

ON HOLD by Gary Young ©2008 Gary Young
~~EXCERPTS FROM SEVERAL SECTIONS~~

Picture of a silhouette a man resting face on hand, just showing head, hand, shoulder. Start with slide of this projected on curtain, preferably life-size. Open curtain to reveal same position, and lights slowly reveal the actor.

*Pre-show:
intermittent radio channel changing with rock and roll music, commercials, tunes in on middle of the announcement for Dr's show, omitting her name.*

Holding for the screener: run to get twizzler. run to get water; try to run and have to sit to hear phone; replace phone several times.

Wrestle with phone. Use duct tape before figuring out to use speaker.

MUSIC "Maybe"

and intro that follows below.

VO. ON THE RADIO AS HOUSE LIGHTS GO DOWN:

...network. If you're alone, tired, depressed, if you have a life issue that needs a sympathetic ear, this is your show. You dictate the terms. So put your nervousness away because we're all in the same boat, together. Think how nervous I'd be if no one called! You listeners out there, you'll learn from the people on the air today. You callers will be holding on the phone for a long time in some cases, but remember, when I take your call, PLEASE turn off the radio.

But first, I have a book that I want to recommend. It's called Loss...

*HE turns down the sound,
deciding to dial the phone.
Dials a few numbers,
hesitates, puts phone down. A
beat, grabs phone and dials
again. The phone is answered
almost immediately*

Uh, uh...

*Hangs up quickly. Dialing
phone, turning radio down

up, abruptly*

(excitedly) Yes. My name? Uh, it's Chad. You're the screener?

make disapproving face

I'm not shouting. *(softly)* I'm a little nervous.
(quickly) Yes. I'm okay. Yes, yes. yes. I'm okay. Yes I'm okay...in a no sort of way. Huh? My nerves: they're dancing around. I think there's a holiday they're observing. Oh, my question? Pardon? C-h-a-d. Pardon? It's...well, sort of a relationship question, or more like a question about direction in life. Or more of a problem that I've been having over and over. Is that okay? Huh? Uh, the third one. That's the one about over and over. A problem I've been having...Yes, I listen often...once in a while...often. Sure. I'll tell her I listen all the time. Okay, I'll tell EVERYBODY I listen all the time. I want to talk about...Yes. I know I have to ask a question. It's like Jeopardy. No discussion without a question. No, I don't think this is a game show. Pardon? Oh, it's my first time calling...any talk radio show. Because I'm nervous. Well you wouldn't have to be nervous. You're not on the radio.

Okay, specifically, I want to talk about something that has been worrying me...life. *(laughs and stops)* No, I guess that's not funny. I'll try not to be nervous when my call is taken. I'll drink some herbal tea in the meantime, to calm me. No, I won't have to go to the bathroom. No, especially during the call, I won't flush.

How many people are ahead of me? Hard to say? Does she take the callers in order that they come in? So there's no guarantee at all. Yes, I understand that some calls take longer, but she never takes very long on any one call,

hardly ever. Okay, she does. Whatever. Yes, I'll tell her I'm a big fan. Yes, I'll tell her it's my first time calling. Why does she need to know that? She gets a lot of calls from him? How do you know I'm not him? Hello? Hello? Damn.

Pacing, deciding to call again, talking to himself, Calls again, using disguised voice.

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Maybe I'll tell you about a little incident that happened to me, really happened to me, not pretend, like in a theatrical setting, to get you all excited and all, but really. Of course, if you want to get excited....

*sip of water*

### **MUSIC: WHY MUST I BE A TEENAGER IN LOVE**

This is how I got started on my road to immaturity. Didn't get started. I don't know. Don't worry, it gets better than it sounds.

### ***I'm fourteen and I am left with questions.***

*(baseball glove, bubble gum)*

So many unexplainable things have happened to me during my life, that I have tried to remain open to outrageous ideas that defy the current understanding of physics. Such as the election of George Bush and Paris Hilton. ESP, foretelling the future, afterlife existence, reincarnation and the other *X-Files* themes are widely believed. Is ESP a product of psychological manipulation, wishful thinking, naiveté, faith? Yes, all of the above, but maybe, just maybe...

Some seemingly small paranormal experiences may defy logic and even immediate detection, but they can touch us and change our lives

I'm fourteen. I just hit puberty. I was late. Not for lack of trying. I'm what you might call a sexual apprentice.

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Music: Ravel's Bolero begins

When I dated, as a teenager, I liked my women like I like my eggs, over easy. Now I'm mature and I know that we're more than the sum of our private parts.

In the dating world, as an immature but ripe man I meet a fascinating variety of women. I see lots of hurt and anger in the faces of many of those women.

During one brief phone encounter, I hear a strange sound on the other end, like muffled distress. I am about to let it pass when she proffers, "Excuse me. I'm depilating." She couldn't stay pilated for the length of a short phone conversation? It's not like I prefer my women overly pilified, but I feel that depilation is something that you don't share on a first date. I think seventh date, at the earliest. Unless your pilitia is a forest...I'm getting off the point.

