

FIERCE

BY

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Post production script

For rights, etc

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An office in a psychiatric clinic. A couch, a comfortable chair. Psychiatrist Maggie Delaney and her patient Jayne French. They are standing, and just looking at each other. Jayne is wearing a faded dark green sweat suit, and she has her arm in a sling. Maggie is holding a note pad.

MAGGIE

Again.

JAYNE

Yeah. Again.

MAGGIE

But worse this time.

JAYNE

So they tell me.

MAGGIE

Okay. So what now?

JAYNE

Well I'm here, so--

MAGGIE

Are you ready to talk now?

JAYNE

You mean am I ready to listen.

MAGGIE

Both. I mean both. Is that what they gave you to wear in jail?

JAYNE

Yeah.

MAGGIE

And you didn't feel like getting into your own clothes when they let you out?

JAYNE

No this is fine. Besides, my clothes got pretty messed up when I got a little playful the other night.

MAGGIE

Playful? Is that what you think you were being? Not reckless? Not thoughtless? Not stupid?

JAYNE

Am I supposed to choose just *one* of those?

MAGGIE

(sitting in the chair)

I think all three fit. And the fact that you're still alive is as close to a miracle as I've ever encountered.

(off the file)

Not only did you survive being hit by a fairly large truck, you seem to have suffered no ill effects from that epic drug cocktail they found in your system. Cocaine, heroin, extremely potent pain killers...

JAYNE

And I think I smoked a few joints too.

(off her look)

It was the weekend.

MAGGIE

(sitting in the chair)

You were walking in traffic.

JAYNE

I meant I don't have a "drug problem."

MAGGIE

Well that judge certainly thinks you do.

Maggie gestures to couch. Jayne hesitates then sits..

JAYNE

Oh yes, that judge. Well she's used to dealing with hard-core addicts. I tried explaining to her that I didn't fit the mould, but everything I said just seemed to baffle her.

MAGGIE

For example?

JAYNE

I told her I only used when I didn't have anything better to do.

MAGGIE
She didn't buy that, eh.

JAYNE
Actually she said "So what?"

MAGGIE
Well exactly. It doesn't matter how often you get completely wasted, Jayne... The point is, that when you do, you're obviously a danger to yourself and to just about everyone else.

JAYNE
Right. The "thoughtless" part. You're talking about that man who drove his car off the road.

MAGGIE
To avoid *you*, yes.

JAYNE
Well obviously I feel bad about that.

MAGGIE
Do you?

JAYNE
Kind of.

MAGGIE
Kind of? Just kind of Jayne?

JAYNE
Well what do I really know about the guy? He could be a total jerk.

MAGGIE
You mean he might have had it coming. Did you say that to the judge?

JAYNE
Am I an idiot? I told her I felt like crap about it.

MAGGIE
And she bought that?

JAYNE

Not completely. But I think it softened her enough to keep me out of jail... I mean as long as I came here for awhile to... "get my life together."

MAGGIE

You think that's funny, do you?

JAYNE

Well come on. Getting your life together. Is there a model for that? The together life? You know, that judge looked like she had a few issues herself. Way too much makeup for one thing. Still doing herself up at that age? Kind of sad.

MAGGIE

Sadder than being a junkie?

JAYNE

There's that word.

MAGGIE

You don't like it.

JAYNE

Not when it's used to make me feel bad. Look, try to pay attention. It's just fun. I made decent money for quite awhile, and I can easily support a little recreational indulgence.

MAGGIE

Heroin isn't a recreational--

JAYNE

Put me in a room.

MAGGIE

What?

JAYNE

Lock me up. Keep me under observation. You'll see. No withdrawal symptoms. No shaking. No throwing up. I've got it under control.

MAGGIE

I'm pretty sure you're wrong about that.

JAYNE

Well then we'll just have to agree to disagree.

MAGGIE

No. Sorry. That's not how it works here. You'll have to acknowledge that I'm almost certainly right and you're definitely not.

Maggie smiles. Jayne smiles back.

JAYNE

That sounds a little arrogant to me. Do you tell that to all your patients?

MAGGIE

No.

JAYNE

So I'm special then.

MAGGIE

You might not be special, but you're definitely unique.

JAYNE

Wow.

MAGGIE

"Wow" what?

JAYNE

You having a bad day, Doc? I don't remember you being this cranky.

MAGGIE

I'm surprised you remember anything. You were almost completely out of it. I only had a chance to say a few words before you told me I was full of shit and staggered out.

JAYNE

Well last time I came here voluntarily. And this time--

MAGGIE

You get leave when I say you can.
And that will only happen if I'm
sure we've made some progress.

They look at each other.

JAYNE

Progress. Got it. Okay... I'll stay
indoors when I over indulge from
now on. The public will no longer
be at risk.

MAGGIE

And what about you?

JAYNE

Well that's my business, isn't it.
You know, I don't see what the big
deal is.

MAGGIE

Obviously. And yes.

JAYNE

Yes what?

MAGGIE

I've had a bad day. A bad week. A
bad few months, actually.

JAYNE

Oh. It seems kind of strange that
you're telling me that.

MAGGIE

Does it?

JAYNE

Yeah. But getting back to me. I was
saying that I don't have any
dependants, no lives other than my
own to be responsible for.

MAGGIE

No husband?

JAYNE

No. Poor me, eh? I was married, but
I lost him.

MAGGIE

Lost him... to illness? Another
woman?

JAYNE

No. We went for a walk in a very dense forest, and I just lost him.

MAGGIE

Is that an allegory of some kind?

JAYNE

I don't think so.

MAGGIE

Okay. So no family at all then?

JAYNE

Besides my brother, his wife and their three kids? No. Well there was my mother. But she died last year. And no. I didn't turn to drugs to numb the pain of her passing. I missed her. The old girl was fun to be around. But I've been getting high for awhile now.

MAGGIE

And you started just because...?

JAYNE

Who knows?

MAGGIE

You do.

JAYNE

Well I'm actually not sure because--

MAGGIE

Take a guess.

JAYNE

(shrugs)

I was bored.

MAGGIE

Bored.

JAYNE

Well you told me to guess. What, you've never heard that before? Okay maybe more restless than bored. Anyway, I took a leave of absence and--

MAGGIE

A leave of absence from what?

JAYNE

Teaching.

MAGGIE

Okay. Well...

JAYNE

Well what? You think maybe I'm just burned out? Sure, lets go with that. So how about I just take it a little easy until I get my passion for education back. Can I go now?

MAGGIE

No. And does sarcasm actually help?

JAYNE

Don't know how I'd manage without it.

MAGGIE

You should probably try though.

They just look at each other.

JAYNE

Listen, I just thought... why not do something that makes me feel good in the moment, and if something goes wrong, well at least I go out happy, right? I started with cocaine... only came to heroin a few months ago. Fantastic stuff.

MAGGIE

Until it kills you.

JAYNE

Well in the words of our friend the judge, "So what?" Why are you looking at me like that?

MAGGIE

I'm just wondering what I'm supposed to do with you.

JAYNE

You mean where to start.

MAGGIE

Where to start. How to continue. If it's even worth the effort.

JAYNE

Wow again. Do you mean that? You're wondering if I'm even worth the effort.

MAGGIE

Absolutely. I have a lot of patients who actually *want* my help.

JAYNE

All right. So why not tell that judge that I got the message, that I'll control myself from now on, and then I can get the hell out of here.

MAGGIE

Let's not rush it. Maybe you've just annoyed me.

JAYNE

What?

MAGGIE

It might be possible that your drug use *is* actually to dull some kind of deep pain.

JAYNE

Deep pain. Not just pain. Deep pain.

MAGGIE

Possibly. And we should try to find out what that's about. I mean talking as a professional and not just someone who--

JAYNE

I've annoyed.

MAGGIE

Yes. As professional I have an obligation to get to the bottom of whatever is going on with you, and then determine an appropriate therapy.

JAYNE

You mean if you can convince me that's what I want.

MAGGIE

Perhaps you're not in any state to know what you actually want.

JAYNE

Oh, you think I might be in denial.

MAGGIE

Big time.

JAYNE

"Big time." Aren't you supposed to avoid judgments like that?

MAGGIE

I've found it's better if I just speak my mind.

JAYNE

Better for whom?

MAGGIE

Me. And for you as well, if you're up to it.

JAYNE

Hmm. Okay. This might get interesting then.

MAGGIE

Because I'll be speaking my mind?

JAYNE

Because we both will. And what's wrong with denial by the way?

MAGGIE

Well it could be preventing you from seeing how you actually want to live the rest of your life.

JAYNE

Or if I even do. I mean--

MAGGIE

I know what you meant. Do you have serious thoughts about suicide?

JAYNE

Are there any other kind?

MAGGIE

(to herself)
Great.

JAYNE

What about your other patients? You know, the ones who really need your help.

MAGGIE

Need and *want* my help. I think you just need it.

Jayne just looks at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

JAYNE

You were a user.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry?

JAYNE

Don't worry. It'll be our little secret.

