

PHONE CALL

By

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Characters

Nick, 70's
Young Couple (optional, non-speaking)

Setting: City Street, street fair scenes in the background. On stage is a bench facing the audience. An old man using a cane (NICK) walks onto the stage. He sits on the bench putting his cane against the side of the bench. He pulls out a cell phone pushes some buttons and holds the phone to his ear.

NICK
Hey, it's Nick, how are you?

NICK
Yeah, I know, I could be better too.

NICK
Right. Well, I just wanted to talk, it's been a while.

NICK
I know, I know, but what's the harm in picking up the phone once in a while? Besides, I have something I wanted to discuss with you.

NICK
No, it won't take long; I can't talk too long anyway. I'm at the Art Festival, and there are lots of people around, it's pretty crowded.

NICK
Yes, I remember. In fact, being here is what reminded me of you. Remember when we'd come here every year? I miss that.

NICK
Okay, okay, no talk of the past, sorry. So listen, I've been thinking of you and wanted to make sure you were okay.

NICK
Well that's good. You know, though, that times are getting tough. In fact, I took my stocks and converted them into something safer.

NICK

No, no, not foolish at all. Hey, I plan on living to at least ninety-four, so I'll need money to last another twenty years or so.

NICK

That's true but the risk is a lot smaller. You know I'm not a man who likes to take risks anyway. Now I've got municipal bonds and other mutual funds that are bond heavy. You should think about doing the same thing.

NICK

I just worry about you that's all. You can be vulnerable sometimes you know.

NICK

No no, I didn't mean that in a bad way, it's just that sometimes you tend to let things go you know? You have to admit that.

NICK

Well still, this is no time to stand pat. I just want to make sure you're thinking about this stuff. Trust me, things aren't going to get better any time soon.

NICK

Of course I believe that, I wouldn't have said it if I didn't think so. And don't look for Congress to do anything to help.

NICK

Yes, I know how you feel about politics, and I won't get into it, but I only mention it to get across that you have to look out for yourself. Those do-nothings in Washington won't be doing anything soon to turn things around, and the things they do only put us deeper into debt.

NICK

Right, right, you need to really think about this. I'm telling you, it's the best thing to do.

[Young couple walks slowly on the stage, holding hands and each with an ice cream cone. The young man gestures with his head toward the bench.]

NICK

I'm just worried about you dear, you know I care. I just want to be sure you have some security. Is there anything wrong with that?

[The couple reaches the bench and sits down at the end opposite NICK.]

NICK

No no, I'm not talking down to you, I'd never do that.

NICK

Yea, weather's good...oh, I get it, changing the subject.

NICK

Oh geez, disgusting.

NICK

Oh, just some young punk with his jeans drooping practically to the ground. What the hell's wrong with these kids?

NICK

Yeah, crazy. And the way they talk these days all that slang. The other day I heard some kid bragging that he was blogging all day. I mean in my day I had stamina like that, but I didn't brag...huh?

NICK

Well how the hell am I supposed to know that, I don't even own a computer.
[*Couple elbow each other and giggle.*]

NICK

No, I can't keep up with all that crap, iPods, ITouch, iPad, iPhone.

NICK

Me? I pee that's about it.

[*Couple look at each other and laugh. NICK eyes them warily*]

NICK

Listen, I'll have to lower my voice, some people just sat down on the bench next to me and I think they're eavesdropping.

[*The couple glance at NICK and lean toward him as though trying to hear better.*]

NICK

Think I should? Oh, why the hell not.

NICK

[*Raises his voice*] Yes I have them on, of course.

NICK

Great absorption, yes.

[Couple look at each other and giggle, nudging each other the whole time.]

NICK

In fact I'm sitting in my shit right now.

[Couple stop laughing, sit up in shock, slowly turn their heads toward NICK and start sniffing. They stand up slowly, take a few slow steps, and then walk away quickly off the stage.]

NICK

[Laughing] Oh man, you should have seen the look on their faces. That was fun.

