

THE CHARACTERS

GESSICA - 23 year old female who is aware of her beauty.

BEN/THIGPEN - 27 year old male.

DESTINY, COCO, CHASTITY, and AURORA - Attractive young females. Coco is African-American.

GUS - An overweight unattractive man in his thirties.

MOTHER - GESSICA'S mother; in her fifties.

TROY - A quirky man in his twenties.

BRENDAN - A nerdy man in his thirties.

TREVOR - A 25 year old attractive male.

GUY 1, GUY 2 - Men aged 18 - 20.

YOUNG GIRL - An attractive 20 year old female.

STRANGE MAN - A male in his thirties.

DISPATCHER - A female in her thirties.

OFFICE BOX - A lanky 20 year old male.

THE SCENES

(This five act play takes place in suburban America; 2009.)

- ACT 1 -

(Scene 1) YOUNG GIRL'S HOUSE: It is clear that a man used to live there but feminine things dominate the space.

(Scenes 2 - 4) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: This is a large open space with two bedroom'S and a kitchen that is joined to the living room. Gessica's bed is in the master bedroom which has a bathroom inside. The Babies crib is in the other bedroom.

(Scene 5) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: TROY in his GARAGE comes in simultaneously during the scene.

(Scenes 6 - 9) GESSICA'S APARTMENT

- ACT 2 -

(Scene 1) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: DUSK.

(Scene 2 and 3) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: Hour later.

(Scene 4) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: Next day.

(Scene 5) ARCHED COVERED WALKWAY: This walkway leads out of an office building.

(Scene 6) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: Night. A Garage, Gus's Apartment, Troy's Apartment and an office cubical are secondary settings that appear in sequence.

(Scene 7) A SMALL GYM: Night; part of Gessica's Apartment Complex.

(Scene 8 and 9) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: After midnight.

- ACT 3 -

(Scene 1) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: Next morning. 7:38 AM.

(Scene 2) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: 9:13 AM.

(Scene 3) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: 12:16 PM.

(Scene 4) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: 1:30 PM. - A 911 Dispatcher at a desk in a call center is shown simultaneously.

(Scene 5) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: Moments later. The text Gessica types on her computer is a separate element shown on a large screen.

(Scene 6) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: 4:06 PM.

(Scene 7) TROY'S APARTMENT: 5:28 PM. Gessica is seated on her love seat simultaneously.

(Scene 8) TROY'S APARTMENT: 2 Years ago.

(Scene 9) TROY'S APARTMENT: One day after previous scene. [BACK TO PRESENT] Gessica on her love seat and Troy in Apt.

(Scene 10) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: 5:56 PM.

- ACT 4 -

(Scene 1) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: A few months ago.

(Scene 2) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: Dawn; a few months ago.

(Scene 3) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: 7:40 PM. [BACK TO PRESENT] All lighting now comes from the interior.

(Scene 4) GESSICA'S APARTMENT: 8:06 PM. - Segments of Gus and Ben outside the apartment are seen. Gus and Ben sitting in a cart from a Ferris Wheel come in as Gessica stays in apartment as a tableau.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A YOUNG GIRL alone in a living room on her cell phone; covered in sweat.

(The sound of a BUSY SIGNAL sets her off; she SCREAMS. She throws her cell phone against the wall - It shatters. She runs out of the living room in hysterics.)

(DARKNESS)

(Each chilling STEP and CRASH is heard as the YOUNG GIRL runs from room to room. After a lone SCREAM there is GASPING.... then silence.) (pause)

(A WHISTLE of a teapot is heard while the YOUNG GIRL lays on the kitchen floor. She is motionless as blood continues to pool around her neck.)

REPORTER (Voice over): Another girl found dead today. This horrific scene is part of a series known to the police as the box-cutter killings. This is Miranda Johnson; F-L-A news... Orlando.

SCENE TWO

GESSICA walks into her baby's room wearing a bathrobe. She picks her CRYING BABY up out of the crib; holds her close and HUMS a classical song.

(Once the BABY stops crying; GESSICA sets her back in the crib.)

GESSICA: Okay, mommy's got work to do.

(GESSICA walks casually into her bedroom. She flips a switch which lights her bed like it was a stage. The bed has two thin lavender curtains that are suspended from above by a curved rod.

A laptop computer on a desk faces the bed; GESSICA adjusts a web cam attached to the top of the laptop.)

(GESSICA sheds her robe revealing her tan, well toned body which is barely covered by sexy underwear and a cut off tee-shirt. She dances in front of the web cam.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): Tits... noun, plural. The milk secreting glands on a woman's body. Oh, but they're more than that. They are the biggest motivator in the world. Tits can control a political leader, they can disrupt a super bowl halftime show, or part a billionaire with his fortune; at least half of it anyway.

(She looks at her hamper in the corner, it's overflowing with laundry.)

I've got to do the laundry; this is my last pair of panties... and I wore them yesterday. I have too much dirty laundry; I'm surrounded by it.

SCENE THREE

GESSICA is in her bathroom; taking a shower.

GESSICA (Voice Over): After each session I take a shower. I scrub vigorously. My tub becomes doused with my perspiration, and my shame. I wish I could stay here, enshrouded in the thick steam. It hides the many imperfections of my body.

SCENE FOUR

GESSICA opens the door. BEN walks into her living room.

BEN: Have I told you how beautiful you are?

GESSICA: Only every chance you get.

BEN: This place is looking like a ghost town.

GESSICA: You know it's bad when people can't even pay rent... don't go into real-estate.

(Ben notices an origami rose in a vase sitting on the coffee table.)

BEN: Did you make that?

GESSICA: Yeah.

BEN: You learn a lot of cool stuff from your dad; don't you?

GESSICA: Learned... I learned a lot from him.

BEN: Right, sorry... that's what I meant.

(Ben walks toward the kitchen pass-through. He is startled when he sees a strange stuffed teddy bear in a safari outfit sitting on the counter.)

What the hell is that?

GESSICA: Oh, I put that on my wish list. A client bought it for me last week. Watch this.

(Once GESSICA waves her hand in front of the teddy bear - The Bear starts SINGING "All Of Me" in an Australian accent.)

Like it?

BEN: No.

(With that, Gessica heads for her bedroom and Ben happily follows.)

GESSICA: You don't like anything I've got.

(GESSICA and BEN enter the bedroom.)

BEN: That's not true at all.

(BEN playfully slaps GESSICA'S butt.)

GESSICA: You want to see the baby?

BEN: I've seen your baby before... I built her crib.

GESSICA: I remember. We had great times together didn't we?

BEN: You know that new David Fincher movie's coming out Friday....

GESSICA: Oh sorry, I can't go I've got the baby.

(pause)

Why don't you take one of your other friends?

BEN: Yeah, well I came by to explain your new server didn't I?

GESSICA: That's why I called you.

BEN: Right. I need to go to the bathroom first.

(BEN exits the bedroom.)

SCENE FIVE

Moments later with BEN and GESSICA in the bedroom. Light pours in as BEN opens the window blinds.

BEN: (opens the blinds.) There, that's better.

(BEN joins GESSICA at the desk to show her how their web site works.)

BEN: I send out tons of spam linking to this homepage. This is the first thing they see.

GESSICA: (points to computer screen.) I never liked that thong.

BEN: Then they click this link to enter and we got 'em by the balls.

GESSICA: How?

BEN: It takes them to a pre-loader screen that says they're logging on, but what it's really doing is downloading a program that secretly takes control of their modem and dials a long distance number in Africa. Then our service provider charges absorbent fees.

GESSICA: We- when do they find out?

BEN: At the end of the month when they get their phone bill. But by then the money's yours; minus the ten percent I take.

GESSICA: But they can catch us; arrest us.

BEN: You look sexy when you're concerned.
(pause)

There's nothing to worry about. The transaction is international so they can't charge us with shit. This scam is very popular; it's called a porn dialer.

GESSICA: How do you know all this stuff?

LIGHTS UP revealing TROY in his garage. He paces while eagerly calling Gessica with his cell phone. A mosaic; PICTURES OF GESSICA are pinned up on the back wall.

BEN: A lot of free time... now if a certain someone would go back out with me I could give this all up.

(BEN looks at GESSICA fondly.)

You remember the hot-tub?

GESSICA: There's no way I could forget about the hot-tub.

(Gessica's cell phone RINGS abruptly; vibrating on the table. She is about to answer it but puts it back down after looking at who's calling.)

BEN: You gonna get that?

GESSICA: Naaaahhhh.

BEN: Some calls are meant to be answered.

GESSICA: Guess that's not one of them.

(Lights down on TROY'S garage.)

BEN: I know; It's not the best looking site, but it get's the job done. So, what do you think?

(GESSICA stands, walks slowly toward the bed.)

GESSICA: What do I think.?

(GESSICA plants herself on the bed.)

I don't like being a cam-girl; it just feels... wrong.

BEN: Do you remember the first time you danced for me?

(They share a LAUGH.)

GESSICA: That was so much fun.

BEN: My back hurt for a week after that.

(pause)

I support you completely -

(light COUGH)

GESSICA: You alright?

BEN: Just getting over a mild cough.

(pause to regain his thought)

It's just a job. People do things that are much worse to pay the mortgage. So, you're the sexy med-student who gets paid to take her clothes off; what's wrong with that?

(The baby is heard faintly CRYING from the other room.)

GESSICA: Thanks, but I haven't even taken the MCAT yet.

BEN: What about the Ferris wheel; you remember that?

GESSICA: At the fair?

BEN: Being high above that city-scape for that long was an incredible feeling; like I was decompressed, weightless. I ultimately realized that I didn't have to be stranded on a third rate carnival ride to feel that way...

(Ben turns; looks at Gessica)

I only had to be with you.

GESSICA: That was random.

SCENE SIX

Ben reluctantly steps out the front door.
GESSICA holds the door open from inside
her apartment.

BEN: It was nice seeing you again.

GESSICA: Yeah; bye. Oh- Ben...

(pause)

You still owe me for January.

(BABY heard CRYING)

(BEN leaves in disappointment.)

SCENE SEVEN

GESSICA sits on the toilet reading a
magazine. When she pulls the handle
nothing happens.

(GESSICA takes off the lid on the toilet
tank; looks inside.)

GESSICA: Shit.

SCENE EIGHT

GESSICA opens the front door for GUS; a scruffy, and intimidating Plummer.

GESSICA: Thanks for coming on such short notice.

GUS: Ubbaaa..uum.....daaa - It's nothing ma'am.

GESSICA: Well... come in.
(GUS enters.)

