

- #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.)*

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...