

Mega Millions

1.

Joshua Harris was waiting in line at the liquor store to pay for his case of beer. Josh noticed the advertisement for the Mega Millions Jackpot had changed from his last visit. It now read, "The Largest jackpot in U.S. history could be yours!" He had never played the lottery before, he figured it was for suckers and would rather spend the cost of the ticket on some beef jerky or a bag of potato chips instead of giving his money away.

"Hey Kelly, how much is that lotto up to now?" He asked the clerk. □ "876 Million. Largest pot ever. Nobody has won in over two months." □ "Yeah, Crazy." Josh stared at the sign thinking. Finally he said, "I think I'll buy a ticket." □ "Just one?" □ "Yeah. Just one." □ "What numbers would you like to play?" □ "Hmm." □ □ Josh picked up a brochure for the lottery. On the back was a list of numbers. Josh, at random, pointed at numbers and read them off. The clerk bagged up his beer, and handed Josh the lottery ticket with his change, which he placed in his wallet.

By the time he got home, he had forgotten about the ticket. He drank his beer and watched his football game. Fell asleep on the recliner, woke up at 11:50 P.M. shut off the T.V. and then went up to bed. This was Josh's routine. He did it every night.

Michelle, Josh's wife, wasn't too happy with how things were in their marriage. She worked hard, took care of the housework, did the shopping, made the meals and even took out the garbage. She worked out on the treadmill and did palates daily to keep in shape. While josh, on the other hand, was lazy, did nothing around the house, drank beer and watched sports daily, he was becoming overweight, and what pissed her off most of all was his refusal to come to bed at night with her.

She groaned loudly when he stumbled into bed. "Oh, Did I wake you, shelly?" He

asked? “No,” she said in a sarcastic tone, “I had my eyes closed because I wanted to see the back of my eye lids.” Not even paying attention to what she said, he simply replied, “That’s nice,” rolled on his side, and wiggled around to get comfortable.

The lottery drawing that Josh had forgotten about, had taken place at 9 P.M. that night. By 11 P.M. the news stations were reporting there had finally been a winner, a single winner, who had won the biggest jackpot ever. While Josh happily snored away, and Michelle cursed at him while trying to fall asleep, the lottery agents were tracking down what city had sold the winning ticket. They determined the winning ticket was sold at a liquor store in a suburb of Madison Wisconsin; the same store Josh buys his beer.

The last thing Josh did, on what may have been the luckiest day of his life, happened at 11:59 P.M, when he loudly farted, waking up Michelle again, and then drifted off to sleep.

2.

Like most days, Michelle had already left for work by the time Josh woke-up that next morning. She had recently taken a part time job at Babbling Brook so she could keep a separate bank account to secretly save up money so that she could one day run off to some tropical island with some someone who’s body resembled that of Fabio instead of the Pillsbury Dough-boy. □□It wasn’t that she didn’t love Josh but he simply drove her crazy. For example, if you asked him what she did for a living, he wouldn’t know, some days he thought she was a cleaning lady, other days he thought she was in charge of the place. If that wasn’t bad enough, he didn’t even know where she actually worked. Her place of employment definitely was not called ‘Babbling Brook’, Josh had overheard a conversation she was having on the phone one day, that name was mentioned. She tried to correct him, but her efforts were futile, since that day, she had to explain to at least a dozen that she really does not work at a Brook that babbles. Also, for the record, she had held her job for several years, and had not ‘recently

started working' as Josh liked to explain it.

Josh was still in bed trying to fall back to sleep for a few more minutes. He had an elaborate alarm system that was sure to wake even the most dedicated sleepers. It went something like this: First, he would hit the snooze button on the alarm clock that Michelle sets for him each night. Second, he would hit it again, when the alarm went off the second time. Next, he would turn off the alarm clock completely and fall back to sleep while waiting for the final step which was the telephone ringing and ringing until he couldn't stand it any longer and picked up the receiver.

