Judgment Date

by
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OVER BLACK
BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
A SHORT MAN in a white blazer brandishes a Colt .45 pistol.
BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!
CLICK. CLICK. The slide locks back, magazine empty.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
SUPER: "Three weeks later"
A small private dining room. Two chairs bookend a single
elegant candle lit table. A fruit bowl, chocolates, napkins,
two wine glasses, two wine bottles, a big black Samsung box.
Big band music entertains itself in the background.

FELICITY
Don’t be so stupid!

JANE (V.O.)
I was only saying.

FELICITY, mid 40s, faded ex TV talent show judge, Chanel
clad, applies another coat of makeup, via a hand mirror. Her
face reveals a mixture of selfishness and fear.

She barks into a wireless headset on her ear.

FELICITY
Well, don’t. Your last selections
were less than impressive.

JANE (V.O.)
You agreed to them.

FELICITY
Don’t forget to check up on
Antoine. Make sure he’s happy.

TONY appears in a Tux. Ex Oklahoma, early 30s, tall, blond
hair, blue eyes, clean shaven. Observant, street smart,
often underestimated. He blinks like a deer in headlights.
He sizes up Felicity, the table, the room.
Uniformed arms behind his back free him from HANDCUFFS.
He shakes his arms, sits. Adjusts his collar, grimaces.

TONY
Are --

Felicity holds up a hand without looking.
She listens to the headset. He checks the exits.

FELICITY
(turns to him)
Feeling better now, Tony?

TONY
(Oklahoma accent)
After what you just put me through,
I’m lucky to be alive. Felicity.

FELICITY
You should have taken your chance.

POP! She opens the champagne. The cork hits the ceiling.
Tony studies its trajectory. She fills a glass.

He opens the other bottle, house brand, fills his own glass.

TONY
A bottle each? Subtle.

FELICITY
You should be so lucky.

TONY
Mine’s apple. Booze didn’t suit me.

FELICITY
How rare, a man who can control his passions. Or at least one of them.

Tony pulls at his bow tie.

TONY
You’re gonna have to excuse me, I ain’t done this for a while.
FELICITY
Take your time. We have plenty. Do you like the music?

TONY
Can we stop pretending it’s a regular date? You might do it every week, but it just ain’t natural.

FELICITY
Where’s your sense of romance? How about sweeping a girl off her feet?

TONY
My current situation distracts me.

FELICITY
If you want to improve your current situation, get with the program.

TONY
Yes, ma’am, whatever you say.

FELICITY
Let’s start with a blast from the past. A song, if you please.

TONY
I couldn’t sing to save ...
(laughs)
You know I can’t sing.

FELICITY
Do I?

TONY
Surely you done your homework?

FELICITY
I leave that to my assistant.

TONY
It must be real tiring delegating all that work. You trust him?

FELICITY
Why do you assume it’s a man?

Tony shrugs.

FELICITY
I trust my people completely, they’re the best in the business. My audience deserves nothing less.
He removes a poker chip from a pocket, plays with it.

TONY
Where is your live audience?

FELICITY
New show, new format. Just the two of us, so you have the best chance to impress me. No mosquitoes, no commercial breaks, no distractions.

Tony smiles, waves at TV cameras in the walls and ceiling.

TONY
You’d be nothing without those so-called mosquitoes. They make you.

FELICITY
Enough trivia. Sing us something!

TONY
I wouldn’t inflict that on anyone, not even you.

FELICITY
I’ll be the judge of that.

TONY
At least I know my limits.

FELICITY
What’s that supposed to mean?

TONY
Why don’t you sing for us?

FELICITY
Tonight isn’t about me.

TONY
That’d be a change.

FELICITY
Can’t you do anything of interest?

TONY
What am I, a trained monkey?

He selects two apples from the fruit bowl. Juggles them. He builds up a rhythm, performs a few tricks.

Felicity smiles, her face shines. She looks years younger.
Tony adds an orange to the mix. More tricks. He loses control, the fruit salad flies towards her.

She lifts her hands in front of her face.

THUD! The fruit smashes into a

TRANSPARENT WALL.

A four inch thick wall between them splits the room in two, and rises towards the ceiling. At the top, a one foot gap.

TONY
Out of practice.

FELICITY
Didn’t you have enough free time?

TONY
I had other things on my mind.

FELICITY
Is that where you learned juggling?

TONY
Hospital.

FELICITY
Did you catch something nasty?

TONY
Yeah, a busted knee. Came back later to amuse the other patients. It sure helps with healing.

FELICITY
You’re joking.

TONY
Very funny! Nope, look it up yourself. Laughter heals.

FELICITY
Whatever you say.

Tony pushes the wall with all his might.

TONY
That just ain’t neighborly.

FELICITY
Would you prefer a straitjacket?
TONY
Don’t tell me you don’t trust me?

FELICITY
With my very life!

TONY
What if we want to get amorous?

FELICITY
Aren’t you assuming rather a lot?

TONY
Ain’t that the point of the show?

FELICITY
You’ve got to earn it.

Tony knocks the wall with his knuckles.

TONY
Wouldn’t think it’d stop a bullet.

FELICITY
It’s also bombproof.

FLASHBACK - INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
A SHORT MAN in a white blazer FIRES a Colt .45 at Felicity. She flinches, remains seated. After eight shots, the slide locks back, magazine empty. The wall, peppered with cracks, survives intact. Two ARMED GUARDS rush in, taser him. He collapses in a heap. They remove the gun, drag him away.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TONY
How did he get that past security?

FELICITY
Maybe it was made of plastic?

TONY
Urban myth. Bet it was good for ratings. Did you slip him the gun?
FELICITY
Don’t look at me, even I’m not allowed to bring mine in here!

TONY
You carry?

FELICITY
As long as people like you exist.

TONY
People like me? What about people like you? Like 'You Be The Judge’?

FELICITY
I can’t believe you mentioned that.

TONY
Not allowed to answer back, eh?
Can’t embarrass the infamous Felicity, can we? That’s ok, you do it pretty good all by yourself.

FLASHBACK - INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

A SINGER awaits judgment on the stage of a TV talent show. Early 30s, red hair, built like a fitness model.

Behind him shines a massive banner: "You Be The Judge". A small one underneath explains: "Where the Audience Decides".

Three JUDGES, Felicity at one end, sit opposite him. In the background, a live STUDIO AUDIENCE, silent.

Her colleagues: anELDERLY JUDGE, hair migrated from scalp to chin, and a blonde KOREAN JUDGE, late 20s.

FELICITY
I must disagree. Although there’s definitely room for improvement,
I’d like to see you sing again.

The Elderly Judge shakes his head.

FELICITY
However, the audience says no, so I’m afraid this time you miss out.

SINGER
What do you mean?
FELICITY
The audience has the final word.

SINGER
What about last night?

Felicity squirms.

FELICITY
You sang very well this evening, and you get my wholehearted vote.

SINGER
That’s not what you said last night. You said I’d get through.

The other Judges perk up. The Audience murmurs.

FELICITY
I’m sorry you didn’t make it, your act shows promise. Please leave the stage so the next performer can --

SINGER
Not ’til you keep your promise.

FELICITY
You’re making a fool of yourself. Please leave the stage now.

KOREAN JUDGE
(to singer)
What exactly are you talking about?

FELICITY
I don’t think --

SINGER
She said I’d get through to the next round if we ... you know.

FELICITY
That’s not at all what happened, you had far too much to drink!

SINGER
It was you draining the tequila, I don’t even like the stuff!

KOREAN JUDGE
If you ... what?
SINGER
I’ll tell them.

Felicity opens her mouth, closes it.

KOREAN JUDGE
Tell them what?

FELICITY
The audience’s vote is final. We can discuss this later. Please.

SINGER
I want to sing in the next round!

Felicity silently pleads.

SINGER
She said I’d get through to the next round if we slept together.

KOREAN JUDGE
I do not believe it.

A few BOOS from the Audience puncture the air.

FELICITY
Maybe we both had a few too many, but making up such lies only makes you look like a sore loser.

SINGER
My buddy saw the whole thing.

The Elderly Judge leafs through a ragged rulebook.

FELICITY
We can discuss this later, but for now, you have to leave the stage.

SINGER
I’m not going ‘til I get through to the next round, just like you said.

The Korean Judge and Elderly Judge confer. More BOOS.

ELDERLY JUDGE
I’m sorry, but if you don’t leave now, I’ll have to call security.

SINGER
Give it your best shot.

The Elderly Judge whispers into his headset.
SINGER
You won’t get away with this! I’m going to sue, you lying --

His microphone goes silent.

Two SECURITY GUARDS stride onto the stage.

SINGER
(shouts)
Touch me and you’ll have a law suit on your hands! I know my rights!

He lies down. The guards grab him by the arms and legs. He flails around, kicks one in the forearm. They retreat.

One Guard addresses him. The Judges strain to hear. The other Guard draws his taser. The Singer struggles to his feet, rushes off. The guards chase him.

The other Judges turn back to Felicity. The BOOS multiply.

Felicity jumps up. Her chair topples over. She lets out a short WHIMPER, marches off. BOOS are joined by JEERS.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TONY
Sure am glad you put that wall up, I feel ever so much safer.

FELICITY
That’s not even remotely funny.

TONY
And his daddy was a cop.

FELICITY
I know you from somewhere. Have you auditioned for one of my shows?

TONY
Not everyone wants to be famous.

FELICITY
I’m not in this for the fame.

TONY
Yeah, right. Anyways, I’ve done some modeling, mostly magazines.
FELICITY
I thought so. I’m not good with faces, but yours I remember.

She sips her drink.

FELICITY
I do enjoy a good Perrier-Jouë.

TONY
You sure are bought and paid for.

FELICITY
As I said, no commercial breaks.

TONY
So did you do it?

FELICITY
Do what?

TONY
Trade favors.

FELICITY
Don’t be ridiculous!

TONY
(grins)
I believe you! Sober as a judge.

FELICITY
Some people will say or do anything for fame! I’m a sitting duck.

TONY
I feel for you, Miss Innocent!

FELICITY
Do you have any interest in winning your freedom tonight, or did you just come along to annoy me?

TONY
After what you just done, you’re lucky I came back at all.

FELICITY
Why are you complaining? I gave you a golden chance right there. Don’t blame me if you couldn’t take it.

He glares at her.
FELICITY
How about you make a little effort?

TONY
Ok if I call a friend?

FELICITY
What for?

TONY
That ‘You Be The Judge’ performance scared me. I need a chaperone.

FELICITY
Do remember you’re here to romance and entertain me and my audience.

TONY
How about we dance the tango while I tell them dirty jokes?

FELICITY
Anyone can call or send a text to vote yes or no. Or cast their vote online at www.judgmentdate.com. These votes alone are your ratings. Over fifty percent, you’re free. If not, well, you know how that ends. Some free advice: don’t be boring!

TONY
You don’t care if I’m guilty?

FELICITY
Let me guess ... you’re innocent?

TONY
You really want to know?

FELICITY
Why not?

TONY
I was framed.

FELICITY
Well, why didn’t you say so? What a dreadful justice system we have, locking up all these innocents!

TONY
I should have --
FELICITY
Amazing, everyone on this show is innocent. I’m calling my senator!

TONY
I’m no killer.

FELICITY
I believe you!

TONY
Subtle as a brick.

FELICITY
Your innocence or otherwise is not my concern. I’m not a lawyer, I’m in show biz. Romance me, give us a good show, and it’s ...

She extends a neutral thumb, turns it up.

FELICITY
If you fail ...

Her thumb turns downwards.

He looks above her head, searches.

