at a moments notice.

BENTLEY

Hey, what ever happened to Ella? I liked her.

TOM

Ella? The spiller. Yeah. Let's just say I noticed some unusual ideas spilling out one evening when we were talking politics. My point is, you can't always judge a plant by its foliage.

BENTLEY

I have no idea what you're talking about, but I think I know why you're still single. What? No porch pot plants to analyze tonight?

TOM

Hey, I could be out enjoying the evening with a lovely lady, but I came to check on you, because, that's what friends do.

BENTLEY

Fine.

TOM

When's the last time you showered?

BENTLEY

I dunno.

TOM

Go shower. I'm hungry. You got anything to eat around here?

BENTLEY

Sure. Those.

BENTLEY motions to a bag of chips on the floor. TOM grabs a handful, eats a few then spits them out.

TOM

Yecch! How old are these?

BENTLEY

Not sure. Few weeks maybe. There's some leftover lasagna in the fridge. It's kinda green and furry. You can nuke it.

TOM

Hell no.

BENTLEY

Keli used to make the best lasagna.

TOM

Keli used to have you pick-up lasagna, from Sal's, on your way home from work.

BENTLEY

Yeah. It was the best.

TOM

Did she ever cook?

BENTLEY

Toast. Once in a while. She usually burned it. Claimed it was, "blackened."

TOM

Didn't you hide her Christmas presents in the oven last year, because you knew she'd never look there?

BENTLEY

Yep. She never did.

TOM

Go shower. We're going out. What's the name of that steak place you like? The one Keli, never wanted to go to?

BENTLEY

Phil's?

TOM

Right. We're going to Phil's, for a big juicy slab of beef.

BENTLEY

No thanks. You go. I'll stick to sniping zombies.

TOM

And leave you alone with Jimmy B? I don't think so.

TOM grabs a shirt off the floor,
smells it and tosses it to BENTLEY.

Here, just put this on.

BENTLEY

Fine. You buying?

TOM

Hell no. You pull in four times what I make. Not to mention
that hefty inheritance you just got.

BENTLEY

I miss my Mom. And, my dog.

Do Not Copy

BENTLEY takes off his old shirt,
smells the one TOM tossed to him
and puts it on.

BENTLEY

I'll drive.

TOM

No. I'll drive.

There's loud pounding at the door.
TOM goes to open it. KELI enters,
sobbing, and runs to BENTLEY. You
can't see her face.

Aw shit.

BENTLEY

Keli? Babe. What's wrong?

TOM

You've got to be kidding.

KELI

I didn't know where else to go.

TOM

How bout you go screw the Salsa Guy.

BENTLEY

Shut up Tom. Let her talk. Keli? Keli. Look at me?

KELI looks up to reveal she has a black eye.

What the hell? He hit you?

KELI

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

TOM

Unbelievable.

BENTLEY

Get her some ice.

TOM walks over to a refrigerator (or off stage) and returns with a bag of frozen peas. He tosses it to BENTLEY.

TOM

Here.

BENTLEY motions for KELI to sit down and he sits next to her. She fidgets nervously with the package of frozen peas.

BENTLEY

It's okay, Kel. You're safe here. Tell me, what happened?

KELI

I can't. I can't talk about it. I need a place to stay. Just for the night. Please?

TOM

Sorry. We were just leaving.

BENTLEY

Maybe you should go, Tom.

TOM

And leave you alone with Little-Miss-Screws-a-lot? I don't think so.

KELI

I never should have come here. I'll go.

TOM

Buh-bye.

BENTLEY

No. Kel. Stay. You'll be safe here. I'll call Krystal.

TOM

Who?

BENTLEY

Krystal. A friend, from AA. She's a detective with-

KELI

No. Don't. Please. That will just make things worse.

TOM

How much worse can you make it? First, you leave Bentley to screw Carlo, the Salsa Guy. Then you try to soak him for an insane amount of money. You're worse than an invasive ground cover.

KELI

What?

BENTLEY

Shut up Tom.

TOM

Seriously, how much more of her crap are you going to take?

KELI

Please, just let me stay for the night. I'll sleep here, on the couch.

TOM

Yeah, right.

BENTLEY

Of course you can stay. Where is he now? Carlo, The Salsa Guy. At your apartment?

BENTLEY walks over to the desk and gets out his gun.

KELI

I, I, don't know.

TOM

Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. When the hell did you get a glock?

BENTLEY

It's a crazy world out there, Tom.

TOM

Yeah. One which needs less drunken rage. Now, put the damn gun down.

BENTLEY

No.

KELI

Bentley stop. Please.

BENTLEY

314 Randall. Apartment B, right? Gimme your keys.

KELI

No. Stop. It's just a bruise. I'll be okay.

TOM

Bent, give me the damn glock. Think about what the hell you're doing.

KELI

Please! Listen to him.

TOM

Your anxiety meds? Where are they?

BENTLEY

Keli, give me your keys.

TOM

Keli don't.

BENTLEY

Tom. Go home.

TOM gets up, grabs a bottle of water and BENTLEY's bottle of anxiety medicine. He opens it up and takes out a pill.

TOM

Come on man. Sit down. Here. Take this.

BENTLEY

I don't need a damn pill.

KELI

Bentley, please, take it.

BENTLEY slaps the pill out of TOM's hands. He grabs KELI's purse, they struggle, he pulls out her keys.

Do Not Copy
 BENTLEY
 Kel, you'll be fine here. Tom, if you're not going home, you're with me.

TOM

The hell I am. And, you're not leaving either. Now, give me the damn gun.

BENTLEY

No!

BENTLEY storms out. TOM and KELI stare at each other. TOM sets the pills and water bottle back down.

TOM

Carlo, The Salsa Guy? That's who you told him you've been sleeping with? Doesn't he live in Havana?

KELI

Yeah, but he doesn't know that.

TOM

Did you know he had a glock?

KELI
No.

TOM
Damn. I didn't think he'd go off like that.

KELI
Sure, you did.

TOM
Not like that. With a loaded gun. Your anniversary? You chose your wedding anniversary for this?

KELI
I figured he'd be more gullible.

TOM
Damn woman. That's colder than an Alberta Clipper.

KELI
What happens when he gets to my apartment?

TOM
Hell if I know.

Do Not Copy

TOM gets up and pours some whiskey into a glass.

Drink?

KELI
Yeah.

TOM takes a small plastic bag out of his pocket.

TOM
You're sure you want to do this?

KELI
Positive.

TOM
Okay. Here you go.

TOM tosses the bag to KELI who pours the white powder into BENTLEY'S bottle of pills, and gives it a shake. Then she puts the bag into her purse.

KELI
What is it?

TOM
You really want to know?

KELI
No.

TOM
Let's just say, my kid brother has friends in low places.

KELI
How long will it take?

TOM
Funny thing about street drugs, they don't come with labels.

KELI
Right.

TOM
That black eye is pretty convincing.

KELI
The things you can learn on You Tube.

TOM
I'm surprised the bag of peas didn't ruin it.

KELI
Did you see me put it on my eyes?

TOM
No. I guess I didn't.

KELI
Exactly. So, did the old shrew's estate get settled?

TOM
Yep. Two weeks ago. Everything was evenly split between Bentley and his sister, in Santa Fe.

KELI

Right. Courtney. The sculpture. I met her once. She reeked of patchouli.

TOM

It masks the smell of her weed.

KELI

So, what was the old lady worth?

TOM

2.4 million. Which leaves you with...

KELI

Not enough.

TOM

Not enough? Damn woman. How much is enough?

KELI

More.

