

Verbal Prostitution

By

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ACT I

Lonnie Shelwick, nerdy looking, and in his late thirties, is a wealthy businessman and restaurant owner. He is sitting in his lavish and big office. Looking over some papers and waiting for the next applicant to interview for the new restaurant he is opening. He's gets a call from his secretary.

Secretary. Mr. Shelwick, the next candidate is here.

Lonnie. Thank you, send her in.

[An attractive woman, also in her late thirties, Connie Lattimore, comes into the room. Lonnie comes out from behind his desk and shakes her hand.]

Lonnie. Come in, come in. Please sit down. How are you doing today?

Connie. Just fine, thank you.

Lonnie. Did you find the place all right?

Connie. Yes, no problems, I'm used to getting around in the city.

Lonnie. Yeah, for some reason, a lot of candidates are getting lost. I don't get it. It's seems pretty straight forward to me. Please have a seat.

Connie. Thank you. Well, some people can get intimidated by the traffic, and trying to get around.

Lonnie. I guess so. As you know, we are interviewing for the new restaurant I am opening up. Called, you can guess the name, Lonnies. Big surprise right. And I am Lonnie. And you're saying, no really, I couldn't tell, considering you have this big nameplate on your desk. Well, this is our fourth restaurant that we're opening up and we're very excited. I always make it a point to interview all the final candidates, and you are one. So let me first ask, have you heard of Lonnie's, and how we operate, and why would you want to work at Lonnies?

Connie. Of course I've heard of Lonnies. I've been to the Lonnies in Philadelphia many times. Your reputation for service and quality is outstanding. I really appreciate your philosophy of always making every customer feel that they are being personally served, and this is the main reason that I want to work here. I want to work for an organization that has such a stellar reputation. That does things the right way. So if I was lucky enough to be hired, and people asked me. Where do you work? I could proudly say, Lonnies. I want to work for an organization, that, when, people here the name, they don't cringe. They kind of nod their heads, and say, okay.

Lonnie. Very good. I like that answer. I am committed to never becoming a hack in this business. As you may know, I am not an expert in the restaurant business. This is an investment for me. However, I've done extensive research about running a restaurant, and I hire the best people. People who have experience and know this business. And these people have done most of the screening of the candidates, and generally I trust their word, but I do have some say, some sway, as you might expect. You are one of three final applicants for the head facilitator. Some call it a hostess, but I don't like that term. You do so much more than just greet people, and take reservations. I consider this to be a very important position at the restaurant. More than people realize. You are the first representative of the restaurant. The first impression, that people get. That has to be a good impression. That good impressive seed has to be planted in the customer's mind right away. Okay. [Lonnie looks down at Connie's resume] Well, looking at your resume. You started as a waitress. A lot of experience there. You've went to hostess positions. A lot of good restaurants. I see. It looks here that you've had a long stretch, of not working. There's a gap. Then you returned last year, and now you are currently working at the Settler's Inn, as a hostess, manager. That's a fine restaurant, I've eaten there. If you don't mind. Could you elaborate, as to why there is such a gap in your employment history?

Connie. Not at all. Before I got married. I was always working. So I have extensive experience in the restaurant business. I stopped working after I got married. To concentrate on raising a family. Unfortunately the marriage did not work out, so after the divorce. I returned to working.

Lonnie. Divorce, say no more. I have been through it myself. Always a tough situation to deal with. I appreciate your honesty. I've since remarried. So why, do you want to leave the Settler's Inn. It's a nice place.

Connie. Lonnie's, to be honest, offers better benefits, a better benefit package, and it would be more money. Along with your excellent reputation. And the way the economy been going. And I wanted to work at a place where I feel that I'm appreciated.

Lonnie. Thank you for your candor. Yes the economy, is just brutal these days. They are just not doing the things they need to get it to grow. Don't get me started on this subject. Why didn't you feel appreciated, at the Settler's?

Connie. Well it kind of goes back to what you were saying about the position of facilitator. There's a lot that goes into making sure everything runs smoothly. When things do run smoothly, there can be a tendency to forget about why things are running so well. I don't know if you're a football

fan, but it's like the offensive lineman, who's really blocking well, and doesn't get called for holding. You notice the quarterback, and the receiver, scoring, but never the lineman, but they couldn't do anything without the lineman's play. Nothing get done, it all starts up front.

Lonnie. That's probably a great analogy, but unfortunately, I am not a football fan. I'm probably the only male where that analogy won't be effective. I'm an original nerd, but I see what you're saying. When things are running smoothly, that means people are doing their jobs. I was an IT specialist some years ago, and when all the computers are running well, nobody pats you on the back, but as soon as there is a problem, it's you're doing a terrible job. So I can relate to what you are saying. Let me ask you. What is your strategy, or belief, personal style, for dealing with people. You know, the different personalities, you encounter, on the job? From the burned out waitresses, to the massive ego chefs, the hard to understand bus boys, and especially the customers.

Connie. I believe in being straightforward. Tell people what exactly needs to be done, make your position clear, but always address people respectfully, positively. Notice and compliment people when they have done a good job, but also be assertive about what they can improve on, what needs to change and be corrected.

Lonnie. Okay, I like that answer. How about? If you, let's say, two groups, both made reservations, for seven thirty, and one group arrives at seven. There are no tables available. The head of the group, starts demanding to be seated. They're new customers. The other group arrives right behind them. This group are regular customers. they always order expensive items. The restaurant makes a small fortune off of them. It's about 7:20 now, only one table opens up. Which group do you give the table to? The group that arrived first, or the regular customers that arrived after them.

