

Rocky Mountain Crash Test Dummies

Written by

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SETTING

An underground garage with a concrete floor in a 20,000 square foot Colorado vacation home.

A door to the garage, Upstage.

A La-Z-Boy recliner, Center, an end-table next to it.

TIME

The present.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BARBARA: 50s.

CODY: Late 20s.

SCENE ONE: DAY ONE

Setting:

The garage.

At rise:

(BARBARA opens the door in darkness, light flooding the stage. She holds a beat, then hits the light switch.

Lights up.

She crosses the La-Z-Boy, pulls the recliner handle lever, putting the chair into its recliner position. Exits.

She returns with a white bedsheet, throws it over the La-Z-Boy, steps back, taking it all in. Exits.

She enters with CODY. He leans on her, semiconscious, like a drunk being led to the chair. She drops him into the chair. He groans.

She checks her watch - needs and wants to be somewhere else. She turns to go - stops! Looks back at Cody. Then she rifles through her Prada handbag, pulls out a tissue, crosses to him and dabs his face. She steps back, takes it all in. Exits.

Cody stirs. Groans, coughs.

Lights fade into darkness.)

SCENE TWO: DAY TWO

(Barbara opens the door in darkness, light flooding the stage. She stands in the doorway and stares at Cody.

Cody groans. Beat. He groans again. Beat. He groans a third time, she turns the lights on and when she sees him, she breaks into tears. Exits.

She returns with a rose in a vase. She puts the vase/rose on the end-table next to the chair, steps back, takes it in - and notices blood pooling at the base of the chair. Exits.

She returns wearing rubber yellow dishwashing gloves. She has a washcloth, a see-through plastic bowl, and pushes a garbage can with wheels.

She places the garbage can Upstage, drops to her knees in front of the chair, mops up the blood. She rings it out into the plastic bowl, then places the bowl at the base/front of the chair where the blood is draining and watches it drip, drip, drip into the bowl. Exits.

Lights fade into darkness.)

SCENE THREE: DAY THREE - THE LAST DAY

(Barbara opens the door in darkness, light flooding the stage. She stares at Cody, then turns on the lights.)

She has her Prada handbag slung over her shoulder. She opens the handbag, pulls out a tissue, crosses to Cody, intending to dab his face.)

CODY

Nice handbag.

(Barbara stifles a scream, steps away.)

CODY (CONT'D)

Water. Please...

(Barbara fights back tears. Exits.)

She returns with a bottle of water, crosses to Cody.)

BARBARA

It's from the tap. Not bottled.

CODY

Not picky.

(She bottle-feeds him.)

CODY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

BARBARA

It's a Prada. The handbag. Thank you for noticing... How long...? How long, dammit?

(Cody nods at Barbara, indicating he wants another drink. She checks her watch, places the handbag on the end-table, steps toward Cody with the bottle and bottle-feeds him again.)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Won't do you any good.

(She points to the plastic bowl at the base of the chair. It has filled with Cody's blood.)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Going have to dump it. Again.

(She picks it up, crosses Upstage, pours the blood into the garbage can, puts the bowl back on the floor by Cody.)

She watches his blood drip into the bowl, then she points at it.)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

See? Drip, drip, drip. That's you. That's your life. One drop at a time.

(She gives Cody another sip of water, steps away.)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

How long have you been conscious?

CODY

Long enough. Nice, that's a nice touch, the rose.

(laughs, coughs)

Thanks. A whole helluva lot.

(She's had enough, reaches for her handbag to go.)

CODY (CONT'D)

Hey! No, please, I'm sorry, don't go! Please don't go...

BARBARA

(to herself)

Cocktails with the girls at 2:00, hair and nails at 3:00, um, an hour to dress, go red, I think, no, burgundy, the Dolce & Gabbana - if I can still fit into it, god - then maybe a few more cocktails - no, more than a few - the Noodle at eight and wine, lots and lots of wine, he likes wine, a good bottle, an impressive bottle, an Australian '92 Penfolds Grange, I think, yes, that'll do.

CODY

I'd go with a Boone's Farm Strawberry Hill, if I were you.

BARBARA

And just what the hell do you know about wine?

CODY

Enough to know it'll be more impressive than the Aussie '92.

BARBARA

You're a bum! A freeloading, pot smoking hippie! A... a... what the hell do they call you here? A granola-head!

CODY

I'm a waiter, actually, and I know my wines. Have to - for people like you. I know people like you.

BARBARA

You know our handbags, apparently.

CODY

Yeah, handbags, wine, trust me: If your date is serious about wine, the Boone's Farm Strawberry Hill will... well... he won't know what to say.

BARBARA

Boone's Farm? Never heard of it.

CODY

It's a little... beyond your circles: The Penfolds Grange '92 goes for, what, \$300, \$400 a bottle? Well, there's no way you'd get that for a Boone's Strawberry Hill. And just so's you know, I prefer tree-hugger to granola-head. I hate granola. But I'd rather you just call me Cody, 'cause that's my name. Cody.

