

CODY / BECCA
CODY / LEAH

TOP DEB

TRUST -
Steven Dietz

(Becca leaves. Gretchen stares front. Leah sips a beer, looks at Gretchen.)

LEAH. Gretchen sweats that when she first saw Becca, stroking her hair across from that man at that restaurant, she knew that they would meet. She knew that they would know each other well.

HOLLY. Title: He never once said a thing.

LEAH. I'll give her that. (Cody on a cordless phone. He wears jeans, no shirt. A towel around his neck. His hair is wet. During the phone call, he dresses. He also sucks and chews on a wedge of lemon, throughout.)

CODY. Hello. This is Cody. Who is this? You mean Becca? No. She's out. Is there a message? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. No, it's fine. Keep going. This is good. Yeah. This is very good. I'm sorry — was it "I really enjoyed our evening?" or "I really loved our evening?"

"Loved" — got it.
Believe me, I'll see that she gets it tonight. Well, try to believe me. I'll wet it and put it on her sheets.
Great talking to you, too.

(Goodb — what?
No. I don't know for sure. She said late. Late can mean a lot of things.

Right. Who knows?
"A woman like her." (Throws the wedge of lemon out of sight.)
Goodbye. (Becca enters. She has a bag of groceries.)

BECCA. Hi, beautiful.

CODY. Who the fuck is Richard?

BECCA. (Smiles.) Yeah, my day was okay. And yours?

CODY. Becca —

BECCA. What kind of —

CODY. I've been on the phone with a man named Richard.

BECCA. Is he cute? Should I be jealous?

CODY. Becca —

BECCA. Can he cook?

CODY. He seems to know you very well.

BECCA. Richard.

CODY. Right.

BECCA. Richard.

CODY. He called you "Bec." Like a beer. "Bec."

BECCA. Richard Grady?

CODY. No last name. Just Richard. She'll know. She has my number.

BECCA. Richard Tipton?

CODY. Jesus —

BECCA. Richard Pearl?

CODY. How many Richards are there, for chrissakes?

BECCA. (Loving this.) Well, there's a lot. Did he mention Kansas City?

CODY. Did he —

BECCA. Richard Akers. That's it. I bet it was Richard Akers.

CODY. "Bec"?

BECCA. I told you about him. I got sent to that book show in Kansas City. I know I told you. I called you. You were in Chicago for that Amnesty thing.

CODY. Maybe you think you called me, but —

BECCA. I called you. You'd had a shitty gig that night at some barn of an arena. The sound was awful. You couldn't find any Mexican food.

CODY. That could be anywhere.

BECCA. And I told you about these people I met at the book show. Richard Akers was one. He's a publisher with a small press in Tacoma. Toledo, something. Zen. New Age. Something. Unicorns and shit.

CODY. And?

BECCA. And a bunch of us went out for a drink.

CODY. A bunch?

BECCA. It's a convention.

CODY. How large a bunch?

BECCA. Several.

CODY. Do you have names and numbers?

BECCA. Listen to you. Like you didn't leave your concert surrounded by babes? Like the radio stations didn't give backstage passes and hotel keys to horny seventeen year olds?

You're the one with the charmed life, Cody Brown. You're the one that —

CODY: Don't try to deflect this. I want to know this.

BECCA: You do?

CODY: Yes, I do.

BECCA: I like this.

CODY: I don't.

BECCA: A lot. I like this a lot.

CODY: So, then what?

BECCA: We all headed back to our hotel.

CODY: Same hotel?

BECCA: It's a *convention*.

CODY: Got it. *And ...*

BECCA: We had a few drinks at the hotel bar.

CODY: A few?

BECCA: Several.

CODY: The bunch of you.

BECCA: Three of us now.

CODY: You and Dick and?

BECCA: Kenny. Curly hair. Space between his teeth.

CODY: Another publisher?

BECCA: They move in packs. Did *he* call?

CODY: Okay, the three of you are having drinks. *Then?*

BECCA: Then *what?*

CODY: Then the moment comes.