"Ehhhhhhh-loow", Josh grumbled into the phone.

"DAMN IT. WAKE UP, GET YOUR LAZY ASS TO WORK JOSH OR I SWEAR, ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOI-", Josh had hung up the phone. It was a fail proof alarm system.

Instead of skipping breakfast, josh skipped the shower, the shave, and the toothbrush. Breakfast was, after all, most important, he thought. Had he told that to someone, they might try to correct him and explain that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and that personal hygiene should be slightly more important than watching cartoons in your tighty-whitey underwear while gorging on a super sized portion of Lucky Charm's cereal. Josh would have to disagree.

Leaving his dishes unwashed in the sink and the box of cereal open on the counter, Josh slipped into his clothes, the same clothes he wore the day before, and headed off to work. At the exact time josh started the car, he was officially two hours late, which as you probably have guessed was right on schedule for Josh.

If you are wondering how someone could constantly be late to their job and not get fired, the answer is simple. Months ago, Michelle called Josh's boss and asked that her husbands hours be changed. Instead of arriving at 9 A.M. he

should be there at Noon. Nether one of them had told Josh of the change, so that he would always be on time for work. The only drawback to the otherwise perfect plan, was that instead of leaving work at 5 P.M. like most people. He stayed 8 P.M. giving him a full 8 hour day, but to josh, who thought he started work at 9 A.M. had an enlarged since of self worth, for all the overtime he was putting in.

Things around town seemed much more lively that morning when Josh was driving to work. There were camera crews at the liquor store he shopped at. People were in the parking lot holding balloons. There was a huge banner stretched across the highway that said: "Congratulations Madison! We got us a Winner!" Josh shrugged. He assumed the circus was coming back to town.

When Josh got to work, everyone there was talking about it. The grand total, just shy of 900 Million dollars had been won, but the winner had not yet come forward. Everyone kept an eye on the Television, waiting for the news reporter to announce the name of the person who won. The ticket was purchased in the neighborhood store , so everyone hoped the winner was someone they knew.

"Well, none of us won. Everyone showed up to work today," Dan, the manager, laughed.

"Can you imagine? I bet the lucky bastard is already on jet to the Bahamas," One of the employees said.

"They are probably just scared to come forward yet. You know, all the vultures come out of the wood work when they smell money. What do you think Josh?" Dan said.

"Huh?" Josh asked. He was already day dreaming.

Dan gestured to the TV.

"Oh," Josh Said. "The Circus. Yeah, I don't think I'm going to go this year."

Everyone laughed.

“You’re Right! It’s a Circus out there, and NONE of us are invited.”, One of the employee’s joked, and everyone laughed again. Dan clapped Josh on the back. “That was a good one!”

“Err, Thanks.”, Josh said, Not getting what was so funny about a second rate circus.

“Seriously though,” Dan said, “ I can’t believe one of our own town folk hit the 900 million jackpot. And the number’s they played, it’s no wonder there was only one winner! It must have been a joke!”

Everyone, except for Josh, burst out laughing again. It finally hit him that someone won the lottery. He paused for a moment wondering how to word his next sentence so he didn’t appear to be an idiot for actually thinking they were talking about the circus.

“Jee, I kind of fell asleep early last night so I don’t have all the details on Who-won-the-lottery. What do you mean by, ‘it musta been a joke’, Dan?”

“You didn’t hear that part?” Dan said. Everyone laughed.

“No, I guess i didn’t”, Josh said.

“Get this. The numbers the person played, the numbers that won the biggest jackpot of all time...” Dan paused, letting the suspense build. Josh slowly took a deep breath and held it.

“... Are... 1...” Dan continued.

Josh nodded. “1? Yeah, go on” he said, still holding his breath.

Not able to hold his amusement any longer, Dan quickly blurted out, “2! 3! 4! 5! 6!!!!” The whole office exploded in laughter that didn’t stop until minutes later.