MAGGIE

Wait a minute. You can't just--

JAYNE

No you had a serious drug "problem." That's why you're having such a hard time coming to grips with what I do.

MAGGIE

Listen, we're not here to talk about me or what you *think* you know about--

JAYNE

There's no way a person with that kind of history could understand how something that *she, i.e. you,* painfully grappled with could have so little impact on *me!*

MAGGIE

Fuck it.

Maggie stands. Throws her note pad down on her chair.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I think we need a break.

Maggie leaves.

JAYNE

Okay...

Jayne stands. Stretches. Takes a joint out of her pocket. Lights it up. Takes a deep drag or two. Picks up the judges' report from inside Maggie's note pad. Reads and reacts.

Maggie comes back in.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Oh-oh.

(off the joint)

Caught in the act...

MAGGIE

(taking her notebook back)

Put that out, okay.

JAYNE

Sure...

She does.

MAGGIE

Where'd you get that?

JAYNE

I smuggled it in. Do you believe me?

MAGGIE

No. How about sitting down again.

Jayne just looks at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Come on. Sit.

Jayne smiles.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Sit.

Jayne sits

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

So... Are you ready to tell me what actually happened to your husband?

JAYNE

Are you ready to tell me why you want to know?

MAGGIE

Well we have to start somewhere.

JAYNE

Do we?

MAGGIE

Maybe you weren't listening closely enough when the judge sentenced you.

JAYNE

That's possible. I was pretty distracted. That courtroom was a very colourful place. Full of gang bangers and crack whores. And that judge all made up like she was going on a date.

MAGGIE

I don't like that term.

JAYNE

What? Date?

MAGGIE

(off her look)
Crack whores.

JAYNE

Oh. Well that's how they describe themselves.

MAGGIE

All the more reason why no one else should. Anyway, the court ordered you to stay here until I said you were fit to leave. If you decide to ignore that order, I'm almost certain they'll put you in jail.

JAYNE

Why did you ask me if it was an allegory? You know, when I told you I'd lost my husband in a forest. Did you think I was going to tell you he was taken away by elves?
(off her look)
You should have asked if it was a metaphor... The dense forest representing his dark and troubled soul.

MAGGIE

Does it?

JAYNE

Yes. He had a very difficult but occasionally inspiring relationship with the world.

MAGGIE

Had. So he is dead then.

JAYNE

Yes. Like I said.

MAGGIE

You said lost.

Jayne takes her arm out of the sling. Stretches it.

JAYNE

You should have known I meant dead. I guess all that training dulled your appreciation for the obvious. Where were you trained, by the way?

MAGGIE

All over the place. But most of what I learned, I learned right here. From dealing with people like you.

JAYNE

People like me.

MAGGIE

People with serious addiction problems. What did your husband do?

JAYNE

You mean to me? Oh... you mean for a living. I thought I might have let slip that he was an abusive drunk.

MAGGIE

Was he?

JAYNE

If only. That would explain so much, wouldn't it? And you must have a standard response for women who've been through that kind of hell.

MAGGIE

I used to. Before my appreciation for the obvious got dulled.

JAYNE

He was a "novelist." Fairly well known. Not as well known as he figured he should be, but he had his fans. There's a lot of overwrought emotional crap in his work, but they appeal to--

MAGGIE

People who like emotional crap?

JAYNE

Well that's my take.

MAGGIE

(nods)

Your brother and his family... Are you close to them?

JAYNE

Not anymore.

MAGGIE

Something happened?

JAYNE

Yes.

MAGGIE

Do you want to talk about it?

JAYNE

I don't know yet. I think I'd like to ask you a few questions first. It'll a lot easier for me to talk to someone I know.

MAGGIE

So these questions are personal.

JAYNE

Relax. I'll make them simple. How old are you?

MAGGIE

I'll be forty-five in a week.

JAYNE

You look younger. Not a lot younger but every bit helps.

MAGGIE

Helps what?

JAYNE

Helps you compete. My husband liked to fuck his fans. Well they were actually his creative writing students.

MAGGIE

Were you one of them?

JAYNE

God, no. Getting involved with your professor. I avoided that cliché. I mean I could have been if I'd had any interest in writing, I guess. He was a friend of my father's.

MAGGIE

That's kind of a cliché too.

JAYNE

Yeah, I guess it is. Are you married?

MAGGIE

No.

JAYNE

Were you ever?

MAGGIE

No.

JAYNE

Friends?

MAGGIE

A few.

JAYNE

Other shrinks?

MAGGIE

One of them.

JAYNE

Man or woman?

MAGGIE

Woman.

JAYNE
Is she your lover?

MAGGIE
No.

JAYNE
Do you have a lover?

MAGGIE
Do you?

JAYNE
Aren't I still asking the
questions?

MAGGIE
How about we take turns?

JAYNE
I guess that's fair. Go ahead.

MAGGIE
What happened between you and your
brother's family?

JAYNE
They kept trying to get involved in
my life. I kept telling them to
fuck off. And then one day they
did. What about *your* family?

MAGGIE
I was an orphan.

JAYNE
No shit.

MAGGIE
Absolutely no shit. In what way
were they trying to get involved?

JAYNE
The way a family usually does. They
tried very hard to keep me close.
To make me care more than I wanted
to care.

MAGGIE
Care about them?

JAYNE
About everything. The worst was the
way they tried to make me happy.
(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

I mean make me happier than I felt like being. Do you understand what I mean by "happier than I felt like being"?

MAGGIE

Yes. And that might be something I can help you with.

JAYNE

You mean if I wanted your help.

MAGGIE

You don't want to experience happiness?

JAYNE

Not if it's forced on me. I'd rather just stumble on it if it's out there somewhere. How long were you on heroin?

MAGGIE

I'm sorry?

JAYNE

It was my turn, wasn't it?

Maggie just looks at her.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

I've been researching you since the first time we met.

MAGGIE

Why?

JAYNE

I think it was the way you looked at me then. Like you already knew who I was.

MAGGIE

You determined that in the short time we were together... even in your druggy haze.

JAYNE

Well you pissed me off for some reason. I mean enough for me to see what I could find out about you.

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

You were busted when you were in your teens.

MAGGIE

Thee's no way you could have--

JAYNE

Twice. You spent six months in juvenile detention.

MAGGIE

Those court records are sealed.

JAYNE

Sure. But some of the newspaper stories contained clues to who you were. You and your boyfriend... not just using but dealing to half your high school. Impressive.

MAGGIE

That's an exaggeration.

JAYNE

So you just had a select clientele then? And there's some stuff about a number of break-ins...

MAGGIE

And you got all this on-line?

JAYNE

I did a fair amount of research for my husband's over-heated novels. I got good at picking through--

MAGGIE

Okay. And now that you know that I was a teenage druggie and a criminal, you feel justified in ignoring any advice I might give you.

JAYNE

Not necessarily.

MAGGIE

Then what's the point of--

JAYNE

I just think it's better if we get real. By the way, nice work in getting all the way from that to...
(gesturing around)

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

...this. I spent the last few years of my teaching career as a guidance counsellor, and none of the "troubled" kids I saw, got themselves anywhere close to where you are now.

MAGGIE

And you know that for sure.

JAYNE

I used my researching skills to keep track of them. With some it was very easy. You just had to watch the news. That young fellow who killed his ex-girlfriend because his current girlfriend told him to... You hear about him?

MAGGIE

I... think so.

JAYNE

He was one of mine. I was trying to arrange a study programme for him at the time. I should have just said, "Be careful who you date.

MAGGIE

Good advice for everyone that age.

JAYNE

Is that your way of telling me it was some guy who got you into drugs and crime?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

JAYNE

Some guy you loved.

MAGGIE

Absolutely. He was my world.

JAYNE

And he was an asshole.

MAGGIE

He was an... unsettled young man.

JAYNE

And an asshole. I came across a lot of unsettled young men.

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Most of them didn't try to drag anyone else down with them. Where is he now? If you don't know, I could maybe find out what happened to him for you?

MAGGIE

I'm more interested in finding out what happened to your husband.
(off her look)
You said you wanted to get real.
I'm up for that.

JAYNE

You mean it might help.

MAGGIE

Well maybe you'd benefit by telling--

JAYNE

I meant it might help *you*.

MAGGIE

We're not here to help me. You have to get that straight or--

JAYNE

I think it will work best if these little chats are mutually beneficial. That's really all I'm getting at.

(off her look)

I killed him.

(off her look)

I pushed him into a quarry. They still haven't found his body.

(off her look)

I mean that water is pretty deep. I know that because I used to swim there when I was teenager. I liked to swim a lot when I was in my teens. You know, instead of shooting heroin.

(off her look)

You going to leave again?

MAGGIE

Why did you do that?

JAYNE

Swimming? It just made me feel good.

MAGGIE
I meant why did you kill him?

JAYNE
Oh. Same answer.

MAGGIE
You thought it would make you feel good.

JAYNE
Yes.

MAGGIE
And did it?

JAYNE
For awhile.

MAGGIE
And then?

JAYNE
Well they weren't all bad times.
Some of the good things about him
started to come back to me.

