

Eric Seiley

The B Side of Life

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Two Seam Fastball

Waking up early to the alarm clock makes me want to throw my David Wells autographed baseball across the room and explode the damn thing off the dresser into a thousand pieces. A high hard bullet screaming right down the middle. But I don't and the cheap piece of junk keeps *buzzing* at me, nagging me to get up.

Ugh, batting practice in an hour. I HATE batting practice. I'm a pitcher for God's sake.

The clock continues *buzzing* and won't stop till I get up and cross the room to physically turn the damn thing off. A trick my batting coach suggested after I showed up late to one too many practices and overheard the head coach threatening to send me down to the Richmond Flying Squirrels, if only to prove a point about tardiness and professionalism.

"If *you'se* can hear the alarm, but *cain't* touch it," Coach Finn, our resident Yogi Berra sage, suggested, "Then you *hazz-ta'* get up and shut her off. And since *you'se* is up anyway, you might as well get to practice on time."

Getting up early sucks, but not nearly as bad as losing my triple-A pitching slot with the Sacramento Rivercats -- or being sent down to double-A ball in Virginia for the rest of the summer. That would surely grind my nutsack!

"I'll get an alarm clock first thing, Coach," I told Coach Finn.

And I did. An old fashioned *Sonic Bomb* with digital red numbers and a manual kill button I found at the Eco Thrift. Two dollars and fifty cents. And, believe it or not, the damn thing works cause I haven't been late to practice since.

But just as I'm getting up, *what's-her-name*, the waitress I picked up last night at the Maple Lounge over on Arden, walks into room holding a plate of bacon and two cups of coffee. She slaps the shit out of the alarm clock like an offending fly and coos, "Don't get up, Sugar. I'll turn it off. There now, all quiet for my super-star pitcher-witcher. I got us a little breakfast too, Sugar, to re-charge those batteries. You didn't have much in the kitchen, but thank God you had coffee cause my ass would've been dragging if you hadn't."

"Sure, a little coffee and bacon sounds good," I reply reaching for a cup. "But would you mind taking off my baseball jersey. I have to wear that later." *Frickin' what's-her-name!* I thought. *So ballsy to wear one of my jerseys without asking. She must've picked it up off the floor after I fell asleep. I mean, I don't care if we did bang one out last night -- that doesn't give her squatting rights to my stuff.*

"Sure, Sugar. Whatever you say. If you wanted to get me naked and back into bed, all you had to do was ask."

I didn't ask, I thought. And you don't look so good in the morning, either. Older than you pretended last night, huh? And what's that? A little cellulitis on the back of the thighs? Time to do a few squats at the gym, darlin'. You do have nice tits though and a decent face. But you look like any other low rent baseball groupie fucked down by this baseball stud.

"Sorry, babe," I say jumping out of bed and starting to dress, "but its check out time."

"Hey, Sugar, what's the rush? I thought we could climb back under the covers and pitch a few extra innings? Whaddya say? If your jimmies too tired, I have a few blue pills in my purse that'll give your bat some extra oomph. I mean, last night was nice and all, but you were a little...fast for my taste. Fine for the minor leagues, but a gal has standards. How 'bout you take one of my little blue helpers and see if we can't load the bases for a grand slam?"

"Oh, hey, uh....uh...you. I'd like to. I really would. But I have to get over to Sutter Park. Batting practice starts in forty-five minutes and I can't be late. That's why the alarm was going off. To make sure I get there on time."

"Alright, sweetie. I get it. I'm a little disappointed, but that's okay. Maybe we can finish up later tonight? Mondays are my night off and I don't live too far from here. You can come over and I'll fix up a nice home cooked meal. Then maybe we can jump back in the sack for a double header. Whaddya say, Sugar? Sound good to you?"

"Oh, hey, that's super tempting and all. Really. But I have practice and then I have to go see my agent downtown. He'll want to take me out to dinner too. And then the team's scheduled to go on the road tomorrow for an away series against the Aberdeen Iron Birds where I'm slated to be the starting pitcher -- so I'll need to get some rest. We fly out in the morning and I don't want to be too tired. The bottom line is, I'm booked. You understand, right? I just don't have that much time to fool around."

