

CHEAT

By

John E. Spare

[johnearlspare@gmail.com](mailto:johnearlspare@gmail.com)  
(724) 712-0937

EXT. BACKYARD DECK-DAY

A weather beaten wooden deck attached to a modern house. Through the window, TODD, (40), stands at the kitchen island preparing two cups of coffee.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN-DAY

His nameless WIFE, (40), silently enters to the opposite side of the island, clutching her bathrobe tightly to her chest. Smiling, looking up, he hands her a mug.

TODD  
Organic Hazelnut. You loved this in  
Deep Creek.

WIFE  
Where are you going?

His smile fades.

TODD  
Pittsburgh, pretty big opportunity.

Grasping the robe tighter, her gaze lowers to the ground.

Todd turns, rests his mug on the island, approaches her.

TODD  
Wish me luck?

He awkwardly leans in as she turns her head, offering her cheek. Used to this routine, he gives her a small peck.

EXT. DRIVEWAY-DAY

Todd places his luggage in the trunk, an open box of business cards visible: "Todd Wright Industrial Sales".

Closing the hatch reveals an Ohio state license plate.

INT. TODD'S CAR-LATER

Driving, Todd fumbles through the radio dial pausing on the rants of a SHOCK JOCK.

(CONTINUED)

SHOCK JOCK (OS)

Do not get married! The sex stops! In my case even affection ceases to exist! It's like that ring shoots ice intravenously directly into my wife's veins! Guys, listen to me! If you have to, keep some on the side, you with me? I mean---

Todd grins.

Entering Pittsburgh's Fort Pitt Tunnel the rambling dissolves to STATIC.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM HALLWAY-DAY

Todd beams victoriously, shaking hands with several EXECUTIVES.

EXT. ELEGANT HOTEL-DAY

Confidently, Todd enters the hotel wheeling his suitcase.

INT. RECEPTION DESK-DAY

An attractive female CLERK checks in her new guest.

CLERK

Mr. Wright...first time in Pittsburgh?

TODD

Oh, no. We...I went to Carnegie Mellon a lifetime ago.

She smiles, utilizing typical trained hospitality charm.

CLERK

It mustn't have been that long ago.

Immediately flustered, his bravado vanishes.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY-DAY

TWO ATTRACTIVE WOMEN pass causing Todd to pretend he is studying his key. His pace quickens. He arrives at ROOM 316.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-DAY

He reaches in, turns on the light, revealing a crisp, luxurious room with one king size bed.

On the dresser rests a chilled bottle of CHAMPAGNE.

Todd approaches, reads the attached card: "Todd, congrats! You hooked 'em! See you next week! Arthur."

INT. HOTEL ROOM-LATER

The television BLARES the news. Empty vending machine wrappers litter the floor.

Todd, propped on the bed, in boxer shorts and a Rolling Stones T-shirt. He pours the last drop of Champagne into a crystal flute.

He dials his cell phone as he takes the last swallow.

TODD

Hey...it's Todd. Thought I might catch you. Ah...good news, I made the sale...maybe we can celebrate when I get home? Uh, give me a call later if you want, I'll be around.

He sighs and ends the call. Looking at the empty bottle, he takes off his shirt and heads to the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL LOUNGE-NIGHT

The sparse crowd consists of businessmen hashing out deals and celebrating conquests.

Alone, Todd, dressed in a sports coat and jeans, takes in his surroundings. He finishes his drink, leaving a fifty under the three empty glasses in front of him.

EXT. SIDEWALK-NIGHT

Walking down the street, he notices a GENTLEMAN'S CLUB. He pauses, taking in the LOUD MUSIC emanating from inside.

Momentarily studying the bright neon, he turns his back on the promise of purchased affection, proceeding onward.

INT. DIVE BAR-NIGHT

Todd peers inside through the large picture window.

He enters, taking a moment to adjust to the cavernous darkness. Noticing only an OLDER MAN nursing a beer, Todd takes a seat at the empty end of the bar.

BARTENDER(OS)  
What'll it be?

Todd looks up to notice a beefy BARTENDER(60's).

TODD  
Ahh...Jack and Coke?

As the bartender turns to mix the drink, Todd's attention focuses on his cell phone: "No New Calls".