BECCA: The —

CODY: Jesus. Don't play dumb with me. We all know the sequence. You flirt, you schmooze, you rely on the late night rate of attrition, you make the right glances, you touch the right shoulder — and then the MOMENT comes.

Right? (*Berra nods, slightly.*) So?

BECCA: So. The moment comes ...

CODY: And ...

BECCA: And Kenny throws up. (*She takes a lemon out of the grocery bag. She sets it on a cutting board.*)

CODY: (*After a beat.*) On Richard?

BECCA: Bullseye. (*She begins to cut the lemon into wedges.*)

CODY: (*Pause, a wry smile.*) Must've ruined Richard's evening.

BECCA: I don't think so. He came up to my room and washed his shirt in my sink.

Kiss me. (*She touches her lips, softly, with the wedge of lemon.*)

He squeezed it dry with his big, rough hands. Not publisher's hands. Hands with *weight*. Hands that should have *names*.

Kiss me. (*She puts the wedge of lemon in her mouth. Sucks on it, slowly.*)

I told him I was engaged to be married. This made him smile.

He draped his shirt over the lamp by my bed. He pulled my curtains closed. He never once said a thing. He took a handful of ice from my bucket. He rubbed it on his neck and face. Hands dripping water, he unbuttoned my shirt. He slid his head down my neck and pulled at my canisole with his teeth.

Kiss me. (*She touches Cody's lips with the wedge of lemon.*)

These are lies.

I want you.

(*Suggested music: "Big Sky Country" by Chris Whitley — intro and verse one. Cody and Becca kiss in silhouette as Leah speaks.*)

LEAH: He looked like me.

Ten years back, when the magazines couldn't get enough of me. When I was the brash new undiscovered hope of pop music.

My naiveté was my secret and the reporters tracked me like meat.

My immaturity was called rebellion and my exuberance, charisma.

They swallowed.

And, for my part, I believed them.

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

Probably won't read this page

When I met Cody, he looked like I had looked. Together, he and I were a retrospective.

(Cody approaches Leah. She sits on the floor with a beer, autographing a stack of CDs. Cody has a lemon wedge with him again.)

GRETCHEN. Title: Do you want to have a night?

LEAH. Come in. It's open.

CODY. Ms. Barnett?

LEAH. Yes.

CODY. Ms. Barnett, I don't mean to disturb you, but I —

LEAH. My, my, my, Cody Brown.

CODY. Yeah. You know me? *(Leah tosses several magazines at Cody's feet. Cody's face is on the cover of each.)*

LEAH. Know you? I'm surrounded by you. Where you eat is trivia and who you fuck is headlines. *(Silence.)*

CODY. Uh — anyway, Ms. Barnett — I don't mean to bother you, but I was just — I know it's late — but I wanted to stop by and —

LEAH. How'd you find me?

CODY. My agent.

LEAH. How'd he know?

CODY. *(A smile.)* Gary knows everything.

LEAH. *(Sharp.)* Yeah. Don't they all. *(Silence.)*

CODY. Look. I love your stuff and I wanted to tell you that. *(Pause. Leah sips her beer and stares at him.)* I should go.

LEAH. You've got this? *(She tosses him her CD. He stops, catching it.)*

CODY. No. Not, yet. I hadn't got around to — *(Beat, looks at it.)* I've heard the single.

LEAH. Yeah, the single's for shit, I know. But the label decided it's the most "accessible" song.

CODY. Whatever that means.

LEAH. It mean's it's not about anything. *(Pause, she stands.)*

You've seen me, huh?

CODY. Six times. Seven with the Amnesty Tour.

LEAH. And you've covered me?

CODY. Oh, yeah. Especially your early stuff. I really loved your early stuff. When I was putting my band together — just

starting out — you were a real influence. I said that, I said that to a reporter in Decatur or Des Moines or — anyway, I mentioned your name and said you'd been a real influence.