"Sure, Sugar. I get it. I been around. It was fun. Let me leave you my number in case you change your mind. Cause if you do, I'll make it worth it. Sugar, I do a few things I know the other girls won't." All smiles.

What's-her-name puts down the bacon, grabs my cellphone from the end table and hands it to me to unlock. When I do, she punches her number in. Then gets dressed without any further fuss. Which surprises me how easy she's making it. Most girls you

practically have to steamroll them out the door with apple pie promises. Or ghost them for a while before they “get it.” All while screeching about “bad feelings” over being “used” and treated like a “sket.” Which wasn’t exactly fair because most groupies couldn’t wait to drop their panties for you when they discover you’re an all-star pitcher heading to the pro’s by the end of the season. Baseball bunnies, am I right?! What else were they expecting? Marriage and an all-expenses paid trip to the majors just for letting you get your nut off on them?

“Yeah, kid.” Coach Finn advised when I explained why I was fifteen minutes late, “That’s exactly what they expect. I know they’s hard to resist, especially when girls throw their assets at you like it was Christmas morning and all. But you ain’t doin’ yourself or your Johnson no favor sleeping with girls you barely know. Take it from someone who seen it a million times. No good comes from such shenanigans.”

“Shenanigans, Coach? Really? Who are you, Lou Pinella? This is the modern world. All girls give it up now. Even the good ones. Trust me, I got it handled. I appreciate your advice though.”

“Bull-puck, you do. I may not be a brain surgeon, but I ain’t dumb. You cocky little boys of summer don’t appreciate nuthin’ that don’t center around your stats, your social media, or your Johnson. In that order. But you right, that ain’t my concern. What is my *bidd-ness* is getting you to *hit* proper – and figuring out why you got the *yips* all a sudden. So let’s succeed at that this morning.”

“Sure, Coach. Whatever you say.”

I spent the next hour hitting while Coach Finn made suggestions, but the yips kept interfering and I didn’t feel like I’d accomplished much. Coach Finn all but confirmed it when he walked off saying, “Don’t sweat it kid. The yips ain’t got no rhyme or reason.

Your mechanics look fine. Fer all you'se know, tomorrow you'll be hitting dingers off the left field bleachers."

Maybe. I mean I never put up big batting numbers, but I could hit regular, averaging around .205 a season. Which was quite respectable for a pitcher who had a slider that sunk faster than the Titanic, a curveball that dropped off the shelf and a two seam fastball clocking in at over 101.5 miles per hour. But over the last two months, I'd been in a bush league slump and hadn't gotten a hit since May. All because my agent told me he was fielding offers from San Francisco and asked me to raise my battering average to above .250 -- so he could take advantage of a few monetary incentives offered in my contract. And I been whiffing a big donut ever since! Yeah, no psychology at work there.

I went off to my pitching session feeling pretty dejected. But pitching was my wheelhouse and I knew it would lift my spirits. Only, for the first time in a long time, I didn't throw well. I felt awkward and couldn't find my rhythm. Not good at all.

"Banksy. What's up?" Coach Turner, the pitching coach, asked. "Where's that nice smooth release we worked on? You had it all dialed in last week. Now you're over extending. Relax your shoulders man! Loosen up the arm. You'll pick up extra speed when you level your lead foot and step forward without over rotating your shoulder. So why aren't you? You feeling okay today?"

"Sorry, Coach. I'm having a bit of a day. I guess I stayed out too late last night and it has me feeling run down."

"Alright. I gotchu. Don't sweat it. Lots of vitamin C and get a good night's sleep tonight. Check in with me tomorrow before the game and we'll get you dialed back in. Don't sweat it. It happens to all of us every now and then. Man, you got the golden arm so don't sweat it."

"Thanks, Coach."

"Hey, this outta pick up your spirits. Rumor has it you're gonna be called up for a cup of coffee the minute you step foot off the mound in Aberdeen. The Giants need a power closer for their weekend series against the Yankees and want you. You know what that means? You're going to *The Show*!"

"That's great news coach. Really is. But right now I need to focus on Aberdeen and get some rest. So don't tell any of the guys, okay?"

"Sure thing, kid. I understand. Don't sweat it. Go hit the showers. You're done for the afternoon. See you on the plane tomorrow morning. Nine a.m. sharp. Get there bright and early, right?"

