

IMPACT

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A Short Play

by

Trey Nichols

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by Trey Nichols

3730 S. Sepulveda Blvd. #202  
Los Angeles, CA 90034  
(310) 926-1061  
treynich@gmail.com

## IMPACT

### Cast of Characters

Ted Phelps:

Mid-30's.  
College-educated, smart, sharp,  
well-dressed; has the relentless  
intensity and forced energy of a  
motivational speaker, underneath  
which lies a deep well of  
unhappiness.

Tommy Pescar:

Mid-30's.  
Working class background, tough  
edge but weirdly off, one might  
say diminished; uncomfortable,  
twitchy, dim, though gives off  
occasional sparks of what we can  
assume was a former swagger.

### Scene

The front seat of a 2002 Honda Civic, parked on a  
residential street in West Los Angeles.

### Time

The present. Afternoon.

SETTING: We are in the front seat of a recent model Honda Civic.

AT RISE: TED PHELPS sits in the driver's seat, TOMMY PESCAR sits next to him. Ted is inspecting the car's interior with a kind of manic attention to detail. He makes little sounds and grunts of appraisal and assessment as though everything he touches brings with it a new discovery. Tommy watches him, holding the keys to the car.

PESCAR

So you wanna take her for a--?

TED

Sh. Sh, sh, sh, sh...

(Ted loosens up his wrist with a couple of shakes, then plays with the stick shift. He puts his hands on the wheel. He turns the headlights on and off.)

PESCAR

(trying to work up a patter;  
slurs occasionally)

Yeah so like I was saying she's been a, she's been a good, been a good little ride for me, I got her new and she runs great, still runs great, I mostly been using her for little errands and stuff, getting groceries for my folks and stuff when they, you know, need stuff or parking across from the high school and watching the kids or going to Long's you know they got a good pharmacy there the people are nice. She's a 2002, you only gotta fill her up like once a month she takes unleaded which is pretty available everywhere. She's a 2002.

(Ted closes his eyes, one hand on the steering wheel, one hand on the stick shift. He imagines driving, upshifting as his speed increases, HUMMING like a

NASCAR roadster.)

PESCAR

So you wanna take her for a spin?

TED

Yessir! Buckle up and point me to the 10 west.

PESCAR

(buckling up)

You wanna go on the freeway?

TED

Oh you betcha!

PESCAR

I think I'm gonna need to get gas.

TED

We won't go far. I just want to see how she handles at high speeds.

PESCAR

Just be careful.

TED

Oh ho ho, you don't have to worry about that, Tommy. I'm sorry, did you say it was Tommy? Or do you go by Pescar?

PESCAR

Tom.

TED

Right, right, "Ground Control to Major," well, I'm a very safe driver, Tom. You might even say I'm anal retentive. Though I wouldn't appreciate it if you did.

PESCAR

I'm just saying--

TED

Here's what we're gonna do: we're gonna hit the 10 west, then we're gonna get off at Lincoln. Then I'm gonna shoot down Colorado, you know, to the pier and, well, basically floor it. 'Kay?

(Small pause.)

PESCAR

Um. What?

TED

Yup. Take her right off the end of the boardwalk and into the bright blue Pacific.

PESCAR

That sounds...kinda fucked up.

TED

Not really.

PESCAR

But we'd drown.

TED

You would. You're wearing a seatbelt. I'll be jumping out shortly after we zip past that little chowder shack about halfway down the pier. While you're all tangled up beating your fists against the window, I'll be sitting down to a nice hot cup of "chowdah."

(Pescar unbuckles his seatbelt and reaches for his door handle. THUNK! Ted locks both doors with the electric lock. Repeatedly. THUNK! THUNK! THUNK!)

TED (CONT.)

Electrical's in great shape. Gimme the keys.

PESCAR

(holding keys out of reach)

No! I'm getting out!

TED

Now hold on, hold on...

(Ted places a secure hand on Pescar's seatbelt buckle.)

PESCAR

Dude, what what what is your problem?!

TED

Tommy Pescar. You don't know who I am, do you?

PESCAR

Are you from the hospital?

TED

Come on! It's me: Ted Phelps.

PESCAR

(doesn't ring a bell)

Ted Phelps...Ted Phelps...

TED

Venice High, Class of '89. You don't remember?

PESCAR

N-no.

TED

Boy, I'm amazed! We were close at one time. Or so it seemed. You even had a little nickname for me.

PESCAR

I did?

TED

You sure did.

PESCAR

What was that?

TED

"That Cocksucker Teddy Boy."

PESCAR

I called you a cocksucker?

TED

"That Cocksucker Teddy Boy."

PESCAR

(after a beat)

I don't remember.

TED

Why should you? It wouldn't have left you with any lasting marks or scars or complexes. Me, on the other hand, oh my! My therapist found all sorts of high-priced psychological Gordian knots to untangle. I should say "ex-therapist" because I finally fired the bastard. Or rather, just

stopped showing up for my appointments, stopped returning his calls. I'm sure he meant well, but come on. (MORE)

TED (CONT.)

