THE LONELY LINE
PILOT

Written by

Jake Alexander Williams

Jakealexwill@aol.com

EXT. MAIN STREET - 1993 - DAY

Cars drive up and down the bustling street. Kids play tag down the side walk, as their moms chat. A young couple enjoys an ice cream cone. At the end of the street sits the pristine City Hall. It's picture-esc.

Suddenly a bike pulls up to telephone poll. The rider gets off of their bike and takes a flyer out of their backpack. They tape the flier up and ride off.

The flier reads "Feelin' lonely? Why not give us a call? Adults only." At the bottom of the flier it has phone numbers for people to tear off.

EXT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

The beautiful, small, marble building practically sparkles in the sunlight. Except for the base of the stairs, where a group of protestors have taken residence. PEARL Newton (50's) conservatively dressed, righteous, bossy, stands on a box with a bullhorn.

Other protestors circle around her holding various signs. "Think of the kids", "Dirty Calls Destroy All", "Ban Phone Porn".

PEARL
--Our youth are being corrupted, and those in power choose to ignore it!

The crowd yells back in agreement.

PEARL (CONT'D)
We must think the well being of the children, and keep the evil out of our houses! Our officials need to ban phone sex lines!

The protestors all yell again. MICKEY Plum (Late 40's) a short, round, nervous lawyer, pushes his way through the crowd up steps and looks around. He checks his watch, takes a sip of his coffee then runs into the building.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Young Women, all dolled up chat about the latest drama. They all wear bright lipstick. They walk around the side of the building to see DOUG (30's) intimidating, buff, could easily span a man in half. Doug nods to the women and opens the door for them.

From around the corner HELEN Mathews (late 20's) a determined, cunning, journalist, pokes her head around to watch. Helen pulls out a notebook and writes down a list of who is entering. Doug then spots her. He shuts the door behind the ladies.

DOUG
Hey! Hey!

Helen makes a run for it. Doug chases after her, but gives up after she turns the corner.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

TOBY Evans (23) a good looking, rebellious, tech genius, leans against a wall in an alley. Suddenly a GUY (early 40's) desperate, embarrassed, balding, walks over to him. He hands Toby a wad of cash.

GUY
Here, take it.

Toby counts it and nods.

TOBY
Pleasure doing business with you, sir.

Toby extends his hand for a handshake, it's denied. The guy walks off. Toby smirks and walks down the street. He then runs into the floral shop.

INT. BENNET'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

PATRICK Bennet (6) a happy-go lucky boy sits mesmerized by the tv. He watches and ad for an adult phone line. A MODEL (Mid 20's) stunning, sexy, with big hair, talks directly to the camera.

MODEL
Hey there baby, I know what you really want. Why not fulfill all your desires? There are plenty of girls just waiting for your call. For only three dollars and fifty cents a minute, we will make sure you have the time of your life.

BARBRA Bennet (40's) a frazzled, but loving, very pregnant mother makes her way into the living room. She walks past the tv and turn it off.

BARBRA
Patrick! Turn that smut off! No TV!

PATRICK
She was pretty, momma.

Barbra helps Patrick stand up.

BARBRA
I set out your coloring book and a snack for you at the table. Go do that. Your sister is in charge while mommy is at the doctor, okay?

PATRICK
Okay, Momma.

BARBRA
Good.

Barbra kisses his head and pushes him to the kitchen. She then sits down on the couch and awkwardly attempts to put her shoe on. She yells towards the staircase.

BARBRA (CONT'D)
Annie! Annie!

ANNIE Bennet (19) a recent high school graduate, boy-crazy, blonde yells back.

ANNIE
What?

BARBRA
I'm leaving for my appointment. Watch Patrick while I'm gone, please.

Barbra just cant seem to reach her foot to put the shoe on. Annie runs down the staircase.

ANNIE
It's okay that Toby still comes over tonight, right?

BARBRA
Who?

Annie rolls her eyes, annoyed.

ANNIE
My boyfriend, mom!

BARBRA
Oh, that's tonight?

ANNIE
Yes, we've been planning this for like a week now.

BARBRA
I forgot to prepare dinner.

ANNIE
Then we can just order pizza.

Patrick yells from the kitchen.

PATRICK
I love pizza, momma!

BARBRA
Right, and what money are we suppose pay for that with? We are just going to have to reschedule.

ANNIE
No! Mom, please! I'll pay for it.

BARBRA (CONT'D)
Really, you'll pay for it?

ANNIE
I swear, I just really want you to meet him.

BARBRA
Fine.

ANNIE
Yes! Thank you!

She turns and runs back upstairs, but stops herself.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Dad, is going to be home tonight, right?

BARBRA
He's suppose to be, just like he was suppose to be last night. So, we will see.

Barbra finally gets her shoes on.

BARBRA (CONT'D)
I'm off, see you later.

Annie runs back to her room.

ANNIE
Bye, mom!

BARBRA (CONT'D)
Remember, you're in charge of your brother!

Barbra grabs her keys.

BARBRA (CONT'D)
Bye, Patrick! Love you!

PATRICK
Love you, Momma!

INT. JAMES' OFFICE - DAY

Law degree's adorn the wall. The space is small, and quite cramp. Papers lay astray the desk, along with JAMES Bennet (40's) tired, stressed out, lawyer who hasn't won a case in over a year. James quietly snores at his desk. The clock on the wall TICKS. RING!

James jumps awake and quickly grabs the phone.

JAMES
James Bennet at law. How can I help you?

INTERCUT:

INT. COURT ROOM HALLS - CONTINUOUS

Mickey stands in the grand hallway with his phone to his ear. Many import looking well dressed individuals pass by. Mickey whispers with urgency and a touch of anger.

MICKEY
Hi, James. It's me, you know. Your partner who you are totally railing right now.

