

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

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FADE IN:

**INT. SULLIVAN'S BAR - NIGHT**

A small place - got that local neighborhood bar vibe.

A YOUNG COUPLE grope each other in a corner booth. A symphony of arms, tongues and lips.

MELVIN (50s), perched on a stool at one corner of the bar pays the couple no mind. Beer in hand, he's laser-focused on a basketball game on the bar's flat-screen TV.

Behind the bar, TINA (35), petite and fit, hair in a ponytail, polishes the bar counter with a white rag. She holds a phone receiver to her ear with her free hand.

TINA

Got it. Okay...bye.

Tina hangs up.

TINA

Mel, you need another?

MELVIN

I always do. But I'll pass.

(points at TV)

It's almost over.

The DING of a bell as the front door opens. In comes JAMES (35), business casual attire.

He cradles a RED HEART-SHAPED PILLOW and a BOX OF CHOCOLATES under one arm, grasps a dozen ROSES in his other hand.

Tina waves her hand over the bar.

TINA

Anywhere you like.

James, head bowed and muttering something to himself, lumbers towards the corner of the bar counter opposite Melvin.

He saddles up on a stool and places the roses and the candy on the bar counter just to the side of him.

He sets the red heart-shaped pillow right in front of him. Then slowly bangs his forehead onto it - over and over.

Tina looks towards Melvin. Melvin circles his finger around his temple - gives Tina the "he's crazy" gesture.

James finally plops his head face down into the pillow for the last time - keeps it there.

TINA  
What can I get ya?

James doesn't raise his head. Mumbles something indiscernible into the pillow.

TINA  
Not a clue, dude.

More mumbles from James.

TINA  
Hey! I don't care if you sleep here. But if you're going to stay, order a drink for Christ sakes.

The Young Couple, embarrassed - scramble out of the booth and head towards the door.

TINA  
I didn't mean you --

The DING of the bell as the door opens and the couple exit.

TINA  
Just as well.

Tina walks over to James, takes in the roses, candy and red pillow. She taps James on the back of the head.

TINA  
Let me guess. Valentine's Day gone bad?

JAMES  
(raising his head)  
The worst. I think we broke up.

TINA  
You think...?

JAMES  
She just lives a block from here. She told me to wait here while she thinks about it.

MELVIN (O.S.)  
I would have kept walking.

TINA  
 (turns towards Melvin)  
 Ssssh!  
 (at James)  
 Something to drown your sorrows in?

JAMES  
 A shot of Tequila and a pitcher of  
 Budweiser.

Tina looks towards the bar door - checking to see if  
 someone's joining him. No one's there.

TINA  
 You want a whole pitcher?

JAMES  
 Yes - no mug.

James slumps his face back on the pillow.

TINA  
 Alrighty.

Tina goes to the bar tap, pours a pitcher of Budweiser. She  
 grabs a shot glass, fills it with Tequila.

Tina delivers the drinks.

James raises his head, places the stems of the roses in the  
 pitcher of beer.

MELVIN  
 Ah...  
 (Citizen Kane style)  
 Rose Bud.

James picks up the shot glass, slams it back.

JAMES  
 Another, please.

Tina pours another shot.

TINA  
 So, what was the issue?

JAMES  
 She wanted something different for  
 Valentines'. What was the word she  
 used...? Oh, yeah - special. She  
 wanted something special this year.

TINA  
And your first thought was flowers  
and candy?

JAMES  
My first thought was bowling. She  
nixted that.

TINA  
(heavy sarcasm)  
Wow, seems like a woman with  
impossible standards to meet.

JAMES  
I know, right?

MELVIN (O.S.)  
Hold your ground, mate. What you  
got her is just fine.

Tina turns towards Melvin.

TINA  
No, it's not.

MELVIN  
And believe me, the last thing you  
want is an arms race.

What!?

TINA

Arms race?

JAMES

MELVIN  
The romance arms race. Let's say  
this year he goes all out. A bed  
and breakfast weekend get-away or  
something.

TINA  
Your point...?

MELVIN  
Well, then he's got to top it next  
year. You know, cause he set the  
bar. Maybe have to get her a new I-  
phone or something.

TINA  
Yeah, because phones are so  
romantic.

MELVIN  
And the year after that - even  
bigger.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Fore you know it she'd be expecting  
two weeks in Hawaii for  
Valentine's.

JAMES

He makes a good point.

TINA

(at Melvin)  
Is that how you treat your woman?

MELVIN

You know I'm not with anyone.

TINA

Exactly.  
(at James)  
I think I make a better point.

JAMES

Hmm.

Melvin stands, grabs his coat from a rack.

MELVIN

Suit yourself. I gotta go.  
(at James)  
I'd keep walking, mate.

The DING of the bell as Melvin slips through the door.

TINA

Okay, let's see what you got here.

Tina picks up the red heart-shaped pillow - examines it.

TINA

Made in China.

