

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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IRL
by Will Clark

Lights up. BRETT, mid-20s, sits in his car smoking a cigarette.

Brett Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhoot.

He reaches down to turn on the radio. The sound of Johnny Mercer crooning “Baby It’s Cold Outside” bursts through the speakers. He immediately shuts it off.

Brett *(cont’d, muttering)* Shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot...

He checks his mirror again, abruptly sits upright in his seat, and hurriedly takes one last puff before tossing it out the window. Brett reaches across to the passenger door and swings it open.

Susan Are you crazy?

SUSAN, early-30s, climbs into the passenger seat and slams the door shut violently.

Brett I know.

Susan No seriously, are you crazy?

Brett No. Look, can I -

Susan My house?

Brett I know. It’s...weird.

Susan Weird? It’s terrifying.

Brett Oh, I don’t know about -

Susan How the hell am I supposed to explain this away? Do you have any idea of the crap that comes out of a six year olds mouth at the dinner table?

Brett I didn’t think of that. I’m sorry.

Susan What if Ted was home?

Brett I thought of that.

Susan What?

Brett I waited until he wasn't.

Susan You watched my house and waited?

Brett Um. Yeah. I. Yeah.

Susan *How do you even know where I live?*

Brett The polar bear. You mentioned the inflatable polar bear. And you had already told me you lived around Hyde Park. I just...I was driving through the area the other day and it caught my eye. And I thought, "Is that her house?" I guess I just got curious. So I looked around and, well...there aren't a lot of other people with inflatable polar bears in their yards over here. None actually.

Susan You do realize how insane this is.

Brett It's not like we never talked about the chances of this happening.

Susan We talked about what it would be like if we ran into each other. We never talked about what it would be like if you sat outside my house, waiting for my *husband* to leave, so that you could knock on my door and introduce yourself to my *daughter*.

Brett That part was an accident.

A beat.

Susan You know what? You aren't crazy. I'm crazy.

Susan opens her door to leave. Brett reaches out for her arm.

Brett Suz...

Susan whips around. Brett releases her arm, raising his hands and surrendering.

Brett *(cont'd)* I'm still just me.

Susan softens a bit. She closes the door. They both sit in silence for a minute.

Brett *(cont'd)* You sound different than I imagined. *(beat)* I know this is a little...odd.

Susan That was pretty stupid Brett.

Brett Yeah. Probably. I just know the holidays can be tough. For both of us.

Susan Are you alright?

Brett Yeah. Yeah, I'm okay.

Susan Good.

Brett What about you? You doin' okay? I've been worried about you.

Susan Yeah. I'm... good.

Brett I don't believe you.

Silence.

Susan I have to get back to the house.

Brett You just got here. You can't spare a few minutes.

Susan *(curt)* No, I really can't. *(beat)* I'm sorry. This doesn't work.

Brett I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make it weird.

Susan No, I'm making it weird now.

Brett Yeah.

An awkward silence. Brett reaches into his pocket and pulls out a Blackberry. He types a brief text message and tentatively places the phone on the dashboard. Susan looks at the phone and looks at Brett who smiles sheepishly.

Susan Brett...

Brett shrugs, and turns away. Susan picks up the phone and reads his message. She takes a deep breath before typing a response and, apologetically, places the phone back on the dashboard.

Brett picks up the phone and checks her response. He crumbles slightly. Shaking his head, he rapidly types a response, placing it back on the dash.

Susan retrieves the phone again. She types what is clearly a one word answer, and defiantly places the phone on the dashboard.

Brett *(cont'd)* You could have both you know.

Brett picks up the phone off the dash and types again. He holds the phone out toward Susan.

Susan No Brett!

Brett, crestfallen, places the phone on the dash once more. Susan, exhausted by the charade, snatches it up and reads.

Susan *(cont'd)* No you didn't.

Brett It's nothing special, it's...here.

Brett reaches into the back seat and comes back holding a small, neatly wrapped package.

Brett *(cont'd)* Merry Christmas.

Susan I can't.

Brett Sure you can. Go ahead, open it.

She opens the package and pulls out an ornament.

Brett *(cont'd)* Just something to hang on the tree. I figured if you were feeling a little down, or lonely... you know, you could look at it and... yeah, I don't know. You're the only person I know that I actually felt deserved a gift from me this year.

Susan looks out the window, back toward her house.

Brett *(cont'd)* You haven't logged on in over a month.

Susan I know. I told you, I can't keep doing this.

Brett I thought I was helping.

Susan You were. You were helping me. Not Ted. Not *us*. I need to be thinking about him, instead of leaving him to deal with our problems on his own. And that means not retreating to my computer every time we are supposed to crawl in bed together.

Brett Is it working? Are things getting better?

Susan I'm trying.

Brett Well we don't have to talk at night. I mean, we don't even have to talk about him.

Silence. After a long beat.

Brett *(cont'd)* A goodbye would have been nice. I think after two years I've earned at least that.

Susan Well maybe this will have to be it. *(pause)* I'm sorry.

Brett No I'm sorry. I shouldn't have come. That was stupid.

Susan It's not that. I just... I need to make this change for myself right now.

Brett I see. I mean I understand. Just promise me if you need me you will come back.

Susan looks away from Brett. She picks up the ornament out of her lap and hangs it from his rearview mirror. She leans toward him and kisses him on the cheek. After a moment, she opens the door to leave.

Brett *(cont'd)* Suz... don't be afraid to tell him your feelings. They're perfect.

Susan smiles.

Susan It was good meeting you Brett. It... it made my Christmas.

Brett Mine too.

Susan opens the door and exits. Brett looks up at the ornament hanging from his mirror, watching Susan disappear into her house.

Blackout.

END OF PLAY.