GUS: Nice place.

GESSICA: Thanks.

GUS: You live here alone?

GESSICA: Yes- No... Ehh, sometimes. Let me show you the toilet.

(GUS follows GESSICA toward her bathroom but once in her bedroom he stops short and stares out vacantly.)

GESSICA: I jiggled the handle and nothing happened... and then I saw that there's no water up here.

(Pause as Gus continues to stare off and Gessica realizes he's not listening. Gessica steps out of the bathroom to nudge Gus.)

GESSICA: Go... fix.

(GUS walks into the bathroom; as GESSICA becomes unsettled by what he was staring at: A SEXY PAIR OF RED PANTIES in her laundry basket.)

GUS (looking at toilet): Yeah, that's a problem.

(GUS kneels down to examine the back of the toilet. He wears unusual BLACK BOOTS WITH A RED STRIPE DOWN THE SIDE.)

GESSICA (Hides panties; turns to GUS.): I'm sorry?

(Without warning GUS pulls out a BOX CUTTER from his utility belt. GESSICA shudders at the sight of it.)

GUS: I can fix it.

(GUS eyes GESSICA up and down, then bends over to work on the toilet exposing his butt crack.)

GUS: Hey princess, haven't I seen you before?

GESSICA: No.
(GESSICA tries to cover up as much of her body as she can.)

GUS: No, I'm sure I have. Are you an actress... some kind of performer?

GESSICA: I'm an Anesthesiologist; you must have me confused with someone else.

GUS: What ever you say.

(The ATAVISTIC SOUND of the toilet tank filling up adds to Gessica's look of discontent.)

SCENE NINE

GESSICA is in her bathroom gearing up for her night as a Cam-girl. She readies her - hair - makeup; Puts on her stockings - top - bottoms - shoes with the precision and utility of a soldier with his gear.

GESSICA (Voice Over): That fat pervert doesn't know me. Guess nobody every told him that crack kills. But not even that invasion of my privacy can bring me down tonight.

(For a last bit of confidence, GESSICA is fully dressed and looks at herself in the mirror. The tight black miniskirt fits just right.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): I'm wearing my lucky dress tonight, I always make the most when I wear it.
(GESSICA looks herself in the eye.)
You look sexy, you're worth their last dollar... so take it.

(GESSICA walks away Classical/hip-hop music plays under.)

LIGHTS UP on bedroom. When GESSICA starts dancing she turns in front of the web-cam, red panties are seen in stark contrast from under her black skirt.

GESSICA (Voice Over): Most of us in the sex trade don't smile when we perform. Our faces are as stoic as a Rodin statue. I think it's because after doing this for a while you become drained emotionally. Besides; how many of these perverts actually take the time to look at my face?

(pause)

With a mute expression I become every man's fantasy. I'm their kid's under-aged baby-sitter, their doe eyed grade school teacher, their mud-flap girl.

(pause)

I don't know who enjoys this change of identity more; me or them? When I'm in front of my web-cam I'm not the same complicated single mother I was before.

(pause)

With each video stream I'm transformed; into the confident and care-free girl I long to be.

(Faster now, Gessica thrusts and flows with intricacy; like she was water.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): Every once in a while... in-between pelvic thrusts, I think about all the man-boys I exploit through my web-cam. How they give me hard earned money for offering a glimpse at something they will never receive. I feel their eyes glaring at me, as depraved men soil their socks over a 72 pixel per-inch low-res video of me.

(pause)

I think of all this, then I realize... I like it!

(pause)

It means I can control a man from hundreds of miles away. I can take from them; everything, and leave them with nothing.

(The music ends and GESSICA quickly scurries out of view as she covers herself.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): I get dressed off camera, they don't deserve extra spank time. Dancing is the easy part; what I can't stand is talking with them afterwards.

(Now dressed; GESSICA sits at her laptop and messages with her client.)

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): Well that was fun.

ANONYMOUS1 (Voice Over): For you maybe, I'm not done.

GESSICA: My clients always use their free hand to send me pleasantries.

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): How 'bout another dance then sweetie?

ANONYMOUS1 (Voice Over): Soon, give me some time.

GESSICA: Jerkoff.

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): Of course. I haven't danced for you before, have I?

ANONYMOUS1 (Voice Over): You have, I use a different name each time.

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): Why would you do that?

ANONYMOUS1 (Voice Over): Isn't this a strange way to communicate? You cant tell if I'm being sarcastic or lying. Nothing to distinguish me from anyone else except for my font choices; its so impersonal.

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): Let's give you that dance now.

ANONYMOUS1 (Voice Over): Not yet princess, by the way I likes the lighting set-up. It's a nice affect.

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): You mean effect with an "E". Affect with an "A" is when it's emotional.

ANONYMOUS1 (Voice Over): Do you always correct the men you take money from?

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): No, just you. L.O.L.

A pause as Gessica grows impatient.

GESSICA: What, are you using both hands now asshole?

GESSICA (Voice Over/typing): You still there?

ANONYMOUS1 (Voice Over): I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!

LIGHTS DOWN; leaving only the flashing low light from the monitor as her computer crashes. A scrambled noise of a MODEM DIALING sounds.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

GESSICA is on her cell phone, in a panic. She opens her refrigerator which is empty except for a carrot; she grabs it.

She reaches for a knife from a knife holder on the counter - but it's empty.

GESSICA: Where did I leave the knives?

(With frustration, she opens the dishwasher and grabs a sharp knife.)

GESSICA: Fucking voicemail.

(The carrot is cut in anger.)

GESSICA: Ben.... I need your help; some guy on the site said he'd kill me.... his username was anonymous1 - you can find out who it is right? Call back, this is important!

(GESSICA places the knife back in the dishwasher and closes it. As she walks over to the washing machine, she dials another number on her phone.)

GESSICA: What's up you sexy bitch?

(pause)

Oh, not much.

(GESSICA opens the lint-trap on her dryer - the screen is covered with lint. She puts it right back.)

GESSICA: Hey, did you borrow my electric shaver the last time you were here?

(pause)

No, I can't find the cord for it though.

(She throws the last of her laundry in the wash and starts the machine.)

GESSICA: You know I love ya. So much in fact; I want you to come over tonight.

(GESSICA pours laundry detergent on the laundry.)

GESSICA: Who?

(pause)

That's fine, bring 'em over. It can be girl's night.

(pause)

You know nothing scares me.

(Suddenly the washer JOLTS on - with GESSICA'S hand still in the washer. GESSICA SCREAMS.)

SCENE TWO

GESSICA and four alluring female house guests; COCO, AURORA, DESTINY, and CHASTITY are sitting on the floor eating pizza.

GESSICA: I've never used fruit before.

(DESTINY dabs the top of her pizza with a napkin.)

AURORA: I have. I use fruits, vegetables, sillystring... anything.

CHASTITY: Men love it when I pull out the cucumber.

(DESTINY holds up her napkin covered with grease.)

DESTINY: Gross.

COCO: The other day I put whip-cream on my nipples and licked it off for the finale.

GESSICA (Voice Over): I could learn a lot from these girls.

COCO: But I can't do that anymore.

DESTINY: How come?

COCO: Too many calories, this sista's got to lose weight.

GESSICA (Voice Over): Coco you smug bitch. I would kill to have any of these girls' bodies.

(pause)

At least I have my eyebrows.

CHASTITY (To GESSICA): What's your hit count?

GESSICA: Wha- 30 thousand.

CHASTITY: I'm close to 6 figure. I bought my first new car last week.

DESTINY: Gessica, are you still driving that two door piece of crap?

GESSICA: Yep.

DESTINY: Why do you like that car so much?

GESSICA: You should know why Destiny.

(pause)

You still going out with David?

DESTINY: Broke up a month ago, but I'm thinking about gettin' back together with him.

GESSICA: Is that for sure, or are you on the hunt?

DESTINY: I'm really thinking about sticking with David. It's just... certain things are bothering me.

CHASTITY: Like what?

DESTINY: He's so messy.

CHASTITY AURORA and GESSICA: Is that all! (Laughter)

AURORA: Every guy is like that.

DESTINY: But he left dirty pants on the stove.

AURORA: Curt does that to me.

GESSICA: How random.

CHASTITY: Be thankful it wasn't his boxers. Mike did that to me once - or was it Mitch... er- Mark.

COCO: How many guy friends do you have?

CHASTITY: Um, the ratio is about three guys to one girl.

DESTINY: You know all those guys you're friends with just want to have sex with you.

CHASTITY: Well, the Army has reserves; why can't I?

DESTINY: Chastity... you are a total slut.

AURORA: Yeah, this is your intervention.

CHASTITY: Jealous. No, Mike was the one who got charley horses a lot. I couldn't stand it.

COCO: What, like a leg cramp? That's not that uncommon. I woke up with one the other day.

AURORA: AAHHH, don't you just hate that?

CHASTITY: No, we were mid-missionary.

GESSICA: He would cramp up during sex?

CHASTITY: Yeah, at the worst times too.

(The Girls LAUGH with empathy.)

DESTINY: Now about the pants; do you think I should bring stuff like that up to him?

COCO: If it really bothers you.

DESTINY: It does, but I thought it was just a pet peeve of mine.

CHASTITY: It's a pet peeve of every girl.

AURORA: Every guy does it, and every girl is bothered by it because we're the ones who clean it up.

GESSICA: In every relationship you learn what to let slide and what not to.

CHASTITY: So choose what matters most; and hold your ground.

GESSICA: Right, because those important things increase in weight over time; like a ballast.

DESTINY: Ballast?

GESSICA: Yeah, it's added weight to steady a boat. And... if the man can't accept the ballast; throw him overboard. No matter how bad it hurts, you have to leave him.

DESTINY: You taught me that one already dear.

AURORA: (To GESSICA): Do you have four matching chairs?

SCENE THREE

The Girls stand as AURORA sets up four armless chairs in a box formation.

AURORA: So none of you have done this before?

DESTINY: No.

AURORA: Okay girls, pick a seat and sit.

(The four girls sit wondering what the hell AURORA'S up to.)

AURORA: Okay, now turn to the left.

(Each girl turns so their legs are over the left side of the chair.)

AURORA: Slowly lean back and fold your arms.

(The girls reluctantly do so.)

AURORA: Coco your first.

COCO: This is some crazy white girl shit isn't it?

AURORA: Just relax.

(With great care AURORA slowly pulls the chair out from under COCO. Surprisingly, she remains in that position, supported by the legs of the girl next to her. AURORA proceeds to do the same with the other three chairs.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): Destiny has the best pair money could buy. Her tits deserve to be viewed by millions on a cathode ray tube. Her body could only be described as perfectly fake.