"Right."

I showered, shaved, and headed off to see my sports agent at the Bryson Building – Joel E. Coen Esq., sports agent extraordinaire and a real mensch. I knew he'd find a way to lift my bad feelings of doom and blues.

"Banksy!" Joel greeted me when I walked into his office. "About time you got your hairy bottom over to see me. I been getting calls on you all morning. Half from coaches who heard your fastball is clocking in at one-oh-two and can't stop salivating like you was steak. The other half wondering if you're gonna fall on your ass wind milling every at bat this season."

"What can I say, Joe. I've been working out the kinks in batting practice. What else am I to do? But that's not what the Giants want me for right. They want the old arm cannon."

"What they want is Ty Cobb, Nolan Ryan, and Derek Jeter all rolled into one. But that's my worry, not yours. What they get is YOU, you super stud! And not just the Giants

either. Sure, they get *prima nocta*, but if they don't advance your contract by the end of the week, we can register you free agent for next season. And the Rockies have definitely been calling. As have the Marlins."

"Well, I can deal with Colorado, but Florida sucks. Way too hot."

"There might not be a choice. There's good money on the table and this week will point us in the direction we're gonna go. Sit down, Brian, I have to talk to you serious."

"Okay."

"Look, I think you're a great ballplayer. The best! Arm like a golden god. But you're going to be a major league ball player soon and there are a few things we need to start dialing in. Professional expectations and the like."

"Such as."

"Well, first is your hitting. You have to pull a rabbit out of your hat tomorrow and get a few hits. Nothing major. You don't need a homer. A dying quail or a grounder with eyes will do. Anything to reassure the Giants. Another big donut this series and questions begin to surface. Your stock will take a hit."

"So no pressure then," I sighed.

"Hey, that's the business Banksy. You need to think like a professional baseball player now. A franchise player! Pitching's just part of the package. You should be able to deal with adversity and still play well. Hit when you need to and not go off the rails. Consistency! Especially if you expect to pitch in the rotation full time in the majors by next season. You don't want to be cast out of your triple-A contract without an offer on the table. Fastball or not, every ball player has an expiration date. Let's make sure this isn't yours."

"I hear you."

"Do you? Good. Cause your golden arm will open the door, but its hard work that will walk you through and let you stay."

"I hear you, Joe. I do. I've been putting in the work! We're on the same page."

"Good. Now to point number two."

"There's more?"

"Yeah, there is. Now listen, this isn't something I normally discuss, but we have to talk about your extracurricular activities."

"You mean the girls."

"I mean the shitty way you've been dumping these girls publicly after your night with them. The girls are a perk to the profession for sure, but you've been setting a few fires lately. Pretty big ones too which I've had to put out at some expense to your and my wallet. They're starting to notice the smoke signals all the way across the bay in San Francisco. But, don't worry, I reassured the Giant's GM it was all growing pains. You know, young man, lots of temptation, getting adjusted, that sort of thing. But, damn Banksy, do you have to pick a fight with every damn waitress and stripper out there? Treat them so bad they'll gladly piss on you whether you're on fire or not?"

"That's not fair."

"Who said it was?! But don't worry, it's not terminal yet. We got a little time. But I am detecting a pattern -- a recurring trend. You seem to have a knack for choosing women who, shall we say, aren't the best investment for their return. You know what I mean? And it doesn't help how you blatantly post bad reviews about each girl across your social media. I mean, damn, does everyone really need a play by play about how you kicked each girl to the curb and all the reasons why?! It's unnecessary. And not very

good for your image. We're getting blow back. To the point I think we need to tone down your social media presence."

"Hey, branding is part of the business. Being visible gets the bigger bucks. And controversy sells. *YOU* told me that."

"I did. I know I did. But I didn't think you'd go all Steve Garvey on me. I was looking more for a bad-boy-next-door-Babe-Ruth type, who visits sick kids in the hospital. Not Albert Belle with a personal agenda to take down every "coyote ho and no-go girl" out there. Your words, not mine. You've been posting a lot of cruel things and it's coming across as misogynistic. Even toxic. Like you have an axe to grind."

