

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.)

VII.

(A very placid, almost bland demeanor; a preternatural stillness, yet an unmistakable air of impending menace.)

I guess you think you're pretty smart.

It must give you a real thrill the way you can control and manipulate people. I bet you like that. I bet it makes you *hot*. Why else would you do it? Because you had it planned all along, didn't you? You saw me coming from a mile away. And I never suspected a thing.

What was it about me? Did you see something in my face? Did I seem...vulnerable to you? Well, I may give that impression but, believe me, there are other sides of me, parts people never ever see. I'm deep... practically bottomless. A big, gaping pit. So many layers and you peel and peel but there's always more that's hidden. But you never saw that, did you? All you saw was somebody you could play with. That's too bad. I wish it could have been different, that you had been straight with me. Eventually maybe I would've showed myself to you, the real me, given you that gift. But now...

There's still a part of me that wants to give you the benefit of the doubt. Get in my car and drive over there and see you. It'd be so easy. I know you're working right now. I could pull up to the pumps and fill up and walk in and say hi...

What really got to me was how nice you always were. How you made an effort to make conversation and ask me how I was doing. And, uh, the way you made eye contact. Most people avoid looking me in the eye but not you. Right from the first--I guess it doesn't matter now but I really believed that we were communicating on some deeper level. Looking at each other...almost like we were *communing*.

You know, after that first time, I never went anywhere else. Even if I was all the way across the city, I made sure I'd drive over there just so I could see you. A couple of times I swear I was running on fumes. But I had to see you. Even if it was just for a few seconds those few seconds made my entire day. They meant the world to me. And I

convinced myself that they meant something to you too. The way you seemed to perk up when I came in, the way you kidded me when I bought pop or chips. You told me I ate too much junk food and, wow, that blew me away. The way you seemed to care about what I was eating. I wish I could recapture that, the magic of how it used to be. The way you looked and smelled.

You sure did a number on me. And I never suspected, just walked right into it. I'm not too smart that way, too trusting or what have you. I don't have a lot of experience...but I bet you do. I guarantee that you've done this before. Set somebody up and then shot him down and walked away laughing. I take my hat off to you--you had me completely fooled.

I was *so* naive. Stupid is more like it. The way I kept coming by, making up all sorts of excuses, buying oil or washer fluid when I didn't really need it. I've got boxes of the stuff in my hall closet. Enough to last me for years. But I didn't care. I didn't. I had to see you and that's all there was to it.

Even my mother guessed something was up, the way I seemed so cheerful all the time. She told me I acted like I was in love. She asked if I was seeing anybody and I made the mistake of telling her some of it. She wanted to know why I didn't ask you out. She said "What kind of relationship is that?" That we barely knew each other and that I was just making things up in my own mind. I told her to stay out of it, that what we had was special and--and that she shouldn't--

But she didn't understand. My mother isn't what you would call a very bright person. It's all so superficial to her. She doesn't understand how much two people can communicate to each other with just one look.

Because I really believed that I knew you, right down to the depths of your soul. I *saw* you, the way you really are. I memorized your face, every part of you, right down to the smallest detail. I got *inside* you...and I thought it was beautiful, the most beautiful, magical thing I've ever experienced. There was never anything dirty or, uh, you know. I always felt we were beyond that.

Once, when you were giving me back change, our hands touched, just a light brush and it was like I'd stuck my head into a wall socket. This incredible surge of electro-chemical...*something*. That's when I began to believe that everything I had ever dreamed of or...envisioned for us was going to come true. I fell for your beautiful lie.

I went out and bought you that chair. Put it on my credit card and I didn't care how I would pay for it, where I would get the money. I just did it. That was going to be *your* chair. No one else would be allowed to use it. Not even me. And you'd sit there and we'd talk and I'd tell you all the stuff I'm thinking, all my hopes and dreams. To finally be able to tell someone my secrets and know I wouldn't be judged or found wanting or scare you away. That you would accept me and care for me...and love me. But you couldn't let me have that, could you? You had to deny me my one chance at happiness, of leading a normal life.

You must be some kind of a monster--without conscience or any sense of guilt or...common decency. No right or wrong. A sadist who preys on the feelings of others and gets off on hurting them, destroying them. You're sick, you're *venal*. You hurt for pleasure. You're worse than an animal. I don't know how you live with yourself.

Did you tell him about me? Was he in on it all along? Do the two of you sit around and laugh about it? I bet you do. I guess it adds to that perverted, sick thing the two of you have going. Toying with somebody like that...

I'm just lucky I decided to drive by there today. I wasn't going to, I thought I've been kind of over-doing it lately. But, you know, it gets to the point where a person can't help themselves. They're in love and they're crazy, they do crazy, stupid things.

And then I didn't want to believe what I was seeing. I turned away, hoping it was a mistake or... And then I got it into my head that I should run in and protect you, that he was some kind of creep harassing you. But then I realized...I saw the two of you laughing and carrying on. Laughing at me maybe. Waiting for me to pull up and see you together. Carrying on and meanwhile knowing what you were doing to me.

But...you don't know me as well as you think. You thought I'd just sit back and take it. That's okay. You just go on deluding yourself.

It's gonna take awhile and I'm going to wait. Act normal, keep coming in like usual. Pretend like nothing's happened, nothing's changed. That's the way I am. I don't act impulsively, don't leap into things. I like to sit back...lie in the weeds, watching...planning.

But one of these days--or nights--I'll be ready. And then...then I'm going to play a little game on *you*. Give you a taste of your own medicine. I'm not going to be satisfied until you know how it feels to have someone tear your guts out and leave you empty inside.

I want you to know what you did and that there are repercussions, punishment that comes to those who do evil for no other reason than because they can. Because they have the power.

I have power too. Great power. I'm capable of things you can't imagine. Some time soon, I'll come and I'll show you. And then you'll know, know what I'm *really* like, deep down inside...way down here in the dark.

(Fade to black)