BARBARA

Look at me, Cody! Look what you've done to me! Damn you! Damn you! I'm a wreck! Because of you! Damn you! Damn you and your stupid bicycle!

CODY

Uh, I think this is because of you and your stupid Prius.

BARBARA

You're the one who shot out of nowhere, kid. You're all the same, you deadbeat locals. Didn't your mama teach you to look both ways before crossing the street? And how about buying a light for your bike, huh? Ever think of that, smart-ass? You shoot out of Clark's parking lot, without looking for traffic, at night, probably stoned out of your gourd, and what do you think's going to happen? Huh? You might be one lucky son of a bitch on a bicycle, but odds are, you ride like that and eventually your luck is going to run out. You're nothing but a brainless crash test dummy.

CODY

You're the fuckin' dummy. You hit me.

BARBARA

Nuh-uh. You hit me.

CODY

15 miles an hour! That's the speed limit! That's the speed limit in town! 15! And there's no way in hell you were doing 15! It's always the prick in the Prius or the twat in the Tesla! Every fuckin' time!

BARBARA

No one does 15 in this town.

CODY

Drive like you own the place! Well, you don't, lady, you cock-juggling-thunder-cunt! And you don't own me! Get me outta here! Get me to a hospital! I need a hospital! I can't move, I can't move my legs! I've been here for days! Days! God help me, I've been here for days...!

(Long beat.)

BARBARA

I cannot go to jail. That is not an option. Cody.

CODY

Somebody help me! Heeelp!

(He continues to scream, but it ends in a coughing fit.)

BARBARA

You need to know something: This is a big, big house, Cody. Twenty thousand square feet, high on a hill overlooking the town. You've probably seen it a thousand times. It's monstrous, I know. My Ex built it for me, the rat-bastard, which explains the size - he was always compensating for something. Just a get-away place, he said, you know, a Coloradoan vacation home, and it just grew and grew into his dream phallus. Most of the time it's empty.

(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Even when I'm here, it's empty. So many rooms, upstairs, downstairs, a genuine labyrinth of male ego. And the garage was his man-cave, baby. Buried it deep underground. In bedrock. It's a tomb.

(beat)

I could throw a party here, right now, invite everyone in the area. And you could scream and scream for help. And no one would hear you or find you, ever. But I never have parties here, Cody. I never invite people here. I'm always alone here. And I've given my housekeeper the week off. So scream. Scream all you want.

(Cody screams for help. Barbara screams with him until he tires out.)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Now, I've got cocktails with the ladies and I intend to make it.

CODY

What... what's your name?

BARBARA

Oh. You think you're clever, don't you? Establish a bond. Humanize the victim. Shake me up some - I've seen enough kidnapper movies to know what you're trying to do. Won't work. Like it or not, my mind is set. You're on day three, kid. You've lost a lot of blood. Pretty sure your legs are broken. Can't imagine what's going on internally. I think today is your last day.

(Beat.)

CODY

OK. OK, you win: I am a tree-hugger and all that hippie-dippy shit, a down and out bum, smoked way too much bud for my own good, I admit it, and I'm a stupid, selfish cyclist whose luck has run out, OK, yeah, you're right, you're right. But can't you give a dyin' guy a break, a, a last wish...? I'd just like to know your name.

BARBARA

...Barbara. I've got cocktails with the ladies. And a date at eight. I intend to make it. Barbara. My name's Barbara.

CODY

Thank you. Barbara. Pleased to meet you and your Prius.

BARBARA

I've got a daughter, Cody. You have to understand. A daughter.

(Barbara pulls a wallet sized photo from an outside pocket on the handbag. She shows it to Cody, then holds it close to her chest, then she slips it back into the pocket.)

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I've lost everything. I can't lose her.

CODY
Everything? What about this house, your Prius, your Prada handbag?

BARBARA
All that's left, I'm afraid. Oh, and let's not forget my Dolce & Gabbana. Did you know that Jada Pinkett Smith and Paula Abdul both wore the same dress at the Teen Choice Awards? My dress. My designer dress. But that was long, long, looong ago, and I only have one left. I can't lose her.

CODY
Your dress or your daughter? I'm confused.

(Barbara shows the photo to Cody again.)

BARBARA
This is all I have left. See? She signed the back with a heart.

(She puts it back into the handbag's pocket.)

CODY
Don't you have a smartphone? A computer? Digital photo files?

BARBARA
I said I lost *everything*. Everything would include things like smartphones and computers and digital photo files, wouldn't it? Don't you think it would? Huh? Smart-ass?

CODY
OK. Sorry. Yeah. Sure. You have a photograph of your daughter in your Prada handbag because you lost everything and it's the only one you have left. Well, I have a confession to make too. I may look like a local, but I'm not... I'm a trust fund kid. A trustafarian, man. I'm loaded. Like you. Just look like I'm not. Bunch of rich kid pretense.

