

ROAD CLIPS

A series of vignettes presented in NYC at the Woman's project, 1999.

Time: 1997

PLACE: Detroit. Cemetary on Woodward.

A gravedigger, LONNY, is busy dragging a coffin over to an intended plot. AUDREY, a blind woman, is sitting quietly on a bench. LONNY doesn't notice her.

LONNY

"If I can't have you, I don't want nobody baby, if I can't have you oh no."

AUDREY

The BeeGees, 1978.

LONNY

God, you gave me a shock.

AUDREY

Sorry, I didn't see you.

LONNY

Are you planning on sitting here for awhile, I might get a little noisy.

AUDREY

If you don't mind. I like it here.

LONNY

(gets a piece of PAper from the side of the coffin and folds it neatly into a sacred little square)

AUDREY

What's it say?

LONNY

What? Oh, Walter Prescott.

AUDREY

AUDREY Andrews.

LONNY

What?

AUDREY

That's my name.

LONNY

My name is LONNY Shea.

AUDREY

Who's Walter?

LONNY

The dead guy.

AUDREY

Has he been dead long?

LONNY

Not more than two days.

AUDREY

When was the funera?

LONNY

There was no funeral. Just PAPers from the morgue with instructions to put him here.

AUDREY

I see. That's kind of sad. No one to give him a final farewell.

LONNY

I try not ot get emotionally involved. I just do my job.

LONNY starts digging the grave.

AUDREY

It must be a nice job.

LONNY

Gravedigging ain't bad.

AUDREY

What's it PAy?

LONNY

\$11 an hour. I got a raise when I came here. Used to dig down south in Indiana.

AUDREY

I like cemetary's. They're so peaceful.

LONNY

Have you been blind all your life?

AUDREY

No.

LONNY

Was it an accident?

AUDREY

No, it was someone's else's accident.

LONNY

What do you mean?

AUDREY

A bus driver killed my deaf brother.

LONNY

How did that make you blind?

AUDREY

It was a build up. Sometimes emotional stress can cause blindness. It's supposedly temporary. It's been going on for a year and a half.

LONNY

Is your brother buried here?

AUDREY

No, he's buried in Philadelphia. I've haven't lived there for years.

LONNY

Did you see him get killed?

AUDREY

No, I heard the screech of the bus, the brakes, and then the loud bag. After that a piercing wail. I didn't need to see it. I knew it was my brother.

LONNY digs vigorously.

LONNY

So, where do you live around here?

AUDREY

I don't. Just staying here temporarily, until my sight comes back.

LONNY

Do you have family out here?

AUDREY

Nope.

LONNY

So you kind of stumbled into this place, thought it was a PArk.

AUDREY

No, I have been making a journey out of visiting cemeteries nationwide.

LONNY

Why?

AUDREY

Because I enjoy meeting people under real conditions. I've noticed that people are quite honest when it comes to death.

LONNY

I'm afraid to die.

AUDREY

Take for instance, your client Walter here. He obviously was unimportant to his people, otherwise they would have given him a proper funeral.

LONNY

Maybe his people Passed away.

AUDREY

Maybe, but if he were alive, no relation would ever admit to his face that they weren't going to give him a decent burial.

LONNY

I see.

LONNY digs very haphazardly at the dirt. He is disturbed.

AUDREY

I don't. That's why we're here. We will give Walter his last rites.

LONNY

So you fancy yourself a death expert.

AUDREY

Oh yes, I know what it feels like.
Lights up a smoke for a break.

LONNY

How's that?

AUDREY

When I became blind. That was like the death sentence. Friends fell away like dominoes. First there were calls of condolences and flowers galore. The scent was pure torture. Then constant whispers like I smelled bad or something. I did forget to bathe someday, because I was just lost in time with nothing to gage my days. I learn to silence myself. Not to want. That's death.

LONNY

What do you miss seeing the most?

AUDREY

I miss seeing the glint in people's eyes, the way I made them happy to see me. Currently, I'm out of friends.

LONNY

I don't have many friends either. Different circumstances, but I'm a drifter too.

AUDREY

What did you do?

LONNY

What didn't I do? I robbed 7-11's. I gambled, I drank, I lied. I lost.

AUDREY

Did you do time?

LONNY

No.

AUDREY

Had it hard, didn't you?

LONNY

No, I had it easy. I was born bad. I stole my Mama's wedding ring and sold at the age of six.

AUDREY

What did you buy with the money?

LONNY

A gun.

AUDREY

You didn't shoot anybody did you?

LONNY

No, the gun was kind of a romantic idea. I was planning my own suicide.

AUDREY

Why?

LONNY

Well, my Daddy committed suicide, and I missed him.

AUDREY

Why did he do it?

LONNY

My mother was cheatin' on him and he was a drinker.

AUDREY

Sometimes I want to die but since I lost my sight, smell has provided an entirely different PAth. Hearing has become orgasmic at times.

LONNY

What sounds do you like?

AUDREY

(PAuse) I like the sound of you shoveling the earth and I like the smell of the soil. It's intoxicating. I like to roll in the leaves. The dampness of foliage is reminiscent of someone's kiss at dawn.

LONNY puts out his cigarette.

LONNY

AUDREY, would you like me to kiss you?

AUDREY

I don't know yet. Let's get back to Walter.

LONNY drags the coffin around so that AUDREY can feel the wood.

LONNY

AUDREY, this is Walter. Go ahead and feel him.

SHE strokes the coffin.

AUDREY

Oh Walter. You're so smooth. You need not worry. LONNY and I are here. We're putting you in a safe spot.

LONNY

I think Walter might have been a convict.

AUDREY

What makes you think that?

LONNY

Well, it's mainly my job to bury the unwanted deceased.

AUDREY

Why?

LONNY

I volunteered for this job.

AUDREY

So what was Walter in for?

LONNY

I didn't really want to alarm you, but he was put to death by lethal injection.

AUDREY

So Walter was a killer?

LONNY

Yes, but he's PAid for his mistake.

AUDREY

Walter, you must have been very brave. We're here now.

LONNY

He was a good man.

AUDREY

How do you know that?

LONNY

I started visitng him six months before his execution.

AUDREY

Why?

LONNY

We kind of knew each other?

AUDREY

How?

LONNY

He was my brother.

AUDREY

He was your brother?

LONNY

He had so many difficulties. After my mother took up with the men in the entire town, Walter went a little haywire, he was always in trouble with the law. The cops were just waiting to put him away, so he finally did something just to satiate them. But he died an innocent lamb.

AUDREY

I'm so sorry.

LONNY

Walter and I never got that close growing up because he was in and out of juvy homes, but the last six months, I really got to know him. I think he must have been a lot like my old man. He'd cry sometimes, and tell me he loved the way I used to kiss my Dad when he was drunk.

AUDREY

LONNY?

LONNY

Yes.

AUDREY

Why don't you take a break.

LONNY

That's a good idea.

AUDREY

Sit down on the bench here.

LONNY

(he does) AUDREY.

AUDREY

Would you like to kiss me now.

LONNY

Yes, I think I would.

LONNY strokes AUDREY'S face. He gives her a long kiss.

AUDREY

You taste like cherries and tobacco.

LONNY

You taste so good. (he kisses her again) It's been so long since I kissed a woman.

AUDREY

And we have Walter as a witness.

LONNY

Walter would have liked you.

AUDREY

Wouldn't it be nice if Walter and my brother meet in heaven?

LONNY

Just imagine, Walter will be laughing, playing poker with Daddy and your brother will hear.

Black-out. END of play