

Taking Linda

by
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(Setting an apparent basement room. Furnishings include a bed, kitchen table with four chairs, a wing back chair and an empty book case with a speaker on the very top.)

Cast

MARTI female----- 35
JACK male----- 25 to 50
LINDA female----- 25
EDDIE male ----- 26

SCENE 1

(A young woman is lying on the bed, a chain around her leg is fastened to a pipe in the UR Corner of the room. A man and woman wearing surgical gloves are also present. The woman [Marti] is checking the connections of the chain. A man [Jack] is placing an envelope on a table DL)

JACK

Check that chain good. And make sure the ankle thing ain't too tight for the little princes.

MARTI

What do you think I'm doing, checking the pipes?

JACK

You ain't funny. Just check it good. Are you sure that kid will stay away until we're clear?

MARTI

He'll do what he's told. As long as he doesn't know any thing he'll be just fine. Have you got everything there?

(Jack places an envelope on the table.)

JACK

Yeah. The cash, the cash, are you sure we shouldn't ---

MARTI

Yes I'm sure. Just just stick to the plan.

JACK

Why won't he just take the cash and split?

MARTI

Because he knows we'll be watching him.

JACK

How does he know that?

MARTI

Because I told him we would be watching him. Are you sure everything is in there?

JACK

The picture, the locker key and the instructions. Why did you have to write the instructions out for him? Another thing, how are we going to watch him? Don't we have enough other stuff to do?

MARTI

We don't have to watch him.

JACK

We don't?

MARTI

He needs to think we are watching him. Maybe you should leave that stuff without the envelope.

JACK

Why?

MARTI

He might miss something.

JACK

How could he ---

MARTI

Just do it. Okay?

JACK

If he's too stupid to know how to open an envelope why the hell is he doing the job?

Because he is stupid enough to believe that we are watching him.

JACK

If you say so.

MARTI

I do. Now let's get the hell out of here.

(As he crosses to the door and opens it.)

JACK

Okay.

(They exit and close the door. A beat and the door opens.)

MARTI (O.S.)

Now what?

JACK

I forgot the phone charger.

(He enters, and places the charger on the table. As he is closing the door behind him.)

MARTI

Maybe you should switch jobs with Eddie.

JACK

Very funny.

JACK

Oops! Damn. *(He pauses pats his pocket.)*

MARTI

Now what?

JACK

The key to the locker. *(He puts a key on the table then exits.)*

MARTI

I hope you didn't forget anything else.

(The door closes.)

(After a few beats we hear an outer door open and close.)

LINDA

Damn. *(Linda peers out one side where she can see the door. She raises her head above the blanket.)*

Tugs at the chain and looks around the room.) Where am I? (She yanks hard at the end of the chain attached to the pipe.)

Oh, shit. (Then she just sits and stares into space.)

Think, damn it, think.

BLACK OUT

SCENE 2

(Lights up scene is the same. Linda still seated on bed. The sound of outer door opening and closing.)

LINDA

Oh boy. Now what do I do. *(She covers herself with the blanket and lies motionless.)*

(The door opens and a young man in his twenties enters. Just as the door is closing his cell phone rings.)

EDDIE

Hello. Yeah. What girl? Okay, okay. The table, yea I see it. The hundred grand? --- Okay, okay *(He crosses to the table.)* I got it. *(He picks up the key.)* Holy shit --- that's a lot of cash. --- I'll read the note, I'll read the note. I know, I know --- I, I just want to check it. No, I won't turn around. Okay I'm listening. Uh hu. Uh hu. Uh hu. The girl? I'm turning around. --- I see something. --- No she's not moving. Is she, you know? --- Good. --- Now what? -- Check her what. --- I can do that. *(He crosses to the bed and peeks under the blanket.)* She's there. --- Yes, she's breathing. Who is she? --- In half an hour? --- What do you mean kidnaped? --- Not me! I'm no kidnaper. Wait a minute, how do I know the mone --- go to the locker and check? The locker? Oh, the key. At the bus station. Got it. I should do that now?

(He looks at the lump in the bed.) Yea. *(Goes back to the table picks up the note reads it aloud.)* 'The locker number is on the key and the money is in the blue suitcase inside. Just check it and you will see that it's all there. Then put it back and lock the door.' *(He returns the note to the table and exits.)*

(After a beat we hear the outside door close. Linda pokes her head out from under the blanket.)

LINDA

I've got to get out of here! *(She looks around the room while tugging on the chain. She is assessing the situation and her surroundings.)* How did I get here? What the hell happened? Think. Think! I came out of the building, hailed a cab and got in. Nothing unusual there. Wait a minute. The cab was right there. *(Pause.)* Waiting for me? Was he waiting for me? It was like he was waiting for me. So what! That's not going to help me now. Maybe it is. What else do I know? The cab driver locked the windows and doors. Yes I remember that. Then? Then the hissing sound and, and I woke up here. *(She test's the limits of how far she can move around, stopping at each point and mentally triangulating the spot.)* Get my bearings. So you've been kidnaped. That sounds weird. Who would kidnap me? *(She sits on the bed.)* The note. I wonder what's in that note. Never mind that. What else do I know. He's got a cell phone. If I can get my hands on his cell phone. Stupid! I have my own phone. It's in my bag. Where's my bag? *(She makes as much of an arc as she can, again noting her positions at the end of the chain.)* Maybe there is something in that note.