Connie. This has happened. That's a good question. I would give the table to the wealthy regular customers. They've proven their loyalty, you know they will be back. The first time group. They might be from out of town. Now they might become regulars just like the first group, but you don't know.

Lonnie. How would you deal with the first group. Now they're really angry.

Connie. You have to smooth it over, be polite and charming, tell them that the other couple made their reservations for seven twenty, give them a bottle of wine and promise them the next table. Something like that. I think in those situations, you have to reward loyalty, unless it's the president of the United States, or someone like that, where exceptions can be made.

- Lonnie. It is a tough scenario, but I would probably do the same thing. So I like that answer. But I would also point out. That with the proper efficiency, this situation should not occur.
- Connie. Yes, you're absolutely right, this should never occur.
- Lonnie. This may sound strange, but you look familiar to me.
- Connie. I get that a lot actually.
- Lonnie. Really, yes you definitely do. I never get that. Can you give me, what you believe are the qualities of a great restaurant? When you go into a great restaurant, what do you want to see, impresses you.
- Connie. I like a classy décor. Not too upscale, but you are impressed., and real, not faux, for example a real fireplace, not a fake electric or gas, although gas can sometimes work. Smiling faces, that greet you, pay attention to you when you come in. A great menu, with a lot of variety, water and bread that comes quickly, and good quality bread. Not something that is slapped together. Every time I get mediocre bread, the meal is generally not of high quality. Also the salad, has to be fresh and of high quality, not some old lettuce thrown in a bowl. Speaking of bowls, all the silverware and plates have to be of high quality. Quality and experienced waiters and waitresses, professionals. Not rookies who come around every two minutes asking how you doing. You need good portions, not overwhelming, but you never have a customer leaving hungry. And also, you don't want the customer to feel like they are being pushed out of the door when they are finished. A great desert menu, and high quality coffee, and espresso. I really believe that you can't skimp on the details. People who know quality, notice this.
- Lonnie. Yes, I like all of those suggestions. As I mentioned, I do own the restaurants, but I am not experienced in the business. I do have a lot of experience eating in the finest restaurants. I can say that, but I made my money in the IT field. So for me, this is an investment, and because I want this to be a successful enterprise. I have hired the best in the food service industry to run these places, and make the majority of the decisions. However, I will make my recommendations of who impressed me. My managers have the autonomy to override my recommendations and have on occasion. That's how you maintain success, you hire the best and let them do their jobs. When you are, outside the realm of your own expertise. I thought you answered my questions very well. I'm always honest. Some might say too honest. I feel that your age might be a negative.
- Connie. My age? Why do you say that? If you don't mind me asking, because I never even thought that would be a consideration.

- Lonnie. You are highly qualified for the job. However, there are a lot of aspects to this position. This position starts with the presentation. You are very attractive, don't get me wrong, but you are thirty eight, same age as me actually, but it could be that you are too old for the position.
- Connie. I'm sorry to hear that. I wasn't aware that there was an age limit for the job.
- Lonnie. No, of course not. There is no age limit. However, we both know, that an attractive person, and you are attractive, I'm not trying to offend you, in any way, is psychologically pleasing. To the customer. This creates an immediate good feeling for the customer. Your presentation is great now, but I'm thinking down the road. If you were to stay in the position for a long period of time. There could be some diminishment. Let's be honest, you're probably slightly past your prime, and on the descent.
- Connie. [getting irritated] To be honest. I don't like the way our conversation has turned. I've never encountered this on an interview. I don't see how my age should be any consideration.
- Lonnie. The position of head facilitator is a job of presentation and representation, you're presenting yourself, greeting people, you're like an actress paying a part, you have to look the part, and your representing the restaurant itself, the first impression.
- Connie. Yes, I see your point, but you also have to consider that , at a sophisticated, classy restaurant, people won't respect a hostess, that is clearly hired, just because she's young and good looking.
- Lonnie. Yes, I know what you are saying. People like the older put together type. It does add class. We're going for a more younger crowd at Lonnie's, the young successful clientele.
- Connie. Okay, well, thank you for interviewing me.
- Lonnie. I'm sorry if I offended you.
- Connie. [becoming angry] I do appreciate your honesty. At least I know where you stand. I just, quite frankly, feel that it quite inappropriate to even consider age for this position. This conversation should have no place in the interview process. There are some things that you should not say to a prospective applicant. You have my resume. Just remember, people won't respect a restaurant that has a young, chippie, implants, vapid blond bimbo hostess that doesn't know her right breast from her left, and couldn't run high

school lunchroom. If that's what you're looking for.

Lonnie. I apologize if I offended you. What a minute. High school. Yes, I think I remember now. Are you, Connie Angelotti? Shawnee High School?

Connie. Yes, that's my name before I got married.

Lonnie [excited]. Wow, that is you. I knew you looked familiar. I graduated with you, you don't remember me? Lonnie Shelwick?

Connie. No, I'm sorry, it's been twenty years.

Lonnie. Ah, come on, really? I was in your English class, freshman year, your social studies class junior year, and I was in the same homeroom all four years.

Connie. Sorry, it was a long time ago.

Lonnie. This is unbelievable. What a coincidence. Yes, I see it now. Connie Angelotti. Can I talk to you for a while? Just talk, I've always wondered what happened to you, after high school. Can you stay and talk? Just for a little while.

Connie. No, I really have to get going. I don't feel comfortable, the way the interview ended, and I do have some other appointments.

