

First Scenes

I wrote these scenes for my acting class. They were the first scenes the students performed. They had a week to prepare. Each scene is about a page long. After these scenes we moved on to the longer scenes.

At Work: Man/Woman, 20s

Setting: Break Room at a Hollywood Studio. MARTIN and WANDA are two young employees at the Studio.

MARTIN: Hey.

WANDA: Hi.

M: I saw you in the commissary.

W: Oh, yeah.

M: You were talking to like George Clooney or somebody.

W: No, just some old guy.

M: Looked like George Clooney.

W: He'd love that. He'd be flattered. I'll tell him you said that.

M: Are you like the opposite of a cougar, like you mack on ancient men?

W: (Laughing) No, he's my boss. He was taking me to lunch.

M: Wow, classy, lunch date in the commissary.

W: (Laughing) No, we work at lunch. He's totally paranoid about losing his job.

M: Shitty worker?

W: No, he thinks some twenty-five year old will take it.

M: I'm a twenty-five year old. I'd love his job.

W: You don't even know what he does.

M: He gets to have lunch with you, that's nice.

W: (Liking this) Hmm... What do you do here?

M: Read scripts.

W: I'm in editing.

M: Ooooo... that's so hot. I love editing.

W: Yeah, we get to fix everything. Make directors look like geniuses.

M: Hmm... You sure that guy's not in love with you?

W: No.

M: Then he's crazy.

W: (She laughs.) He's got nine kids. All he cares about is money. They all need orthodontia.

M: He's Catholic?

W: Mormon. But the good kind.

M: Oh, yeah, I like Mormons when they're the good kind. (She laughs.) You wanna have some lunch?

W: I just ate. You just saw me eating. Duh?

M: Sorry. Your extreme beauty makes me stupid. I stare at you any longer I'll be a retard.

W: I don't think that's funny. My cousins have learning differences.

M: Sorry.

W: I'm joking. I mean I'm not. They do have learning differences. But I'm not offended.

M: Great, cause I'm a little bit Asperger's.

W: Hot. I love guys on the spectrum.

M: Coffee?

W: Ok, sure.

M: At four?

W: It's a date.

M: Commissary?

W: Hot. We could see George Clooney. (He laughs.)

Making Plans: Man/Woman, 20s-40s

Setting: Restaurant, lunchtime, JEANETTE and DAVE are sister and brother.

JEANETTE: There *is* something wrong with it.

DAVE: Oh, what's that?

J: I don't want to talk about it.

D: Go ahead. I can take it.

J: You know how I feel.

D: No, I don't. I really don't.

J: It's our mother's funeral. I don't think it's appropriate.

D: It's a song.

J: It's not the song that bugs me.

D: What is it then?

J: You know how I feel.

D: Do my friends bother you, Jeanette? Do they?

J: No.

D: Then what's the problem?

J: They're very campy. You must admit.

D: Campy? They're campy? What exactly does that mean?

J: They're very big.

D: Big?

J: You know what I mean.

D: You mean they're very gay. They act gay? Is that it?

J: Ok, yes, they're obnoxious.

D: Many of them knew her. Many of them loved her.

J: She was a devout Baptist.

D: Ok. So?

J: So she wouldn't want this at her funeral.

D: How do you know? She's dead.

J: It's a religious ceremony.

D: Why don't you just say it? It's what you believe.

J: What is that?

D: Say it.

J: I don't know what you're talking about.

D: It's against God, right? Me and my friends are against God.

J: That's not what this is about.

D: Oh, it is. It really is.

J: Can we just decide what the program will be? Can we?

D: Ok, what do you want? What do you want for the program?

J: You can sing "Maybe." Solo. Just something simple. Just you.

D: (Pause.) Ok, fine. That's fine.

J: Thank you. I appreciate that. I do.

D: Let me tell you something, Jenny. She's gone. Mom's gone. And now we're left with each other. That's it. There's going to be no reason for us to even see each other. No excuse after this. Is that how you want it? Because if you go on hating me and Richy and "my kind" we just won't see you. Is that what you want?

J: My beliefs are my beliefs. They're private.

D: Not when you vote the way you believe. Not when you vote against me.

J: I think we've agreed on the program. Let's move on. Ok? (DAVE leaves.)

Picking Up Stuff: Man/Woman, 20s

Setting: Apartment Kitchen, Morning; SHEILA sits at table, DANNY enters.

DANNY: Hi.

SHEILA: Hey.

D: I didn't know you'd be here.

S: Yeah, I'm a little slow this morning.

D: Well, I'm not early.

S: I didn't say you were.