James sighs and places his head on his hand.

JAMES
What do you want, Mickey?

MICKEY
Where the hell are you? We were suppose to be here at one! You're late!

James yawns and rubs his eyes.

JAMES
Late for what?

MICKEY
James, you better be pulling my leg right now and be in the court room having a gag.

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

MICKEY
The motion regarding Peele versus ACC, dipstick.

James sits up quickly, he flips through his calendar.

JAMES
What? That's not until July fifteenth.

MICKEY
It is the fifteenth, dummy!

James looks at his clock.

JAMES
Oh, shit.

MICKEY
I'll stall as long as I can. Now get your ass over here!

Mickey hangs up the phone, and speed walks to the court room. END OF INTERCUT.

James puts the phone down and swipes paper and legal documents into a briefcase. He grabs his jacket and runs out of the office.

INT. JAMES' CAR - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

James frantically drives down the road. The radio plays an ad.

MODEL (V.O.)
Hey babe, want to live out all your fantasies? Let's make them a reality. Call now and get connected to the girl of your dreams--

Ring. Ring. James turns down the radio. He answers.

JAMES
Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barbra sits in a chair that obviously is not very comfortable. Couples all sit next to each other in the colorful room.

BARBRA
Hey, there.

James tries to hide the panic in his voice.

JAMES
Hey, honey. What's going on?

Barbra inhales, annoyed.

BARBRA
I'm just at the doctor office...
for the check-up.

James looks to his watch and throws his hand onto his face.

JAMES
Barbra, I'm so sorry--

BARBRA
You're busy.

JAMES
I'm sorry, I totally forgot about this hearing. I was on my way to the doctor, but then Mickey called. They're waiting on me.

BARBRA
It's fine.

Beat.

JAMES
It's fine?

BARBRA
Yeah, it's fine. It's clear you just don't care about me--

JAMES
Stop it, you know that's not true. I love you.

BARBRA
Where were you last night?

JAMES
At the office. I got caught up working on the case, and--

BARBRA
Maybe, you shouldn't have left Martin and Callum. Ever since you left to do your own thing, I never see you. I miss you. Your kids miss you, James.

JAMES
I'm doing this for us, you know that when the firm is established, we are going to make so much more money.

BARBRA
If--

JAMES
When. I promise. I'm sorry, that I can't be there today, but know I'll be thinking of you the whole time, while I'm at the court.

Barbra sighs.

BARBRA
Okay. Will you promise me something?

JAMES
Anything.

BARBRA
Please make it a priority to come home for dinner tonight. Annie invited her boyfriend over to meet us.

JAMES
I promise, I'll be there.

BARBRA
Seven PM.

JAMES
Got it. What's for dinner?

BARBRA
We are ordering pizza.

JAMES
With what money?

BARBRA
Annie is paying, she's got a little extra cash from her new job.

JAMES
She got a job?

A NURSE pops there head out into the room.

NURSE
Mrs. Bennet, the doctor will see you now.

Barbra nods and grunts as she stands up.

BARBRA
I gotta go, they're bringing me back now. Remember seven pm.

JAMES
You got it. Seven tonight. I hope it goes well. I love you.

BARBRA
I love you too. Good luck at the hearing. Bye.

Barbra hangs up the call and waddles over to the nurse. END OF INTERCUT.

James puts his phone in his pocket and speeds down the road.

EXT. COURT HOUSE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

James throws his car into park. He grabs his briefcase and runs up the stairs. Pearl still preaches on her soapbox surrounded by the protestors. She yells at James with her bullhorn.

PEARL
Sir, will you join our crusade to protect the morality of this country! Please, sign our petition!

A protestor runs up to James blocking his way. Mickey runs down the steps to shoo away the protestor.

MICKEY
Leave him alone, you wackos. He's got more important things to do right now.

Mickey puts his arm around James.

JAMES
Thanks, Mick. Is the judge mad?

MICKEY
I bought us some time.

JAMES
How?

MICKEY
Told him you were fighting some demons in the bathroom. If anyone asks, you had some bad sushi for lunch.

JAMES
Gotcha.

The pair make it into the courthouse.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Judge Holmes (50's) a grey-haired, firm but fair, with a demanding presence exhales loudly behind the bench. LEO Peele (60's) wiry, nervous, meek man, sits behind the railing. His wife JOY Peele (60's) a no-nonsense, stern, wide, woman sits next to him.

Behind the defense table RANDY Callum (50's) the brilliant, dashing, shark, leans back in his chair surrounded by interns who all scribble onto their legal pads. Randy clears his throat and looks to his watch. He stands.

RANDY
Your Honor, we are officially running twenty minutes behind--

The door flings open. James walks briskly towards the prosecution table with Mickey in tow.

JAMES
Sorry, your Honor, I had some bad... bad, um--

Mickey whispers to him.

MICKEY
Sushi.

JAMES
Sushi! Just really... caught me off guard.

Mickey shakes hands with Leo and Joy.

MICKEY
Hi, guys, how are you doing?

JUDGE HOLMES
I understand, I had some bad chicken the other day thought it was going to kill me. Now that we have our Plaintiff's here. Can we please begin? I do have other things to accomplish today.

Randy rolls his eyes.

RANDY
Of course, Judge.

Judge Holmes nods to the Stenographer in the room. Mickey and James take their seats. James opens his briefcase and pulls random papers.

JUDGE HOLMES
We will now hear the motion set in place from the American Collect Call, in the case of Leo and Joy Peele versus ACC. I understand that you would like to drop all charges Mr. Callum, is that correct?

RANDY
Yes, your Honor. I believe that my clients have done nothing wrong. Mr. Peele does not have a case against us and we believe that the fee that he’s asking for is utterly outrageous. I mean twenty thousand dollars? Even if my clients were in the wrong, which they are most definitely not, doesn't that seem like an egregious sum of money?

