

Excerpt From Solo Album

GIMME SHELTER

The offices at the back of what would, in polite conversation, be referred to as an adult entertainment facility. In short, a strip club. A desk, a cheap rug. A safe at the back of the office.

DAWN is throwing on clothing, pacing. She has a gun with her.

DAWN

All right, man. Walk right through that door. Come on, Jerry. Let's go. Let's go. You hear me? Let's go? All right? All right.

I hate this fucking song, man. Man, something about the Stones. I hate it, how it gets those guys all pumped up. That's how you know they're coming to the end, when they start playing that "Start Me Up," when they start playing that "Rocks Off," when they start playing that "Bitch." Oh yeah, that "Bitch." That really gets them going. Can't forget that "Bitch." Come on, Jerry. Come on back here. I got something to show you. I ain't gonna shoot you. I just wanna have a little conversation. I ain't gonna shoot you. Well, maybe just a little bit.

(Picks up phone, dials.)

They said, "Aren't you dancing for the prize money tonight?" I said, "Naw, man. I got other plans. My boyfriend's birthday tonight, man. Naw, man. I'm tired out, man. I'm tired, man.

(To phone.)

Man, would you get off the fucking phone? Come on.

(Hangs up, redials.)

I mean, I ain't never gonna win it anyway, man. 'Cause the other girls, they bring their boyfriends, they bring their cousins, they probably bring their dads for all I know. I don't bring no one. I just do my job. I ain't gonna demean myself.

(Hangs up.)

Who the fuck are you talking to? Come on, man. Come on. Jesus Christ.

(Redials.)

No, I'm not gonna demean myself. I do my six hours. I hear those Stones tunes and then I take a powder. I'm not gonna degrade myself, dance with 50 other girls, try to out-dance them, try to get the guys all riles so they clap most for me, so they want me. It ain't worth the money. I got other ways of getting that money.

(To phone.)

Come on, man. Answer the fucking phone, will ya? "Customer has left the vehicle?" What the fuck does that mean? Where the fuck are you?

(Pause.)

Easy, man. Calm. Calm. Calm.

(Takes out baggie from pocket, puts a line of cocaine on the desk. Snorts it.)

You've been all through it. You've been all through this shit. Ain't nothing gonna go wrong, so long as you keep your cool. Calm calm calm calm.

(Lights up cigarette.)

Two hours from now. All over. Whole different life. Whole different world. This'll be just a memory. Two hours. That's nothing. Two hours ago? I was dancing, man. Dancing to fucking Billy Squier. They call it dancing. The girls, they don't like if you call them strippers; they're "dancers." I don't care what the fuck you call it, 'cause I've done dancing and this ain't it, man. This is making money. That's all it is. I walk in that door. I stay my six hours. I come out with money. A couple hundred bucks sometimes. Sometimes more. I don't even know what the fuck I do to get it. When I'm out there, man, I'm not looking at anything, I'm not talking to anyone, I just listen to the music. I don't see faces. They say shit to me and I respond. It's just one moment in time. It lasts a second and it lasts forever and when I come out, it's six hours later and I've got money and they're playing the Stones.

(Dials phone.)

I go home and I sleep it off, wake up 4:00, 5:00, whatever it is. Get breakfast, get dinner, whatever it is, then come back and do it all over again, man. Do it all over again. Make my money and sleep.

(Into phone.)

Mark. Yeah. Mark. Where the fuck are you? Where the fuck? All right. Yeah. Yeah. I'm fine. All right. Yeah. You're gonna be... Yeah. Okay. You're out there? Okay. No, I'm fine. I'm fine. Yeah, I'm fine. Yeah, all right. Yeah, okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Yeah, fine. Yeah, bye. Yeah, Mark? Yeah. All right. Okay. Yeah. Wait. Mark? Yeah, like any minute. Yeah. All set. Yeah, bye. Okay, bye. What? Okay, bye. Bye. Wait. Hello? Bye.

(Hangs up.)