KELI gets up, paces a bit, then sets the drink down on table.

Then there's his life insurance. That's another million. Right?

TOM

Yeah. I guess.

KELI

You're sure he'll sign?

TOM

He'll sign. In the middle of all the wherefores and here-with-ins, I'll become his legal power of attorney.

KELI

Which means?

TOM

Which means, once he's gone, I'll have access to all his money.

KELI pulls TOM close.

KELI

Just think. Diamonds. Yachts. Villas in southern France.

TOM

Or, warm Caribbean beaches and cold beer.

KELI

In the meantime, I play the broken, remorseful ex.

TOM

Better hit up You Tube again.

KELI

Very funny. Any thoughts on where to go first?

TOM

I've got my eye on a sweet little beach-house in Jamaica.

KELI

I'm thinking an upscale Swiss chalet, just outside Zurich.

TOM

Swiss bank account?

KELI

High-end boutiques. Luxury spas, and only a few hours from shopping in Milan, not to mention decadent Swiss chocolates.

TOM

Speaking of food.

KELI

Let me guess. You're hungry?

TOM

Famished.

KELI

Come on. I know a quaint little pizza place on the East Side. Their deep dish is to die for.

TOM

Interesting choice of words.

TOM and KELI exit.

LIGHTS OUT.

END SCENE

ACT 1 - SCENE 2 - Why Do I Smell
Pizza?

SETTING: BENTLEY'S apartment. It's the same as in the previous scene.

AT RISE: Lights up. BENTLEY returns to his apartment.

BENTLEY

Keli? Kel? Where are 'ya babe?

BENTLEY takes out his phone to make a call. He leaves a message on her voicemail.

BENTLEY

Kel, it's me, Bent. Hey. Where are you? You okay? I just need to know you're okay. Call me. Call me, please.

BENTLEY paces around a bit, then takes a few deep breaths.

BENTLEY

Breathe, Bentley, Breathe. I'm sure she's fine. Probably went to her Mom's. Geez. I'm shaking.

BENTLEY sees his pills, picks them up and takes one. He takes a drink of water and paces a bit. Eventually sits back down and falls asleep. A few moments later there's a knock at the door. TOM enters.

TOM
Bentley? Hey, you still up?

BENTLEY wakes startled, grabs his
gun and jumps to his feet, pointing
it at TOM.

Whoa! Bent! It's me, Tom.

BENTLEY
Tom? Jeez, man. I could have killed you.

TOM
Yeah. What the hell.

BENTLEY
You okay?

TOM
Aside from almost blowing an artery, I'm fine. The question
is, how are you? The Salsa Guy? What happened?

BENTLEY
Shot him.

TOM
What?

BENTLEY
Yeah. He's dead.

TOM
No. That's impossible.

BENTLEY
Why? Why is that impossible?

TOM
Why? Well, uh, because, I know you. I've seen you catch and
release crickets.

BENTLEY
Yeah. I didn't shoot him. I wanted to. I drove over to
Keli's. Never went in. Just parked and sat in the car.
Thinking.

TOM
Thinking, of?

BENTLEY

Imagining what I'd do if I saw him. Carlo. What I'd say. Then, I imagined jumping out of my car in slo-mo, and shooting him up. John Woo style.

He does a slo-mo action move, as if shooting with a gun in each hand.

Then watching him drop. Blood oozing out, pooling around him, while he gasped for breath.

TOM

Okay, Woo, I get it.

BENTLEY

Then, I drove home.

TOM

You're sick. You know that?

BENTLEY

Any idea where she is?

TOM

Keli? No.

BENTLEY

I thought maybe she was with you.

TOM

Me? No. Vanity and greed are not my style.

BENTLEY

Yeah, yeah. 'Thrillers, fillers, whatever.'

TOM

She left after you stormed out. Said something about going to the drug store for Ibuprofen.

BENTLEY

I've got tons of that stuff. She knows that.

TOM

Look man. All I know is what she told me. She's your crazy ex.

BENTLEY walks around, sniffs the air.

BENTLEY

I smell pizza. Why do I smell pizza?

TOM

Why do you smell pizza? Why did Keli show up with a black eye? Why did you imagine blood oozing out of Carlo The Salsa Guy? And why did you almost shoot my nuts off?

BENTLEY

I still smell pizza. Pizza and beer. You been drinking?

TOM

You need to get out. Tell 'ya what, I'll met this sweet 'filler,' Julia. She's great.

BENTLEY

No. Stop. I told you, I'm not interested.

TOM

Fine. You have left me no choice. You know what time it is?

BENTLEY

It's late. Midnight?

TOM

No. Not even close. It's page flip time. You start.

BENTLEY

Page flip? Seriously? We haven't done that since college.

TOM

Clearly, it's past due. New topics only.

BENTLEY

Fine. Let me think. Okay. How's your new greenhouse manager working out?

TOM

Nicole? Pretty good. She seems to be catching on. She's great at scheduling and has a great ass.

BENTLEY

You know you're gonna get sued?

TOM

Relax. I play by the rules.

BENTLEY

So, how's your business going?

TOM

Awesome. I work 80 hours a week, and I'm only \$250,000 in the red.

BENTLEY

Damn. I had no idea. You always said that place was your dream?

TOM

Yeah. It is. In spring it's great. I'm golden. The rest of the year, I'm fighting off creditors.

BENTLEY

Right now?

TOM

If I don't know who's calling, I don't answer.

BENTLEY

Why didn't you say something? I'll cut you a check.

TOM

What? No. I'll be fine. It's just, you know, life, between the dash.

BENTLEY

The dash?

TOM

Yeah. The dash. Like you see on a headstone. Tom Williams, Born 1986, dash. Died...fill in the blank?

BENTLEY

Damn. I never thought about it like that.

TOM

Hits home every time I lose someone. Damn cancer. Took my sister, Marcia, last year.

BENTLEY

Right.

TOM

Okay. Page flip. Tell me about your new wheels.

BENTLEY

The Ferrari? Love it. 720 horsepower, twin-turbo v8. 0-60 in less than three seconds, and the Italian leather seats, softer than a newborn kitten.

TOM

Lucky bastard. A solid Fortune 500 company, followed by a flush inheritance.

BENTLEY

Come on. I inherited the company.

TOM

Yes. I know.

BENTLEY

Page flip. Remember when you wanted to drive bulldozers?

TOM

Every boys' dream.

BENTLEY

Not mine.

TOM

No. You wanted to be an Olympic skier. What was the name of that guy you worshipped?

BENTLEY

Tommy Moe.

TOM

Right. Tommy Sven Moe. It took me years to convince you to stop calling me Tommy.

BENTLEY

We go way back.

TOM

We do. Third grade. Sister Mary Mel's class.

BENTLEY

She was one of the nice ones.

TOM

She never knuckled us. Even when we put that rubber mouse in her desk drawer.

BENTLEY

Hey, thanks.

TOM

For what?

BENTLEY

Page flips. Perspective. Coming over on a crappy night.

TOM

No problem. And, now that I know you're back, and not posing for mugshots, I think I'll head home.

BENTLEY

You could stay and kill off a few more zombies.

TOM

Nope. I'm good. You go ahead. I've actually got a lady friend coming over for a drink.

TOM exits. BENTLEY sits down and starts playing his video game again. Cue video game SFX.

BENTLEY

That's right. That's right. I'm coming for you, you disgusting, hyped-up Cyborg. What?! Where'd you come from? Oh, you nasty little mother.

Sound of someone knocking at his door. BENTLEY calls out.

BENTLEY

It's open.

KRYSTAL enters.

KRYSTAL

Hey Bent, how's it going?