James stands.

JAMES
Judge, dismissing this case is just out of the question. Mr. Callum's clients are attempting to bully my client from suing. This is an example once again of the elite using their power to keep the little guys down. Not to mention that The American Collect Call Company not only over charged Mr. Peele an extra seven hundred dollars on his bill, but then they sent debt collectors to approach him not only at home but also in public. Causing an immense amount embarrassment and emotional distress. Twenty thousand is the minimum of what they could provide to amend the damage they have done to my client.

Judge Holmes scribbles on a pad of paper behind his podium.

JUDGE HOLMES
Mr. Callum, would you please inform me why your clients are suggesting that all charges should be dropped immediately. To me it sounds as if Mr. Bennet has a point.

RANDY
Your honor, my client has brought evidence before me that is conclusive of their innocence in this situation, and I merely wanted to provide Mr. Peele the ability to drop the charges before he embarrasses himself even more publicly than he already has.

JAMES
Objection, harassment.

RANDY
I apologize, maybe I was to frank.

Randy takes his seat. Judge Holmes looks to Leo and Joy.

JUDGE HOLMES
What do you have to say about all of this, Mr. Peele?

He responds shyly.

LEO
Well, you see--

Joy stands up and explodes.

JOY
I want those bastards to make a public apology! They showed up our church and harassed us in the parking lot to pay our bill! You know how embarrassing that is? To be approached in front of God and all his witnesses and having your husband being accused of calling a phone sex line? It's humiliating! They need to pay.

JUDGE HOLMES
Mr. Peele? Any comment?

He swallows.

LEO
I... I agree with my wife, Judge.

Mickey whispers to James.

MICKEY
This was easier than I thought this was going to be.

Randy stands from his chair. He turns to one of his many interns and holds his hand out. The intern hands Randy a CD.

RANDY
Mr. Peele, you claim you never called into American Collect Call's phone line. Correct?

LEO
That's correct.

RANDY
Interesting...

Randy and an Intern walk over to the wall where an outlet lives. The intern carries over a stereo, and plugs it in. Randy places the CD in and hits play.

Static is heard momentarily, followed by a long beep. A PHONE WORKER with a seductive voice can be heard.

PHONE WORKER (V.O.)
Hey honey, I'm so glad you called. I was starting to get lonely. My name is Ruby. What's yours?

LEO (V.O.)
Uh, Leo... Leo Peele, ma'am.

James and Mickey look to the stereo, their hearts sink. They mutter under there breath.

JAMES
Son of a bitch.

MICKEY
You gotta be kidding me...

PHONE WORKER (V.O.)
Leo, I've always loved that name. Makes me think of a sexy, stud of a man. Tell me Leo... Are you a stud?

LEO (V.O.)
Of course, I am.

PHONE WORKER (V.O.)
Well, Leo I could really use a man like you right now. Tell me what's your kinkiest fantasy?

Randy hits the pause button. Leo drops his head in shame. Joy looks shocked.

RANDY
I feel like we should stop the recording there.

James looks behind him to Leo. He doesn't dare look up.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Mr. Peele?

Beat.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Excuse me, Mr. Peele. Does that recording remind you of any phone calls you made to my clients?

Joy looks as if she was about to cry.

JUDGE HOLMES
Mr. Peele.

He looks to the Judge.

JUDGE HOLMES (CONT'D)
Would you like to continue the case?

Leo looks to his representation. Mickey and James are bewildered. Leo looks back to the Judge.

LEO
No, your Honor. We will drop the charges... I'll pay the bill.

Joy stands up from her chair and storms out of the court room.

JOY
You bastard!

The stenographer writes down Joy's remark. Leo looks around at everyone in the room staring at him. He drops his head and follows his wife. Randy smirks.

RANDY
Thank you, Judge.

Randy's associates all shake hands. James and Mickey stare with a look of contempt.

EXT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

James and Mickey exit out of the grand front doors.

MICKEY
Unbelievable. How were we ever going to win that case? What a waste of time!

JAMES
Well look on the bright side, we may have a divorce case coming now. That will at least be a little money.

Randy walks out of the courthouse followed by his lackies.

RANDY
James! James!

James and Mickey turn to see him approaching.

MICKEY
You chat with Mr. Perfect. I'll see you back at the office.

JAMES
I'll see you there.

MICKEY
Yeah.

Mickey quickly walks off. James sighs and turns to Randy who stands right behind him.

RANDY
I was surprised to see your name on the lawsuit when it hit my desk.

JAMES
Yeah, what a coincidence, right?

James forces a smile.

RANDY
It really is. How are things going with the new venture? You decide to come back to Martin and Callum yet?

JAMES
Actually on the contrary, Randy. Business is actually going very well.

RANDY
Is that so?

JAMES
It is. I mean, well enough to where I'm able to afford my own in house paralegal.

RANDY
Well, congratulations. What kind of cases are you handling primarily?

James scoffs, putting on an act.

JAMES
I'm actually not able to share that information at the moment. NDA's. A lot of them, really.

RANDY
Right, right. Good for you, James. Well, it was great getting to see you again. I hope I'll see you in the court room again soon.

Randy extends his hand. James shakes it.

JAMES
You too.

Randy walks off.

RANDY
See ya around.

Randy walks right past the protestors. Pearl continues to yell.

PEARL
There he is! There is the man defending the greedy elite preying on our youth!

The crowd boo's at him. Randy smiles and almost lets out a laugh. He gives them all the "talk to the hand" sign. James rolls his eyes and continues to walk to his car when he hears...

HELEN
Mr. Bennet! A word, please?

Helen rushes over to him. James keeps walking.