Mark's a weird motherfucker. Deadly, too. Fuckin' deadly. Well he's gotta be. He's a cop. Crooked fucking cop and you gotta be twice as deadly to be that. Well, what's crooked? I don't know. Who knows anymore? You gotta do something wrong these days, if you wanna do what's right. So what's wrong? What's right? I don't know, but when he's around, people respect him and they don't do nothing and, if they fuck around, if they're fucking criminals, if they're fucking scumbags, if they're ducking on the wrong side, they're going to jail and if they know how to get around that jail shit, they're gonna wind up dead.

(Does a line of cocaine.)

I mean, this whole Jerry thing, it was his idea. Well, yeah, maybe it was our idea. I mean, it started out by something I said, but you know that what was just something I said, because I say shit. I mean, it's like I always mean it serious, well I mean I usually do, but I don't usually go

through with it, 'cause how do you go through with it, like "someone oughta kill this guy," you say it and you mean it and you'd be happy if it happened, but when it comes down to the doing of it, fuck it, it's like you're entering a whole new realm. Like video games, man. Like this is level 2, this is level 3. I mean, once you know how to get to level 3, you can do it all the time, but it's getting there the first time. Once you know how to get there, you can do it every time. Like you've passed through this realm, man, this fog, and there's a clearing. When I fire that gun, man, when he opens that safe and he takes out that prize money and I put this gun to his head and I fire it, there's gonna be another clearing. This fog, these nerves, this panic will lift and it will be a whole new realm.

Yeah, you can tell they're getting ready to wrap it up now. I don't know how these girls can do it night after night after night. I don't know how they can fucking cope. I always thought it would be a temporary thing. I mean, you make \$500, \$1,000, \$2,000 and that's it, you finish up the two credits at Northeastern and that's all behind you and you get your degree. Child education--that's what I got left--two credits for a BA, and I'm gonna get it now. But somehow, you know when you're in it, man, it just doesn't work like that. I mean, the money comes in, yeah, and it's decent money. It's good money. You don't pay taxes on it. But it's something about the way you get it or maybe the way that they give it to you that makes it so you can't hang onto it. Even if it's a thousand bucks, if it's in cash, in \$100 bills, you can't hang onto it. I have no idea what the fuck happens to it. It ain't like I have an extravagant lifestyle. I don't buy lots of fucking expensive clothes. I don't buy jewelry. I don't eat in fancy French fucking restaurants. I don't have a fucking uncontrollable habit. You should see how I live. I don't even have a fucking television set.

But this money? This ten fucking grand? It's not going anywhere, man. 'Cause I'm doing this right, man. 'Cause I've learned from my mistakes. 'Cause this money, I know exactly where it's going, man. I got one more semester. That's \$5,000. And there's \$5000 more to live on. Live on. Like live. Like a human being live. Like a nice place. Marks wants me to move in with him. He's got a house. Lake Villa. His wife, they're separate. Little complex around the lake. Yeah, it's tempting, but I'm like no. No. I can't do that now. 'Cause I don't need the distractions, 'cause

I'm gonna go through all that again and Mark, yeah, he's cool and he's into your own space, my own space and he's not demanding. He just says whatever.

He understands that all I'm gonna be doing is studying. No clubs. No drinks. No partying. Nothing like that 'cause if you want to change your life and live a certain way, you have to live that way every fucking second of your life. It's not a gradual thing. When that gun fires, when it fires, man, that's the curtain coming down. That's it that's that's close the fucking book, that's BAM, no more fucking all nighters, that's BAM, no

more waking up at 4:00, man, that's no more fucking one more line to keep me going, one more line, one more hit. No, that's it, man. That is it.

This little strip, this little strip of road with the neon signs and the greasers and the pimps and the bouncers and the Air Force kids and those fucking drug guys, man, with their suits. No, man. I ain't coming near this place. I'm not coming within a square fucking mile. All these girls, they don't exist. Jerry, he doesn't exist. I mean, by then he's dead. But he's more than dead. He doesn't exist.

Come on, man. Come on. Come on, Jerry. Let's go. He always waits to the last second. He always waits 'til they start playing "Bitch." He knows everybody's eyes are on him, waiting to see when he's going back to get the prize money outta the safe. Yeah, he likes to take his time and stroll back real slow, real slow with those black alligator shoes with the little heels on them this high. Yeah, he deserves to die, man. Everyone who goes into this business. Some of them, they're all right, they're doing a job, man. They're feeding their family. They're okay. They're just sad people. They don't know no better. They're fuck ups. They're ugly. They're fat. They got family trouble. They got hatred. For themselves and everybody.