BENTLEY hops up.

BENTLEY

Krystal.

KRYSTAL

Yeah. Nice to see you too.

BENTLEY

Sorry. Just surprised. I didn't know you were coming over.

KRYSTAL

I had dinner at my sister, Annie's place. Thought I'd drop in on my way home. I remember you said this might be a tough night.

BENTLEY gets up to take her coat as she takes it off. He sets it over a chair.

BENTLEY

You have no idea.

KRYSTAL pulls a Kleenex out of her pocket to wipe off her shirt.

KRYSTAL

You'll have to excuse the banana pudding.

BENTLEY

Uh, okay.

KRYSTAL

My two year old niece, Ada, is a hugger. She nailed me before I could wipe the pudding off her sticky little fingers.

BENTLEY

Sounds kinda awesome.

KRYSTAL

You did say, stop by anytime.

BENTLEY

Right. Yes. Of course. I'm glad you took me up on it. Can I get you anything? Water? Ginger-ale?

KRYSTAL

No thanks. How about you? How are you doing?

KRYSTAL sees the gun, whiskey bottle and pills.

BENTLEY

Fine. Just taking out a few rogue cyborgs.

KRYSTAL

Fine? Is that the typical guy, "I'm fine." How are you?
"Fine."

BENTLEY

Okay. Maybe I'm not all that fine.

KRYSTAL looks around at the mess.

KRYSTAL

What's with the gun? And, booze?

BENTLEY

Oh. Don't worry about those.

KRYSTAL

Too late.

BENTLEY

It's a long story.

KRYSTAL

You have my utmost attention.

BENTLEY

I'd really rather not go into it.

KRYSTAL

Yeah? Well, that boozey-glock-combo could get you 15-20 in a jumpsuit. And, I don't think orange is your color.

BENTLEY

I'm not drunk. I only had one shot. And, I didn't shoot anyone. I wanted to. But, I didn't.

KRYSTAL

Okay, so let me get this right. You had a shot of whiskey, grabbed a glock, thought about shooting someone, but what, changed your mind?

BENTLEY

Something like that.

She holds the bottle up and looks at it.

KRYSTAL

There's more than one shot missing from this bottle.

BENTLEY

Huh. Tom was here. Maybe he had some. Here. Wanna play?

BENTLEY hands her a remote.

KRYSTAL

No. Does this have anything to do with Keli?

BENTLEY

Uhh, yeah.

KRYSTAL

You should have called me. We've talked about this. Remember?

BENTLEY

I know. I know. I shouldn't let her party in my head.

KRYSTAL

So? What happened?

BENTLEY

She came over.

KRYSTAL

Okay, and?

BENTLEY

He hit her, Krystal. He freakin' hit her.

KRYSTAL

Who? Who hit her?

BENTLEY

The Salsa Guy.

KRYSTAL

I'm gonna need a little more.

BENTLEY

The guy she's been living with. Carlo, The Salsa Guy. He hit her. Gave her a gruesome black eye.

KRYSTAL

Oh. That's terrible. Did she give him stale chips?

BENTLEY

What? No. He's called Carlo, The Salsa Guy, because he teaches salsa dancing on You Tube.

KRYSTAL

Oh geez. That guy gives me the creeps. Have you ever seen him?

BENTLEY

No. I'd never heard of him, until Keli hooked up with him a few months ago.

KRYSTAL

Interesting.

BENTLEY

Interesting? What's so interesting about Keli leaving me? Or, Carlo The Salsa Guy giving her a black eye?

KRYSTAL

You're kind of an idiot. You know that?

BENTLEY

Thanks. I feel so much better.

KRYSTAL

She's playing you, Bentley. Playing you like a shiny waxed Baby Grand.

BENTLEY

Excuse me?

KRYSTAL

Oh, Sweetie. You really need to expand your culture beyond the virtual world of zombies and cyborgs.

BENTLEY

Did you just call me Sweetie?

KRYSTAL

Is your divorce final?

BENTLEY

No. Not yet.

KRYSTAL

Let me guess. You just need to settle on her alimony?

BENTLEY

Yes. She claims \$24,000 a month isn't enough for her to live on.

KRYSTAL

24? I thought it was \$14?

BENTLEY

It was, until-

KRYSTAL

Let me guess. Your Mom passed away?

BENTLEY

Well, yes, but it's not like that.

KRYSTAL

Right.

BENTLEY

Keli may be a lot of things, but she's not a-

KRYSTAL

Bentley. Carlo The Salsa Guy, lives in Havana.

BENTLEY

What?

KRYSTAL

Havana, Bentley. Carlo The Salsa Guy lives in Havana. Here. Look.

Do Not Copy

KRYSTAL pulls out her phone, googles the Salsa Guy and shows BENTLEY.

BENTLEY

What the hell? You're right. She is playing me. I'm a freaking idiot.

SFX knocking at the door. KELI enters carrying a small bag with a bottle of pills in it.

KELI

Bentley, I'm back. Oh, I didn't know you had a guest.

KRYSTAL walks over to shake her hand and tries to look at her black eye.

KRYSTAL

Hi, I'm Krystal. A friend of Bent's. You must be Keli. I've heard a lot about you.

KELI

Oh, uh, hi. Nice to meet you. Did Bentley call you? Bent, I told you not to call her. I'm sorry if he bothered you.

KRYSTAL

No. No bother. I was in the area, just dropped in to say hi. Why? Is something wrong?

KELI

No. No. Everything's fine.

KRYSTAL

Wow. That's quite the shiner you've got. May I ask, what happened?

KELI

I'd rather not talk about it.

KRYSTAL

The shape and colors are quite pronounced.

KELI

Bentley, would you please get me some water?

BENTLEY

Sure, babe.

BENTLEY gets a bottle of water and gives it to KELI.

BENTLEY

Here. Huh. I smell pizza again. Why do I keep smelling pizza?

She opens the bottle and takes a pill.

KELI

Thanks.

KRYSTAL

Painful, huh?

KELI

It's not bad. I'll be fine.

KRYSTAL

I've seen quite a few shiners. None quite like that though. You should probably get it checked out.

BENTLEY

That's what I said. Come on Keli, let me take you to the ER.

KELI

No! No. That would just make things worse.

KRYSTAL

You know, as a detective I'm obligated to report abuse. In fact, just say the word, I'll get a restraining order.

KELI

What? No. Stop. Both of you. Please.

KRYSTAL

We're just trying to protect you from, who did you say hit her?

BENTLEY

Carlo, The Salsa Guy.

KRYSTAL

Right. Sounds like Carlo, the Scumbag Salsa Guy, needs a visit from my friends in blue.

KELI

No. Don't. You'll just make it worse.

BENTLEY

Actually, Krystal, that won't be necessary.

BENTLEY pick up his gun and slowly looks it over.

I shot him.

KRYSTAL

What?

KELI

What?

BENTLEY

Yeah. I saw him coming out of your building. Got out of my car and dropped him right there. Bang. Bang. Two in the head. He's dead.

KRYSTAL

Oh my God. You didn't tell me that.

BENTLEY

You didn't give me a chance. Now, I need to dump the body. Damn, that guy's a beast. Or, he was a beast.

KRYSTAL

You didn't hear this from me, but the guys in autopsy claim that bleaching and burning a body leaves the least amount of DNA.

KELI

Holy crap! Are you crazy? Are you both freaking crazy? Bentley, please, tell me you're lying.

BENTLEY

No. I told you, I-

KELI

No. Stop. I don't want to know. Not another word. I've got to go. I've, got to go.

