

From A Night Near the Sun
By Don Zolidis

TROY, 40ish, a small-time drug dealer.
KRISTI, 16, a frightened punk girl.

(KRISTI has run away from home after having a fight with her boyfriend. She ran into TROY, a small-time drug dealer, and fled with him across state lines. In this scene, TROY has taken KRISTI to a dingy hotel room.)

TROY

Good thing ya ran into me, huh?
(short pause)

You and Andy have a fight?
(short pause)

Well all right, screw him then. He don't know what he's got, huh? What'd you guys fight about, if you don't mind me asking.

KRISTI

Nothing.

TROY

Oh yeah man me and Louise fight about nothing all the time. It's her favorite fucking thing to fight about. First it's I'm not loving enough. Then it's I accidentally screwed the baby-sitter.

KRISTI

You have kids?

TROY

No, which is why she got suspicious about the baby-sitter.

KRISTI

Oh.

TROY

Joke! Fucking joke come on! Have a sense of humor!

KRISTI

Sorry.

TROY

Nah, she wants a divorce, though. Keeps leaving little hints around. Like some other guy's underwear. Gotta hand it to the woman, she's subtle. I keep finding these size 46

briefs around—who's she fucking, some whale? No way she's getting that divorce, though.

KRISTI

Why doesn't she just divorce you?

TROY

She loves me too much. Mostly she's just talk. She wouldn't know what the fuck to do without me. She'd lose that whole 'married woman' appeal she's got going on.

KRISTI

Yeah.

TROY

You all right? Did he hit you?

KRISTI

No.

TROY

He hits you I kick his fucking ass, okay?

KRISTI

He didn't hit me.

TROY

You can tell him I said that too. We're friends and all, but I draw the line somewhere. When I got a friend who hits his woman, that's it, I don't associate with them anymore. They're scum.

KRISTI

That's not what it's about.

TROY

Good. That's good.

(Pause)

You want something to eat?

KRISTI

No.

TROY

You want a beer or something? We could go to a bar—

KRISTI

How would I get in?

TROY

We'll just pretend you're my daughter. There's a whole law about that—it's okay to drink if you got your legal guardian there. It's supposed to help out the alcoholics. You know, pass on the wisdom from one generation to the next.

KRISTI

Oh.

TROY

Joke! Come on, Jesus!

KRISTI

I don't want to go to a bar.

TROY

I got some other shit, too, you know—you want anything, you just tell me.

KRISTI

I'm okay.

TROY

You don't look okay.

KRISTI

I'm just a little tired, that's all.

TROY

What's this all about, huh?

KRISTI

Nothing.

TROY

It ain't about nothing. You come up to me in Main Street and ask me to go to fucking Illinois, I'll take ya, sure, no problem, but... It just don't make any sense to me, know what I'm saying?

KRISTI

I just wanted to be away for a little while.

TROY

I'm just saying it's a little strange is all.

KRISTI

Yeah.

TROY

Maybe I oughta get out of here and let you... uh... do whatever.
(He does not move.)

KRISTI

I think you should stay.
(Pause. TROY looks at her.)

TROY

All right. I'm supposed to stop by Andy's tonight, but I'll stay.

KRISTI

What for?

TROY

Delivery.

KRISTI

Oh.

TROY

You involved in that?

KRISTI

No.

TROY

You ever tried it?

KRISTI

Yeah.

TROY

You like it?

KRISTI

Sure.
(TROY produces the same sheet of acid (without the quarter of it missing))

TROY

You want some?

KRISTI

Yeah.

TROY

I don't know, Kristi. I don't think this is such a good idea.

KRISTI

No, it's okay, I've got some money—

TROY

Don't worry about it. You're not paying for anything.

KRISTI

But I've got a little bit—

TROY

Nah, we'll just take it out of theirs. Just that maybe all's you need is a night's sleep—and this ain't the most conducive thing in the world for it, know what I mean?

KRISTI

Maybe it will help me sort things out.

TROY

Maybe.

KRISTI

Come on. We'll both do it.

TROY

Obviously. I'm not gonna sit here and let you trip by yourself.

KRISTI

Please?

TROY

All right. How many you want?

KRISTI

How strong is it?

TROY

Moderate.

KRISTI

Three.

TROY

Three?

KRISTI

Should I do more?

TROY

How many times you done this?

KRISTI

Just once.

TROY

Aw shit, Kristi, I don't know—

KRISTI

I'll owe you a favor.

TROY

You don't owe me any favors. Understand that. No favors. Got it?

KRISTI

Yeah.

TROY

Three, huh? All right, three it is.

(He picks up a tiny strip of acid in tweezers and holds it up.)

Open your mouth.

(KRISTI does so, and he drops it on her tongue. He takes a noticeably larger strip for himself and puts it in his mouth. Note to the director: the effects of acid are slow enough so that there shouldn't be any noticeable symptoms until the stage directions say so.)

Man, they're gonna kick me out of the PTA for this shit.

KRISTI

You don't have any kids.

TROY

Yeah, I know, I go anyway. It's a great place to pick up chicks. Joke!

