

SHRINKS

By

Javi Mulero

javimu111@yahoo.com  
mujavier2000@yahoo.com  
Tel. #: (323)804-8264

ACT I

Scene 1

*(MR. PLODNICK's Office.*

*MR. PLODNICK, a very tall man, walks to the door to admit someone in. However, he has a lot of trouble trying to open it. Lots of trouble. Finally, the door relents and opens, revealing MR. SANCHEZ, a perhaps younger - but definitely - much smaller man, standing on the other side.)*

PLODNICK

Mr. Sanchez? Please come in.

SANCHEZ

*(entering:)*

Oh my God.

PLODNICK

Anything wrong?

SANCHEZ

No, just -- uhm -- You're huge!

PLODNICK

*(beat)*

... As in...?

SANCHEZ

No, I mean, you're big! And TALL!

PLODNICK

Well, yes, when it rains I'm the first one to find out. Pleased to meet you. Can you please take a seat, I'll be with you in a second. The bathroom.

SANCHEZ

Oh, of course.

*(PLODNICK goes into a bathroom, closing its door. SANCHEZ is nervously waiting.)*

SANCHEZ

*(to himself)*

"... I am seeing... your wife. Your wife wants to divorce you, and she wants to marry me." Uhm ---

*(He checks his elbows and knees. As he bends his joints, we can tell he is wearing kneepads and elbow pads.)*

(CONTINUED)

SANCHEZ

Good... (continues) ... uhm... "Sir, I am... Uhm...  
Your wife wants to marry me, so please divorce her  
---" -- Oh my God!

*(From the bathroom, we hear:)*

PLODNICK'S VOICE

Mr. Sanchez?

SANCHEZ

Yes, what? Yes! I'm okay --- what?

PLODNICK

Mr. Sanchez, please give me two minutes. Or more like  
three minutes. It's taking longer than I thought.

SANCHEZ

Ah --- yes! Yes. No problem. Yes.

*(SANCHEZ pulls out his cellphone and dials:)*

SANCHEZ

*(whispering:)*

Norma?... I'm in your husband's office... Your  
HUSBAND's office!... I CAN'T say it any louder, I'd  
like to live!... No, no, I haven't told him yet, he's  
in the bathroom. I'll -- I'll tell him in two  
minutes. Well, actually three minutes... Because it's  
taking longer than I thought... I'll explain  
later... Uhm, you know, he's really big! And  
tall! You didn't tell me that. Yes. Yes, of course  
I'm gonna tell him, I promised you! *(to  
himself:)* But, why, God, WHY?... *(to  
her:)* Yes. Yes, I'll be there in time for our trip,  
yes. Remember: Pier number fourteen. Be on time, and  
wait for me. Four o'clock. Remember cruises are  
always on time when they leave. *(Looks at his  
watch:)* I KNOW it's a quarter to three now. I'll get  
this done; I just can't believe this ultimate revenge  
of yours. To want to leave your husband, and on top,  
to have me tell him face to face just so I can report  
his pain back to you... Yes, I'll be there... I know,  
yes. Me too. See you soon.

*(Hangs up. To himself:)*

"Face to face," she says. "It has to be face to  
face!" She's a sadist!

*(SOUND of TOILET FLUSHING. Soon after, PLODNICK  
re-emerges.)*

(CONTINUED)

PLODNICK

Thanks for waiting, Mr. Sanchez. Sit down, please.

SANCHEZ

(sits)

Uhm, yes -- uh -- Thank you for - for seeing me, and for -- agreeing to see me at this time. (looks at watch)... this late time...

PLODNICK

It's only ten to three. I'm okay. I always stick to my appointments.

SANCHEZ

I hope I'm not keeping you, your --- your secretary had said something -- about your -- your "art" classes?

PLODNICK

MARTIAL Arts classes.

SANCHEZ

Oh.

PLODNICK

It's not until five o'clock.

SANCHEZ

Of course. Oh boy.

PLODNICK

Are you okay? Do you need anything, water, a coke...?

SANCHEZ

I'd kill for a valium...

PLODNICK

Ha, ha. Yes. Well, we can't do that here, of course. It's against regulations.

SANCHEZ

I know. WE can't, either. In our office. Neither.

PLODNICK

Oh? And what kind of work do you do?

SANCHEZ

A shrink. Also.

PLODNICK

Well, then, you know.

SANCHEZ

(pointing:)  
What's THAT??

*(He points to a pair of boxing gloves that are on display.)*

PLODNICK

(shrugs)  
I like to show off.

SANCHEZ

You box? Too? You do martial arts -- and you BOX?

PLODNICK

A little... (then:) Time, you know?

*(PLODNICK points to the clock)*

SANCHEZ

Oh, yes. Yes...