"Hey, I'm just having fun. They're all big girls who know what they're signing up for. It's part of the game. You should see all the comments I get on social media. And how many subscribers I have. *THEY* don't seem to mind. In fact, I always trend heavier when I give out the *deets*."

"Well, I want you to hold off for a while. Turn it off. Turn it all off. We need to scrub all your content clean and go dark on social media. At least until we get your pro contract signed, sealed and delivered. Then we'll re-brand and re-launch. You'll be a shark swimming in a pool full of the hottest minnows this side of the Bay when that day comes. But not now, okay? You gotta go submarine. Total blackout. Are you hearing me on this, Banksy?"

"Shit. Alright. If you say so."

"I say so to the tune of two and a half million dollars. That's what I'm gonna get you for your first year contract if you listen to me. Then when you win the Cy Young at the end of your rookie year, we'll be jumping into Justin Verlander territory and an eight figure contract my friend."

"And then they can't touch me?"

"Banksy, listen to me. If you do what I say, you're going to get everything you ever wanted. The brass ring is there to grab if you don't screw it up. That said, I need you to do something for me. Trust me and do something."

"Anything, Joe. You know that. I trust you."

"Good, 'cause I've set you up with a psychiatrist, Dr. Sheila Mendell. Don't worry, she's very discreet and very good at what she does. You'll meet with her out in Maryland between games in Aberdeen. I've used her before and she writes excellent reports. She's on our team, okay?"

"You want me to see a psychiatrist? What for! My batting? I told you that's just the yips. Everyone gets them now and then. I'll be hitting fine by tomorrow."

"It's not the batting, Banksy."

"What then? The social media stuff. I just agreed to go dark. What more do you want? There ain't nothing wrong with me."

"I'm not saying there is. This is sports medicine 101. The Giants asked for a psychological work up on you before they invest in a two and a half million dollar contract."

"Is that normal?"

"Well, hey, don't look at it like that. It's not a question about normal or not. It's just a hoop to jump through so the Giants feel better and we get you your first year contract. Don't worry, the doc will give you a glowing recommendation. She's a friend of mine. She's got my back, and I've got yours. You hearing me?"

"I don't know. I never heard of anyone else having to do this. Why am I being singled out?"

“Truth? It’s not just the hitting. And it’s not just the social media. It’s the way you....I don’t know how to say this....it’s the way you go the extra mile to insult these women after you sleep with them. I mean, I’m not down with all the “woke” attitudes out there, but even I know if you denigrate these women across your Instagram feed, you have to expect a reaction. Toxic is what they call it. Big ball clubs don’t want toxic and they’re checking closely for that stuff now. They have morality clauses built into contracts to prevent liability concerning old school crap like that. It affects your marketability. They want choir boys who improve the image of the franchise, not fuck boys who create scandal.”

“And that’s why I have to see a shrink?”

“Look, Brian, do you trust me? Cause I have your best interest at heart. I do. Let me be your father here. It’s my job to get you the best contract possible for the money you deserve. But that means we still have to offer up tithes to the emperor. I’m here to get you ready to step into your major league professional shoes. I know what I’m talking about too. And bad boys are out! Toxic masculinity is no longer acceptable and managers aren’t turning a blind eye anymore. They’re acting accordingly. You need to learn how to protect yourself. The Commission has a Pete Rose complex. And their Mark McGuire, Sammy Sosa, Barry Bond accusing steroid days are long over. They’re not gonna tolerate a rookie coming in who’ll give the league another black eye. We need to change up your image. Maybe find you a proper girl and stick with her for a while to quell the concerns. Preferably a girl-next-door beauty queen with a degree in marketing. Get your image on solid ground. And having a little psychological interview is step one.”

“You’re over exaggerating a bit, aren’t you?”

“Not in the least. Look, I’m gonna level with you. I had a long talk with your head coach this past weekend and he’s not a fan of yours. He’s considering a vote of no confidence on you and wants to tank your prospects with the Giants. He’s also talking about an outright release of your contract and wants to end your career altogether. Thinks you’re bad for baseball.”

“He can’t do that! I’ve been putting up solid pitching numbers. No one’s throwing heat like I am right now. So my bat’s been a little shaky. But that’s not what they pay me for.”