She takes the blanket from the bed and tries to dislodge the note by holding one corner and tossing it toward the table.) No luck. So far, not my lucky day. *(She sits back down on the bed.)* Think, damn it think! I have a cell phone. Where's my bag? *(She looks under the bed. Then panics.)* Stop! Get hold of your self. Think, think.

BLACK OUT

SCENE 3
LINDA

(She is again measuring the room. She moves the bed.)

Maybe that will give a little more maneuvering room. The light switch --- *(It is out of her reach.)* No help there.

(The outer door is heard.)

LINDA (cont'd)

Shit! *(She moves the bed back and sits on it.)*

(Eddie enters, carrying a woman's purse.)

LINDA (cont'd)

Hi, honey, you're home.

EDDIE

What? I'm not your honey ---

LINDA

You can say that again. Hey, that's mine.

EDDIE

I know.

LINDA

Give it to me.

EDDIE

Please?

LINDA

Please, give me my bag.

EDDIE

After I have a look.

LINDA

You can't do that. Whatever is in there is mine and it's private.

(He rummages through the bag, dumps the contents on the table.)

EDDIE

Some of this stuff I can't let you have.

LINDA

Listen, you better let me let me have my things.

EDDIE

I better don't let you have them. First let me see what you got, oh, what have we here?

(Holding a cell phone in his hand.)

LINDA

A cell phone? I wonder how that got in there.

EDDIE

I bet you didn't even know it was there.

LINDA

Don't be stupid, of course I knew it was there.

EDDIE

If I was stupid I wouldn't of looked.

LINDA

I was hoping you wouldn't notice.

EDDIE

So you do think I'm stupid. Well who's the one chained up and who's the one with the hundred large?

LINDA

Hundred large? Listen I don't know what you think you're doing here and I certainly don't know what the hell I'm doing in this dungeon ---

EDDIE

Hey! This is a nice clean place I cleaned --- *(A cell phone rings. He answers the one in his hand.)* Hello, hello?

You can't answer that phone.

LINDA
EDDIE

I can do what I want.

LINDA

You can't.

EDDIE

Why?

LINDA

Because it's my phone and it's not ringing.

EDDIE

Shit! *(He knows he looks stupid, tosses phone onto table and reaches for his phone.)* Don't laugh.

LINDA

I'm not laughing. *(She is.)*

EDDIE

Hello. Sure it's me.

LINDA

How do you know?

EDDIE

Yes she's here. What, do you think I'm stupid.

LINDA

Evidence is mounting.

EDDIE

This just ain't going the way I figured it.

LINDA

Not the way you figured it?

EDDIE

Shut up, would ya? *(Into phone.)* She's a pain in the ass.

LINDA

I'm a pain in the ass? You are a waste of body parts.

EDDIE

I said to shut up! *(He storms out the door speaking as he goes.)* I don't know why I let you talk me into this in the first ---

LINDA

Bye now. Jerk! Little twerpie jerk.---

EDDIE (O.S.)

I heard that.

LINDA

(Pulling on the chain on her leg.) Hear this you piece of crap. You kidnapping piece of crap.

EDDIE (O.S.)

She just won't shut up. Shut up I'm trying to talk on the phone.

LINDA

If you don't want to hear me then let me out of here, you jerk.

EDDIE

You hear what I have to put up with? I know, I know.

LINDA

What an ass hole!

EDDIE (O.S.)

I heard that! I can't take much more of this broad, you better ---

LINDA

Ass hole! Ass hole! Ass hole! Ass hole!

EDDIE (O.S.)

Hold on a minute would you? Shut up! Shut up! *(He bursts into the room.)* Shut up, I won't say it again *(The door closes behind him.)* Oh shit. You stupid bitch. Look what you did. We're locked in here. Now what am I gonna do?

LINDA

What do you mean we're locked in?

EDDIE

You just couldn't stop. You saw it was pissing me off but you couldn't stop. You had to keep calling me an ass hole.

LINDA

You are an ass hole. Not only that you are a stupid ass hole. And what do you mean we're locked in?

EDDIE

The door is locked. So we're locked in. That's what I mean or are you stupid yourself?

LINDA

Wait a minute. You're locked in? That's funny, if you think about it. I mean I was already locked in and now the guy who locked me in, the ass hole that locked me in is locked in here with me. Isn't that ironic?

EDDIE

I don't know about ironic. I do know that we are locked in and that my freekin phone is out there and it's still on and the battery is gonna die and that ain't ironic. How do you feel about that?

LINDA

Like the ass hole who locked me in here is even, if at all possible, stupider than I thought. Tell me genius, how are we getting out of here?

EDDIE

You mean how am I getting out of here. You ain't going nowhere until they come up with the ransom.

LINDA

Ransom? What ransom? And who are, they?

EDDIE

Who are they? You should know who they are.

LINDA

What are you talking about?

EDDIE

The they are your family. Your rich family. That's who. They pay the ransom, I blindfold you and then let you go. It ain't complicated.

LINDA

Oh, yes it is. It's very complicated.

EDDIE

Only if they don't pay. Then I guess it will get complicated. Cause if they don't pay and I don't get a phone call --- Oh, holly shit.

LINDA

Like. Holy shit, the phone is in another room? You ---

EDDIE

Don't bother saying it. I feel like an ass hole. Okay?

LINDA

Okay, so now you know your an ass hole, but do you know these rich relatives that I don't know I have?

EDDIE

Who do you think you're kidding? I seen your picture.

LINDA

How did I get here? I didn't come here. As a matter of fact I don't know how I got here. And who the hell are you.