(AURORA pulls out the last chair, the one under GESSICA.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): Seeing Destiny brings all my faults to bear... I fear these anatomical breasts of mine will be my downfall.

AURORA: And down on three. One.... two three.

(GESSICA falls down to the ground.)

SCENE FOUR

A book the size of a telephone directory sits heavy on the table. GESSICA feverishly thumbs through it and scribbles notes into one of hundreds of pages in a giant binder.

GESSICA (Reads from book with Mock-intelligence.): True or false. The arabinos operon, which is controlled by positive regulation, requires the presence of arabinose to transcribe and translate its structural genes?
(looks at notes, thinks.)
Fuck this.

(Cell Phone RINGS just in time. GESSICA stands and answers it.)

GESSICA: Hi mom.

MOTHER (Voice Over): So I do have a daughter, I almost forgot already.

(GESSICA walks over to a small desk and starts opening one of the many bills she has in a stack.)

GESSICA: I got your last message, I've just been real busy lately. I was studying when you called.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Oh, how's that going?

GESSICA: Good; I'm in Microbiology 10-48, and Mammalian Systems in Physiology.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Sounds like a hoot.

GESSICA (sarcastically): Oh boy.

Mother (Voice Over): Your father and I are very proud of you, but you can't stay in college forever.

GESSICA (Voice Over): I'd like to. Rather plan for my future for an eternity, than have to live up to high expectations for a second.

(GESSICA writes into her checkbook registrar and glazes over the stack of bills.)

GESSICA: I know.

MOTHER (Voice Over): How is everything?

(With frustration the bill is thrown down on the desk and GESSICA stands again.)

GESSICA: Fine.

MOTHER (Voice Over): That's good. Oh, did I tell you I started using an online dating service?

GESSICA: No, Mom. Trust me on this... there's too many weirdos online.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Well it's going great so far. I'm talking to this one man, he's a claims adjuster. He's a great man, but he keeps asking for a more recent picture of me.

(Bracing for a long chat, GESSICA grabs her baby monitor off the table and heads for her room.)

GESSICA: See what I mean?

MOTHER (Voice Over): What's wrong with being a claims adjuster?

(GESSICA moves quickly into her bedroom.)

GESSICA (sigh) Nothing mom.

MOTHER (Voice Over): I forgot to tell you that my printers on the fritz again, your father used to always help me with it. So the next time you come ov-

GESSICA: Mom, I've showed you this a hundred times, all you have to do is go to the control panel and-

(GESSICA enters her bathroom; looks in the mirror.)

MOTHER (Voice Over): Wait let me write this down.

(GESSICA'S places the phone on the counter, she sits on the toilet.)

MOTHER (Voice Over): By the way Ges, the other day this strange man called here, at first I thought he was from the dating site - but he wasn't.

(Mother is HEARD on the cell phone, Gessica is not listening.)

MOTHER (Voice Over): He was scarring me, he had a raspy voice I remember; he sounded sick.

(GESSICA enters her bedroom.)

MOTHER (Voice Over): I thought it was strange that he called out of the blue and was asking all of these questions about you.

(She starts to clean up her room.)

GESSICA: Wait - who called?

MOTHER (Voice Over): Some guy.

GESSICA: What was he asking about?

MOTHER (Voice Over): Personal things, like if I was planning on visiting you anytime soon and If you had a boyfriend. Don't worry, I didn't tell him anything - hanged up pretty quickly.

GESSICA: Just great.

MOTHER (Voice Over): You're not in any trouble are you? This doesn't have anything to do with that new job of yours?

(GESSICA finds a missing stiletto-heeled shoe under the bed. She throws it in her closet with the other.)

GESSICA: No mom, everything's fine.

(Overwhelmed, GESSICA lays on the bed.)

MOTHER (Voice Over): Then why can't you even tell me what you're doing?

GESSICA: Because it's not important; and right now I need the money.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Sweetie, you need to find a decent man and get your life back together.

GESSICA: Well thanks, love you too mom.

MOTHER (voice Over): I do love you, that's why I'm saying this.

GESSICA

Do it all while you're young.

MOTHER (VOICE OVER)

Do it all while you're young.

MOTHER (Voice Over):...because let me tell you; aging will set in before you know it, and then everything in your life starts to decline... including those perky boobs of yours.

GESSICA (Voice Over): Not a chance. My tits go; I go.

MOTHER (Voice Over): With your education you need to be making 40,000 dollars a year.

GESSICA: But I'm getting my masters and saving up money. It's not like I'm struggling.

MOTHER (Voice Over): All I'm saying is that... what is it? Around fifty percent end up going into a different field than what they went to college for.

(pause)

I think you're drifting along... you should consider other options.

GESSICA: Careers don't come as easy for most people as it did for you. And what... do you expect me to do, just drop everything and do something I hate, just for the pay?

(pause)

Let me tell you something about those people... they're miserable.

MOTHER (Voice Over): I'm only saying... it's something you should think about.

GESSICA: How could I forget; you tell me to think about it almost every week.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Well...?

GESSICA: Mom -

MOTHER (Voice Over): I know, I know. Hey, have you used that gift card I gave you last Christmas?

GESSICA: The one for the restaurant? - I'm waiting to use it when I find a decent man, like you said....

Mom; you still there?

MOTHER (Voice Over): I hope the card doesn't expire.

SCENE FIVE

Sun pours through the blue tinted arched windows as GESSICA walks down the pathway. GESSICA is talking with BEN on her cell phone.

BEN (Voice Over): Hey there.

GESSICA: Ben! You got my message right?

BEN (Voice Over): I'm doing well, thanks for asking...

GESSICA: Hi Ben; what's up?

BEN (Voice Over): I've been keepin' busy, what are you up to?

GESSICA: I just renewed my business license.

BEN (Voice Over): Guess you gotta spend money to make money. How much did it cost?

GESSICA: Too much, now about that death threat...

BEN (Voice Over): Yeah, that's terrible... you have any idea who it could be?

GESSICA: I was hoping you could find that out.

BEN (Voice Over): Well... here's the thing; normally I could figure it out... but.

(GESSICA moves to the side and leans heavy against the window.)

BEN (Voice Over): I hate to admit it but he out smarted me. He hacked the system.

GESSICA: He said he used different names.

BEN (Voice Over): Exactly... the guy's really good.

GESSICA: So what am I supposed to do now?

BEN (Voice Over): If you feel scared... I could always come over... spend the night?

GESSICA: I should be alright, thanks anyway.

BEN (Voice Over): I had to ask.

(pause)

Are you going to call the police?

GESSICA: Haven't thought about it.

BEN (Voice Over): Okay, I'm going to keep working on this; I'm worried about you babe.

(pause)

I'll talk to you later okay?

GESSICA: K- Bye.

SCENE SIX

GESSICA sits at her computer; as visions come to her.

GESSICA (Voice Over): I'll keep working on this babe. Why should I be expected to depend on a man if my father left when I was still in diapers? So I'm looking up the history of the usernames my clients have used; looking for something.... anything.

(Pause)

How 'bout this creep; The big one.

[GARAGE] The Garage is cluttered with second hand surveillance equipment. Cameras, microphones a CB radio receiver. A STRANGE MAN is in shadow; he sits at a table diligently rewiring something.

(Back to GESSICA.)

GESSICA: Or... Saw Dude3.

[GUS'S Apartment] GUS, the creepy Plumber from earlier is sitting on the couch in a sweaty undershirt watching TV. Out of the blue; it is clear that GUS is talking to himself. He speaks clearly and with strong inflection, but in a low tone of voice.

GUS: Clean your shorts. - Where you going now? - Don't you do it....

(GUS picks up a pair of scissors; stares at it.)

AAAAAAHHHH!

(hits his head)

Look who's talking to a girl; you'll never get a girl.

(pause)

I'll get a girl; that Gessica girl was nice, shaken her ass on the web-cam. I'll get a girl; I'll get a girl.... I'll get -

(Back to GESSICA.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): What is this... The Third Man.

[TROY'S living room] A candlelight dinner for two is set on the dinner table. TROY is well dressed and entertains his guest.

TROY: You look beautiful this evening. Now eat up.

(pause)

Not that you need to gain weight; didn't mean that. I Like small girls - small healthy girls; like you.

(TROY calmly takes a bite of his food. This date is ruined.)

TROY: I'll never forget prom. Will you honey?

(pause: no response)

Guess I left you speechless, or is it breathless.

(TROY get's out of his seat. A blow-up doll sits at the other end of the table. A cheap printout of Gessica's face is glued onto the doll.)

TROY: I see what's wrong sweetie; here, let me help you.

(TROY picks up some lipstick and applies it to the doll's lips.)

TROY: I'm so glad you answered my call and came over. I was so happy to see you. You didn't have to come here you know, I would have been fine going to your place.

(Back to GESSICA.)

GESSICA: Wait... Him; Office space 27.

[OFFICE CUBICAL] A skinny; tightly wound, OFFICE BOY is at his desk watching Gessica dance on his computer. His left hand is above the desk near a phone that is off the hook. He masturbates with his right hand. (under desk)

OFFICE BOY: Turn around, no - don't do that thing again. (He looks behind him) There, that's better... like that, come on...

(The PHONE RINGS loudly. OFFICE BOY stops in frustration and answers the line.)

OFFICE BOY: Forever Reality; it's always a good time for time-shares. How can I direct your call? (response- his boss again!)

I was holding... no, I didn't hang up.

SCENE SEVEN

GESSICA bobs her head from side to side while listening to rock music on her headphones. She walks past two men; they leer at her.

GUY 2: I want my arms so big that I'd need a concealed weapons permit to wear long sleeves.

GUY 1: Dude, look! Bob Villa couldn't build a better rack than that.

GUY 2: I see her; damn girl.

(Gessica sits down and starts using a machine that works out her pectorals.)

GUY 2: That girl is fine; I mean - damn.

(GESSICA sees that the men are talking about her; looking at her. She turns off the music but continues to bob her head like it's still playing.)

GUY 1: I'm goin' to talk to her.

GUY 2: Yeah right, what are you going to do invite her to yo' mom's house?

(GESSICA smiles, whips her hair back with both arms; sticking her breasts out for her two admirers.)

GUY 2: She's smiling 'bout something.

GUY 1: I can make her smile.

GUY 2: Oh, yeah. How are you goin' to do that?

GUY 1: I bet she likes it ruff.

(The weights SLAM down early as GESSICA stops and begins to walk away.)