BENTLEY

Where you going, babe? I thought you wanted to stay with me tonight. It could be just like old times.

KELI

No. And, don't call me babe. Don't call me at all. Don't text me. Don't contact me. Ever. I never want to see you again.

KELI exits. They look at each other and laugh.

KRYSTAL

Well played Bentley.

BENTLEY

That was kinda fun. Did you see the look on her face when you suggested I bleach and burn the body?

KRYSTAL

I believe that look is what we call the "shock and awe-hell-no!"

BENTLEY

I'm glad you stopped over.

KRYSTAL

Me too.

BENTLEY

Hey, thanks for filling me in on Carlo.

KRYSTAL

No problem. By the way, that black eye?

BENTLEY

Yeah?

KRYSTAL

Makeup. Cheap, drug store makeup.

BENTLEY

Seriously?

KRYSTAL

Classic Halloween You Tube shiner.

BENTLEY

Damn. That skanky little bitch.

KRYSTAL

You gonna be okay now?

BENTLEY

Yes. Thanks.

KRYSTAL

Good. Well, now that she's gone and you know her latin lover is bogus, I'll leave you to battling disgusting cyborgs, and I'll head home to change into something a little less pudding-ie.

BENTLEY

But, you wear it so well.

KRYSTAL picks up the bottle of whiskey.

KRYSTAL

Have you got any more of this stashed somewhere?

BENTLEY

No.

KRYSTAL

You're sure?

BENTLEY

Yeah. I bought it this afternoon when I was down. Like I said I just had one shot. Funny thing, it tasted disgusting. I guess that's a good thing.

KRYSTAL

It is a good thing. I will dispose of it on my way home.

BENTLEY

Hey, thanks.

KRYSTAL

Sure. That's what friends are for. Before I go, will you do me a favor?

BENTLEY

Sure. Name it.

KRYSTAL

Lock up that gun.

BENTLEY puts the gun back in the drawer.

Do Not Copy

BENTLEY

Done.

KRYSTAL notices his bottle of pills, picks up the bottle and looks them over.

KRYSTAL

Bentley, what are these?

BENTLEY

Those? Those are my anxiety meds. I take them when I'm stressed or can't sleep.

KRYSTAL

Are they usually covered in white powder?

BENTLEY

No.

BENTLEY dumps the pills into his hand.

BENTLEY
What the hell? Now she's trying to poison me?

KRYSTAL
That seems a bit extreme.

BENTLEY
First she lies about having a lover. Now, she's trying to poison me? I don't believe it. She doesn't want half my money. She wants all of it.

KRYSTAL
Let's not jump to any conclusions. Tell you what. I'll take these with me and drop them off at our lab for testing. In the meantime-

BENTLEY
I know, I know. Try to relax and don't let her party in my head.

Do Not Copy

KRYSTAL puts on her coat and then gives BENTLEY a quick kiss on the cheek.

KRYSTAL
You got it.

BENTLEY closes the door, strokes his cheek and smiles.

BLACK OUT

ACT 1 - Scene 3 - Prison Hair

SETTING: TOM's apartment. Later that night.

AT RISE: KELI pounds on the door, then barges in. TOM is sitting down, looking at stuff on his laptop.

KELI

(panicking) I can't stay at Bentley's. He killed a guy. Tom! Bentley killed a guy.

KELI tosses her coat, phone and purse onto a chair.

TOM

Uh huh.

KELI

It's my fault. It's all my fault. I never should have told him about Carlo. Now, some poor guy from my building is dead.

TOM

Okay.

KELI

After we finished our pizza, I did a little stress shopping. Then I went back to Bent's.

TOM

That tomato sauce was a little too spicy for me.

KELI

There was a woman there. Carli, or Candi, or something. Very plain. No style. Smelled like bananas.

TOM

I'm still tasting garlic.

KELI

She and Bentley were trying to convince me to go to the ER, to have my eye looked at. She was a cop, Tom. A Cop or detective or something. She wanted to file a restraining order against Carlo The Salsa Guy.

TOM

Damn acid reflux. You got any Tums?

TOM gets up and starts looking through KELI's purse.

KELI

Then Bentley said a restraining order wouldn't be necessary, because he shot him. Tom, Bentley shot a guy, with that gun!

TOM

Any flavor's okay. Just not grape. I hate grape.

KELI

Now, he and whats-her-name, are trying to figure out the best way to get rid of the body. Bleaching or burning?

He pulls out a Tums and pops it into his mouth.

TOM

Oh, cherry. I like cherry.

KELI

(Ranting) It's all my fault. Some guy is dead because of me. Us. A guy is dead because of us. We're going to prison, Tom. We're both going to prison.

TOM

No. No, we're not.

KELI

(Her rant escalates) I can't go to prison. Have you seen what they make you wear? Orange! They make you wear an orange jumpsuit. No one looks good in orange, or a jumpsuit. And, my nails and hair! Have you seen prison haircuts? There are no layers in them Tom. No layers!

TOM

Oh, for the love of God, woman. Stop.

KELI

My cocktail dresses. What will happen to them?

TOM

Keli. Stop rambling and listen to me.

KELI

I love those dresses. They have sequins and beads. Shiny little crystal beads.

TOM

Okay, let's hit the brakes on the crazy train and think about this. Clearly you need another plan.

KELI

Another plan? Right. I've got it. Let's leave. Let's leave tonight. I'll check Southwest. See if there are any flights to Barbados.

KELI grabs her phone. Looks at it, then tosses it onto a table.

Crap. I forgot to charge it. The battery's dead. You check. Check flights.

TOM

No. *(He pounds on his chest, then belches.)* Ah, that's better.

KELI

Belize? No, Peru. Cusco. Yes. Cusco. We can hide out in the Inca ruins.

TOM

I wonder if they make pizza in Peru?

What?

KELI

TOM

If they do, they probably put potatoes on it. It might not be as spicy. Did you know they grow over 4,000 varieties of potatoes in Peru? They eat a lot of potatoes down there.

KELI

What are you talking about? Why are you taking about pizza and potatoes when Bentley just shot a guy?

TOM

No. No. He didn't. I went to Bentley's before you showed up. He told me he never got out of his car. Just sat there. Oh, he thought about shooting your imaginary Latin lover, but-

KELI

He didn't shoot anyone?

TOM

No. Just imagined it. In rather disturbing details I might add.

KELI

So, I'm not going to prison?

TOM

I don't think so.

KELI

I can still get my hair and nails done?

TOM

I suppose you can.

KELI

And, no one will take my cocktail dresses?

TOM

Probably not.

KELI

Then we don't need another plan.

TOM

Not really. I was just messing with you.

KELI

That jerk. That damn, jerk. He scared the crap out of me.

TOM

Clearly, he figured out you were playing him.

KELI

How? How would he know?

TOM'S doorbell rings. BENTLEY calls out.

BENTLEY

Tom? It's me. Bent.

KELI and TOM panic. She grabs her coat and purse and rushes off stage into another room. The door to the room is open just enough that you can see Keli watching and listening to their conversation.

TOM

Bent? Hang on. Uh, just a minute. I'm not decent.

BENTLEY

You've never been decent.

TOM
Okay, it's open. Come on in.

BENTLEY enters.

TOM
You get tired of mutilating zombies?

BENTLEY
She tried to poison me, Tom. That skanky little vamp tried to poison me.

TOM
What are you talking about?

BENTLEY
Keli. Keli tried to poison me.

TOM
No. That's crazy.

BENTLEY
My pills are covered in white powder.

TOM
What kind of white powder?

BENTLEY
How would I know.

TOM
Did you taste it?