MAGGIE
And you began to feel... guilty?

JAYNE
Well guilty is probably too strong
a word. He had it coming.

MAGGIE
Because?

JAYNE
He did a very bad thing.

MAGGIE
Do you want to tell me what that
was?

JAYNE
Not without getting a little wasted
first.

Jayne takes out a pill bottle. Pops a couple.

MAGGIE
Jesus Christ. Where the hell did
you get those?

JAYNE

I can't remember.

MAGGIE

Jayne. Listen to me. I don't know where the hell you think you are, but you can't get high in here every time you just feel like it.

JAYNE

Well obviously that's not true.

Maggie grabs the bottle.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Hey!

MAGGIE

I need to know where you're getting this stuff. A little weed is one thing but--

JAYNE

Maggie. Let it go. It's not a big deal.

MAGGIE

Jesus. Not a big-- And it's Margaret, okay.

JAYNE

I prefer Maggie. And what I was saying, is that your personal history with drugs has coloured your--

Next three speeches overlap

MAGGIE

They don't help! They only disguise.

JAYNE

Oh. You mean except for *prescription* drugs.

MAGGIE

As a last resort. And under supervision.

JAYNE

Supervision. Right. Look what you did when you were a kid is not what I'm doing now, okay.

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

All that stuff obviously messed you up. And you're still fighting it. That's okay. That's what you have to do, I guess. But you shouldn't let it close your mind to how it might help others. And if you can't get your head around the possibility that narcotics are sometimes the only thing that--

Next four speeches overlap

MAGGIE

Listen, why don't we just step back and--

JAYNE

What? And *what*?

MAGGIE

Leave the drug issue aside for awhile.

JAYNE

Why? Do you feel like you're losing control of our...

Jayne stands. Wobbles. Sits on the couch.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Sorry. That might have been a little too much.

MAGGIE

Of what?

JAYNE

Of whatever I was given.

MAGGIE

Given by whom.

JAYNE

Come on. Drop it. I'm not a snitch. And I'm definitely not going to cut off my...

(looks at her)

My husband killed our dog.

MAGGIE

He what?

JAYNE

He took our dog out on the lake with a storm approaching and waited too long before he started back in. The waves got to be too much before they reached shore, and the boat capsized. He hadn't bothered to put the life jacket I'd bought for Casey on and my precious little guy drowned.

MAGGIE

Your dog.

JAYNE

Yeah. But my husband "miraculously" made it ashore. That's what they said. But he had a life jacket on so where's the fucking miracle in that. It was really just another case of him putting himself first.

MAGGIE

You mean ahead of the dog.

JAYNE

Yeah yeah. "The dog." Like my husband was so much more important than him. Well not to me he wasn't. I tried for several years to forgive his arrogance and selfishness... And then one day I got tired of trying and pushed him into that quarry. I'm pretty sure I heard him break his neck as he bounced off the rocks on his way down, but I could have just been imagining that. I guess I was looking for something to feel extra good about.

(a look to Maggie)

So? Do you think we should talk about that? Or maybe I should just be allowed to leave and get on with my life.

Maggie is thinking.

MAGGIE

So you killed your husband because he was responsible for the death of your dog.

JAYNE

That was the core reason. But his personality didn't help. And then there was all that crap he wrote.

MAGGIE

In his novels...

JAYNE

In his novels. His letters to the editor. The notes he left on the fridge telling me what he wanted for dinner. "Baked chicken, skin off. Easy on the salt" I don't know why you're looking at me like that, and I'm not going to bother asking. No actually I get it. What kind of man could cause his wife to have such disdain for him? Okay, here he is in a nutshell. He was from a wealthy family. He went to private school. No one there liked him. Not even the other self-absorbed assholes. His novels were all juvenile sex fantasies with him as a powerful but sensitive alpha male and all the women he encountered as adoring love toys. He tried very hard to live like he was in one of those novels and for awhile so did I.

MAGGIE

You were a love toy.

JAYNE

An adoring love toy.

Maggie is making a note.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, write that down. That's pure gold! Jesus!

(finds her thought again)

But... time destroys fantasy, thank God. And we were together long enough for the adoration to fade and eventually rot. Probably like it happened with you and your criminal boyfriend. He was older, right.

MAGGIE

Yes.

JAYNE
How much older.

MAGGIE
Look I really don't want to--

JAYNE
Just tell me for godsake!

MAGGIE
Six years. Okay? He was twenty and
I was-

JAYNE
Fourteen? Jesus. What was wrong
with you?

MAGGIE
I was worried about surviving. I
was scared and alone-- But... this
isn't about me so-

JAYNE
No no. Friends share.

MAGGIE
Friends?

JAYNE
You think it's going to be enough
to keep treating me like a patient?
You want to get to me. I have to
get to you.

MAGGIE
Get to me. Really.

JAYNE
Yeah. Really.

MAGGIE
(smiles)
All right. Well maybe when we've
spent more time--

JAYNE
Now.
(looks at her)
Now.

Maggie is thinking. Jayne is just watching her.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Try to get it out. It might help.

MAGGIE

Who?

JAYNE

Oh right. It has to help *me*, doesn't it. Because there's nothing wrong with you. Okay then, tell me all the ways you fucked up. People can learn a lot from other peoples' failures.

Another stand off look between them. Then...

MAGGIE

I ran run away from every foster home they put me in. And when I was on the street I did a lot of illegal things. I spent six months in detention where I was beaten twice pretty severely. Robbie was a shithead, but I was more than a match for him.

JAYNE

Really.

MAGGIE

Oh yeah. I was a hard case for sure. Well that's what can happen to you when...

JAYNE

When what?

MAGGIE

When you get discarded. I had no one to answer to. No one to please. No mother at home expecting or hoping that I'd had a good day at school, that I'd learned something useful, that I was on my way to having a productive happy life.

JAYNE

None of your foster parents did that?

MAGGIE

One did. And she changed my life. There were few who were decent enough. They fed me and clothed me, but I needed more. A lot more. Did you really kill your husband?

JAYNE

Yes. How did that one foster mother change your life?

MAGGIE

She made an effort. Was it really because he didn't save your dog?

JAYNE

Like I said, it was a combination of things. What do you mean, she made an effort.

MAGGIE

She talked to me. No one had ever done much of that before. And she taught me music. Piano. And we danced. I was with her until I finished high school. And every day there was music.

JAYNE

Do you still see her?

MAGGIE

She died suddenly just after I finished med school. And it was a shock I had a hard time getting over. A year or so later, I relapsed.

JAYNE

You started using again...

MAGGIE

It cost me my residency. And when I got clean it wasn't easy convincing the medical board to let me back in.

JAYNE

Do you still think about her?

MAGGIE

Of course I do. She was the only person in my life who truly cared about me.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Listen, none of this is going to help us get to your...

(noticing that Jayne is lost in thought)

Hey, try to stay with me here.

JAYNE

Okay.

(smiles)

Okay! Let's do acid.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry?

JAYNE

Good ole LSD. It's just about the only thing I haven't tried. And we need to do something besides talk.

MAGGIE

Well it can't be that.

JAYNE

Why not?

MAGGIE

Are you kidding?

JAYNE

No. And I think you should consider it. I've got some. It's supposed to be pretty good stuff.

She produces a blotter from her pocket.

MAGGIE

Jesus Christ!

JAYNE

You have to stop being shocked by this.

MAGGIE

Well that's a lot easier said than done. Someone in the clinic is pushing--

JAYNE

Think of it as alternative therapy. He's just trying to fill the gaps in your knowledge.

MAGGIE

So it's a man.

JAYNE

Unless I was trying to throw you off the trail. I think LSD might be the right thing for us both. I've done some research and you're supposed to do it with a friend. I choose you.

MAGGIE

I'm honoured, but--

JAYNE

That laptop on the floor beside you, can I use it?

MAGGIE

For what?

JAYNE

Google. What else?

Maggie hands it to her. Jayne turns it on.

MAGGIE

What are you looking for?

JAYNE

We need to know what to expect. Unless you already do.

MAGGIE

Just what I've read. And I don't think you're in any shape to--

Jayne is working the keyboard.

JAYNE

Hey. Didn't you hear me? It has to be both of us. You know, it would have been a lot better if you'd been honest right from the beginning and hadn't tried to trick me into thinking you're weren't totally fucked up.

MAGGIE

I don't take drugs now, Jayne.

JAYNE

I'm not saying you take them. I'm saying you need them.

MAGGIE

If I needed them, I'd take them.

JAYNE

Would you?

MAGGIE

I'd at least acknowledge that I needed them. I'm trained to recognize the signs that--

JAYNE

Trained. Please. You're talking to your pal here, Mags--

MAGGIE

(to herself)

Great. Now it's Mags--

JAYNE

You can just drop that doctor patient shit, okay. We're on the verge of a real thing here. A human to human dialogue about the horrors of daily living. And let's get one thing straight. No one who had the life you did, ever becomes totally healthy.

MAGGIE

I got help.

JAYNE

Not enough. But that's okay because I'm here now. All right here we go. It's a long article but--

MAGGIE

You'll just find the useful bits?