FELICITY
What are you looking for?

TONY
Spears dangling from the ceiling.

FELICITY
Technology has improved, I have a remote in my purse.

TONY
I wouldn’t be surprised. Judge Judy with a black hat. Judge, jury and executioner. Except you’re not as polite as her. Maybe you’re gonna execute me live on TV?

FELICITY
That might improve ratings.

TONY
So I have to entertain you all. Could you be a bit more specific?
FELICITY
That’s up to you. Be creative, make it interesting, make it exciting!

TONY
But what do they want? What does any audience want? You TV folks try all sorts ’til something works for a while. From what I see, nobody knows nothing.

FELICITY
Speak for yourself! Some people are consistently successful in showbiz.

TONY
Some people haven’t hit one out of the ballpark in years.

FELICITY
Audiences are easily distracted. So yes, somebody knows something about showbiz. You can count on that. In fact, you can bet your life on it.

TONY
You think of that all by yourself?

FELICITY
You really do have a death wish.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT
A wall of monitors captures the dining couple from various angles. Audio and video ENGINEERS toil over workstations.

DICK, mid 50s, wearing a headset, dressed in a young man’s clothes, watches a close up of Tony.

JANE, mid 30s, medium height, painfully shy, plain, with a body to live for, wearing a headset, stands alone, watches.

DICK
This dude’s a killer? He’s smarter than most everyone in this room!

VICTORIA the intern, early 20s, flat chested, dressed as a waitress in Versace clothing, admires Dick.

DICK
Ok, get ready. This is way good practice if you ever try acting.
VICTORIA
I told you, I’m going to be like Felicity. Don’t you listen? She says I got the look, she’ll train me! Could you learn me how, too?

He looks her up and down.

DICK
Sorry, babe, far too busy. Remember to come back here between servings.

Dick leers at Jane. She’s oblivious. Victoria glares at her.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Tony stands up, stretches.

FELICITY
What are you doing?

He slips off his dinner jacket, places it over his chair. Removes his bow tie, undoes the top button of his shirt.

TONY
Why is it so hot in here?

FELICITY
That’s no excuse to be a scruff.

TONY
I heard you like a bit of rough.

FELICITY
You heard incorrectly.

She checks her watch.

FELICITY
You have under two hours to make your case.

TONY
How important is the audience vote?

FELICITY
Crucial. I always listen to them.

TONY
What if you like me but they don’t?
FELICITY
Their word stands.

TONY
What if they like me but you don’t?

FELICITY
Do we have to nitpick every detail?

TONY
It might not matter to you --

FELICITY
That’s not very likely, is it?

TONY
What if they like me but you don’t?

FELICITY
It hasn’t happened yet.

TONY
What if it does?

Felicity hesitates.

FELICITY
This is their show, the audience vote is final. So you’d better make it interesting, hadn’t you?

Victoria appears, trailed by an armed GUARD. Tony freezes.

She carries a seafood platter with vegetables. Puts it down in front of Tony, along with some plastic cutlery.

He picks up the knife between a thumb and forefinger.

FELICITY
So you don’t hurt yourself.

TONY
(to Victoria)
Sure smells good, thanks.

She nods, surprised, leaves with the guard.

FELICITY
How much better would it smell if you weren’t such a coward earlier?
FLASHBACK - INT. SPORTS COMPLEX - NIGHT

Felicity admires a LIFEGUARD at an empty swimming pool. Tony appears, in a swimming costume. The armed guard follows.

TONY
Where’s the sauna?

FELICITY
I changed my mind. I thought a swim would help you work up an appetite.

Tony halts, turns to the guard, who strokes his holster.

Tony retreats until he BUMPS against the wall.

FELICITY
If you swim a length of the pool, you’re free. I guarantee it.

Tony closes his eyes.

FELICITY
Dinner will be much more relaxing.

He stands motionless.

FELICITY
Swim one length for us.

Tony searches the room for an escape.

FELICITY
A width? Surely you can do a width?

TONY
You’ll set me free?

FELICITY
Guaranteed.

Tony creeps towards the pool’s edge. His breathing speeds up. He checks the Lifeguard, slides his toes forward.

FELICITY
Hurry up! It’s only water.

His eyes shoot poison.

FELICITY
My daughter can swim over a mile.

He peers into the depths, turns away.
FELICITY
We don’t have all night.

Tony forces himself to face the water.

Felicity leans forward, pushes him. He tumbles into the pool with a SCREAM, thrashes around.

The Lifeguard jumps forward.

FELICITY
Give him a minute.

LIFEGUARD
I don’t think he can swim.

Tony flails about, gasps for air.

LIFEGUARD
This is dangerous.

FELICITY
He’s just not trying hard enough.

Tony disappears under the water. They watch him sink.

The Lifeguard dives in.

FELICITY
I said another minute!

The Lifeguard fishes him out, heaves him onto the side.

Tony CHOKES, coughs up water, sounds like a chain smoker.

Felicity turns, strolls away.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tony reaches for a chocolate truffle.

FELICITY
Treats so early?

TONY
My future ain’t exactly certain.

FELICITY
Swiss?

He opens one, smells it, dispatches it.
TONY
Belgian.
(French/Belgian accent)
Magnifique!

FELICITY
Belgium’s sole claim to fame.

TONY
What about Hercule Poirot?

FELICITY
Who?

TONY
Detective Poirot? Agatha Christie?

FELICITY
Ah, yes. Weren’t they married?

Tony stops chewing.

TONY
(usual accent)
He sure went quiet after she died.

Victoria enters alone with Felicity’s meal and cutlery.

Tony pockets a truffle, unseen by Felicity.

Victoria puts down her offering. A mixed grill.

FELICITY
I ordered fries. Where are they?

VICTORIA
I’m not sure, I’ll check.

FELICITY
You’d better.

Victoria turns, trips, recovers, hurries out.

TONY
You have to be so short with her?

FELICITY
Would you like to run this show?

TONY
Just trying to domesticate you.
FELICITY
Don’t you have more important things on your mind?

TONY
There ain’t nothing wrong with treating people well. Maybe it’s not exciting enough for you?

FELICITY
What right do you have to lecture me, after what you’ve done! How about showing some respect?

TONY
There’s that assumption again.

FELICITY
We already covered that. Respect!

TONY
You’ve got to earn it. Anyways, do you really want another yes man? I saw the others, those polite guys didn’t do so well. Sure, you tried to hide the yawns, but there you were, up on your throne, always checking your watch. Some were real pretty, but tame. I watched them all, and I learned good.

Felicity reflects.

TONY
Surely you want an exciting finale? (Irish accent)
How about we go out with a bang?

FELICITY
What do you mean?

She adjusts her headset.

FELICITY
(to Jane)
Can you check him again?

JANE (V.O.)
He’s being scanned constantly.

FELICITY
(to Jane)
Are you sure it’s foolproof?
JANE (V.O.)
It’s from Israel.

TONY
(usual accent)
What about a death on live TV?

FELICITY
Yours or mine?

TONY
Both?

Felicity leans over, explores his side of the table.

FELICITY
Typical man, bluffing.

TONY
All hat and no cattle?

FELICITY
You hicks have a term for everything.

TONY
And you city folk just love putting down people you don’t understand.
(formal English accent)
Would you treat me the same way if I spoke like this?
(usual accent)
Why do you always abuse folk? Not everyone’s as strong as you!

FELICITY
Now wait a min --

Tony stands up abruptly.

TONY
Can’t you just leave well enough alone? Sooner or later you’re going to reap what you sow.

FELICITY
Calm down. They all volunteered, nobody was forced to appear.

TONY
Why always go for the extreme?
FELICITY
We all like a bit of excitement!

TONY
One day you’ll get yours.

FELICITY
Surely, that applies more to you?

TONY
Why can’t you be nice like Oprah?

Felicity snorts.

FELICITY
You watch Oprah?

TONY
Ain’t nothing wrong with Oprah, at least she cares about people.

Felicity shakes her head. Tony sits down.

FELICITY
Well, I never.

TONY
That sure is obvious.

FLASHBACK - INT. OFFICE - DAY

A lush office is furnished with an oak desk, straddled by a leather high back chair and a cheap office chair.

Behind the desk is Dick, hypnotized by his computer.

The door opens. In glides Felicity, sits down.

DICK
Ever heard of knocking?

FELICITY
The usual please.

Dick turns round, fills a glass with Tequila, gives her it.

DICK
I won’t sugar coat it: we don’t have the money for your finale.
FELICITY
Dick, I need this. Don’t cut me off at the knees, we go back too far.

DICK
It’s not my call. Carol just won’t take the risk. A million bucks is still a lot of moola, even today.

FELICITY
Think of the ratings! Jane found a death row killer who can actually speak in complete sentences. It’s never been done before on TV!

DICK
Ever asked yourself why not?

FELICITY
How can you turn down ratings? You of all people! Just give me this one. Just one more chance.

DICK
Sorry, kid, it’s not up to me.

FELICITY
What if I can get the ratings without paying the ransom?

DICK
That doesn’t sound fair to me.

FELICITY
I can’t afford fair at the moment.

Dick considers.

DICK
No, we would look like cheapskates.

FELICITY
How’s the new blonde? Have you introduced her to your wife?

Dick pauses.

FELICITY
What do I have to lose?

DICK
I’ll talk to Carol.
FELICITY
You’d do the same in my position.

DICK
What’s the deal with your freaky new rating system?

FELICITY
A percentage is a far more accurate way to measure audience approval.

DICK
Don’t you think it’s obvious you’re trying to camouflage low ratings?

FELICITY
You’ve always been jealous of my innovations, have you? Besides, the British have something similar: the Audience Appreciation Index.

DICK
Whatever.

FELICITY
I so appreciate your support.

DICK
The chief police honcho says you need three armed guards in the room at all times. For your own safety.

FELICITY
Don’t be ridiculous. That wall survived eight bullets! One off duty officer is more than enough.

DICK
We’re not negotiating here, I’m telling you. At least three guards at all times, or it’s finito.

FELICITY
That will ruin the sense of danger!

DICK
Don’t push your luck, chica.

Felicity opens her mouth, reconsiders.

FELICITY
How did we ever get to this?
DICK
You got what you wanted, then you dumped me. Remember?

FELICITY
I miss the old days.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Victoria returns with fries. Felicity ignores her.

TONY
(to Felicity)
Thank you, they smell great!
(to Victoria)
You reckon I deserve my freedom?

Victoria looks at Felicity. She nods.

VICTORIA
If you did the crime, then you do the time. That’s the law.

TONY
But what if I didn’t?

VICTORIA
If a jury says you done it, then you done it.

TONY
What if they made a mistake?

VICTORIA
Mistake? This is, like, America! We are the best of the world! If you, ah, that’s not good enough, then --

FELICITY
Yes, thank you, that will be all.

Victoria hurries out.

FELICITY
Tell me about yourself, apart from your obvious charm with the ladies.

TONY
(Welsh accent)
What would you like to know?
FELICITY
For a start, the accents.

TONY
(usual accent)
I like them, always have. Why should we all talk the same? Variety is the spice of life.

FELICITY
You have a photographic memory.

TONY
I’m pretty good with faces.

He caresses his poker chip, turns it over and over.

FELICITY
Is that why you became a gambler?

TONY
I ain’t no gambler.

FELICITY
I’m sorry?

TONY
Gamblers play games they can’t win.

FELICITY
And this isn’t you because ... ?

TONY
I only played blackjack and poker.

FELICITY
Counting cards?

TONY
In blackjack, sure.

Felicity notices the wall has fogged up. One of her plates rests too close. She wipes the wall clear with a napkin.

