

## CONTROL

Make yourselves comfortable. Two of you can take the couch. You prefer to sit on the floor? Whatever makes you happy!

Todd! Welcome to my house, well, apartment actually. I live alone, and that's the way I prefer it. It's not much, three rooms: a kitchen, bedroom and a living room. Oh, yes, the bathroom is off the kitchen. I guess it's four rooms. Sure, go ahead, I'll introduce myself to our guests.

So you're Scott and you're Jeff. I feel as if I know you from somewhere. Don't you feel that way too? My house is your house, *mi casa es su casa*, my bed is your bed. Actually, I don't have a bed. I sleep on my laundry. It's in a pile in the room next to the kitchen, my bedroom. It's quite comfortable, really. Where do I sleep when I have to wash it? Well, hmm . . . I suppose I would use the couch, but I don't know. What? What's so funny?

Ahhh, Todd! I trust you found my bathroom o.k. . . . I see you've also found the gin. It's a magical drink, gin is. Voodoo, that's all I have to say. You laugh again. You're laughing at me? Sit down Todd, sit down. I know these things, I know lots of things. Wait, I'll get some glasses.

I can hardly believe I'm only twenty. I've been around, I guess. Don't laugh, Todd, you know.

I'm here because I'm hiding. That caught your interest, didn't it? I've been hiding for quite some time,

and it's only lately that I can relax and enjoy my comfy little apartment with its view of, what is it, Morrison Street?

Why am I hiding? Why am I telling you this? You haven't asked, but I know you want to know. Your eyes tell me. I can tell in an abstract sort of way that I know you. Yes, I'm sure of it. I never forget a face. I've done many things, seen many people and I remember it all, I remember them all. Excuse me for a second while I get some tonic water, and a lime. I find that I can enjoy the magic of gin a little more if it doesn't taste as harsh.

Here you are, your gin, your gin, and one for you, Todd. Mine? Oh, I never mix gin with anything, it weakens the magic. I know these things.

Make yourself comfortable, relax. Does anyone want a pair of shorts? No? Well feel free to discard your clothes if you feel warm at all. It's going to be a long night, I'm going to tell you a story. I'm going to tell you about me. It's going to be a longgggg night.

How long have you rolled your own smokes, Todd? Three months? Hmmmm. I used to roll my own smokes, but they had crack in them. Don't look so startled, Jeff, Scott. Todd knows. Don't you Todd? No! I won't shut up! Don't tell me to relax, I just want to tell my story, I just want to, for once, finish it. You two, I remember you both now. I never forget faces, now let me tell my story.

Three rooms, a bed and roof, food to eat, a job. I have everything I need, without having it all. One can be

happy without having it all. It's like my small view of Morrison Street. Sky, the pavement, the Schwinn bike shop and part of the Queen Bea Diner.

But is that all? If you look closer, if you press your head against the side of the window frame and look to the right. Next to Schwinn, you can see part of a condemned shop. And the sky! And people walking! Even a simple view like this is constantly changing, it's constantly dynamic. Full of surprises. You see the Schwinn shop, the diner, but what was there before, think of that. I have this apartment, and a job, (I work as a cook at the diner) but what was I before? Do you see what I mean? Do you see what I'm trying to say? Maybe I was just like you two, going to college. Pampered by mommies and daddies. Maybe my parents cared about me, before I fucked myself all over! Or, maybe, I was just fucked over from the beginning. What if I don't know my dad. My mom may have slept around a little bit. Does that change anything? Would it change anything if I had gone to a Catholic school for six years? What if I sold drugs to your little brother, or fucked your sister? How about that? Have you finished your gin? Do you want some more?

I used to be an alcoholic and a drug addict. What? Why am I drinking? I have control, that's why. It's as easy as that. I will never be an alcoholic, or a drug addict again, because of my control. I can drink this gin, and know that I could set it down whenever I wanted. You

could set a pile of blow in front of me, and I wouldn't touch it. I have that much control. I wouldn't even want it.

You remember how I was, Todd. What was my record? Six inches? You look puzzled, both of you. Didn't you tell them Todd? Never mind, they should have known. I don't blame them though, it's easy to forget. It's been a long time since they've been here, and when we've done as much as we have, it's easy to forget some things. I do all the time.

We used to set up two lines of cocaine, inches apart and run the straw up the center, sucking them both in. Six inches was my record. Don't look surprised, I really could do it. I had surgery on my nose because of it, the cartilage deteriorated. Oh well, you can hardly tell it, my nose I mean.

I remember the first time you snorted coke, you were so scared at first. Ha ha, only at first. You couldn't handle the power, the adrenaline, of having everything you wanted at your fingertips. You were so scared. So you came to me, and do you remember what I said? That's right, I said set me up. And you said, "no fucking way." Ha ha, but you didn't have control. When you ran out that night you said, "I want some more," not "I need some more," or anything else, you said, "I want some more." Hmmmphh, your eyes were all flat and your voice was, metallic is a good word for it, sounding. Do you remember what you did that night? When you couldn't get any more. You stalked my apartment, for hours. Like a hunter stalk-

ing his prey. An animal that has somehow managed to elude him for a long time. You were frustrated, nervous, and excited. You wanted more but you couldn't get any.