Then I tried singles ads.

It's a little difficult to get started, but it's not as bad as it seems. Or maybe it's worse.

The process is simple, really. After retrieving phone numbers, I then become nervous and ponder whether to make the call. Judging from her voice, what does she look like? From her voice, is she warm and loving? From her voice, is she honest? Well, you can't tell from a voice.

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## ***My personal physics lesson***

Food is a metaphor for life, isn't it? Somehow, during our time together, I pick up on my father's obsession with food and link it to his deeply felt sadness toward his life. To this day, to me, food is a metaphor for sadness, except ice cream. And Girl Scout cookies. And a Mai Tai served poolside or at the beach, especially Kapalua. And maybe a nice slice of pizza. And I remember my Bar Mitzvah cake. It was in the shape of a torah. I ate Leviticus. I hear that Deuteronomy was good too.

So, my father takes ill. He has a...well, they aren't sure. They're never sure at first, Not until they do the...things they need to do in order to find out. Well by now they have done the things. He is partially ambulatory. And his right eye droops in a strange sneering way that reminds me of...him. And he can barely speak.

They allow him a little shore leave. A brief trip across the street to a little park. They do that sometimes for some of their patients, especially a certain category of patient.

They provide me with this...rickety...wheelchair. It serves. I put his feet in the stirrups and looked up into his eyes. They are a little...they were...somewhere else. His face...nothing. He'd have done well at poker that day.

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 Father points vaguely

FATHER

(Unintelligible word) - grabs the cigar abruptly, puts in mouth and straightens up some. Once he has his cigar, we can understand his words, in a voice which sounds like George Burns or Jackie Mason and a definite New York rhythm. The cigar is never actually lit.

I never light them, not for the last ten years.

Pay attention.

My doctor says I should give up sex at my age. I told him at my age I need anything I can do to keep off the streets and out of trouble. Then my doctor died. And I'm still having sex. But not at the moment.

This cigar tastes like shit. I guess that's why I like it.

I know you can understand every word now. That's amazing, isn't it? That I should find my voice in a borsht belt comedian. *Shrugs.* Me, I can't even understand most of the time now. This way, I seem to get around the bad stuff and talk. I discovered this process while a cute nurse was giving me a sponge bath. It's amazing what you can discover during a sponge bath. Yes. I forgot it was even there. But the little fella perked right up...

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 Now listen. Look. Learn. You know, the best thing about already being in the hospital, they have an early bird special on colonoscope. You should try it. You're such a tight ass anyway, it might help. You should know, my doctor kept humming "Some enchanted evening" He had a lovely

voice. The camera went ALL the way up there. I think it got lodged for a second under my left arm pit. I asked for a copy of the video. Reality shows are in. Gives a new meaning to the term "residuals," doesn't it? So they asked me how I was feeling. I gave a look. You know. A look. The think is up my ass, how should I feel. So I said I felt so so. Actually, I was definitely more so than so.

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Now you're forty-two. You can choose your own goddamn success and failure. You don't need me. Okay, I'm your father, so you need me, but just a little. I had nothing to do with your success. Okay, I helped in some ways, but you did it on your own, and your failures, I don't even know them because you don't talk about them. Like you're embarrassed to be a human being or something. It's not so bad, being human. Some of my best friends...except for the poker guys, they're all ass holes. Like me. They are animals. And they fart and it's very ugly all the time. And they always have that white crap on the side of their lips. What are they too old to wipe. I don't want go go any further with this thought. Am I getting off the subject? I had to say fart at least once. When you were young, you thought I invented farts. I'd be a rich man. He he.... But you still are listening? Let me see your eyes. (pause) Boo! (blows at him). That was a test. 78 is passing.

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You know what is? You worry. You think you're too, I don't know, too or not enough, everything. Am I right? Let's see. You're too short. Yes? You're too dumb. You're too this, you're too that. Because everyone cares. Because everyone is more perfecter than you.

Don't blame me. Don't blame yourself. Don't blame. Don't waste your time bl-aming. Be what you want to be. Just do the work.

Let me tell you something. This is what is. Now, listen. Everyone is too fat; everyone is too thin; everyone is too bald, too hairy, too ugly, to pretty, too smart, too dumb, too compassionate, too naive, too insensitive, too sloppy, to neat, too smelly, too perfummy, too whatever else I left out.

You see what I'm saying here? Just relax. I'm telling you.

It's probably hard to suddenly relax, because you're the tightest ass I ever met, but JUST RELAX GODDAMN IT. You're not going to change, but neither is Hershel Feinberg who has three disgusting moles on his nose since he was a kid, and never even tried to remove them. You talk to him and all you can do is look at his nose or look away. And he has forty-nine gazillion dollars. And a heart condition. 5 bypasses. 4 wasn't enough. And he chews with his mouth open.