TONY
Getting steamed up over me already?

FELICITY
How long have you played blackjack?

TONY
I gave that up years ago. Boring, and too hard playing hide and seek.
FELICITY
What?

TONY
If you win regular, you’re banned.

FELICITY
Surely, they can’t do that.

TONY
It’s private property, so they can and do. Except in Atlantic City.

FELICITY
That’s not fair! Why can’t anyone count cards if they want to?

TONY
Yes indeedy! Casinos just love it when people try card counting.

Felicity frowns.

TONY
Most people who try counting get it wrong, and lose more money than usual. But a few can and do win, so the casinos ban them. No point giving money away if they don’t have to. And they don’t have to.

FELICITY
Sounds like they can’t lose.

TONY
Now you’re getting it.
(stretches)
Enough of cards. Just hearing about playing cards is almost as much fun as ... reality TV.

FELICITY
We’ll discuss whatever I want us to discuss. I’m running this show, ok?

TONY
Sure ... for now.

FELICITY
What do you mean by that?
TONY
You’d prefer I make an effort to keep things kinda interesting?

Felicity nods.

TONY
Just checking.

FELICITY
Why do they let you win at poker?

TONY
You don’t play against the casino. so they don’t care who wins.

FELICITY
How do they make money out of that?

TONY
They take a piece of every pot, or hourly fees from all the players.

FELICITY
Do you count cards at poker?

Tony snickers.

TONY
Mostly, I watch the other players. At the highest levels, it’s all about reading people and disguising your play. The cards hardly matter.

FELICITY
Don’t be ridiculous!

TONY
In the long run, the cards even out, but the money always ends up with the same people.

FELICITY
Really? So skill does count.

TONY
You’ve got to study your opponents. Watch how they play a strong hand, a weak hand, how they mix it up.

Tony drops his poker chip, retrieves it.
TONY
Most players have tells, little habits that tell you what cards they have. One player always gets nervous when he’s strong. Another scratches his ear when he has nothing. You gotta look and learn.

FELICITY
There’s more to this than I imagined.

TONY
It’s endlessly fascinating. If you spot their tells, then it’s pretty much free money. It’s like seeing their cards. Of course, you gotta mix up your own play so they can’t figure you out. Works both ways. Another thing. If you look around the table and can’t see the sucker, it’s you. Change tables. Now.

He stares at her like a laser.

FELICITY
Where do you play?

TONY
Friends set up games with whales, high rollers who can’t play. It’s amazing how many are willing to lose four or five figures a night.

FELICITY
Thousands of dollars a night?

TONY
It’s only money. Play a few times a week, you can almost live on it.

FELICITY
Only money? I’m obviously in the wrong business. Aren’t you worried no one will play you after tonight?

TONY
If ... I mean, when I get out of here, there will be twice as many want to take a crack at me. There’s never any shortage of rich kids willing to put Daddy’s money where their mouth is. It’s an expensive lesson, but I believe in education.
FELICITY
Do you play regular hours?

TONY
I hate playing indoors. Nothing beats the freedom of being out in nature. I make what I need and move on. Sometimes I take the odd job, gardening, maybe. I’ve travelled around Mexico and the South West.

He pronounces Mexico with an authentic accent.

FELICITY
Do you speak Spanish?

TONY
Un poco solamente.

FELICITY
What does that mean?

TONY
A little. Enough to get around.

FELICITY
Where have you been?

TONY
Here and there ... Santa Fe, Tuscon, Lake Havasu City, Siuti --

Felicity startles.

TONY
You know it?

FELICITY
No, I thought you said something else.

He watches her. She turns away.

TONY
I had to keep moving, people thought I was cheating. I threw hands to put them off, but that only delayed things. Sometimes I ended up at the wrong end of a gun.

FELICITY
Couldn’t you call the police?
TONY
Sometimes they were the police.
Even south of the border, a forty four Magnum beats four aces.

FELICITY
How did you end up here?

TONY
Safer. Nobody cares when I win.

Felicity stares at him.

FELICITY
Do you have anyone special?

He clams up.

FELICITY
Hmmm?

TONY
Not no more.

FELICITY
What happened?

Tony resists the tears.

FLASHBACK - EXT. BEACH - DAY

UNKNOWN MAN’S POV:

A man frolics in the surf, face unseen. He splashes LINDA, attractive, Hispanic, playful, well built, a decade older. The sun reveals the years have been kind to her.

She giggles, skips away from the water. He chases. They collapse onto towels at the foot of a sand dune.

He gazes into her eyes, caresses her face. She melts.

He glances away. His other hand searches under a crumpled polo shirt. It returns with a hidden prize.

His hand leaves her face. She opens her eyes.

His other hand unfolds, reveals a small open box containing an engagement ring.

She swoons, opens her mouth. He presses a finger to her lips. She smiles, they embrace, kiss passionately.
They part, lost in each other, oblivious to the world.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

FELICITY
My viewers would like to know.

TONY
Maybe I’ll tell you later.

FELICITY
Maybe you’ll tell us now.

TONY
Don’t rush me. Remember how you felt when your mom left you?

His words cut like a knife. Both take a moment to recover.

She checks her watch.

FELICITY
Let’s hope those skills of yours are in good condition tonight. This is the biggest gamble of your life.

TONY
You specialize in stating the obvious? Why don’t you tell us all something about your past?

Her face sours.

TONY
You’re not so pure. How’d you get those debts? Not exactly popular, neither. Skeletons in the closet? You’ve got an Indian burial ground.

FELICITY
What do you --

TONY
White Trash TV Queen.

FELICITY
I’m not going to dignify that garbage with a comment.

TONY
It was a great read. Yes indeedy!
FELICITY
Do you really think I bothered?

TONY
It was way more fun than your own effort. That just made me dizzy.

FELICITY
Dizzy?

TONY
Apache chopper has less spin. Why fight the truth? We all know it. You live off pain and suffering!

FELICITY
Not this again. You’re boring me!

TONY
But you don’t have to abuse them! They can’t all handle it. You never wondered why you’re so unpopular?

FELICITY
All my shows are amongst the highest rated in TV history.

TONY
Some of the early ones, maybe.

FELICITY
Why do you keep on about it? Enough already! Have another chocolate.

Tony reviews the range. He grabs one, unwraps, devours it.

TONY
Not bad. You should try one.

His right hand moves to his jacket pocket.

FELICITY
I’m not big on chocolate.

TONY
Please, these are real good.

She shakes her head.

TONY
I’m afraid I got to insist.

Tony lobs something up in the air, towards top of the wall.
It stretches up towards the gap just below the ceiling.

    JANE (V.O.)
    Get down! Under the table!

It crosses over the gap above the wall, onto the other side.
Felicity SCREAMS, hides under the table.
Tony tracks the descent ... falling ... falling ...
Felicity closes her eyes.
It lands on the floor, bounces, hits Felicity’s nose. She startles, opens her eyes, rotates her head to identify it.

    JANE (V.O.)
    Get away, as far as you can!

Felicity turns, scurries away on her hands and knees. She knocks over her purse on the floor. The contents scatter.
She curls into the fetal position, hands over her ears.
Silence.
She unravels, turns towards the projectile.
She inches forward, investigates up close.
A chocolate truffle.

    TONY
    You really have to try one.

    FELICITY
    You bastard, you vicious bastard!

Felicity rubs her grazed knees, winces.

    TONY
    I only offered you a truffle.

    FELICITY
    You’re lucky you’re stuck behind that wall, however big you are!

She scours the floor, repacks her purse.

    TONY
    Not much fun being scared, is it?
INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Dick and Jane are glued to the monitors.

He checks a large digital panel below. Green figures: 75%.

DICK
This homie rocks! If he wins tonight, I’m offering him a job.

Jane paces back and forth.

DICK
Don’t worry, I’ve got a little surprise in store for Felicity.

JANE
This is important, don’t interfere!

DICK
Chill out, it’s going to send ratings through the roof! You’ll be well pleased, just wait and see.

Jane isn’t convinced.

DICK
Listen ... why don’t you drop by after we’re done? I could show you a few things. After all, I made Felicity the success she is today.

JANE
I can’t, I’m busy.

A BUSTY BLONDE, late 20s, saunters by, winks at Dick.

DICK
You can lead a horse to water ...

He slides off, follows the blonde.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TONY
What do you want in a man?

FELICITY
What do you care?
TONY
Maybe my fate depends on knowing?

She scrutinizes his face.

FELICITY
The usual, I suppose. Strong, good looking, knows how to move, can hold up his end of a conversation.

TONY
Just don’t say you want a nice guy.

FELICITY
I think I’ve figured that out.

TONY
Well meaning mamas tell their sons to be nice and kind, and they’ll get the gal. It just ain’t true.

FELICITY
I don’t want a selfish drunkard!

TONY
Sure, but you do like a bit of danger. You might protest loudly, but you’re always attracted to bad boys. Just can’t resist that edge.

FELICITY
Lucky for you, isn’t it?

TONY
Me? I’m a pussy cat.

FELICITY
That’s not what the files say.

JANE (V.O.)
This is standard 'pick up' stuff.

FELICITY
(to Jane)
What?

JANE (V.O.)
They teach this on the Internet.

FELICITY
Do they just?
JANE (V.O.)
He’s trying to seduce you.

FELICITY
No kidding, Sherlock.

JANE (V.O.)
I’m just telling you.

FELICITY
I can look after myself, thank you.

She clears her throat.

FELICITY
My assistant tells me you can learn this patter on the Internet.

TONY
Sure, you can, yes indeedy! Books, too. Heck, you can even do courses!

FELICITY
Don’t just recite your lines at me!

TONY
No, listen. Most men fall for that nice guy stuff, ok? So they strike out with women, and women miss out, too. I was the same – hopeless.

FELICITY
What? With those baby blues?

TONY
I made all the usual mistakes. Always complimenting a girl, doing anything she asked. Always buying her things, being real nice.

FELICITY
And?

TONY
Let’s just be friends. I thought it was tattooed on my forehead. Howdy, my name is Tony and I’ll be your doormat for as long as you like. Ask me for anything, I’ll buy it.

Felicity can’t repress a chuckle.
TONY
I didn’t have a clue. One day, many years ago, after yet another gal yawned in my face, it hit me. Why not learn from someone who does? So I bought an online dating course.

FELICITY
You mean women fall for that stuff?

TONY
It’s not about technique, it’s about learning what women are really attracted to. If you don’t know that, and you’re not pretty or rich, or both, just stay at home.

FELICITY
Now you have women queuing up?

TONY
Not quite, but I get a helluva lot more interest than I used to. I’ll never understand women, but a little bit of know-how goes a long way. Wouldn’t you rather a guy had half a clue for a change?

Felicity plays with her hair.

FELICITY
Go on.

TONY
Guys always think it’s easy for pretty women. They can have any man they want. But I’ve talked to a few, they say different. How do you deal with all the clueless, coming on to you like moths to the flame?

FELICITY
It’s not easy.

TONY
Guys like what they see and don’t care about the rest. How do you cope? You put up a bitch shield --

FELICITY
A what? Are you calling me a bitch?
TONY
Hold your horses. Pretty women
don’t have time to politely decline
the attention of every chump, so they put on this act of being a bitch, so guys won’t even approach. Just a look will do, they’ll slink away without even trying. Sure beats having the same conversation with each loser that shows up.

FELICITY
Did you check with any real women?

TONY
Casino waitresses. They have to
deal with hell. Smile and act real friendly, no matter how big a bozo is ogling their titties.

FELICITY
Language please.