JAYNE

Right... So this sounds important.

(reading)

"The best way to avoid a bad trip is to have a good set. The "set" is your mind state at the time of ingesting. You want to be in a happy state of mind, with no major life problems to deal with."

(shrugs)

Well there goes that idea.

MAGGIE

I thought your life was going along just fine.

JAYNE

I was thinking about you.

(reading)

"If you're relaxed about going into the trip then you're halfway to having a good one.

(to Maggie)

Still not that good. You look pretty tense.

MAGGIE

Do I?

JAYNE

You're thinking about doing it, aren't you?

MAGGIE

No. I'm not.

JAYNE

Yes you are. You're thinking, what the hell, it might work.

MAGGIE

Who knows what will work for you? You might actually be beyond--

JAYNE

Again, that was a reference to you.

MAGGIE

Just keep reading.

JAYNE

(reading)

"And a good trip is much more likely to occur if you're somewhere you feel safe and with people you trust..."

(to Maggie)

That's probably all relative, right.

Maggie gestures firmly for her to continue.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

(reading)

Blah blah, feel safe, people you trust... "Feeling safe can go a long way to neutralizing anxiety.

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

If, during the trip something negative happens, or you think unwanted thoughts, just remember that you need to take the good *and* the bad without letting the bad overwhelm you. A change of lighting is a good way to alter the mood and is usually enough to put your mind onto a different path..." Okay?

(no response)

Okay?!

MAGGIE

They're on a dimmer.

JAYNE

So?

Maggie has a remote in her pocket. She clicks it twice. The light dims.

MAGGIE

Where did you get that blotter?

JAYNE

C'mon, does that matter?

MAGGIE

I'm just saying I could have gotten some that was medically tested.

JAYNE

Tested on whom?

MAGGIE

I mean clean. Not tampered with. I could have gotten us some if you'd asked.

JAYNE

Well how was I to know that? You said *us*, by the way.

MAGGIE

I know.

JAYNE

You said *us*!

MAGGIE

Jesus! I know!!

JAYNE

Okay. Good. So are you ready to do this?

MAGGIE

I'm not sure. I never did acid.

JAYNE

Right. You weren't a hippie. You were a criminal. Do you want to bail?

MAGGIE

I'm not sure! I'm trying to decide if there's any therapeutic value in it. And if it would help you if I--

JAYNE

Oh knock it off. It's not a "professional" decision. I think you're just itching to try this. And it would be good if you'd admit that.

MAGGIE

Actually I'm a little scared about how you'll react. And I'm thinking that it might help you to know that someone is going through the same thing you are. I mean the same loss of control.

JAYNE

So you believe it'll bring us closer. In that doctor/patient way you're so fond of.

MAGGIE

It could. And it might be your only hope.

JAYNE

You mean *you* might be my only hope.

MAGGIE

Yes. I suppose I do.

JAYNE

Well I guess that's a way of thinking you're going to hold onto for quite awhile, eh. They'll probably take away your licence for doing this.

MAGGIE
It could happen.

JAYNE
You trust me not to tell anyone?

MAGGIE
Who'd believe you? You're a fucking
drug addict.

JAYNE
You're a fucking drug addict.
(holds up the blotter)
Coming or not?

Jayne takes the tabs off the blotter. Two each.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
(handing Jayne hers)
Under the tongue.

MAGGIE
Both of them?

JAYNE
I'm told that just one probably
won't make the trip intense enough.

MAGGIE
Told. So your supplier is an expert
then?

JAYNE
That's definitely a trick question.

Jayne puts two tabs in her mouth. Maggie does the same.

MAGGIE
Try to just let go.

JAYNE
You too.

MAGGIE
I'll be right here.

JAYNE
Unless you're somewhere else.

Maggie clicks the dimmer again and the lights dim to near
black then start flickering.

Music. Slow and hazy then becoming psychedelic. This goes on
for awhile.

We can barely make them out as they move around the room. Jayne languidly, silently. Maggie more intensely. She is groaning loudly, shouting, shrinking away from something and finally collapsing onto the floor in tears.

Lights fade up.

Jayne is on the floor, cradling Maggie's head in her lap.

Maggie is gently crying.

MAGGIE

That was awful. All of it. Really awful and actually painful. I could feel the pain.

JAYNE

You were being beaten. You were yelling for it to stop.

MAGGIE

But it didn't. It... never stopped.

JAYNE

Who was it?

MAGGIE

Some man I didn't know. He was in the house and no one would tell me why.

JAYNE

How old were you?

MAGGIE

Nine or ten. I'd forgotten all about it.

JAYNE

Not really.

MAGGIE

I made myself.

JAYNE

Yes. But not really.

MAGGIE

Okay... not really. But I got over it.

JAYNE

No you didn't. How could you?

MAGGIE

People do. I did.
 (sitting up slowly)
 What was it like for you?

JAYNE

Floral. It was just a lot of
 floral... wallpaper, I think.
 Pretty. But boring.

MAGGIE

And that's it? Just wallpaper?

JAYNE

Floral wallpaper. Some of it with
 fairly intricate patterns.

MAGGIE

So... a very calm experience then.
 And no sense of regret or fear
 of... any consequences for what you
 are.

JAYNE

What am I?

MAGGIE

A murderer. You're a murderer.

JAYNE

Not on any deep level. His death
 might have been the result of my
 murderous *thoughts* but--

MAGGIE

You pushed him into a quarry.

JAYNE

I *led* him to a quarry. Actually I
 led him into a forest that more or
 less surrounded a quarry. It got
 dark. We got separated. He came out
 of the forest and fell.

MAGGIE

You got separated.

JAYNE

I separated myself... from him. But
 I didn't push him.

MAGGIE

You might as well have.

JAYNE
Clearly I don't believe that. Hence
the floral nature of my acid trip.

MAGGIE
I need a drink.

Maggie leaves.

JAYNE
Where are you going?

MAGGIE
(off)
Well I don't leave alcohol in my
office.

JAYNE
Of course not.

MAGGIE
(returning)
I keep it in the bathroom.

She has a bottle of vodka. She removes the cap. Takes a long
drink.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Do you want some?

JAYNE
Are you kidding?

MAGGIE
Yes. No. Actually I'm not.

Maggie hands the bottle over. Jayne takes a longer drink.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
But be careful.

JAYNE
You too.

Hands the bottle back to Maggie.

MAGGIE
Absolutely. This isn't good. I
might be in the process of giving
up.

JAYNE
In me?

MAGGIE

Maybe in you. Maybe in me.

Maggie takes another long drink.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

But as long as we're here...

(sitting)

So... you didn't actually kill your husband. You just--

JAYNE

Left it to fate. But I don't know what I would have done if he'd survived.

MAGGIE

Maybe tried again.

JAYNE

I don't know if I could have pulled that off. People were already pretty suspicious about his death.

MAGGIE

You brother and his wife,

JAYNE

And my mother. She was still alive at the time.

MAGGIE

Your mother thought you might have arranged for his death.

JAYNE

No, she was sure I did.

MAGGIE

She told you that?

JAYNE

Yes. As she was uncorking the champagne.

MAGGIE

So she loved your dog a lot too, I guess.

JAYNE

My dog? Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Plus she was tired of seeing me weep like a child about all the affairs my husband was having with his students. And she despised his writing.

MAGGIE

Really.

JAYNE

"It's all bullshit," she'd say. "All total slight of hand bullshit" She asked him once, "Why doesn't anyone ever call you on your bullshit?" She was talking about literary critics.

MAGGIE

What did he say to that?

JAYNE

He launched into a long defence of bullshit. He was one of them, right.

MAGGIE

A literary critic?

JAYNE

Yeah. A lot of them are. Novelists, I mean. And they review each other's work. You must have noticed that.

MAGGIE

I have, yes.

JAYNE

Too cozy, right. Great reviews for their friends. And all the rest get patronized or destroyed. My mother wouldn't allow any quotes from other writers on her book jackets. Even terrific ones.

MAGGIE

She was a novelist too?

JAYNE

A poet. Mary Price MacDonald.

MAGGIE

Oh. Really. I love her work.

JAYNE

You don't have to say that.

MAGGIE

It's the truth. A friend gave me a collection of her poems a few years ago and I--

JAYNE

Which one?

MAGGIE

Winter at Night.

JAYNE

Yeah. Lovely. She could be lovely about things when she was in the mood.

MAGGIE

I remember a few of them being quite fierce.

JAYNE

She could be that too.

MAGGIE

Like you.

JAYNE

And you. You're fierce too. You wouldn't be here if you weren't.

MAGGIE

You mean here in this office or... here in this world?

JAYNE

Both.

MAGGIE

I told you, I had help.

JAYNE

And that's it? A woman taught you how to play the piano and that was all it took for you to get your very damaged young self through, what... how many years in school does it to become a shrink?

MAGGIE

Post secondary? Ten or so.

JAYNE

Yeah and just any former junkie can pull that off. Plus all this stuff you've obviously still got simmering inside you.

MAGGIE

It was the hallucinogenic. Usually it stays where it is.