Lonnie. I'm sorry about that. Please, just for a little while. Are you hungry? I could have some food brought in. Was it the past your prime, on the descent, thing. I'm sorry about that. Please, I'd never thought I'd get a chance to see you again. A chance to talk to you.

Connie. Why me? Didn't you go to all those class reunions?

Lonnie. Yeah, I went to all the class reunions. All the people I didn't want to see were there. You weren't at any of them.

Connie. No, I have no interest in them. The past is the past.

Lonnie. Just talk to me for a little while.

Connie. No, I have to get going.

Lonnie. I know you might think I'm a bit crazy, but this is such a chance meeting. With someone I've always wondered about. This is going to sound crazy to you, but I'm totally serious. I'll pay you to talk to me. Just for a little while.

Connie. Pay me? To talk to you? This is getting a little strange.

Lonnie. I'm loaded. I'll pay you a thousand dollars to talk to me. For an hour. The money, it's nothing to me. A drop in the bucket. I'll make it back and then some, with the interest on my investments in about an hour.

Connie. A thousand dollars, just to talk to you. I don't get it. Why me? This is a joke right?

Lonnie. No. This is not a joke. I'm dead serious. You're Connie Angelotti, I'm dying to find out what you've been doing. Aren't you curious about what I've been doing? How I got to be so successful?

Connie. Not really. I'm having trouble remembering who you were in high school. I could use the money. We didn't even know each other in high school. I don't think so, it's a little too weird.

Lonnie. I know it wouldn't mean that much to you, but it would mean a lot to me. How about two thousand dollars, to talk to me, for an hour, one hour.

Connie. How about ten thousand dollars?

Lonnie. Ten thousand is something to me. Here it is. Four thousand dollars, for one hour, just to talk to me for an hour. That's all I can spend. I can draw up a consulting contract, to make it official, but then you have to pay taxes, or I could give cash. Just an hour, and you're walking out of here with four thousand dollars in cash.

Connie. This is all so unexpected. This is a new one on me.

Lonnie. Me too. I've never done this before. It will be between you and me. I look at it this way. A lot of wealthy people won't think twice about spending four thousand on a bottle of wine, or a certain box of cigars. To me it would be worth it, to talk to you.

Connie. I just can't believe you would spend all that money, just to talk to me.

Lonnie. It's just such a chance meeting. This may have never happened, ever meeting, as adults.

Connie. It just feels strange. Let me think about it.

Lonnie. What's to think about? Four thousand dollars.

Connie. How does it go down? You say just for an hour?

Lonnie. Here's what I'll do. [Lonnie goes to a safe in his office, and gets out four thousand dollars] I have four thousand dollars in cash. I'll give you half to hold, and I'll give the other half, when the hour is up. Here [Lonnie counts and puts two thousand dollars in a nice leather pocketbook] I'll put two thousand in this nice

Louie V. leather pocketbook that you can keep. The other two thousand, I'll just keep right here on my desk. The only condition I have, is that you have to be honest with me and engage in a real conversation, and it all will go no further than this room. No topic is off limits.

[Connie counts the money and puts it back into the pocketbook]

Connie. This is a nice pocketbook. This isn't a knockoff Louie is it?

Lonnie. Lonnie Shelwick doesn't buy anything knockoff. What do you say?

Connie. To be honest. This happens to come at a time, when I really do need money. I just don't know if I have anything to say really, to talk to you about. I barely remember high school.

Lonnie. Don't worry about that. I have plenty to talk about. Remember I can draw up a consulting contract, real quick, but then, you might have to pay taxes, though.

Connie. I would like to get the money under the table, but what guarantee do I have to get the other half. If the conversation turns bad, and you're not satisfied. That other two thousand.

Lonnie. I could write up a promissory note. Believe me. You will get the other half. It's nothing, it's not a big deal to me. I have very strong business ethics, my word is golden. When I make a deal, I stick to it. It's all in the privilege of wealth, we can decide how we want to spend our money.

Connie. What about the job?

Lonnie. This conversation will have nothing to do with the job. I thought you did well in the interview and are highly qualified. As I mentioned, I don't make the final decision on the hiring. I will give you a good recommendation, but I will mention that you are thirty eight and might be too old, for the position. However, I'm not an expert in this field, my managers might not feel that that is an issue at all.

Connie. God, this is nuts, I could really use the money. One hour, that's it.

Lonnie. Great!

Connie. All right, when does the time start.

Lonnie. Okay, why don't we go by this clock. [Lonnie goes over to a big clock on the top of his bookshelf]. Great, look it's ten o'clock, one hour from now, eleven, will end it.

Connie. All right, the time is yours.

Lonnie. Connie Angelotti. Wow. I always wanted to talk to you. I could never talk to you in high school. You were in a higher social strata. Connie Angelotti, she's such a hottie. That's what we used to say. I can't believe you don't remember me.

Connie. It's twenty years ago.

Lonnie. Well, I still remember you. Images are seared into my mind about you. Here look, here's a picture. [Lonnie goes over to the bookshelf and gets out the high school year book].

Connie. You still have a yearbook?

Lonnie. Of course, you don't?

Connie. No.

Lonnie. Really that's hard to believe. [Lonnie comes over and shows Connie some pictures]. See, there you are, cheerleader.

Connie. Oh my goodness, look at that hair style. All right where are you.

Lonnie. Oh, here, lets see, there I am.

Connie. Okay, Leonard Shelwick, you were a nerd, wait a minute, you were the nerd with the tiny...[Connie starts to laugh].

Lonnie. Go ahead, you can say it. I was the nerd with the tiny bird.

Connie. Funny how a nick name can always be remembered.