“Yeah, well, it’s different now. They don’t want a specialist. They want the full deal. Hit, throw, catch, and run. And that’s only part of the package. They want the mental fortitude and behavioral analytics of a Lou Gehrig right now, not Darryl Strawberry. And the way you’ve been behaving lately implies more liability than likable.”

“So, what are you saying? I’m out?”

“No, not necessarily. But you might want to keep Florida on the table for right now until we know how things shake out.”

“Okay, so screw them. I’ll go to Florida. Or Colorado. Forget San Francisco.”

“Look, Banksy, I’ve thrown a lot at you. I know it’s tough, but don’t worry about it tonight. We have a few days to figure it out. Nothing’s set in stone. Focus on the game in Aberdeen. You’re the starting pitcher tomorrow, right? Pitch like you do, get a base hit or two, and lay off the strip club waitresses. Go meet with the psychiatrist and by the end of the week we’ll be golden again.”

“Man you’re really putting the pinch on me, you know.”

“I do. I’m sorry. But it’s big boy time. Hitch up the pants and let’s get to work. I’ve got a multi-million dollar contract waiting for your rookie year. And this will all be a distant memory if you do well.”

“Like I have a choice.”

I left Jimmy’s office feeling low. More than I thought possible. Rather than being pumped up and determined, I felt myself dropping into a dark place. Black even. And I knew that wasn’t good. I couldn’t function in the dark and needed an immediate pick-me-up to set things in a more uplifted, confident direction. Otherwise, tomorrow was going to be a grind. But what to do?

Then it hit me – the best pick-me-up I knew was a little rough and tumble. Always has been. Get a cute little thing to light my fire and take my big, high hard fastball right down the middle for a strike. That would give me the boost I needed. But did I have time tonight? Without a fish on the line? Only I did! I had *what’s-her-name’s* number. And she asked me to call!. She wanted me and was already primed and ready to go. So maybe I go over for a little dinner, have a little fun in the sack, and sprint home after to catch a couple of zzz’s before tomorrow’s flight. She did have nice tits after all.

I reached for my cellphone, looking for new contacts and found her under recent entries as “Rachel” with two stars. Fifteen minutes later, I was pulling up to her apartment on South Camden.

“Hey sugar!” Rachel greeted me at the front door, “I had a feeling you’d come over tonight. My Mama always said I had a bit of the divination and could read minds. Sure enough, here you are. Come on in. Momma wants to take care of her big boy star pitcher.”

I still couldn’t stand the baby talk, but she was standing in the doorway wearing a tight halter over cutoff jeans with her hip jutting out like that chick in *Black Snake Moan*. Oh man, did I want to moan. And I admit I got hard fast just looking at her. Before I knew it, I was pushing her back into the apartment, slamming the door shut behind me, and surprising even myself by foregoing the niceties and grabbing her ass. Followed closely

by a no-fuss, open mouthed, hard ass, lustful kiss. I don't know what came over me exactly and didn't feel in control at the moment, but, damn, she looked good enough to fuck, if you forgive my French. And that's what I intended to do -- caveman style -- which I knew she'd like. Didn't they all? So, I forged ahead -- picking her up and slamming her hard into the opposite wall, ramming my groin into hers. A little harder than I meant, but still. She was a big girl, I figured.

"Oh, hey, sugar," Rachel cooed back, a little surprised, rubbing the back of her head.

"Slow down a bit. I like the enthusiasm, but I don't want the game to be over too quickly. Let Mama catch her breath and go get you one of her little blue pills. Then we can pitch a full nine innings and have some real fun."

"Sure thing," I replied. "I'm game." And I was. I mean, I hadn't planned on taking her blue pill or making it into a long night, but now that I was there, I decided it might be worth it. One last lowdown and dirty romp before I went legit for the pros.

Rachel went for her purse and took out a round pill vial -- then handed me one of the pills with water. I swallowed it whole and followed her to the bedroom, watching her strip along the way, and feeling like I was gonna pass out from the blood rush. I don't think I even made it to the bed with her.

The alarm clock started buzzing again and I opened my eyes with the strangest sense of déjà vu. Like I wanted to sit up and throw my David Wells autographed baseball across the room. But then I realized I wasn't lying in my own bed at my own place. And it was now Tuesday, not Monday.

