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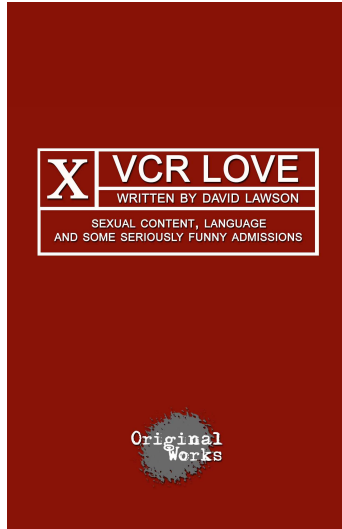
SLUT

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Trade Edition, 2013

ISBN 978-1-63092-009-8

*Also Available From
Original Works Publishing*



VCR Love by David Lawson

Synopsis: A solo performance about the one thing everybody enjoys alone but never speaks of in mixed company: pornography. Using stories both personal and universal *VCR Love* explores, lampoons, questions and celebrates how contemporary technology has changed porn.

Cast Size: 1 Male

"honest, charming, vulnerable."

- Ed Malin (nytheater.com)

SLUT

**A one woman play by
Brenda McFarlane**

SLUT was first produced at the
2000 Toronto Fringe Festival.

It was directed by the author and
starred Heidi Weeks as Matilda.

Scene 1 - IT'S ALL A MISTAKE

On RISE:

(We see a single red chair. The shadow of a cell window falls across the floor.

House out. Spotlight center. Stage Manager walks on to stage.)

STAGE MANAGER

Good evening. I want to point out the fire exits which are here and here. Please take a moment to make sure all your cells, pagers, blackberries and other vibrating devices are off. Finally, please know that the play you are about to see is a work of fiction and none of the characters are based on real people. The opinions expressed, experiences related, and events that occur in no way reflect the actor, playwright or (*indicating self*) stage manager's views, morality, or sexual practices. Thank you and enjoy the show.

(Woman wearing a short satin nightgown

over black lingerie trimmed with pink feathers stumbles on, as if pushed. She holds a jailhouse placard.

She spots the audience, smiles weakly and finds an X on the floor. She holds up the placard, it has her name—Matilda J. McHartle—and an identification number on it. It's upside down.

She smiles for a police camera, frowns, looks down at the placard and turns it right side up, she glances at us.)

MATILDA

(To us)

Just because I'm in jail doesn't mean I'm guilty of anything.

(Gesturing)

These people are having a difficult time understanding just how big a mistake they're making.

(Note: We never see or hear any of the characters Matilda sees or hears.)

(Addressing a police photographer in front of her)

Excuse me? You know, you're not going to need mugshots. If you give me a minute I can explain—

(Bright flash.)

(Wincing)

Oww!

(Apparently the police photographer asks her to turn left.)

(To photographer)

What? My left or your left? This side is better—

(She listens to the police photographer's instructions.)

My left? Sure.

(She turns and poses in profile.)

(Bright flash.)

(To us)

Really. This is all a mistake.

(Matilda reacts as someone from a different direction calls for her.)

Sorry? Oh, fingerprints. Of course.

(To us)

Would you excuse me? I'm just going to get my fingerprints taken.

(She heads off stage, sticks her head back out and says—)

This is my first time being arrested. I'm really keeping it together, don't you think?

(Matilda disappears off stage to get her fingerprints taken.)

(From off stage)

Apologies will be issued. A law suit is impending.

(Matilda returns to the stage, wiping her fingers.)

The compensation deal I'm going to get will be huge.

(She is asked a question.)

My phone call? Oh, no. I don't need a telephone call. Thanks.

(To us)

I'm not planning on letting anyone know about this.

(Someone asks her another question.)

Lawyer? Oh, I don't need a lawyer.

(Proudly)

I don't even know any lawyers.

(To us)

Well, except Fred, my sister's husband.

(The person tells her something.)

Fine, a public defender would be great. Swell.

(To us)

I'm the victim of a vengeful plot. See, there's this senior citizens' building next door to me and—

(Something the person just said to her must be sinking in because, alarmed, she turns back to the person.)

Wait. In the morning? What the hell do you mean "in the morning"? I have to stay here?

(Listens to the answer.)

Oh, right, bail. I hadn't thought of bail.

(Beat)

Do you take Visa?

(Listens to the answer.)

I see.

(Very sweet)

Um, can I make that phone call now?