Lonnie. Yeah, I hated that nickname.

Connie. Yeah, I guess so.

Lonnie. It ruined my whole senior year. I had to deal with that shit every day in my senior year. It never let up. Especially from the crowd you hung out in. I was a skinny nerd. What was I going to do about it. I couldn't kick anyone's ass at that time. I had to take it, just try to comeback with my own comments. Pretty hard to come back from the nerd with the tiny bird. How many small dick references are there, millions.

Connie. Ah, well, it was twenty years ago. How did you get the nick name?

Lonnie. Well, not being good looking. I had to go out with who I could get. I went out with Mary Candolato a couple of times. A fat big nosed beast of a chick. Hey that's all I could get. The best I could hope to do. Not like you, one of the good

looking kids. Well, it was after a party, we both had a couple of beers. We decided to go skinny dipping at Wowams Lake. Bad idea. It was cold. She got a quick look after I got out, before I could get my pants on. Things went badly after that. I tried to get into her pants, she got mad. Then of course she spreads the rumor that she saw my bird and how small it was. You know how that kind of thing spreads. Whole year uined. By the way. I'm a grower, not a shower. Woman do know that right. That some guys are growers, that a penis can be very unimpressive when not hard but very impressive when hard. Woman know that right?

Connie. Yeah, woman know that. That's was too bad. That was a hard one to shake. The nerd with the tiny bird. I guess it's the rhyme of it.

Lonnie. Well, I've shaken it. Believe me. Look at this office. In fact, my success is due in a large part because of the way I was treated back then. Believe it or not. I owe a large part of my success to you.

Connie. To Me? I feel a back handed compliment coming.

Lonnie. Yeah, you're right. We we're in different circles. Back then, you were a cheerleader. You were so good looking. So hot. You always wore the right things. Always the right fashion of the day. Hung out with the coolest kids in the school. The highest social level. Went out with Wade Lacel. The star quarterback. I was a nerd. Hung out with nerds. The not good looking people. Much lower level than you. I had such a crush on you. I was obsessed with you.

Connie. Really?

Lonnie. Oh yeah. I'm surprised you didn't see staring at you. I guess when you're that good looking, you get used to people staring. You know, there's always one person that really does it for you. There just your dream type. Fantasy type, you know, the ultimate sex symbol for you. And you were that for me. That image, for a guy at least, will stay with you forever. Especially in that cheerleader outfit. Those tan legs.

Connie. This is getting creepy, I don't know what you want with this, but if you touch me in any way. I'll take your whole empire down.

Lonnie. No, it's not like that. It's just words. Believe me I have no intentions like that.

Connie. All right. I'm not someone you want to mess with. I can take care of myself.

Lonnie. No, it's nothing like that. I'm a nerd. Hey, you could probably kick my ass. It's just a conversation. Remember the rules. No topic is off limits. Honesty.

Connie. Just a conversation. Okay.

Lonnie. Where was I. Oh yeah. Those tan legs. Your legs were always tan, all year round. I don't know how you did it. And your ass. It was a work of art. So round, and your breasts. Wow. They were so perky, and upturned. Just the perfect size. Like they were saying hello to everyone. Just ripe for the picking.

Connie. I see. Is this how it's going to go?

Lonnie. It's just a conversation, just words. Just go with it. Where was I. Your tits. God they were perfect. You were my number one masturbation image. Hands down. No pun intended. In high school, and for many years after that, actually.

Connie. Well, that's a disgusting thought.

Lonnie. Disgusting? Not unsettling, or uncomfortable. Right to disgusting.

Connie. No. I'll stay with disgusting, it went right past disturbing.

Lonnie. Yeah, everyday, in high school. My hope, and my goal was to get as many mental images of you as I could. Especially in that cheerleading outfit. Those blue bloomers. That little skirt would fly up. They called them bloomers, but who are they kidding, they're panties. A legitimate way to see panties. And I couldn't wait to get home. Especially when I had some good material, some really good mental images. J.O. material I called it. When I got home. I went right up to my room. Locked the door, and went to town.

Connie. This is pathetic. Well, ah, I'm glad I was able to provide you with a lot of action for your right hand. Your parents should have bought stock in Kleenex.

Lonnie. Yeah, to you, I was a nerd loser in high school. See people like us, couldn't actually get real sex. Like you and the other cool good looking kids. This is what we did. I was with my right hand and you were banging Wade Lacel, blond Adonis quarterback. While I was stuck with Mayr Candolata, an ugly troll, who wouldn't give up the goods anyway. What the hell she thought she was holding onto, I'll never know.

Connie. This is pretty sad. Who cares. This was twenty years ago.

Lonnie. I care. I believe that all your life matters. You take your life in total. That was twenty years ago, but it was still your life. A part of your life. We take all of our lives with us. All of your life stays with you. And you will examine it all. Memories are your life. You look at them all. People say, just worry about today, now is all that matters. Yeah, that's well and good until you are about to expire. The high school years could be the most powerful and life changing years in your entire life. The most life shaping, whether you want them to be or not. You really start to learn about how the real world works. About social class, and what people

think matters, and what are the illusions. How people treat others, that are different. We have no choice. We take all of our life with us. I don't dismiss any part of my life. I take it all with me. It all matters. Everyone will confront their entire life someday.

Connie. Did you ever see a psychiatrist? Some obsession, or anger issues you need to deal with?

Lonnie. Connie Angelotti. Shes such a hottie. I for some reason. Yeah, you were part of the elite group in high school. The highest social strata. The ultra cool kids. The super good looking with the latest fashions. The one's everyone talked about. Fantasized about. Watched. The one's who put us down, but we secretly wanted to be. Secretly admired.