BENTLEY
What? No. Of course not.

TOM
Maybe one of them broke open.

BENTLEY
Krystal noticed. She's having them tested, and checking the bottle for fingerprints.

TOM
You know mine are on there. I picked it up when you were raging out. Kinda like you are now.

BENTLEY
I can't believe Keli is actually trying to kill me.

TOM

You know what I think?

BENTLEY

What?

TOM

I think you've been watching too many Dateline specials.

BENTLEY

Did you know Carlo The Salsa Guy lives in Havana, Tom? Havana!

TOM

You sure?

BENTLEY

Positive. Krystal pulled up his profile. I'm such a idiot. Why do I keep falling for her crap?

TOM

Come on, man. How could you possibly know?

BENTLEY

Who's she living with? Who put her up to this? If it's not the Salsa Guy, who? A maintenance guy? A pool guy? The pizza delivery guy? Maybe that's why I keep smelling pizza.

TOM

Dude. Reign in your imagination. For all we know, she lives alone and a pill broke open in the bottle.

BENTLEY

That black-eye? Makeup. Cheap makeup.

TOM

You know this, how?

BENTLEY

Krystal. She recognized it as a fake the minute she saw it.

TOM

Wow. Sounds like this Krystal chic saved your ass tonight.

BENTLEY

Monday morning I'm calling my lawyer. The sooner I get this divorce finalized the better.

TOM

Make sense to me. Let me know. I'll be there to witness.

BENTLEY rants and paces around.

BENTLEY

I can't believe she'd turn on me like this. She doesn't want to be married, fine. But to lie about another guy, and then try to poison me? I have half a mind to go back over to her place and-

TOM

Okay, stop. Just stop.

TOM goes to the fridge, grabs a can of soda and hands it to BENTLEY. He tries to calm him down.

TOM

Here. Sit down. Now, before you start foaming at the mouth like a rabid raccoon, sit down and tell me about Krystal.

BENTLEY

Krystal?

TOM

Yeah. Where'd you meet her?

BENTLEY

I met her at AA.

TOM

AA? Isn't dating other alcoholics verboten?

BENTLEY

The first year, yes. But we've both been in group for the past few years. Besides, we're just friends.

TOM

Friends?

BENTLEY

Yes. Friends.

TOM

That's why she stopped over late on a Friday night? To just be a friend?

BENTLEY

She stopped in to check on me. I told her about Keli and that this would have been our anniversary.

TOM

All right. All right. No need to get perturbed. So, what do you know about her?

BENTLEY

I know she's a detective. She works homicide.

TOM

Damn. That's got to be intense. No wonder she drank.

BENTLEY

She was living with a guy. Turned out he was a mean drunk. Add in working bloody crime scenes and yeah, it was downhill slide. She wised up, moved out, and started coming to AA. That was three years ago. She's solid as they come. Sweet and solid.

TOM

But, just a friend?

BENTLEY

Yes.

TOM

You gonna ask her out?

BENTLEY

What? No.

TOM

Why not? You're the one who wants the perfect sitcom life. You said she's sweet and solid. She stopped in to check on you.

BENTLEY

Yes, she did. But, no. I'm not ready. Not yet.

TOM

Fine. Just remember, everyday gets one day closer.

BENTLEY

Closer? Closer to what?

TOM

The dash, man. Everyday we're one day closer to filling in that damn tombstone dash.

BENTLEY

Thank you, Tommy Sunshine.

TOM

I'm just saying, if you like her, ask her out.

BENTLEY

No. Maybe. I'll think about it.

BENTLEY gets up to leave, he looks at his phone, then notices KELI'S phone. He picks it up.

What's this? What the hell is this?

TOM

That? I believe that is known as a cellular phone.

BENTLEY

I know it's a phone. It's Keli's phone!

BENTLEY grabs TOM and they scuffle with the phone. TOM grabs it.

Why the hell do you have Keli's phone? Where is she? It's you? You're screwing her! You're screwing Keli!

TOM

Whoa. Calm down Bent. You're wound up tighter than a snitch in a crack house. Who says it's Keli's? You think she has the only red bedazzled phone in the city?

BENTLEY

Fine. Let me call it.

TOM hands the phone to BENTLEY. He calls KELI'S number. Nothing happens.

TOM

Satisfied?

BENTLEY

Sorry man. It's been a rough night.

TOM

I told you, a lady friend was coming over.

BENTLEY

Shit. Is that why it took you so long to get to the door? Why didn't you say something?

TOM

Like what? Sorry, can't come to the door right now. I'm pollinating a new species. It's okay. Don't worry about it. Now, if you don't mind, go home.

BENTLEY

Yeah, yeah.

BENTLEY starts to leave.

TOM

Hey, Bent? You gonna be okay?

BENTLEY

I'll be fine. Just need a good night sleep.

TOM

Right. Did Kristal take all your anxiety meds?

BENTLEY

No. She just took the powdered ones.

He pulls a small bottle of pills out of his jacket pocket.

I've still got these.

TOM

Good. Let me know when you hear back from her.

BENTLEY

Will do. Maybe a pill did just break open.

TOM

Right. I can't imagine Keli would actually try to poison you.

BENTLEY

Then again, she lied about Carlo The Salsa Guy, and faked a black-eye, so who the hell knows.

TOM

Like I said, Bent, time for a fresh start.

BENTLEY

Yeah, yeah. See 'ya later.

BENTLEY exits. TOM exhales. KELI enters.

KELI

Holy crap. That was close.

TOM

He's having that bottle of pills tested.

KELI

Shit. We're screwed.

TOM

No. You're screwed.

KELI

That woman, Carli? Candi?

TOM

Krystal.

KELI

Yes, Krystal. You need to convince Bentley that Krystal put the powder in his pills.

TOM

What? Are you nuts? First of all, the powder was in the bottle before Krystal arrived. Second, why would she do that?

KELI

I don't know. Confuse him. Think of something. She's jealous? She wants to frame me. Get me out of his life, so she can have him for herself.

TOM

News-flash babe. You are out of his life.

KELI

She's after his money. That's it. She knows about his inheritance and wants a piece of it. Some women are so greedy.

TOM

'Ya don't say.

KELI

She wants to be wined and dined. Go to swanky charity events at his ritzy country club. Be seen with, with all the movers and shakers.

TOM
I don't think people say, "movers and shakers" anymore.

KELI
You know what I mean.

TOM
Relax. I'll figure something out.

KELI draws TOM close and begins
gently rubbing his back.

TOM
Ahh, that feels good.

KELI
Yeah? Wanna feel really good?

TOM hands KELI her coat, purse and
phone.

TOM
You should probably go. I'll call you once I hear anything
from Bent about the fingerprints.

KELI
You sure you don't want me to stay? I'm all black and lacy
under this extremely soft cashmere sweater.

TOM
As tempting as that is, that pizza's not sitting well with
me.

KELI
Eww. Oh, okay. Well, call me.

TOM
Absolutely.

KELI exits. TOM collapses onto the
couch.

Damn.

TOM

BLACKOUT

INTERMISSION

Do Not Copy

ACT 2 - SCENE 1 - MAKE MINE A VENTI

SETTING: A few days later at BENTLEY's clean, apartment. He's cleaned up and looks much better.

AT RISE: BENTLEY enters carrying two large cups of coffee. He sets one down on the coffee table, then sits down and begins to sip on his cup. A few moments later the doorbell rings. BENTLEY gets up to let KRYSTAL enter.

BENTLEY

Hey. Thanks for coming over.

KRYSTAL

No problem. And, look, pudding free.

BENTLEY

Nice. Although, you wore it well.