"Shit!" I said sitting up fast and looking for my cellphone, "What time is it?" Only I couldn't sit up -- my hands were tied to the corner bed posts and my feet to the bottom of the bed frame. When I tried to yank free, the knots tightened. "Hey!" I called out.

"What gives? Hello? Hello! A little help in here, uhm,....Sugar." *Shit*, I thought.
What's her name? Shit! "Hey, can you hear me? Is anyone there?"

What's her name walks into the room fully dressed and holding a cup of coffee. "Hi there, darlin'. You're finally awake. How you feelin,' Sugar?"

"Hey..uh...uh," *Shit! What IS her name?!* "Can you untie me? I gotta go. What time is it?"

"I'll untie you if you can tell me what my name is first," she teased.

"Come on now. Stop playing games. I gotta get going, uhm...uhm..." *Rachel with two stars!* "Rachel! Rachel with two stars!"

"Now that wasn't so hard, was it, Sugar?"

"Okay, but can you untie me now? What time is it? I've got to get going. I have a plane to catch."

"It's six thirty, sugar. Six-thirty-five in the evening to be exact. You passed out last night and been sleeping ever since. Guess that little pill I slipped you hit you fast and hard. I had to call my brother earlier than I intended to help me get you onto the bed -- you were all dead weight by then."

"What? Holy Shit! Are you kidding!? Six thirty!? Tell me you're joking! There's no way it's that late. What kind of pill did you give me exactly?"

"Well, no sense hiding it from you now. It was a *roofie*," Rachel laughed sipping her coffee while sitting on the edge of bed. "Rohypnol. One of the bartenders I work with got some for me."

"Roofie?! The knockout drug? You drugged me? Why!? What for!?"

"Revenge, Sugar. Pure and simple. It sure wasn't for your sparkling personality."

"No, no, no! You're lying right! You're just pulling a prank on me, right? This can't be happening." I tried to yank myself free again, but the ropes cut deeper into my wrists and ankles.

"No prank, Sugar. It's real. And those ropes aren't gonna give. I had my brother tie them. He was a marine and knows his stuff. You should've taken a moment to consider that before you did what you did."

"Did what I did? Consider what?! What does that mean?"

"You should've thought about the people you've hurt."

"The people I've.....Okay, okay," I say breathing slow, trying to get my heart rate to slow down so I could think. "Whatever this is, I can fix it. I can apologize if you want. But right now I need my phone so I can make a few calls first. Then I gotta get to the airport. I wasn't kidding when I said I had an important game tonight and would be flying out to Maryland."

"Sorry, Sugar, I don't think that's gonna happen now. We're gonna have a chat instead."

"I don't have time for a chat."

"So you say, but here you are."

"The hell I am. Untie me."

"You know, the interesting thing about roofies, as I've learned, is how many people turn into chatterboxes when they take them. You'd think they just pass out, but they don't. It's like a truth serum. Like the stuff the CIA uses. People just start talking under questioning." And here Rachel picks up my cellphone from the end table. "For example, it's interesting all the information you can learn from someone when they're high on roofies and feeling honest. Passwords mainly. But also habits, fears, secret

vices, skeletons in their closet – or in your case, recent conversations you’ve had with your agent. Really nasty stuff if you ask me.”

“Come on Rachel. You’ve had your fun. Good joke. Can you untie me now, please? This is feeling a little too serious.”

“To tell the truth, I think roofies reveal the true essence of a person,” Rachel continued.

“And let me tell you, you’re one fucked up puppy. Seriously. I mean, it must be something more than pure ego and vanity to do what you do to women. Or why you do it. But you do. Over and over. You should look into that.”

“I will. I promise you I will. You’re right. Can you untie me now, please?”

“By the way, Sugar, you were very active on social media last night and I don’t think people will be too happy about it. I mean, in all honesty, I helped a little -- I hope you don’t mind -- but you were very direct with your opinions about a great many things. Your agents, your fellow players. And not just the women you bed,” Rachel laughed.

“What? What do you mean I was active on social media last night?”

“Just what I said, Sugar.”

“Now look, Rachel. You’re in some serious trouble. This is slander! And kidnapping! And when I talk to my lawyer, he’s gonna put your ass in jail for this. You’re gonna do a lot of time. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Let me go now and I’ll just forget the whole thing.”