TONY
From what I see, all she really wants is a guy who’ll lift his gaze from her titties, I mean, rack, I mean, chest, and look her in the eye. Someone who wants to know who’s behind that pretty face and who lives in that luscious body.

Felicity leans forward.

TONY
Ain’t that what we all want? Someone who’s interested in who we are, not just what we look like?

Felicity is spellbound.

TONY
It’s even worse if you’re famous - everyone wants a piece. How can you tell if someone wants to get to know you, or use you? Beats the heck out of me. I don’t envy you.

Felicity slides off a shoe, glides a stockinged foot forward under the table. She bumps it against the wall, startles.
FELICITY
So, Mr Know It All, what are you looking for in a woman?

TONY
Big titties and a trust account.

He chortles.

TONY
I wouldn’t knock either of them, but I’m a sucker for maturity. The pretty young things are nice for a while, great for your confidence, but they haven’t lived. There ain’t no bigger turn on than maturity.

FELICITY
That’s an uncommon view.

TONY
Even the biggest stud can only spend so long in the sack. Other things matter. Life experience, knowing how to deal with emotions. Youngsters just ain’t lived long enough. It ain’t their fault. I was the same when I was young and cocky. Now I’m just cocky.

FLASHBACK - INT. BAR - NIGHT
A noisy fashionable crowd. Felicity sits beside Dick.
He types on his cell phone. She writes with a fountain pen.
A Tequila bottle sits between them. She sips from a glass.
Jane touches her shoulder.

JANE
Excuse me, are you Felicity? On TV?

FELICITY
Yes, that’s right. And you are ...?

JANE
I’ve always wanted to meet you!

FELICITY
My compliments on your good taste.
This is Dick, my ... colleague.
DICK
Hi, I’m in charge of her show.

He extends his hand to Jane. She shakes it.

JANE
(to Felicity)
Could you please sign my notebook?

FELICITY
Of course, I’d be happy to. What would you like me to write?

She takes the notebook.
Jane is fascinated by the fountain pen.

JANE
To Jane. From Felicity.

FELICITY
That’s all?

Jane nods. Felicity signs it. Dick pockets his phone.

JANE
Thank you!

She gawks at Felicity. Dick checks out Jane’s body.

JANE
What’s your next show?

FELICITY
Sorry, I can’t share that just yet.

JANE
Oh.

FELICITY
You’re not with Bob, are you?

JANE
Bob?

Felicity searches her face.

FELICITY
Sorry, I’m a little paranoid. This business is so competitive, people are always out to steal my ideas.
JANE
I don’t work in TV.

FELICITY
No?

JANE
I’ve always wanted to, but ...

FELICITY
But what?

JANE
I’m ...

FELICITY
Don’t let being shy stop you! There are many things to do behind the scenes that are just as important as being out in the limelight.

Dick sighs.

JANE
Really?

FELICITY
Are you a good organizer?

Jane nods.

FELICITY
Punctual?

Another nod.

FELICITY
Willing to get up early?

JANE
I’ve always been an early riser.

FELICITY
Married?

JANE
Not any more.

FELICITY
I’ve been looking for a good PA.
JANE
PA?

FELICITY
Personal Assistant.

Jane beams.

Felicity digs into her purse, extracts a business card.

FELICITY
If you want to learn from the best, call my office for an interview.

JANE
Thank you!

DICK
The hours will be very long.

Felicity glares at him.

FELICITY
It’s hard but rewarding. There’s no better way to get into showbiz.

She hands Jane her card. She takes it, opens her purse.

She removes a small business card folder, rearranges several cards to make room. She inserts Felicity’s card.

DICK
You really are organized.

JANE
Alphabetical order, easier to find.

Felicity looks her up and down.

FELICITY
What’s your name?

JANE
Jane.

FELICITY
You’ll have to dress better if you work for me. Do you understand?

Jane nods, adjusts her collar, studies Felicity’s clothes.
FELICITY
This could be your lucky day. I look forward to getting your call.

DICK
It was a pleasure to meet you.

Felicity and Dick both admire Jane as she leaves.

DICK
Hiring another stranger?

FELICITY
Chasing another filly?

DICK
And you’re not?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

JANE (V.O.)
Ratings are sixty five percent.

FELICITY
Interesting.

JANE (V.O.)
Tell him.

FELICITY
All in my own good time.

TONY
You gonna tell me how I’m doing?

FELICITY
Soon. Don’t you love the mystery?

TONY
You’re playing with my life!

FELICITY
Relax, you’ve got over an hour.

TONY
I sure hope there’s a hell --

The transparent wall HUMS. A vertical gap appears in the middle. The two wall sections glide apart on tracks.

Tony and Felicity stare at each other.
FELICITY (whispers to Jane) 
What’s happening?

JANE (V.O.) 
I’m checking.

Tony looks behind Felicity, into the shadows.

TONY 
This another gimmick? I head over your side and get lead poisoning?

He explores the sides of the room, the wall tracks.

TONY 
Any shooters around the corner? It’s a trap, ain’t it?

Felicity is motionless. Tony leans forward.

TONY 
Or maybe not.

FELICITY 
Yes ... it’s a trap.

TONY 
Funny how things change.

FELICITY (to Jane) 
Where the hell is security?

JANE (V.O.) 
I don’t know. We’re looking.

FELICITY 
What do you mean, you don’t know?

TONY 
I’ve always wondered what it’s like on the right side of the tracks.

He springs up. She jumps.

He ambles over to her side of the room.

TONY 
This could get real interesting.
FELICITY
Don’t do anything stupid.

TONY
Mercy don’t live on death row.

She shudders.

TONY
Still don’t care if I done it?

Felicity tries to speak but cannot.

TONY
Huh?

FELICITY
(to Jane)
Call the geek.

JANE (V.O.)
Steven?

FELICITY
(to Jane)
Call him!

Tony faces her. Moves closer. He looks into her eyes.

JANE (V.O.)
He wants to be paid double.

FELICITY
Give it to him, for God’s sake!
After he’s closed it, fire him.

Tony moves in closer. Felicity strains her neck backwards.

JANE (V.O.)
He’s watching. Now he wants triple.

FELICITY
Just pay him!

TONY
It ain’t polite to be on the phone when somebody wants to talk to you.

His hand advances, removes her headset, puts it on.

TONY
Houston, do we have contact?

He looks away.
TONY
Anybody there? Maybe they’ve deserted? Or have you just been talking to yourself? I guess it beats being lonely. What do you think? I’m talking to you, lady.

FELICITY
I don’t know.

TONY
When I came in, I noticed you were dressed real ... conservative. Was that for me? Are you dessert?

He looks her up and down. She looks away.

He walks behind her. Stops.

He gets out a handkerchief, wipes his chin.

She twists around. She sees his handkerchief, turns back.

Her eyes fall on her plate. On her steak knife.

TONY
Not quite so confident now, are you? If I didn’t know any better, I’d say you were almost ... scared.

He takes a sniff of her neck.

TONY
Hmmm.

His hands explore her hair.

TONY
Oops, missed a bit. I never knew it was dyed! Sorry, I suppose you wanted to keep that a secret.

Her head quivers.

TONY
Just for fun, let’s assume I am a murderer. Can you give me one good reason why I should let you go?

FELICITY
Millions of people would miss me!
TONY
Ha! Think that’s going to save you?

FELICITY
If you hurt me, you die.

TONY
Having seen the other fellas on your show, I’m not sure I’m an odds on favorite to get pardoned. So what difference does it make?

FELICITY
I’ll pay you.

TONY
Money. You think you can buy anything. How much use is a stash of cash without a pardon?

FELICITY
You’ve got it.

TONY
As easy as that? I’d love to believe you, but I suspect your offer is null and void due to you being in fear for your life.

She closes her eyes.

TONY
We found that one good reason yet?

He leans forward until his head is in line with hers.

FELICITY
Have mercy, for God’s sake. Surely you don’t get pleasure from this?

TONY
It ain’t nothing to do with pleasure. You stand accused of being selfish beyond belief. You profit by making misery for others, giving no thought to anyone but yourself. How do you plead?

FELICITY
My daughter!
TONY
Your daughter?

FELICITY
Who would look after her if I ... Die?

She swallows.

TONY
Yes, Naomi would lose a Mom. But would she really be any worse off?

She turns, looks him in the eye.

FELICITY
I love her more than life itself! I’ve sacrificed repeatedly for her.

TONY
Have you? Like her schooling?

She turns away.

FELICITY
What about her schooling?

TONY
Why didn’t you change schools?

FELICITY
Running from problems doesn’t help.

Her words distract him. He reflects, recovers.

TONY
You could have easily moved her somewhere nicer. Even her teachers said so. Why didn’t you?

She fiddles with her fingers. Her eyes return to the knife.

TONY
I didn’t quite hear that. Do share.

FELICITY
I didn’t have the money.

TONY
That’s not what I read.
FELICITY
The others were a great deal more expensive. I’m not made of money.

TONY
No, of course you’re not. We can all relate to that.

He lifts her left arm.

TONY
That’s a Cartier, isn’t it?

FELICITY
Quality always pays for itself.

TONY
Quality ... or luxury? Just out of interest, what car do you drive?

FELICITY
That’s got nothing to do with it.

TONY
No? Toyota hatchback? Little old VW? Late model Mercedes, ain’t it?

FELICITY
I’ve got to look the part, image is important in this business!

TONY
More important than her education?

FELICITY
That’s what pays for her education!

TONY
How selfless. She thank you for making her stay and face the music?

She rocks back and forth on her chair.

TONY
How about we ask the audience?

He stares directly into a camera.

TONY
What do you good folks reckon?

Felicity bursts forward towards the knife.
Tony, too late to catch her arm, grabs her around the chest, like a car seat belt in a crash. She recoils, winded.

TONY
What were you going to do with that? You ain’t got the balls!

He reaches past her, lifts the knife. He admires its edge.

TONY
Now where were we? Ah, yes, the audience. Think we should ask them?

Felicity rubs her ribs, winces.

TONY
That’s a yes?

She shakes her head. He wipes the knife on his handkerchief.

TONY
I thought this was their show?

His hands move to her neck. He gazes straight ahead.

TONY
Not keen? Alright. I’ll reserve my final judgment ... for a while.

He slides the knife into a pocket.

TONY
I am getting really hot. You know what would help? A beer. Not one of them fancy imported beers, just a good old fashioned American beer. You know ... with a twist off cap.

He holds her head still with both hands. She trembles.

TONY
I wonder what that lover boy singer would give to be here right now? A chance at revenge. Should I do it? Strike a blow for artistic dignity?

A single SOB escapes her.

TONY
Trouble is, somebody might be watching. It probably wouldn’t improve my chances tonight.

She shakes her head once.
TONY
You’re really tense, you should take some time off after the show. Maybe a year or two, away from TV.

He puts the headset onto the table, returns to his chair.
She picks up the headset, drops it, puts it onto her ear.

FELICITY
What the hell is taking so long?

JANE (V.O.)
I’ll check with Steven.

Tony lobs the knife onto Felicity’s plate. She startles.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

DICK
Listen up, peeps. If any of you were involved with that wall coming down, you’re outta here. Got it?

Two engineers look up, stare, return to their work.
Dick turns away, struggles to conceal a smile. Jane watches.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TONY
Was that exciting enough? You love me yet? Even just a little bit?

Felicity ignores him, still trembling.

TONY
I believe your words were ... make it interesting, make it exciting.

She refills her glass, quaffs it.

TONY
What say I pay you?

FELICITY
What?

TONY
You’re offering to buy my freedom, how about I pay you back?
(New Jersey accent)
I’ll make you a real good offer.

FELICITY
It wouldn’t make much of a show, would it? One law for the rich, another for the poor?