NICK

Yeah, they sure can be. Oh God, someone just walked by with a doggie stroller. Third one I've seen today. Wow, can you imagine? Why bring a dog if you can't walk it? Some of these people treat their dogs better than kids.

NICK

What's that? Oh yeah, good one. I agree, better than treating their kids like dogs.

NICK

Yeah, we always did see some sights didn't we? I'm telling you, if you were here today you'd be making some snide remarks. Plenty of material here that's for sure. We'd be laughing our asses off.

NICK

No, it hasn't changed. Still weird. That dog also had a string of pearls around its neck. Probably real too.

NICK

Yeah, I remember that. Earlier I saw a woman with a pet skunk.

NICK

No, carrying it around, like a child. Drew a crowd everywhere she went.

NICK

It better have been! No, I'm sure it was de-scented. Still not something you see every day.

NICK

Oh yeah, that was something too, I almost forgot about that. Hey, a little while ago I passed by some kids, one had a green snake wrapped around his neck, and the other was carrying one ferret and had another in the hood of his sweatshirt.

NICK

Um, no, I don't think they eat snakes, no, I'm sure of it.

NICK

Oh no, don't feel stupid, stop. Hey, remember Bullets?

NICK

Yeah, the real pointy bras, right. Well, she moved back up north.

NICK

I don't know, something about being near her grandkids.

NICK

I wouldn't say miss her, but yeah, she was okay. Hey, ready for this one? It will be hard to find a girl of her caliber.

NICK

C'mon, you like it, that was a pretty good one, admit it.

NICK

Who?

NICK

Oh yeah the RDQ, yeah, she's still around.

NICK

It is too what we called her, built like a longshoreman, but wore those short skirts, what a sight.

NICK

Right, looked like a Roller Derby Queen. Had the softest voice too, remember?

NICK

I know. Imagine someone dating her just based on a phone call, man they'd be in for a freakin shock.

NICK

It is not!

NICK

No it isn't, "freakin" is not a swear word.

NICK

I know you don't, that's why I don't swear in front of you.

NICK

The hell I do damn it!

NICK

The show's good, yeah...another subject change huh?

NICK

Anyway, yes there's lots of good, interesting stuff. You'd like it. Expensive though.

NICK

Yes, I guess that would go along with your tastes. Hey, do you have any plans on being in the area in the next few weeks?

NICK

No, nothing like that, but I miss you, it's been such a long time, you know?

NICK

Yeah, I know, it's just that I saw so many things here today that reminded me of you. Art work that you like, clothes that would look great on you, it seemed like everywhere I turned I'd see something that made me think of you.

NICK

No, I know, but I get so lonely some times, and thinking of you just makes it worse. I mean here I am in a sea of people and I feel so alone.

NICK

I know, I know, but it's not easy to move on. Easier said than done. I try. I try to get out among people, but sometimes that makes it worse. Seeing people enjoying each other's company makes me think of the good times we had together and how much I miss that.

NICK

Yes, those days are gone, but they're all I have left.

NICK

I know, I know, you shouldn't dwell on the past, but the past is all I have, I have no future.

NICK

No, I don't mean financially, I mean emotionally, personally.

NICK

Right, right, I'm sounding like an old fart, somehow I knew you'd say that.

NICK

No, no, it's okay. So what do you say, can you make it down here?

NICK

I understand, but it doesn't have to be anything more than having dinner together, or spending a day at the museum or something. C'mon, what do you say?

NICK

But you can make it happen, I know you can.

NICK

Oh man, don't do this, I just needed to hear your voice again, that's all.

NICK

No, I won't, I won't.

NICK

Yes, I'm okay, I'll be okay.

NICK

Right, right, but think about what I said, okay?

NICK

I miss you Steve, I miss you so much.

NICK

I know you do. I just had to talk to you. It's been ten years since the cancer took you from me and it's not been easy for me.

NICK

Yes, yes, I know, can't dwell on the past. Like you always used to say, "deal with it," right?

NICK

Yeah, I should get going too.

NICK

Okay, you too. Miss you, love you. Bye.

Lights Fade to Black

End of Play