EDDIE

Who the hell are you? What do you mean you don't have any rich relatives? They told me this would be over in a day or two and your father would pay up and I could let you go and I could just keep my money and you could go home and everything would be okay and --

-

LINDA

Woa! Hold on Sparkie! Slow down a minute. Catch your breath, relax and tell me. Who do you think I am?

EDDIE

Wait a minute, let me think (*He paces back and forth.*) They never told me. (*He wanders to close and she wraps the chain around his neck from behind, pulling him down on the bed.*) Hey! What do you think you're doing? (*Choking out his words.*)

LINDA

Aha! Shoe on other foot now, grasshopper. Now tell me what the hell is going on or so help me ---

EDDIE

(*Still choking.*) Please, I can't hardly breath.

LINDA

Not my problem. (*She holds on tight.*)

(*He gasps and goes limp in her arms.*)

LINDA (cont'd)

Oh, shit. *(She loosens her grip and crawls backward on the bed.)* I killed him! Now what am I going to do. *(She moves back toward him, pokes at him, undoes the chain and is patting him on the cheek as she speaks.)* I'm in a locked room with a dead guy. Please don't be dead. I've never killed anything in my whole life.

(He begins to sputter.)

LINDA (cont'd)

Thank god. *(She jumps backward.)* Oh, boy. Oh, boy!

(He rolls off the bed, crawls across the room choking and gasping.)

EDDIE

What the --- *(He props himself up against US wall.)* Are you crazy?

LINDA

I don't know why I did that. It's not like me, I never did anything like that before.

EDDIE

You almost killed me.

LINDA

I know. I didn't know I could do that. I, I'm not a violent person.

EDDIE

Maybe you should reevaluate yourself. Whew! I thought you killed me. I mean you could fool me that you never killed before, that was pretty good almost killing.

LINDA

I'm sorry, really I am sorry.

EDDIE

Forget it.

LINDA

How can I? I almost killed you. I almost killed a person another living being. I don't believe it.

EDDIE

Believe it. Where'd you learn a move like that anyway, and who the hell is Sparkie?

LINDA

Could I have a drink?

EDDIE

A drink?

LINDA

Of water. Could I have a drink of water? Evidently, almost killing someone is thirsty work.

EDDIE

You're making jokes? Do you know what kind of trouble you're in?

LINDA

For almost killing you? Can you blame me? You can't really be angry about that can you?

EDDIE

Not really. I kind of understand.

LINDA

Good. After all what are you going to do with me if my relatives, who by the way don't exist, won't come up with the money? What happens then? Are you still going to let me go, or do you have to kill me?

EDDIE

You're just full of questions aren't you? I don't know the answer, they never told me what to do. Only what to do when they got the money.

LINDA

If they get the money?

EDDIE

Well, they said when. If, I don't know about any if.

LINDA

So you're not so sure. No plan 'B'? Are you sure? Who are they?
Who do they think I am?

EDDIE

More questions?

LINDA

More, no answers?

EDDIE

Don't have any. Also, don't have any water. Locked door!

LINDA

You don't know who I'm supposed to be. You don't know who
they are. Bye the way which they don't you know?

EDDIE

What? I don't get you. What do you mean which they?

LINDA

Well, near as I can figure there are two they's that you referred to.

EDDIE

Really?

LINDA

Yes really. Here goes Sparkie, see if you can pay attention. There
are the they who either kidnaped me or had me kidnapped, and
don't know that I am probably the wrong victim. Then there are the
they who are supposed to pay a ransom to save me, whom I do not
in all probability know and who I am willing to bet have no idea
who the hell I am and so in all likelihood will not pay any ransom to
save me. Can you identify either of them?

EDDIE

No. Why do you keep calling me Sparkie? It ain't my name.

LINDA

Sorry. What is our name.

EDDIE

Well it ain't Sparkie. That is my name ain't Sparkie it's --- wait a
minute. You almost had me.

LINDA
Okay, Sparkie. So who are they?

EDDIE

Which ones? (*Pause. He begins to laugh.*)

LINDA

Stop laughing. This is serious.

EDDIE

You bet your ass it's serious. I've been thinking.

LINDA

Oh, boy! Sorry. (*Pause.*) Listen, maybe I can help you think.

EDDIE

You're gonna help me think? How are you gonna help me think? I don't even know what to think about.

LINDA

Just tell me what you know.

EDDIE

What I know is that I'm locked in a room in a cellar with you and I'm waiting for a phone call which I can't get because the phone is in the other room.

LINDA

What else?

EDDIE

What are you? A cop? Are you a cop?

LINDA

No, I am not a cop. I am a kidnaped person, who doesn't know why she has been kidnaped or by whom. So.

EDDIE

So, what?

LINDA

So tell me more about what is going on here. How much ransom? To be paid by who? What's in it for you? Yes there's a question you should be able to answer. Why are you involved?

EDDIE

For the money. Why else?

LINDA

How much are they going to pay you then.

EDDIE

Not going to.

LINDA

Sparkie you just told me that you're doing it for the money and now you tell me that you're not getting paid. That doesn't make sense.

EDDIE

I already got my money.

LINDA

I don't believe this. They gave you money to keep me prisoner and then let me go when they call you after they get the ransom.

EDDIE

I didn't know about any ransom or kidnaping until later. You see they gave me the hundred grand and set me up here to wait for instructions. I didn't even know what this was all about until they brought you here and chained you up.

LINDA

Why didn't you leave then?

EDDIE

Cause I know they're watching me and that's when I found out that it was a kidnap and that I was involved in a crime.