BENTLEY hands KRYSTAL the other cup of coffee.

BENTLEY

Here. Venti vanilla latte.

KRYSTAL

You remembered what kind of coffee I like?

BENTLEY

I'm kind of a details geek. You mentioned it once.

KRYSTAL

Impressive.

BENTLEY

It's been over a week. Just wondering, did you find out anything? About my pills or the fingerprints?

KRYSTAL takes a sip of the coffee, closes her eyes and smiles.

KRYSTAL

Ahhh. Reminds me of a morning cappuccino in Naples.

BENTLEY

Right, right. Glad you like it.

KRYSTAL

Did you know the Italian word, venti, means 20? A venti sized drink is 20 ounces. And, trust me, when in Italy you should never order a cappuccino after 11am. That is a major faux pas.

BENTLEY

I did not know that. Krystal. The pills? The white powder? Anything?

KRYSTAL

Right. I'm just messing with you. The bottle had at least a half dozen different fingerprints on it. It's safe to assume, a few were from people working in the pharmacy.

BENTLEY

And, one would be mine. Another would be yours and then Tom's. He picked up the bottle when I was, upset.

KRYSTAL

That still leaves at least one print unidentified. Then, there's that white powder.

BENTLEY

Yeah. What is it?

KRYSTAL

I don't know. The lab's been backed up. The report's not back yet. But, street drugs are generally-

BENTLEY

Street drugs?

KRYSTAL

I was curious, so I broke open one of your pills. The granules in the capsules are definitely larger than the white powder they were dusted with.

BENTLEY

So, a pill didn't break open?

KRYSTAL

No.

BENTLEY

Son-of-a-bitch. She's trying to kill me. She's actually trying to kill me.

KRYSTAL

Bentley. Bent. Look at me. We don't know that. All we know is that it's a powder. We don't know what it is, or how it might have affected you. And, we don't know for sure that the other fingerprint is Keli's.

BENTLEY

She was the only other person here. I can't believe it. I can't believe she'd poison me.

KRYSTAL

What I need now is something with her fingerprints on it. Do you have anything of hers around here?

BENTLEY

I doubt it. She took everything she owned when she moved out, along with the dishes, silverware and some of my favorite paintings.

KRYSTAL

What about about the other night? Did she leave anything here?

BENTLEY

I don't know. I don't think so.

KRYSTAL

There must be something. Come on. Think about that night. Where did she sit?

BENTLEY walks over to the couch where they sat.

BENTLEY

Here. We sat here. Tom tossed me a bag of frozen peas for her to put on her eye.

KRYSTAL

Great. You still have the bag?

BENTLEY

No. I threw it out. It got mushy. Funny thing, she never actually put the bag on her eye.

KRYSTAL

She didn't want to ruin the makeup.

BENTLEY

Uhhh. How could I be so-

KRYSTAL

The water bottle? You gave her a water bottle.

BENTLEY

Yes. I did.

KRYSTAL sees the water bottle on a table and carefully picks it up, holding it by the cap.

KRYSTAL

Is this it?

BENTLEY

No. That's mine.

She sets the bottle back down.

BENTLEY

It's gone. Everything's gone.

KRYSTAL

It's okay. That's okay.

BENTLEY

So now what?

KRYSTAL

So now, you invite her over and get her fingerprints on something.

BENTLEY

If you recall, she said, "don't call me, don't text me. I never want to see you again."

KRYSTAL

Just tell her it's about her alimony. If she's in this for the money, she'll show up.

BENTLEY

Right. I'll ask her to come over for coffee. Tell her I have some papers for her to sign.

KRYSTAL

Papers?

BENTLEY

Yeah. I'll make something up. She never reads the fine print.

KRYSTAL

Great. Then just make sure after she leaves.

BENTLEY

I keep her coffee cup.

KRYSTAL

And, the pen she uses to write with.

BENTLEY

It feels like I'm in some kind of weird, twisted crime drama.

KRYSTAL

Hopefully it will have a happy ending.

BENTLEY

I'll call her tomorrow morning.

KRYSTAL

Fine. Once you have her cup, and the pen, call me. I'll come over to get them, and take them to Harold.

BENTLEY

Harold?

KRYSTAL

My neighbor. He works in the lab downtown.

BENTLEY

Oh, okay.

KRYSTAL

He's a great guy.

BENTLEY

(disappointed) Uh, good.

KRYSTAL

And, his wife, Christa is a real sweetheart. She lavishes me with home-made chocolate chip cookies.

BENTLEY

(relieved) I always say, nothing like good neighbors, or chocolate chip cookies.

KRYSTAL lifts her coffee cup to toast with BENTLEY.

KRYSTAL
Or, friends.

They clink their cups together.

BENTLEY
Hmm. Speaking of friends.

KRYSTAL
Yes?

BENTLEY
I was thinking about Tom. When he came back to my place the other night, he smelled like pizza and beer.

KRYSTAL
How barbaric.

BENTLEY
I asked him about it. He claimed he had no idea what I was talking about.

KRYSTAL
I'm not sure I know what you're talking about.

BENTLEY
When he asked me what happened at Keli's, and I told him I shot Carlo. He didn't believe me.

KRYSTAL
Because, you typically do shoot people?

BENTLEY
No. Of course not.

KRYSTAL
So, why did his reaction baffle you?

BENTLEY
He claims he's seen me catch and release crickets.

KRYSTAL
Is that true?

BENTLEY
Well, yes. But, the point is, he seemed so sure.

KRYSTAL
You can't fault a guy for knowing you. You said you've been friends for years.

BENTLEY

Yeah. Since third grade.

KRYSTAL

That's a long time. What? Now, you're suspicious he and Keli are in cahoots? Plotting evil ways against you?

BENTLEY

I don't know. I guess when you say it like that, it sounds pretty crazy. But, he's definitely messing with my mojo.

KRYSTAL

Your mo-jo?

BENTLEY

Yeah. My mojo, or juju. Something like that.

KRYSTAL

I think what you're trying to say is that you were confused, by Tom's reaction.

BENTLEY

Yes. Exactly.

KRYSTAL

And, perplexed by Keli faking a violent latin lover, and black eye.

BENTLEY

And don't forget, tainting my anxiety meds, or the phone.

KRYSTAL

The phone? What phone?

BENTLEY

Oh, I didn't tell you about the phone. I went over to Tom's, later that night.

KRYSTAL

The night he smelled like pizza and beer?

BENTLEY

They both smelled like pizza and beer.

KRYSTAL

Okay, but that's not a crime. People do go out to eat.

BENTLEY

There was a red phone on his table. It looked exactly like Keli's.

KRYSTAL

This might be a stretch, but I expect Keli doesn't have a one-of-a-kind red phone.

BENTLEY

No. Of course not. But, I completely freaked out, grabbing Tom and accusing him of screwing Keli. Then I tried to call her.

KRYSTAL

And, what happened?

BENTLEY

Nothing.

KRYSTAL

Nothing?

BENTLEY

Nope. Not a peep.

KRYSTAL

Well, there you go.

BENTLEY

Then I apologized profusely and left, feeling like a moron.

KRYSTAL

So, whose phone was it?

BENTLEY

I don't know. Evidently he had a lady friend in his bedroom.

KRYSTAL

Who obviously has a phone like Keli's.

BENTLEY

Yeah.

KRYSTAL

You know what I think? I think you need a distraction. A night out, away from all the crazy drama of the past few days.

BENTLEY

That's what Tom said. But, out where?

KRYSTAL

I don't know. Where do you like to go?

BENTLEY

Hey, how about dinner? Would you like to go out for dinner with me tonight.