Scene 2 - MAKING THE CALL

(Matilda slinks to a corner. She holds a telephone receiver to her ear.)

MATILDA

(Into the phone)

Yes, Vicki, jail. So, I guess that means I need Fred's help.

(Vicki asks a question.)

(Into phone)

Do we have to go into this now?

(Vicki responds.)

(Into phone)

All right. I'm in jail for—

(Matilda looks at us and turns away, hiding.)

(Whispering into the phone.)

—running a common bawdy house.

(Vicki must not be able to hear her because...)

(a little bit louder)

For running a common bawdy house.

(Vicki still can't quite make out what Matilda is saying.)

(Louder still)

For running a common BAW-DY house.

(Her sister finally hears the words.)

(Yelling into phone)

YES! BAWDY HOUSE! RIGHT!

(Matilda turns to us, realizing we have heard what she said.)

(Giving us a pained smile.)

(Vicki asks a question.)

A house of ill repute? A whorehouse? A BROTHEL? Yes. That's correct.

(Vicki asks her a question.)

No! I haven't been... What do you... I would hang up on you if I could but I can't because I only get one call and I called you because you're my sister, and because, for once, your lawyer husband is going to be useful.

(Listening to Vicki say something.)

I understand he is an immigration lawyer, Vicki, but he must know something about the law.

What do they teach in law school if not the law?

(Listening to Vicki's response.)

Yes, tonight.

(Listening to Vicki.)

A baby-sitter? Uh huh.

(Beat)

I'd offer but I'm tied up at the moment.

(Listening.)

(Urgent)

NO! Don't call Mom! If you call Mom, you'll have to tell her why she has to come over in the middle of the night. And you'll have to say because I'm in jail, and the next logical question will be, "What is Matilda in jail for?" And then you'll have to tell her! Which would put a strain on my relationship with Mom, don't you think, Vick?

(Matilda looks at us to share her exasperation.)

Scene 3 – BUT I'M AN ACCOUNTANT!

(Lights change suggesting a jail cell.)

(Matilda reluctantly enters.)

MATILDA

They put me in a holding cell with a bunch of women who look like hookers to me.

(She sits down.)

Oh, right. They think I'm one too.

(She laughs, trying to get us to laugh with her.)

Me, a hooker. What a laugh!

(Realizing that she may look like a hooker.)

(A bit defensive)

The outfit is unfortunate but I'm not a prostitute. I'm an accountant. Really. I even own glasses and flat black shoes. But they didn't notice those during the search, did they?

Okay. The truth is, maybe, maybe I'm a bit of a... a bit of a sl...

(She can't say "slut")

Maybe I've been a bit tramp—

(She can't say "trampy")

Er... maybe I... ah... get around just a bit more than every woman I know but that is not illegal. I mean, what's wrong with these people? Don't they watch TV? If they want to arrest somebody they should start with the TV people, sex this and sex that and special victims' sex unit. They're the ones selling sex to kids like it's Pokémon. And yet they arrest me and I personally don't think anyone under 21 should even have sex! Well, I know I shouldn't have.

(Proudly)

Anyway, I've even been married. I've been a married woman.

(Beat)

Although, why I think that should win me any respect I don't know. The marriage was...

(Searching for the perfect word to describe her marriage)

Bad. Yes. Very, very, very bad. But I'm not bitter.

I have forgiven him for telling me I was unattractive and bad in bed. Anyway, I'm just having fun

being single. A lot of fun. Is that a crime?

(Glancing around at where she is)

Apparently it is. Apparently it is a crime.

(She's interrupted by the introduction of a woman entering the jail cell.)

They bring in this classy woman. Chanel suit, Manolo Blahnick shoes, Armani spectacles. She's had her hair done in the last 24 hours, I can tell.

(Referring to the woman)

She sits next to me. I try to imagine what she's in for. Fraud? Poisoning her rich husband. Shooting a philandering boyfriend?

(As Classy Woman)

"Who are you with?"

(As herself to us)

She asks me.

(As herself to Classy Woman)

What? With?

(As Classy Woman)

"Your agency? Or do you work the street?"

(As herself)

No. This is all just a mistake.

(As Classy Woman)

"Oh, well, it usually is."

(As herself)

No. I mean, I'm not a prostitute.

(Beat.)

(As herself)

What are you in for?

(As Classy Woman)

"Oh, I'm a call girl, of course."