LINDA

Anything for a cool hundred grand. Well here we are locked in and you are not going to get any phone calls.

EDDIE

Why not?

LINDA

Off hand I can think of two reasons. One is I'm not who they think I am and so the other they, won't pay the ransom if nobody they know has been kidnaped and two the god damned phone is in another room and you can't answer if they do call. So that leaves you and me in a whole lot of trouble.

EDDIE

Why am I in trouble? I didn't do nothing, I'm baby sitting. That's what the note said.

LINDA

What note?

EDDIE

The one they left with you and the other stuff.

LINDA

I think we are running out of time. If I asked you again could you could tell me your whole story from the beginning?

EDDIE

But I did.

LINDA

You keep leaving out bits and pieces. How did it all start.

EDDIE

You have to give me time to think. I didn't know about any kidnaping, I swear I didn't. I got this letter, with some money in it, asking me to rent this place for a month. When I did I got a package with the phone in it and instructions to be here on Thursday. And that's all.

LINDA

That can't be all. Was there a return address on the envelope?

EDDIE

Yeah, and that was weird.

LINDA

Why was it weird?

EDDIE

It was the same as mine.

LINDA

That's weird.

EDDIE

Yeah, weird. I got it maybe they live in my building.

LINDA

Maybe they didn't want you to be able to find them?

EDDIE

Probably, right.

LINDA

What about when they brought me here? Did they say anything?

EDDIE

I wasn't here. I mean, I was here but I, I, got a call on the cell.

LINDA

And? (*Pause.*) What did they say?

EDDIE

The voice said to go and get lunch and come back in an hour.

LINDA

And?

EDDIE

So, I did. I went out and came back in an hour and there you were and the phone rang. The voice said don't worry about the girl. A hundred grand is in the suitcase in a locker. And I'm thinking, what girl? That's when the voice told me not to look so I didn't. But then I did turn around to see and the voice said to look on the table, so I did and the voice told me, just check out the note.

LINDA

Did you check on me then?

EDDIE

I was to busy reading.

LINDA

What was in the locker?

EDDIE

The money.

LINDA

They gave you a hundred thousand dollars and that's it?

EDDIE

Well no, there was the note and the charger.

LINDA

What's in the note? They gave you a hundred thousand dollars?

Why did you come back here? Why didn't you take the money and run?

EDDIE

They're watching me.

LINDA

Like now? Right now. Are they watching you, us now?

EDDIE

Geese, I don't know. They could be I guess.

LINDA

Can they hear us?

EDDIE

Geese, I don't know. (*He X's to the table*) Could be. (*He looks thru her purse.*) Look at this. (*Holding up her wallet.*)

LINDA

That's mine, give it to me.

EDDIE

After I have a look. Nice picture. My drivers licence picture looks like a mug shot.

LINDA

Just practicing for the real thing?

EDDIE

Are you always like this? Bitchy, like this?

LINDA

Only when kidnaped. What about you are you always getting ready for you mug shot?

EDDIE

Boy, you're something. Are you still in school? This is an school I.D. you look old ---

LINDA

Thanks a lot.

EDDIE

I meant old to still be in school. I graduated two years ago and even the seniors looked like kids.

LINDA

You only graduated from high school two years ago. You look older!

EDDIE

I get it. I look old, ha that's funny. No, actually college, I graduated from college two years ago.

LINDA

You did? Why are you? --- You're a college graduate?

EDDIE

Dah, yea I got educated and all.

LINDA

Stop. So how did you get mixed up in a kidnaping?

EDDIE

As usual, long story. Your licence says you are Karen Ellis but you're not really ---

LINDA

Karen Ellis? Yes I am.

EDDIE

The note said you are Linda Miller.

LINDA

What did you study?

EDDIE

Your not Linda Miller? Architecture mainly. Interior design, but I got my degree in Philosophy.

LINDA

No offense, you sound more like a drop out.

EDDIE

It's an act, just playing a role.

LINDA

That explains a lot.

EDDIE

It does?

LINDA

Not a lot of work out there for philosophers. I'm just guessing.

EDDIE

Not really. I get by.

LINDA

How does a philosopher get by. What do you do?

EDDIE

So the cops can track me down. Is that why you're asking all these questions.

LINDA

I'll bet you work off the books. Tutoring.? That's what you do to get by. Come on you can tell me. Do you think the cops would believe that I was kidnaped by a philosophy tutor?

EDDIE

Alright, you got me. I tutor on the side.

LINDA

Good. Maybe you could help me out.

EDDIE

Kant?

LINDA

Why not?

EDDIE

You are funny.

LINDA

Oh, Emanuel Kant.

EDDIE

Kant what? Barrump bump.

LINDA

We could take this on the road.

EDDIE

Maybe after they pay the ransom.

LINDA

Reality check. Start thinking about what will happen when they find out they screwed up. We need a plan 'B'

EDDIE

We need a plan 'B'?

LINDA

Yes we.

EDDIE

I'll think about it. I keep thinking about why they would make a mistake like that. After all, kidnaping is kind of a big deal they must have planned it pretty thoroughly.

LINDA

Maybe they are the ass holes.

EDDIE

Even so. You really shouldn't go into this kind of business without a good plan. Especially making sure to kidnap the right person.

LINDA

One would think. Look at my shoes. Look at my bag. My clothes? Do you see rich people gear there?

EDDIE

So if you're not Linda, who are you? I mean if you are this Karen who are you? What are you?