JAMES
I'm sorry, who are you?

HELEN
Helen Mathews, I'm a journalist. May I ask, what are your feeling on ACC coming from the view point of what Mr. Peele went through?

JAMES
Don't know if you heard, but Mr. Peele is no longer pressing charges.

HELEN
Did ACC buy his silence?

JAMES
No, they didn't. Mr. Peele had a change of heart. What publication are you with?

HELEN
I'm work for WHB Evening News.

JAMES
How long have you been a journalist with them?

HELEN
I'm not. I'm just a production assistant. I'm hoping that if I write a few independent pieces that possibly they'll bring me on as writer.

JAMES
I see.

HELEN
Yeah... So, any thoughts on ACC's business practices and secrets that they're withholding from the public?

James makes it to his car, which is parked halfway on the sidewalk.

JAMES
Listen... ummm...

HELEN
Helen.

JAMES
Helen, I'm not sure I want to make any statements on ACC at this time. If you're looking for a story, go interview Pearl.

James points to Pearl who continues to rial up the protestors.

HELEN
So you know nothing about the allegations about the missing girls?

James is caught off guard.

JAMES
What?

HELEN
Five girls. All five of these girls were working for ACC as workers, and they have disappeared without a trace. Allegedly, ACC has something to do with it. Do you have a comment?

JAMES
Who’s making these allegations?

HELEN
Me, I’m making these allegations.

James scoffs.

JAMES
Goodbye, Helen. I hope you find a story. Word of advice coming from a lawyer, don’t make false claims to create a sensationalized story. It won’t go well once a lawsuit shows up at your doorstep. Especially not against a major corporation.

HELEN
But--

JAMES
Goodbye, Helen.

James gets in his car and drives off. Helen watches as he leaves.

INT. BENNET'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Annie sits on the couch reading a magazine next to her friend MARY BETH Newton (18) a nerdy, innocent looking, optimistic girl sits next to her looking at her own magazine.

MARY BETH
So are you nervous? I’d be nervous.

ANNIE
What do you mean?

MARY BETH
I mean you have a boy, coming over... to meet your parents.

Annie drops the magazine.

ANNIE
Mary Beth, were going to college in a month! We are basically adults. I'm not nervous at all.

MARY BETH
Really?

ANNIE
Well, maybe a little, but like it's a good nervous.

Annie looks back to her magazine. Beat. Mary Beth's curiosity has peaked.

MARY BETH
So like, have you done anything yet?

ANNIE
Mary Beth!

MARY BETH
C'mon, tell me! I want to know!

ANNIE
Well, we did kiss--

Patrick pokes his head in.

PATRICK
Gross!

Annie looks at him.

ANNIE
Patrick! Have you been ease dropping?

Patrick has a big smile across his face.

PATRICK
Nooooo...

ANNIE
Would you just go to your room? The adults are hanging out.

Patrick runs up the stair to his room.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
He can be so annoying.

MARY BETH
That’s so totally awesome about you and Toby! I’ve never kissed a boy. I don’t know how to even act around boys.

ANNIE
Well you better learn! If we are going to be popular at college we gotta be prepared for the parties!

The front door opens. Barbra walks in and immediately kicks off her shoes.

BARBRA
Well that took longer than expected. Where is Patrick?

ANNIE
He’s playing upstairs.

Barbra notices Mary Beth.

BARBRA
Well, I wasn’t expecting to see you here, Mary Beth.

MARY BETH
Annie said I could come hang out for a few hours, I hope that’s okay. I was just bored at home.

BARBRA
Of course that fine, are you staying for dinner too?

MARY BETH
Not tonight, I’ll let you all meet the boyfriend without me.

BARBRA
What’s your mom up to?

MARY BETH
She’s still at the court house protesting. She said that she’s hosting a few rallies this week.

BARBRA
Well, good for her.

MARY BETH
Yeah... Anyways, I think I’m going to head out.

ANNIE
Sounds good, I'll call you later tonight.

MARY BETH
Sounds great! Bye, Mrs. Bennet!

BARBRA
Bye, Mary Beth.

Mary Beth leaves.

ANNIE
Did you ask Dad if he's coming tonight?

BARBRA
He said he was going to try.

ANNIE
Awesome! I can't wait!

Annie runs up the stairs. Barbra plops down onto the couch.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The town is bustling. Mary Beth rides her bike down the side of the road, wearing her helmet. She looks contemplative. She looks over to see a young couple holding hands.

She then turns her head to see a group of guys sitting on a park bench goofing off. She stops at a stop sign and looks into the car parked next to her. A couple make out in the front seat.

She averts her eyes and rides off. She lets out a depressed sigh. Then a flyer catches her eye. She stops her bike and reads it. "Feelin' lonely? Why not give us a call? Adults only." She holds her breath. She looks around. She quickly rips off a phone number, then rides off.

INT. JAMES' OFFICE - DAY

Mickey sits at his desk with piles of books before him. He wears reading glasses at the end of his nose. James walks in the front of the small building.

MICKEY
So, what did the court room poster child say to you?

JAMES
Not much, just wanted to gloat. Man, I just hate that he's good.

MICKEY
He's not that good, we just drew the short stick on clientele. If they didn't have that recording, would have been a slam dunk.

James walks over to his side of the office and leans against his desk.

JAMES
I can't believe Leo actually made that call.

MICKEY
Are you kidding? You hear what he's married too?

Mickey laughs to himself.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
If he's been dealing with her for the last thirty years, I say he deserved that phone call.

JAMES
It just seems like... out of character for him. You know? I mean, he sings in the choir at our church every week, and he seems so reserved.

Mickey finished his notes and takes his glasses off. He leans back in his chair.