LEAH. That's a great word, don't you think? *(Silence. She moves toward him.)* And the thing is, you never see it coming. One night you go to bed a *forre* ... and when you wake up ... you're an influence. *(Very close to him now.)* Funny, huh?

CODY. I guess.

LEAH. This culture just keeps churning out the relics. *(Silence. Leah lights a cigarette. Looks at Cody.)* You got a thing for lemons or what?

CODY. I quit smoking.

LEAH. Sure you did.

CODY. I'm trying this. It's a substitute.

LEAH. *(Taking a long, delicious drag on her cigarette.)* There's no substitute. *(Silence. She is still very close to him. He stands his ground.)*

CODY. So, where was your gig tonight?

LEAH. The Last House on the Left.

CODY. Where's that?

LEAH. Couple blocks from the stadium.

CODY. How'd it go? *(She stares at him.)* Just curious.

LEAH. Well, Cody Brown ... I was not the headliner.

CODY. You opened for another band?

LEAH. Worse.

CODY. What?

LEAH. I opened for a comic.

CODY. Sorry.

LEAH. Fuck 'em. *(Sips her beer.)* I walked over to the stadium on my break. Saw your trailer in the parking lot. Nice. "Cody Brown World Tour." Very nice. Jaccuzzi?

CODY. Yeah. And cable.

LEAH. Perfect.

CODY. It's bullshit, I know. But everybody said, you know, you can afford it now, so why not take —

LEAH. Hey, shut the guilt up. Enjoy yourself. Okay?

CODY. Okay. *(She takes a long swig on her beer. Silence. Cody looks at her, then tips the CD she gave him.)* Well, thank you. I

gotta —

LEAH. You want a beer?

GODDY. Sure.

LEAH. *(She brings him a beer.)* Sit. Where's the crowd?

GODDY. Inside.

LEAH. The crowd. Where are they all?

GODDY. Oh, they're — it's a party across town somewhere — some' guy from Warner Brothers has a penthouse and —

LEAH. Agents and babes.

GODDY. Agents and babes. *(Silence. Gody is looking at the stack of CDs.)* Lot of autograph seekers, huh?

LEAH. I did an "in-store" this afternoon. "Come and meet a legend, a musical pioneer." Leah Barnett. "Take home an autographed copy of her latest." Show and tell, you know.

GODDY. Yeah. I was supposed to do one downtown, but the crowd got out of hand.

LEAH. Exactly. That's why my store set up those little ropes so people could file past me in an orderly fashion. They lined security. They gave me three extra pens.

GODDY. How did it go?

LEAH. Nine people came. Actually, seven — but my agent went through the line twice. "To create a fervor" he said. So, we're gonna try to pawn these off on the radio stations.

GODDY. Fuck 'em.

LEAH. Yeah. The hard part is *finding* 'em. *(Silence. They stare at each other.)* So. Is this a night? Do you want to have a night?

GODDY. I —

LEAH. I mean, I don't know who does what here. You know?

GODDY. Well, you know, I uh, I —

LEAH. You an asshole, yet?

GODDY. What?

LEAH. Not that you'd know. You wouldn't know. And not that you'd admit it if you know. *(Sinks.)* Look at you. You don't know.

GODDY. What are you —

LEAH. Take my word, baby. They *don't* want you to be an asshole. It's the only revenge they've got. *(Sips her beer.)* Years, Gody. I didn't get this till years later.

GODDY. Get what?

LEAH. They wanted me to hold out for ludicrous sums of money and make ridiculous demands: "A bowl of red MSM's or I walk."

They wanted me to spit on reporters, snk the rings off married men's fingers, and fuck over my friends for a bigger piece of cake.

They *needed* me to be an asshole and here is why: It provided a balance to their little universe. Look, they'd say, she's suddenly a famous object of adoration and desire.

Thank *god* there is a penance for that.

Thank *god* she has also become a miserable, whining sack of shit.

(Long silence.)

GODDY. Can I have another beer?

LEAH. No. *(Silence.)*

GODDY. Okay.

LEAH. Sound stranger?

GODDY. What's that?