LINDA

As you noted, I'm in school. The New School. Studying acting, writing and directing.

EDDIE

I hear all that pays well.

LINDA

If you find work.

EDDIE

I understand. Believe me, I understand.

LINDA

Sorry that I called you an idiot and an ass hole but you have to appreciate my situation. Here I am locked in a dungeon, by an uneducated dolt, chained to a pipe and all for reasons I don't know about. That could put a person on edge, if you get my meaning.

EDDIE

Understandable. Who are you calling a dolt? It's just that not being able to find steady work and all, insults are kind of hard to deal with.

LINDA

You were pretty convincing, maybe you should try acting.

EDDIE

I hear it pays well.

LINDA

Back to our situation. After you read the note did you check on me then?

EDDIE

They told me to, so I did.

LINDA

I remember that. I made believe I was out cold.

EDDIEY

You're pretty sneaky.

LINDA

I'm not sure about sneaky but I am not stupid. What about the water.

EDDIE

Out there. Everything, water, food and ---

LINDA

Bathroom?

EDDIE

Yep.

LINDA

What's going to happen?

EDDIE

If you need to use the facility?

LINDA

No. What's going to happen when they find out they kidnaped the wrong person.

EDDIE

Maybe they didn't. I still don't know that.

LINDA

Then what happens when that phone rings and you can't answer? I am telling you right now it isn't going to ring. Because nobody is going to pay to save someone they don't know, especially when the intended victim is probably at home. Safe at home. Then what?

EDDIE

I don't know.

LINDA

Why don't you think about it.

EDDIE

Maybe I should just take the money and ---

LINDA

And what? You're locked in here and I bet whoever is responsible for this mess will want that money back.

EDDIE

Oh no! That's mine, I earned it fair and square. I did my part. I'm done, no harm no foul.

LINDA

No harm no foul? You are a loose end. They are going to come back here and get rid of both of us. I have been kidnaped, I am a witness to a crime. They committed a crime a felony and you are an accessory and a potential witness against them. They need to get rid of the evidence. That's you and me.

EDDIE

Not me. I'm not evidence.

LINDA

You are and worse. You have their money. They will kill us both but before they kill you skippy, you will give them the money. Or at least the key.

EDDIE

If I don't give it to them they can't kill me.

LINDA

Lights on in a vacant room.

EDDIE

What's that supposed to mean?

LINDA

Have you ever heard of a thing called torture.

EDDIE

Yes, I have and philosophically speaking it doesn't work.

LINDA

You'll change your mind when they start pulling out your fingernails.

EDDIE

They would never do that to me.

LINDA

You know them that well?

EDDIE

You're trying to trick me but it won't work. Because I really don't know who they are.

LINDA

So what do you think will happen.

EDDIE

I don't know.

LINDA

Take a wild guess.

EDDIE

They call me to tell me to turn you loose after they get the money.

LINDA

And when you don't answer the phone.

EDDIE

Right. I forgot that.

LINDA

(She takes a breath and exhales a sigh.) I'm going to die. That's it, isn't it?

EDDIE

When I don't answer they will keep the ransom and take off.

LINDA

And leave us here? Or maybe they will wait for you to go get the money and then kill you and take it. And when you don't show, then what will they do? You see either way, they get the ransom or they don't you are locked in here and they have to come looking for you. When they do we are both cooked.

EDDIE

That was your fault. You wouldn't stop yelling! And now I'm going to get killed? Oh no, I'll tell them what happened ---

LINDA

And then they will kill us and take your money with them when they leave. One other thought. Maybe they were just using you and were going to kill you and take your money any way. What kind of philosopher are you any way?

EDDIE

A fake one. I made that up. And you are confusing me with all this talk about killing and -- I don't know what to think.

LINDA

Philosophers are thinkers. Listen to me, we need a plan and we don't know how much time we have.

EDDIE

You're right. Either way they are going to kill both of us aren't they? What can we do?

LINDA

Prepare.

EDDIE

I don't know what to do. What about sex?

LINDA

What?

JACK

I mean if were going to die any way.

LINDA

You're cute but all things considered I think I would rather spend my time trying to save my live. How does that light work?

EDDIE

Electricity?

LINDA

I hope you are being funny. The switch where is the switch.

The switch is right there, next to the door.

LINDA

Not the best place ---

EDDIE

Yes it is. Just inside the door according to code.

LINDA

I don't care about any code.

EDDIE

It's just that I studied ---

LINDA

Got it. You studied architecture. You did that while you weren't studying philosophy.

EDDIE

I did take a few courses.

LINDA

Good, then help me out here. How do I turn off the light without that switch.

EDDIE

Don't know.

LINDA

Let me explain, one more time. Ransom or no ransom, right victim or wrong victim, they are going to come back here and kill us.

Even if you withstand the torture and don't tell them where you put the money, they are going to kill us. I am a witness to a felony and you are an accompis to that crime and a loose end.

EDDIE

It all sounds right when you say it but in my head, I get to keep a hundred grand, tax free. And all I have to do is watch you sleep for a couple of days.

LINDA

Let's try this. A couple of days watching me not being able to use a bath room. Do you think they wanted me to be angry enough to spend my life helping the cops find you? How about if was an actual wealthy person with the resources to do so?

EDDIE

They couldn't know that we would be locked in here.

LINDA

(Pulling on the chain.) Let's assume that somehow magically you get that door open. How do I get to the bath room. How is that supposed to happen? Any thoughts? Better yet, you get your phone call. How do you set me free?

EDDIE

Wait a minute. I never thought of that.

