

SEPTEMBER 10 by Art ShulmanACT 1
SCENE 1

(DAN is doing sit-ups)

DAN

Forty five, forty-six, forty seven...

(JODI enters. DAN notices.)

Two hundred forty-eight, two-hundred forty-nine...

JODI

Working off dinner?

DAN

(The last sit-up) Two hundred fifty! *(Beat)* Gotta maintain the old washboard.

JODI

Andy's tucked in. Dishes are all done.

DAN

What dishes? We ordered in Chinese food and we used paper plates.

JODI

Someone had to wash our good chopsticks.

DAN

You're so cute. *(He rises and hands her a letter)* Hey, look at this cover letter for my proposal. See if I can say anything better.

JODI

(As SHE reads the letter) Who is this guy, anyway?

DAN

A new account exec at Darby. They're looking for airline business.

JODI

At the end, instead of, "Please let me know if you have any questions", say, "Call me any time with questions". It's more concise and friendly.

DAN

Good idea!

JODI

Otherwise, the letter's great. (*Handing back the letter*) Think they'll go for it?

DAN

I hope so. It's a really good proposal. But everybody's cutting back. My last project was back in June.

JODI

Uncertainty is the scourge of freelancers. But you're the best group moderator in Los Angeles.

DAN

(*Not quite meaning it*) So, thanks for bringing home the bacon.

JODI

The Chinese takeout. Sorry, I know I've been coming home late.

DAN

It's not that late. Hey, suppose after Andy falls asleep we can, uh...

JODI

(*Surprised*) You haven't wanted to for weeks. Many weeks.

DAN

I know I've been quiet and keeping to myself a lot. You've been good about forgiving me. There's virtue in forgiveness.

JODI

Do you mean that?

DAN

And the virtuous get rewarded. If I get the project, let's celebrate with a weekend in Catalina.

JODI

Sure. (*Beat*) So, forgiving is virtuous?

DAN

Although, virtuous maid, I do regret providing you with the opportunity to be forgiving.

JODI

(*Struggling*) Maybe I need your forgiveness too.

DAN

For what?

JODI

Never mind.

DAN
Jodi, what?

JODI
I've wanted to tell you for a couple of weeks.

DAN
Are you losing your job?

JODI
No, no, that's not it. (*SHE steels herself.*) A month ago Mitch's brother died and he went back to Ohio for two weeks. The first day he was back at the office, we were working late and he started telling me about his brother. And he started to cry. He was so sad.

DAN
He's a sensitive guy, isn't he?

JODI
Yeah... I hugged him to comfort him. He drew me tighter to hug me back, and he was still crying. Even harder. Then he stopped crying and started to... (*SHE finds it hard to go on.*)

DAN
Started to what?

JODI
Touch me.

DAN
He what?

JODI
Then he kissed me.

DAN
And what did you do?

JODI
Nothing.

DAN
He raped you?

JODI
No. No, he didn't.

DAN
What did you do, then?

JODI

I did nothing. I did nothing to stop him.

DAN

From kissing you?

(SHE looks away in embarrassment)

You screwed him?

JODI

He lost control. I lost my mind. I regretted it even as we were...

DAN

You just went along and screwed him! Screwed him! (Beat) You remind me of my mother, my fucking mother!

JODI

I'm not like her, Dan. I don't drink, I take care of my child, and I didn't run off with anyone.

DAN

My mother deserted me. And once again the person I relied on most is gone. No longer exists.

JODI

I'm so sorry. I'm so so sorry.

DAN

Why did you have to confess it to me? Couldn't you have just kept it to yourself?

JODI

I tried not telling you for two weeks. But whenever I looked at you... You're much too important to me and if I didn't say anything there'd always be a wall between us, even if the wall only existed for me. And then you were just talking about forgiveness.

DAN

I can't just forgive something like that. (Beat) Why did you do it? Why?

JODI

What can I say? I've known him eight years, and the first week I started there I could sense he was attracted to me, thought I was special. But he never said anything, never did anything.

DAN

And all this time you were attracted to him?

JODI

No! I've liked him. Of course, all along I've liked him. But not that way. He was my mentor.

DAN

He sure taught you, all right. You just couldn't say no. (Beat) I suppose it's what I deserve for neglecting you.

JODI

I wouldn't do anything like that just because you were having problems.

DAN

You can be a wild woman, Jodi. When you want to.

JODI

I'm that way with you, only with you.

DAN

Is this why you came home late tonight and all the nights before?

JODI

No! I've just been busy with work.

DAN

(Loudly) I don't believe you!

JODI

Dan I made an awful mistake, and it'll never happen again.

DAN

(Loudly) How can I know that? How can I fucking know that?

(A KNOCK on the door)

JODI

Come in.

