

A Few Will Find This Difficult

by Mark Lyons

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INT. VISITING CUBICLE - DAY

Slotted off by perforated glass.

EDWARD CONSAPUS, 30s, wearing an orange jumpsuit, sits on one side.

SAVANNAH BEAN, early 20s, homely, sits on the other. A cheap notebook sits in front of her.

EDWARD
You look nervous.

SAVANNAH
A little.

Their voices echo in the small space.

EDWARD
This your first time in a jail?

SAVANNAH
My first interview.

EDWARD
In a jail?

SAVANNAH
Ever. The paper came to campus last week after the strike started and needed help. They sent me to cover you.

Edward gives a small chuckle.

EDWARD
You're a scab, huh?

SAVANNAH
Yeah. They said you could make or break me. They said your case is unprecedented.

EDWARD
It's going to be a difficult story to tell. Most people won't understand my side of it.

Savannah sets a small tape recorder as close to the perforated glass as she can. She hits 'record'.

She follows a script clearly written out in her notebook.

SAVANNAH
Can I have your name again?

EDWARD
Edward Consapus.

SAVANNAH
Where are you from?

Edward stops dead in his tracks. He looks up at her and gives a wry smile.

EDWARD
A little over five years.

SAVANNAH
I'm sorry, what?

EDWARD
If you want to impress your editor, you should probably only ask important questions. Cut the shit and get straight to the nit and grit...

Savannah's caught off-guard. She's flustered and not sure where to take it from here.

Edward continues for her.

EDWARD
I've been an addict for a little over five years now. About the same time as my mom's accident.

Savannah jumps to a different page in the notebook in front of her.

SAVANNAH
And your mother is Jacquelin?

Edward nods.

SAVANNAH
Why wasn't your mom put in a hospital, or a home?

EDWARD
I love my mother more than anything. No one would've taken better care of her than me.

Edward shrugs and sits back, settling in.

EDWARD

Besides, not having to waste a room on her; not having to pay employees to keep her muscles from atrophying; not having to pay for cable just so a vegetable can watch it; all those things appealed to the board. I didn't have to fight too hard to keep her home with me.

SAVANNAH

Why'd you keep her medication from her?

EDWARD

I didn't. At first. Not totally. She's had dozens of routine punctures for stress tests. Her mind is mush. She doesn't feel a thing.

Savannah jots down notes as quick as she can.

EDWARD

The state kept her on meds just to keep bilking the insurance.

He laughs and shrugs his shoulders.

EDWARD

I wasn't going to argue. I only weened her off the morphine to keep her system clean. I'd up her dosage to get her back to normal by the time the hospice nurses came around again to check on her.

SAVANNAH

Why'd you have to ween her off?

EDWARD

Cause I've been on probation for the last eight months. I needed her clean piss.

Savannah looks at him, confused.

Edward takes a deep breath, ready to tell his story.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

It looks like a hospital room because of all the equipment.

JACQUELIN CONSAPUS, 50s, lays in bed, hooked to an oxygen machine and feeding tube.

Her blank eyes dart miscellaneously around the room, but focus on nothing.

Edward brushes her stringy hair.

He finishes, leans over her and gives her a small peck on the corner of her lips.

Her eyes never quit darting around.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Edward pulls down a bottle of morphine sulfate from a cabinet. He shuffles a tablet out.

He grabs a soup ladle and a large spoon from the dish rack.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Edward blotches the tablet with masking tape to remove the color.

He mashes the tablet in the soup ladle with the spoon, careful not to spill any of it. He adds a bit of water.

He flicks a lighter under the ladle and heats it. He blows a waxy film off to the side.

With a tourniquet tied tight around his bicep, he draws the liquid up in a syringe.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Edward stares, relaxed. Focused on nothing, he's content.

Then, he looks around and takes in the setting as if he just awoke.

He grabs a phone off the coffee table and dials a number.

WOMAN

(filter)

You've reached Mahoning County TASC services for Tuesday, March twenty-second. The following are to report for urine screen today. TASC Track One, Judge Henry's Juvenile Court Phase One, and TASC Track Four, are all to report for urine screen today... You've reached Mahoning County TASC-

Edward hangs up and takes a deep breath.

EDWARD

Shit.

He looks around again before he stands up from the couch.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edward exchanges an empty catheter bag for Jacquelin's full one. He checks to make sure there's enough urine in it.

He opens his mother's bedside drawer and digs out a box of condoms.

He takes one and walks in the bathroom with both the wrapped condom and urine bag.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Edward gets--

IN HIS CAR

-- and blasts the heat on. He waits and makes sure enough hot air comes out the defrost vent on his dashboard.

He carefully sets the urine-filled condom, tied off at the end, directly on the vent to absorb the heat.

INT. TASC WAITING ROOM - DAY

Edward's the only one waiting.

A SPOTTER, in his 50s, probably used to be a corrections officer, opens a hallway door and peeks in.

SPOTTER

Consapus. You ready to drop, man?

EDWARD

All set.

Edward stands slowly. Careful.

INT. TASC BATHROOM - LATER

The spotter wears latex gloves and lets Edward into the bathroom. He closes the door and hands him an empty cup.