KRYSTAL

Sure. I'd love to.

BENTLEY

Great. What do you like? Italian? French? Sushi?

KRYSTAL

Actually, have you ever been to Phil's? They make an amazing Caesar salad, table side, and sear tenderloins to perfection.

BENTLEY

Yes. Yes, they do. What time?

KRYSTAL

My shift ends at six. I'll meet you there around seven. I need to stop home, change clothes and let Dawn out for a run.

BENTLEY

Dawn? I hope that's not your roommate.

KRYSTAL

(Laughs) No. She's my Yorkie. By that time of day she needs a good run around the backyard.

KRYSTAL give him a quick peck on the cheek as she leaves.

Do Not Copy

KRYSTAL

Okay, see you at Phil's at seven.

BENTLEY closes the door, smiles and sits down.

BLACKOUT

ACT 2 - SCENE 2 - SAVE THE CUP

SETTING: Morning. BENTLEY'S clean, well-lit, apartment.

AT RISE: BENTLEY is clean shaven, and well dressed. He has upbeat music on, which fades when he begins speaking. He's sipping a cup of coffee and has a cup ready for KELI when she enters. He calls KRYSTAL on his phone.

BENTLEY

Hey, it's me. Yes. It was nice to get out last night, and those tenderloins were amazing. Yeah, thanks. Hey. You nailed it. I called Keli. All I had to do was mention money and she agreed to meet. Yes. I remember. Right. I'll call you later once I've got it. Thanks.

BENTLEY puts his phone in his pocket. He sips his coffee for a few moments. KELI knocks, then enters. BENTLEY stands to greet her.

BENTLEY

Hey Keli. Thanks for coming.

KELI

You said it was important. About my alimony?

BENTLEY

Right. Right. Have a seat.

BENTLEY slides a small latte across the table to KELI.

BENTLEY

Here. Carmel Macchiato.

KELI

No thanks.

She grabs the cup and slides it
back toward BENTLEY.

BENTLEY

We had some good times, didn't we? Bistros and boutiques in
Paris. Paella in Spain. That pizza in Catania.

KELI

What are you doing?

BENTLEY

Just, reminiscing.

KELI

Yeah, right. Good times. Now, what's up with our divorce?
You need me to sign some papers or what? I'm getting botox
with Angela at 2:00 and a pedicure at-

BENTLEY

Your eye looks better.

KELI stands to leave.

KELI

That's it. I'm done.

BENTLEY

Sit down. Relax. Drink your coffee.

KELI sits.

KELI

Fine. I'm sitting and sipping. You happy?

BENTLEY

This divorce. You're sure this is what you want?

KELI

Yes.

BENTLEY

Because, we could try marriage counseling.

KELI

No.

BENTLEY

My friend, Arnie, said counseling saved his marriage.

KELI

There's nothing to save. And, if there's nothing here for me to sign, I'm done. Next time you want to talk, call my lawyer.

KELI stands to leave.

BENTLEY

Actually, I do have something for you to sign.

BENTLEY gets up, to retrieve a piece of paper and pen, then sets them down in front of KELI.

BENTLEY

Here. Sign this.

KELI

What is it?

BENTLEY

My life insurance policy. The Beneficiary line. Sign it, here. Date it, here.

KELI

Seriously?

KELI grabs the pen, signs the paper and slides it back to BENTLEY.

There. Done.

Thank you. BENTLEY

That's it? KELI

That's it for now. BENTLEY

KELI gets up to leave.

KELI
So, even though we're getting divorced, you're leaving me on as your beneficiary?

BENTLEY
No. Of course not. I cancelled the policy a month ago. I just needed your signature to verify it.

I hate you. KELI

Do Not Copy
KELI storms out as BENTLEY replies.

Have a nice day! BENTLEY

BENTLEY picks up a plastic bag and puts the coffee cup and pen into it.

Come on, fingerprints. BENTLEY

BENTLEY pulls out his phone and texts KRYSTAL. He sips his coffee, a short time later someone knocks at his door. KRYSTAL enters.

BENTLEY

Oh. I wasn't expecting you till later.

KRYSTAL

I thought you might be anxious, so I took a late lunch.

BENTLEY

You know me well.

KRYSTAL

So, she showed up?

BENTLEY

Yep. She wasn't happy about it, but she did.

KRYSTAL

And, you enjoyed playing the sleuth?

BENTLEY

Yes. And, just for fun, I suggested counseling.

KRYSTAL

How'd that go over?

BENTLEY

Lead sinker.

KRYSTAL

Okay, so you've got her coffee cup?

BENTLEY holds up the plastic bag.

BENTLEY

The cup, and the pen she used to sign the document.

KRYSTAL

What document?

BENTLEY

Life insurance. For the beneficiary.

KRYSTAL

She's still your beneficiary?

BENTLEY

Hell no.

KRYSTAL

Despite all this drama, you seem much more relaxed today. You look, uh, healthier.

BENTLEY

I am feeling better. I got up early, and went for a run. I forgot how good that feels.

KRYSTAL

I didn't know you were a runner. Where do you run?

BENTLEY

Lake Park. The loop around the lagoon.

KRYSTAL

I've heard of that. I may have to try it sometime.

BENTLEY

The south end is a killer, but I conquered it.

KRYSTAL

I ran track in college. You up for a challenge?

BENTLEY

Absolutely. When?

KRYSTAL

How 'bout Wednesday morning? 6:30?

BENTLEY

You're on. I'll meet you at the bottom of the hill, by the green dumpster.

KRYSTAL

Sounds wonderfully romantic.

KRYSTAL gets up to leave.

Okay, I'd better head back to work. I'll drop these off with Harold at the lab. See if he can match a print from your pill bottle to Keli. It may take a few days.

BENTLEY

And, the powder. Any results?

KRYSTAL

No. Sorry. Not yet. I'll let you know as soon as I hear.

There's a loud knocking at the door. TOM enters. He's carrying a backpack and is extremely nervous.

BENTLEY
Tom? What's up? Something wrong?

TOM
Yeah.

BENTLEY
Geez. You're chalky white and, shaking.

TOM
We need to talk.

KRYSTAL
Perhaps I should go.

BENTLEY
No. Stay. Tom, this is Krystal.

TOM
Krystal? Right. Yeah. Bent's told me about you.

BENTLEY
Okay Tom, sit down and tell me-

TOM
Did Keli call you?

BENTLEY
No. She was just here a few hours ago.

TOM
She's gonna call.

BENTLEY
Why? What does she want now?

TOM
She's going to call and ask you to meet her for a late dinner tomorrow night at Fitz's.

KRYSTAL
I know that place. Great ribs.

BENTLEY
Keli hates that place. It's out in the boonies. She calls it Hicksville.

TOM
I know. And, no matter what she says, if she's crying, pleading, groveling. Don't go!

KRYSTAL
What do you know Tom?

TOM

I know...just don't go.

BENTLEY

Why? What the hell's going on?

TOM opens his backpack and pulls out a stack of papers.

TOM

Here. Look at these.

TOM looks through some of the papers.

BENTLEY

They look like copies of emails and texts.

TOM

Look! Look who they're from.

BENTLEY

Keli? They're all to you, from Keli.

TOM

Yeah. Read 'em. She's nuts Bent. I'm telling you, she's freakin' nuts.

BENTLEY starts reading through a few pages, handing them to KRYSTAL as he finishes.

KRYSTAL

So, Carlo, The Salsa Guy? You knew he was bogus?

TOM

Yeah.

BENTLEY

And, her black eye. You knew it was a fake?

