

EARLY BIRDS

by

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FADE IN:

**EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - GAS STATION - NIGHT**

Wee hours. Deserted. Eerily silent.

A CONVENIENCE STORE is located alongside the station.

A CAR comes to a grinding halt. BRAD(20s), muscular, in black overalls, steps out of the car. A mask covers his face.

He hurries up to the store.

The door is locked. Not a hefty one, so Brad kicks it open.

**INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

Brad enters with a gun in his hand.

From behind the cash counter, GREGG(30s), lean, tall, and out of breath, pops up.

GREGG  
Sir, can I help y-

BRAD(AIMS HIS GUN AT GREGG)  
Look, I don't wanna hurt you, but  
if you don't do as I say, I'll  
fucking blow your brain's out.

Gregg clenches his fists and stares at Brad.

BRAD  
You hear me, dumbass?

GREGG(ODDLY CALM)  
Yes. What you want me to do?

BRAD  
Give me all the money.

GREGG  
Really?

BRAD  
Fuck yes.

GREGG  
Why do you look so nervous?

BRAD  
I am not. Don't waste time!

GREGG  
Your hands are shaking. First time?

BRAD

Don't test me. I am fucking serious.

GREGG

But you do look nervous. Have you ever pulled a trigger?

BRAD

You doubt?

GREGG

A little.

BRAD

So lemme just put a hole in you right now and clear your doubt.

GREGG(NODS)

Wow! Alright. I get it. You're really strong. But just so you know that - the money is mine. I did some... horrible thing to *earn it*.

BRAD

I think I should just fucking ki-

GREGG

Fine! I will give you the money.

BRAD

Quick.

Brad moves closer to the counter. Gregg reaches for the cash register.

GREGG

Lemme tell you that you are trying to piss all over my hard work of-

Suddenly, Gregg grabs a sealed food can off the counter, hurls it at Brad's head, and it hits perfectly.

BRAD

You fucker!

Gregg quickly grasps Brad's wrist, yanks it towards him, and twists it viciously.

Brad screams. His gun falls on the floor.

A knee right on the elbow joint breaks Brad's elbow.

Even before Brad can scream, Gregg pulls him over the counter and hits him hard in the neck with his knee.

Brad's lifeless body lies sprawled on the disarrayed counter.

Gregg catches his breath.

GREGG  
Don't snatch someone else's hard  
earned money. Ever.

He manages to shut the damaged door.

Gregg drags Brad's body across the store and into an aisle.

BETH(50s), the store owner, lies on the floor in a pool of  
blood.

GREGG  
Fucking great! Why can't things be  
simple for me?

He sighs.

END.