*(They both sit again)*

SANCHEZ

Nice couch... (PLODNICK nods; then:) How much is "a little"?

PLODNICK

I'm pretty damn okay. I won State in college two years in a row. K.O.'s.

*(SANCHEZ feels his elbow and knee-pads involuntarily. Then he searches into his pocket and produces some HUGE eyeglasses: they are way too big for his face. PLODNICK, finishes writing something and finally looks up:)*

PLODNICK

Now, please, proceed. (Sees him:) Jesus!

SANCHEZ

What?

PLODNICK

I'm sorry, I just -- I thought they had switched clients on me.

SANCHEZ

THESE threw you off? My expensive glasses? On my fragile face?

(CONTINUED)

PLODNICK

I mean, they're a little --

SANCHEZ

I know. My -- my nose hurts just wearing them. It's still healing.

PLODNICK

Your -- your nose was broken?

SANCHEZ

Yes! Just got a new one.

PLODNICK

Well... Why don't you get some new glasses?

SANCHEZ

Superstitious. (Looks at his watch:) May we -- could we continue?

PLODNICK

Time is running, I'm all ears.

SANCHEZ

Oh. Yes. Uhm... I'm -- I'm --

PLODNICK

Tic-toc, tic-toc, tic-toc --

SANCHEZ

(speeding)

Yes, Im seeing somebody. Who's married. And she wants me to tell her husband to -- to get a divorce because she wants to marry me.

PLODNICK

Yes?

SANCHEZ

(breathing fast)

That was hard. And I just got started.

PLODNICK

Tic-toc.

SANCHEZ

And I also want to marry her. But she wants me to tell her husband.

PLODNICK

And how do you feel?

(CONTINUED)

SANCHEZ

Suicidal... I mean, not as in 'killing' myself, but as in --- yeah, actually, yeah, that'd be nice.

PLODNICK

And what are you going to do about it?

SANCHEZ

(thinks hard)

Er..... Something??...

PLODNICK

Good. It's better than 'nothing.'

SANCHEZ

(beat; then gets up)

Actually, Plan B, because I REALLY have to go -- uhm -- here's what I came to say -- and, uh --

(handing PLODNICK an envelope)

And also here's a hundred dollars for your time, it's inside the envelope, you can keep the change, than you you're welcome good day bye.

*(SANCHEZ has ran to the door and IT DOESN'T OPEN!  
-- He tried and tries and tries to open it, but it  
seems to be locked!)*

SANCHEZ

What!? What's going on? What's wrong with this door? I can't -- I can't get out! What's wrong with this door??

PLODNICK

Yes, I'm sorry about that door. It happens once in a while. I have to fix it.

SANCHEZ

Yeah, but, why does it have to get stuck NOW?? I GOTTA get out of here, I gotta go!

PLODNICK

Why don't you tell me what's wrong? You came here to talk to me, so just -- please: tell me! (beat) Oh, I get it. The reason is inside this envelope, right? That's why you want me to -- (begins opening it)

SANCHEZ

No, no, no, no, no. It's okay. No, no, no, no, no. Gimme. Listen. Give that to me. It's just -- GIVE it to me.

(CONTINUED)

PLODNICK

(withholding it)  
Relax, relax, relax. Just relax...

SANCHEZ

Pleeeeeeeaaase!.....

PLODNICK

(taking letter out)  
Let's see. What's the big secret here... Oh, I see. You have a note here for me. Let's see if this helps...

*(PLODNICK begins reading it.)*

SANCHEZ

It really won't. And -- God! -- you should buy some new doors!

PLODNICK

(reading)  
"Hi. Your wife and I have been having an affair for nine months. She wants you to grant her a divorce because she wants to marry me. And I want to marry her. Sincerely, Joe Sanchez. PS-- Thank you."

*(PLODNICK stares daggers into SANCHEZ's eyes, while SANCHEZ re-adjusts his shoulder pads.)*

PLODNICK

(somber)  
Don't go anywhere.

*(SANCHEZ surveys the room around him)*

SANCHEZ

(shitting bricks)  
Obviously.

PLODNICK

Don't you DARE go anywhere.

SANCHEZ

(nods)  
Listen, I only weigh a hundred and thirty seven pounds. Probably less, 'cause I'm shitting bricks right now.

PLODNICK

(circling each other)  
Did YOU write this letter? Just tell me -- that you DIDN'T write this letter.

(CONTINUED)



SANCHEZ

I reeeeeeally wish that was so. Really!

PLODNICK

Because I am mad, Mr. Sanchez. I am VERY mad!

SANCHEZ

If I tell you I typed it, is that okay?

PLODNICK

No, it's not okay. Did you know that the ONLY way out of here is through the window in the bathroom?