But Jerry, man. He's a fucking...Jerry. Fuckin'. He's a...Fuck it. I get so fuckin' pissed 'cause when I see that guy, when I see, when I see what he does to those girls. I'm not talking about me. I knew what I was getting into. I'm not fucking stupid. I know about business. But the way, the way he preys on people. There is an evil there. In his eyes, man. You can see it in his eyes, 'cause they got nothing in 'em. And no one fuckin' sees it but me.

Broke a girl's arm once. Right here. Right backstage. 'Cause this guy, man. This customer. He said something to her. I don't know what the fuck it was, but it musta been something awful, and she fucking slapped him and got him right in the nuts and she's back here and she's changing and Jerry comes back. He always comes back when we're changing. And I don't know why it is, because we're pretty much naked from five minutes after we get here to five minutes before we leave, but when he's in here and we're getting dressed, man. It feels like the worst fucking violation. But anyway, he comes back here and he's smiling. He's always smiling. Even though you know from looking at him that he doesn't ever think anything's funny. And he walks up to her and he's still smiling and he says, "What you did out there was fucked up." And she kinda chuckles. Nervous. And he kinda chuckles. And he says, "There's no reason ever be rude to a customer. Whatever they say, whatever they do, you listen to it and you like it," and he grabs her arm and he twists it and he's twisting it and he's twisting it and she's crying and he's twisting it and he's twisting it and he lets her go and she collapses to the floor. And no one says a fucking word.

They're all just getting dressed, pretending that nothing happened, just glad it's not them. Talking about where they're going for drinks,

talking about that bald guy tips good and this guy don't tip shit and she's got her arm broke and she ain't saying a thing. She won't even talk to me when I ask her how she's doing. Just starts yelling at me. "I'm fine. I'm fine. Leave me alone. I'm fine." And I told Jerry, man. I told him this. I said, "I bet you wouldn't try that with me." He didn't say nothing.

(The Rolling Stones' "Bitch" plays in the background.)

There it goes, man. There it goes. The Rolling Fucking Stones. Never sounded as good to me as it sounds right now. Like a fucking anthem. I can see him now. He's making his way through the crowd. And they're all dancing, playing with guys' ties and bending down in front of 'em and smiling. Maybe he's grabbing a tit or two as he walks back here. He always fucking does that. Not 'cause he enjoys it. Just so he can say, "This is mine. I own this. I paid for this and it belongs to me." Yeah, I bet he's walking down that corridor right now, gliding down that dirty, blood-red carpet, stinking up the hallway with his cheap cigars saying, "This is my hallway. I own this. I paid for this and it belongs to me, man." Then he'll put the key in the door and open it and close it behind him and step back to the safe. He'll do the combination and then I step out. I won't say a word. I'll just let him see me. I want him to know it was fucking me. He'll just smile. I know he'll smile and then he'll start saying something smart. But he won't have a chance to get it out. The last sounds he'll here are the echoes of the bullets and the Stones playing loud, loud, loud. All you need is one shit, but I'll make it three just the same.

(Takes gun, raises it.)

In the chest, BAM! In the chest, BAM! In the chest.

(Accidentally, she fires the gun. It sounds, but it is blank.)

What the...

(She fires again. Another blank.)

What the fuck. Come on, man. Come on.

(Another blank.)

Come on. What the fuck, what the fuck.

(Another blank.)

Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. Jesus. Come on.

(Holds gun to her head. Fires it. A blank.)

Jesus.

(Goes to phone, dials.)

Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. Mark, come on. Come on, man. Answer. Come on, man. Pick it up pick it up, pick it up. Fuck. Let's go. Fuck, man. Come on.

(She fires the gun, now empty.)

"Customer has left the vehicle. Customer has left the vehicle."

(She redials.)

Pick up, man. Pick up. Pick up, Mark. Pick up. Fucking pick up. Jesus.

