

WILLOUGHBY

Don't gimme that look. If you got rid of every cop with vaguely racist leanings then you'd have three cops left and all o' them are gonna hate the fags so what are ya gonna do, y'know?

He smiles at MILDRED, then comes round and sits on her side of the desk, looking down on her.

WILLOUGHBY (CONT'D)

I wanna know something, Mildred...

MILDRED

Does sitting up high like that make you feel more powerful, Chief?

WILLOUGHBY

I'm sorry, Mildred, I'll go sit where I was if it makes you feel more comfortable.

MILDRED

I didn't say I was uncomfortable. I don't get uncomfortable around cops. Sit wherever you want. It's your police station.

WILLOUGHBY

Why'd ya drill a hole thru poor fat Geoffrey's thumbnail?

MILDRED

Oh, that didn't happen. His hand slipped and he drilled a hole thru his self. Is he saying I done it? Jeez, then I guess it's just his word against mine, huh? Kinda like in all those rape cases you hear about. Except, in this instance, the chick ain't losing.

WILLOUGHBY

It ain't really about winning or losing, though, is it, Mildred? I mean, do you think I care about who wins or loses between the two of you? Do you think I care about dentists? I don't care about dentists. Nobody cares about dentists! I do care about, or I'm interested in, tying you up in court so long that your hours at the gift shop are so shot to shit that you ain't got a penny to pay for another months billboards. I'm interested in that.

MILDRED

I got some dough put away...

WILLOUGHBY

What I heard was you had to sell off your ex-husband's tractor-trailer to even pay for this month's billboards, that right? (pause) How is ole Charlie, by the way? He still shackled up with that pretty little intern works down at the zoo?

MILDRED

He's still shackled up with some chick who smells of shit. I don't know if the zoo's got anything to do with it. Although I'd hope so.

WILLOUGHBY

How old is she? Nineteen? That must smart.

MILDRED

Keep trying, Officer. Keep trying.

WILLOUGHBY

What's Charlie think about these here billboards of yours, an ex-cop like Charlie?

MILDRED

Ex-cop, ex-wife-beater. Same difference, I guess, right?

WILLOUGHBY

His word against yours, though, right? (pause) Charlie don't know about them, does he?

MILDRED

It's none of his business.

WILLOUGHBY

He's kinda paying for 'em though, ain't he?

MILDRED

I'm paying for 'em.

WILLOUGHBY

This month you are. How about when...

WILLOUGHBY suddenly let's out a short sharp cough which spurts a spray of blood that hits MILDRED in the face, wholly by accident. Horrified, shaking, WILLOUGHBY tries to wipe her face with a handkerchief, MILDRED almost in tears at his embarrassment.

WILLOUGHBY (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to...

MILDRED

I know...

WILLOUGHBY

It was an accident...

MILDRED

I know, baby.

WILLOUGHBY

It's blood.

MILDRED

I know.

They're both in tears, and there's a desperation in his eyes, as he sits there shaking.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

I'll go get somebody...

She rushes out the door.