#1: Didn't think so. You also don't want to keep him waiting. It's your turn. Just go right through that door.
(#2 gets up and starts to exit. He/she stops at the door and turns back to #1.)

#2: I do have one last question.

#1: What?

#2: You keep saying "the boss." Who's the boss and which ...way did I go?

#1: Let's just say, you got what you deserved.

#2: It's going to be a long eternity. *(Exits through the door.)*

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9. The Hostage

(A warehouse. #1 is pacing. #2 comes around the corner while taking off a mask and joins #1.)

#1: What's he doing?

#2: Eating.

#1: Again? That's what, four times this morning? He's a skinny old man. Where the heck does he put it?

#2: I don't know. He says he's hypoglycemic and he'll faint if he doesn't eat something every hour. Have I mentioned what a mean son of a gun he is?

#1: Not since his last feeding. Well, we'd better make this call now or any money we get for him will go to food. You got the phone?

#2: Yeah. Here it is. *(Pulls out a cellular phone.)*

#1: Where'd you get it?

#2: Fat Mike sold it to me.

#1: Fat Mike? Fat Mike's a pickpocket.

#2: So?

#1: So, that thing is probably hot.

#2: We kidnapped an old man and were about to ransom him. Dealing in stolen merchandise is pretty much of a step backwards for us.

#1: Forget I said anything. What are you going to say?

#2: How's this. *(Takes out a piece of paper and prepares to read some copy. As he/she does, he/she uses a phony voice.)* We've got your father. If you want to see him again...

#1: Wait a minute, wait a minute. What's with the voice?

#2: I'm disguising it so no one will recognize it.

#1: Who do you think you are, Frank Sinatra? Your voice is hardly a recognizable entity.

#2: What?

#1: Nobody knows you!

#2: Excuse me, but you seem to forget that I worked for that family.

#1: You delivered flowers there...once. Two years ago. Get a grip.

#2: I still think I should change it.

#1: Be my guest, just pick another voice.

#2: Why?

#1: Because we want to be taken seriously. What you're doing makes it sound like their uncle was kidnapped by a cartoon.

#2: I'll change it, but what do you think of our demands?

#1: I don't know. You have to read them to me. *(#2 prepares to read.)* And for now, just use your real voice.

#2: We want one million dollars in small, non-sequential bills. We will call you back tomorrow and explain the plan for delivering the money.

#1: What plan?

#2: I think we should run whoever is going to deliver the money all over town before they leave it in the trash bin.

#1: Why?

#2: So we know they're not being followed.

#1: *(Pause)* You saw "Dirty Harry" again last night, didn't you?

#2: Well...

#1: Well, nothing. We're not running anyone anywhere. Just have them drop the money at noon. The trash is picked up by the city at 12:30. We'll get it then. Just tell them that we'll be watching. If we see anyone following the truck, then the deal's off.

#2: That's so boring.

#1: Make the call!

(#2 dials the phone and listens.)

#2: It's ringing. *(Pause)* Hello. I think you've been expecting our call. We have your uncle... *(Pause)* I said, we have your uncle... *(Pause)* Hello, hello? They hung up.

#1: What do you mean they hung up?

#2: They answered the phone, there was a lot of noise...

#1: What kind of noise? Like a bad connection or something?

#2: No...actually, it sounded like they were having a party. Anyway, I said "we have your uncle," they said "what"? I said "we have your uncle," they said "good" and hung up.

#1: You idiot! You must have dialed the wrong number.

#2: Not too likely.

#1: Give me the phone. I'll take care of it. *(Takes the phone, dials, and waits.)* Hello...I said, hello! *(Pause)* You might be able to hear me better if you turned the stereo down. *(Pause)* It's a live band? Then tell them to take ten! *(Pause)* Thank you. Now, we have your uncle and if you... *(Pause)* I mean we're the ones who kidnapped him... *(Looks stunned.)*

#2: What's the matter?

#1: *(Into the phone)* Hold on. *(To #2)* I told them we kidnapped their uncle and they said, "thank you." What is going on? You talk to them. *(Pushes the phone to #2.)*

#2: Hello. *(Pause)* I'm not sure you heard us right. We said that we kidnapped your uncle. *(Pause)* Stop thanking us. If you want to see him alive then you'll give us one million... um... I said one million... uh *(Pause)* you want to stop laughing?

#1: Give me that! *(Grabs the phone back.)* Look, maybe you don't get what we're saying. We have your uncle. He's old and frail and... *(Pause)* OK, he's old and frail and nasty, but.... *(Pause)* you know, we're not going to get anywhere if you keep calling him names. If you want to see him alive again, you'll... *(Pause)* What do you mean you don't want to see him again? *(Pause)* Why not? *(Pause)* You people are pretty sick. We'll call you back.

#2: I'm afraid to ask.

#1: You should be.

#2: What did they say?

#1: They said he's a mean, horrible, nasty man that no one

really likes, but they're all still in his will, so keep him. They don't want him back.

#2: This isn't good.

#1: Well, there's only one thing to do. *(Pulls out a gun.)* **You have to kill him.**

#2: Come again?

#1: You have to kill him. *(Pushes the gun on #2.)*

#2: Why me?

(#2 pushes the gun back. They keep pushing the gun back and forth as the dialog continues.)

#1: Because he's seen you.

#2: No he hasn't. I always wore a mask around him. Just like you.

#1: Oh...then...this was your idea.

#2: It was your idea.

#1: You...keep saying how mean he is and how he kicks you every time you give him food. You hate him.

#2: Obviously so does everyone. If you're so hot on killing him, you do it.

#1: I can't. I've never killed anyone before.

#2: And who am I, Charles Manson? I've never killed anyone.

#1: So what do you suggest we do?

#2: Look, he's old. Maybe if we go in, wave the gun around, make a lot of noise, like we're gonna shoot him he'll get scared and have a heart attack. *(Pause)* **What do you think?**

#1: *(Pause)* **I think you're a moron.**

#2: Well, I don't hear you coming up with any bright suggestions. How about if we just leave. After we're gone we'll call the cops and tell them where to find him.

#1: I can't believe that we're not going to get anything out of this. *(Just then we hear an Off-stage voice of the old man yelling. #1 gets an idea.)* **Wait, I have an idea. Where's that phone?** *(Finds the phone and dials.)* **Hello, it's us again.** *(Pause)* **Nice to hear you, too. Look, we have your uncle...** *(Pause)* **Wait! If we don't get one million dollars by four**

o'clock, he'll be back at your front door by 4:05. *(Pause)* **Now, don't panic. We'll give you time to get the money together.** *(To #2)* **I knew there was an answer.**

#2: I still think we should run them all over town.

(We hear another Off-stage voice of the old man.)

#1: You wanna take care of him? *(Back to the phone)* **Yes, I hear you. We want small bills...**