(She throws the phone to the ground.)
Get outta here, man. Outta here. Outta here.
(She swings open the door, gasps at what she sees.
She closes the door and locks it.)
Fuck, man. Fuck. Jesus. Fuck. Come on. Shit. Let's go. Come on.
(She runs to the window, tries to open it.)
Let's go. Let's fucking go.
(It does not open. She glances around the room.)
Come on. Oh shit. Oh Jesus. Come on. Oh shit.
(She collapses in front of the desk.)
Oh Jesus. Oh shit. Oh shit. Come on. Oh shit, man. Oh shit.

SIRENS RING OUT. THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

“Gimme Shelter” plays loud.

BLACKOUT

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Excerpt From The Blank Page

The Offices of The Void Magazine

DARREN, the editor-in-chief, is constructing music critic ZILCH about an article, while G-MAN (publisher), BLAKE (business editor), and LOUISE (assistant editor) look on.

DARREN

You had no intention of doing a serious interview, did you? You just went in thinking he was a jerk-off, called him one and hung up on him. What is that?

ZILCH

That is journalism. Ballsy, gonzo journalism. What the fuck's with you anyway? I've never even seen you read a fucking article before.

DARREN

Well maybe I'm starting now.

ZILCH

Not with Dreamboy Freddy you're not. Someone needs to stand up and be counted. Someone needs to state the facts. Some guy's gotta uncover the lies and reveal the truth: Dreamboy Freddy is a douchebag.

LOUISE

But if he's such a douchebag, why run the article at all?

G-MAN

'Cause he's famous and it's funny. I love reading that shit. I hate that puffball shit. No one wants to read about how talented someone is. They want to read about someone calling someone famous a douchebag. I want to run "Dreamboy Freddy is a Putz" in a 72 point banner headline across the entire spread. People would totally read that. Wouldn't you read that, Blake?

BLAKE

I'd totally read that.

LOUISE

1,500 words of that? You want your page and a half for ads, there you go.

ZILCH

Hey. Hey Louise? I have a thought I want to share with you: Fuck off.

BLAKE

Hey, focus. Focus. Louise, can't you focus on what you're doing?

DARREN

I think that's your cuttable spread right there.

G-MAN

No way. We're not cutting that. It's awesome. It's the best thing in the magazine.

DARREN

The best?

G-MAN

To me. But I'm not a reader; I'm a browser. I don't like to read. Nobody does. I like a nice big picture, a nice caption, a couple of cool pull quotes. I like to be able to walk away with a couple key bites of information and turn the page. Here, we've got Dreamboy Freddy. I look at a picture. Cool. We got some good shots?

ZILCH

Color slides.

G-MAN

Excellent. I look at the headline: "Dreamboy Freddy is a Jerk Off." Cool. I turn the page. I've learned something.

DARREN just looks at him.

G-MAN

Don't be such a fucking snob. It's just a fucking rock 'n' roll guy. You're an intellectual. You're a reader. Magazines for you people are going out. Nobody fucking reads them.

(Picks up a magazine, flips pages.)

Let me show you how I read a magazine. I pick it up, start browsing. I look at some pictures of some disks. Cool, I've got that one. What do they say about it? It sucks. Yeah, I think it sucks too. Maybe look at a couple of the other pictures. Turn the page. Some bands. Where're they playing? Cool. I might check them out. Keep browsing. Something about hip-hop. Hot chicks, big pants. I might read a little bit about that. Keep going. Couple pages of text. Pretty gray. Turn the page, browse some more. Oh, here's some restaurants. What's that place? Maybe I'll check it out. Look at some pictures of some food. Browse some more. Dreamboy Freddy. Oh, I've heard of him. What do they say about him? Oh, he's a putz! Yeah, I always thought that too. Browse some more. Turn the page. Oh,

my favorite part of the magazine: fashion. Cool. Hot chicks. Color pictures. Cool clothes. I'll stare at that for a couple minutes. Then I'm done. And that's how you read a magazine. Blake, isn't that how you read a magazine?

BLAKE

No. But I don't think most people are like me. I think most people are like you.

DARREN

So we're producing something to read for people who don't read?

G-MAN

Not something to read. Something to look at, because not a lot of people like to read, but everybody likes to look.

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