JAYNE

In your subconscious.

MAGGIE

My unconscious.

JAYNE

Whatever.

MAGGIE

There's a difference.

JAYNE

Well just pick the one most appropriate to your condition. The point is, you're obviously still in pain.

MAGGIE

So are you.

JAYNE

I saw wallpaper. You got beaten.

MAGGIE

Look, it might be better if we just let that go.

JAYNE

Better for...?

MAGGIE

Our professional relationship.

JAYNE

Which means almost nothing to me. You're my friend.

MAGGIE

Yeah, you've said. Since when?

JAYNE

Almost from the beginning. Didn't you feel the connection?

MAGGIE

No.

JAYNE

Liar.

MAGGIE

All I got from you was resistance and resentment.

JAYNE

Well that's just how I am. Friends have to take the bad as well as the good.

MAGGIE

Is this the good? Your need to dwell on my problems instead of your own.

JAYNE

Are you suggesting we can just go on without you admitting you have serious issues.

MAGGIE

Issues. I hate that fucking word.

JAYNE

Tough. You've got them. And who better than a trusted friend to help you work through them.

MAGGIE

I'm already in therapy.

JAYNE

Who with?

MAGGIE

Someone who doesn't use the word issues.

JAYNE

Well it's not working. I think I can help you more, and I'm willing to try.

MAGGIE

Thanks but--

JAYNE

I'm sure you'd do the same for me.

MAGGIE

If you'd let me.

JAYNE

I would if I needed you to.
Wallpaper, remember. I'm at one
with the universe.

MAGGIE

A universe in which you feel
required to take revenge on someone
for causing a pet to die.

JAYNE

You have a problem with the fact
that it was a dog.

Next five speeches overlap.

MAGGIE

I'm thinking that maybe it was an
over-reaction. And that--

JAYNE

Don't you like dogs?

MAGGIE

I love dogs. But--

JAYNE

Do you have one?

MAGGIE

Not at the moment. But--

JAYNE

Don't you think that when you have
a dog you're totally responsible
for the care of that dog. For its
shelter, its food, all the love and
attention the dog requires? In
short, for the dog's life. It's a
kind of contract you make with the
dog. And when that contract is
breached, don't you think there
should be consequences. I do. When
a dog or any kind of animal is
abused, I think the abuser should
be put in prison.

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

And if the animal dies from abuse or callous indifference to its well being then... Suppose I told you it wasn't a dog. Suppose I told you it was a little boy. Suppose I told you it was my little boy. Would it make a difference? Would you still think I was overreacting?!

MAGGIE

Stop! We can't do this. We can't talk about one thing when it might actually be some other--

JAYNE

Okay. Then fuck it. Let's not talk about it at all!

MAGGIE

If it... if it was your son, then all this self-destructive behaviour would make sense and we could--

JAYNE

Self-destructive?! How'd we get back on that?

MAGGIE

I guess I can't get the image out of my head of you strolling down the road, causing cars to suddenly veer away to avoid hitting you. One of them even crashing.

JAYNE

Okay. That's fair. That's something to be considered and corrected. How about I cut back? And when I feel like I need to go on a bender, I'll just come here. You can make sure I don't leave, and we'll get stoned together.

(reaching)

Can I have another drink of your stash.

MAGGIE

No.

JAYNE

Worried you'll need it all later?

MAGGIE

You mean when I'm finished with you? Probably.

JAYNE

(reaching)

Come on. We're supposed to be sharing.

MAGGIE

Yeah. How did that happen?

Maggie looks at her then hands the bottle over.

JAYNE

Thata girl.

She takes a long swig.

MAGGIE

Hey!

JAYNE

Sorry. Got a little carried away.

She hands the bottle back.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Who gave you my mother's poems?

MAGGIE

I told you. A friend.

JAYNE

It came out a long time ago. Twenty-five years ago maybe. Was it your foster mother?

MAGGIE

No.

JAYNE

So who then? Oh. It was your boyfriend the dealer, wasn't it?

MAGGIE

He was more than just a dealer.

JAYNE

He was a poetry lover.

(leans in to her)

What the hell was really going on between you two?

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

I mean when you weren't selling
dope and breaking into--

MAGGIE

He took care of me.

JAYNE

He loved you.

MAGGIE

Yes.

JAYNE

And you loved him.

MAGGIE

I guess. I definitely needed him. I
had no one else at the time. So he
was--

JAYNE

Your bodyguard. Okay... But you
don't know where he is now.

MAGGIE

He's up north.

JAYNE

Up north... working?

MAGGIE

In jail. He's been charged with
second degree murder.

JAYNE

Jesus...

MAGGIE

He beat some guy to death with a
shovel.

JAYNE

Jesus. Because?

MAGGIE

The guy was screwing his
girlfriend. But Robbie says it was
self defence.

JAYNE

You mean the guy had a *bigger*
shovel?

MAGGIE

A tire iron. He called me and wants me to come see him.

JAYNE

And you're thinking about it.

MAGGIE

I'm trying not to.

JAYNE

How'd he get your number? I mean after all these years.

MAGGIE

He knows what I do. How hard would it have been to find--

JAYNE

You stayed connected?

MAGGIE

For quite awhile, yeah. I haven't seen him in years though. When he was still in the city and still getting into trouble, I bailed him out a few times. He stayed with me off and on... But when I was in med school I just--

JAYNE

Cut him loose.
(off her look)
Anyone else know about this?

MAGGIE

That he's been charged with murder?

JAYNE

That he even exists.

MAGGIE

No.

JAYNE

Not even your therapist.

MAGGIE

No just you. My new best friend.
But...

JAYNE

What?

MAGGIE

It's him. He's the one in trouble.
Not me. I feel for him, but I'm
not... He's not one of my "issues."

JAYNE

Are you sure?

Maggie lifts the bottle to her mouth. Hesitates.

MAGGIE

All those kids you failed. Or think
you failed when you were
counselling them... you had to let
them go. You must know that, right.
You weren't expected to feel
responsible for them forever.

Maggie drinks.

JAYNE

(reaches for the bottle)
No. But it wasn't always easy. And
I wasn't in a relationship with any
of them like you were with whats-
his-name.

Maggie hands her the bottle.

MAGGIE

Well thank God for that, at least.

Jayne drinks.

JAYNE

They already had enough
complications in their lives.

MAGGIE

Yeah... Robbie is... He's just a
part of my past. I'm a different
person. It's upsetting, what's
happening to him, but--

JAYNE

It was my dog.
(off her look)
Not my son.

Maggie just looks at her. Jayne takes another drink.

MAGGIE

Are you sure?

JAYNE

I think I could tell the
difference.

MAGGIE

I mean are you sure that's what you
want me to think.

JAYNE

Well even if it was my son you're
in no shape to deal with that
information.

(off her look)

But it wasn't. Honest.

Maggie takes the bottle back. Drinks.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Are you going to go see him?

MAGGIE

I don't know.

JAYNE

What's stopping you?

MAGGIE

I think it's the overwhelming
sadness of the whole thing.

JAYNE

You deal with sadness every day,
don't you.

MAGGIE

Not my own. I feel like I've
deserted him. But there was too
much difference between the new
life and the one with him in it. He
knew that too. But the thing is...

JAYNE

He rescued you.

MAGGIE

Right.

JAYNE

And turned you into a drug dealer.

MAGGIE

But before that he rescued me. I
was on the street and very
vulnerable.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

He was in a rooming house, and he let me sleep on his floor.

JAYNE

And how long did that last? I mean the sleeping on the floor part.

MAGGIE

Not long. But I'm the one who changed it.

JAYNE

You probably just got into his bed to stay warm. You were only fourteen for godsake.

MAGGIE

A very experienced fourteen. I'd slept with quite few guys before him. A couple of them when it wasn't even against my will. Why are you looking at me like that?

JAYNE

I'm just wondering why, other than *maybe* your therapist, you don't have anyone in your life to talk about this stuff with.

MAGGIE

Orphans often don't. It's about distrust. That's my issue by the way.

JAYNE

Distrust?

MAGGIE

Yes.

JAYNE

Of everyone.

MAGGIE

Pretty much. But mostly myself. You see, I'm not sure who I really am. Maybe I'm the woman who works here, tries, even feebly sometimes, to help others. Maybe I'm actually still that scared lonely little girl, and the person you're looking at now is just... someone who's pretending. It's what my therapist and I are working on.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

My distrust, my uncertainty about so many things. And there's no room for dealing with Robbie or anyone else once I leave this office.

Maggie takes another drink.

JAYNE

Maybe you've had enough of that.

MAGGIE

Gimme a break.

JAYNE

I mean without handing it back. You think I just want to sit here and watch you get hammered?

Maggie passes the bottle. Jayne drinks. They are both getting fairly drunk.

MAGGIE

I don't get hammered.

JAYNE

Okay.

MAGGIE

No. I mean it. Just like you don't get addicted. I don't get drunk. I built up a tolerance when I was a kid. I was legendary. I could drink all night.

(looks at her)

I shouldn't be treating you.