GUY 2: Guess we'll never find out. I'd follow that ass anywhere.

GUY 1:
(GUY 1 stops working out.)
There goes my motivation.

GUY 2: A girl like that; I bet everything she touches turns to gold.

(Guy 1 casually pulls the waist of his sweatpants out, looks down.)

GUY 1: You're right about that.

SCENE EIGHT

Many EERIE SOUNDS are heard from a baby monitor; static, record scratching, baby crying, a man's voice that is too low to understand.

(GESSICA wakes abruptly in her bed; sweating. The SOUNDS stop. She looks at the baby monitor, nothing unusual. Restless; GESSICA gets out of bed.)

SCENE NINE

GESSICA walks into the living room; drinking a beer.

GESSICA (Voice Over): No chance for sleep now. Sleepless nights, long weekends; I'm lucky to have a job with such flexible hours.

(GESSICA settles on the couch as the light from the TV fills the room.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): A nine to five would be the death of me at this point.

(She starts to chug the beer.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): Now, normally I don't drink... but nothing about today was normal. One thing for sure, I have a lot to do tomorrow.

(Finished; GESSICA slams the bottle on the table.)

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

GESSICA asleep on the couch, still in her pajamas. There are 10 empty bottles of beer on the table.

(Suddenly, her cell phone RINGS and vibrates loudly on the table. Lethargically, dreary eyed - GESSICA answers it.)

GESSICA: Hello.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): It's time to wake up.

GESSICA: If you're a fox maybe... Who is this?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Someone who enjoys watching you.

GESSICA: You're going to have be more specific; I'm popular in that regard.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): My, what a pretty voice you have.

GESSICA: I'm hanging up now.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That would be a mistake!

GESSICA: Name one reason.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I'd ask what you're wearing but I can see for myself.

GESSICA: Bullshit!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Pink and white elastic pants and a t-shirt.

(GESSICA jumps up in panic; locks the front door.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): (Laughs) Do you know how easy it is to bump a lock?... No you probably don't.

(pause)

Oh, I forgot that you have the word "girl" sewn onto the ass of your pants.

(Looking down; GESSICA confirms that detail.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I always wanted to ask you girls; is the point of that to get strangers to look at your ass, or do you think putting it there is the only way they'll get the message?

(pause)

What no reply?

GESSICA: That's right.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You'll learn to obey me soon enough.

GESSICA: How did you get my number?

(GESSICA opens the door to her baby's room; everything is okay.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): They say the best thing about the internet is also the worst; anybody can use it. It's amazing what one can find out with a few clicks of a mouse these days.

(GESSICA is at the front door; reaches for the knob.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Don't touch that door!

(GESSICA looks to her left and sees that the window has its blinds up. She walks over to lower them--
CRASH - WINDOW BREAKS - GUNSHOT WHIZZES BY AS GESSICA FALLS TO THE FLOOR IN HORROR.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That almost scared the silicone out of ya didn't it sweetcakes?

GESSICA: Why are you doing this?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Glad you asked; would you be interested in changing your internet provider?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): If you want to live, listen carefully to my rules.

GESSICA (She stands): Rules?--

(The sound of a RIFLE COCKING sends it's message.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I thought I said listen? See that's when I talk and you don't.

(GESSICA positions herself behind the wall; away from the windows.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): First rule: All the blinds stay up. I guess you learned that one the hard way. Consider that a warning shot.

(pause)

Second: you can't hang up on me until I say the game is over.

(Cautiously, she reaches to pick up a cordless phone on the table beside her.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Third: Slide that cordless phone in front of the window. Do it now!

(GESSICA uses an umbrella to push the phone and charging unit in front of the broken window.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That phone stays there; as long as you're not on it... and yes, I'll ask you to make some calls with it.
(pause)

The last rule: The game is not over until you call all of your ex-boyfriends since high school and confess all the ways you used and manipulated them.

GESSICA: What?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): If you succeed and they don't hang up on you, I'll leave you alone and you can call the police.

GESSICA: Maybe, I'll just call them now?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): The best response time is four to six minutes. I can break in there and take care of you before they'd even be on the way. Besides you wouldn't want to leave your baby motherless would you?

(pause)

Hello; you still with me?

GESSICA: Stay the fuck away from my child!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): And in rare form I see. Do you have any questions before we begin?

GESSICA: Yeah, just one. Why me?- Why are you doing this?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That was two questions. I picked you because you made yourself available, you're not exactly an introvert.

(pause)

As for why I'm doing this; I hope you learn that on your own. Now, let's make some calls.

SCENE TWO

GESSICA paces nervously with the cordless in her left hand and the cell phone in the other.

(A number DIALS; GESSICA wears a wireless earpiece on her right ear; which the cell phone signal goes through.)

GESSICA: What if they don't answer?
(She sets the cell phone down.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Then we'll go back to them. But I have a feeling they'll take your calls.

BRENDAN (Voice Over): Hello.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Told ya.

GESSICA: Brendan... It's Gessica from Shermer High.

BRENDAN (Voice Over): Yes, of course... I thought... I'd never hear from you again.

GESSICA: I was just looking through my yearbook and thought I'd give you a call, talk about our time together.

BRENDAN (Voice Over): That's right, you were only a freshmen then right?

GESSICA: And you were a senior.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Oh... I see where this one's going already.

BRENDAN (Voice Over): So what are you doing with yourself these days?

GESSICA: I'm in the service industry.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Service with a smile.

GESSICA: And you?

BRENDAN (Voice Over): I'm a c++ computer programmer. It's exciting.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Great; you could of had nerd babies - now cut to the chase.

GESSICA: Yeah - and... I was... Do you remember what we did when we went out?

BRENDAN (Voice Over): I think... I remember we would get ice cream a lot... and then I'd drop you off at the movies... things like that.

GESSICA: What about when we went to the mall?

BRENDAN (Voice Over): Right... you had to leave early though to meet with your study partner at his place.

GESSICA: What did both of those dates have in common?

BRENDAN (Voice Over): Um... you were there... I was happy; is that it?

GESSICA: Brendan, I was young and naive; a totally different girl than I am now...

THIGPEN (Voice Over) Yeah, now you're old and crafty.

GESSICA: I enjoyed spending time with you... but I kind of liked your car.

BRENDAN (Voice Over): Well so did I- wait; are you saying you used me for my car?

GESSICA: A lot of freshmen did. What was I supposed to do walk everywhere?

BRENDAN (Voice Over): I can't believe this.

GESSICA: About the study partner; that was Trevor a freshman that I liked.

BRENDAN (Voice Over): I'm hanging up now!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): The beer.

GESSICA: I used you for beer also.

(The sound of Brendan SLAMMING the phone down is heard under THIGPEN'S LAUGHTER. GESSICA sets the phone on the charger.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You're good; I think I've found a natural. Okay, answer however you'd like; but be honest.

(pause)

Do you feel sorry for him?

GESSICA: Not really, he should have known what I was doing.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I couldn't help but notice what he said. Even though he was your chauffeur; he was happy.

(GESSICA sits down; but is guarded.)

GESSICA: I guess.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I bet you're a back-archer.. aren't you?

GESSICA: What's that?

(GESSICA uses a scrunchy to keep her hair back; which pushes her chest out.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): A back-archer... you know. A girl who often does that classic move when she messes with her hair because it causes her boobs to stick out.

GESSICA: I've never done that before.
(THIGPEN COUGHS; GESSICA realizes and puts her arms down.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Denial is very common among back-archers.

GESSICA: Whatever.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I hope you won't have to call off of work because of this- Oh right; you work out of the home. A self-made entrepreneur, and all you have to do is take your clothes off. The girl nation should be impressed.

GESSICA: I do it because I have to.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Nobody's forcing you to do anything.... well besides this.

GESSICA: I'm taking care of my baby on my own. And I'm in College.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): It's called child support for a reason. Hey, what do you think would happen if your mother saw your web-cam site?

(pause)

Maybe I should give her a call.

GESSICA: Don't you dare!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Or what? I have to say the home page is well crafted; doesn't leave that much to the imagination though.

(pause)

So your mother doesn't know you're a stripper.

GESSICA: I'm not a stripper, I'm a cam-girl or live entertainer.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Oh please; I'm not a killer I'm a population adjudicator. All the euphemisms you hide behind can't change the truth.

GESSICA: At least I don't strip in a club.

(pause)

You know who doesn't mind what I do? My husband. He should be coming home any minute now.

(She looks at the clock; it's 10:40.)

GESSICA: He works third shift at a door factory.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I hope you have on your poker face; with a bluff like that?

GESSICA: It's the truth, and he could kick your ass.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Then why did you say you raise the baby on your own?

GESSICA: Because... well -

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Don't worry about it; I knew you were lying to begin with. I've been watching your house for months. I didn't just happen to pick today; I waited until now because your neighbors upstairs moved out and the ones next to you are at work. Did you honestly think I was that stupid?

GESSICA (Voice Over): Yes.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I enjoyed chatting with you after your dances. So you're Trouble18?

GESSICA: In the flesh.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I could use a little trouble.

GESSICA: If troubles what you want, then you're gonna get it.

(Upon looking at her wide-screen TV.)

GESSICA: I have money; jewelry, how about you take it all and leave?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Don't you think if I wanted any of that stuff I would've taken it by now? I've done this before. The newspapers called me the Box-cutter Killer.

GESSICA: I read about that.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Good; now what do you remember about the crime scene?

GESSICA: The paper said nothing was taken from the girl's house.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That's right... It wasn't a robbery. I don't want your money. All I want is your full cooperation for one little day of your privileged life.

(The cordless phone RINGS ominously as GESSICA stares straight ahead.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): What does the caller ID say?

GESSICA: I think it's some guy I met at a coffee shop last week.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Well don't answer it.

GESSICA: Wasn't going to.
(bites her lip; too late.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Ah ha. We were about to call our next contestant, but lets talk about this first. You're a tease; it's your profession and your hobby.

(GESSICA sits on the couch. This one could be bumpy.)

GESSICA: I'm not a tease.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Then why not take his call?

GESSICA: Because I don't want to.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Yet you gave him your number? - What would you say if you answered by mistake?

GESSICA: I'd say "help some deranged psycho's holding me hostage with a gun."

THIGPEN (Voice Over): How many men have you given your number to?

GESSICA: I don't know; lots.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Hundreds probably. Now, how many of them have had their calls answered?

GESSICA: Consistently?... not many... ten or twelve.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That's a ratio of one in ten. And you can't admit you're a tease.