LEAH. The word "No." You heard that lately? *(Silence. He stares at her, then his look changes a bit, understanding.)*

GODDY. No.

LEAH. Yeah. It's weird. You'll come to miss "no." It's a friendly little word. You know where you stand with "no." "Yes," on the other hand, "yes" is a bitch. You know?

GODDY. Yeah.

LEAH. *(A very smile.)* No, you don't, but that's okay. You want another beer?

GODDY. No.

LEAH. Good. Get me one while you're at it. *(He gets the beers, then stops and stands in the room, motionless.)* What?

GODDY. I never thought I'd be doing this.

LEAH. *(A knowing smile.)* Where you're headed, that sentence will be proper attire.

I never thought I'd be in a room with Dylan.

Then I opened for him.

A dressing room in Akron, Ohio.

And he kept ... changing his shirt.

Again and again.

Asking me what did I think.

Just like every other nervous singer.

(She moves toward him slowly, her story becoming a seduction.)

Prinping.

Dylan.

Ohio.

I never thought I'd be in that room. *(She stands directly in front of him.)* Then he went onstage and became Jesus Christ.

So.

I don't know who does what here. *(They kiss.)* That's nice.

CODY: Mm hum.

LEAH: The lemon. That's very nice. *(They kiss, again, longer. Then Leah pulls her mouth away from him and looks in his eyes. Speaks softly.)* Tell me.

CODY: What?

LEAH: What does she kiss like? *(He looks at her, puzzled.)*

Does she kiss like this? *(She kisses him — delicately licking the corner of his mouth with her tongue.)*

CODY: What are —?

LEAH: Wait. Like this. *(She kisses him again — gently biting his upper lip with her teeth. He pulls his head back, away.)*

CODY: Who are you talking about?

LEAH: How would I know? You tell me.

CODY: Fin kissing you. It's just a kiss. *(Suggested music: "The Walking Fool"** by Lyle Lovett — *intro.*) What?

LEAH: *(A soft smile.)* There's no such thing, baby. There's no such innocence. *(She kisses him very lightly on the mouth. Whispers ...)* Every kiss is a betrayal. *(H. looks into her eyes.)* Smile. It's still early. *(Suggested music: "The Walking Fool"** — *reverses one and two. Cody and Leah kiss, as the music plays. Then,*

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

they exit, arm in arm. Becca stands on a small stool. Gretchen is measuring her. A long moment as the music plays and Gretchen does her work.)

ROY: Title: You're my first. *(Music fades.)*

BECCA: You come highly recommended.

GRETCHEN: That's nice to know.

BECCA: My friend, Kay, said you did a beautiful job on her dress.

GRETCHEN: She was a beautiful bride.

BECCA: God, when I was little, I had this fantasy. I was going to design and build my own wedding dress. The whole thing. All by myself.

GRETCHEN: And what happened?

BECCA: I grew up.

GRETCHEN: Breathe in.

BECCA: I am breathing in.

GRETCHEN: Sorry. *(Silence. (Gretchen works.)*

BECCA: You've done this awhile?

GRETCHEN: Mm hum. *(Silence. (Gretchen works.)*

BECCA: Are you married?

GRETCHEN: No.

BECCA: You probably get your fill building these dresses.

GRETCHEN: No, I got my fill doing it for ten years. Pull your hair up. *(Silence. (Gretchen works.)*

BECCA: What was your wedding like? *(Gretchen stops and looks at her.)*

GRETCHEN: Hey, the interview is over. This is the fitting.

BECCA: Oh come on. I'm curious. *(Pause.)* Okay. Fine.

Never mind.

GRETCHEN: *(Pause, then relents.)* My wedding was lovely. I was one of those women that decided since I couldn't get the man I wanted, I would have the wedding I wanted.

BECCA: Th u what happened?

GRETCHEN: I grew up. Lift your arm. *(Silence. (Gretchen works.)*

(works.)

BECCA: You know what I want?

GRETCHEN: Hmm?

BECCA: I want your name. *(Pause.)* I've always loved that