TOM

Yeah. I knew.

BENTLEY

Krystal, look at this.

BENTLEY and KRYSTAL look over some of the pages together. Bentley hangs on to them.

KRYSTAL

She asked you to buy drugs? So she could poison Bentley, on their anniversary?

TOM

Yes. But, I didn't! I didn't! I swear, it was corn starch. Plain corn starch. That's what was in your pill bottle.

KRYSTAL

Huh. That's a new one.

TOM

Keep reading. She wants to kill you, Bent. She seriously, fucking wants to kill you.

BENTLEY

And, you went along with all this, because?

TOM

To protect you. I was trying to protect you from everything she was planning.

KRYSTAL

So, you were in on all this?

TOM

Yes. I mean, no. No! Not like that.

BENTLEY

Jesus, Tom, I thought we were friends.

TOM

We are! Don't you get it? I was trying to shield you.

BENTLEY

By playing along with her egocentric insanity? What the hell kind of friend does that?

KRYSTAL

All right, stop. You both need to stop and calm down. Tom, start from the beginning.

TOM

Right. Okay. Bent, remember about six months ago when you were in Portland on business?

BENTLEY

Sure. I was negotiating the Anderson account.

TOM

Right. Well, one night when I was at the Vintage House having a drink, I heard a familiar voice bragging about just getting back from some swanky villa in Tuscany.

KRYSTAL

Let me guess. It was Keli?

TOM

She was shit-face drunk. Dressed like a high priced hooker. She recognized me and came strutting over, tried to give me a friggin' lap dance.

BENTLEY

She told me she was staying at the country house with her sister.

TOM

Yeah, well, she wasn't.

KRYSTAL

Okay, so you were at a bar, Keli was drunk, then what?

TOM

She was shooting her mouth off. Bragging about all the money she was going to squeeze out of you in the divorce.

KRYSTAL

What else?

TOM

I was looking out for you Bent. Honest. When she was gassing about her plan to swindle as much money from you as she could, I played up to her. Tried to convince her I wanted in on her plan.

BENTLEY

So you played along with the Carlo story? That's how you knew I didn't kill him? He wasn't real.

TOM

Right. And when she wanted to poison you-

KRYSTAL

You told her you'd buy the drugs. That way you could make sure Bentley wasn't actually poisoned.

TOM

Exactly.

BENTLEY

So, the night I stopped at your place. She was there? She was the 'thriller'?

TOM

Yes. She was there. But **no!** She was not a 'thriller'.

KRYSTAL

Why was she there?

TOM

That's when everything changed. She came over in a paranoid rage. Ranting about you killing Carlo and convinced that she'd be spending the rest of her life in prison.

BENTLEY

So, you told her I didn't shoot Carlo?

TOM

I had to. I had to convince her I was on her side.

KRYSTAL

Because you couldn't let on, that you were looking out for Bent.

TOM

That's when the crazy train jumped the track. It was like she downed a cocktail of a hate, rage and revenge.

BENTLEY

Just because she found out I didn't shoot her imaginary lover?

TOM

No. That was just the tip of the insanity iceberg.

KRYSTAL

What was the next tipping point?

TOM

You. She saw you as a threat. She was convinced you were going after Bent for his money.

BENTLEY

Because she came to check on me?

KRYSTAL

What else Tom? What happened next?

THERE'S a loud pounding at the door. Keli bursts in, in a rage.

BENTLEY

Keli? What are you doing here?

KELI

Shut up! I followed you Tom. I followed you here. You told him! You told him about the plan didn't you?

TOM

What? No. I just dropped in to see how he's doing.

KELI

You're lying! I know you're lying. You two-faced-fucking-bastard!

KRYSTAL

Okay, let's calm down. This is probably all just a misunderstanding.

KELI

Shut up bitch!

BENTLEY

Hey! Don't talk to Krystal like that.

KRYSTAL

It's okay. It's okay. Keli, stop. Take a breathe and tell me-

KELI grabs some of the papers Bentley is holding.

KELI

What are these?

TOM

Nothing. Plans. For, my greenhouse.

KELI looks through the papers throws them at TOM then goes to Bentley's desk and pulls out his gun. She aims it at TOM.

KELI

Liar! You two-faced liar! Those are copies of emails and texts I sent you.

BENTLEY

Put the gun down Keli! Put the damn gun down!

TOM

Listen to him Keli!

KELI aims the gun at Bentley, then Tom, then back to Bentley.

KELI

Shut up! Both of you! Shut the fuck up or I swear I'll shoot! I'll shoot you both!

KRYSTAL

Keli, stop. You don't want to do this. Give me the gun and let's talk. If you pull that trigger it's murder. Right now you'll still getting alimony. Once you pull that trigger you're looking at a long time in-

BENTLEY

Go ahead Keli. Shoot! Shoot Tom. After all, he did double-cross you. I've got the evidence right here.

KELI keeps moving the gun back and forth between TOM and BENTLEY.

TOM

What the hell? Jesus, Bentley! Are you fucking nuts?

KRYSTAL

Keli, don't! Don't listen to them. Listen to me. Listen to my voice. I can help you. I can, help you.

BENTLEY

Tom used you Keli. Now you're going to prison and he'll get off with a slap on the wrist. A tender little slap on the wrist, while you're rocking an orange jumpsuit.

KELI

Shut up! Shut up! Stop it! I hate you! I hate you both!

KELI aims the gun to shoot TOM.
 KRYSTAL shoves TOM out of the way,
 pulls a gun out from the back of
 her pants and aims it at KELI.

KRYSTAL
 Drop it. Now.

KELI drops the gun.

KELI
 Bitch.

KRYSTAL handcuffs KELI. TOM gets
 up, visibly shaken. BENTLEY grabs
 the gun.

Do Not Copy

TOM
 Jesus Bentley! You were gonna let her shoot me?

BENTLEY
 Relax. It's a fake, see.

He points and shoots the gun, which
 is actually a lighter.

KRYSTAL
 It was a fake? The whole time?

BENTLEY
 Not the whole time. I got rid of the glock a few days ago.
 Picked this up just for fun. Convincing huh?

TOM
 And, there goes my arrhythmia.

KRYSTAL leads Keli towards the
 exit.

KRYSTAL

Come on Keli, we're gonna take a little ride downtown.

KELI turns and spits at her.

Bent? Dinner at Phils, at seven?

BENTLEY walks over and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

BENTLEY

Absolutely! I'll meet you there. Tom, you wanna join us?

TOM

Are you kidding? After all this? How can you even think about food? Hell no. I'm going home for a hot shower, Xanax and clean shorts.

KRYSTAL

Your loss. It's rib night.

KRYSTAL exits with KELI. Tom begins to exit.

BENTLEY

Hang on Tom.

BENTLEY walks over to his desk drawer, takes out his checkbook, writes out a check and hands it to TOM.

BENTLEY

Here. Take this.

TOM

\$250,000? For what? No. I can't take this.

BENTLEY

Sure you can. Pay off your debt. Take a vacation.

TOM

No. I can't-

BENTLEY

Look, I won't be paying alimony, and you collected enough evidence to put that she-beast away for years. So, take it.

TOM

Yeah, but-

BENTLEY

But nothing.

TOM

Seriously?

BENTLEY

Absolutley.

TOM

Wow. I don't know what to say. Thanks man.

BENTLEY

You're welomce.

TOM

Hey. What about Krystal?

BENTLEY

What about her?

TOM

She's badass. Sweet and solid. Seems like a keeper to me. Maybe even The Whole Shebang.

BENTLEY

Time will tell Tommy. Time will tell.

THE END