D: Ok, whatever.

S: Is that her... waiting in the car?

D: Oh, come on. Are you for real?

S: Is it?

D: No, it's Tony. You know that, you know his car.

S: Do I?

D: Yeah, you do. (Pause.)

S: I put the bed in there too. If you want it.

D: That's your bed.

S: Yeah, I know.

D: I never liked sleeping in that bed.

S: Thanks a lot.

D: I mean, I don't like sleeping in waterbeds.

S: Yeah, all right.

D: Forget it. (Pause.) Ok, well, I'll just...

S: Yeah, go ahead...

D: Look.

S: What?

D: She's...

S: She's what?

D: She's not the reason.

S: Is that supposed to make me feel better?

D: No, I just... I don't think... I never thought...

S: Haven't we argued enough about this? Gawd.

D: Can I just say something? Can I? (Pause.) I never felt like you were all that into it.

(Pause.) Sorry. But frankly, I'm surprised to see you here at, what is it, eleven o'clock. You're usually ticking off your fifth meeting by now.

S: Well, here I am.

D: You knew I was coming.

S: Yep, I did.

D: I'm just surprised.

S: I'm not feeling that well, ok? I've been sick.

D: With what?

S: I don't know, Danny. Let's see... could it be depression? Yeah, I think it's depression.

D: Enough to miss work?

S: Kinda looks that way, doesn't it?

(He sits and holds her hand.)

S: You better go. Tony's waiting.

D: Yeah, yeah, ok... (He holds her hand for a moment longer, then exits.)

You Drink Too Much: Man/Woman, 20s
Setting: Apartment Living Room, Morning

CHERYL: (CHERYL is packing up for work) You drink too much.

MICHAEL: Oh, come on.

C: No, you do.

M: Give me a break.

C: I'm sick of it. (Pause.) We're going to have some ground rules around here. (Pause.)

M: What are you talking about?

C: You know what I'm talking about. We're not going to have any more nights of sitting around here verbally abusing Cheryl. You wanna have a drink, fine. Go out and do it with your friends. Not around me.

M: Jesus.

C: I grew up with that shit and you know it. I'm not going to live with it again.

M: All right. (Pause.) Are we not speaking?

C: I'll speak when I hear an apology.

M: I'm sorry you feel this way.

C: A real apology.

M: I really don't feel like I drink that much.

C: That's part of the problem.

M: Two drinks. I have to work. It's stressful. You're still in school.

C: That's stressful too.

M: Two drinks is not that much.

C: It's too much for you.

M: Ok. Maybe...

C: I'd be very careful about what I said next. Very careful. You're hung over.

M: Ok.

C: That's another thing. You need to think about everything you say to me. Before you say it. You need to start being very careful about how you talk to me.

M: Sounds like a great basis for a relationship.

C: Yeah, sounds shitty, doesn't it? I'm not crazy about it either. But I'm not listening to the crap I had to listen to last night. I'm finished.

M: Ok.

C: Ok, fine. We understand each other.

M: I'm sorry, Cheryl. I'm sorry. I love you. You're my little angel.

C: If that's the case then you need to start being extra careful. If you have even an inkling you're going to upset me, don't speak. It's that simple. We can sit in silence for twenty years, that's fine. Or not. You decide. I love you too, but...

M: Ok.

C: I'll see you tonight.

M: Yes.

C: I hope you're careful on your bike.

M: Yes. You be careful on yours. (Pause.) Can I have a kiss?

C: I really hope we understand each other. I can't believe you made me behave this way. Like I'm forty years old and you're my child. It's really insulting. It's undignified. You've behaved without dignity.

M: I'm sorry. (C leaves.)

Cramming: Man/Man, Early-20s
Setting: Dorm Room, Weeknight, Late

DALE: So the German army did what at the beginning of the war?

TOM: Invaded Poland.

D: Very good. (DALE stands and goes to the window. Looks out.) Anyway, why?

T: They wanted to get Danzig back and the Polish Corridor.

D: Good. And then who invaded from the East?

T: China?

D: Come on. (Looks out window.) Damn, where are those guys? Who invaded Poland from the East?

T: Japan?

D: No, come on.

T: Japan fought in the war.

D: Yeah, but much later. And Japan is nowhere near Poland.

T: I really don't know.

D: Basic geography. Go back to what we discussed about geography.

T: I really don't know.

D: Of course you know this. What's the big problem in Europe? Even now. The big eastern country that's always invading.

T: Russia.

D: Yes. Excellent. If you don't know the answer just think logically. China?

T: Sorry.