TONY
(usual accent)
Ain’t that what you’re offering? A ‘Get Out of Jail Free’ card?
Anyways, I can clear my name later. Kind of hard to do if I’m dead.

The wall HUMS. CLICK. The two halves move together.

TONY
Parting is such sweet sorrow.

He waves at Felicity. The wall closes.

FELICITY
(to Jane)
Fire that mercenary and don’t pay him a cent.

JANE (V.O.)
You can’t.

FELICITY
It’s my show, I’ll do what I want.

JANE (V.O.)
It’s not legal.

FELICITY
What are you talking about? We never signed anything, and ... a verbal contract isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.

JANE (V.O.)
All contracts are verbal. You mean an oral contract.

FELICITY
What?

JANE (V.O.)
The proper term is oral contract.
FELICITY
Aren’t you just full of surprises?

JANE (V.O.)
An oral contract is just as valid as a written one. We have to pay.

FELICITY
Even though he was blackmailing me?

JANE (V.O.)
Yes.

FELICITY
I’m not convinced. I’ll check with our legal team after the show.

She and Tony lock eyes.

FELICITY
(to Jane)
Reopen the wall.

JANE (V.O.)
What?

FELICITY
You heard.

JANE (V.O.)
I’ll check with Dick.

FELICITY
Just do it.

She empties her glass.

JANE (V.O.)
Dick likes it. Ratings are up to seventy two percent.

The wall HUMS. It separates at the middle, parts.

TONY
Oh, my dear, it’s been so long!

FELICITY
Do you take anything seriously?

TONY
Yeah. What kind of system is it when only the rich can buy justice?
FELICITY
You want government to control access to legal counsel?

TONY
No, but I can see what don’t work! How come you can buy my freedom?

FELICITY
The state is short on prison space and funds. I offered to help out.

TONY
Bet the cops on the beat love that.

FELICITY
The cops on the beat can’t see the big picture. The state is close to bankruptcy. Do you the total cost for each inmate on death row?

TONY
Can’t say I do.

FELICITY
Over a million dollars.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT
Carol, 50s, gray hair, quietly confident, RAPS on the door. Dick looks up. She motions to him. He wanders over.

CAROL
What happened with that wall?

DICK
We’re checking into it.

CAROL
It has your fingerprints all over.

DICK
Why would I do something like that?

CAROL
Let me count the reasons ... 

DICK
That’s crazy, I love that girl.
CAROL
It’s not easy for a woman in this game. I was in her position once.

DICK
She might be in your position soon.

CAROL
If anything happens to her, it’s on your watch. Remember that.

Dick is silent. Carol leaves.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Tony bends under the table to his right, returns with a green abalone decorated fountain pen.

TONY
Will you look at this? They sure made things to last way back when.

FELICITY
Where did you get that?

TONY
Under the table.

FELICITY
It must have fallen from my purse.

TONY
Finders keepers.

FELICITY
It’s mine.

TONY
Prove it.

FELICITY
AJM. My grandmother’s initials on the bottom. Anne Julie Macintosh.

Tony checks.

TONY
Well, I’ll be a ... 

FELICITY
The case is abalone, from New Zealand. She had relatives there.
TONY
Maybe you do, too?

She puts her hand out. Tony gives it up.

FELICITY
I wondered where this got to. I haven’t seen this in ages.

Tony lets out a CRY, looks up at the ceiling.

FELICITY
What’s wrong?

TONY
Sorry, this whole thing is getting to me. Have you ever looked death in the face, up close and personal?

Felicity contracts.

TONY
It ain’t easy. I try to avoid it, but you can’t hide forever. Sooner or later, it sneaks up on you.

FELICITY
I’ll take your word for it.

TONY
You know what it’s like on death row? It ain’t pretty. Solitary mostly, only see other people an hour a day. It’s a nightmare.

FELICITY
You should have thought of that before you committed murder.

TONY
You want me to continue?

FELICITY
Please.

TONY
The cell is tiny, makes some go crazy. You distract yourself as much as you can, reading, planning, Internet if you can swing it.
FELICITY
On death row?

TONY
Sure, it’s banned, but if you have the money. Then you’ve got the uncertainty. You never know when.

FELICITY
How long usually, before ... ?

TONY
Don’t you know this stuff already?

FELICITY
For the audience, please.

TONY
It can take years. Most get several appeals, some wait for decades. Others die waiting their turn.

FELICITY
You appealed, of course.

TONY
Tried several times. Didn’t make no difference. Not allowed any more.

FELICITY
So tell the audience when ...

Tony tears up.

TONY
Next month.

They share the silence.

FELICITY
Do you believe in God?

TONY
I don’t know. I’d sure like to. I’m no different from anyone else. I’d like to meet my maker, but not yet.

Felicity softens. She points the pen at him.

FELICITY
Have you ever used one of these?

Tony digs in his jacket, extracts a royal blue fountain pen. Writes on the menu. Elegant strokes from another age.
"Upset, upset, read all about it. Pen beats Sword!"

She smiles. He extracts his handkerchief, dries his eyes.

FELICITY
How did you get it past security?

TONY
I was real devious. I showed it to them. Guess they didn’t expect the wall to come down. I was thinking of bringing a sword, but ...

Felicity meets his eyes. She returns to his writing.

FELICITY
Did you practice that in prison?

TONY
Sure is amazing what you can do with a little time on your hands.

FELICITY
Time. I remember that. There isn’t so much of it in my game. Everyone is always busy and overworked.

TONY
People wonder why they get sick and marriages break up. Nobody takes the time any more to slow down and enjoy life. Kind of old fashioned.

Victoria and guard return. She clears away dinner. Tony eyes the guard’s holstered Glock 23.

TONY
Compliments to the chef.

FELICITY
(to the guard)
I’ll deal with you later.

Victoria and the guard leave.

FELICITY
I almost envy you, with all that time. No meetings, no deadlines, no stress worrying if your job --

TONY
Anytime you want to trade places.
FELICITY
I need to slow down. I hardly see Naomi these days.

TONY
Nobody’s gonna do it for you.

Tony admires his pen.

TONY
Older than me, still writes fine.

FELICITY
Mine’s an antique.

TONY
Wait, there’s something wrong here. We ain’t fighting no more!

Felicity smiles.

TONY
You’re not all bad, you know that?

FELICITY
Is that an attempt at a compliment?

TONY
Fancy sharing an interest in these old relics. I’d never have guessed you were into penology.

FELICITY
I’ve always loved them.

Tony chuckles.

FELICITY
Why is that funny?

TONY
Penology is about how best to deal with crime and criminals.

An upbeat new tune lightens the mood.

FELICITY
We used to play this when I was a girl. It always takes me back.

TONY
Happier days?
FELICITY
Simpler days.

Tony rises, extends his hand towards her.

TONY
May I have the pleasure, ma’am?

Felicity stands, takes his hand.

He guides her away from the table. They dance. He leads with confidence, spins her gently, pulls her in. She sighs.

TONY
Not bad.

He whispers in her ear. She smiles.

Victoria enters, clears away dinner.

JANE (V.O.)
There’s a problem.

FELICITY
Not now.

JANE (V.O.)
Yes, now.

Felicity stops, turns away from Tony.

FELICITY
Can’t you see what’s happening?

JANE (V.O.)
But --

Felicity takes off the headset, throws it onto the table.

Tony takes her in his arms, leads her around the floor.

TONY
Now, where were we?

He whispers to her head on. He moves closer. Her eyes widen.

He moves closer. Stops dancing. She looks at his lips. He pauses, smiles, whisks her off in another direction.

She slaps his back, closes her eyes, relaxes.
FLASHBACK - INT. JAIL - NIGHT

A fluorescent ceiling light barely illuminates a dingy cell.

A plain wooden table separates Tony from a male INTERVIEWER, serious, mid 40s, plainly dressed. Both are seated.

An armed GUARD watches. A mounted video camera records.

INTERVIEWER
Why do you want to be on the show?

TONY
I have this unnatural desire to
live a little longer. Yes indeedy.

INTERVIEWER
Anything else?

TONY
I want to know if she can handle a
guy who doesn’t roll over and beg.
One who might be as smart as her.

INTERVIEWER
That would be you?

TONY
You’re pretty smart, yourself!

INTERVIEWER
Why would Felicity choose you?

TONY
I’ve got something upstairs. I’m
not your typical dumb jailbird. She
could use a challenge instead of
the usual doormats. Keep things
interesting, good for ratings.

INTERVIEWER
Anything else?

TONY
Sure there is. I prefer older
women. The young gals look good,
but they get boring real quick.
They’re all the same after a while.
No depth. Women of a certain ...
maturity, they’ve lived a little,
been round the block a few times.

He addresses the video camera.
TONY
That’s sexy. That’s what I want.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
A new tune. Felicity rests her head on Tony’s shoulder, eyes closed. She moves his hand down to her butt.

He stops, shakes his head.

TONY
It’s way too soon, I can’t do this.

He returns to his chair. Felicity stands alone.

FELICITY
You really need some dance lesson.

She drifts back, sits down, replaces the headset.

FELICITY
So what was so important that it couldn’t wait a few minutes?

JANE (V.O.)
Dick says never remove the headset again. And ...

FELICITY
And?

JANE (V.O.)
Carol won’t pay.

FELICITY
What? Get her on the line.

JANE (V.O.)
She’s in a meeting.

FELICITY
Don’t try that on me. Ge her now.

JANE (V.O.)
She really is in a meeting.

FELICITY
She can’t do that! Not now.

JANE (V.O.)
You have to pay. You can afford it.

Victoria brings vanilla ice cream. She sets it down, leaves.
Felicity picks up her spoon, replaces it on the table.

      JANE (V.O.)
Ratings are forty percent. Do something!

Felicity looks around in a daze.

      TONY
What’s up?

She refills her glass to the brim, takes a gulp.

      FELICITY
Ratings are down to forty percent.

Tony flops back in his chair.

      TONY
I guess nobody wants a happy ending. What’s it gonna take to impress this audience of yours?

Victoria returns, gives Tony two plates of trifle.

      TONY
Thanks.

      FELICITY
What in the world is that?

      TONY
(Cockney accent)
Trifle. The British Empire’s greatest gift to world cuisine.

He admires the feast. Victoria leaves.

      TONY
(usual accent)
Eat up, or it’ll get cold.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Dick studies the ratings meter: 39%. The digits are red.

Victoria tramps in.

      VICTORIA
I was hoping they’d get together.
DICK
Why do you care? You’re her slave!

VICTORIA
She’s under pressure, that’s all.

DICK
Can’t you see she’s using you?

VICTORIA
How would you know? You’re just jealous of all her success!

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Tony grabs a spoon without looking, knocks it to the floor. He reaches down to his right, picks it up, CRIES OUT.

FELICITY
What’s up?

TONY
Nothing much. Just a little love bite I got in a fight.

FELICITY
Our worst drug problem isn’t heroin or cocaine, it’s testosterone.

TONY
I happened to be helping someone!

FELICITY
Did you help him to the hospital?

TONY
I should have helped him to a boxing ring and taught him some moves. He looked at a waitress the wrong way. His timing wasn’t great, the boyfriend was watching.

FELICITY
You men are so possessive.

He takes a mouthful of trifle, savors it.

FELICITY
I’m listening.
TONY
Hold your horses. Whatever happened
to slow down and smell the roses?

FLASHBACK - INT. CASINO - NIGHT
Tony sits at a poker table. Next to him is a tattooed ANGRY
MAN, 30s, and PETER, skinny, mid 40s, bespectacled.