LINDA

Think about this. We need an escape plan. Even if I'm wrong, what else should we do with our time? *(Pause.)* Forget it Sparkie! Sex is not an option.

EDDIE

(Putting on the charm?) Not what I was thinking.

LINDA

You call that thinking?

EDDIE

Okay, let's work on a plan. What do we do.

LINDA

Let's look at the assets and liabilities of our situation. Liabilities first. One locked door, one chain, no weapons, no communication with the outside.

Except that is we could communicate by using my cell phone which you won't let me have. A quick thought. Why don't you use my phone to call somebody who could help us out?

EDDIE

I don't know.

LINDA

Why didn't I think of it before. You have to admit it's an option.

EDDIE

I don't know anybody that I could call.

LINDA

How about your mother? You must have a mother.

EDDIE

High Mom it's Eddie I'm involved in a kidnaping and at the moment I'm locked in a basement with the victim. --- How does that sound?

LINDA

Don't have a lot of friends? Let's put it on the asset side. Say for use when they come back and actually try to kill us.

EDDIE

We could do that, I guess.

LINDA

Assets. What have we got. Let's see, chairs we can use as weapons. Except for the fact that I will still be chained to the pipe. I wonder what the pipe is for.

EDDIE

Don't know. Could be a water pipe. Too small for a sewer, too bad.

LINDA

Out of curiosity, why too bad?

EDDIE

Sewer pipes are usually cast iron in older buildings.

LINDA

So what?

EDDIE

They're brittle. Could be steam they're kind of brittle.

LINDA

Could we break it?

EDDIE

Probably not. Nothing to break it with, just wooden chairs.

LINDA

If you moved the table to where you could reach the light standing on it, you could loosen the bulb and we'd be in the dark. And then -

--

EDDIE

We'd be alone in the dark.

LINDA

Yes we would be.

EDDIE

And you said no sex.

LINDA

You're not going to stay with that all night are you?

EDDIE

Just kidding.

LINDA

I'm not so sure.

EDDIE

Aha, so you are interested.

LINDA

Once the lights are out we are in control. How long I don't know.

Do they have guns?

EDDIE

I've never seen them how the hell would I know that?

LINDA

Just testing. We take the sheet from the bed tie a corner to the door knob run the sheet around the pipe so I can pull the door open.

EDDIE

That's stupid. Why don't I throw the sheet over the door so that it can't close?

LINDA
Because you will be standing on the table loosening the bulb.

EDDIE

I don't like that.

LINDA

I don't care. Do you want to get out of here alive.

EDDIE

Maybe I will when they get the ransom.

LINDA

There won't be any ransom, believe me. What about me? They will kill me for sure. Are you going to let them do that?

EDDIE

Even if what you say is true, how can I stop them?

LINDA

You have been trying to figure out how to involve sex. Haven't you? Why not apply that energy to an attempted escape. Who knows what could happen then.

EDDIE

You're kidding aren't you? (*Pause.*) What's the plan?

LINDA

I am trying to figure that out, which might be easier to do with your help, I might add.

EDDIE

I'm not saying I'll go along with it but go ahead tell me the plan.

LINDA

I don't have it all yet, so see if you can come up with something.

EDDIE

Can't promise any thing. Go ahead.

LINDA

You pull the table over to where you can reach the light bulb.

EDDIE

You already said that.

LINDA

Right. When they unlock the door I pull on the sheet the door flies open you turn out the light and hit the one nearest you with the chair.

EDDIE

I turn out the light jump down and grab a chair and in the dark swing it around until I hit someone. Sounds like it can't miss. Are you nuts?

LINDA

Listen to me. You put a chair on the table, so that it's right where you can reach it. Unless you think you should use the chair first.

EDDIE

That might be better.

(The outside door opens we hear Jacks voice.)

JACK

Son of a bitch!

EDDIE

Listen to me.

LINDA

Get under the bed.

EDDIE

In the bed?

LINDA

You are persistant. Under the bed!

(He does so and as he slides under the bed she drapes the covers over the side of the bed as the door opens.)

MARTI

Eddie!

JACK

(Enters, carrying Eddie's cell phone.) What the hell is going on?

MARTI

Where the hell is he?

LINDA

I. --- I think the bathroom. He said he had to go to the bathroom.

Did you come to get me out of here?

MARTI

Listen to her. Yeah, we came to save you. She looks like the picture. Jack, check the bathroom. What was his phone doing out there?

(He exits.)

LINDA

I don't know. I asked him for some water and he said he had to go to the bathroom and that he woul ---

MARTI

Shut up.

(Jack returns.)

JACK

He's not here. Where would he go?

MARTI

He went after the money the little bastard. *(She turns to Linda.)*

How long ago did he leave?

LINDA

What if I don't tell you?

MARTI

(She backhands Linda.) Don't fuck with me. When did he leave!

LINDA

A few minutes ago.

MARTI

You better not be lying to me.

(Marti raises her hand to hit her, Linda ducks under the covers.)

JACK

(Spots the purse.) You stay here with her I'll take care of him.

MARTI

And run off with my money. You jerk. You kidnaped the wrong broad and now you're going to run off and leave me with her.

Not a chance. Come on let's get him before he gets the money.

(He grabs Linda's purse from the table.)

JACK

What about her?

MARTI

Who cares. She'll be dead before any body finds her. Let's go.

(As they are leaving Eddie slides out from under the bed and tries to get the door before it closes. He doesn't make it. The outside door opens and slams shut.)