(As herself)

A call girl? Really? That's nice, er, interesting.

I'm an accountant.

(Small beat)

I bet your job's better than my job. Pays better I bet. But would you listen to me? Rambling on like I know something about anything when I have no idea what it could be like.

(Small beat)

What is it like?

(As Classy Woman, she thinks then responds)

"Powerful. That's the good part. It pays. It's a service. A necessary service."

(As herself)

Right. I've always thought that.

(As Classy Woman)

“Of course, the down side is when you want to develop a heroin habit or scrub your skin off with a brillo pad, or take a hacksaw to the next man you have to blow.”

(Then, cheery again, still as Classy Woman)

“But the rest of the time, I don't really think about it much. It's just a job.”

(As herself)

Well, it doesn't sound that much different from my job.

(As Classy Woman)

“Oh, I can imagine, I find numbers and math about as much fun as a Brazilian wax.”

(As herself)

Oh, me too!

(To us)

Hillary and I hit it off I think.

Scene 4 - THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED

MATILDA

(To us)

Okay, I'm in this situation because of the damned senior citizens who live in the high rise next door to me.

(Gesturing left)

It's as if those people have nothing better to do with their time than spy on me from their balconies, play their god awful music and die. And once they die, all their stuff gets thrown into this mound of garbage across from my front walk. I spend a lot of time trying to keep my place looking neat and it's not like I have help or anything.

(Matilda visualizes her yard and the mound of garbage next to it.)

I mow the lawn every week, I trim the shrubs, I bundle my old stuff up neatly. I even dry clean my clothes before I donate them. But

what's the use when every day a smelly carpet, or a box of moldy books gets added to this mound

of garbage right beside my house? It costs a lot of money to live alone here. It isn't fair they make it look like a slum. So, one day, I'm staring at the soggy mess of trash and this man pulls up in his yellow Hummer and he starts trying to extricate an old ratty three-legged chair from the very bottom of the heap. He scatters everything everywhere. I've had enough!

(Matilda moves stage right and... picks up the "phone".)

(Into phone)

Hello? I want to make a complaint about illegal dumping of garbage.

(To us)

The Sanitation Department promises to send out an inspector. They don't. That's okay. I put them on speed dial.

(Into phone)

Hello? Yes, I'm following up on a complaint I made a week ago?

(To us)

They tell me they've sent a Mrs. Stiletti, the superintendent, a notice.

(Into phone)

Hello? Yes. I'm calling to inquire about the status of a trash violation notice?

(To us)

Mrs. Stiletti chooses to ignore the notice.

(Beat)

No problem.

(Into phone)

Hello? Yes, I'm calling to see if a fine has been collected at a certain seniors' residence.

(Matilda goes to check the pile of garbage.)

(To us, frustrated)

The fine is charged but the garbage keeps piling up and it's spilling onto my grass!

(To phone)

Hello. This is Matilda McHartle again.

(To us, triumphant)

Sixty days and forty-two telephone calls later, the pressure finally gets to Mrs. Stiletti and the garbage problem is eradicated.

(Matilda sits back down in the chair center.)

(Beat)

(To us)

I was repeatedly assured that my identity would be strictly confidential.

(She shakes her head grimly.)

But somebody squealed. Mrs. Stiletti had taken to glaring at me.

(Gesturing)

She lived two stories up, was about 75, very thin, hawk-like and dressed only in black. I could feel one of her glares from 200 feet. Like a bad-vibe ray gun.

(Shrugging)

But I could handle it. She wasn't going to make me feel guilty.

(Beat)

I would have left it at that if it hadn't been for the weekly Tuesday Night Entertainment Soirees.

Scene 5 – ONE SPRING NIGHT

(Matilda picks up the chair and sets it back down as if she's setting up her backyard patio for a bit of relaxation.)

MATILDA

It was one of those first really nice nights in spring? I just happened to be going through a hormonally challenged 24 hours. I'm sitting on the patio, trying to read a book while fighting simultaneous cravings for Ranch Doritos, Hagen-Dazs Double Chocolate Chip Ice-cream and a cigarette when the festivities began next door.

(Matilda looks up at the building next door and goes back to her book, trying to concentrate.)

But I tell myself: "Look, if I can get to like the Grateful Dead after four years at college, enjoying the Polka Music they're playing should be a breeze." Then they turn it up. Fine. I'd just go inside.