A skimpily clad WAITRESS delivers vodka on the rocks to the
Angry Man. Peter admires her. The male DEALER watches him.

ANGRY MAN
That’s enough, little man.

PETER
What?

The Angry Man rises up, towers over him.

TONY
Leave it, he’s not worth your time.

ANGRY MAN
(eyes still on Peter)
This is between me and him.

TONY
Let it go, he’s no threat.

The Angry Man spins around, slashes at Tony with a knife. He
springs back but gets caught. He YELPS, grabs his right arm.

The Dealer presses the silent alarm button under the table.

ANGRY MAN
Any more helpful advice?

They circle each other.

TONY
I just want to play some poker. A
fast game is a good game, right?

The Angry Man jabs at him. Tony evades the blade.

Two GUARDS appear next to Tony, with tasers drawn.

ANGRY MAN
Sorry, we started without you.

He lunges for one. Both guards fire. Two darts bury
themselves into his torso. He collapses in convulsions.
A guard kicks away the knife. They drag him off.

PETER
You become forever responsible for that which you tame.

FELICITY (PRELAP)
What did you say?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TONY
Made no sense to me, neither.

She sits up straight, puts down her spoon.

TONY
He bought me a drink and we shot the breeze for a while. He was a real strange one, yes indeedy.

FELICITY
Where was this?

TONY
Reno.

FELICITY
What did you say he looked like?

TONY
I didn’t. Average height, pretty weedy, dreadful thick glasses, kinda hopeless look in his eyes.

FELICITY
Did he say anything else unusual?

TONY
Sure, plenty. Mostly from a book called ‘the Little Prince’. It was out there, some weird kid planet hopping, meeting other weird folk.

FELICITY
What was his name?

TONY
Peter. We used to hit the sauna together. He was an awful player, passive and scared. Always hoped for a big win, always booked a (MORE)
TONY (cont’d)
steady loss. Every weekend he gave away his allowance, like clockwork.

FELICITY
Allowance?

TONY
His wife gave him money, he’d just drink and gamble it away.

FELICITY
His wife?

Tony downs another dollop of trifle.

TONY
He didn’t love her, just kinda drifted into it. She fell for him, had money, he didn’t mind. Said his one true love left him as a kid.

FELICITY
That wasn’t my fault! My father got a job here and we had to move!

TONY
You’re kidding me.

She digs into her purse, retrieves a worn copy of ’the Little Prince’. She offers it to Tony. He leafs through it.

TONY
Yep, that’s it. Said you planned to meet up five years later. He showed but she – you – didn’t. After that, he just gave up.

FELICITY
I forgot! Oh, my God, I forgot!

She breaks down. Sobs.

TONY
Hey, lady, it ain’t the end of the world. I got his address.

FELICITY
Where? Where is he?

TONY
He gave me a card. He’s in Dixie.
FELICITY
You mean the South?

TONY
The very same.

FELICITY
You’ve got to tell me.

TONY
You have a little something I’d like, too. Maybe we can all get what we want out of this?

FELICITY
Oh, God, yes!

TONY
What about the ratings?

FELICITY
I’m sure my audience will be ecstatic if I can find him again.

JANE (V.O.)
The network won’t pay, remember?

FELICITY
(to Jane)
We’ll deal with that later.

JANE (V.O.)
But --

FELICITY
(to Jane)
We’ll deal with that later!
(to Tony)
When did you last see him?

TONY
A few years back. Then we split.

FELICITY
Why? What happened?

FLASHBACK - INT. SAUNA - DAY

Tony and Peter are wrapped in towels below the waist.
TONY
Come on, what’ve you got to lose?

PETER
I couldn’t bear it again. She’s twice already broken my heart.

TONY
But you keep saying she’s your soul mate! Ain’t that worth going after?

PETER
I’d rather not risk yet more pain.

TONY
But you’re already miserable!

PETER
My wife treats me very well. She gives me --

TONY
No, she don’t, you’re always saying how she puts you down in public!

PETER
At least I know where I stand.

Tony shakes him by the shoulders.

TONY
Whatever happened to all that ‘better to have loved and lost’ stuff? Do you believe any of it?

PETER
It wouldn’t do any good, she missed our sacred rendezvous. Even if I wanted to, how would I find her?

TONY
There are plenty ways. Why not take your pocket money and hire a PI?

PETER
I couldn’t. They’re shifty and grubby, going through garbage cans.

TONY
I don’t get you. All that romantic talk, poems and stuff, and what do you actually do? Squat! What about that dream wedding of yours?
PETER
Yes, that would be something. The
service at Notre Dame, in the Paris
spring, reception under the --

FELICITY (PRELAP)
Paris? We had planned on Hawaii.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TONY
Yes, that’s right. Paris was the
second honeymoon.

FELICITY
It was Maui, always Maui.

TONY
Sure, the Islands. He was all talk
and no action, so I got tired --

FELICITY
He wouldn’t have forgotten Maui!

TONY
We had put back a few. Anyways, I
got tired of trying to --

FELICITY
Where was his birthmark?

Tony falters.

TONY
Said he had it removed years ago.

FELICITY
Where was the scar?

TONY
The scar was ...

Tony’s eyes flicker around, searching.

FELICITY
Where’s your photographic memory?

TONY
What can I say? You got me.
FELICITY
What? WHAT?
She slaps him across the face, backs off.
His poker chip falls to the floor.
FELICITY
You absolute ...
Tony rubs his face.
TONY
And I’m violent and dangerous?
Felicity snatches her purse, bounds up.
She marches towards the exit, and out of sight.
FELICITY (O.S.)
(to Jane)
Let me out.
JANE (V.O.)
What?
FELICITY (O.S.)
It’s over, I’m done.
JANE (V.O.)
There’s still another half hour.
FELICITY (O.S.)
How dare he do that to me? On live TV! This is my show! It’s over. He spent the last ten minutes lying!
TONY
We’re all liars, and anyone who says otherwise --
FELICITY (O.S.)
I am NOT a liar!
TONY
Never played hard to get?
She reappears.
FELICITY
That’s completely different!
TONY
Did you ever let someone down gently when ... no, scratch that.

FELICITY
Why did you do that? Why?

TONY
Ratings were way down. I gotta do something! I’m sure you’d do the same if you were in my shoes.

FELICITY
You’ve just signed your own death warrant.

She turns back towards the exit.

TONY
You’re bluffing.

FELICITY
You think so?

She turns, rushes towards him. She raises her hands to scratch him. He stands tall. She stops in her tracks.

FELICITY
I’m going to get a ring side seat to watch you fry, and I’m going to enjoy every minute. In fact, I’m going to buy the DVD as well, so I can relive it all in the comfort of my own home, again and again.

TONY
Oh, don’t be like that. It’s just a lovers’ tiff. We still have some time. Quit now, your career’s over. I never figured you’d be a quitter.

She stands immobile, looks at him, the door, back at him.

DICK (V.O.)
This is great! Sure, it was below the belt, but the show must go on! Don’t give him the satisfaction. That’d be mucho unprofessional.

FELICITY
Unprofessional?! Let’s talk about unprofessional, shall we? You try to ruin me while I’m out here live.
DICK (V.O.)
That wasn’t --

FELICITY
No, it never is. Let me guess, priming your new bimbo? The one you’re sleeping with? Aren’t you getting enough sleep at home, Dick?

DICK (V.O.)
Be careful what you’re saying.

FELICITY
Don’t worry, I won’t tell a soul. Dick by name, Dick by nature.

She spins around, strides back towards Tony.

FELICITY
We’re not continuing until you apologize for what you just did.

TONY
Ever hear of the Golden Rule?

FELICITY
I don’t give a shit about any of your folksy homespun good old boy country rules. Apologize! Now!

Silence. She reverses, heads for the exit.

TONY
Sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you.

Felicity stops.

TONY
No, that ain’t true, I did. Listen, lady, you had that coming. Anyways, I reckon it’s good for ratings.

Felicity resumes her departure.

Tony dashes after her, blocks her path.

He gets down on one knee, takes her hand. She rips it away. He clasps his hands together, looks up at her.

TONY
I do hereby solemnly and sincerely apologize for deliberately humiliating you on live TV.
She sniffs.

TONY
Guess you can’t handle someone fighting back. You just want us all to roll over. First sign of any resistance, you scamper away with your tail between your legs.

FELICITY
You don’t sound worried. Why aren’t you worried? You’re on death row.

TONY
I figure you’ll keep going. I read the papers, I ain’t the only one here with something to lose.

FELICITY
Don’t believe everything you read.

TONY
Or see on TV.

JANE (V.O.)
Ratings are eighty four percent.

Felicity makes a beeline for her chair, sits down, checks her watch. She refills her glass, takes a sip.

FELICITY
Ratings are down, you have half an hour. Let’s see you get out of this one! This is your last chance.

FLASHBACK - INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

A large mirror dominates the room, facing a plush high back chair. Enthroned is Felicity.

Her dressing table supports a hyperactive caged blue Macaw, and a half empty bottle of Tequila. She sips from a glass.

Crammed in a corner on a cheap chair is Jane.

Plugged into the wall next to her is Felicity’s cell phone.

FELICITY
Is it fully charged yet?

Jane picks up the phone.
JANE
Five minutes.

FELICITY
When it’s done, put it in the box.

Jane examines the phone.

Felicity applies her make up.

FELICITY
In the box.

Jane nods, puts down the phone.

FELICITY
Don’t be so nervous. It sounds like this one’s still full of life, and has more than enough motivation.

She waves the Tequila bottle at Jane, who shakes her head.

FELICITY
You need to relax a little.

JANE
I need a clear head tonight.

Felicity opens a packet of birdseed.

JANE
I’ll do that.

FELICITY
No, leave it.
(to the bird)
Don’t worry, Antoine, Mommy will be back before you notice I’m gone.

She fills a plate, pops it into the cage.

FELICITY
How did you get to be so beautiful?
(to Jane)
You should buy one. They’re the most loving creatures. So faithful.

Felicity offers her finger to the bird. It scuttles away.

Dick rushes past the door. He stops, pokes his head in.
DICK
Go for gold! We’ll all be watching.

He reaches across, whispers into Felicity’s ear.

DICK
This is your last chance.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Victoria arrives with coffee for Felicity.

TONY
You have any Earl Grey tea please?

VICTORIA
Go get it yourself.

She turns to leave.

FELICITY
What did you say?

VICTORIA
(to Tony)
I’m not getting you anything more after what you just did to her!

TONY
I’m only trying to entertain.

VICTORIA
How dare you treat her like that!

Felicity smiles, settles back in her chair.

TONY
You know how she earns her living?

VICTORIA
She’s Felicity! Everyone knows how good she is. She’s famous!

TONY
Is that all that matters?

VICTORIA
Just cos you never did anything famous in your life, you loser!
TONY
Your logic leaves me speechless.

VICTORIA
I hope they hang you good and --

FELICITY
That’s enough now. Get him the tea.

Victoria fumes, hesitates, storms out.

FELICITY
Another success with the ladies.

Tony ignores her.

FELICITY
How will you be executed?

TONY
Didn’t you look it up already?
Sorry, your female assistant.

FELICITY
She did, but I’m sure our audience would like to hear the details.

TONY
I’m not so sure.

FELICITY
If you please, the execution.

Tony retrieves his poker chip from the floor.

FELICITY
I’m waiting.

He shakes his head.

TONY
Lethal injection, or gas if you have a thing about needles.

FELICITY
What a shame, I thought they were going to fry you up with some grits. Why do they have to take all the fun out of these things?

TONY
You ever seen anyone executed? I did, hope to God I don’t see (MORE)
TONY (cont’d)
another. Talk about cruel and unusual punishment. Yes indeedy.