He folds his arms and leans back against a wall to watch Edward do his thing.

Edward, his back to the spotter, unzips himself and lets the urine-filled rubber poke out just a little from his pants.

He loosens the web of his middle and ring finger to reveal a paperclip jammed between.

He flops the paperclip out with his thumb and pricks a hole into the end of the condom. He squeezes the urine out of the rubber and into the cup.

Once empty, he tucks the rubber back in his pants and zips up. He slides the paperclip back into the web of his fingers and turns back around to the spotter.

SPOTTER

All finished?

Edward flashes a wry smile.

EDWARD

Yeah.

He sets the cup on the counter, where the spotter walks over and snaps the lid on it.

The spotter lifts the cup into the light and checks the heat-sensitive label.

SPOTTER

All right, sir. You're good to go.

Edward washes his hands as the spotter walks out.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Edward only wears a towel.

He leans over and gives his mother a kiss on the corner of her lips.

He sits back up and wipes vanilla pudding off her chin and cheek with a paper towel.

Her eyes continue to dart past him around the room, not recognizing anything.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Edward clicks a button on the answering machine and sits down on the couch, still only wrapped in a towel.

LATESSA

(filter)

Edward, this is Anna Latessa. I made you an appointment tomorrow. I need you to report to my office by three.

He rubs his eyes, breathes deep, and exhales.

EDWARD

Damn it.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A line of people wait outside an office door. Edward's the closest.

A young WOMAN briskly walks out of the office, upset.

WOMAN

(under her breath)

Bitch.

LATESSA (O.S.)

Next.

Edward stands.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

ANNA LATESSA, mid-40s, sits behind her desk, filling out paperwork.

Edward walks in, as happy-go-lucky as he can be.

EDWARD

Hello. How are you doing today?

LATESSA

(deadpan)

Hi.

She doesn't even look at him, just signs and dates papers.
Edward just sits down and waits.

Finally, Latessa dots her last period and hands over a yellow paper.

Edward takes and reads it.

EDWARD
What's this?

LATESSA
Your court date.

EDWARD
For what?

LATESSA
Probation violation. You failed
your drug screen yesterday.

EDWARD
It couldn't have come back dirty.

LATESSA
It didn't. It came back clean.

He looks at her, confused.

LATESSA
Which is good, because you're
pregnant.

Edward's silent. He can't speak.

LATESSA
Tell whoever urine it was that I
said congratulations.

Edward hangs his head down in his hands.

LATESSA
The judge ain't going to like that
you tried to pull a fast one.
Expect to get your original
eighteen months he took off the
first time.

EDWARD
But I have to take care of my mom.
There's not anybody else.

LATESSA
What's wrong with your mom?

EDWARD

She's comatose. She's in a vegetative state.

Latessa shrugs.

LATESSA

The court date's not for another two weeks. You have time to make arrangements.

Edward just sits there, in shock. Latessa continues to her next item of paperwork.

He gets up and walks to the door.

Latessa stops writing and looks up at him.

LATESSA

Mr. Consapus?

He stops and looks back at her.

LATESSA

Where did you get the urine from?

Edward can only stare at her. He can't think of what to say.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VISITING CUBICLE - DAY

Edward just sits there. Savannah's noticeably uncomfortable, but angry this time instead of awkward.

Finally, he just shrugs.

EDWARD

I had to tell. The person taking care of her while I'm in here had to know she was pregnant. I don't want my mom to lose my baby.

He shakes his head frustrated.

EDWARD

I should've never gotten this rape charge. I'll have to do so much more time if I don't get it dropped.

SAVANNAH

She was defenseless.

He shakes his head.

EDWARD

I should've only gotten the probation violation. The judge would've dropped the eighteen months to ninety days. I'd be able to watch my child be born.

SAVANNAH

She was your own mother.

EDWARD

I love her more than anything.

Savannah grunts.

SAVANNAH

She had no way to defend herself. Look at her condition. She's likely not even to carry it to term.

Edward halfway shakes his head and nods at the same time. He might be getting worked up.

EDWARD

There's medicines now. It's going to be tough, but she can do it. I want so bad to be there and help her. They've already started the prenatal vitamins in her system, even with all the politics still going on.

SAVANNAH

You raped an unconscious woman. You had no right.

Savannah's getting worked up, too.

EDWARD

I felt her spasming when I was inside her. She dribbled fluids out all the time. I know she liked it.

Savannah makes a face.

EDWARD

I know it's what she would have wanted, for us to keep loving each other like we have. She's always just wanted her little man Eddie to love her.

He sniffles.

EDWARD

It wasn't rape. It's never been
rape. Not even when I was little,
and she would come into my room...
It was something we both wanted.
What we had was everything to us.

Savannah closes her notebook and rubs a temple.

EDWARD

I should only get the probation
violation. I want to be there when
my child is born. I want to cuddle
in the same bed as them. I want to
take care of them. I want to tell
him how wonderful of a mother he
has. How loving she can be.

Savannah only stares. She shakes her head, disgusted. She's
seasoned now.

Edward can only sit... And sulk.

CUT TO BLACK.