Luckily for Josh, because everyone was so caught up in their own laughter, no one noticed the fact that all the color in his face had gone paper white. His hands trembling, he quietly reached into the front pockets of the pants he had worn yesterday, fishing around for a lotto ticket that wasn't there. His mind was stuck in a loop, the memory of himself buying his first lotto ticket. He was picturing himself looking at all the numbers he could choose, he figured the first 6 were as good as any.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. - The numbers of the winning ticket. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. The numbers Josh picked. He left the guys, who were still laughing, and went into the bathroom. He was sure that he was the mystery winner everyone was looking for. Still fishing around in his pockets with both hands, Josh had only one problem, he could not remember what the hell he had done with the ticket.

3.

Manager Dan, and the rest of the people at the office heard someone scream "HELLO?!" from the bathroom. Everyone ignored the loud greeting, but a moment later they heard the same person quickly scream out the following: "NOOOOO! COME ON! I'M TELLING THE TRUTH! PLEASE WAIT! LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE! DON'T HANG.... "AHHHHHHHHHHH-SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!"□□ All the office workers shifted their gaze back and forth between the bathroom door and Dan the manager. They had looks of disgust on their faces. Finally Dan shrugged, and said, "He must have eaten some bad Chinese food or something. Who wants to go see if he needs some T.P.?" Everyone quickly went back to work at that thought.

You see Josh wasn't having a severe case of diarrhea, no, his problems were much worse. He has just found out that he had purchased a winning lottery ticket, but seemed to have lost it. In desperation he dialed information and asked for the number to the office of the lottery.

The first scream everyone heard was Josh mistaking a recording for a live

operator, after pressing, 0 twice, followed by 1, followed by 5, followed by 3, followed by 0 again, he was passed onto a person.

“Lotto Department how may I help you.” the operator said.

“Yeah, hi. I’m Josh Harris. I purchased a ticket the other day, I didn’t know it but it turns out I won. I won the big one, the mega millions. So, I’m the guy you’re looking for, so I needed to know what to do to get my money? Can you help me with that?”

As if reading off of a script, the operator said, “I would be happy to help you with that sir. Congratulations and Thanks for playing the lottery, if you could read me the 24 digit verification code that is found on the back of the...”

“Wait,” Josh said.

“Sir?” The operator said.

“The problem is... I can’t find the ticket. I think I lost it.”

“So you’re saying you won the big jackpot, and lost the ticket?”

“Yes.”

“And you want me to somehow magically get the state to pay out this large sum of money to you, taking just your word, that you are the winner?”

“Exactly.”

The operator paused for a long time. Then he blurted out, “Thanks for wasting my time buddy, I’m now required to read this long ass paragraph informing you that you’re shit out of luck, and not to call back. Ready? Good. Here we go.” He quickly read off the ‘official no ticket policy’, as Josh screamed “NOOOOO! COME ON! I’M TELLING THE TRUTH! PLEASE WAIT! LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE! DON’T HANG.... “AHHHHHHHHHHH-SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!”

Josh ran out of the bathroom, around a corner, running into manager Dan, knocking him over. Not even bothering to stop, he yelled, "Sorry Dan, Gotta go!" and ran out the buildings front door. Dan called after him, "When ya gotta go, you gotta go."

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When Michelle came home, the first thing she noticed was the couch sitting in the front yard, and Josh frantically throwing items out of the front door.

"JOSH!" Michelle screamed. He stopped, and stood up, "Hi Shelly," then went back to throwing things out into the front yard. "Josh!" She screamed again, "What the hell are you doing? Are you mad?!"

"Ya," He said, " I'm pretty pissed off!"

"Damn it, Josh," She said, "Why is my couch sitting in the front yard?!"

"Shelly, I was going to come home and tell you to pack your bags because I just won the lottery. You was supposed to be super-excited, and say, 'should I pack for the sun or the snow?' and I was going to say, It don't matter just pack your bags and get the hell out! Hahahahaha," He said.