MICKEY
You're thinking about it all wrong. He's their prime customer. The boring, quiet, non-assuming person. The one that deep down have that secret desire that they're to afraid to talk about it. So, what do they do? They call the sex lines and live out those fantasies there! I mean they're a lot more popular than you think.

JAMES
Is that so?

MICKEY
Oh, yeah. So popular I heard that the FCC may get involved soon. You can thank Ms. Pearl Newton for that. That nut wants to ruin the fun for everyone... You know this might shock you, but I actually call the lines pretty frequently.

JAMES
That doesn't shock me in the slightest, Mickey.

James sits down at his desk, and flips through the files.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Heard anything on Police dispatch today for hit and runs?

MICKEY
I heard one... Are we seriously going back to wrecks? Come on, I want to do something more exciting than that!

JAMES
Well unfortunately, need I remind you, we lost our case today, so we need all the new clients we can get.

MICKEY
Right. Want me to walk there and make sure if anyone trips walking on the sidewalk we sue the city for that too, while I'm at it?

Mickey chuckles. James snaps back, clearly stressed.

JAMES
I don't need the snarky remarks, okay? Just go do it.

Mickey stops his chuckles. He shuts his books.

MICKEY
Alright, damn. What's got you so riled up?

JAMES
We are bleeding money, Mick! We need to turn a profit, like today.
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'm trying to keep the doors open, I'm the laughing stock of all the guys over at Martin and Callum for thinking I could do this on my own, I can barely provide for my family as it is, and not even mentioning that Barbra and I have another one on the way.

James throws his head forward and buries his face into the desk. Mickey walks over to his desk.

MICKEY
Oh, I know what's happening here.

Mickey places his hand on James shoulder.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
You're getting no action at home.

James sits up abruptly.

JAMES
What?

MICKEY
Do I need to be clearer? No sexy fun times? Big Bangs? Woohoo sessions--

JAMES
Stop, Mickey.

MICKEY
Tell me I'm wrong, huh? When was the last time you had a hot and spicy evening with Barbs?

James rolls his eyes.

JAMES
That is wildly unprofessional--

MICKEY
How long, Jameson?

JAMES
I don't know! Like... three months. Things have just been stressful at home lately.

Mickey shakes his head.

MICKEY
There's the problem. Tsk, Tsk, Tsk. That's no good at all.

Mickey walks back to his desk. He takes a small slip of paper and scribbles something.

JAMES
What are you doing?

MICKEY
Fixing the problem.

Mickey walks back over to James and hands him the slip of paper. James reads aloud.

JAMES
1-900-HOT-BOOB?

MICKEY
You need to call that number. Get the stress out. You cannot work effectively, when you have not been relieved in months.

JAMES
Gross, Mick.

MICKEY
Hey, I'm doing this for us! You want to keep this place open? You better get the personal needs done first. Ask for Kitty, she my favorite. You have any fantasies you wish you could try out in the bedroom--

JAMES
I do not want to talk about this with you, Mickey. I will think about it, okay? Now please, go to the hospital and try and find a new customer... Please.

Mickey grabs his suitcase and his hat.

MICKEY
Okay, I will. I'm serious though, call that number.

Mickey walks out of the office. James shakes his head then goes back to the files for a moment. He then looks at the picture on his desk. It's of him, Barbra, Annie, and Patrick. He sighs, then leans back in his chair.

He picks up the picture and stares at Barbra. He sighs then gets up from the desk. James locks the door and turns off the lights. He sits back down and looks at the picture one last time. He places the picture face down on his desk.

He picks up the phone and dials the number. The PRE-RECORDED WOMAN speaks.

PRE-RECORDED WOMAN (V.O.)
Hey there baby, I'm so glad you called us. We want to live out all of your wildest dreams with you. So it's time to whip it out... Your credit card that is. To talk to our models it will charge three fifty a minute. If you're okay with this charge stay on the line.

Beat. James takes a deep breath he contemplates putting the phone back on the receiver. He reaches for it, but stops himself. He puts the phone back to his ear.

PRE-RECORDED WOMAN (V.O.)
Mmm, that's good baby. Now to connect you I need to ask you a few questions. What's your full name?

James gulps.

JAMES
James... James Bennet.

PRE-RECORDED WOMAN (V.O.)
Would you like to hear our menu of models?

JAMES
Yes.

PRE-RECORDED WOMAN (V.O.)
Press one to talk to our sexy school teachers. Press two to talk to our strong male cops. Press three to talk to our flirty next door neighbors. Pres four to--

James presses three. Ring. Ring. Ring. The FLIRTY NEIGHBOR speaks on the line.

FLIRTY NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
Oh, hey there! James Bennet right?

James clears his throat.

JAMES
Yeah, this is-- I am James.

FLIRTY NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
Nice to meet you, my name is Eden. I know that we haven't gotten to meet each other officially yet. Tell me, James... Are you a strong, handsome man, that could help me with my load?

JAMES
What?

FLIRTY NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
I'm talking about all these boxes, silly. I am just moving in.

JAMES
Oh, yeah... yeah...

FLIRTY NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
If you help me with my load, maybe I could help you with yours... How does that sound, James?

James holds his breath he turns red. He freezes.

FLIRTY NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
James?... James... You want my help with that, baby?

James slams the phone down. He takes a deep breath. He stands up from his desk and wipes the sweat off his hands. He's shaking. He unlocks the front door and turns the lights back on. He sits back down at his desk.

INT. NEWS STATION - WORK SPACE - DAY

Helen walks into the office space. She carries a tray of coffees. She hands them out to the cubicles filled with workers.

HELEN
Here you go, and I think this one is yours...

Suddenly, EDWARD Sutton (60's) robust, well dressed, classic southern gentleman, head of the station, exits his office.