(ANDY enters, wary.)

Hi, Andy. I thought you were sleeping, young man.

ANDY

I heard noise.

JODI

We were having a little discussion.

ANDY

It was an argument.

DAN

Sometimes moms and dads have arguments.

ANDY

It was loud.

JODI

We're done with our argument, Andy.

ANDY

(Still wary) Good night, then. Now you come in and say good night, Dad.

DAN

(Not paying much attention to ANDY) Be right there.

ANDY

Now you come in and say good night, Dad.

(ANDY exits.)

DAN

I don't think we'll ever be done with our argument.

JODI

Can we talk more about it tomorrow? We'll have clearer heads after twenty-four hours.

DAN

My head's clear right now.

JODI

Mine's not.

(DAN exits. The lights fade.)

ACT 1
SCENE 2

(DAN is packing clothes into a suitcase. JODI is offstage.)

JODI (o.s.)

Wake up! Wake up! Dan, wake up!

(JODI bursts into the room. SHE doesn't notice the suitcase.)

DAN

I'm up.

JODI

We're under attack.

DAN

What?

JODI

Under attack. I heard on the radio! After I dropped off the car pool.

(JODI clicks the remote to turn on the TV.)

Two jumbo jets crashed into the World Trade Center! The Pentagon's been hit. They're on fire!
We don't know yet who did it.

ANNOUNCER

The buildings are on fire. On what is otherwise a beautiful morning in Manhattan, there are massive plumes of smoke rising into a bright blue sky. We repeat, two commercial jets have crashed into the towers of the World Trade Center, one into each tower. When the first one hit there was thought it might have been an accident. But after the second it seems clear that this was done intentionally.

With nowhere to go, people trapped in the buildings are jumping from windows. Their choice -- flames or a drop to the pavement.

(The ENSEMBLE enters, as if THEY are running away from the towers.)

People are streaming out of the buildings. Many of them are running. My God, Tower 2 is crumbling. It's falling! It's coming down! Imploding on itself... A massive billow of smoke and ash... Tower 2 has collapsed. Thousands of people must be inside.

I don't know how anyone near what was Tower 2 can see or breathe. The smoke is so thick. Ash is in the air. Even blocks away. What was Tower 2 of the World Trade Center has come down. A landmark building, so prominent in the skyline of New York City, is no longer there.

A tragedy unbelievable in scope has occurred. Thousands of lives have been lost. We're told over 10,000 people worked in Tower 2 of the World Trade Center. We don't know how many of them were inside when it collapsed.

(A SURVIVOR is on TV)

SURVIVOR

(Breathless, near panic)

I must have been one of the last ones out the building... Thank God I'm alive. I couldn't see.

ACTOR 1

I couldn't hear.

ACTOR 2

I couldn't breathe.

ACTOR 3

I was running through the smoke.

ACTOR 4

I couldn't see where I was running.

SURVIVOR

I fell... I thought I was going to die.

ACTOR 1

I thought I was going to die.

SURVIVOR

But I got up... And kept running.... I worked on the seventieth floor.

ACTOR 2

The thirty second.

ACTOR 3

The twenty-first.

ACTOR 4

The sixtieth.

SURVIVOR

Me and Bill Baker, he worked in the next office, we started down the stairs after the plane hit the other tower. Then we heard on the loudspeaker...

ANNOUNCER

It is safe to return to your offices.

SURVIVOR

Bill went back...

ACTOR 1

Bill!

ACTOR 2
 Bill!

SURVIVOR
 Oh, God!... He wanted to finish the deal he was... Oh, no! No!... I can't talk any more! Please, I have to go... Got to call my sister.

ACTOR 3
 My brother.

ACTOR 4
 Mother.

ACTOR 1
 My kids.

ACTOR 2
 My mother.

SURVIVOR
 Tell her I'm all right... I almost died... I almost died!

ACTOR 3
 I almost died.

ACTOR 4
 I almost died.

DAN
 Did they hit anything here?

JODI
 Don't know yet. But they say Los Angeles was the destination for some of the planes..

DAN
 Oh, no!

JODI
 Please, please. This can't be happening.... Which floor did you work on?

DAN
 Eighty-three. Tower 1. The one still up.

JODI
 My God! You might have been there.

DAN

The agency moved uptown three years ago. But I must know someone. The guards. The restaurant people.

JODI

I'm going to get Andy.

(SHE gets up to exit. SHE notices the suitcase.)

I thought we were going to decide tonight. Clearer heads after twenty-four hours.

DAN

Yeah, I was... just in case.

JODI

Maybe we should put off our talk. (*Nodding toward the TV*) Considering.

(DAN nods agreement.)

Who is doing this to us? What's next?

DAN

Tower 1?

(Lights fade)