FELICITY
Killing an innocent person wasn’t?

TONY
Judge not, lest ye be judged. You keep making that assumption.

FELICITY
Didn’t we agree the courts had already settled that?

Victoria returns with a tea tray. It supports an ornate china cup, teapot, bowl of sugar, and jug of milk.

TONY
Thank you again.

She leaves. Tony ladles half a spoonful of sugar into his cup, adds milk. He lifts it towards his mouth.

FELICITY
Don’t take too long, we have one more surprise visit this evening.

Tony stops, cup half way up.

FELICITY
Another guaranteed ‘Get Out of Jail Free’ card for you to earn.

Tony puts the cup down. His hand trembles.

TONY
I’ll see you when you get back.

FELICITY
It’s not optional.

TONY
You go enjoy it for me. I’m not doing any more of your tests.

FELICITY
Not even to save your life?

TONY
You just don’t know when to call it quits. How would you feel if someone you loved was threatened?
Another hypothetical question.

How about your daughter?

What do you mean?

It might grow a little compassion in that empty hole in your chest.

Felicity tears open the Samsung box on the table, extracts a phone, turns it on.

Come on, come on.

It beeps. The screen lights up. She makes a call. No answer. She makes another call. Same result.

What have you done?

Me? I been here all night with you!

She keys another number.

Bast Security, can I help you?

This is Felicity. Can you check my house? I can’t get hold of Naomi!

Sorry, the links are down. We’ll get right onto it when the line’s up again. Might be a while, though.

You’re joking!

No, ma’am. Sorry, ma’am.

She hangs up, puts the phone down. Stands up.
TONY
How long you had your sitter?

FELICITY
What?

TONY
How long you had your sitter?

FELICITY
Three years, maybe four.

TONY
They ever go out unexpectedly?

FELICITY
I expressly forbade it.

TONY
Not never, not even once?

She pauses.

FELICITY
Once, several months ago.

TONY
Maybe this is the second time?

She rocks back and forth on her heels.

TONY
How about we believe that for now?

The phone rings: old fashioned ring tone from decades ago.

INT. SECURITY FIRM - NIGHT

Video screens monitor rooms in Felicity’s house. All but the living room are immaculate, more for show than living in.

A bodybuilding magazine lies open on the desk.

A young SECURITY OPERATOR with a huge belly is on the phone.

FELICITY (V.O.)
Yes?

SECURITY OPERATOR
Is that Felicity?
FELICITY
Yes, yes!

SECURITY OPERATOR
The line’s up again. Your house is empty. A few dirty plates, some clothes, but nobody home.

FELICITY (V.O.)
Have you checked every room?

SECURITY OPERATOR
Yes, ma’am, several times.

CLICK.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Felicity calls another number.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
Hello?

FELICITY
My daughter is missing! I called security but the house is empty!

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
This is a private line. Who is this? How did you get hold --

FELICITY
This is Felicity, and my daughter is missing. You’ve got to find her!

A sigh from the other end of the line.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
How long has she been gone?

FELICITY
I don’t know, I only just called home. Perhaps one or two hours?

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
Have you any idea how many kids go AWOL for a few hours?

FELICITY
You’ve got to go and look for her!
POLICEMAN (V.O.)
There’s really no point looking yet. She’ll probably be home soon.

FELICITY
You wouldn’t say that if it was your child! I have to find her!

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
Please calm down, be patient. Call back if she’s not home by midnight.

FELICITY
What if she’s in danger? All alone? (turns to Tony)
The world’s full of sick people!

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
Do you have a recent photo?

FELICITY
Come and get it as soon as you can.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
I’ll send someone over.

CLICK. Felicity produces a small photo from her purse.

TONY
Sit, she’ll probably show up soon.

FELICITY
Do you have children?

TONY
Not that I know of.

FELICITY
Then why don’t you just shut up!

TONY
Sure, you’re right. Work yourself up into a frenzy, that’ll help.

Felicity drops her head into her hands. She weeps.

TONY
She’ll be ok, you’ll see.

He walks around behind her, massages her neck.
TONY
Tell me about her.

FELICITY
She’s the sweetest thing you ever saw. She has short brown hair and the cutest smile. If anything happened to her, I’d never ...

Tony strokes her hair. She swings around to face him.

FELICITY
If you’re behind this, if she gets hurt, I swear I’ll kill you.

TONY
Relax, they probably went to the movies. You know how kids are.

FELICITY
Why would I trust anything you say?

TONY
Don’t tell me you don’t trust a drifter gambler on death row?

FOOTSTEPS. The guard scampers in.

GUARD
You got that photo I can give them?

Tony steals a glimpse of his gun.

Felicity pushes the photo onto the guard.

FELICITY
I’m coming with you.

GUARD
Sorry, I can’t let you leave.

FELICITY
I can’t do anything here!

Felicity pushes past him. He darts back in front of her. They collide.

Tony gets up.

GUARD
You have to stay here, ma’am.
TONY
Be gentle with her.

She pushes the guard. He grabs her hands, resists.

TONY
Hey, buddy, take it easy.

GUARD
Keep out of this.

TONY
She’s been under a lot of pressure.

The guard turns towards him, unlocks his holster.

GUARD
I’m telling you for the last time!

Tony puts his hands up, sits down.

Felicity grabs the gun. The guard spins around.

FELICITY
On the floor!

GUARD
Listen, lady, I got no beef --

FELICITY
On the floor! Face down!

The guard bends down, does as he’s told.

FELICITY
Turn around, face him. You two should get on well together.

The guard scrambles, turns himself around.

Felicity turns the gun on Tony.

FELICITY
Put your hands in the air.

TONY
That’s such a cliche.

FELICITY
Just do it!

Tony obeys.

The guard hiccups.
Felicity turns to him.

FELICITY
Stop that!

GUARD
I can’t help it.

FELICITY
Where the hell were you when the wall came down?

GUARD
The door jammed, I couldn’t get in.

FELICITY
So you just stood there looking stupid?

GUARD
I asked, but they couldn’t open it.

FELICITY
Who did you ask?

GUARD
Ah ... I can’t remember.

FELICITY
Jesus Christ!

He hiccups.

FELICITY
Do you always do that?

GUARD
Only under stress.

FELICITY
Great. Why didn’t you tell us?

GUARD
I needed the job.

JANE (V.O.)
Give him back the gun.

FELICITY
You can shut up, too.

Another hiccup.
JANE (V.O.)
We’ll get fired!

FELICITY
Ha!

JANE (V.O.)
Somebody could get hurt.

FELICITY
I want my daughter back.

Felicity grabs a look at the table, back at Tony.
She feels for her glass, eyes only leaving him for moments.

DICK (V.O.)
Felicity, this has to stop.

FELICITY
Isn’t it helping ratings?

DICK (V.O.)
The network would be liable.

FELICITY
He’s kidnapped my daughter and nobody is doing anything about it!

DICK (V.O.)
We don’t really know he did it.

FELICITY
Who else could it be?

DICK (V.O.)
Just chill for a moment, will you?

Felicity knocks her drink over, curses. Locates the chair with her other hand, backs into it.

FELICITY
Remember that newsreader who shot herself on live TV?

DICK (V.O.)
You don’t have the cojones!

FELICITY
Not me, you idiot. Him.

Tony inches forward.
DICK (V.O.)
Put the gun down, and I’ll get the cops to start looking pronto.

FELICITY
Why don’t I save everyone the trouble? They’ve already paid for these bullets. How about it?

CAROL (V.O.)
Felicity, you’re doing wonderfully tonight. Just great. I’d like to offer you a new show next season.

FELICITY
After you sabotaged me earlier?

CAROL (V.O.)
We don’t need to pay that money. Ratings are up to eighty seven percent. You did that all by yourself. He’s not worth saving.

FELICITY
Finally, somebody’s talking sense! How do I know you’re not lying?

CAROL (V.O.)
It’s all about ratings, remember?

Tony creeps forward.

FELICITY
(to Tony)
Get back! You don’t want to try me!

Tony steps backwards.

FELICITY
(to Carol)
Very well, you have a deal.

CAROL (V.O.)
Good. I’ll put Jane back --

FELICITY
Wait a minute! You cut me loose when ratings had collapsed!

CAROL (V.O.)
This isn’t the time to argue. Do you want your own show or not?
TONY
Whatever they’re offering, take it.

Felicity racks the gun. A round of ammo flies to the right. She follows its descent to the floor.

JANE (V.O.)
You’ve got what you want, now stop!

FELICITY
Have I?

JANE (V.O.)
Please! I can’t take this any more!

FELICITY
Why am I surrounded by weaklings?

She wrenches off the headset, discards it.

FELICITY
(to Tony)
I don’t believe a single word you’ve said all evening.

She creeps towards him. Sweat drips down his nose.

FELICITY
I think it would be best for all concerned if your sorry life ends right here. Tonight. On live TV.

Another step. The gun is within touching distance.

He appears calm. She shakes.

She brings her right hand up to join the left.

TONY
Don’t forget the safety catch.

FELICITY
Nice try, Glocks don’t have them.

TONY
But you write with a fountain pen!

FELICITY
I’m not going to stand here and argue the merits --

Tony shifts his head to his right, out of the line of fire. His hands swing inwards, converge upon the gun. He swivels to his left, yanking Felicity forward. She SCREAMS.
Tony twists their hands, rotating the gun away from them. Another SHRIEK, she releases it, falls to the floor.

It’s over in a few seconds.

Tony adjusts his grip on the gun, redirects it at her.

**TONY**

On your front. Now.

Felicity breaks into tears.

**TONY**

Do it!

She does it. He aims the gun at the guard.

**TONY**

Get up real slow and put your hands on your head.

No movement.

**GUARD**

Me?

**TONY**

Yes, you, sunshine.

The guard puts his hands on his head, tries to get up.

He fails.

**TONY**

Get up, THEN hands on your head.

The guard scrambles up to face Tony. Raises his hands onto his head. Hiccups.

**TONY**

Someone had to stop her.

The guard nods. Tony’s eyes dart around the room.

His gaze returns to the guard.

**TONY**

I’m going to give you back the gun.

The guard looks confused. The penny drops. He nods.
TONY
Then you take her to her chair.

The guard nods.

Tony lowers the gun. He presses the magazine release catch.

He extracts the magazine, sets it down on the table.

He turns the gun on its left side, racks it. The final cartridge flies into the air. He catches it on the way down.

Another hiccup.

Tony bends down to pick up the cartridge Felicity ejected. His eyes remain fixed on the guard.

He rotates the gun so it points into empty space, holds it out in front. The guard extends both hands, takes it.

He looks at it, up at Tony, points the gun at him.

Tony picks up the magazine, waves it.

He hands it to the guard, then the loose rounds.

The guard lowers the gun. Tony sits down in Felicity’s seat.

The guard pushes the loose rounds into the magazine. He inserts it into the gun, racks it, redirects it at Tony.

They stare at each other. The guard hiccups.

He lowers the gun, returns it to his holster. Eyes Tony.

He helps Felicity to her feet, guides her to the empty seat.

Having swapped seats, Tony towers over her.

He wipes up the spilled drink on the table with a napkin.

He recharges her glass, pushes it across the table.

GUARD
You ok, ma’am?

He hands her the glass. Felicity holds it with both hands.

GUARD
Drink.

She drinks.
Tony bends down, retrieves the headset, slides it onto the table. He places his poker chip into a trouser pocket.

The guard stands behind Felicity. He watches Tony.

Her phone rings. She ignores it. Tony snaps his fingers.