EDWARD
Helen, honey, after I didn't see you this morning, I thought you finally had enough.

He laughs. Helen approaches and hands him a coffee.

HELEN
Of course not, sir. You can't get rid of me that easily. Here's your coffee.

EDWARD
Thank you, darlin'. Did you ever call that reporter in Hiawassee? I'd love to see that article they wrote in that paper and see if we can run it tonight for the evening news.

HELEN
I'll get right on that. Mr. Sutton--

EDWARD
Don't call me that, Mr. Sutton was my father.

HELEN
Sorry... Edward, I wanted to ask you if we could talk about me coming on as a journalist now?

Edward chuckles and walks down the hallway, Helen follows.

EDWARD
Helen--

HELEN
I've been working as an assistant here for the last five months. The staff seems to like me enough, I'll even continue to do all the daily menial task. Just... Just give me a shot. I promise, I'll be able to give you winner.

EDWARD
Now--

HELEN
Sir, I just want a chance, please.

Edward stops walking. He ponders.

EDWARD
Okay, darling. I'll give you a chance. Write me a story and have it on my desk tomorrow, by three PM. I'll review it, and we can talk about it. Don't get your hopes up though, alright? I'm not sure if we have a position open.

Helen perks up.

HELEN
Yessir! Absolutely. Thank you so, so, much.

EDWARD
Don't get your hopes up!

Helen runs off.

HELEN
You won't regret this sir!

Edward smiles and shakes his head.

INT. JAMES' OFFICE - DAY

James writes down on a file. He glances up at the photo on his desk. Ring. Ring.

JAMES
James Bennet at Law, how can I help you today?

A DISTORTED VOICE is heard on the other end of the call.

DISTORTED VOICE
James Bennet?

JAMES
Yes, who is this?

DISTORTED VOICE
That's not important right now. What is important is that I know who you are?

JAMES
Patrick, this isn't funny. Put your mom on the phone.

The voice laughs.

DISTORTED VOICE
No, I'm not your son, Patrick.

James now grows concerned.

JAMES
Mickey? Is that you?

DISTORTED VOICE
You don't know me, James. However, I know everything about you. You have two children, Annie and Patrick. You and your wife Barbra are expecting a third. You have your own Law Firm. You must be living it up over there Mr. Lawyer Man...

JAMES
How do I know this isn't some kind of prank?

DISTORTED VOICE
Listen to this.

Suddenly, a recording plays.

FLIRTY NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
Oh, hey there! James Bennet right?

James clears his throat.

JAMES (V.O.)
Yeah, this is-- I am James.

FLIRTY NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
Nice to meet you, my name is Eden. I know that we haven't gotten to meet each other officially yet. Tell me, James... Are you a strong, handsome man, that could help me with my load?

James hangs up the phone. He breathes heavily. He's freaked out. Beat. Ring. Ring. Ring. James thinks for a minute. He answers.

DISTORTED VOICE
James--

James hangs up again. Ring. Ring. Ring. James answers quickly.

JAMES
What? What do you--

DISTORTED VOICE
You better not hang up on me. You will regret it.

JAMES
What do you want?

DISTORTED VOICE
Four grand...

James, stunned for a moment, then lets out a laugh. The laugh dies off.

JAMES
You're joking...

DISTORTED VOICE
No, James. I am not. Four grand and all of this will go away.

JAMES
This is extortion.

DISTORTED VOICE
And?

JAMES
Well, I'll call the police.

DISTORTED VOICE
No you won't, because if you do that, you'll have to come clean to your wife once I give her the recording.

James stands up from his desk and paces.

JAMES
Oh my god.

DISTORTED VOICE
Get the cash and I'll give you instructions tomorrow for the drop.

JAMES
I can't! I don't... I don't have the money!

Beat.

DISTORTED VOICE
Well, you better find it.

The line goes dead. James hangs up the phone.

JAMES
Shit.

INT. BENNET HOME - BATHROOM/HALLWAY - EVENING

Annie stands in the bathroom wearing a bra. She looks at herself in the mirror, then reaches to the toilet paper. She stuffs her bra. She checks herself out for a moment, until the door swings open. Annie jumps in shock as Barbra comes in holding the phone.

ANNIE
Oh my god! Mom, don't you knock!

Barbra jumps startled.

BARBRA
Oh! Oh! I am... I... Sorry, honey!

ANNIE
Get out!

Barbra covers her eyes and shuts the door. She stands in the hallway for a moment, then the door slowly opens again. Annie is now wearing a shirt. She awkwardly looks to her mom and then walks down the stairs.

BARBRA
I think you're beautiful just the way you are, Annie!

Annie yells back to her.

ANNIE
Let's not talk about it.

Barbra enters the bathroom and locks the door. She turns on the sink and throws water on her face. She then opens the cabinets below the sink. She reaches around feeling the top of the cabinets.

A pack of cigarettes and a lighter are taped to the top of the cabinet. Barbra pulls it down, cracks the window, and lights up. She takes a seat on the toilet. She then pulls a bill out of her back pocket. Its for eight-hundred dollars.

Barbra dials a number on the phone. Ring. Ring.

BARBRA
Hey there... I know, I know... It has been a while. Listen, I'm really sorry that I have to call like this, but... I need help.

INT. NEWTON HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The house seems very clean. Religious pictures and crosses adorn the walls. Mary Beth sits on the couch staring at the phone number. She takes a deep breath, suddenly the front door opens. Mary Beth quickly balls up the phone number in her hand.

Pearl walks in and takes off her shoes.

PEARL
Well, that was a long day. Thought I was gonna lose my voice yelling at all those big wigs, but I still got it.

Mary Beth walks to her mother and gives her a hug.

MARY BETH
How's Joanne?

