

Taken for a Ride

By

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INT. GAS STATION CONVENIENT STORE - MORNING

MIKE (30s) watches customer NATE (20s), looking annoyed as Nate studies the items of the candy aisle.

MIKE
Same stuff that was there
yesterday, chief. Make a decision.

Nate ignores Mike and continues to weigh his options.

Mike's attention is caught by a new Mercedes pulling into the station.

MIKE
Whoa.

MANDY MALONE (30s), a very attractive woman, gets out and pumps gas.

MIKE
Whoa.

Mandy walks into the store and looks around.

MIKE
Coffee's back there, only 69 cents.

MANDY
Is it any good?

MIKE
Why do you think it's 69 cents?

Mandy walks past Nate, who continues to study the candy bars, and fills a cup of coffee. She takes a sip and her face verifies the lack of quality of the coffee.

She walks back up the aisle and just as she walks by Nate, he absent-mindedly backs up into her causing her to spill some of her coffee and drop her purse.

MANDY
Watch it!

NATE
Sorry.

Mandy picks up her purse and goes up to the counter to pay.

MIKE
On the house if you take me for a
spin in that beautiful car.

(CONTINUED)

Mike feigns driving with an arm up on the seat and one hand on the wheel.

Mandy gives Mike a fed-up look, pulls a dollar out of a wad of cash, slaps it down on the counter and leaves.

MIKE

Ooh, feisty. Thanks for the tip.

The Mercedes squeals out of the station as Mike watches.

MIKE

(to himself)

Stripper or thief?

Nate comes up to the counter.

NATE

This was on the floor.

Nate holds up a ring.

MIKE

And did you clean the rest of the floor while you were down there?

NATE

(gesturing out the door)

I think it might be hers.

MIKE

I think if you run you can still catch her.

Nate puts the ring in his pocket and and places a king size Snickers on the counter.

MIKE

Wow, king size. Big day, huh?

Nate pays Mike, collects his change and leaves.

INT. GAS STATION CONVENIENT STORE - NIGHT

Mike sits at the counter reading a car magazine. The phone rings.

MIKE

This is Mike.

MANDY

(on the phone)

Hi Mike, this is Mandy Malone. I was in there this morning. I got coffee and that kid almost knocked me over. Do you remember?

MIKE

Ah, reconsidered my offer?

MANDY

So you do remember. I have an odd question: did you find a ring around there anywhere today?

MIKE

I may have. Did you lose one?

MANDY

Yes, I think it fell out of my purse when that moron backed into me. Will you be there tomorrow night? I'll be nearby and I can stop by and get it.

MIKE

Maybe, what's it worth?

MANDY

The ring? Not that much, it's only valuable to me.

MIKE

How valuable? Remember I saw your car.

MANDY

Wow, you really are a jackass! How much do you want?

MIKE

Whoa, what kind of guy do you think I am? Let me take that car for a spin.

MANDY

I'd rather pay.

MIKE

Daddy won't miss his money?

(CONTINUED)

MANDY

Bite me.

MIKE

Five hundred.

MANDY

Five hundred?! Are you crazy too?
That ring isn't worth five hundred
dollars! And, that's extortion.
I'll call the cops.

MIKE

And I'll lose the ring and forget
this conversation.

MANDY

Screw you.

MIKE

No deal, huh? Too bad.

A long silence.

MANDY

Alright. Four hundred.

MIKE

Six hundred.

MANDY

OK, five. I'll be by tomorrow
morning.

Mandy hangs up.

Mike smirks, pleased with himself. Then his expression
changes.

MIKE

(to himself)

I hope that kid shows up again.

ARTHUR (30s, heavy-set) walks in.

ARTHUR

What's up, Mike?

MIKE

Hey, Arthur. Looking slim as usual.

(CONTINUED)

ARTHUR

Sounding sarcastic as usual. You can cash out and go. And you better not be short again. I think Mr. Franks is getting serious about firing you.

Mike prints out a total from the register and counts his cash for the day.

MIKE

If he fired me, though, he'd have to cover my shift- which he doesn't want to do because then he would have to stop being lazy. So I'm safe.