(She gets up and begins to go inside, changes her mind.)

No, damn it! I'm single! I need this fresh spring air! I need this! Why don't I just go over there and tell them to shut up? Why am I such a coward? Why can't I stand up for myself?

(On a roll)

Why do I always want people to like me? Why didn't my ex like me? Why did I waste five years on that man? Why did I let him stiff me on groceries and stink up the bathroom! Why didn't I say to him, "If you don't buy groceries you're out of here!" Or "for Christ's Sake, open up the window!"? But no! I couldn't assert myself! But, damn it, I could go over there and tell them to turn off the damned, fucking polka music!

(Begins to stomp over, stops.)

But I won't. First of all I've made a resolution to be more tolerant. Secondly, I'm suffering from PMS so what I should do is...take a Midol.

(She does.)

(An aside)

Pre-menstrual women aren't actually crazy, they're just extra sensitive. Foods taste better,

smells smell better, in fact everything's better but just not too much of it. See, a pre-menstrual woman can only take so much stimulation. In this state, it would be perfectly natural when confronted with, say, a yapping dog, to want to rip out its vocal chords. Next door, they replace the Polka Music with Abba.

(Sings a portion of "Mama Mia")

The Midol was taking a long time to work. They don't care about me and the rest of the neighborhood! No, they just want to have a good time, screw the rest of us! They turn it up a notch.

(Sings "Mama Mia", louder)

I'm having a hazy white melt-down which makes me do things that are not wise and could get me in trouble.

(Light change)

Zap! I find myself in the center of the old folks' party room. There's a bunch of senior citizens looking at me curiously but I don't care. I spot the stereo and zero in on the volume button. I

give it a harsh jerk and the only thing left is a vague rattle and whine.

(Sings a high, squeaky version of "Mama Mia")

The seniors are all gazing at me.

(To seniors)

I'm going crazy over there, don't you understand? I just want some peace. I NEED to relax and Abba is pushing me over the edge! *A tiny little lady with a pink hat hobbles over to me with her walker.*

She smiles up at me and says,

(As pink-hatted old lady)

"I understand perfectly, dear. I didn't have any children either. Who cares what everyone thinks, I say good for you, girl, good for you."

(As herself)

I'm not exactly sure what she's talking about but then Mrs. Stiletti enters.

(As Mrs. Stiletti, with an Italian accent)

"Who has interfered with my music!" Then she spots me. "You! You!"

(As herself)

She swoops over to me and pokes me right on the chest.

(As Mrs. Stiletti)

"What are you doing? You trespassing, you know that? I'm not no fool, you know that? You know that? I know what you are.

(Full of innuendo)

"I know what you are!"

My old lady friend tries to defend me, "Now, Maria, you mustn't be mad at her, the poor girl is just enjoying her last gasp of youth. She has no children and no husband. Her juice is drying up."

(To us)

I'll think about what she's said about me later— over and over in fact— but now, I don't have time because Mrs. Stiletti ignores her and continues to poke me in the chest.

(As Mrs. Stiletti)

"I play my Abba! I play my Abba!"

Mrs. Stiletti then physically shoves me out of the way and cranks it up to 10!

(Matilda looks around, figuring out her next move.)

The old folks look like a force to me, and while my pink-hatted ally seems ready to do battle at my side, we're outnumbered.

(To all the old folks)

If you don't turn it down... I'm calling the police!
And with that, I storm out.

(Light change)

I get back to my place and... and I call the police. I mean, what else was I going to do?

(Old maid's voice into the telephone)

There's a party going on. It's past 11 and it's disturbing the peace and I want you to tell them to turn down the music. I asked them to but they won't do it.

(To us)

I "forget" to mention that it's a seniors' apartment building.

(Doing a little dance.)

(sing-song)

I win. The police make them turn it down.

(Sits. Thinks.)

(Her elation dies.)

I've managed to bully a bunch of old folks into doing what I say. Congratulations, Tilda.

Scene 6 - LEWD BEHAVIOR

(Light change to jail cell.)

MATILDA

But right now I wish I'd smashed Mrs. Stiletti's stereo system to smithereens. Then at least I'd be in here for destruction of personal property or assault or something normal.

Okay, the prostitution charges are just ridiculous but the other charge...

(Reluctant)

Lewd behavior in public is, well, less ridiculous. It turns out, Mrs. Stiletti isn't just your run-of-the-mill Italian widow. Nope. I pick a fight with a vindictive, former National Geographic, wild-life photographer. Yup. And, are you ready for this? With a specialty in night-time shots.