PEARL
She's okay, she ended up taking Richard back. Which if it was me, I would have never taken him back. I mean, calling that filth in there own home? That's unforgivable. She came to the rally today, she even dragged him along too.

Pearl drops down onto the couch.

PEARL (CONT'D)
Go grab me the bottle, please darling.

MARY BETH
Yes, ma'am.

Mary Beth runs to the kitchen. She discreetly opens a drawer and throws the phone number inside. She then grabs a glass and a large bottle of whiskey, and bring it to her mother.

PEARL
Thank you, honey. What did you do today?

Mary Beth sits on the floor as Pearl pours herself a glass.

MARY BETH
Well, I ran by the church and dropped off that check like you asked me. Then, I went and hung out at Annie's house for a little while.

Pearl scowls.

PEARL
Honey, you know I don't like you hanging out over there.

MARY BETH
I know, momma, but--

PEARL
Mr. Bennet is not a godly man. I do not want you around those who are not godly.

MARY BETH
But, Mom, I'm an adult. I'm about to go to college. I feel like it may be time for me to make my own choices. Mr. Bennet wasn't even home, also he does come to church every week! He is godly!

PEARL
Any lawyer cannot be godly. Those two things don't go together.

Pearl takes a long swig from the drink. Beat.

MARY BETH
I'm sorry, Mom.

Pearl pushes Mary Beth's hair behind her ear.

PEARL
I forgive you, I just want what's best for you.

MARY BETH
I know.

Pearl stands from the couch, and walks towards the kitchen.

PEARL
I'm going back to the Court House tomorrow to protest again. Would you want to come with me?

Mary Beth sighs.

MARY BETH
Sure, Momma.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - EVENING

Mickey stands in the small room. He stands at the foot of a bed giving his spill. The heart rate moniter in the room beeps.

MICKEY
I am so sorry for the injustice that you suffered at the hands of another driver, Mr....

Mickey looks at the medical report. He clears his throat.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
I mean, Ms. Klein. I've talked to those that were on the scene and everyone agreed that when you were crossing that street, that bus really came out of nowhere. They were probably going over the speed limit too!

Mickey shakes his head in disgust.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Those bastards... I guess the point I'm getting at sweetheart is... I think you've got a rock solid case here. If you sign with me, I can promise you we will sue the pants off this guy! We can probably even get you some money from the city too! Maybe even get them to add a stop sign to that intersection to make sure nothing like this ever happens again. Now, I for the question that everyone always asks... Well, how much is that going to cost you.

Mickey chuckles to himself.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
There is nothing to worry about there. Since I feel that you have suffered so much, I want to help all I can. I'm not like all the other lawyers, I have a heart. For my fee, I'll only charge a portion of the settlement money, once we win the case. My share will be thirty percent of the settlement, and the remaining seventy percent will be one hundred percent yours. How does that sound Ms. Klein?

MS. KLEIN is covered head to toe bandages. So much to the point where you cant even see her face. Ms. Klein doesn't respond. Beat.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Ms. Klein?

No response. Mickey looks around the room and the hallway to make sure the coast is clear. He then walks over to her and places a pen in her hand. He signs the document for her.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Ms. Klein. This is going to be an open and shut case. We are going to make you a lot of money.

Mickey then shakes the very bandaged hand.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Glad to be representing you in a court of law.

James the speeds down the hallway, shouting.

JAMES
Mickey! Mickey!

James burst through the door. He's very out of breath.

MICKEY
James, what a pleasant surprise! I'd like you to meet our newest client, Ms. Klein.

James looks to her, confused.

JAMES
Is she even awake?

MICKEY
Doesn't matter she signed.

Mickey hold up the contract with a large smile. James looks down the hallway to check the coast is clear then he shuts the door. He turns to Mickey and shoves him.

JAMES
I cannot believe you got me into this situation.

MICKEY
Whoa, whoa, chillax will ya? What's going on?

JAMES
I called the line.

Mickey Smiles and sits on the bed.

MICKEY
Oh, really? I told you! It's life changing.

JAMES
That's one way to put it.

MICKEY
What, you didn't like it?

JAMES
Because of you, I'm being blackmailed by someone?

MICKEY
Blackmailed?

JAMES
Yes! They have the recording of my call and they said they'll give it to Barbra if I don't pay them four grand by tomorrow!

MICKEY
Four grand?

JAMES
Yes!

Mickey's jaw sits open, he's shocked. James nervously paces the floor.

MICKEY
How are you gonna pay it?

JAMES
I don’t know, Mickey! That’s why I came to you!

MICKEY
Did you call from the office?

JAMES
Yes, why?

MICKEY
Well, then just say the call was from me. Problem solved.

JAMES
That won’t work, Mick.

MICKEY
Why not? What’s on the recording?

JAMES
I gave them my full name.

Mickey stands up, even more shocked.

MICKEY
You did what?

James throws his hands up defensively.

JAMES
What?

MICKEY
Why would you give them your full name, you idiot!

JAMES
I’ve never called one of those lines before!

MICKEY
You’re suppose to give a fake name, dumbass! Did you learn nothing from Leo Peeles’ case!

JAMES
Well, I didn’t think someone would be blackmailing me with the recording.

Mickey sits back down on the bed.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I don't have the money, Mickey.

Mickey shakes his head.

MICKEY
I'm sorry, buddy. I don't either. I wish I could help you, but I've got nothing.

James takes a seat next to him on the bed.

JAMES
I should have never called. I was being stupid. Man, Barbra's going to be so mad.

Beat.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Oh, crap.

MICKEY
What now?

JAMES
What time is it?

Mickey looks to his watch.

MICKEY
It's 6:55. Why?

JAMES
Damn it, I promised Barbra I'd be home for dinner tonight at seven.

James stands up and heads to the door.

MICKEY
Good luck!