Connie. I never thought Of myself like that back then.

Lonnie. Come on. You didn't know that you we're good looking? And that all the rest of us were ugly mutts. Hoping to be thrown a bone.

Connie. I thought I was pretty good looking. In high school you magnify the negatives. You have trouble with your self image. So I really did think I was all that.

Lonnie. Yeah, you we're my masturbation fantasy.

Connie. Back to this?

Lonnie. Yeah, I couldn't wait to get back home. With all my mental images. Of you doing your cheerleader routines. Or of you just sitting in class. I would sit in front of you in class sometimes, and I would put my head down and try to get a peak of your crotch. If I did, it would be the highlight of my week. A great triumph.

Connie. Can I throw up. Is there a bathroom in here?

Lonnie. The only thing was, when I did masturbate to you. I had to set up the fantasy. Because we ran in different circles. Like maybe we just happen to be at the same party. A big party, where even the nerds could sneak in. and maybe you just broke up with Wade Lacel, and you were drunk and crying and I was consoling you, and I would take you home, and it would go from there. I would start kissing you, start worshipping your body, boom.

Connie. That's nice. Well, I'm glad I was able to provide these thirty second interludes for you.

Lonnie. No, not thirty seconds, not thirty seconds, for you I took more time. At least a minute for you. When you're seventeen, eighteen, we're at our peak sexually, I

would knock it out three times a day to you. If I could squeeze it in. No pun intended.

Connie. My life would have been so much better, if you hadn't told me this.

Lonnie. Aren't you flattered? I would be. If someone told me that.

Connie. Flattered? That wouldn't be the word. Revulsion, I think would be a better word.

Lonnie. The thought of me, then or now, touching you, makes you recoil in disgust?

Connie. Yeah, you just don't know. The creep meter, is broken, the measure of creep is off the charts. It's an all time creep moment record of some kind.

Lonnie. And look at you now. Still pretty. Holding on, the best you can. But compared to the way you used to look. The way I remember you. You've got a ton of makeup on. Face, breasts, all losing the battle with gravity. Looks like you're getting those lines on the neck. Chin line starting to go. Lines on your forehead, starting to stencil in, and around your eyes too. Your ass, your once wonderful ass, starting to go globular. What is it like. For a good looking woman. To start to lose it. Knowing that everyday from now on, it's only going to get worse. That you're on the down slide?

Connie. Me? Look at you. With your doll hair transplant plug thing you got going on there. You couldn't afford a better doctor to do that. What did you say, give me the Barbie plug look. Got a nice gut going there, no time to go to the gym, or do you think the shaped like a pare look is in now. Your teeth, those thousand caps, it looks like you're wearing fake teeth from a halloween store. Your complexion is as bad as it was in high school. Still got the connect the dots thing going on. Can't you afford a good dermatologist? What's it like to start off ugly and know you're going down hill for the rest of your life? You greasy faced asshole, and you can take the facilitator, fucking hostess job and shove it up your ass. Hey this might turn out to be fun.

Lonnie. Okay, a little fire. But, oh, guess what, it's different for a man. I have money. That's all that counts. Money, strangely enough, makes me good looking.

Lonnie. Here, check this out. [Lonnie takes the picture of his wife and shows it to Connie]. No, that's not a super model, that's my wife. Fifteen years younger than me.

Connie. Very pretty. It's nice that she doesn't have to strip anymore.

Lonnie. No, sorry, was never a stripper. She worships me.

Connie. It doesn't bother you that she's only with you because of your money?

Lonnie. You don't know that.

Connie. Oh. I know that.

Lonnie. I'm a mover and a shaker. Power is the greatest aphrodisiac. Women are attracted to men like me.

Connie. Come on, she's thinking about the pool boy every time you do it. Holding her nose and practicing her orgasm acting skills and thanking god every time you're finished, and counting the days until you die of a heart attack. You must know this. Did you sign a pre nup?

Lonnie. No I

Connie. You're fucked, you're toast.

Lonnie. Hey, all I know is I'm in the company of a beautiful woman. Everywhere I go. Guys are literally drooling, and she's the one I go home with.

Connie. Well, the first thing you should do is hire someone to taste your food for poison, and have your breaks checked regularly.

Lonnie. We're very happy, we vacation in beautiful places, we're going to Hawaii in two weeks. Where do you go for vacation? We have a house in Kauai. Ever been there?

Connie. Yeah I've been there. It's all right.

Lonnie. What about you. Your marriage, didn't work out? What happened? You didn't marry Lance did you?

Connie. No, Lance and I broke up right after high school. Went our separate ways. No I married a guy I met in college. It was great in the beginning, it's always great in the beginning. It just didn't work out

Lonnie. Men are such pigs.

Connie. Yeah, and you're not helping the stereotype.

Lonnie. You have kids?

Connie. Yeah, a girl and a boy. They're both doing okay, Joey is fourteen and Tara is fifteen. Both still in high school. What about you?

Lonnie. Yes, one child, Troy, a chip off the old nerd. Excelling in high school, wants to go to Princeton. To study physics. Getting back to thanking you.

Connie. That's right, the back handed thank you.

Lonnie. Yeah. it was you that gave me the motivation for all my success. Most great people, have a moment. When they decide on their course. They discover the fuel for their drive. Could be a simple little thing, but it shakes them, wakes them up to a goal and shoots them in that direction. In high school, I was obsessed with you.

Connie. Yeah you told me. Your right hand was in love with me.