A SQUEAK of the restroom door. A plain WOMAN, (50's), exits with her purse. She walks towards Todd, taking a seat immediately to his left.

WOMAN  
Get me another, huh Barney?

This voice causes Todd to nervously glance over. Quickly he turns his attention back to his phone. The bartender returns with Todd's drink.

Taking a sip he notices she is smiling at him.

TODD  
Sorry, I didn't know someone was sitting here.

WOMAN  
Well, now you have to pay the rent. Barney, handsome here has mine.

Barney The Bartender SNORTS a knowing chuckle. Todd gives a hesitant nod of approval, returning his eyes to his phony texting.

WOMAN  
So, what's your name, whaddya do?

TODD  
(flustered)  
Me? Uh...Steve...Steve...

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

You sure about that Steve Steve?

TODD

Sorry?

WOMAN

You missed an opportunity. When I asked...

She holds her fingers in the air making imaginary quotation marks, large bracelets JANGLING.

WOMAN (CONT.)

...what do you do, you were supposed to come back at me with something cute, like, I dunno, hopefully **you** later.

Barney returns with a tall draft, placing it in front of the woman, turning his attention back to the television.

TODD

I'll have to remember that one.

WOMAN

You're not from around here, I can spot a non-yinzer. Barney, get him a stronger drink.

The woman pulls out a cigarette, holds it in her mouth pointing with her chin at a pack of matches on the bar.

Todd's eyes follow her motion. He picks up the pack, strikes a match, offers it to his new neighbor.

TODD

I didn't think smoking was allowed in bars anymore.

WOMAN

I do a lot of things I'm not supposed to, right Barney?

Barney rests another drink in front of Todd's.

BARTENDER

Sylvia, have your fun and leave me out of it, McCutchen's going for the cycle.

Turning his attention back to the Pirates game, Todd smiles at the exhaling woman who now has a name.

(CONTINUED)

SYLVIA  
You're married, aintcha Steve?

TODD  
Uh...yes...

SYLVIA  
It's OK, baby, I'm married, too.

Todd is uncertain how to respond.

TODD  
Oh...good...

Sylvia smiles, a cat prepared to play with a mouse.

SYLVIA  
How do you know?

Todd stares at her tongue tied.

SYLVIA (CONT.)  
Relax, baby, I'm just messin'  
witcha. Marriage is either real  
good or real shitty, nuthin' in  
between.

Todd takes a long swallow of the stronger Jack & Coke.

TODD  
It used to be good.

SYLVIA  
Which means now it's shitty. Kids?

TODD  
No, nope, not yet. We had plans---

SYLVIA  
We all had plans, Steve! I was  
gonna be the next Cyndi  
Lauper. Screw plans! Only the here  
and now is real, you know? So let's  
hear your story.

TODD  
I wouldn't know where to start. You  
really don't want to hear this.

SYLVIA  
Just start talkin', Steve. You  
might be surprised how easy it all  
comes out.

TODD

Well...we actually met here at  
CMU---

SYLVIA

Now see that, I knew you were  
smart! Go on, Professor.

TODD

Got married, moved to Cincinnati,  
we both had good jobs, I still  
do. After she got downsized she  
used to come back here to spend  
time with her friends, this was  
like three, four years ago, but  
now---

SYLVIA

The warm and fuzzies shit the bed?

TODD

Can I call you Sylvia?

She nods, flicks her cigarette onto the floor

SYLVIA

Barney, more drinks!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIVE BAR-LATER

Several empties rest on the bar. Glassy eyed and drunk, Todd  
stares into Sylvia's kind eyes.

TODD

...I mean, she is totally repulsed  
by me. You know, she won't even let  
me see her naked anymore? It's been  
three years since I've seen my own  
wife with no clothes on.

SYLVIA

Did she get all fat?

TODD

Not at all! She just  
got...distant.

SYLVIA

She don't give you any?

(CONTINUED)



Todd shakes his head taking another drink. Sylvia reaches onto Todd's lap and smiles.

SYLVIA (CONT.)

Well, it doesn't seem to be a problem with the plumbing!

BARTENDER(OS)

Closing time, lovebirds. You don't have to go home but you can't stay here and all that horseshit. Let's go!

Todd rises from his chair, trying to steady himself.