GESSICA: Well at least I've never been a cheerleader; they're the biggest teases of all.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You have a point there; but you're still not off the hook on that technicality.
Why do you do that?

GESSICA: What give my number without intending on going out?
(Pause)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I'm waiting.

GESSICA: I don't know.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): It's for the same reason you do anything; the attention. And unanswered calls are the best kind aren't they; it's a one way street leading straight to you. I bet when you get that first call you wonder; will he leave a message? If so, what will he say? How many more times will he call before he gives up?... Something like that... how em' I doing?

(GESSICA is stern in her silence.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Oh, no! The silent treatment; don't do me any favors sister-woman.

(pause)

All those unanswered calls; the false hopes, they have to add up to something. You and the rest are playing games with us. Well now I'm playing a game with you, a grand little payback for my friends in the heartbreak club. How do you like it?... How do... you like it!

GESSICA: I don't like it alright! I feel used... vulnerable. There are you satisfied?

(A phone DIALING NOISE begins.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Not - Even - Close.

SCENE THREE

GESSICA adjusts her earpiece as she dials out on her house phone. A Phone DIALING NOISE continues.

GIRL (Voice Over): Hello.

GESSICA: Oh... hi. Is Trevor there?

GIRL (Voice Over): Hold on.
Daddy phone.

TREVOR (Voice Over): Yes.

GESSICA: Trevor?

TREVOR (Voice Over): Gessica... is that you?

GESSICA: It's me.

TREVOR (Voice Over): Awww, not you too. The whole pre-midlife retrospective phase. Susie called me last month; now you.

Sorry, my daughter answered... that must have been strange, I'm married now.

(A BEAT)

Are you hitched up?

(GESSICA makes her way over to the window.)

GESSICA: Yes, and we have a baby girl.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): White lies have many shades; some turn black.

TREVOR (Voice Over): That's great; I wish you called earlier.

GESSICA: Me too.

TREVOR (Voice Over): We have a lot of catching up to do. Just so busy now- oh, I'm an MD; have a private practice.

GESSICA (Voice Over):

(She looks out the window with desperation.)

Okay, crazy guy. You can shoot me now.

TREVOR (Voice Over): Did you hear that Scottie was arrested?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That's enough chit chat.

GESSICA: Yeah, I heard. So... how did you and your wife meet?

TREVOR (Voice Over): College. I'm such a lucky man.

GESSICA: She's probably lucky to have you.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Enough!

TREVOR (Voice Over): Yeah, I spoil her. What does your husband do?

GESSICA: He's into gun sales.

(at earpiece)

I tell him only weak men need guns.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): The next one won't be a warning shot.

TREVOR (Voice Over): You're probably right.

GESSICA: Trevor, I'm calling because I feel bad. Like...the way I treated you when we went out I mean.

TREVOR (Voice Over): That was eight years ago. I honestly don't remember much of High school.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Probably wants to forget it... wonder why?

GESSICA: What about prom?

TREVOR (Voice Over): Sure, still have our picture somewhere.

GESSICA: And Peter from the track team was there... with Clair.

TREVOR (Voice Over): And at the end of the night you left me for Peter; is that what you're getting at?

GESSICA: Well yeah, aren't you mad?

TREVOR (Voice Over): A little bit... at the time. If you wanted to be with Peter, then that's your choice. I knew it had nothing to do with me... maybe it was for the better?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I like this guy.

GESSICA: I... em; but Peter was your best friend?

TREVOR (Voice Over): Not after that. Did you know right after prom I spent the night with Clair? We spent most of the Summer together... Isn't life strange?

GESSICA: Trevor, I gotta go, it was nice catching up with you.

TREVOR (Voice Over): Anytime.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You don't want to hear anymore about his wife?

GESSICA: Okay - bye.

(GESSICA hangs up and takes a deep breath; after being submerged with regret.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Yesterday I read about this study from the National Cancer Institute. It found that the more often a man has an orgasm the less likely he'll get prostate cancer.

(pause)

It said... that.... Men who came 21 times or more a month had a 33 percent lower risk of prostate cancer.

GESSICA: So?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Is that why you chose your line of work? Trying to rid the world of prostate cancer one dance at a time?

GESSICA: Fuck you!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I guess I deserve that; I am holding you hostage and all. I bet you regret standing up Trevor at the prom.

GESSICA: I do.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): It seems, given his outlook... that he wouldn't even be same person if he stayed with you all these years.

GESSICA: I guess that makes sense.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): So, if you stayed with him, you might not think as highly of him as you do now.

GESSICA: I don't know why I'm even talking to you about this.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Because right now I'm the only one you have to talk to.

GESSICA (Voice Over): If this guy knows me so well; maybe I know him?

(The Baby CRIES out loudly.)

GESSICA: My baby needs to eat something... Please.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You have to stay on the line with me though.

SCENE FOUR

GESSICA carefully feeds her baby some baby food. The Baby is in the crib and GESSICA talks into the earpiece.

GESSICA: I don't think it's fair that you know everything about me and I know nothing about you.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Why would I want to tell you anything about me?

GESSICA: Like you said, everyone has to talk to somebody. There must be something you can tell me and stay anonymous?

(pause)

What should I call you... you have a nick-name or something?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Thigpen.

GESSICA: That's unusual; is it German?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): No... it just sounds cool. Okay, the babies fed, now it's your turn. If you need something to eat or drink get it now.

GESSICA: Okay, there's this Chinese place down the street I've been dying to try.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You'll be dying to try it alright.

(Once inside the kitchen GESSICA grabs the left-over pizza box out of the refrigerator.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I suggest you stick to what's in the kitchen.

GESSICA:

(Pours a glass of water, and sits at the counter.)

Thanks Thigpen. You didn't have to do this.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I know. Hope you don't mind eating alone, I forgot my bag lunch.

GESSICA:

(Eating cold pizza)

I think pizza's better cold.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I don't.

(pause)

I can't even get a decent pie around here. Angelo's in New York; that was pizza.

GESSICA: When was the last time you ate pizza from there?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Long ago, when I was little.

GESSICA: Tell me a story; I want to hear about a young Thigpen out on the town.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Don't have any stories sister-woman.

GESSICA: What's with this sister-woman crap?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): It's a character from Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Did you ever see the play... or the movie?

GESSICA: No.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You should see it; probably the best performance of Paul Newman's career. Anyway, you remind me of the Character Sister-woman.

GESSICA: Was she attractive?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Oh, yes. And everybody loved her.

(laughs)

You really should see the movie.

GESSICA: I bet your childhood sucked, is that why you're doing this?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Alright sister-woman you want a story; here you go.

(GESSICA Looks over at the cordless from across the room. She stands with purpose and walks towards it.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I grew up in a worn down building with my parents and my younger bother. My brother and I liked to swim. When we went to the pool I started to notice that every week he had fresh bruises on his arm, his thigh wherever.

(Discreetly, Gessica slowly pushes the phone to the edge of the table.)

GESSICA: Go on.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): And Mic was a pale bastard, no way he could hide those bruises.

(Suddenly GESSICA SCREAMS - falls to the floor after bumping the table.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): What happened?

GESSICA: I stepped on the broken glass... from the window.

(Crouching below the window; she sweeps the broken glass under the table with an umbrella.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Can you stand?

(The cordless phone lays beside the table on the floor. She grabs it - calls 911.)

LIGHTS UP on DISPATCHER seated at a desk in a cramped space.

DISPATCHER: 9-1-1 what's your emergency.

GESSICA: I'm bleeding, help me!

THIGPEN (V.O.)
Stand up now.... or I'm coming in!

DISPATCHER
Where are you? Tell me where you are.

GESSICA: I'm trying-

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That's it game over.

(GESSICA quickly stands up, leaves the cordless on the ground.)

GESSICA: This is all your fault, for shooting up my window.

DISPATCHER: Wh- I'm trying to help you.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Pick the phone up now!

DISPATCHER: If you don't tell me where you are I can't help you.

(Timidity, she picks up the phone and sets it on the table.)

GESSICA: See it's right here!

DISPATCHER: I'm hanging up now.
(A BUSY SIGNAL follows)

LIGHTS DOWN on DISPATCHER.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Are you alright?

(GESSICA walks over to the couch with a slight limp.)

GESSICA: I'll live.
(Stretches out. GESSICA kicks off her sandals; feet are fine.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): So, my younger brother had these bruises,
and I knew it would only get worse. The old man would hit me
when my brother was a baby.

(pause)

That's what he did when he was on the bottle.

GESSICA: Couldn't you have done something?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Late one Sunday night Mic dumped all of
our dad's booze down the bathtub. I mean a cabinet full of
bottles; in the tub. When the old man caught by brother doing
this; he pushed 'em. Right into the tub.

(pause)

He was scratched up pretty bad. When Mom saw him like that we
decided to run for it. We were on that old fire escape... and...
something gave way.

GESSICA: What... do you mean?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Mom and I made it down alright... my
brother didn't.

GESSICA: So, is that why you're here today? Doing what you're
doing?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You want to know why I'm doing this? I can sum it up with one word... mendacity.

GESSICA: Mendacity?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): The system of liars and lying. At least men are honest enough to lie with their words. But women do it with their whole body, every fiber of their being. It's in the X chromosome... their DNA.

GESSICA: So you were lied to; that doesn't warrant this.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Do you think it's right to manipulate people, to get what you want?

GESSICA: No.

(GESSICA looks out the window to address her accuser.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Then why do you do it?

GESSICA: Because I can!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Exactly. I can do this. But I couldn't use sex the way you do... no I had to employ - good - old-fashioned - violence.

(GESSICA steps away as she has a revelation.)

GESSICA: Now I know... this is the only way you can get your rocks off. Isn't it?

(pause)

You perverts are all the same; I've dealt with them day in, day out. I know there is no limit to the fetishes you guys have... it's sick!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Of course we're horny. Which is a good thing; or you'd be out a job. What's sick is the way women exploit it.

(pause)

Penis pays right. Anniversary gifts, Valentine's day - It's Christmas all year round with you bitches.

(pause)

How about marriage?

GESSICA: Sorry, you're not my type.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Contract, first definition; An agreement between two or more people which is written and enforceable by law.

(pause)

Second definition; to get or incur... a disease.

(pause)

When you take away all the tradition and archetypes beaten into a women's psyche since day one... marriage is a contract, pertaining not to love or faithfulness... but property.

GESSICA: Fine, then don't give us anything.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Then I'd end up pretty lonely wouldn't I?

GESSICA (Voice Over): Probably hasn't had a girlfriend in years.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): How do they sell mattresses these days?