BARBARA
Don't tell me you're from Texas. I'm from Texas.

CODY

East coast. Old money. I'm ashamed of it. Been running from it all my life. Led me here. I can hide in this town, 'cause it's my...

(sings like John Denver)

...“Rocky Mountain hiii-deaway, Colorado.”

BARBARA

Mine too.

CODY

So we're both hiding here. What'd you do? Cheat on him?

(Barbara nods.)

CODY

Rat-bastard deserved it, I bet. What else? You're a complex woman, Barbara, I can tell. I sense there's more.

BARBARA

Oh, yes. Addiction. Cigarettes. Drugs - you know.

CODY

Marijuana?

BARBARA

No, no. Prescription. Alcohol. DUIs.

CODY

Plural.

BARBARA

Yes. Crashed the Prius just last week, as a matter of fact, after three bottles of Opus One, '97, I believe - still driving it around like that, big dent in the front. Priuses are tougher than you think.

CODY

And hard.

BARBARA

So, you see, don't you? There is no hope for you. I'm not going to have to explain why the front end of my Prius is caved in, why the windshield is all busted up and broken like you, am I? And no one will wonder where you are because you're hiding.

CODY

What if someone saw you? What if someone saw you driving home with me stuck in your fuckin' windshield?

BARBARA

I worried about that, that someone saw you - Cody, my new hood ornament. After I parked the Prius in the garage, it was hard to pull you out of the window. All that glass. But I did. I did it. All by myself. That was days ago. And no one has said a thing.

(conspiratorial whisper)

I'm going to get away with it.

CODY

So what's next then? Bury me in the backyard?

BARBARA

Got a big backyard, Cody. Acres and acres. Far enough from town. I'm alone here. I'm alone.

CODY

You're repeating yourself.

BARBARA

I am alone. Just. Like. You... Hm. I wish we'd met differently somehow. I can talk to you.

CODY

Maybe it's because I'm dying. Frees things up. You can say... anything to me.

BARBARA

Yes. I think I even like you. Who knows, maybe we could have...?

CODY

Yeah, maybe. Sexy cougar and one lost young man who just needs a little guidance, expertise, show him the ropes, the ways of the Force...

BARBARA

The Force is female, my young, dumb apprentice, so you're shit out of luck.

(beat)

Too bad. You would have been a lot of fun. I guess I'll have to forgo the pleasure and somehow live with what I've done.

CODY

You religious, Barbara? I sense that about you, that maybe you are. Part of your Texas complexity. Protestant? Catholic? How can you justify what you're doing?

BARBARA

I'm an Alice Bailey Buddhist, Cody. Born and raised in Los Angeles. I can justify anything.

CODY

So you're not a real Texan then.

BARBARA

That's right. Just pretending. Like you. Like everyone in this town. Everyone in this fucked up country. But unlike everyone else, and more to the point, unlike you, I win.

CODY

Water. Please...?

(Barbara gives him a sip. Weak as Cody is, he's still quick and strong enough to get an arm around her.)

He pulls her into his lap, his arm wrapped around her neck. She struggles to free herself. Cody reaches for the handbag, snatching it from the end-table.)

CODY (CONT'D)

Prada this, you crazy bitch!

(He beats Barbara with the Prada handbag. The contents of the bag fly out: Small bottles of booze, prescription drugs, cigarettes, joints.)

Cody wraps the handbag's leather straps around Barbara's neck. He pulls the straps tight, choking her. Her legs kick out as she struggles to breathe, knocking the bowl over and spilling the blood.

But Cody's energy is waning. Barbara pulls away and frees herself.

He still has the handbag. He digs for the photograph of Barbara's daughter and, in a final moment of defiance, pulls it out and shows it to her.)

CODY (CONT'D)

You lose. Everything.

(He tears the photo to pieces.)

Barbara screams, drops to the floor, weeping, trying to pick up the pieces. As she does this, hands, knees, clothes become soaked in the blood spilled from the bowl.

Cody's energy is spent. All he can do is watch.

A beat.

Shari pulls herself together. Afterwards, she methodically places the shredded photo/personal stuff back in her handbag.

She grabs the empty bowl and puts it back, at the base/front of the chair, watches Cody's blood drip into it.

Then she looks at herself in a compact, combs her hair with her hands, wipes away the makeup smears and tears, leaving fingertip-trails of blood on her cheeks, rolls on lipstick.)

BARBARA

Got to go, Cody. Cocktails. With the ladies. And a date at eight. Thanks for the advice on the wine, I'll take it: I'll go with the Boone's Farm Strawberry Hill instead of the Australian '92 Penfolds Grange. Thanks to you, I will impress the hell out of my date. As for you, just sit back, relax, and listen to the... drip, drip, drip.

(Barbara exits. Cody laughs.)

Lights fade into darkness.)

CURTAIN