*(At this, SANCHEZ dashes and runs to the door that leads into the bathroom, slamming it shut and locking himself inside. Pause. PLODNICK has a big grin on his face. We hear SANCHEZ:)*

SANCHEZ

But, sir! -- ??... There's NO WINDOW in this bathroom!...

PLODNICK

(gloating)

I KNOW!...

SANCHEZ

This is not FAIR!!

*(PLODNICK walks over to his speakerphone:)*

PLODNICK

(into the speakers:)

Isabel? Would you please cancel all of my appointments today? And also my Martial Arts classes tonight: Both 'Tae Kwon Do' and 'Karate' AND 'Kickboxing.' I think today I'm going to get my work out right here in the office.

SANCHEZ

No! NOOOOOOO! Have pity! Pleeeeeeease! It's not even five o'clock yet!!

*(SANCHEZ repeatedly tries to open the door)*

PLODNICK

Are you really trying to open your door, Don Juan?

SANCHEZ

I'm not. I'm trying to find a way of locking it some more! But I don't know how! How can I build a barricade with four rolls of toilet paper?

(CONTINUED)

PLODNICK

So!... My wife told me she was going somewhere for the weekend! With friends, she says. Was it -- by any chance -- with YOU??

SANCHEZ

I'll give you my cruise tickets! To the Bahamas!

PLODNICK

The Bahamas! Really!

SANCHEZ

Pier number fourteen! Think of it! You can surprise her on deck -- and then you can kill her! I promise I'll never see her again! Only please let me out of here alive!

*(He bangs on the door repeatedly)*

PLODNICK

It's no use. That doorknob has a trick. And only I know how to jiggle it right!

*(Frantic jiggling of doorknob!)*

PLODNICK

No: Wrong! And even IF you got out, the door that leads into my office is also locked.

SANCHEZ

Fuck you! Fuck you and your shitty doors!...

*(Pause)*

Are you there?

*(Pause)*

Where'd you go??... Are you there?

PLODNICK

Yes.

SANCHEZ

Well, fuck you!

PLODNICK

I feel like kicking a door down and hitting something or someone.

SANCHEZ

I'm kidding. I'm kidding! I'm -- Jesus! Can't you see I'm shitting in my pants?

PLODNICK

You're in the right room.

(CONTINUED)

SANCHEZ

Help! Aaaaah! Help, someone!!

PLODNICK

Now tell me how it all happened, Mr. Sanchez. From the very beginning.

SANCHEZ

You're going to miss YOUR BOAT!!...

PLODNICK

And so, I suppose that when you and my wife come back from the Bahamas, you will both wait for me to grant her a divorce. Tell me, Sanchez, how long have you known Louella?

SANCHEZ

See, I hate pain. I have a REAL phobia with pain! If you open this door and let me walk out of here with all my bones intact, I promise you --- Who the HELL is Louella?!

PLODNICK

My wife, you schmocko!

SANCHEZ

(jiggling doorknob)  
Your wife's name is Norma!

PLODNICK

(beat)  
Funny. She never told me that.

SANCHEZ

Wait a minute: Are you Doctor Sheldon? Doctor Barry Sheldon?

PLODNICK

No, I'm Doctor Plodnick. Doctor Larry Plodnick.

SANCHEZ

Oh, my God!

(opens the door easily and comes out:)  
Then, tell me, Mr. Plodnick -- is all this really any concern of yours??

PLODNICK

All I know is that you finally jiggled that doorknob right.

SANCHEZ

Jesus! What the hell am I doing here?

PLODNICK

I have no idea. Barry Sheldon is across the hall, though. But you made an appointment with US. (then:) And we took it...

SANCHEZ

(looking at a piece of paper:)  
Yes. Suite number two-sixteen.

PLODNICK

Yes, that's us. But you should have made it with Doctor Sheldon in Suite two-seventeen.

SANCHEZ

(dread mounting up:)  
Oh my God.

PLODNICK

I won't charge you for your time. You've now made me breathe easier.  
(opens Office door)  
You're free.

SANCHEZ

(going to it)  
Thank you. I really must go now. I'm late. And I have a mission to accomplish with Doctor Sheldon now in the next (looks at his watch:) ten minutes... Pray for me. (dreading:) Oh God! I hope Doctor Barry Sheldon across the hall doesn't know 'Karate'!

*(And SANCHEZ exits. PLODNICK walks over to his speakerphone:)*

PLODNICK

(into speakerphone:)  
Isabel? Did you tell me this morning that Doctor Barry Sheldon went home sick earlier today?... So, he's not there?... No, no message. Have you cancelled the rest of my day already?... Good. Keep at it because I'd love to have the rest of the day off. Also, Isabel? -- I was thinking of flowers for my wife. What store do you recommend?

THE END