KRISTI

Oh. How many did you do?

TROY

Seven.

Fuck.
KRISTI

You build up a tolerance to the shit.
TROY

I didn't know that.
KRISTI

Brain gets used to it. Brain gets used to just about anything, huh?
TROY

It tingles.
KRISTI

Yeah it tingles.
TROY

KRISTI
(Denorex shampoo commercial)
The tingle tells me it's doing more. `We put high grade acid on one half of this person's tongue and a department store brand on the other. The high grade side, it tingles, that tells me it's doing more. The department store brand, no tingle.

So what do you wanna do?
TROY

Or it could be like Mento's. You ever see those commercials?
KRISTI

I don't watch TV. Rots your brain.
TROY

KRISTI
Well it's these breath mints, right? And basically they're just a license for you to do something really stupid—like, if you fuck up real bad, you just pop a Mento's and life is hunky dory.

What?
TROY

KRISTI
So I'm thinking, fuck up in life, pop some acid, and everything will be cool. Huh?
(She does the Mento's smile thing with the tweezers)
Okay, it loses something in the translation.

TROY

I guess.

KRISTI

When do you swallow it?

TROY

You don't. You keep it on your tongue. Let me see.
(KRISTI sticks out her tongue)
 Yeah, just like that. And you just leave it like that till it dissolves, all right?
(KRISTI keeps her tongue stuck out, making a strange face)

KRISTI
(tongue still out)

Okay.

TROY

What the hell are you doing?

KRISTI

I don't know.

TROY

You better not point that thing at me unless you intend to use it.
(KRISTI laughs and puts her tongue back in her mouth. Pause.)
 We should get some music.
(TROY finds the little clock-radio (it doesn't actually have to be on stage) and turns it until he finds a late-night blues station from Chicago. Note about the music: It should begin quietly and grow steadily louder throughout these flashbacks. If the effect is possible, it should also begin to turn strange towards the end.)
 Yeah, right there. This is gonna sound like a gospel fucking choir in about an hour.

KRISTI

Should we go for a walk or something?

TROY

Nah, it's cold out.

KRISTI

You're right.
(Pause)

TROY

Kristi... Why are you doing this?

KRISTI
(truthfully)

I don't know. You ever do something and not think about it?

TROY

Depends on what it is.

KRISTI

And you wake up in the middle of it, and you have no idea why you started, but you're in it now—so you just gotta... finish?

TROY

Maybe.

(KRISTI begins nervously rubbing her hands together)

KRISTI

Do you like your life, Troy?

TROY

What's that supposed to mean?

KRISTI

Do you like who you are?

TROY

Yeah.

KRISTI

Really?

TROY

Sometimes.

KRISTI

Which times?

TROY

I don't know. I mean, yeah, there are people out there who got it better than me, but—

KRISTI

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about do you like who you are as a person?

TROY

Mostly.

KRISTI

You're forty years old and you're doing acid in a hotel room with a sixteen year-old girl, you like that?

TROY

What are you getting at?

KRISTI

It's a question.

TROY

You're tripping me out, Kristi.

KRISTI

Think about it. You ever think about that?

TROY

Well, maybe I'm not where I wanted to be in life, okay, all right. I get by.

KRISTI

That's what you wanted in life? To get by?

TROY

See, the problem with you kids is that you got all these big ideas in your head. Like, what should my life mean? Where should I go? All that shit. It's not about that. It's about getting by. All those big questions, they don't mean shit. All it is is, how'm I gonna pay my rent?

KRISTI

That's it, huh?

TROY

That's it. And love's got nothing do with it either, I know what you're thinking.

KRISTI

That's why you're still married?

TROY

What the fuck does that have to do with anything?

KRISTI

Well it's just...

TROY

So what. I could give a rat's ass about that. So there's a person who lives in my house who I... thought I cared for way back when. Big fucking deal. That's gone, you know? That's the past. And sometimes you remember what it was like—when you and her were young and you still fucking...

(loses the word)

KRISTI

What?

TROY

When you still had a reason. For something. But you grow outta that. That gets squeezed out of you. By what? By fucking getting by, that's what. And so you're left with, what, some kinda shadow from twenty years ago hanging around? What can you do? You can sit and fucking whine about it, or you can go on. I go on.

(short pause)

So I got a question for you. You're sixteen years old, you're in a hotel room doing acid with a forty-year old man, you like that? That how you envisioned your life?

KRISTI

Not at all.

TROY

Well?

KRISTI

Well what?

TROY

Got any theories on that?

KRISTI

None I'd care to share.

TROY

(laughing)

That's how it's gonna be, huh?

KRISTI

Sure. Why not?

TROY

Just making sure.

KRISTI

Of what?

The rules.

TROY

And what are they?

KRISTI

You know, there's something about drugs. Makes life steeper. Huh? And it's a fun fucking ride sometimes.

TROY

All the way down, huh?

KRISTI

Oh yeah. All the way down. That's the best thing about acid—you realize there is no floor. You feelin' it yet?

TROY

It's kind of warm... in my fingers.

KRISTI

Yeah. That's where it starts. That's where it starts.

TROY