And the pictures.

Well, okay, having sex on the hood of my car could be seen as lewd, only I park my car at the back of my house, with a fence on one side and a big leafy tree on the other. Effectively blocking any view, or so I thought. And this might have made a good argument if she didn't have pictures

of this happening on two different occasions with, well, with different men each time which does make me look, well, worse somehow, doesn't it?

And, I don't know what the men would think of me, if they found out, or rather, I worry I do...

Oh, all this so sucks, you know? Because what could be seen as a special experience gets all sullied by knowing that it wasn't exactly the first time I've had sex on the hood of my car. And because it wasn't the first time, how can anyone think it's still special?

Which is a big problem all around.

Because it is special. Whether I've done something once or a hundred times.

And poor Jack. He didn't need this at all.

Jack's wife just left him for a truck driver. Jack's a clown. I mean he's a real clown. He wears a red nose with a sunflower painted on it. He works at kids' restaurants and doesn't make a lot of money but he likes his job and I admire that. Well, I did until I caught him stealing coins off my dresser. I immediately told him I didn't want to see him

again. I tell you, making a happy-faced clown cry isn't an experience I would recommend.

Anyway, unfortunately for Jack, he was with me last night when they came with the search warrant. Oh, I know, I know, I broke up with him, but he called and asked if he could come over and Warren had just left, Warren works security at nights, and Jack was just around the corner and...

Okay, normally, I do not sleep with two men on the same night. But this was a special, highly unusual circumstance. Jack really needed me. His ex-wife came back so she could take his dog. And on the way out, she told him he was the worst lover she ever had. And, then, in parting, she informed him he was getting too old and ugly to be a clown. Now, what was I going to do? Not let him stay? If you could have seen him, you would have let him stay too.

Oh, but when I tried to explain this to Detective Bruce, the detective who interrogated me, he said, "So you see yourself as a sort of Sexual Florence Nightingale?"

Which is not true. It's not. Sure, I think that sex can have a healing effect but it's not like I consider myself a first aid kit or anything. I needed Jack as much as he needed me. See, I'd dressed up like this for Warren but somehow I felt, I don't know, unseen, at a personal level, you know?

But I don't think I'm going to see Warren again. Well, unless he can learn to look me in the eyes when we make love.

I guess I think that sex is just a gift from a generous and benevolent Universe and all we've got to figure out is how to unwrap it.

Scene 7 - THE SEARCH WARRANT

MATILDA

So, it's 2 a.m.

(Light change to her apartment, late night.)

Jack is asleep and I'm just drifting off when there's a knock at my front door.

Jack bolts upright.

(As Jack)

"Who is it?"

(Matilda looks out the window.)

I peer out the window.

(To us)

There's a cop car. Outside my house.

(To Jack)

It's the police.

(As Jack, panic)

"What are they doing here?"

I don't know.

(As Jack, horrified)

"You're going to answer the door?"

(To Jack)

Yes.

(To us)

Jack gets up, looking for his clothes. I don't bother reminding him that they're in the kitchen.

(To Jack)

Just get back into bed. I'll see what they want. Don't worry.

(Matilda makes her way to the "front door".)

(Light change)

(Matilda opens the door.)

Yes?

(As Police Officer)

"Ms. McHartle?"

Yes?

A very young police officer stands there holding a piece of paper. Three other officers stand behind him.

(As Officer)

"I have a search warrant."

(Interested)

Really?

(She takes the search warrant but doesn't read it.)

(Curious)

What are you searching for?

(As Officer)

"Move aside please."

(Helpful)

But, if you tell me what you're looking for, maybe I can help you.

(As Officer)

"Step aside."

But—

The Officer barges in and begins to go up the stairs.

(Matilda imitates the police officer making his way

cautiously up the stairs.)

(As Officer)

"Is there anyone up there Ma'am?"

Yes.

(Matilda imitates Police Officer nodding and drawing his gun.)

(To us)

The officer nods and pulls out his gun.

(To Officer)

What are you—what are you doing? It's just Jack, Jack's up there.

(As Officer)

"Just a police precaution Ma'am."

(Matilda imitates Officer carefully finding the light switch, flipping it on and jumping into the room, gun drawn.)