D: (Looks out window. Then looks at phone.) So what brought France into the war?

T: Don't know.

D: Come on.

T: Russia invaded.

D: Is Russia next to France?

T: Um.

D: If Germany invades Poland from the West and Russia invades it from the East who invades France? Who *can* invade France?

T: Britain?

D: No, no, no. (Looks out window.) You're never going to be ready for this.

T: No.

D: Look, you should just reread these chapters again.

T: It's too much, in one night.

D: Go on Wikipedia. Just read the introduction. "World War II."

T: Ok.

D: (Looks out window.) These guys are like an hour late.

T: Why don't you call them?

D: I don't want them to know I care.

T: I thought Britain invaded France with the United States.

D: They *liberated* France from the Germans. That was later.

T: Shit.

D: (Looking at phone.) They didn't even text me. (He looks at TOM.) Fuck it. (He sits and opens TOM's book. He and TOM look at the book together.) Here it talks about

the origins of the war, ok? The most important thing is Germany's rearmament, ok?
And the global economic crisis of the thirties. (He answers his phone. Into phone)
You were supposed to be here an hour ago. Yeah? Now I'm busy. (He hangs up. To
TOM) The thirties... (End.)

I'm a Cop: WOMAN/WOMAN, 20s-50s
Walgreen's

DIANE: Can I see inside your bag?

KALY: No.

D: Ma'am-

K: Leave me alone or I'll scream.

D: Just open up your bag, ma'am.

K: You can't tell me to do that. What are you? Security?

D: I'm actually a police officer, ma'am.

K: Yeah, right.

(DIANE shows badge.)

K: Ok, so...

D: Open the bag please.

K: Do I have to? Don't you need a search warrant?

D: Actually, I don't. Open the bag or I'll open it for you.

K: (Opens bag.) Ok?

D: (After looking inside) Ok. Why don't we go in back?

K: Oh, come on.

D: Ma'am.

K: Just take it and I'll leave, it's no big deal.

D: Ma'am.

K: Jesus. (Almost crying) Isn't there a fine I can pay?

D: A fine?

K: A fine I can pay right now?

D: Are you offering me a bribe, ma'am?

K: No.

D: (Taking K's arm) Come on.

K: That really hurts.

D: Sorry.

K: (Crying) Oh, my God.

D: I'm sorry about his, ma'am. We should go in back.

K: Look...

D: Yes?

K: I'm a school teacher. Ok? This is really... this will really screw things up for me.

It's... I have a bad habit.

D: Ma'am, if you have done this before you know there is no possibility I will let you go. You know that.

K: Yes.

D: You have your job, I have mine.

K: Please.

D: Ma'am.

K: Just please... ok? Please.

(Pause.)

D: Give it to me. Just... put it in my hand. (K hands her the item.) Ok...

K: Thank you... thank you so much.

D: (Changing her mind) No, sorry, I'm sorry, but no. (She shoves it back in K's bag and holds her arm again.) Sorry.

K: Shit. Oh, shit. (They exit.)

My God, Yes!: Woman/Woman, late-20s
Setting: PHILOMENA's living room, night

PHILOMENA: So get rid of him.

JOCASTA: You never liked him.

P: That doesn't mean he's not a dick.

J: But you always thought he was a dick.

P: But now you agree. So get rid of him.

J: I love him.

P: Oh, come on.

J: I do.

P: (Grabbing J's phone) I'll get rid of him.

J: (Grabbing it back) Give me that.

P: (Struggling over phone) No, let's do it. Let's call him.

J: Stop it.

P: You never listen to me. I give good advice.

J: It's tainted.

P: What is?

J: Your advice.

P: Because I'm a lesbian?

J: No.

P: Because I hate men?

J: No.

P: Because I'm in love with you and have been for like ten years?

J: Yes.

P: That doesn't taint my advice.

J: It makes it of questionable value. If you were in lust with me it would fine. Then we could just have sex and it would be meaningless. But I know you'd be all in love with me and clingy for life.

P: (Thinks about it for a minute.) That's true.

J: I'd have sex with you right now if it was meaningless.

P: I'm not going to be a pawn in your boyfriend war.

J: That's not what this is about.

P: It is. Absolutely. You'd call him the second you got out of bed.

J: You're right. I'm a shitty person.

P: You're not.

J: I am.

P: There's a difference between being a shitty person and having a shitty boyfriend.

J: He's not shitty, he's just immature.

P: The definition of shitty is immature.

J: He just did a stupid thing.

P: Ok, so he's stupid and immature.

J: I don't want to talk about it.