ARTHUR

No, the reason I said that is because I overheard him talking on the phone to his niece, who apparently needs a job.

MIKE

I won't be under, keep your double XLs on.

ARTHUR

He also said I have to report to him your over/under.

Mike looks at Arthur.

MIKE

So you're my babysitter now?

ARTHUR

I wouldn't have to babysit if you would just pay better attention to detail.

Mike finishes counting and looks at Arthur.

MIKE

I'm two dollars short.

Arthur looks disappointed.

MIKE

I'll just cover it. And you'll cover for me, right buddy?

Mike pulls two dollars out of his wallet and puts them in the register.

(CONTINUED)

ARTHUR

Two dollars today, twenty dollars tomorrow, two hundred dollars-

MIKE

I get the point, but that won't happen. Besides, I'll be able to cover that soon too.

Mike pulls up the hinged part of the counter to leave and holds it up for Arthur. Just as Arthur is under it he drops it, hitting Arthur on the head.

MIKE

(faking apologetic)

Oops, sorry Art.

ARTHUR

Punk.

Mike leaves.

INT. GAS STATION CONVENIENT STORE - MORNING

Mike sits at the counter looking nervous. His leg bounces and he looks out the window. He spots Nate and stands up.

Nate walks in.

MIKE

Hey, good morning, brother.

Nate looks puzzled and goes to the candy aisle.

Mike watches Nate, who selects a candy bar.

Nate walks up to the counter with a 3 Musketeers.

MIKE

Yeah, I would have gone with this over the Snickers today too. 99 cents please.

Nate lays down a crumpled dollar bill.

MIKE

(trying to sound nonchalant)

Oh, hey, do you still have that ring you found yesterday?

(CONTINUED)

NATE

Yeah.

Nate pulls the ring out of his pocket and Mike glances out the window to the front of the store.

MIKE

That lady called and she needs it back.

NATE

Oh, did she leave an address or something?

MIKE

Yeah, I can take it to her though, I'm sure you have better things to do.

Mike checks out front again.

NATE

Not really. I can take it.

MIKE

No, really. Give it to me, she's not coming by until later anyway.

NATE

By here? You said she left an address.

MIKE

(trying to cover)

No, she gave me an address of a place to meet her.

NATE

You didn't care this much about it yesterday. Are you getting something out of it?

Mike tries to look shocked and steals a quick glance out front again.

NATE

Don't do that. What did she offer?

MIKE

Alright, she offered a hundred bucks.

(CONTINUED)

NATE

Then either you're a terrible extortionist or you're lying.

MIKE

Two hundred.

Nate considers.

MIKE

Look, I'll give you half if you give me the ring. We both win.

NATE

Two hundred just doesn't seem right.

MIKE

Dude! Four hundred, alright? I got her up to four hundred.

NATE

Better. Give me two hundred and it's all yours.

Nate holds out the ring out of reach while Mike thinks.

MIKE

I don't have two hundred on me and I can't leave the store.

NATE

Good thing you have a register full of cash right here. Just put it back when what's-her-name pays you.

Mike shakes his head but gets two hundred dollars out of the register.

MIKE

Two hundred. Hand it over.

Nate gives the ring to Mike.

NATE

Nice doing business with you, Michael.

MIKE

Suck a fat one.

Mike studies the ring. It doesn't look like much.

(CONTINUED)

Nate stands out front and the same Mercedes pulls up. Mike takes a deep breath and smiles, pleased with himself.

Mike sees Mandy sitting in the driver's side smiling at him. She waves.

MIKE

Yeah, hi. Get in here and give me your money.

Nate waves all cutesy-like and gets into the car.

MIKE

What the hell?

The realization that he has been conned spreads across Mike's face.

MIKE

No way. Get back here!

Mike runs out to the front but the couple drive away too quickly. He throws the ring in frustration.

He clenches his jaw and his shoulders sink as he realizes there is nothing he can do.

He returns to the counter and rests his head in his hand.

The phone rings. Mike picks it up.

MR. FRANKS

Michael, this is Mr. Franks. Arthur told me you were under by two dollars last night. One more screw-up and I'll have no choice but to fire you.