JAYNE

Exactly what I've been telling you.

MAGGIE

(slightly slurred)

No you've been telling me you don't need to be treated. I'm saying you do, but it shouldn't be me who does it.

JAYNE

Well if I did need treatment, which I still maintain I don't, I would definitely *want* someone as fucked up as you to give it to me.

They look at each other.

MAGGIE
There's something wrong.

JAYNE
(also kind of out of it)
Yeah. You look kinda... unsteady
there.

MAGGIE
And the way you're mouth is working
is...

JAYNE
Is what?

MAGGIE
Wrong. It's wrong. Maybe we
shouldn't have started to drink
with the LSD still in our
systems...

JAYNE
Fuck it.

MAGGIE
Okay but maybe--

JAYNE
Fuck it.

MAGGIE
Okay, but it could be very... No,
you're right. Fuck it.

She takes the bottle. Drinks until it's empty.

JAYNE
Well that was kind of selfish.

MAGGIE
Don't worry about it.

She leaves.

JAYNE
Where you going?

MAGGIE
(off)
Guess.

She returns with another bottle.

JAYNE
Hey, good for you.

MAGGIE
Yeah it is. I mean good for me.

JAYNE
I think you might be an alcoholic.

MAGGIE
Whatya talking about, you
judgemental bitch? Here.

Hands Jayne the bottle.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Sorry. I didn't mean to call you
that.

JAYNE
That's okay. I think I am a
judgemental bitch.

MAGGIE
Of course you are. Why else would
someone kill her husband for
letting her dog drown.

JAYNE
You mean my son.

MAGGIE
Right. What?

JAYNE
And I didn't kill him. It was an
accident.

MAGGIE
Not really.

JAYNE
No. Not really.

MAGGIE
I mean not really your son.

JAYNE
Yes. I mean no.

MAGGIE
It's just so sad.

JAYNE

About my son?

MAGGIE

About Robbie. His life and the way it's turned out.

JAYNE

Sad but no surprise. I knew a lot of Timmys.

MAGGIE

Who's Timmy?

JAYNE

He was a-- Did I say Timmy? Yeah. Right. He was a totally messed up kid from when I... Yeah messed up and dangerous just like...

MAGGIE

Robbie.

JAYNE

Yeah. Robbie. I knew a lot of Timmys and Robbies.

MAGGIE

There was only one Robbie.

JAYNE

There were dozens. I saw dozens. And I failed them all. The prisons and shelters and graveyards are full of people I failed.

MAGGIE

(trying to focus)

Me too. I've got a few in those places too. Well maybe not prisons. But shelters, graveyards, yeah. But not a lot. Not full. Just one. Maybe two or three. Just two. And just one for now. Robbie. And maybe, probably you... in the future.

JAYNE

I'll be fine.

MAGGIE

Not thinking like that, you won't.

JAYNE
Thinking like what?

MAGGIE
Thinking like you think.
(she takes a drink)
You keep thinking like that and you
are screwed.

JAYNE
Is that your professional opinion.

MAGGIE
My private professional opinion.

JAYNE
What's that even mean?

MAGGIE
It means I haven't shared it yet. I
haven't told any of my patients
what I really want them to do.

JAYNE
Which is?

MAGGIE
(on her feet)
Just stop! Stop being so fucking
crazy. Stop thinking all those
crazy thoughts and doing all those
crazy things. I mean Jesus Christ,
how are we ever going to evolve,
with all that crap swirling around
in our heads. Okay, I've got
"issues," myself but I was fucking
abandoned and tossed around like
garbage for years. You don't
recover from that. Not really. Not
totally. But if you weren't
abandoned or abused or otherwise
seriously traumatized, get over
yourselves. Not you. I don't mean
you. You were traumatized by the
death of your beloved dog, so all
the lunatic shit you do with drugs
and highway strolling is completely
understandable.

JAYNE
Really?

MAGGIE

No of course not. I'm just
humouring you. It was a dog, for
chrissake. And all this other stuff
has to stop too.

JAYNE

The other stuff being?

MAGGIE

Feeling responsible for all those
kids you think you failed, for one
thing. What are you, some kind of
fucking martyr? There's a lot of
people who could be blamed for how
those kids turned out. The parents,
the other teachers, the government,
and most of the hugely indifferent
people in this fucking world. Maybe
take *their* failures to help in any
real way into consideration when
you think about those kids.

JAYNE

I was the last line of defence.

MAGGIE

Crazy talk.

JAYNE

No. I know that for sure. Not just
because of the ones I didn't help.
Because of the few I did. Why
couldn't I help them all if I was
able to help some of them?

MAGGIE

Right. So you're not a martyr. You
just a fucking idiot. "Why couldn't
I help them all?" Jesus. Look just
concentrate on those few. Because
maybe the others were beyond help.

JAYNE

The point is, I just gave up.

MAGGIE

You quit?

JAYNE

I stropped. Then I quit.

MAGGIE

Well you better "strop" drinking.
Because you're starting to...

JAYNE

I stropped. Stopped.

MAGGIE

Stropped/stopped what?

JAYNE

Caring. And then I didn't...
listen. Because it was too hard.
It was confusing. And scary. All
the things they were going through.
At school at home. Everywhere. It
was sometimes very scary.

MAGGIE

I know.

JAYNE

No you don't. Oh right. You do. You
must hear some scary things.
But I saw stuff. It's worse when
you actually see it. One day I saw
a kid I was counselling carrying a
machete into a park.

MAGGIE

A machete like...

She swings the invisible machete violently.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

...a machete?

JAYNE

That's the one. Next day I called
him in and asked him what he was
doing with something like that.

MAGGIE

What did he say?

JAYNE

He said, "You got no business
asking me a question like that,
Miss."

MAGGIE

What did you say?

JAYNE

I said, "But it was a fucking machete!" And apparently that wasn't an issue for him. Because he just looked at me like I was some kind of fool and handed me a note from the soccer coach asking me to okay him for the last game of the season.

MAGGIE

Lots of luck with that, I bet.

JAYNE

No I cleared him to play. The kid had a C minus average and didn't qualify for any extra curriculums. But really what difference was it going to make in his life.

MAGGIE

You mean taking the machete into account.

JAYNE

Yeah. Definitely.
(reaches for the bottle)
I scoured the internet for days looking for any attacks involving one. Didn't find any, but I resigned a month later.

MAGGIE

Okay. So I was right about burnout.

JAYNE

I guess.

MAGGIE

Was this before or after your dog died?

JAYNE

Before.

MAGGIE

Before or after your mum died?

JAYNE

Before. Why are you asking?

MAGGIE

Beats me why I ask most of things I do. Could just be habit.

JAYNE
Or a fear of silence.

MAGGIE
Yeah well the silence of some of my patients is a little terrifying.

JAYNE
You mean because of what they might be thinking?

MAGGIE
Or planning.

JAYNE
I'm hungry.

MAGGIE
You eat?

JAYNE
Well I have to keep up my strength, or I won't be able to get the drugs into my mouth.

MAGGIE
Or your arm. Or your groin. Or between your toes.

JAYNE
Okay. Cool it. I haven't reached that stage yet.

MAGGIE
Well that's good then. I mean that you're hungry. Because that's something I can definitely help you with.

She takes out her cell phone. Speed dials a number.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hi, Tony. It's Maggie... No I'm good. Can I get a large special? ... It's all locked up, so have your guy just call when he gets here ... Yeah, my cell... Thanks...
(disconnects)
Won't be long. They're fast.

JAYNE
So you're on a first name basis with the pizza man.

MAGGIE

He used to feed me when I was on the street.

JAYNE

Okay. And now he delivers to your workplace. He must have been blown away when you reconnected.

MAGGIE

We never *disconnected*.

JAYNE

Really. I thought you left all the people from that life behind.

MAGGIE

Not the people who fed me.

JAYNE

And he fed you for how long?

MAGGIE

All the way through school. Plus he paid my tuition.

JAYNE

An angel.

MAGGIE

A very kind human being. They all are.

(off her look)

I mean his family. I spend all the holidays with them.

JAYNE

(a little angry)

So you're not alone.

MAGGIE

Not always.

JAYNE

So why do you seem like such lonely person then?

MAGGIE

That's projection.

JAYNE

Sorry?

MAGGIE

You're the lonely one.

JAYNE

No I'm fine. I have you. But you're in despair. Might be because of your work. Your past. But I sense it big time.

MAGGIE

Everyone despairs. You can't live a full life without ever despairing.

JAYNE

I know that. You think I don't understand that despair is part of--

MAGGIE

You were making it sound like my despair was worse than normal despair, and I was--

JAYNE

No I wasn't.

MAGGIE

Yes you fucking were.

JAYNE

No I fucking wasn't. But it is. It's worse. It's not normal. And I know that because I know the difference between normal and extra normal despair.

MAGGIE

You're drunk.

JAYNE

So are you.

MAGGIE

Not like you. You're drunk in the way an addict gets drunk.

JAYNE

You mean in the way a drunk gets.