Lonnie. I felt so lucky to be in some of your classes, and especially to be in the same homeroom. I got to see you every day. See what you were wearing, how you did your hair. I couldn't wait to get to school and see you. I looked forward to it every day. Oh, I knew you were out of my league, but...

Connie. I know, you needed whack off material for your mental catalogue. Did you ever use your left hand? Cheat on your right hand, make him jealous?

Lonnie. I tried, it doesn't work. I don't know why. Your dominate hand has it down to a science, knows all the subtleties. It's a mystery. Like you can't brush your teeth with your left hand. Forget about it. Are you about done with the masturbation jokes?

Connie. I'm not sure. I mined it pretty good.

Lonnie. Ah, well, senior year. I signed up to help with the pep rally banner and the pep rally activities. Stupid idea, I know. You do stupid things when you're obsessed. I thought maybe, the people in your crowd might see me differently. It might start to quell the nerd with the tiny bird comments. That maybe some in your crowd might start saying, yo, dude, stop, he's cool. He helped out with the pep rally. And of course the main reason, was that I be near you. See you. I knew the first day would be weird. Like, what is he doing here? It was after school in the gym. My last class was near the gym. You can get to the gym by walking through the back of the stage. I'm so nervous. So I'm walking through the back of the stage. I'm still out of sight and I start to pick up the conversation of some of the people who are already there, and I stop to listen. I hear you and your best friend Sammy Jo talking. I can't believe he signed up. He's such a nerd, yeah the nerd with the tiny bird, every one laughs. I heard he signed up because of Connie. He likes you. And you say, ugh, don't even say that. I think I'm going to throw up. He's just so gross. I hope he doesn't show up. I stopped. This deflating bolt just ran right through my body. I turned around and went home. Do you remember that?

Connie. No. It was twenty stinking years ago. Who cares, it doesn't matter anymore.

Lonnie. Well, like I said, sometimes it's just that one thing, that sets you afire. My whole life up to that point. Was a daily life of being put down, derided, ridiculed. The

last one picked in gym class. Never part of the crowd. You don't know what that's like.

Connie. But to hold onto this is just crazy.

Lonnie. Maybe, maybe not. That day as I was walking home. I started to think, who does she think she is? Who do they think they are? Stuck up, think you're better than everyone else. Why, why? Because you're good looking? You're good at sports. You wear the latest fashions? I made a pledge to myself that day. That I was going to show you and everyone else like you. I'll have the last laugh. I have the smarts and the brains, and this will win out, in the end. You're popular now, but you're all dumb as trees. The high school world will be ending soon. And that's what I did. I busted my ass in college, and when I got out I got a job at Microsoft. Worked my ass off there, and eventually started my own company. I later sold that company for a fortune. So thank you. I probably wouldn't of had the motivation. If you weren't such a stuck up conceded bitch in high school.

Connie. Oh. You're so welcome. I'm so glad I had such a positive influence on you. What is your fucking problem? Really. Obsessing over something that happened over twenty years ago? Are you kidding me? Really? What do you want from this? You are pathetic. Are you happy now? Now that you got to rub it in? Look at me. Look at all I have. So much more than you. I'm great and you're not. I have so much more money than you. So what. Who cares.

Lonnie. So what? I don't think it's so what. I think it's so everything. And yeah, I do want to rub it in. It feels good. I've always dreamed of rubbing my success in your face. It's a dream come true.

Connie. Are you happy? Does it make you feel good?

Lonnie. Yeah, it feels great. I know you, now, your current worries, anxieties, they all come down to money, don't they?

Connie. You don't know anything about me.

Lonnie. Money is the common denominator. That's why you're talking to me right now. And I have so much. Think of all the things you could do if you had money. You could get some Botox here and there. Around the eyes there. Yeah there's so much you could do.

Connie. You're insane. You know that, right. A functionally insane person. Hanging on to what? Anger, resentment? We were kids back then. Think about when you're young. You're immature, there's peer pressure. You don't plan or conspire to be in a certain group. You go along with what's going on. I didn't plan to be in the so called cool crowd. You get caught up in the wave, of peer pressure, and

advertising, and all the influences that push and pull you. Nobody knows what they're doing when they're sixteen seventeen. You don't have any wisdom at that age.

Lonnie. No, don't blame your treatment of me on peer pressure. Take responsibility, and how about an apology.

Connie. If that's what you're after. It's not happening. I am not apologizing for something that happened twenty years ago, that I don't even remember. My treatment of you. I barely even knew you. There was no treatment. I was a kid. You have money. Big deal. Big man. To me, all that matters is, what kind of person are you? What kind of person did you become? I was a little stuck up in high school, high school, but I'm not like that now. You were a creepy little pervert in high school, and you changed into a creepy pervert asshole, apparently. Money doesn't help you there.

Lonnie. I disagree. Money can help there. You think I'm an asshole, but you're one opinion of all the people I come in contact with. To the many, I'm a great person. A great humanitarian. Just ask the people at the cancer association, and all the other people at all the charities I give to. They would have a different opinion. I'm on their wall of honor. To them I'm a fantastic human being. I've done more good than you could ever do. Why, money.

Connie. But that's just throwing money around for your image, and I'm sure to help with your taxes, right? That still doesn't make you a good person.

Lonnie. Sure it does. Ask anyone at one of those charities I give to. Oh, Lonnie Shelwick, oh, he's a great person, he's a saint, we love Lonnie Shelwick.

Connie. So you believe in living a life of delusion?

