

The Break: 10 The Hard Way

By Cliff Burns

This monologue has been selected from a one-person show on the theme of relationships breaking up. There are ten monologues written for ten separate characters, with a wide range of emotions depicted. Though written from a male perspective, either gender can play the role for the purpose of the classroom exercise. Strong language has been used in some cases, feel free to adapt it as needed.

Questions to consider as you prepare this monologue piece:

- 1) Who is the person speaking? List qualities of the person's character.
What do you think they look like?
- 2) To whom is the monologue addressed? What is the relationship to this person?

Note: A simple, minimalist set--a generic sofa placed slightly off-centre; a small coffee table in front of it containing a push button telephone, a scatter of magazines, beer bottles, etc., whatever each scene requires.)

I.

*(Sound of numbers being tapped into a push button telephone.
Lights come up...)*

Yo, Tony-O! How ya doin'? Yeah? Great...great.

Hey, listen, I got some big news for you, dude: the deed is done.

The deed is done, man, get it?

Yeah! Ding-dong the witch is dead. No kiddin' it's been a long time comin'. That woman was harder to get rid of than hemorrhoids, know what I mean? *(Laughter)* You got it. That's right, that's what I'm sayin'.

Well, you know me, I was cool. I just laid it on the line. Told her, you know, the thrill is gone, baby, the magic has *de*-parted and, you know, don't let the door hit you on your pretty little butt on the way out.

What? No...well, maybe I exaggerate slightly but that was the general--

Oh, okay, do you want me to call you back or--no sweat, but get rid of 'em fast 'cause, you know, I'm just getting to the juicy stuff.

(Long pause while he waits for his friend to take the call on the other end. Sits back on the couch, hums to himself, flips through a porno magazine, etc.)

You back?

Yeah. So who was it and is she available? Okay, never mind then. Right. Exactly.

So, okay, I could tell right off the bat she knows something's up. 'Cause I'm playing it real cool, keeping my distance, not saying too much. I mean, I am *focussed*, dude, like a *laser*, zeroed right in on her. No way was I gonna let myself get distracted 'cause I am a man with a mission.

And she's all "Is there something wrong? Is something going on?" and I'm, like, no kidding something's wrong, you're wrong, we're all wrong and there's no use pretending any more. Stick a fork in it, honey, 'cause this relationship is done.

'Cause you got to be honest about stuff like that and, you know, ruthless too. To some extent. And it's like I say, it isn't like she was--that she didn't suspect something. I mean, she ain't dumb, I never said she was dumb. That wasn't the problem. And you can't say she didn't try either. All this week she's been--

Hang on a sec, now I got a call coming in.

(Pushes a button.)

Yo, what is it? Huh? No, listen, I ain't interested, all right? Just forget it. Try another number and while you're at it, lose this one. Okay? Thanks.

(Pushes a button.)

Jerk.

No, man, not you. It was some stupid charity or something.

And the first time you give 'em something you're on the hook forever and then they're always calling.

What was I sayin'? Oh yeah. So all this week she can't be doin' enough for me, cookin' nice meals--hey, she even cleaned my *bathroom*. I'm dead serious. Like: baby, are you my girlfriend or the friggin' maid, y'know? And, by the way, you missed a spot there--

(Laughter)

It's crazy, it was almost, you know, almost pathetic. No kidding. No kidding.

No way, man, no effect whatsoever. Once I get my mind set on something I'm like one of those pit bulls. Man, you know what I'm like. There wasn't going to be any last minute phone calls from the warden or whatever, if you know what I mean. I practically knew the time right down to the minute that I was gonna pull the trigger. Put her out of her misery fast, end the suffering.

Yeah, end my suffering is more like it. Awww, man, I shouldn't talk like that. She wasn't that bad. She had her moments. But moments, you know, they're--what do you call it? Transitory, is that the right word? You can't make a relationship out of moments. It takes a helluva lot more than that.

I mean, what it comes down to, what this is all about is *chemistry*, right? Either the magic is there or--exactly, that's what I'm saying. We did our thing but there was no sparks, no electricity. We were like an old married couple or something. Like a couple of old fogies sittin' on a porch somewhere and pattin' each other on the knee--I mean, screw that, right? Who needs it?

And you know what she was thinking, what was going through her mind. Another couple of months and she'd be expecting to move in or go and pick out a ring together or some kind of crap like that. *No thanks*. I ain't that stupid. I'm still young, still got a lot of life left in me. I got my sights set higher than that. A *lot* higher. If you're gonna tie me down you'd better be wearing leather and carrying a whip, know what I'm saying?
(*Laughter*)

And, hey, it isn't like there aren't lots of other guys around, right? There's plenty of dumb schmucks out there who'd, you know, be happy to make an honest woman out of her, if that's what she wants. Sure. So she ain't gonna end up an old maid or anything. She'll meet somebody, no question. And good for her. I hope she finds what she's looking for. Sure I mean it. I got no hard feelings. We did our thing but, you know, all good things have to end. Live and learn.

And maybe next time she'll see people the way they really are. It's not like I was gonna change or anything, suddenly become...sure. That's what I mean. Take off the rose-coloured glasses and lose the illusions-- 'cause otherwise you're always gonna get let down in the end. You can't change people, make them into something they're not. That's not the way it works. Not in a million years. And if you believe that you deserve to get screwed over big time. You know, I hate to put it like that, so blunt and all but, hey, them's the facts of life.

No, man, no regrets, that's not the way I am. You oughta know me better than that. It's more, you know, getting used to her not being around and--and doin' stuff together. 'Cause you get used to having someone in your face, pick up the phone and she's there--and talking and hangin' out. But, hey, you get over it. Life goes on.

Yeah, right. You got it. That's what I'm saying.

So, listen, you doin' anything tonight? 'Cause I'm, like, totally available, single and swingin' again--. Huh? Hey, man, tell 'em something's come up, tell 'em you're busy, call 'em back and--yeah, I understand but like I just said, hey, lock up your daughters 'cause the wolf is on the prowl again. *Awhhooooo!* Ready to par-ty!

(Slumping.)

Okay, that's cool. Sure, no sweat. We'll do it some other time. Do the rain check thing. How about Friday? Well, call me, okay? Soon as you know. Far out. Okay, sure....right, right. Talk to you later.

*(He hangs up, sits for a moment, vaguely dissatisfied.
Looking around, noticing the descending quiet. Becomes
discomfited. Picks up the phone, taps in some numbers.)*

Marvin? Marvin the man. Marvin my main man. Sup, dude? Oh, you know, just chilling out, kicking back and enjoying the bachelor life. You are talking to a free man. I done pulled the plug and, hey, I gotta tell you, from where I'm sittin' I gotta say it's the best thing that ever happened to me...

(Fade to black.)