Now why are you looking at me like that Todd? Don't be so alarmed, we're just old friends, dredging up secrets of the past to pass a long and lonely night. What do you mean what did I take! What do you mean? Ha ha, okay I'm calming down, okay! All I want to do is finish my story.

What is cocaine? Hmm, that's an interesting question. I know you didn't ask, I don't care! Mmmmm sorry, but I know you want to know, Scott you were always the inquisitive type, and Jeff, always afraid to say what's on your mind. So, I can tell you want to know. Cocaine is . . . well, let me describe it this way. Take four bottles, four separate bottles, each with a cork in it. In the first one you place all of your joy, your happiness. A kiss from your girlfriend, an A on a test. A pat on the head from your father when you were a child. Now cork it up and set it aside. Everything you fear, the dark as a child, maybe your parents? Being rejected and laughed at, maybe failure. Put it all in the second bottle. In the third bottle put all your hates. Toss in that kid who used to beat you up in the third grade. That guy that is fucking your last girlfriend, the one you still love. And throw your math class in there too. The last bottle, this is the best of all, in this one you put your adrenaline. Take the feeling you had when you plummeted down that long drop on your last roller coaster ride, or free

falling from an airplane. Put the feeling you had during your first fight, when you won. And take the time your girlfriend reached her hand into your fly. Put it all in the last bottle, and set it aside.

Why am I so quiet all of a sudden? No, that's not all cocaine is. I'm not done yet. You've got to let me hit you in the nose as hard as I can. Bang! then break all four bottles inside of you at once! In your heart and in your mind, that's cocaine! God, if you put a pile of blow in front of me now, I'd kill you if you tried to stop me from snorting it.

Don't be afraid, don't get excited! I apologize once again. It's just that I feel good. This is a good time, the four of us sitting around, discussing our pasts. It's just like we were never apart, just like old times. Why are you looking at me like that? Don't you feel the same? Ha ha, you will soon, I'm sure. This is a good time, huh? What did I take? What did I take? Ohhh. Why does it always have to be something I took, why can't it just be me! Have some more gin, relax, it's going to be a longgggg night.

No, don't go, please? Ha ha. O.k. I'm sorry. Mmmmmphhhh. What's so funny? Oh, I just don't think you'll have the same urge to hurry home if you wait a while. What do I mean? Oh, I just don't think that home would be the best place for you to be, what with your parents and all. You see, I put something in your drinks. Something that'll . . . hmmmph!

Settle down, settle down. Sit! That's much better.

Would I do anything to hurt you? You my friends, we've been through a lot together, haven't we. What? Why is my voice slurring like that?

Is it what? Acid? Ahhhh . . . you know, huh Scott. This isn't your first time, is it? Why are you looking at me like that? Don't shake your head, don't leave!

Todd told me about you two. Todd said that you both wondered what drugs were like. He said you wanted to know why people do them. Todd wanted me to tell you two what it was like. Well, let me tell you, you're about to experience it first-hand.

Ha, ha-ha. No, you won't see strawberry fields, or kaleidoscope girls. Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds. You know, they deny that song was ever about L.S.D.

You may see some trails, some lights dancing a little bit. How will you feel? You will feel good! Sit down Todd! I don't care if they're fucking scared! I don't care if this wasn't part of what I was going to do! Christ! Look at them shaking like that, it won't even kick in for another half hour.

Don't let them go! Todd, goddamn it! You know goddamn well what I took! Yes, get out, go home to your mummies, have her caress your heads as you whimper your fright to her. Go tell her what this evil man did to you . . . .

They're gone now Todd. They're gone and they're scared, like a teenager coming home drunk to Mom and Dad for the first time.

Except what? What do you mean except that? Shut

up, my voice is fine.

Todd, you told me to scare them. I scared them. You told me drugs were not for them. I scared them, but they still would have been curious. You know they would have. Answer me! Goddamn it, you know they would have! They would have started with pot, then shrooms, maybe a hit of acid.

Back off Todd! I did you a favor, they left here so fucked up, it'll only heighten their fear. They'll shake for a while, cry to each other. Then about six hours from now they'll go home, scared. Scared but wiser.

You can leave Todd, I don't care. Leave! I saved them a lot of pain, and ha-ha, money. You know how it is Todd, once it's in you, it's always there. They'll be o.k. Goddamn it! You know what I took!

That's right Todd, leave. Go take care of your frightened little rabbits.

I only wanted to tell them my story. You know how it is. That's right I do! Ha ha. Todd's gone. What's-their-names are gone. They're all gone. Except you and me, sniff, ha ha. You know how it is. How lonely it gets. Sniffffff. You do know that I don't need you! You do know that, hmmmmp, I have control over you. I don't need you! Ha ha. O.k. As long as you know, it's all right. Yeahhhhhhhh. Just as long as you know I'm in control.

*Tim Wiegand*