She looks up at him. The phone. Grabs it, answers.

FELICITY
Yes?

SECURITY OPERATOR (V.O.)
Is that Felicity?

FELICITY
Yes. Who is this?

SECURITY OPERATOR (V.O.)
Bast Security. We have some good news for you. They just got home.

FELICITY
Put her on!

SECURITY OPERATOR (V.O.)
We can’t, we’re not at your house.

Felicity hangs up, hits a speed dial number.

NAOMI (V.O.)
Hi, Mom.

FELICITY
Thank God you’re safe! Where were you? I was scared to death.

NAOMI (V.O.)
Why? We went to the movies.

FELICITY
Why didn’t you let me know?

NAOMI (V.O.)
Um ... ’cos you told us to go?

FELICITY
No, I didn’t. When?

NAOMI (V.O.)
You texted me.
FELICITY
When?

NAOMI (V.O.)
(reads)
Why don’t you go see that movie?

Felicity’s arm drops onto a knee.

NAOMI (V.O.)
Mom? Are you still there?

She raises the phone to her ear.

FELICITY
I don’t ... I don’t remember.

She squints at the screen, presses it several times.

Tony reaches across the table for his glass and bottle.

FELICITY
(reads)
Why don’t you go see that movie?

NAOMI (V.O.)
It’s ok, Mom, you’re just getting old. Can I go? There’s ice cream.

FELICITY
I don’t ... ah ... yes, you can go.
I love you, Naomi, you know that?

CLICK. She puts the phone down.

GUARD
You want me to stay with you?

FELICITY
No, I’m alright.

GUARD
You sure? You’ve had quite a shock.

FELICITY
I’m fine. Thank you. Thank you.

She smiles at him. He leaves.

Felicity breaks down.
TONY
It’s ok, she’s safe.

She looks up at him.

TONY
Naomi is fine.

FELICITY
It’s not just that.

TONY
What?

FELICITY
The network broke their promise. They won’t pay for your freedom.

TONY
You’re kidding. No, you’re not.

FELICITY
I’m sorry.

TONY
So this whole evening has been a farce, nothing but a desperate attempt to save your own butt?

FELICITY
They only told me half way though, after we finished dancing!

TONY
I knew something was wrong.

FELICITY
I didn’t mean this to happen! They double crossed me as much as you.

TONY
You on death row, too, huh?

FELICITY
I’d buy you out if I could. But the crash. I don’t have the money.

Tony buries his head in his hands.

TONY
Borrow it.
FELICITY
What?

TONY
I can pay you back. It’ll take a year or two, but with the action I get, you’ll be fine. I’ll pay you fifteen percent a year interest. You’ll even make a nice profit.

FELICITY
Who’s going to lend me a million dollars at my age?

TONY
Mortgage your house.

FELICITY
I can’t do that. There are debts.

TONY
Can’t or won’t?

FELICITY
I don’t have ... many years left. There are too many younger prettier models snapping at my heels. I can’t put my future up for grabs.

TONY
Why does any of this surprise me?

Felicity reaches out to touch him. He moves out of reach.

FELICITY
I’d pay if I had the money.

TONY
Easy to say when you don’t.

FELICITY
I’m sorry, I really am.

TONY
We had something tonight.

Felicity looks away.

FELICITY
You know I can make the money at poker. What’s the problem?

Felicity drains her drink.
Tony sighs.

    TONY
    I’m sorry. You leave me no choice.

    FELICITY
    What?

    TONY
    I don’t need your money no more.

    FELICITY
    Since when?

    TONY
    Since you claimed the fountain pen.

    FELICITY
    Who cares about the fountain pen?

    TONY
    Remember you asked if I had someone special in my life?

    FELICITY
    Yes.

She pours another drink, lifts it to her mouth.

    TONY
    I had someone a couple of years back. A real sweetie. Her name was Linda ... 

Felicity stops. The color drains from her face.

    TONY
    ... and she was from Siuti.

    FELICITY
    I ... I didn’t even know her.

    TONY
    No?

    FELICITY
    You’re trying to confuse me!

    TONY
    At least you still remember her.
FELICITY
I never met her in all my life!

He drops his head, removes a contact lens from his left eye.

FELICITY
What are you ... ?

He removes the other. He produces a pair of black spectacles and a dull green baseball cap from his jacket, dons them.

He looks up at Felicity. His eyes are brown.

TONY
(Australian accent)
Does this jog your memory, mate?

Her head sways. She stops cold.

FLASHBACK - EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Tony limps down the steps, held by two cops. In front, TV reporters, cameras and microphones jostle for position.

He is handcuffed, brown eyed, sports thick black spectacles, a scruffy black beard, sideburns, ponytail.

He wears jeans, a black shirt, a dull green baseball cap.

TONY
(Australian accent)
I told you, she was already dead!
Why would I kill her? If you saw us together, you’d know it wasn’t me!

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TONY
(Australian accent)
Ring any bells?

Felicity shrinks into the chair, grabs the headset.

FELICITY
(to Jane)
Get this wall back up RIGHT NOW!

JANE (V.O.)
Why?
FELICITY
Get me out of here! He’s a killer!

JANE (V.O.)
Is that news?

FELICITY
He’s trying to frame me! That Mexican woman a few years ago.

TONY
(usual accent)
Refresh my memory.

FELICITY
Get me out of here right now!

JANE (V.O.)
Dick says no, it’s great TV.

TONY
Go on, we’re listening.

FELICITY
(to Tony)
I don’t know what you mean!

TONY
She meant so little to you?

Felicity’s eyes dart around the room.

TONY
I’ll explain for the audience. Her name was Linda, and she sure was.

Felicity opens her mouth. Nothing.

TONY
I came around one day and there she was. Dead. Mi carina. I panicked. An old girlfriend a few years back took out a restraining order. She said I hit her, but she was the violent one. Nothing I could do. It don’t look good on your record.

Felicity shakes.

TONY
I knew I’d get blamed, so I split. That sure was a smart idea. Cops said that proved I killed her.
FELICITY
Why the accent?

TONY
Sympathy vote. Didn’t work. So there I was, in the can for killing the woman I loved. Losing Linda was bad enough, but the cops wanted to impress the new Latino DA, so they went for the death penalty.

He pours a drink.

TONY
They found a fountain pen at her place. I told ’em it wasn’t mine, but it had my initials. AJM. Anthony John Morrison. But if it wasn’t mine, whose was it?

He takes a gulp.

TONY
They didn’t care. I been inside for a couple years. That’s a lot of time to think. Lucky for me, I had a little help on the outside.

FELICITY
I’ll get you for this, Dick!

TONY
Why do you assume it’s a man?

FELICITY
But if you were with her, then ...

TONY
Little big sis, God bless her heart. Blood is thicker than tequila. Why do you think she pushed you to do a prison show?

FELICITY
Don’t be stupid, that was my ...

She crumbles.

TONY
Thanks, sis. I can’t ever ...

He raises his glass high, chokes on the emotion.
TONY
It was the fancy abalone fountain pen. Pretty rare, so I researched them. Couldn’t find anything for ages, then some magazine said you used nothing else. So I sent Jane.

JANE (V.O.)
I didn’t want to deceive you. I did like you, just not like that.

FELICITY
Did.

TONY
She checked your pen at the bar, it was the exact same pattern.

FELICITY
Why didn’t you tell the police?

TONY
We did. They weren’t interested.

FELICITY
So you brought it with you today.

TONY
Jane couldn’t just ask you if it was yours. Even if you said yes, there’d be no witnesses. No proof.

FELICITY
Live TV. No editing, no censoring.

TONY
You had to claim it in public. I didn’t know about your grandma, that just sealed the deal.

Felicity gets up, looks around the room.

TONY
You also knew Siuti. You tried to hide it, but you knew it alright. That’s where Linda grew up.

FELICITY
Anyone could know that town.

TONY
She turns to face him.

TONY
I could also tell when you were lying. It ain’t exactly hard.

FELICITY
Nobody can do that.

TONY
You blink real fast whenever you lie. I saw it on TV before, I saw it today. Heck, even Jane saw it.

FELICITY
That won’t be accepted as evidence.

TONY
Maybe, maybe not. Then you slapped me with your left hand. I had to provoke that. Sure, normally you look right handed, but when you’re under stress, you go back to left.

FELICITY
So what?

TONY
Linda had a bruise on the right side of her face. Only a Southpaw could make that by slapping her.

She slips back into the chair.

TONY
You also grabbed the gun with your left hand.

FELICITY
Don’t pretend you planned that.

TONY
I try to avoid the wrong end of a gun. Sooner or later, it ends bad.

FELICITY
I didn’t mean for her to die.

TONY
(earnestly)
I believe you.
FELICITY
I loved her. I just couldn’t stand the thought of losing her.

FLASHBACK - INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Soft lights reveal a bed decorated with floral patterns. Seated on top are Felicity and Linda.

FELICITY
Engaged? When?

LINDA
Last week. I cannot handle the secrecy any more. I am sorry.

She takes Felicity’s hand. Felicity snaps it away.

FELICITY
Let me see a picture.

LINDA
No. It is private.

FELICITY
I love you to bits, you know that! It doesn’t have to be me or him. Why can’t you love both of us?

LINDA
You are joking, yes? That would be a sin. I am sorry, I have decided.

FELICITY
If you leave me, I’ll tell him.

LINDA
You wouldn’t ... would you?

FELICITY
Do you want to risk it?

Linda examines her eyes.

LINDA
It is better to face my shame now rather than forever live in fear.

Felicity gets up.
FELICITY
You’re being so selfish! What we have is special, why give that up?

LINDA
I thought so, too, yet now you threaten me. You call this love?

FELICITY
I need you! I can’t lose you!

LINDA
I am sorry, there is no other way. Felicity chokes up.

LINDA
Please leave.

FELICITY
I won’t leave. I can’t.

Linda jumps up, shakes her by the shoulders.

LINDA
Yes! Leave!

Felicity slaps her on the cheek with her left hand.

Linda bounces off the bed, hits her head on the nightstand.

FELICITY
Linda. Linda?

Blood trickles down Linda’s forehead.

Felicity muffles a cry, scrambles for the door.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

FELICITY
You must be delighted to know I’m going to get locked up.

TONY
You’d think so. All I care about at the moment is reasonable doubt.

FELICITY
What?
TONY
My attorney said it’s enough to set me free. Reasonable doubt.

Felicity shudders.

FELICITY
I’m scared. Will I end up like you?

TONY
It was an accident. You’ll be out in a few years. It’ll be tough, but so are you. Probably sell your story for millions, too.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT
Everybody is riveted to the screens.
Victoria sobs. Jane is ecstatic. Dick turns to her, claps.

DICK
Best supporting actress.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
The guard appears.

GUARD
Sorry, ma’am.

Felicity turns back to Tony, leans over, kisses him. He resists, softens. He holds her face, prolongs the kiss.

The guard taps her on the shoulder. She lets Tony go, pushes herself to her feet. Her eyes linger.

The guard cuffs her, leads her away.

Tony puts on the headset, turns around.

TONY
(to Jane)
You ok, sis?

JANE (V.O.)
I didn’t think she’d push you in!

TONY
What? Oh. It’s over now, forget it.
JANE (V.O.)
How do you feel?

TONY
Like I done fifteen rounds with Marilyn Monroe.

JANE (V.O.)
I didn’t know you were a model.

TONY
Me neither. I had to say something. She get her precious ratings?

JANE (V.O.)
Let me check.

At the exit, Felicity stops, looks back at Tony.

JANE (V.O.)
Ninety three percent.

The guard nudges Felicity. They leave.

FADE OUT.