LINDA

Now do you believe me?

EDDIE

They got the wrong one. Now who's stupid?

LINDA

Any chance they might just grab the money and take off?

EDDIE

How the hell would I know?

LINDA

If that's the case, then they have left us here to die. They will have no reason to come back for me. They as much as said that they left me here to die. All they want now is to get back the money they paid you.

EDDIE

It ain't there.

LINDA

What?

EDDIE

The money ain't there. I moved it.

LINDA

Good news, bad news.

EDDIE

What does that mean?

LINDA

The good news, they might not come back.

EDDIE

What's the bad news?

LINDA

They might not come back.

EDDIE

If they don't come back?

LINDA

We have to figure a way out of here. On the other hand if they do come back we need to be ready. How long will it take?

EDDIE

For what?

LINDA

Until they get to the locker and come back here?

EDDIE

I don't know.

LINDA

You must know, damn it you made the trip. How long did it take you?

EDDIE

I stopped and had dinner but that doesn't mater the money ain't there.

So why would they come back?

LINDA

They don't know that you know that they know they kidnaped the wrong person.

EDDIE

I don't get it.

LINDA

If they think you don't know that I'm the wrong person, then they must assume that wherever you went doesn't mater because you will come back and wait for the phone call.

EDDIE

That makes sense. Doesn't it? I mean, yea that makes sense. They will come back here to find me.

LINDA

And torture you for the money and you won't be able to hide under the bed this time.

EDDIE

What can we do?

LINDA

The first thing we do is think. I forgot. We do have a way out.

EDDIE

We do? What is it?

LINDA

We can call the cops.

EDDIE

How? My phone is out there.

LINDA

But mine isn't. Give it to me.

EDDIE

Oh, no. If you call the cops they'll bust in here and arrest me. Well, wont they?

LINDA

But you will have all that money to hire a good lawyer.

EDDIE

I don't know.

LINDA

I'll testify for you, tell the cop that you're not a bad guy and you didn't hurt me.

EDDIE

Isn't there another way?

LINDA

Sure! There must be! Let me think --- how about this, when they come back all pissed off because their deal went sour and then they found out that you already took the money, let's see what would be a good plan. Well now how about when they are all distracted trying to kill us we just beat them up and arrest them. How does that sound. How is that for a plan? Unless you have a better idea, Sparkie!

EDDIE

Don't call me Sparkie. I told you my name is Eddie. Let me think.

LINDA

That's it. You think. Okay, stop thinking now. Can you loosen one of the legs on that table?

EDDIE

It'll fall over.

LINDA

Brilliant! Deductive reasoning, of course. Listen to me. Maybe the idea of beating them up isn't so far fetched after all. We do have the element of surprise on our side.

EDDIE

How about I tell them where the money is if they promise not to hurt us and then you can have your phone back? *(He very carefully backs away from her. Then turns to see that the purse is gone.)*

EDDIE

You are not going to believe this.

LINDA

What?

EDDIE

It's gone. Your purse, the phone, and everything is gone.

LINDA

(Yelling.) Move the table! Now!

EDDIE

You don't have to yell.

LINDA

Just do it.

(He moves the table under the light.)

EDDIE

Now what? I forgot what you said.

LINDA

Put a chair on top of the table. Then next to the table. Then ---

EDDIE

On top or next to, which one?

LINDA

Start thinking slower.

EDDIE

Thinking slower?

LINDA

You are listening faster than I am talking. Slow down and pay attention.

EDDIE

Do we have time?

LINDA

I hope so. Now put one chair on the table and one chair next to it so you can get up and down.

EDDIE

Like a step.

LINDA

Right. Make sure you are under the light so you can unscrew the bulb. Get close enough to the door so you grab the chair and swing it in the direction of the door. Take some practice swings. Go ahead.

(He swings the chair a few times.)

LINDA

That's good but when they come in you will have to swing harder. And remember to keep swinging until you hit somebody.

EDDIE

What if I miss?

LINDA

Don't! Maybe you can move the table a little closer to the door.

EDDIE

So you can grab me with that chain again?

LINDA

Listen to me. We are each others only chance of staying alive.

Why on earth would I do anything that stupid?

EDDIE

Just being cautious.

LINDA

Now he's being cautious. This is the time to throw caution to the wind as they say. We will probably only get one chance so let's take our best shot.

(He moves the table a bit closer to the door.)

EDDIE

Is that better?

LINDA

Yes. You better get up on the table.

EDDIE

Then what?

LINDA

We wait. Don't forget to turn out the light.

EDDIE

Got it.

(They sit in silence for a moment, he on the chair facing the door, she on the bed with the sheet in her hand and as much chain as she can on her lap.)

LINDA

You look like a statue sitting up there like that.

EDDIE

You look pretty nice yourself. Do you think if we had met some place else that we would like each other?

LINDA

I don't see why not. You seem like you could be a nice enough guy when you're not kidnaping people.

EDDIE

I didn't kidnap you.

LINDA

I know that. I was just thinking out loud.

EDDIE

I don't do that.

LINDA

Think out loud?

EDDIE

No, kidnap people. I would never do such a thing. I don't know why I'm even here.

LINDA

A hundred thousand reasons, I thought.

EDDIE

I don't really want it now. I just want us, both of us, to get out of this alive. Then I don't care what happens.

LINDA

You're not really a bad person. I've sort of come to realize that.

EDDIE

Thanks, but I am still in a lot of trouble. Maybe I should have gone to the police when I realized that you had been kidnaped. I should have done the right thing then.