MAGGIE

A drunk who's also an addict. You get too personal. Too wrong about things for it not to be too personal. Your judgement is impaired.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

And when a judgmental person like yourself has impaired... judgement... well, you see what I'm getting at.

JAYNE

Sorry. Maybe if you stopped trying to use words and just groaned like you really want to.

MAGGIE

Why would I want to groan?

JAYNE

To fully express your deep despair. The aching despair of an orphan. Bless all the orphans for enduring the despair of being alone in this immense fucking indifferent world. Oh not now of course. Because you have this nice Italian family who takes you in at the holidays.

MAGGIE

And no one takes you in at the holidays?

JAYNE

I don't want to be taken in.

MAGGIE

That means there's no one, right.

JAYNE

I could make calls. There are still people out there I'm on a first name basis with.

MAGGIE

Who are they.

JAYNE

Teachers, neighbours I had, friends I made.

MAGGIE

Were they close friends?

JAYNE

Not as close as we are.
(off her look)
At school.

MAGGIE
You mean other parents?

Jayne just looks at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I assume you're talking about your
son's school. You know, when you
were dropping him off or picking
him up, you probably had
conversations with some of the
other...

JAYNE
No...

MAGGIE
No what?

JAYNE
Just no.

Maggie's cell goes off.

MAGGIE
He's almost here.
(starting out.)
Just be a minute.

Jayne just nods. Maggie looks at her, leaves.

Jayne lowers her head. Is thinking. Lifts her head. Shudders.

JAYNE
All right...

She takes out her pill bottle. Pops a few. Sits back. Closes
her eyes.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
All right...

Maggie returns with a large pizza. Puts the box and the
napkins that came with it, on the couch. .

MAGGIE
Let's eat.

JAYNE
In awhile.

MAGGIE
It's better when it's hot.

JAYNE

I said in awhile. Do you really want to do this?

MAGGIE

Eat?

JAYNE

No. Talk about my son.

MAGGIE

If you do.

JAYNE

Well that's quite a choice. Eat Tony's special pizza, or turn myself inside out, and let my guts spill out all over your floor.

MAGGIE

I spilled mine.

JAYNE

A few anecdotes about the hardships of being an orphan. Please.

MAGGIE

I did it for you. So that you'd trust me.

JAYNE

You told me about your past because you don't have any friends you could tell. And also because you were high. Or maybe you think it's good for me to "interact" with someone who has more problems than I do.

MAGGIE

Or maybe you do. After all the research you did on me, maybe you thought you'd have something over me. Something that would help you get out of here and go about your merry, self-destructive, delusional way.

JAYNE

(looks at her, smiles)
It crossed my mind.

MAGGIE

I bet it did.

JAYNE
(inhales)
Yeah but now... No never mind.

MAGGIE
Nevermind what?

JAYNE
Nevermind that I trust you. It
doesn't matter about my life. I
probably don't want it saved.

MAGGIE
Is that what we're talking about?
Saving your life?

JAYNE
I guess.

MAGGIE
You thought I was trying to save
your life.

JAYNE
You weren't?

MAGGIE
I just wanted you to be honest with
me.

JAYNE
That's all?

MAGGIE
Well it was going to be a
beginning. And then...

JAYNE
Then you could try to save my life.

MAGGIE
By stopping you from walking in
traffic.

JAYNE
Or anything else.

MAGGIE
But specifically from walking in
traffic. I wasn't trying to get to
your--

JAYNE
Subconscious.

MAGGIE

That takes months. Or years.

JAYNE

Right. So...

MAGGIE

If you need to stop living, you need to stop living.

JAYNE

You believe that?

MAGGIE

Oh yeah. I think I do now. If a person of relatively sound mind has just had enough then that person should be allowed to... say goodbye to it all.

JAYNE

A person of sound mind who's not under the influence.

MAGGIE

I just think, in your case, it's worth talking about the real reason why you're...

JAYNE

Troubled?

MAGGIE

It's not because you think you failed all those students.

JAYNE

Although I am haunted by that.

MAGGIE

Yeah. That sucks. But...

JAYNE

He was seven years old... You can eat pizza while I tell you this. I won't think it's insensitive.

MAGGIE

(sitting)

That's okay.

JAYNE

Actually it might be better. You know, just to dull the drama.

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

The drama, the pain, the whole miserable thing... is pretty hard to get through.

MAGGIE

I'm not eating pizza while you talk about the death of your child, Jayne.

JAYNE

Right. You're a professional at heart. Despite some of your more unorthodox opinions.

MAGGIE

Is this going to be the same story you told me before. But not with the dog.

JAYNE

Not exactly. That's troubling isn't it. Saying it was my dog is deeply disturbing.

MAGGIE

To you, you mean.

JAYNE

Not to you?

MAGGIE

Yeah. To me too. But I think I might know why you do it.

JAYNE

Do it? I don't do it ever. I only *did* it for you. I couldn't get away with that story out there in the real world. But in here, when I'm already in a very vulnerable state, it was necessary. I had to put some distance on it.

MAGGIE

Why?

JAYNE

Well how would I know that? You're the shrink. You figure it out if you have to. I just know it couldn't be about my son at the time.

MAGGIE

But you wanted to tell me. You did tell me.

JAYNE

Yes and it felt wrong, so I *untold* you. But then lying again felt even worse. To talk about a dog instead of... It felt cheap and cowardly. I mean he was my little boy. He was my sweet little boy. We should have gotten very drunk or very high right away. I'm really very hungry. But I don't think I can move. Can you...

Jayne is gesturing towards the pizza.

MAGGIE

You want to eat?

JAYNE

I'm hungry.

Maggie gets her a piece of pizza. Hands it to her.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

What about you?

MAGGIE

That's okay.

JAYNE

No you have to eat. I can't eat alone. Please! It's too upsetting.

MAGGIE

To eat alone...

JAYNE

Yes. It puts distance between us again. We're in this together. I know how sad and miserable you are and most of the reasons why. And you know I'm a coward who can't talk about the most devastating thing that ever happened to me without lying. We've accepted those things about each other, haven't we.

MAGGIE

I...guess so.

JAYNE

Okay. So let's just keep things like they were. Not like they were before. Like they were more... recently.

MAGGIE

Like just a few minutes ago?

JAYNE

Yeah. When we were in sync. Kinda. Let's kind of stay in sync...

MAGGIE

By sharing a pizza.

JAYNE

Yes. And sitting close.

Maggie sits close to her.

MAGGIE

Okay?

JAYNE

Yes.
(takes a bite)
Good pizza. Have a bite.

MAGGIE

No I--

JAYNE

Have a bite!

MAGGIE

Okay. Okay...

Maggie takes a bite.

JAYNE

There. Things are normal. Pizza is pizza. A friend is sitting near me. And a horrible loss can be talked about without feeling like there's a knife ripping away at the heart.

MAGGIE

I think I should be sober for this.

JAYNE

Why?

MAGGIE

So I can do my job.

JAYNE

Your job isn't important. I
couldn't tell this to a doctor.

MAGGIE

But that's what I am.

JAYNE

No. What you are is a struggling
human mess who has tomato sauce on
her chin... My husband wasn't
responsible for our son's death.
Not really. Not directly. I wanted
him to be. I wanted to be able to
blame him so badly that I just did.
I made myself remember it like it
was him who was totally and
directly responsible. Everyone knew
the actual truth, so the only
person I could tell my version to
was me. And I told it to myself
over and over again.

MAGGIE

Until you believed it.

JAYNE

I never believed it. I'm not
insane. I just preferred my version
because in a lot of ways it was
closer to the truth. Not the actual
truth. The real truth.

MAGGIE

What's the difference?

JAYNE

One is what happened and the other
is... what it meant that it
happened.

(looks at her)

It was me out in the boat with our
boy. It was supposed to be my
husband, but he was "way too busy"
to go and our little guy had his
heart set on it. It had been a
shitty vacation for him. His father
worked and drank and his mother
cried and tried to make the best of
it. So I took him out on the boat.

(MORE)

JAYNE (CONT'D)

But I'd had a few rum and Cokes and... I'm not sure why he didn't say anything when I put his father's life jacket on him instead of his own. Probably because he thought I'd never make a mistake about something like that... But I did, and when the boat capsized it came off. And he went under. And... he was gone. Very fast. Just like that. I wanted to go with him. I wanted to just sink and fucking drown. And I'm still not sure why I didn't.

Maggie just stares at her for a moment.

MAGGIE

And your husband?

JAYNE

Fuck him. Wherever he is.

MAGGIE

Meaning he isn't dead.

JAYNE

Not as far as I know. He screamed at me for a few months about what a shitty mother I was, and then he took off with one of his little... Funny though, whenever I think about him, I see him bloated and rotting at the bottom of that quarry.

MAGGIE

Where he fucking belongs.

JAYNE

What?

MAGGIE

Where you think he... fucking belongs.

JAYNE

Right. So are we done now? Are you finished peeling away my protective shell?

MAGGIE

You did that all on your own.

JAYNE

Ah come on. Give yourself a little credit. You made a major effort here. Doing drugs with me. Pretending to be my friend. And now here I am. Emotionally exposed and mentally exhausted. Do with me what you will.