Lonnie. I don't see it as delusional at all. I see it as crystal clear reality. With wealth comes the ability to provide resources to charitable organizations. This is a great feeling to be able to do this. I receive the tax breaks in return and the admiration of the people. I'm one of the few that is very skilled in operating in the world that has evolved over time. That old expression. It's a jungle out there. No truer words were ever spoken. It is a jungle. Some just develop just enough to survive, and others like me develop the skills to thrive and flourish. Do you remember the class we had back in high school.

Connie. No, I haven't spent one minute thinking about it.

Lonnie. The majority of the class were dumb asses, empty headed jocks, vapid cheerleaders...

Connie. Crepster nerds.

Lonnie. Yeah, okay. But, think about it, not much going on there, not too much awareness of the world. What it takes, not too much intelligence or drive. I mean you had yeah, the nerds, and some others that were bright, and they're doing well now I'm sure, but the majority of the class, my god. Remember Bobby Bentworth?

Connie. No, I do not remember Bobby Bentworth.

Lonnie. Bobby Bentworth, social studies class? He thought Hawaii was another country, and when we had to name the fifty states, he was putting down cities as states, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and he was the norm. He was the average student. I really think teachers should just be honest with the parents of these kids. You know at the teacher conferences. Mr. and Mrs. Bentworth, little Bobby is a dumbass douchbag. It won't be long before he's going to be an adult. We need to start thinking about a trade of some kind. Maybe HVAC, or something like that. How is someone like this, all the people like this hope to excel in this world. The majority are just destined to become the plebians. The few like me, with the intelligence and the awareness of this world become the elite. The people like me create the companies, that provide for all the average Joes and Janes, provide the jobs so they can carve out their average lives. See, crystal clear reality.

Connie. More like opaque bullshit.

Lonnie. And I'll tell you another thing. Speaking of bullshit. I hope we keep teaching the young people, keep indoctrinating in them, that you can be anything you want, you can do anything you want. Keep feeding them this bullshit. Because if all the dumb ass masses ever come to the realization that this is a load of dog shit, there would be riot in the streets.

Connie. This is very interesting. The irony. You despised the stuck up conceited people back in high school. People who thought they were better than everyone else. And now, you're the snob, you're that person. The elite who's better than everyone else. A tad hypocritical?

Lonnie. No, I disagree, not hypocritical, some irony I suppose. I hated the myopic vision of the people like you in high school. Just seeing this ephemeral world of, how you look, and what you wore, and who you hung out with, who you went to the dance with. How short sighted it was. How clueless you were. How far it was from reality. You thought you were better than everyone else for trivial reasons. I know I'm better than most because of the reality of the way society is set up. What this free market capitalistic society really values. You still see it today. With all this social networking. Everyone has a smart phone. Everyone is so involved with everyone else. What did he say about you, and she said this, and on and on. They value a smart phone, and a computer game and all this other bullshit. Then when you're ready to go out into the world. They think they're so ready, but they're like a tiny lamb trying to fend off hungry lions. Smart phone can't help you now. It helped you avoid science class. It did a real good job of that, but it's

not helping you now. And you. Connie Angelotti, she's such a hottie. I feel sorry for you.

Connie. That's funny, because I feel sorry for you.

Lonnie. You had looks. A good looking young woman. When you smiled, everyone smiled back. It could open doors for you. But now, you can feel it start to fade, the looks card can't be played so easily. In you late thirties now, a whole different world than high school. Still good looking, but it takes more work, and it's fading, but holding on, with no prospects.

Connie. You think you know me, but you have no idea. I'm not this desperate person you envision. I've found happiness in my life. I've become a good person. You, I feel sorry for you. You have to surround yourself with all these toys, all these things money can buy. Trying to buy happiness. Attaching yourself to things, more ways for you to be disappointed and unhappy, if they should ever be taken away, or lose their charm. In your heart, money doesn't buy happiness. In your heart, if you have one, you must know this.

Lonnie. I do not know this. I disagree, money does buy happiness.

Connie. You disagree? What a surprise.

Lonnie. Money does buy happiness. If you're rich and unhappy, then it's something besides the money. They got something else going on. Come on, money is freedom, freedom to do all the things you always wanted to do. Money is travel, vacation time when you want it. The nicer things in life. experiencing the best, going to see the best artists in concert, with great seats. Seeing the great plays, food. Sitting on a Hawaiian beach with a glass of the best wine at sun set. People who say that money can't buy happiness, has never had it, or doesn't know how to use it.

Connie. I don't do any of that and I'm very happy.

Lonnie. Look at the world. It's so obvious. Where are the problems in society, in the world. High crime rates, and all the problems that come from a lack of resources. The slums and the ghettos in the poorer parts of the cities, and the poorer countries in the world. Now your average ignorant buffoon can be happy without money. With his two days off, drinking beer and watching football. Or some religious nut, or mystic. You don't absolutely need money to be happy, but money can and does buy it.

Connie. That's very interesting. Because I don't think you're happy.

Lonnie. Ah, you got to be kidding. I'm ecstatic with all I got.

Connie. No. I think it's all a front. I think you're very unhappy, and you surround yourself with all these toys to divert you from your unhappiness

Lonnie. No I'm happy, believe me. I'm going to get a blow job from my beautiful supermodelish wife later today. Ah, yeah, I think I'm happy.

Connie. That's just another distraction.

Lonnie. That's a pretty nice distraction.