GESSICA: At gun point?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): They show a beautiful woman laying on it, in a slip. Sex sells; we are bombarded by it. It's bad enough we are led on by women, but now it's every magazine, commercial, movie trailer and banner ad.

GESSICA: You're right. Beauty is only skin deep; that's a dead expression these days.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You said it.

GESSICA: Is that the lesson? Are we done now?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): We're half way there.

GESSICA: But I don't have anymore boyfriends to call.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Yes you do... and if you're about to say you lost their numbers, I'll provide them.

GESSICA: Thigpen, there's something I've been meaning to tell you.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Yes...

GESSICA: I have to take a piss.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): So who's stopping you?

GESSICA: There's no way I'm letting you hear me go to the bathroom. That's a whole different form of perversion; I couldn't go with you listening anyway.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Too bad then.

GESSICA: I've had to go for the last 30 minutes. There has to be some way?

(THIGPEN takes a BREATH.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): The cordless stays at the window...

(GESSICA springs up; walks into her bedroom and heads for her stereo.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Play some music so I can tell the line is still active - Wait. If you're not done in five minutes... I'm comin' up to help you flush.

GESSICA: Understood.

(Presses "Play" - The Funeral March. Lento by Chopin is turned up.)

(She sets the cell phone down by the stereo.)

GESSICA: Take that asshole.

(GESSICA turns on her laptop before exiting the room.)

SCENE FIVE

The Funeral March is heard faintly from the other room. GESSICA is on the toilet; peaceful for a moment.

GESSICA (Voice Over): I can't believe this is happening... Destiny's a bigger tramp than me.

(She grabs a bottle of mouthwash and swishes it; while remaining seated.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): Keep it together Gessi.

(pause)

My life's in danger, and right now I'd give anything just to take a shower, brush my teeth; comb my hair... My friend the killer has that advantage over me.

(GESSICA sits up and spits the mouthwash into the sink.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): He probably woke up, showered...

(GESSICA heads straight for her computer after entering her bedroom.)

...brushed, ate a bowl of cereal in his underwear, then got ready to make my life a living hell.

GESSICA is online, typing an e-mail:

[DESTINY; THIS IS NOT A JOKE! CALL 911 BC
I CANT. THERE IS A MAN WITH A GUN OUTSIDE
MY HOUSE]

GESSICA (Voice Over): Well I'm not like the others; I wont give up without a fight.

She sends the e-mail with a prayer.
Quickly opens her cam-site though a
bookmark. Web-cam's on, she types
message:

[IS ANYBODY OUT THERE? HELP ME!!!!!!!]

(GESSICA races to pick up the phone in time.)

GESSICA: I'm back.
(turns music off)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That was real cute; I didn't know you listened to Chopin? I'm actually impressed.

GESSICA: You probably know less about me then you think.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): What's next; you play all of Vivaldi's Four Seasons while you take a sponge bath?

GESSICA: What kind of music do you like?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Everything except Country; and I refuse to listen to it because I'm afraid I might like it.

GESSICA: You have any tats?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Tatoos?... Nope, I believe if you weren't born with it, it doesn't belong on your body. I don't need to ask you that question... I know every inch of your body.

GESSICA: You're not going to get away with this. All it takes is one mistake; one loose end.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): We'll see about that. I never made a mistake with any of the girls before you.

GESSICA: I can't believe... why me? This is so random.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Shuts the hell up! What does that even mean?... Nothing's random.

(pause)

Alright, lets call our next victim- I mean boyfriend.

GESSICA: No.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I'm sorry, I didn't catch that... could you repeat it?

GESSICA: I won't continue until I call my mother, I have to know she's alright.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Why wouldn't she be?

GESSICA: Because I know you've been calling her; asking questions about me.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You don't make up the rules around here; I do.

(GESSICA tramples into the living room.)

GESSICA: Not if you lay a hand on my mother... or my baby.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You're not listening to m-

GESSICA: No, you listen to me!

(pause)

Your death threat doesn't matter if I have nothing left to live for.

(THIGPEN BREATHS HEAVILY on the other end.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Don't try anything, because I'll know... Just like I knew when you called the cops. That didn't go well by the way... you probably realized that by now. Besides, you don't want to involve your mother in this. I think you underestimated me.

SCENE SIX

GESSICA Lays on her bed, her cell phone rests on the bed by her ear. The RING TONE on the cordless phones on until MOTHER answers.

MOTHER (Voice Over): It's nice to know I still have a daughter.

(GESSICA tries to hold back her tear filled glee.)

GESSICA: Nice to know I still have you.

MOTHER (Voice Over): How are you?

GESSICA: Fine.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Let me tell you the latest about the guy I met online-

GESSICA: No- I mean, I'd love to hear all about it when I come over. I've got to help you with your printer remember?

MOTHER (Voice Over): Oh, that's right.

GESSICA: Mom... about my job, I decided I'm getting a new one.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Gessi, about that strange man that called... asking about you.

GESSICA:
(to cell phone)
I think he's just a loser, who has no life.

THIGPEN (Voice Over):
(sarcastically) Awww, that hurts.

MOTHER (Voice Over): He told me what you're doing, and I didn't believe it until I saw it with my own eyes.

(GESSICA cries openly.)

GESSICA: I wanted to tell you... but I couldn't.

MOTHER (Voice Over): It's okay sweetie, that's not you. I know it's not you.

GESSICA: And it never will be... I decided I'm going to take 4 classes next term.

MOTHER (Voice Over): I'm glad... you don't sound well; you're not in any trouble are you?

GESSICA: No mom, everything's fine.
(GESSICA squeezes her pillow tight.)

MOTHER (Voice Over): It will be alright, we all go through a difficult stage. Like me before I met your father; I don't know what I would have done without him. Once you-

GESSICA: Mom-

MOTHER (Voice Over): I know, I know.

GESSICA: No... I love you.

MOTHER (Voice Over): ...I love you too. I'm... glad you called. I'll let you go.

GESSICA: Oh and mom... I'm going to use that gift card you gave me, tomorrow.

MOTHER (Voice Over): That's good, I don't want it to go to waist.

GESSICA: Me either... good bye.

MOTHER (Voice Over): Bye.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I think we can move on now... If you're satisfied?

(A phone DIALING NOISE is heard.)

GESSICA: Not even close.

SCENE SEVEN

TROY's phone RINGS; He has no idea where it is. TROY walks one way then the other; searches all around his messy bedroom for the phone.

(TROY moves his blow-up doll to look through a mound of junk near his closet.)

LIGHTS UP on GESSICA reclined on a love seat, with the cordless phone and the earpiece.

GESSICA (Voice Over): Please don't answer... please don-

(TROY finds the cell phone in a pants pocket at the other end of the room. He quickly answers.)

TROY: Hello.

GESSICA: Hi, Troy. You busy?

TROY: Not really, I was just cleaning up around here.
(tone changes)
Thought I might never hear from you again...

GESSICA: Why did you think that?

TROY: Because you never answer my calls.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): (laughs) I like this guy too.

GESSICA: I've been busy wit-

TROY: So, how's the car?

GESSICA: Fine, I'm actually calling about that.

TROY: Oh - do I have the manual lying around somewhere?

GESSICA: Troy I can tell you're upset about it.

THIGPEN (voice Over): Very perceptive.

GESSICA: Can I start from the beginning? What was it... three years ago?

TROY: It was two.

LIGHTS DOWN on GESSICA

SCENE EIGHT

GESSICA enters TROY'S APARTMENT from the front door; cigarette in hand. She sets the car keys on the counter.

TROY: Hey.

(GESSICA jumps. TROY can't be seen from behind several house plants which were moved into the center of the apartment.)

GESSICA: Troy? I didn't see you there.

TROY: Our plants have Canker.

GESSICA: Have what?

TROY: Canker; it's bad.

(She walks over, TROY moves branches around to look at white blotches and worn bark on the plants.)

GESSICA: Well buy some new ones then.

TROY: I'll take them to a nursery.

(As GESSICA looks closer she is repulsed by the Canker.)

GESSICA: What causes it?

TROY: Pathogens getting through the bark... because of a cut or something that weakens its defenses.

(pause)

You have the keys?

GESSICA: On, the counter.

(GESSICA walks around to the other side of the plants.)

GESSICA: I had to run some errands this morning...

(GESSICA moves the plants aside.)

Hope you don't mind?

TROY: No problem, sweetie.

(TROY lunges out from the plants to kiss GESSICA - she moves her head in time, he gets her cheek.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): Was it that night....?

TROY (Voice Over): No, it was the one after that.

SCENE NINE

GESSICA stands outside the front door sets the car alarm with the key-chain. She pauses, disarms it; then arms it again. She smiles at the FUNNY NOISE it makes.

GESSICA (Voice Over):

(She enters the apartment.)

That's right, I came back early, my class was canceled.

(DESTINY straddles TROY as they make out on the couch.)

GESSICA (Voice Over): That's when I saw you... and Destiny.

(Like a crazed woman, GESSICA throws everything she can get her hands on at TROY. DESTINY stands there, fixes her outfit.)

TROY (Voice Over): She was coming on to me since the day you introduced me to her.

GESSICA (Voice Over): That doesn't mean you have to act on it.

TROY (Voice Over): If you slept with me even once while you stayed with me... I wouldn't have done it.

GESSICA (Voice Over): Don't even try and blame it on me.

(GESSICA picks up a lamp by the top of the shade and swings it at TROY.)

All LIGHTS DOWN.

TROY (Voice Over): So, you leave me with the lease, keep my car and ruin my favorite lamp... all in the same day.

LIGHTS UP on GESSICA as she sits in the love seat on the phone.

GESSICA: The car was in both of our names; that was your decision.

LIGHTS UP on TROY back on the phone call with GESSICA.

TROY: One that I made as a happy boyfriend; boy was I wrong.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You're going to tell him right?

GESSICA: I'm getting to that.

TROY: Getting to what?

GESSICA: At the time... Destiny and I...

TROY: No.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Yes.

GESSICA: We were experimenting.... together.

(TROY freezes in circumspection. Puts it together.)

TROY: You... unbelievable bitch.

GESSICA: Well thanks sweetie.

TROY: You two set me up.

GESSICA: You set yourself up; we just knocked you down.

(TROY SCREAMS at his phone; throws it.
In the cluttered bedroom, TROY manages to find a baseball bat.
He proceeds to hit the blow-up doll several times in the face with the bat. It pops.)

TROY: (With the hits.)
That - was - my mother's - lamp - you bitch.