(Light change)

(To us)

Jack's eyes are bulging out of his head, he's got the bed sheets pulled up to his chin and it looks like he is shaking. I can see his feet, he's yanked the sheet right out, he's wearing one black sock. The other sock is, no doubt, somewhere in a pant leg in the kitchen.

Now Jack was having a bit of trouble sexually before this, I don't imagine this is going to help him.

(As Officer, to Jack)

"Sir, could you please stand up?"

(To us)

Ah, now why does the guy have to make Jack stand up? I mean, really. Does Jack look like he's concealing a weapon for pity's sake?

Poor Jack stands up.

(As Officer, to Jack)

"Drop the sheet."

(To us)

I almost say, "For Christ's sake, there's no weapon there, I can assure you." But I don't want to hurt Jack's feelings.

Jack drops the sheet.

(Matilda looks at Jack in surprise, squinting.)

It's amazing what fear will do to a man. I had no idea.

(As Officer, to Jack with a trace of contempt)

"You can get dressed now."

(Gently to Jack)

Your clothes are downstairs, Jack, remember?

(To us)

Jack nods and slinks to the kitchen, completely

naked except for the sock. And I'm left with my grim-faced Officer and another cop who is snapping on a pair of latex gloves. Of course, the first drawer he opens is my lingerie drawer. But I know it isn't illegal to have undergarments of questionable taste on your premises, is it?

That's when I remember "The Joint." "The Joint" is one year old now. I was keeping it for an emergency, I guess. Although I can't quite envision right now what kind of emergency requires one to spark up but it seemed like a good idea at the time until my house was being searched by the cops.

Maybe false bravado would work better than lame confusion.

(Using her "voice of authority" with Officer)

I demand to know what the hell is going on!

The Officer taps the piece of paper,

(As Officer)

"It's all there Ma'am."

I glance at the search warrant, I read it. I read it again.

This is some kind of mistake, I say as the other guy is dropping a red hot lacy number from the drawer into a plastic baggy.

(She changes her tone with Officer)

You don't understand. You've gotten the wrong idea.

(To us)

The other guy lifts a feather boa out of the drawer.

The Officer smiles, his first smile, and says,

(As Officer)

"Perhaps you want to talk about it? But first I must advise you that you are under arrest for prostitution, for running a house of prostitution and indecent acts in public."

(To us)

Ouch.

Although the charges were absurd, I had still become, in the flash of a second, a bona fide slut.

Scene 8 – INTERROGATION

(Matilda walks around the stage as lights change.)

MATILDA

They took me down to the station for an interview with Detective Bruce. This is when they present me with the evidence, the pictures.

(Matilda reaches out to take a "stack of pictures.")

(Looking through them one at a time)

Oh, this is Ike. He's from Buffalo, I met him in Florida.

(Another picture)

Bill. He's a cab driver. No, I didn't meet him while he was driving me home. I met him at a bar.

(Another picture)

Daniel, I met him in art class.

(Another picture)

I met Pete in art class too. He was the model.

(Another picture.)

That's Allan. He's just this guy I know.

(Moving quickly to the next picture.)

Jeffrey. We grew up together. Yes, I sleep with Jeffrey occasionally, we're good friends.

(Another picture.)

That's my ex room-mate. No, I didn't sleep with my room-mate. He's like 22 years old. What do you think I am? Oh, right, a prostitute, of course, because a woman can't have a few different lovers and NOT be a whore, right? Don't tell me to calm down! I'm not calm. This is my personal life. It's none of your business. I do not take money for sexual services!

(To us)

Detective Bruce holds up a string of real pearls.

(To Detective Bruce)

It's a gift. I'm returning it. That's why it's still in the box.

(To us)

Detective Bruce is sort of smirking. I hate that.

(As Bruce, with a police officer accent)

"So, you're sayin' all these men are just boy-friends?"

(To Detective Bruce)

Lovers, I'm saying they're lovers, that's what I'm saying!

(As Bruce)

"You got to be kidding me, no one has 'lovers'. What are you? French? Around here we call 'em 'Johns'—but if you're trying to be delicate, you can call 'em 'clients'."

(To Detective Bruce)

They are not clients! They're lovers! I share sexual and emotional love with these men in a non-permanent but intimate way.

(As Bruce, laughing)

"I like that, that's funny. 'Share sexual and emotional love in a non-permanent but intimate way.' Good one.

(Sobering)

"So, how much?"

(To Detective Bruce)

What?