“Oh, Sugar, your threats are as hollow as your promises. But you’re awfully cute. I almost feel sorry for you. Especially since you haven’t realized, but you’re having the worst day of your entire life. And it ain’t gonna stop here. There are a lot of people pissed off at you right now, not just your coaches, your agent, and your teammates. I mean, to talk about what you did with your grandmother in the bedroom when you

were young? Nor do I imagine your parents like being called such horrible names on social media. And your 'fuck everyone' attitude is getting some pretty nasty responses on your Instagram feed. You're currently trending as *#toxicpitcher/fuckhim/cancelhiscontract*. Isn't that cute?"

"You're lying."

"No, Sugar. I don't lie as a matter of habit." Rachel opened my phone and showed me the things she'd posted, scrolling through several pages, and letting me read to my heart's content. No, she wasn't lying. She'd fucked me but good. Truly, royally fucked me. It was 6:45pm and all the voicemails from coaches, teammates, and about a hundred other missed calls from my agent were stacked up, unanswered. Oh, boy, this was bad! Epic-ly bad!

"Do you know what you've done to me!?" I screamed, "I'm totally screwed! You just cost me my pro contract! I'm as good as out! Oh, I'm gonna so have you arrested and thrown in jail for this! For a very long time!"

"No, Sugar, that's not going to happen. Not to me at least."

"The hell it isn't. When I get free everyone will know you did this to me. That I didn't do a thing. Everyone will know I was abducted by a crazed stalker and none of what you said or did on my social media will be held against me. I'll be the victim and you'll end up in jail once the truth comes out. I'll be forgiven and you'll be fucked!"

"You sure about that, Sugar? I don't think so. I mean, you can try, but no one will believe you --especially after you raped me and are arrested for it."

"What? What! No way! I did no such thing!"

"You didn't? You were pretty rough on me last night coming through the door. I have torn panties and giant bruises on my arms and legs, not to mention the walnut sized

knot to the back of my head where you slammed me against the wall. And all that rough sex we had late last night still has your semen all up in me. Oh, Sugar, your DNA is all over me and all over my place. And, as far as I can say, none of it was consensual. You just showed up and attacked me. That's what I'm going to tell the police anyway."

"You wouldn't! Come on, that's serious. I could go to jail if you lied like that."

"Who says it's a lie?"

"No, you wanted me. You wanted to have sex with me. We texted about it. Plus, you went to my place willingly. People saw you go with me."

"Sorry Sugar, but I thought of that. No one will know I went to your place. I sent my brother to your apartment today to scrub the place clean. And since no one saw us there, there's no proof I was even there."

"Yeah, but there were people at the bar that saw us talking and leaving together."

"Talking? I was your waitress, of course they saw us talking. But only the bartender saw us leave after and, like I said, he's my friend. What he remembers is how you got pretty aggressive with me during evening, hitting on me and all. And then got pretty angry when I said no and rejected your advances. So he kicked you out of the bar. Alone."

"Then how did I end up at your place last night, huh?"

"You must've followed me home from work. I went in today for a bit and you followed me home. I'm sure your phone GPS coordinates will prove I'm right. I mean, I did take your phone with me after all."

"No you texted me to come over. I received the texts in my phone."

"Are there? I don't see any such texts anywhere here in your phone. I do, however, see

lots of pictures of me tied up on my bed with a blind fold on. And several more with you taking advantage of me last night. Well the back and sides of you, anyway. My brother had a bitch of a time posing you so we had to use less than flattering angles. Then there's all the social media posts you put out after -- talking about how I refused your advances and how you had to exact some measure of revenge as a consequence."

"I didn't do any of that! I didn't say or write any of that!"

"Didn't you though? The evidence suggests otherwise."

"Why are you doing this to me? I've never done anything to you. I barely know your name."

"Well, *Sugar*, everything has a price and your bill has come due." Rachel walked over to the dresser and took down a framed picture. "See this," she asked showing me the photo.

"Yeah."

"Recognize anyone?"

"It's you. A little younger and skinnier maybe, but it's you. I'm not a moron."

"No the other girl. The one I'm standing with."