SCENE TEN

GESSICA feels relieved after that call;
she stands confidently.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Lipstick lesbian my ass. That was just another card in your deck.

GESSICA: Your 180 off on that. When I met Destiny I was... curious.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Tell me more.

GESSICA: Not a chance. Not too much to tell anyway.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You know what I've observed?

GESSICA (Voice Over): That size does matter?

GESSICA: No.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You have a lot of dirty laundry; you're surrounded by it. It's repulsive.

GESSICA: I'm sure you've hurt people in the past.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): At least I put 'em out of their misery.

GESSICA: I hardly think you should talk of morality.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You know when certain animals... like an octopus are provoked they instinctively trigger a survival response.

GESSICA: Yeah.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Think of what I'm doing as a violent defence mechanism from a wounded animal.

(pause)

Let me ask you. We do all we can to keep up our livelihood; our standard of living right? You've got the baby, car payments, the mortgage; It's a nice place by the way.

GESSICA: I guess. So what?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That's why you control people?

GESSICA: No. You're wrong about me.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): What are you talking about? You sent your girlfriend out to entice your sex-starved boyfriend so you could get his car.

(pause)

You take money from men, for just prancing around in your bedroom. It seems the only thing you're not in control of around here is your grip on reality.

GESSICA: People use other people. One way or another, everyone does it. Attractive men use undesirable women in the same way.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I don't blame guys for lowering their standards... It's better than being single. If the girl knows she's lucky to have you, she'll go out of her way to keep you.

GESSICA: (deep breath) You're not going to kill me... are you?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Nobody knows the answer to that, not even me.

GESSICA: What do you mean you don't know? You're in control of your actions; right?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That's the only thing we really have control of.... but.... things change.

GESSICA: They certainly do.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): The one thing that doesn't change is what women look for in a man.

(pause)

You girls go after the good looking, stupid, asshole types; because you have to pursue them... try to change them. What you don't realize is you're leaving behind all the guys that would treat you better and give you more attention, because they have to.

(pause)

They would be so grateful that they were able to slip through the cracks of all this fucking neurotic feminine bullshit!

GESSICA: Are you finished?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Almost; fuck - bitch - bullshit... yeah we're good.

GESSICA: Girls want a guy that will listen to them, and treat them right... but not if he tries too hard, is not confidant, or predictable.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That was the talk show answer; not the reality. Women operate on emotion; not logic... A girl wants a guy that will give her more and more attention no matter what she does.

(pause)

There's that word... attention; it's like a drug to you. Isn't it? All the kind words, money and free gifts you get from

stripping, no doubt, releases norepinephrine and serotonin in your brain.

(pause)

Face it, you're addicted. You know it as well as I do. It's the same feeling I got when I fired that shot at you this morning.

GESSICA: I bet you were actually aiming for me, and you missed. I should just run for it.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Go for it track star. I really don't want it to end that way though.

GESSICA: Yes, I'm addicted. I can admit that now. I'm so lucky to have you; this is better than therapy. Can you let me go now?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Well let me see... that was all of your boyfriends right?

GESSICA: Yeah.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You're not lying to me are you? You know how I feel about mendacity.

(pause)

I think there's one more.

(GESSICA stands in front of the old love seat in the room.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Do a little searching in that pretty little head of yours.

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE

BEN is seated in the same love seat. This is the same room but with different decor.

(BEN plays a handheld video game.)

BEN: Are you sure you want to do this?

(DANCE MUSIC starts playing. A non-tan GESSICA comes into view wearing a skirt, stockings and a t-shirt. She dances up close to Ben's face. GESSICA drops her leg in between BEN and the video game; rubs his lap with her foot.)

BEN: I guess so.

(GESSICA'S movements are not on point, without rhythm and she is very nervous.)

(She kicks off her shoes, almost falls backward as she rolls off one of her stockings.)

(The stocking is thrown at BEN who holds it prestigiously. GESSICA lifts her skirt up to display a standard white pair of panties.)

(Trying desperately to be sexy; GESSICA starts to lift her shirt up while dancing - it gets caught around her arms and the shirt covers her head as she squirms to get out of it.)

(BEN LAUGHS, he's about to get up but she gets the shirt off.)

(GESSICA walks like a model around the side of the love seat. BEN turns and leans back to keep sight of her. By the time She is behind him - BEN falls back in the seat as it lands on the floor.)

(GESSICA CHEERS as BEN tries to roll out of it.)

SCENE TWO

In the LOW LIGHT BEN'S and GESSICA'S skin seem to blend together. They are naked in bed together; partially covered up. The early dawn sunlight peeks through the blinds as GESSICA playfully runs her finger down each panel.

(GESSICA turns to her side; BEN moves into the spooning position.)

(pause)

(For the moment BEN is happy, GESSICA is happy and everything is perfect - peaceful. GESSICA turns to sneak a peek at BEN'S smiling face. Then she lifts the arm BEN has around her by the wrist and shoves it away disparagingly.)

GESSICA: (moaningly)
EENNH.

BEN: What was that for?

(BEN puts his arm around GESSICA -- she shrugs him off again.)

GESSICA: EENNH.

(BEN gets out of bed, goes to his desk and turns on his computer.)

GESSICA: What are you doing?

BEN: I'd much rather be in bed with you... holding you. But if you're going to push me away for no good reason... I'll just start my new screenplay instead.

GESSICA: Aren't you going to get mad... do something... hit me?

(GESSICA lays there; looks at him like he was a ghost, set apart from any man she's been with.)

BEN: Can I get you anything?

GESSICA: (turns away from BEN.)
No.

SCENE THREE

Out of the darkness GESSICA turns on a few lights throughout her apartment. She is still on the phone with THIGPEN.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Well here we are... the point of no return, the final curtain, last call.

GESSICA: What if I decide not to call this one?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Huum, let me refer back to the rules.... oh that's right - you die.

(pause)

Let's recap. The glorious exploits of Gessica with a "G". And why is it spelled with a "G"? Gee... nobody cares.

GESSICA: It's better than Thigpen.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I bet you thought you would be saved by now; the bad man is vanquished and you live happily ever after.

GESSICA: Yeah that's it exactly.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Destiny; This is not a joke. Call 911 because I cant. There is a man with a gun out side my house.
(LAUGHS)

Bravo, it was very clear and concise. But you forgot.... the man outside my house has planed for every possible move I could make; and this man doesn't like loose ends.

GESSICA: What did you do.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Let's just say your friend didn't get that message.

GESSICA: If you-

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Let's review. As a young, learner permit wielding freshmen you solicited Brendan so he could buy you and your friends beer. In addition he drove you wherever you wanted including into the arms of our second lucky suitor.

(pause)

Trevor; you left him at the prom for a one night stand - why do they call it that anyway? Most of the time isn't spent standing but lying on your back... most likely in your case. It should be called a one night lay. Don't you think?

(pause)

We learned that your leaving Trevor for his best friend was the best thing you could have done for him. Because that helped shape him into the man he is now. Which is... and correct me if I'm wrong here... everything you could want in a man. I'm sure his trophy wife thanks you.

GESSICA takes that one pretty hard.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): And then there's Troy. You set him up with the help of your female lover so you could run off with his wheels.

(pause)

So, you did all of that... how do you plead to these charges?

GESSICA: This whole court's out of order.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Guilty as sin. And a baby girl to pass the reins to.

GESSICA: Yes, I did all that and more; but it's nothing compared to what I'm going to do when I get my hands on you... you sexually frustrated soon to be eunuch fucker!

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Such hostility in you. That really affected me; that's affect with an "A" right?

GESSICA: Have you even thought about that? What happens after this little game of yours ends?

(pause)

Because let me tell you, everything you've heard about woman scorned... is true. When this is all over; I'm going to find your ass.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): How do you plan on doing that?

GESSICA: It shouldn't be that hard to find someone hailing from New York with a dead younger brother named Mic.

(THIGPEN LAUGHS malevolently.)

GESSICA: You never lived in New York did you?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I never had a brother.

SCENE FOUR

GESSICA rubs her left ear before placing the earpiece back on. The cordless phone's DIALING SEQUENCE is heard. GESSICA sets her cell phone on the table.

BEN (Voice Over): Ges..(yawn) how's it going?

GESSICA: Hi, did I wake you?

BEN (Voice Over): No, I'm just tired; I couldn't get any sleep last night. Have you had any more death threats?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Don't even think about it!

GESSICA: Whoever it is has been calling my mother... but that's it.

BEN (Voice Over): That message you left really scared me... the thought of losing you I mean.

GESSICA: I wanted to talk.

BEN (Voice Over): Okay, 'bout what?

GESSICA: Us.

(pause)

What happened to us.

BEN (Voice Over): I wouldn't say it happened to us.

GESSICA: So you're saying, us is what happened?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Enough semantics.

BEN (Voice Over): Why were you trying to trick me into getting you pregnant?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Guess he beat you to it.

GESSICA: What?- Getting pregnant was an accident.

BEN (Voice Over): Oh, so you accidentally kept pushing me away in bed for weeks. Until that one night when you dropped your panties and jumped on me.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): There it is.

GESSICA: You could have kept it in your pants.

BEN (Voice Over): You could have not held out on me like that. And why did you happen to break up with me right after you found out you were pregnant?

GESSICA: Because you wouldn't let me keep it. I'll never forget that night.

(RAINFALL is faintly heard.)

GESSICA: It was pouring; but all the rain in the world couldn't wash away what you... You said if I had the baby it would be without you.

(pause)

Do you have any idea how bad that felt? All I wanted was for you and I to bring a life into this world.

BEN (Voice Over): That doesn't mean you should find some sneaky way to get pregnant.

GESSICA: It just happened.

BEN (Voice Over): It just happened? No avalanches; landslides just happen... you knew what you were doing.

GESSICA: You wouldn't have wanted the baby If I asked.

BEN (Voice Over): That's right because at the time we couldn't afford it, not to mention the added responsibility.

(pause)

No matter what, you knew I would have to support the child; why do you think I'm working two jobs now?

GESSICA: Are you saying I did it on purpose?

BEN (Voice Over): Maybe.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Yes, that's what he's saying. Aren't you listening?

GESSICA: It was the ballast... me getting pregnant was the ballast.

BEN (Voice Over): Ballast? What the hell are you talking about?

GESSICA: That's just it you don't know.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Don't pull that, you don't know shit.
(pause)

Tell him the rest; tell him you were talking about him behind his back- flirting with his friends with the only intention of making him jealous.

(GESSICA stares blankly as she realizes that she did that too.)