LINDA

You're doing the right thing now.

EDDIE

For the right reason? It's my life too now. I should have acted as soon as I knew.

LINDA

This is not the time for moralizing and philosophizing.

EDDIE

Right again. Listen, when we get out of here or maybe when I get out of jail ---

LINDA

Not now Sparkie. I need you to concentrate on the mission at hand. We can talk about that other stuff later.

EDDIE

Will there be a later?

LINDA

Don't know. All right just this once and then back to business. I don't hate you any more as a matter of fact, you kind of grow on a person after a while, so maybe when this is all over, maybe a cup of coffee ---

EDDIE

Or lunch?

LINDA

Maybe even lunch. Listen Eddie, while we're killing time waiting I think you could think about what you are actually going to do after this is all over. Providing of course that you are still alive.

EDDIE

I've been trying.

(The sound of the outer door opening and closing.)

EDDIE (cont'd)

Thinking is going to have to wait.

LINDA

Ready?

(He indicates that he is. She readies her chain and sheet. The door opens and Jack enters and stops, Marti is right behind him. He notices Eddie reaching for the light bulb.)

JACK

What the ---

(As Eddie grabs hold of the bulb he let's out a howl of pain.

[IT'S HOT.] Then Eddie freezes.)

LINDA

(She screams.) We are dead. Dead, dead, dead! (She yanks hard on the chain and the pipe breaks.) Shit!

(Marti and Jack are momentarily distracted by Linda's actions.

Eddie composes himself, jumps down from the table and reaches the light switch. As he does so the door closes.

Lights out.)

JACK

Get him!

(Lots of noise. Scuffling.)

LINDA

I've got her.

EDDIE

You do. Then who do I have.

LINDA

That would be me.

EDDIE

Give me that pipe.

MARTI

Let go of my leg.

JACK

That's your leg?

(The sound of a pipe hitting something. The chains rattle. Lots of huffing, puffing, moaning and groaning. Then silence.)

EDDIE

Hello?

(A female grunting. Sound of furniture moving. Lights on.

Eddie is standing at the switch. Linda is wrapping Marti up in the bed sheet while keeping the chain around her neck.

Jack is sprawled out across the table with a chair resting on top of him.)

LINDA

Hello yourself.

MARTI

(Muttering.) Let go of me.

LINDA

Not a chance, honey. Take the pillow cases and tie his hands and legs.

EDDIE

Yes ma'am! Wow!

Blackout

Scene 4

(Jack is laid out across the foot of the bed unconscious. Marti is awake but tied up with a gag in her mouth.)

LINDA

Now we need to search them. We need the key to the door.

(They begin to go through pockets. Marti resists and utters unidentifiable noises.)

EDDIE

And their cell phones?

LINDA

Yes, the phones.

EDDIE

You're gonna call 911?

LINDA

I don't think so. *(She picks up the pipe and shows it to Marti.)*

Please shut the hell up.

EDDIE

I got one. And here are the keys.

LINDA

Let me have the phone.

EDDIE

(As he hands her the phone.) Who are you calling?

LINDA

My father. *(She dials.)* Hi dad it's Linda. I'm fine. Are you and mom okay? I'll bet she is. Everything is under control here. What?

Oh, yes. *(To Eddie.)* What's the address here?

EDDIE

(Staring at her in amazement.) The address?

LINDA

Yes so my father can send someone here to get me. Yes dad, he's one of them but don't worry. Stop staring.

EDDIE

You're her?

LINDA

That I am. I'll explain later. The address.

EDDIE

421 Larch St.

LINDA

421 Larch street and dad --- no guns please. She hangs up. So, Eddie, are you going to use the hundred grand to finish school or spend it buying lunch?

EDDIE

Both. And I don't mind if you call me Sparky.

THE END

MARTI

The money is in the suitcase?

JACK

In the locker at the bus station. Like you said. What I don't understand ---

MARTI

Nuclear fission?

JACK

What? Oh, I got it. Funny. What I don't get is why all the fives and tens? Wouldn't it be easier with hundreds?

MARTI

What you don't get is credit for being a genius. It's amazing how far you got on looks.

JACK

What's that supposed to mean?

MARTI

Somebody starts spreading hundred dollar bills around, people get suspicious. Attracting attention? Do you get it now?

JACK

Yea, now I get it. But what do we care? He don't know who we are or nothing.

I own the building, remember? He gets questioned and gets nervous maybe he leads the cops here. Then what?

JACK

Why would he do that?

MARTI

Maybe he wouldn't but it's one less thing that could be a problem. I have spent a lot of time working out all the details, so could you just get with the program.

(Jack reaches into a shopping bag and pulls out a wig.)

JACK

How's this?

MARTI

Looks good, try it on. What about the mustache and hat?

JACK

Got them too and the padding for the shoulders. *(Reaches into the bag.)* How do you like the teeth?

MARTI

They're beautiful. Who's your dentist?

JACK

I didn't get them ---

(Marti throws her hands up exasperated.)

JACK

I get it. Who's my dentist. I get it.

MARTI

Let's see how you look.

JACK

I'm putting it all on. Don't get nervous.

(Thru the next few lines he applies the disguise.)

MARTI

Let's run through the details. We know she leaves the building every Tuesday at three. She goes down to the corner and hails a cab.

JACK

I wait in the cab on the next block and when I see her come out I make sure she gets into my cab. I already timed out when to start to catch her eye before she hits the corner.

MARTI

You're sure?

JACK

Timed it out three times in my car.