

CUFFED

By G. Sherman H. Morrison

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CHARACTERS

NUN	Has a very warm and helpful personality, an uncharacteristically bright red purse in which is concealed a pair of handcuffs, an essential headdress (gray or navy blue), the rest of the habit can be conservative gray skirt, sweater, dark stockings, and shoes (black, nurse-like).
JERRY	A man, late twenties, attends Georgetown Law School and is a legislative aid for a senator on Capitol Hill, should be dressed in a conservative suit typical to DC political scene (dark navy blue, white shirt, conservative red and navy blue tie), carries a cell phone.
WEIRD GUY #1	He is dressed in normal street clothes, and a jacket in whose pockets are a banana, and an apple. There should definitely be a strong sense that not all is well with this person mentally, very high-strung and nervous.
DOMINATRIX	She wears a lot of leather, which is initially covered up by a normal khaki-colored trench coat, also carries a nondescript black purse and a large flashlight. Hair, face and make-up should not give away what she is, has a leather whip concealed in the trench coat.
BURGLER	Dressed in all black, with pantyhose on head (knee-high).
WEIRD GUY #2	Normal clothes, needs to have some of the standard ghost hunting equipment: 35mm camera, EMF detector, night vision goggles (which he is wearing), a thermal scanner, and a small audiocassette recorder with microphone.
CINDY	Late twenties, an ex-girlfriend that JERRY dumped along the way when he started getting heavily into the politics, dressed in sweats, the sweatshirt needs to have a hood to conceal the headphones she is wearing (the small kind that fit right into the ears), cassette player is clipped to sweatpants and covered by the sweatshirt, has a book.

STREET PERSON Needs to look very shabby, down on his luck, dirty, ragged clothes, etc, carries a switchblade.

SETTING

The action is set in a small park along the canal in Georgetown. The stage can be bare except for a lamppost (slightly stage right of center) and a park bench (slightly stage left of center). It is a pleasant summer night, just after midnight. The lamppost needs to be substantial because it is what Jerry gets handcuffed to.

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AT RISE: NUN sits on the park bench, eyes closed, and a beatific smile on her slightly uplifted face. Beside her is the bright red purse. JERRY walks on dialing his cell phone. HE is weary.

JERRY: Hey Bill, it's Jerry. ***(quite a bit louder due to the party in the background)*** IT'S JERRY! ***(pause)*** I'm in that little park near the canal in Georgetown. ***(pause)*** Yeah, I know the party's at your place. I can hear it! Sounds pretty wild. ***(pause)*** I don't know, I don't think I'm gonna make it over. I just finished up at the office. ***(pause)*** Yeah, I know it's midnight, but there's a bunch of important votes slated for tomorrow... ***(pause)*** Yes, sometimes the Senate has to have Saturday sessions to get through all the work. ANYWAY, the Senator had to be briefed about what's going on with Homeland Security and that whole Trent Lott fiasco. He didn't get back from his last campaign speech until 7:30 and we've been at it ever since. ***(pause)*** Well, that's life for a Legislative Assistant. Plus with classes starting up in a few weeks, I've got to start prepping for all that. ***(pause)*** Hey, a degree from Georgetown Law is gonna be my ticket to a career in politics. ***(pause; NUN glances over at him)*** Look, don't start with all that "I'm obsessed" crap, okay? I really can't take it right now. ***(pause)*** You say Sharon's there? ***(pause)*** Do you HAVE to have that sneer in your voice when you say her name? ***(pause)*** Okay, you've obviously had too much to drink already, so I'm not even going to respond to that. ***(pause)*** Hey, Cindy couldn't handle my obsess — my involvement in politics. Sharon's VERY supportive. End of story. ***(pause; NUN glances over at him)*** Let's just not get into this right now, okay? You're my best friend, but you're also drunk, so maybe we'll talk tomorrow. I'm just tryin' to unwind a little and then I've GOT to get some sleep. ***(pause)*** All right, I'll drop by tomorrow. See ya then. Bye. ***(ends call, big sigh, puts cell phone in shirt pocket, and tries to loosen up his aching shoulders)***

NUN: ***(rises, turns to speak to JERRY)*** I recently returned from a pilgrimage to India, visiting some of the places where Mother Teresa did so much of her good work. We learned some truly divine meditation techniques that help to greatly reduce physical and mental stress. I think, perhaps, that I should teach you one that might do you a lot of good.

JERRY: ***(somewhat taken aback)*** Oh! Well... thank you, sister, that's... that's very kind of you.