BEN (Voice Over): Just tell me in plain English why you had to get pregnant?

GESSICA: The time was right.

BEN (Voice Over): It's not a biological clock anymore. It's a ticking time bomb waiting to destroy the independence of mankind.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): That's right. Now... tell him the rest.
(Rifle is COCKED)

(THE BABY CRIES OUT after the rifle sound sending Gessica into panic.)

GESSICA: Oh God..no!

(GESSICA runs over to the doorway to check on the baby from outside the room.)

BEN (Voice Over): Are you alright? You want me to come over?

THIGPEN (Voice Over): You're not done that will count as a hang-up.

GESSICA: No- Don't. We need to talk.

BEN (Voice Over): Okay- I'm coming over. (CLICK)

(A DIAL TONE echoes like a death sentence in Gessica's ear. - She drops the house phone. She cannot get a word in - she mouths something inaudibly but her face conveys "oh shit" in every possible language.)

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Sorry sister-woman, you know the rules.

GESSICA: No... please I'll do anything.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): Spoken like a true member of the sex trade.

GESSICA: Do whatever you want to me, just leave my baby alone.

THIGPEN (Voice Over): I guess that's my invitation... see ya real soon.- (CLICK)

GESSICA runs to grab the cordless phone - phone's dead. She hangs it up and checks it again. She casts away the earpiece and the cordless phone.

GESSICA: He cut the fucking line.

GUS stands along the outside of a house.

Below the knees - an axe lowers into view.

GUS wears a ski mask and BLACK BOOTS WITH A RED STRIPE ON THEM.

(FEAR - PANIC - SCREAMS as GESSICA tries desperately to pull the couch to block off the front door. - She drags it slowly.. until one end is against the door.)

(GESSICA runs into her bedroom. She looks out her window with anxiety.)

(GUS gets inside through the window in the babies room.)

(Suddenly; the motion sensitive bear from the living room starts SINGING "All of Me.")

(GESSICA; sees that GUS accidently set off the bear. She runs up to her bedroom door and closes it right before GUS gets in. GESSICA leans up against the door as GUS pounds on it from the other side.)

GUS: Redrum...(Laughs) do you hear me?

(GUS rips off his ski mask in anger.)

GUS: Little pig, little pig let me in. Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin.

(pause)

Then I'll huff and I'll puff... and blow your house in.

(WHACK - GUS swings his axe. The unmistakable sound of an AXE PRYING INTO WOOD is heard.)

(GESSICA backs away from the door. WHACK - WHACK, Gessica stares at the door in horror... until the noise stops. For a moment nothing is heard.)

(She slowly steps toward the door. Now her head a foot away from the door; listening real close. - WHACK part of the axe peeks through from the other side, hurling GESSICA backward.)

GUS: (GUS looks at Gessica through the hole he's made in the door.)

How about a dance!

(GESSICA SCREAMS, as GUS continues to hack away at the door. With nowhere else to go she heads for the bathroom.)

(GESSICA slams the door, locks it and slumps to the floor in despair. She is on the brink of madness as the POUNDING continues outside.)

(GESSICA'S CELL PHONE RINGS from on top of a table in the living room. GUS smashes it with his AXE- ringing stops.)

GUS: Oh, I'm sorry... was that for you?

(GUS reaches in to open the bedroom door from the inside. He moves toward the bathroom door.)

(GESSICA sits motionless in the bathroom. She has an idea, turns around frantically looks through the cabinet.)

GUS: Honey I'm home. Had another hard day at the office. And the traffic.... was murder.

(GESSICA finally looks on the side of the toilet and finds a bottle of air freshener. Pulls the trigger to test it.)

GUS: I've always wondered why women spend so damn long in the bathroom. I mean.. you can't all have IBS.

(GESSICA calmly gets low on the floor to look under the door. Gus is a few feet away.)

GUS: I guess I'll just have to bash this boor down and find out.

GUS:

(GUS steps closer to the door.)
You hear me?

(GESSICA forces the door open with all her might; hitting GUS. He stumbles back up - she sprays him in the eyes with air freshener. As GUS YELLS like a girl, Gessica runs into the living room.)

(GESSICA struggles; she tries to move the couch away from the front door.)

GUS: You're going to pay for that bitch!

(NO TIME - Gessica runs over to the kitchen. She goes for a knife but the knife holder is empty. She looks at the closed door on the dishwasher - NO TIME.

(GUS spots her from the bedroom doorway. She runs - he runs.)

(Once inside the babies room; GESSICA slams the door on GUS'S arm. When she notices this; she leans into it hard. GUS gets his arm back; after he starts to pull it in and GESSICA closes the door on him again.)

(GESSICA closes GUS out - locks door. She leans against the wall by the door.)

GUS: Are you scared yet? Well... you should be.

(The BABY CRIES; GESSICA breaths heavily.)

GUS: How's my two favorite girls doing in there?

LIGHTS DOWN on GUS.

(GESSICA walks over to the crib... slumps down beside it. She looks off to the side and stares at something on the ground. GUS POUNDS on the door.)

(On the floor under the crib is the electric shaver cord GESSICA has been looking for. She LAUGHS at the absurdity.)

GUS: (A CRASH is heard.)
What the fuck?

(With anticipation GESSICA listens to the violent struggle on the other side of the door.)

FURNITURE IS BANGED AROUND - MUFFLED
PUNCHES - THINGS BROKEN.

Until - A BODY CRASHES TO THE FLOOR AND
FOOTSTEPS ARE HEARD.

(And then.... silence. GESSICA stands near the door - WHAM. She jumps back as the banging persists. From beside the crib GESSICA looks over at the window; it is open slightly. WHAM - She looks back at her baby.)

(GESSICA looks down from above the crib. She wraps the power cord tightly around each palm of her hands - stretches it out.)

GESSICA: Okay, mommy's got work to do.

(With wrathful intent she walks toward the door. - Closes her eyes - slow breath.)

(WHAM - the door contorts to the force of a body driving into it.

(pause)

She hears FOOTSTEPS - opens eyes - swings door open as a man rushes past her into the dark room.)

(GESSICA charges for the stunned figure with his back to her; near the far wall. - She swings the cord around his neck - pulls tight - choking him. The man GASPS.)

GESSICA: What was that... I couldn't catch it. Not much to say now is there asshole!

(Suddenly the man rights himself and pushes Gessica back with him out into the living room. The man sends GESSICA into the side of the dryer - he breaks loose.)

(GESSICA grabs the dirty lint trap from the dryer and shoves it into the man's face. He COUGHS and stumbles toward the kitchen and lands on the floor.)

(GESSICA stands there looking on.)

BEN: No, stop (cough) Gessica... it's me... please.
(Ben moves his arm from his face and lifts his head up.)

GESSICA: Ben... is it really you?

BEN: He's gone now.

(GESSICA goes to him - falls to his level as they embrace.)

BEN: I told you I was coming over... It's going to be alright sweetie... don't worry.

(GESSICA CRIES out with joy and relief. BEN enjoys every second of this moment. GESSICA sees that BEN is banged up and his nose is bleeding.)

GESSICA: Oh, babe... you're bleeding.
(She stands)
Let me clean you up.

BEN: That was a rush! I guess you have to be pushed to the limit to truly feel alive.

(BEN manages to get on his feet as GESSICA comes back with paper towels. She uses the paper towels to dab the blood away.)

GESSICA: No, don't tilt your head back... move it forward.

BEN: And I don't mean alive in the spiritual sense; this is something primal...something basic.

(She takes another piece and sticks part of it up his nose.)

GESSICA: There you go.

(GESSICA looks around at the living room - furniture moved - things broken. She walks over to the front door which is wide open; she closes it.)

GESSICA: Did he...

BEN: He's gone... you won't be seeing him again, believe me.

(GESSICA looks at the odd display on the counter: The singing teddy bear has an axe laying across his lap.)

GESSICA: I hope you're right.

(BEN moves in, stands at GESSICA'S side.)

BEN: Have I told you how beautiful you are?

GESSICA: Only every chance you get.

(pause)

Come on... I'll make you something to drink.

(They step around to the kitchen; GESSICA hovers around as BEN finds a seat at a table.)

GESSICA: What do you want?

BEN: What do you have?

(She looks in the refrigerator.)

GESSICA: Beer in da' mini fridge, some... old milk, water; Oh I could make hot tea.

BEN: Tea sounds great, thank you.

(She grabs a tea bag from the cupboard and turns on the stove.)

GESSICA: You know what; I think I'm very lucky to know a man like you.

(GESSICA prepares the tea kettle and places it on the hot burner.)

BEN: I agree. I'm glad you said that.

(pause)

I don't know what I'd do without you?

(When GESSICA turns to face BEN they say nothing but convey plenty as they look fondly at each other for a moment.)

BEN: So, what do you think?

GESSICA: Tomorrow's Friday right?

BEN: Yes...

GESSICA: Any good movies coming out?

BEN: That thriller I mentioned the other day.

GESSICA: David Fincher, right?

BEN: Yeah.

(GESSICA stands there, thinks.)

(BEN pulls out a RED BOX-CUTTER and holds it tentatively behind his back - flipping the blade in and out.)

LIGHTS DOWN on BEN

LIGHTS UP on a slowly rocking cart on a carnival Ferris Wheel. BEN and GUS sit beside each other.

GUS: Why did we have to meet here?

BEN: It's private; but also in public. In case you got any ideas.

GUS: They probably think we're necking up here.

BEN: We'll here's your money lover.

(BEN gives Gus a small stack of hundreds.)

BEN: You're only going to scare her.

(GUS looks away then looks down.)

BEN: What's wrong with you? I mean it, don't hurt her.

GUS: That's fine I got it. I'm just... afraid of heights that's all.

LIGHTS DOWN on Ferris Wheel.

LIGHTS UP on BEN laying in the grass wearing a headset; a laptop in front of him. He uses his cell phone to switch back and forth; he changes his voice as Thigpen. A rifle is at his side.

BEN: Are you alright? You want me to come over?

THIGPEN: You're not done that will count as a hang-up.

GESSICA (Voice Over): No- Don't. We need to talk.

BEN: Okay- I'm coming over. (CLICK)

LIGHTS DOWN on BEN.

- BACK TO SCENE -

LIGHTS UP on BEN sitting at the kitchen table with the box-cutter behind his back.

BEN: So, what do you think?

GESSICA: I could get a sitter...?

(The tea kettle WHISTLES loudly as steam spouts upward. GESSICA stands motionless as BEN continues to flick that murderous blade in and out... INDECISIVELY.)

CURTAIN