Tina lifts the roses out of the pitcher of beer. Sees that a  
frayed rubber band is holding them together.

TINA

Classy.

Tina picks up the box of chocolates.

TINA

Ahhh - a Whitman's Sampler.  
So, which drug store?

JAMES

Pardon?

TINA

The pillow's bout five bucks. The roses are bound by a rubber band. Any florist worth their weight would've bound them in a ribbon.

(points at roses)

Those scream retail.

(taps the box)

But those are the dead give-away.

JAMES

Chocolates...?

TINA

I'll break it down for you. You got your Godiva chocolates. For my money, the best - but also the most expensive and you got to look for them. They aren't going to be on the shelf of your local grocery. After that, you have your Sees Candies. Not real expensive, but you have to actually drive to a Sees store to get them. You know, make an effort. And then...

(picks up the box)

You got your Whitman's Samplers.

JAMES

No good?

TINA

Available in any grocery or drug store worldwide and perfect for Valentine's Day. That is if you're broke or if you're twelve. You're obviously not twelve. Are you broke?

JAMES

No...Christ, chocolates are far more complicated than I would have guessed.

TINA

I'm guessing everything is.

TINA

So, you said she lives a block from here. Which direction?

JAMES

Why does that matter?

TINA  
To pick the correct drug store.  
Which direction?

JAMES  
West.

TINA  
The Rite Aid right off the freeway  
off-ramp. You got all this there -  
on your way to her place.

JAMES  
You're kind of scaring me.

TINA  
Five minutes in and out - tops. Am  
I right?

An embarrassed James, nods.

Tina rests her elbows on the counter - feigns a dreamy-eyed  
girl look.

TINA  
That really does sound special.

JAMES  
I know, I know. What makes it worse  
is that it's our anniversary. We  
met Valentine's day two years ago.

TINA  
Ahh...

JAMES  
Ahh what?

TINA  
She wanted an engagement ring. That  
was the something special.

JAMES  
Really?

TINA  
So you must not want to marry her.

JAMES  
Of course I do. She's everything to  
me. I just haven't found the right  
time to ask.



TINA  
Your two year anniversary falls on  
Valentine's Day and you couldn't  
think of the right time to ask?

James takes his smartphone from his pocket.

JAMES  
I'll send her a text.

TINA  
No! No text. Jesus, how thick are  
you?

Tina grabs the box of chocolates.

TINA  
I got a better idea.

She opens the box. Several pieces are missing.

TINA  
You ate some!?

JAMES  
I was hungry. Dinner wasn't going  
to be for a couple of more hours.

An eye roll from Tina as she goes to the Cash Register. She  
opens a drawer underneath the register, removes an ink pen  
and a small blank piece of paper.

She returns to James - hands him the pen and paper.

TINA  
What's her name?

JAMES  
Amy.

TINA  
Okay. Write - *Amy, I love you.*  
*Please marry me.*

James looks at her - confused.

TINA  
Go on. I mean unless you really  
don't want to be with her.

James writes on the paper.

TINA  
Okay - give it here.

James hands Tina the paper. Tina neatly folds it in half, tucks it underneath the center piece of chocolate, then puts the cover back on top.

TINA

Okay - pay attention now. I'm going to need you to focus.

James nods his head like an eager student.

TINA

You tell Amy that this note was in the box the whole time. That all you wanted her to do was open it so you could start your new life together. Got it?

JAMES

That's genius.

James picks up the box, the red heart shaped pillow and starts to reach for the roses.

TINA

Too late for those.

JAMES

You're a lifesaver!

James scurries towards the door. DING as he exits into the street. A satisfied smile crosses Tina's face.

**INT. AMY'S TOWNHOUSE - JUST A BIT LATER**

A teary-eyed AMY (32), clad in a black cocktail dress, holds the box of chocolates in one hand as she reads the hand-written note in her other.

An anxious James awaits her reaction.

Amy tosses the box of chocolates on the floor, wraps her arms around James' shoulders.

**INT. SULLIVAN'S BAR - DAY**

Tina at the bar wiping glasses.

Amy on a stool in front of her, reaching inside her purse.

**SUPER: THE NEXT DAY**

TINA  
So, you're happy?

AMY  
Ecstatic. I know he would've gotten  
there sooner or later. But you  
know, the sooner --

TINA  
The better.

AMY  
I can't thank you enough.

TINA  
Hey, it was your idea. Pretty  
clever.

Amy retrieves a hundred-dollar bill from her purse, places it  
on the counter.

AMY  
We agreed on a hundred - right?

TINA  
You know - keep it. It was my  
pleasure.

Tina slides the bill back towards Amy.

AMY  
You sure?

Tina nods as she reaches under the bar, retrieves the roses,  
still steeped in the beer pitcher.

AMY  
He put them in beer?

TINA  
He did indeed.

Tina removes a rose from the pitcher, hands it to Amy.

TINA  
For your memory book.

AMY  
Thank you.

TINA  
Label it - Rose Bud.

FADE OUT.