P: Ok, let's look at this catalogue. Let's decide what you're going to wear to the cotillion with your shitty boyfriend.

J: Just stop. God, I feel lousy.

P: Yeah, so do I.

J: You wanna eat something?

P: My God, YES!!!

Sale: Woman/Woman, 20s-40s

Setting: Jewelry Counter at Macy's, Mid-Day

CHERYL: Is this on sale?

TRIX: No, but I'll let you steal it if you want?

C: What?

T: You heard me. Shove it in your purse. I won't say anything.

C: Very funny.

T: I know. I'm hysterical. That's a very pretty blouse.

C: Thank you.

T: I bet you're getting laid regularly. I can tell these things.

C: Wow.

T: I get laid semi-regularly. And not by the same guy. Are you a lesbian?

C: No.

T: All my lesbian friends get sex constantly. And from the same partner. It's enough to make you want to be gay.

C: Are you always this obnoxious?

T: I thought I was being friendly.

C: I think this comes under the title: workplace abuse.

T: Really?

C: Well, you're making me very uncomfortable.

T: You must be frigid. That's so weird. I thought you were like someone who got fucked all the time.

C: All right that word is totally inappropriate.

T: Inappropriate is my middle name. My first name is Carole.

C: Is your manager here?

T: No, she's drunk somewhere. Probably at The Cheesecake Factory.

C: They serve drinks there?

T: They do to her.

C: I find this all incredibly offensive.

T: And yet you haven't walked away. There must be a part of you that enjoys it.

C: I'm just in shock, that's all. Are you trying to get fired?

T: Oh, my God, I'd love to get fired. But it's impossible. I'm in the Union. Are you married?

C: I'm not going to answer that question. You'll just make fun of me.

T: Why? Does your husband have a small penis?

C: I really can't believe you. (Pause.) And no, he doesn't.

T: What about your boyfriend?

C: I don't have a boyfriend. I'm Catholic.

T: Oh, please. The first man I had sex with was a priest.

C: Were you molested?

T: No. It was consensual. We met on-line. It was a Catholic cruising site: St. Craig's List. Ha ha. I just made that up. It's not that funny but I think it's hysterical.

C: You're right. I must enjoy this. I can't tear myself away.

T: Not what you expect from the Macy's jewelry counter.

C: No.

T: Maybe that's because I don't work here. It will teach you to treat strangers like sales girls. (T exits. C looks after her, then stuffs necklace in her purse and exits.)

Take Charge: Man/Woman, 20s-40s

Setting: Yoga Studio, after class, SY waiting, MARY enters in a hurry.

SY: Ummm... Wait a minute.

MARY: Yes, what?

S: Are you like married or anything?

M: Married?

S: Yes.

M: Ummm, no. Why?

S: Sorry. I just had to blurt it out or I would never have said it.

M: Ok, so you said it. What next?

S: What?

M: So you blurted it out. What's your next question?

S: I, umm... Look, I didn't take this class to meet women or anything.

M: Neither did I?

S: Ha-ha. That's very funny.

M: It was funny. It wasn't very funny.

S: Ha-ha. You're what my grandpa would call a wiseacre.

M: Would he?

S: It's just... I do a lot of on-line dating and it's pretty rough... I mean, to find someone... To find someone who's not a freak. But anyway, I do my dating on-line mostly so I don't want you to think I do yoga to meet people... I'm sincerely interested in yoga. But I do my dating on-line.

M: Well, maybe you should do it in person. You might have a better time.

S: Huh?

M: That was another joke. Remember, I'm a wiseacre?

S: Oh, ok... yeah, pretty funny.

M: Look. So far you've told me about your dating rituals, and your interest in yoga, and your grandpa. Why don't you just tell me what you want? It might be simpler.

S: Yeah. Yeah, ok. (Pause.) I'm a very shy person.

M: You don't seem shy.

S: I mean I'm very shy about asking for what I want. I know that's rude.

M: No, it's rude wasting people's time talking about what you are and what you're not and what your grandpa says-

S: Yes, yes, ok, sorry. (Pause.) You want to have coffee?

M: Well, I don't really drink coffee but we could have something else.

S: Like what?

M: Fruit juice.

S: Yeah, ok.

(Pause.)

M: When?

S: When what?

M: When do you want to have it? Now? Later? Next year? Bastille Day?

S: Umm... Ok, I take it you want a take-charge kind of guy and I respect that but I'm not really-

M: I have half an hour and then I have to be back at work. So it's time to fish or cut bait.

S: Wow, my grandpa says that as well. Sorry. Ok: Fruit juice, now, here, with me.

M: I'd love to. (They exit.)