JAMES
Thanks!

EXT. STRIP MALL - ALLEY - EVENING

Helen sits in a parked car where she can see the door. Doug leans up against the wall. A group of girls walk out of the building. Helen writes down all the names of the girls. After that she looks up to the door.

She sees LOUIS McCray (50's) suave, trim, multi-millionaire, owner of the lines. He shakes Doug's hand and walks to his porshe. Helen scribbles down notes furiously. She looks to see Doug distracted talking to one of the girls.

She takes her opportunity and gets out of the car. She rushes over to him.

HELEN
Mr. McCray! Excuse me! Mr. McCray!

Louis looks over his shoulder to see her.

LOUIS
Do I know you?

HELEN
No, you don't. I'm Helen Mathews, journalist for WHB. I'm writing an article about ACC. If you have time for an interview, I'd love to talk to you.

Louis smirks.

LOUIS
Honey, I'm sorry I don't take interviews unless they are scheduled before hand and I'm aware of the question list.

HELEN
I know this is forward for me to bombard you, but--

LOUIS
There is nothing I can do about that. That's the rules.

HELEN
I really need this, please!

Beat.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I'm not a journalist... Yet, I'm just doing a writing sample for my boss. If he likes it, I may be able to start writing. Your input would be great for this.

Doug looks over to see that Helen has Louis blocked from his car.

DOUG
Hey, you! Leave him alone!

Doug walks briskly over to the pair.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Mr. Louis, is this lady bothering you?

Louis puts his hand up to stop him.

LOUIS
No, Doug. It's fine.

Doug gives Helen a nasty look.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Go back to the door.

DOUG
Yes sir.

Louis looks Helen up and down. He smiles.

LOUIS
I like your style, baby. You know, I always have said if you want to succeed in the world, you gotta be loud.

Helen writes down the quote.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I'll give you an interview. Meet me in my office at nine-am tomorrow morning.

Louis takes Helen's note pad and pen. He writes down his email address.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Email me the question list tonight. Sound good?

He hands the note pad back to her. She grins ear to ear.

HELEN
That sounds wonderful, Mr. McCray, thank you.

LOUIS
Louis.

Louis extends his hand. They shake.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I'll see you at nine tomorrow. Don't be late. I'm very busy.

HELEN
Yes, sir.

LOUIS
See you then.

Louis gets in the car and speeds off. Helen watches with a wide smile. She turns around to see Doug who stares daggers at her. With a smirk, Helen gives him the bird and walks to her car.

EXT. BENNET HOME - EVENING

Toby knocks on the door of the home, while holding a flower bouquet. He shakes out his nerves with a smile. The door opens and Annie smiles widely. She has TP protruding from her shirt. Toby sees it.

TOBY
Umm...

She looks down and quickly shoves it back in the bra. She blushes. Toby laughs and hands her the flowers.

TOBY (CONT'D)
I got these for you.

ANNIE
They're beautiful!

TOBY
Just like you.

She smiles and takes his hand and walks him inside.

INT. MICKEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is very bare, with beer bottles scattered around. It's your typical bachelors pad. Mickey walks in carrying a brown bag. He loosens his tie, kicks his shoes off, and takes a seat in his recliner.

He pulls out a beer from the bag and cracks it open. He picks up the phone and dials a number.

MICKEY
Hey there, this is Rod. Let me talk to Kitty.

INT. NEWTON HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Pearl sits on the couch passed out with the bottle of whiskey in her hand. Mary Beth pokes her head into the room. She then sneaks to the drawer in the kitchen. She pulls out the phone number and grabs the phone.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Helen sits at a computer and types. She writes the questions for tomorrow's interview. She smiles and sips on her drink.

INT. NEWTON HOUSEHOLD - MARY BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mary Beth stares at the number for a moment, lets out a breath, and types the phone number in. Ring. Ring. Ring.

MARY BETH
Can I talk to a guy, please?

EXT. BENNET HOME - NIGHT

James speeds into the driveway, and throws the car into park. He jumps out and runs to the door while looking at his watch.

INT. BENNET'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Patrick, Barbra, Annie, and Toby sit at the table eating pizza.

ANNIE
That's when Toby helped me pick up all the cans, and that's how we met.

BARBRA
Well that's very sweet.

James quickly walks into the room.

JAMES
Hey everybody!

Patrick jumps out of his chair and runs to his dad.

PATRICK
Dad!

He gives him a hug.

JAMES
Hey there, kiddo!

James walks to Barbra.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Hey, honey.

They kiss.

BARBRA
You're late.

JAMES
I know, I'm sorry. I got caught up with a client at the hospital. She got hit by a bus.

James pulls up a chair.

ANNIE
Dad, this is Toby, my boyfriend.

James reaches across the table and shakes his hand.

JAMES
Nice to meet you, Toby.

TOBY
You as well, sir.

James grabs a slice of the pizza.

JAMES
So, Toby, tell me about yourself. You in school?

TOBY
No sir, couldn't afford it so I went directly into the work force.

JAMES
Nothing wrong with that. Whatcha do?

TOBY
Well, I'm an IT guy mainly. I love toying around with computers.

JAMES
Oh, so you're super smart then.

Annie laughs.

ANNIE
Dad!

JAMES
He is! Anyone that knows computers has got to be a genius.

TOBY
Well, thank you sir. I mean you too are smart yourself. Annie's told me all about you.

James smiles.

JAMES
Oh, really? What is she telling you? Good things, I hope.

TOBY
Oh, for sure, for sure.

James laughs.

TOBY (CONT'D)
I heard you were a Mr. Lawyer Man.

James smile fades.

JAMES
Mr. Lawyer Man....

Toby smirks at James. James realizes Toby was the voice on the phone.

END OF EPISODE.