(As Bruce)

"How much do you charge 'em for this 'sexual and emotional love'?"

(To Detective Bruce)

It's free, you moron!

(As Bruce)

"Hey! No reason to name call. Come on, Lady. Give me a break. You look nice but you're askin' me to believe you just give it away to all of these men?"

(To Detective Bruce)

Yes, I guess so.

(As Bruce)

"Are you like...troubled? I saw this movie once where this housewife goes wacky and starts throwing herself at men. I mean including like her blind piano tuner and her daughter's teen-aged boyfriend."

(To Detective Bruce)

You think I'm a nymphomaniac?

(As Bruce)

"Well, no. I mean, I'm not a doctor but it's my experience most women don't just like the sex part. They got to get love too. Which is fine by me, since it sort of lifts us men out of our muck,

if you know what I mean. So, I just can't buy that a woman like you would be willing to satisfy men's animal lusts for nothin'."

(To Detective Bruce)

Oh, I see. Men are driven by animal lusts but women don't have them, right? I am so sick of men who think like that! First of all, I got them too. Second of all, men aren't just animals. They're humans and sometimes they even act like humans.

(As Bruce)

"I'm just saying, for men, sex is just sex but for women it's something more. A woman's love, her sexuality is...like a flower, like a ray of sunshine, it's gentle and well...a gift that she gives only to a special man who loves her."

(Still as Bruce)

"See, women inspire men to work hard. The more effort a man makes, the more valuable a woman is to him. Kind of like mountain climbing. You got to admit that it's not worth much if just any man can get there."

(To Detective Bruce)

We're talking relationships with people here, not rock climbing. People! Sex isn't just sex for men. Of course you men try to keep feelings out of sex. But it's a choice, not a condition. You're afraid if you mix a little love in with your sex you'll wind up married with eight children. And you try so hard to keep sex just sex that feeling love whacks you out. So you do end up married with eight children. But this game of men withholding love and women withholding sex? It's a disaster. We need both. Sex is easy and love is so plentiful you have to work at not getting smacked in the face with it.

(As Bruce)

"No, you're wrong. Love isn't like candy you pick up at a Seven Eleven. A person is lucky if they experience love once in a lifetime. I've known that kind of love. She was my angel. If you'd ever known something like that you wouldn't talk such trash. Men will stick it anywhere. From what you're saying, you just happen to be

that anywhere. Sounds like it's you who's afraid. I think you're afraid of intimacy so you just go spreading yourself around to the first guy who wants it!"

(Matilda stares at him. Her face screws up. She tries to resist but can't. She puts her head in her lap and wails. Then she begins to sob and blubber.)

(As Bruce)

"Oh, Lady, now, gee. Okay, now. Maybe I stated things too harshly. You really got me going and... Gee, I, I didn't mean to... Maybe I better... I better go... Go get some help, huh?"

(Detective Bruce rushes out. Matilda tries to re-gain control of herself.)

I'm really upset because there's some truth to what he said. I'm not good with intimacy. Real intimacy over the long-haul, that's true. It scares me. It does. But I'm good with bits of intimacy. Isn't that good enough?

Another detective, a woman, comes in.

(As Female Detective)

"Um, sorry about my partner there, he's a funny guy, a little touchy, you must've said something about love."

(Beat)

"Did you?"

(To Detective)

Yes.

(As Female Detective)

"See, that explains it. He has this tragic love thing going for his first girlfriend in high school and still hasn't gotten over her."

(To Detective)

High school? But he must be pushing 40.

(As Female Detective)

"Yup, tell me about it."

(Matilda gives us a "that explains it" look.)

Scene 9 – CONDOMS

MATILDA

(To us)

Now, if you were my mother—which thank God you're not—you'd want to know, "Am I being safe?" And the answer is yes, yes I am.

But I got to tell you it isn't always easy.

I used to think that using a condom was an agreement between me and a man, but it's not. A condom is an agreement between me and a penis which is a whole other thing. I've known penises that get frightened of having a condom in the same room, let alone trying to get them together.

I don't actually get it, why don't men practice at home? Work out any problems? That's what I'd do if I were a man.

Anyway, I have finally mastered the Zen of condom use.

(In an old Asian Wise Man's Voice)

Do as Buddha would. Be clear, be true, flow like river. If Condom and Penis fail to join, react like flower at night. Close up and sleep. May luck shine on you in the morning light.