"Do I look like I'm in the mood for your jokes Josh?! What the hell is going on!" By now she was pretty pissed off herself.

"Hahahaha!" He yelled, "It's got to be here somewhere!"

"Fine, I give up." She said, "I'm going to go take a bath, I expect you to have my house put back together in 1 hour or I swear to god I'm going to have someone come get you."

"Just wait! I'll show you, I know it's here somewhere!" He said, while carrying out the love seat."

Michelle sighed, "Whatever."

An hour later Michelle spied out the window, Josh was still carrying items outside and tearing them apart. She had to do something, the neighbors were watching and she didn't want to be the laughing stock of the street.

She went to the phone and dialed in a number. "Hi Karen," Michelle said, "Not doing so good. You? Well I think my husband has taken some kind of narcotic. Yeah. Yep, he looks high as a kite. No, I didn't know he used drugs. You can? That's great, thanks Karen. Yeah, one night should do it. Can you send 'em now? Thanks again, and I'll see you tomorrow. Bye."

She went downstairs and sat on the steps as Josh ran in and out of the house. Each time carrying out a new item and inspecting it, tossing it aside and going back in the house for something else.

"Josh," She said calmly, "What exactly are you on?"

"On?" He said, as he dug through the soil of a potted plant.

"Obviously you are high on drugs. Acid? Mushrooms?"

"I'm not high! You'll see, just wait." He said.

"Sorry Josh," She said as she watched a white van pull up to the house. "Remember that vacation you were talking about earlier? I think it's time for you to take a little vacation."

"Yeah, as soon as I find it!" He said, not noticing the two extremely huge men wearing all white clothing came up behind Him.

"Find what, Josh?!"

The two men grabbed Josh by the arms. "WHAT THE HELL!" he screamed.

"Don't fight 'em Josh. They are going to take you somewhere you can relax and

get some help." She said.

"No, Wait, you don't understand!" He protested.

The two men dragged him into the back of the van, locked the doors and got in the truck. They waived to Michelle and started the car.

"Michelle!" He said.

"You'll be o.k." She said.

"Listen to me! I brought a ticket, The lotto! I won! I swear, I had the winning ticket! I lost it!"

The truck begins to pull away.

"All I remember is that I bought it at the liquor store, got the ticket and change and stuffed em in my wallet and went home and got drunk...." A look of utter shock filled Josh's face. "Wallet," he whispered to himself. Then screamed "Hold up! Stop the Van!. FUCK, It's in my wallet! I forgot to check my wallet! STOP THE VAN! It's in my Wallet; I left it on the nightstand! Michelle, STOP THE VAN! I'm not crazy! You hear me? I'M NOT CRAZY!"

Michelle read the word on the back of the white van as it drove around the corner. "Spring Grove Mental Institution." She worked there as an administration assistant. One of the perks of the job is that if you, or a immediate family member, suffers a mental breakdown, you can get 3 days 2 night stay, for free. You would be surprised how often the employees took advantage of the program.

She figured Josh was stoned out of his mind, so far gone, him thinking he had won the lotto, Ha! He might be better in a day or too.... But just to be sure, she headed back into the house to have a peak into his wallet.

“Doc,” Josh said, “I think I’m ready to get out of here.” He was in the office of the new head doctor of Spring Grove, pleading his case. His wife Michelle mistakenly had him committed to a mental institution when she came home one day and found that he had moved their living room into the front lawn. She thought he was on drugs, but as it turned out, he had just misplaced a very important piece of paper worth millions and millions of dollars.

I’m sure that kind of thing happens all the time. “I’m not so sure about that Joshua. It seems you’re still showing signs of delusions. This is based on your, er...” The Doctor quickly searches his desk, scattering papers on the floor. He picked up a clipboard. “Ah, here we are,” The doc said, “Your, er... err...”

“Chart?” Josh asked.

“Yes! Chart!” The doctor said, It is clear to me, looking at this, that you are obviously not ready to return back to society.”