SYLVIA

Ya know, I've lived here all my life, never been in that fancy smanchy hotel...

INT.HOTEL HALLWAY-NIGHT

Sylvia snuggles with a drunken Todd dragging her large purse en route to Room 316. At the door, he fumbles for his key.

SYLVIA

Hey, last chance to change the course of events here.

He grins leaning in for a kiss, she turns her head, nudges him to the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

Stumbling in, Todd wrestles off his sports coat, throws it towards the bathroom. Sylvia pushes him onto the large bed.

He HEAVES a huge breath. Clothed, Sylvia straddles him.

SYLVIA

Relax, Hun.

She begins to unbutton his shirt. He closes his eyes, relinquishing to her hands as they massage his bare chest.

One hand leaves his chest, the other quickens the pace.

SYLVIA (OS)

That's right baby, enjoy this.

The sound of SHUFFLING AND JANGLING causes Todd to slowly open his eyes, a broad smile on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CLACK once, CLACK twice. He turns his head, shocked to see two sets of handcuffs have secured him to the headboard.

Sylvia leaps from her partner, pulling her purse with her. She rummages through the pocket of his sports coat, taking his wallet.

Todd quickly blinks, pulling on the restraints.

TODD

Wait...I'm not into this type of---

Studying his license, Sylvia paces, becoming more smug, her voice changing, more educated.

SYLVIA

You've made a choice, Steve.

TODD

I don't under---

SYLVIA

You will.

TODD

Listen, Sylvia, please---

SYLVIA

You think that's my name, Steve? Is that the nom de plume you always use, Steve?

TODD

I'm sorry, look, what is your name?

SYLVIA

Do you ever wonder how your actions affect others?

TODD

This wasn't my intention, you talked to me---

SYLVIA

If mankind spent just a little more time considering the possible consequences of their actions, the world would be a much more harmonious place, don't you agree?

Todd, wide eyed, stunned.

SYLVIA (CONT.)

Society never seems to learn from their mistakes. The world today just forgets, goes on, never feeling contrition. Do you have any idea how many children grow up in broken homes due to selfishness?

Kneeling on the floor, she rummages through her purse.

SYLVIA (CONT.)

We've been endeavoring to make a change for over a decade. We know we're not able to make you regret your actions right now, but we are certain we can arrange things so you remember what you've done.

She pulls out a metal rod and small butane flame tank.

TODD

(panicked)

What is that? What are doing?  
Please! Sylvia, please---

Out of focus, she lights the torch, heats the rod.

SYLVIA

You should have learned a long time ago, you play with dirt, you're bound to get dirty...

TODD

No! No! Wait!

DISSOLVE TO BLACK as the SIZZLE of burning flesh mingles with Todd's SCREAMS.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-DAY

DISSOLVE FROM BLACK:

Todd's POV. His eyes flutter open.

MAID (OS)

Senor? Senor?

Todd sees a gold cross dangling from the neck of a LATINO MAID. His view pans upwards to her shocked eyes as she stares at his chest.

His now freed hands follow the path of the housekeepers gaze.

(CONTINUED)

A burned, CAPITAL "C" branded on his chest.

CUT TO:

INT. TODD'S CAR-DAY

He drives West, painfully touching the wound, tears welling in his eyes. He POUNDS the steering wheel in frustration.

INT. HOUSE-DAY

The interior handle of the front door turns as Todd enters, dropping his briefcase and luggage in the entrance way.

Like a death row inmate making the last walk, he slowly proceeds upstairs.

INT. BEDROOM-DAY

Entering the bedroom, Todd hears SPLASHING emanating from the attached open bathroom.

Standing at a distance, seeing the back of his wife's head, her knees breaching the full tub.

TODD

I am so sorry.

From the tub, her legs shift down into the water.

Shoulders hunched, he begins to sob, burying his face in his hands. His wife steps from the water, nude, her back facing her husband.

With earphones in, listening to an ipod, unaware that her husband stands crying just feet away from her, she reaches for a towel.

Receiving no response, his tear stained eyes peek through his fingers only to see his naked wife walking into her closet, earphones still in.

His mouth drops open, as he notices the a large CAPITAL "C" branded on her right ass cheek.

FADE TO BLACK