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NUN: It's a very simple technique, but quite effective. Just lean back against the lamppost there and close your eyes. **(JERRY does so as NUN goes to far side of lamppost behind him.)** Now bring your arms behind you, around the lamppost as far as you can. Slowly, don't want you to pull anything. See how that stretches out your shoulders?

JERRY: **(again, doing as NUN advises)** Mmmm.... wow, that does feel good. **(We hear the click of handcuffs being locked onto JERRY's wrists by NUN.)** HEY! What's going on here? You put handcuffs on me? What'd ya do that for?

(NUN returns to her original position on bench, a beatific smile upon her slightly uplifted face, as before. JERRY strains at the cuffs for a moment, then tries to be reasonable.)

JERRY: Sister? If this is some kind of joke, it's really not very funny. I'm very tired and I just want to go home and get some sleep, so please unlock these handcuffs. **(No response from NUN, who completely ignores him. JERRY gets angrier.)** SISTER! I don't know what you're think you're doing. Trying to teach me some sort of lesson or something? **(NUN glances over at him.)** Ah, is that it? You're trying to teach me something? Trying to make some sort of point? **(NUN returns to meditative position. JERRY gets angrier.)** Since when do nuns teach people things by handcuffing them to lampposts? **(pause, then loudly)** Does God approve of this sort of thing? I don't think so! **(NUN rises and begins to cross stage right to leave. JERRY shifts his position around the lamppost to "follow" her and plead to her.)** Look, sister, I'm sorry. I'm just really tired, ya know? **(NUN comes back and stands facing him, quite close. JERRY is very relieved.)** Thank you sister. Thank you. **(NUN reaches out and takes the cell phone from his shirt pocket and places it just out of reach on the ground at the stage right end of the park bench and then leaves stage right. JERRY keeps rotating his position around the lamppost to "follow" her movements.)** Oh now come on, sister, this is ridiculous! Why are you doing this to me?! **(louder as SHE disappears offstage right)** I just wanna go home and get some SLEEP!

(Really yelling now. As HE faces stage right and delivers next line, WEIRD GUY #1 enters stage left to edge of park bench, watching JERRY with curiosity.)

JERRY: Not funny. Okay?! NOT FUNNY! **(moans in frustration)** SHIT!

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WEIRD GUY #1: *(Takes a banana from his pocket, holds it up to his ear like a telephone, and turns away from JERRY toward stage left so “telephone” is downstage. As HE speaks, JERRY hears him and swings around the lamppost to see whom it is, but doesn't really hear what WEIRD GUY #1 is saying.)* Yeah, it's me. Subject is a male Caucasian earthling. Appears to be in distress. *(short pause)* Yep. *(short pause)* Right. *(short pause)* No, entrapment not needed, subject is already immobilized, handcuffed to a lamppost. *(Puts banana back in pocket, JERRY doesn't really see that HE was speaking into the banana.)*

JERRY: HEY! Boy am I glad someone came along! This has been one heck of a long day for me. You really wouldn't believe what has happened to me tonight. Now this is going to sound really strange.... *(interrupted by the sound of a ringing cell phone)* Oh, that must be my cell phone. It's right over there by....

WEIRD GUY #1: *(interrupting)* No, no that's mine. Man, they're LATE. This is NOT good. *(pulls the banana out of his pocket to take the call as JERRY looks at him in disbelief when HE realizes what's going on)* Yeah? *(pause)* Yeah, I told you before he's ready; he's not goin' anywhere. Man, what is taking you guys so long? I do NOT want to run into those creepy men in black again. If they figure out what I'm doing, my ass is grass. *(pause)* Okay, okay, just HURRY UP, man. *(puts banana away)*

JERRY: *(after an awkwardly long silence in which WEIRD GUY #1 keeps glancing at JERRY and then quickly glances away)* Ignoring the fact that you were using a banana as a telephone, who exactly were you speaking to?

WEIRD GUY #1: At this juncture, it would definitely be better for you NOT to know the answer to that question, man.

JERRY: Why?

WEIRD GUY #1: You might find it.... Upsetting.

JERRY: More upsetting than being handcuffed to a lamppost by a nun?!

WEIRD GUY #1: Oh yeah, way more upsetting than that, man.

JERRY: How do ya figure?

WEIRD GUY #1: *(takes a couple of nervous glances around, gets closer to JERRY, and whispers loudly and earnestly)* At least you're sill here on EARTH, right?