It's his job to be concerned. He kept wanting me to "process" and "dialogue" and "seek closure" and my big breakthrough finally came one day when I realized that all I really wanted to do was stab his eyeballs out with that dried flower arrangement on his desk. "Closure?!" Gimme a break! You ever hear the expression "Post 9/11 World?" Post?! There's nothing "post" about it. It's a 9/11 world! I mean, of course there was the Horrible Event and the planes and the buildings and the bodies and all that, but post-9/11?! Come on! Look at the news! Are we seeking "closure" with the terrorists? Do we strive to be "at peace" with every shitty thing that ever happened to us and all the shitty people who ever fucked us up. Hell, no! We fight back! It's a 9/11 world! 9/11 is history, it is myth, it is context, it is background, it is now, everywhere, all the time, it's inside us! Because what is 9/11? What is it?! At its most basic level?

(Small pause.)

PESCAR

Are you asking me?

TED

Yes!

PESCAR

(thinks a moment)

Something...bad...got in.

TED

That's right. That's exactly right.

PESCAR

(struggling with it)

And everything...is collapsing. Still.

TED

Yes. It's that simple.

(Pause.)

TED

You made me get down on all fours and bark like a dog, Pescar. Among other daily humiliations. Remember? In the locker room. Naked. I performed tricks for you and your buddies for almost two years. And you laughed, god, you loved it, everyone did. I was a show dog! "Bark! Roll over! Play dead!" And I did, boy, I barked my little cocksucker heart out.

PESCAR

Why did you do that?

TED

I was scared shitless.

PESCAR

I never touched you.

TED

It didn't matter. You had those eyes. That voice.

(he shivers; beat)

Now do you remember me?

PESCAR

I think I remember fuckin' hating you cuz you were a pussy. Then I forgot all about you.

TED

I was going to call you, at some point, after high school, I was going to call you and say:

(pause)

Anyway, I never called. Then recently my wife and I decided we needed a new car, for her mostly, and after a bit of number-crunching, it became clear, at least to me, that we couldn't afford a new one. My wife, she's really a lovely person, but sometimes I wish she would make a more spirited effort at masking her disappointments in me, of which there are many. I mean, she really is a lovely, lovely, well, she's my wife and that's enough. She needs a new car. So as I was scanning the ads in the Auto Trader, I saw your phone number and I couldn't believe it. I'd know that number anywhere, even though the area code's changed like three times since we were in high school. I even recognized the front of your house in the picture, which I used to walk by, quite a lot in fact.

PESCAR

Why'd you walk by my house?

TED

I was depressed, I was an idiot. You dumped me.

PESCAR

Whoa.

(Beat.)

So you might say, you might say, I had a, a kind of impact on you?

TED

You might say that. Something bad got in.

(Beat.)

To tell the truth, I was surprised to find you here. Still living at home.

(Pause.)

PESCAR

I uh, I gotta take some pills.

(He pulls baggie with pills from his pocket.)

TED

Still doing drugs? Tommy Pescar. Is that why you're selling this car? For drug money?

PESCAR

(a hollow chuckle)

That's me, still the big druggie.

(shows Ted pills)

Anti-psycho, anti-sadness, anti-spaz. Here's my favorite, it's called Eskalith, for my radical mood swings. I like that name man, Eskalith, sounds like an escalator, going up to the top floor of my little brain. I wish it had roof access, man, I'd take a ride to the top and take a look around.

TED

What's wrong with you?

PESCAR

Something bad got in. Bad genes, bad life; I was a badass and now I'm just...bad. Looka my hands.

(He holds his hands up. He has a slight tremor.)

PESCAR (CONT.)

Can't drive no more, DMV took away my license, freaks. Won't be able to do shit for myself in a few years the doctor says. My parents are dealing with it, they're cool. I moved into my older brother's room, it's gotta big window, I can see our whole backyard.

TED

Wow. Shit.

PESCAR

Yeah, shit is right. But I have no regrets.

(Pause.)

PESCAR (CONT.)

Do you wanna buy this car?

TED

I gotta see how she runs.

PESCAR

Let's take her out. I could use a little adventure. I haven't been to the pier in a long time.

TED

Actually, do you mind if we just kind of sit here a minute?

PESCAR

Go ahead. You want to turn on the radio?

TED

I don't listen to radio.

PESCAR

Oh yeah?

TED

All that talk, I talk too much as it is, think too much, chatter, chatter. No.

PESCAR

There's music.

TED

There's music.

PESCAR

CD player's good, I put new speakers in last year. Before the fuckin' diagnosis.

(Pause.)

PESCAR

What did I used to call you?

TED

That cocksucker Teddy Boy.

PESCAR

Oh yeah.

TED

Used to walk through the locker room swinging a towel.  
"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?!"

PESCAR

"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?"

TED

(louder, bellowing)

"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?!"

PESCAR

(louder, imitating Ted)

"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?!"

TED

(louder, overlapping)

"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?!"

PESCAR

(louder, overlapping)

"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?!"

TED

(louder, overlapping)

"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?!"

PESCAR

(louder, overlapping)

"Where's that cocksucker Teddy Boy?!"

(Small pause.)

I was a badass.

PESCAR

You were.

TED

Good times.

PESCAR

(Beat. He hands Ted the keys.)

Let's roll.

THE END