

APA-tizer 15

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The Stupidest Man I Know

Our cast:

Tom Bliss, a friend of mine from twenty years ago. He's not the nicest person I know, perhaps even the most dangerous person I know, and now he's the stupidest man I know.

Kelly Bliss, Tom's wife.

Dave Zins, another friend of mine from twenty years ago. Mutual friend of Tom's and perhaps one of the nicest people I know.

My wife, Aileen wakes me up at 5:30 in the morning, thrusting a phone in my face and says, "You talk to him, he's your friend!"

When I woke myself up enough to answer say hello, a familiar voice on the other end said, "Hello Ken? Guess what, I'm in jail!"

I recognized Tom Bliss' drug and alcohol slurred voice so I dragged myself out of bed. He'd been in trouble with the law before so I knew his story would be a good one.

"Ken, you know I've been out of work for six months. To support myself, I've been dealing crystal, you know, speed. Kelly and I were doing okay until a couple of months ago. Someone broke into my car and ripped off my supply. Of course, I still owed the Mexican Mafia for it, oh, did I tell you, my connection here in Phoenix is the Mexican Mafia? Anyway, I still owed them, but I convinced them to re-supply me and I'd owe them more.

About two weeks ago, someone broke into my apartment and ripped me off, including my new supply. Now I owed them some twenty-five thousand dollars and no way of paying them. They decided to kill me and Kelly for it, but I convinced them to let me help them pull a robbery to cover my debt.

One of them suggested Dave Zins' house. He and his wife had a big screen television,

stereo and lots of credit cards. They planned on tying Holly up and terrorizing her into giving up her cards and the access numbers for their ATM. I volunteered to do that part while the others moved the stuff into the cars. I figured they'd hurt her and if I did it, I could make sure she was safe.

We showed up at their house when I knew she'd be home, but Dave would be at work. We knocked on the door and force ourselves inside when she answered the door.

I tied her up and started threatening her while the others started moving stuff outside. I wouldn't have actually hurt her, I just wanted her to think that so she'd give us the information we wanted. Unfortunately I didn't tie her up very well, and when my back was turned, she got away and called the police. Then she ran outside, partly naked since I had ripped off her shirt in the process, and started yelling for help.

I called down to my partners that the police were on the way, we could already hear the sirens. They jumped in the cars and sped away. I ran down to my car only to find that my friends had taken my car keys with them and filled my car with molotov cocktails. I guess they were hoping that I'd get into a shoot out with the police and get blown up, or something. Anyway, I knew I couldn't outrun the cops so I grabbed my shotgun and waited for them to notice me.

The Mesa cops were efficient as usual. A bunch of cars pulled up and they all jumped out with guns drawn and suggested that I surrender.

I held them at bay, telling them I wasn't going to surrender yet. While they stood around, trying to figure out what to do, I quietly lit a cigarette. Once again, they insisted that I was surrounded and that I should surrender. I told them I wasn't about to surrender until I'd had a chance to think about it, and drink a beer.

I popped open a Bud and sipped it while contemplating suicide. I couldn't decide if that was better than jail. I drank my beer, and then finished off a bottle of Jack Daniels, and finished my cigarette. Then I put down my gun and put my hands up.

That was just a couple of hours ago. After I was booked, I decided to call you."

While Tom recounted this story to me, he kept slurring and stumbling over words. It seemed likely to me that he had been speeding for a number of days straight, maybe as long as a week. He was also drunk and under the influence of who knows what else. There's no doubt that he was suffering from a major case of paranoia, probably brought on by sleep deprivation and drug abuse.

That all happened six months ago. Since then, Tom "found God" and swore off all "impurities" like alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. I'm not convinced that he isn't working on "good behavior" for the benefit of the incarceration officials. We shall see.

The story you just read is true. The names haven't been changed because the story is true.

I haven't spoken to Tom in months, nor have he written except for the one "sober letter." On the other hand, Dave Zins came to Las Vegas six weeks ago. He and I haven't seen each other since 1983. We parted on unfriendly terms, but it seems that neither of us held a grudge.

Dave's "marriage" (it turns out that he and Holly never were married) fell apart not long after the robbery. He says that it was headed down hill anyway, that the robbery just sped the demise.

Dave also told me about his "expensive stuff." The wide screen TV was a fifteen year old front projection system and the stereo is a K-mart blue-light special.

I'll never know why Tom did the things he did. I've always known he was impulsive and obsessive, but never this stupid.

As with all people in this situation, I wish him the best of luck, but I don't think I'll invite him to my house anymore.

APA-tizer 15 is still from the mind of
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