JERRY: *(slowly)* Yeah, I am.

WEIRD GUY #1: Well, let's just say you won't be for long.

JERRY: What in the world are you talking about?

WEIRD GUY #1: No, man, what I'm talking about is OUT of this world, man. *(Pause while JERRY looks dumbfounded. Next line is delivered with some sort of wild gesture to indicate outer space.)* Literally OUT of this world! *(JERRY gives him one of those*

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I-still-don't-get-what-you're-talking-about looks.) ALIENS, man.

I'm talking about ALIENS. I was talking TO aliens.

JERRY: ***(slowly)*** Through a banana.

WEIRD GUY #1: ***(impatiently)*** Yes, through a banana. That's how they communicate with me! No one would ever catch on to that!

JERRY: You'll have to forgive me if I find that a wee bit far-fetched.

WEIRD GUY #1: And you'll have to forgive me for handing you over to them. I HATE doing this.

JERRY: Then why do it at all?

WEIRD GUY #1: Because as long as I do it, as long as I keep them supplied, they won't take ME. That's the deal. I scout out likely candidates and let them know.

JERRY: I see. But why do they need you at all? Can't they do that themselves?

WEIRD GUY #1: Sure, but the government's on to them, see, so they have to make the abductions as quick as possible so they don't get caught. They can't come down here and tool around looking for people to take. They gotta get in and get out FAST, see? That's where I come in. Once I've had contact with them, they zero in on the coordinates and BAM, they're here and you're GONE, like really fast. Except this time they're LATE, way late. And that could spell big trouble for all of us.

JERRY: Except for me.

WEIRD GUY #1: Oh, man, ESPECIALLY for you. If they have even an INKLING that the men in black, those are the government agents, are on to them, they'll just vaporize you, like from remote, man.

JERRY: But if they have technology so advanced that they can vaporize me from remote, why can't they just abduct me from remote?

WEIRD GUY #1: Hey man, they're advanced but they're not THAT advanced. They're working on it.

JERRY: Ah. ***(cell phone rings)*** I suppose that's your banana.

WEIRD GUY #1: Yeah, hold on. ***(takes out banana to take the call)*** What is taking you guys so LONG?! ***(short pause)*** Nope. No sign of the men in black, yet, but I'm sure they'll be here soon. ***(short pause)*** I said I'm sure they'll be here soon! ***(short pause)*** Let me move to a different location. ***(moves several steps in whatever direction)*** Can you hear me now? ***(short pause and moves in another direction)*** Can you hear me now? ***(short pause and moves in another direction)*** Can you hear me now? Yeah? Good. ***(short pause)*** Oh man, the APPLE? Are you sure? ***(short pause)*** Okay, okay, I'll do it. JUST HURRY UP ALREADY! ***(ends call by putting banana back in pocket, reaches in other pocket and pulls out an apple)*** Man, this is bad. I gotta use the apple.

JERRY: The apple?

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WEIRD GUY #1: Look, they're on the way, but they're worried about getting' nabbed by the men in black. The apple has to sit on top of your head. If the apple falls off your head before they get here, then they know the jig is up and BAM, your vaporized.

JERRY: You've gotta be kidding me, right?

WEIRD GUY #1: You wish, man. ***(goes over to JERRY and puts the apple on his head)***

JERRY: ***(actually getting a little nervous now, in spite of himself)***
But what if I have to sneeze or something?

WEIRD GUY #1: DON'T!

JERRY: Well... Okay, what are they going to do to me?

WEIRD GUY #1: Sorry, man, but I really have no idea. I don't ask a lotta questions. The less I know the better.

(Now a beam of light from offstage left begins to move around the stage.)

WEIRD GUY #1: That's them. I gotta get outta here. Sorry, man, and good luck! ***(runs offstage right)***

JERRY: ***(gets increasingly agitated as the beam of light starts to zero in on him)*** This is just stupid, right? I mean, that guy's CRAZY. Right? Why is this HAPPENING to me?

(HE squeezes his eyes shut tight as if bracing for something horrible to happen. DOMINATRIX enters from stage left wearing a long normal-looking khaki trench coat and conservative black purse. SHE carries a large flashlight that was the beam of light. The light is still focused right on JERRY. As SHE comes on stage, SHE turns the flashlight off. SHE walks right over to JERRY and gets very close to him. His eyes are still closed HE opens them and yelps in fright. The apple must stay on his head throughout all this.)

JERRY: YAAH! AH! Oh, hi?

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