Maggie nods. Goes to her and hugs her tight.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

I can't breathe,

MAGGIE

Oh...
(letting go)
Sorry.

JAYNE

No... Not from...
(gasping)
I actually... can't breathe very well.

MAGGIE

Okay. Sit down.
(helping her down)
Head between you legs. Slowly inhale. Slowly. Now slowly out... Better?

JAYNE

No...

She leans forward and falls on the floor.

MAGGIE

(kneeling beside her)
Jesus. Okay. Okay I'm going to call...
(checks her pocket)
Where's my goddamn phone?

Sees it on her chair.

JAYNE

Okay...

She stands, starts forward. Jayne grabs her ankle and Maggie stumbles, tries to keep her balance but eventually falls all the way down.

MAGGIE
What are you doing.

JAYNE
Do not resuscitate.

MAGGIE
What?

JAYNE
I've got it written down somewhere.
DO. NOT. RESUSCITATE!
(slows her breathing)
You were... going to call 911.
Don't. I want to die.

MAGGIE
You're not going to die. It's
probably just a panic attack but...
(getting up)
...we have to make sure.

JAYNE
No. Let it... play out. I'm okay
either way.

MAGGIE
Jayne.

JAYNE
No no it's... better.

MAGGIE
What's better?

JAYNE
My breathing. Please no 911. All
that fuss. Sirens. People running
in. Stretchers. Questions.

MAGGIE
(kneeling beside her)
Breathe for me.

JAYNE
Sure...

MAGGIE
(hand on her chest and her
back)
Good... I really think it was just
a--

JAYNE

Panic attack. Right. But just in case I take a sudden turn for the worse, remember what I said. No resuscitation. That's my living will. And you're my witness.

(off her look)

Hey I'm not kidding.

MAGGIE

I don't care. I can't let you die.

JAYNE

Well then fuck you.

MAGGIE

Sure. But you don't want to die, anyway. Not really.

JAYNE

Like you'd know.

MAGGIE

I would. Definitely.

Jayne struggles to sit up. Looks at Maggie.

JAYNE

Have you tried?
(off her look)
To kill yourself.

MAGGIE

Not recently.

JAYNE

So how long ago?

MAGGIE

There were a few times actually.
(sitting next to her on
the floor)
The last one was just after I got certified.

JAYNE

Certified as what?
(off her look)
Oh. You mean to practice. All that success just got you down, eh.

MAGGIE

I felt like a fraud. I was pretty sure I wasn't actually well enough to help anyone else, so--

JAYNE

Why'd you fail?
(off her look)
At suicide.

MAGGIE

I try not to think of it as failure, Jayne.

JAYNE

Well what was it then? A rehearsal?

MAGGIE

No. I meant for it to work. A friend found me. It shouldn't have mattered, but I'd underestimated the dose.

JAYNE

Or your tolerance. And the other times?

MAGGIE

Earlier. Twice when I was in my teens. Once with a razor.
(shows her the scars on her wrist)
And then a heroin overdose. Both times people intervened.

JAYNE

What a drag, eh.

MAGGIE

Yeah. I was really pissed off.

JAYNE

And the last time when your friend found you. How'd you feel then?

MAGGIE

I had mixed emotions.

JAYNE

So you'd gotten a bit sentimental.

MAGGIE

Sentimental?

JAYNE

About life.

MAGGIE

Okay. Sure. Sentimental. How about you?

JAYNE

You mean do I consider doing it... instead of just waiting for someone to run me over. Of course.

MAGGIE

So what stops you?

JAYNE

I don't know. Do you think you've stop trying?

MAGGIE

Maybe. Listening to other peoples' problems made me feel less alone. So many of them in the same kind of pain. Abandoned. Or just feeling abandoned.

JAYNE

Other orphans.

MAGGIE

Kind of. How are you feeling now?

JAYNE

Tired. Telling the truth really takes it out of you. I'm still hungry though.

Maggie peels off a slice of pizza for Jayne

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Did you ever try to find out who your birth mother was.

MAGGIE

I knew who she was. I was with her until I was six.

JAYNE

Oh. I figured you were a newborn.

MAGGIE

Wrapped in a blanket? Left in a church at the foot of the altar so Jesus could look out for me?

JAYNE

Yeah. And there was probably music.

MAGGIE

Music. Yeah. AC/DC. My mother was piss drunk and dancing her ass off. Gyrating all over our sad little apartment and yelling at me to join her. "Come on, move. Move your fucking feet!" But I wasn't in the mood to move my fucking feet because I hadn't eaten all day. So I just sat there and watched her and waited for her to stop. Then suddenly she did. She stopped, turned the music off, looked at me like something really important had just occurred to her and said, "You're just no fun, are you. No fucking fun at all. Well who needs this shit!" And she threw some of my stuff into a garbage bag, dragged me down the street and dropped me in the foyer at Children's Services. So there I was. Too old and grumpy to be adopted and about to begin my life as a ward of the state.

JAYNE

And your mother?

MAGGIE

Kyla? As far as I know she's still in that apartment. Mary looked her up once. Mary was my last foster mum.

JAYNE

The piano teacher.

MAGGIE

(nods)
They had a meeting.

JAYNE

How'd that go?

MAGGIE

Well there was no violence. But there was no interest in me going back to her either. Not from my mother.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

And definitely not from Mary after she found out how my mum was living.

JAYNE

Was she--

MAGGIE

A druggie? An alcoholic? A hooker? I didn't push for an answer. But I'm betting she was all three.

JAYNE

So you never went to see her.

MAGGIE

Why would I do that, Jayne. I'm not a masochist.

JAYNE

Am I?

MAGGIE

Good question. Like the pizza?

JAYNE

(off the pizza)

Yeah. It's really good pizza.

MAGGIE

Tony knows his stuff.

JAYNE

Not too much sauce.

MAGGIE

Just a very thin layer.

JAYNE

Like they do in Italy.

MAGGIE

Right. Have you been?

JAYNE

Yeah my mother took me when I was sixteen. Have you?

MAGGIE

No. I'm planning to go when I retire.

JAYNE

And when will that be?

MAGGIE

Maybe tomorrow.

JAYNE

Good. Do that. We'll go together.
Travel through all of Europe.

MAGGIE

Visit the sites of all the worst
atrocities.

JAYNE

What?

MAGGIE

I was just--

JAYNE

No. I've actually thought of doing
that.

MAGGIE

Seriously?

JAYNE

Sure. I mean people do that kind of
thing for other less worthy
reasons. Birth and death places of
poets, politicians. But our trip
would be a trip of enormous sorrow
and recognition.

MAGGIE

Recognition of...?

JAYNE

Our personal disappointment with
the human race.

MAGGIE

And our need to avoid having a good
time at any price.

JAYNE

Well we'd drink, we'd get high...

MAGGIE

We'd cry...

JAYNE

We'd bellow with rage.

MAGGIE

Right. But where to start.

JAYNE

Well so many bad things happened in
so many places.

MAGGIE

All over the world.

JAYNE

Yeah. It'd be the trip of a
lifetime. How are you fixed for
cash?

MAGGIE

I'm pretty sure Tony just put that
money aside that I repaid him for
my education. What about you?

JAYNE

I guess I could use it.

MAGGIE

Use what?

JAYNE

My husband had taken out a life
insurance policy on our son. I
didn't know about it until I
received a cheque for my half in
the mail. I mean what the fuck? Who
takes a life insurance policy out
on a five-year-old.

MAGGIE

People do. It's not necessarily--

JAYNE

Ghoulish? Maybe not until the child
dies. Then it's grotesque and
heartbreaking.

She takes out another joint.

MAGGIE

What did you do with the cheque?

JAYNE

My mum made me cash it. But I
haven't touched the money.

Jayne lights up. Offers the joint to Maggie

Maggie ponders the joint. Takes it. Inhales deeply.

She passes it back to Jayne. Jayne smiles.

MAGGIE

Bloody Sunday.
(off Jayne's look)
Belfast. We should go there.

JAYNE

There was Bloody Sunday in St.
Petersburg too. 1905, I think.

MAGGIE

Okay. All the Bloody Sundays will
be honoured.

JAYNE

Honoured. Right. So it won't be
about trying to feel better.

MAGGIE

Although if we reconcile with the
truth of the world that could
happen.

JAYNE

We could feel better.

MAGGIE

Yes.

JAYNE

About the world or ourselves.

MAGGIE

Maybe both.

JAYNE

Or maybe neither.

MAGGIE

Right. The whole thing could just
be an exercise in despair.

JAYNE

Yeah. But maybe we should do it
anyway.

MAGGIE

Right. To honour all those who
suffered. And all those who
despaired.

JAYNE

And are still despairing.

MAGGIE

Yes. Good...

They exchange the joint a couple of times.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Very good...

JAYNE

You're talking about the dope now.

MAGGIE

Yeah. Where'd you get it again?

JAYNE

(smiles)

That was good. That was a good try.

They exchange the joint one more time.

MAGGIE

Thanks....

Blackout.

THE END