"Yeah, I see her. She looks like you. So what. She your sister?"

"Yes, my little sister to be precise. My *only* sister. My *DEAD* sister. Do you happen to remember *HER* name?"

"Why would I? I've never met her before."

"Look at her again. Try. You know her."

"I don't, I'm sorry. I meet a lot of people, but that doesn't mean I know everyone."

“Well let me help you out, Sugar. You know her because last summer you had sex with her. You picked her up at Bonnie’s, promised her she was special like you do all the girls, took her to your place, and fucked her. Didn’t even ask if she was a virgin or anything. Or even how old she was. Then you kicked her out the door like she was nothing but a piece of trash.”

“Oh, hey. I’m sorry. A lot of girls throw themselves at me. Including you. And I treat them nice. I treated you nice.”

“Don’t lie. You couldn’t wait to get me out the door this morning. I can’t imagine you treated her any different. But that wasn’t your biggest mistake. Not with me nor with her. Do you know what that was?”

“What *what* was?”

“Your big mistake. Look at this photo and tell me how old my little sister is! It was taken three days before you met her last summer.”

“I don’t, uhm. I really don’t...”

“Oh, don’t look so surprised. Like you would’ve cared. She was seventeen last summer. My little sister Jamie turned seventeen years old and was visiting her big sister in the city when you ‘dicked her down’ as you like to say.”

“I didn’t know. Honest. She looked a lot older. I mean, if I had known, I wouldn’t have messed with her.”

“Sure you would have. But again, that’s not the worst of it. You did much worse. Sure she was too young and naïve to be treated like you did, but she would’ve gotten over it. She was a strong. Only, after, when you’d posted all those nasty comments about her – all over Twitter and Instagram, rating her, debasing her, along with those naked candid’s you took -- calling her a wet dishrag and comparing yourself to a coyote who

had to gnaw his own arm off just to get away from her? You went too far! You made her a laughingstock in front of her friends and family. Everyone in our hometown knew what happened and saw those posts. You embarrassed her and you embarrassed our entire family. Our Dad read your posts and saw those ugly photos you took – the naked ones taken while she was sleeping. He couldn't look at her for a month without seeing that shit! And still she tried to call you after – she was crazy about you and just wanted you to take those things down off social media. She wanted to forgive you. But you ghosted her like she was nothing! Nothing! She wasn't *nothing*! She was a beautiful, sweet, naïve girl and you crushed her with all your bullshit! Two months later she killed herself because of you."

"No, no, NO! NO! This can't be happening. You're lying! I don't deserve this! I didn't do anything to you or your sister! I'm a star pitcher being called up to the majors this week. Not some degenerate that you're making me out to be!"

"Oh is it hard to have a mirror put up to your face, isn't it, Sugar? Well, it's nothing compared to what you did to my sister!"

"You can't do this to me! You're sick! And crazy! I didn't do anything to your sister and none of what she did was my fault!"

"You better believe it was, Sugar! And you deserve every ounce of what I'm about to do to you."

"What more can you do? What are you going to do?"

"Well, I was just going to kill you and claim it as self-defense. But my brother convinced me there was a better way to punish you -- by sending you to prison and giving you a taste of your own medicine. Oh, they're gonna treat you like a pin cushion there once I'm done with you. Then you'll get a small taste of what it's like."

"Screw you!"

"I could just made it happen. But before I did, I wanted you to know WHY you were in prison. I wanted you to know WHY you lost everything! I wanted you to feel powerless, like my sister, and not able to do a damn thing about it. All while getting raped in prison."

"You're crazy!"

"Your punishment won't grant absolution for what you did to my sister -- not even close -- but it will ease my family's pain some to know you're suffering because of what you did."

"Oh, geez. Oh God help me. It can't be this way."

"It can and it is. Now listen closely, Sugar. Listen up good. In a few minutes, my brother and a few of his friends are gonna come in here to cut you free and let you go. I suggest you be nice, get dressed, and get the hell outta here cause it's not too late to just kill you. And once you do, I'll be calling the cops to report what you did. It won't be long before you're arrested for kidnapping and rape. So, bye-bye for now, Sugar. It's been real special. I wasn't lying when I said I was a fan and your two seam fastball was something to see."

The End.