Connie. I don't think so. If you harbored this resentment for me. Someone you knew twenty years ago. You have to be filled with angst and anger every day. With your ego. All the people you have to deal with, all the business deals, all the people you have to deal with. There has to be problems. You're obviously someone who holds grudges. You hold a grudge like a baby or a wino holding a bottle. We've established that. No you're filled with anger every day. It's eating at you, from the inside. You put on a front, especially in front of me. But you can't let go of anything. Your mind can never be free. Always churning. How much time do I have left. [Connie looks at the clock]. Shit.

Lonnie. This is your feeble attempt to salvage something for yourself from this encounter. Nice try. Come on, indulge me, please, give me some more about your life after high school. I see that you have a ring on your left hand. Looks like it's turned around though.

Connie. Oh, yeah, I always turn my ring around when I'm in the city.

Lonnie. Engagement ring?

Connie. Yeah, we're taking it slow, right now, nothing planned.

Lonnie. What's his story? How did you meet him?

Connie. There's not much to tell really. I was a business major in college. He was a senior, we fell in love, yadda, yadda, yadda, blah,blah,blah, and we got married. I dropped out of college. He was a really bright guy. We were doing great, house in the suburbs. He was an accountant, his father already had a firm started so he was working right after college. The way we planned it. Then he developed a drinking problem, and his work suffered. He also had affairs. It started to all go down hill. Then divorce, we have two great kids from it though, and now I'm trying to get back into the working world again. There was a time when I was a little depressed. Every morning looking in that mirror. Almost afraid to leave the house without any makeup. I went through this sinking desperate feeling. But everything has changed for me recently. I've met Michael, my fiancé, and with the situation with Joey has changed me. It's just the wisdom that comes with age. I came to the realization that, all the worry, about the wrinkles, and the sagging,

and getting older, won't add one second to your life. Not one millisecond. You can't change the year you were born, so why worry about it. You were put here at a certain point in time, and that's it. It was very liberating for me. Besides I still look pretty good. You still desire me. I can tell. You can't hide it

Lonnie. I am still attracted to you. I said you were a good looking woman. But I've been riding a Lamborghini for the past couple of years, once you've been riding a top of the line sports car, it's hard to think about going back to an older model. You're like a, you know, a fine Lexus sedan, that has some miles on it, still nice, but will have to go into the shop soon for some more maintenance. What does this Michael do?

Connie. You would be a banged up 1980 Ford escort with the muffler held up with duck tape by the way. He's a financial planner.

Lonnie. I employ a couple of those. So, your kids, they're doing well? What situation with Joey?

Connie. Ah, that was a mistake. I didn't mean to mention that. That's tricky. It can be hard to talk about, but it's life. Joey, about a month ago. Started having seizures, and some trouble speaking. We took him to the doctor's and it turns out that he has a brain tumor.

Lonnie. I'm sorry to hear that.

Connie. Yeah. They're going to operate next week. It may all turn out all right. It could go either way. There's a risk of complications and diminished capacity as they say. I hate those words, diminished capacity. Those words can send shivers through my spine. It really makes you think about the world we live in and life itself, what it is. We all have these trillions of cells, in our bodies. It's just amazing. Each one is like a tiny little warehouse operation. You know, taking in nutrients, secreting storing chemicals, breaking down substances, operating like a little restaurant, you know. Twenty four hours a day. And you're not even aware of it. You get this information in high school, but it's just information, but to really reflect on it. I guess, forced to reflect on it. On it all. The awesomeness of this process going on, inside you.

There are no words for it. It's a feeling more than a thought really. And then one day. There's a problem in the operation. There's a breakdown in the operation. Cells start to grow out of control. Abnormal cells start to grow out of control. It's like a break in from some bad guys, or a robbery that goes bad, all right everyone, stop your normal operations, we're going to start to form a tumor now. Why do they have to do that? So, if we can, I'd like to leave Joey out of the conversation

Lonnie. I'm sorry about that.

Connie. So what about your failed marriage? What happened with that?

Lonnie. got married right after college. It was a mistake. She was a fellow nerdette. She was pre law, and now a lawyer. After college I was just too busy working, trying to get ahead. And she was going to law school. You know, to be honest. You can analyze these things and you can go to counseling and all that, but the basic reason most marriages fail is that you lose that attraction, or it was never really there in the first place, or you honestly just don't like the person's company. You come to realize, you just don't like being around that person. At the time, I thought that was the best I could do. Looks wise, and I was just not that attracted to her. So we called it quits well before I established myself.

Connie [Gets up and starts walking around the room. She stops at his book shelf and picks up and looks at various awards and pictures] Nice office. I see you have the I am great, in case you missed it, look at these awards bookshelf.

Lonnie. One should be proud of what they accomplish.

Connie. Don't you think modesty is a nice virtue?

Lonnie. With what I've accomplished, modesty and honesty, just don't get along.

Connie. Who's this good looking guy that's in just about every picture?

Lonnie. Thank you.

Connie. No, the good looking guy in the background. Always next to or behind the troll and the Barbie doll.
(Lonnie gets up to see, and they are both close to each other, and it's an uncomfortable moment. Lonnie quickly sits down).

Lonnie. That's Franco. My bodyguard.

Connie. Body guard? Why the hell would you need a bodyguard?

Lonnie. I know it's hard for you to understand, but when you have the kind of money I have. Your life changes. There's always someone willing to do something stupid to try and get some of it. Kidnapping, blackmail, things like that. Somebody wants revenge for a business dealing that didn't go their way.

Connie. What's your trophy, excuse me, wife's name?

Lonnie. Penelope, and you know, I don't mind the term trophy wife. I worked hard to be in a position to get a woman like that.

Connie. Penelope? Where did you find her, in a cartoon?

Lonnie. We met a party.