“Doc?” Josh asked.

“Yes Joshua?”

“You’ve got the clip board upside-down.”

The doctor paused for a moment, then he turning the clipboard right-side up, paused a moment longer and, choosing his words carefully he said, “That’s great Joshua, I was testing you!”

“Testing me, doc?”

“Yes! You are well aware of your surroundings! ...Which is a good thing.”

“So, you’re going to let me out then?” Josh asked, excited.

With a huge smile, the Doc happily said, “No way!”

Josh sighed. He looked at the calendar on the Doc’s desk. He said, sadly, “I’ve

been here 6 months now.”

“Wow, really? Gosh that’s a long time. I’ve been here 6 hours!”

It was true; The Doctor that Josh was talking to was new to the Institution and had just begun work 6 hours ago.

“You just started?” Josh Asked.

“Yep” The Doc said.

“I just want to go home, Can you tell me when that might be?”

“uh... uh... oh yes, I’m not so sure about that Joshua. It seems you’re still showing signs of delusions.” The doc said.

“You already said that doc.” Josh said, confused.

This is based on your, er...”

“Chart” Josh Said.

“Yes! Chart.”

“I think I want to go back to my room now.”

“Ah, don’t be so bland Joshua, your wife is here to see you. Some of the nice men in the white coats will escort you to the visiting room! I do hope that this gig works out for me and we can have a chat again. Good day!”

Two big men walked in and picked Josh out of the chair and started to walk him out of the room. “Just a sec, Bruno and Clevis” He said to the orderlies. They stopped and one of them said to Josh, “It’s Mike and Tobias, Mr. Harris, stop calling us Bruno and Clevis, we’re people too and we have feelings.”

“Sure, whatever,” he said, not really paying attention, “Doc, do I know you from

somewhere?"

"Nope, I don't think so," the doc said.

"I'm pretty sure I do," he said, trying to remember where he may have met the doctor before.

"Your wife is waiting. Bruno, Clevis, take him to the visiting room now," The doc ordered.

Both orderlies, looked at each other, sighed, then picked up Josh and drug him to the waiting room to see his wife Michelle.

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"Blah-Blah-Blah-Blah?" Josh asked the lady sitting at the table across from his, to the right. He was sitting in a worn out chair in the waiting room. Michelle hadn't arrived yet. The lady had not heard him so he said it again louder this time, "BLAH. BLAH. BLAH-BLAH!?" She looked at Josh, smiled and laughed, and then waved her finger at him and made a reply, only it was something so utterly incoherent that I can't even type it. "Good one, Brook!" Josh said, and they both laughed together.

Brook was one of the patients, she didn't speak English in the traditional sense, and instead she just babbled. Earning her the nickname-'babbling brook'. It was this same person whom Michelle was talking about to a co-worker on the phone one day, that initially gave Josh the impression, babbling brook, was where Michelle worked. But after 6 months of being in Spring Grove, he still had not figured that out.

It took Josh, less than 20 minutes to understand Brook's language and figured out a successful way of communicating with her. Using a combination of three sounds. "Blah" "Goo" and "Err-Duh." You might think this was an amazing achievement, considering what you have already learned about Josh, but to be

honest, Josh only pretended to understand Brook and basically made up what he thought she was saying.

On the other hand, Brook, who had tested at a genius level on written I.Q. tests, she only played along when Josh 'Spoke' to her. Why? Because she thought he was retarded.

Looking across to the table to the left, Josh saw the second friend he had made at Spring Grove. "Hey Ted, how's the case of Herpes!"

"I never got the Herpes, but I am infected with the Teddies right now." He said.

"That's great. Good luck with the treatments."

"Thanks Josh! Any luck finding the Multi-million dollar ticket?" Ted asked.

"Not yet," Josh said, and leaned forward to whisper, "I can only look after lights out, otherwise the doctor will never let me out."

"Hey, Listen," Ted whispered back, "while you're looking for that ticket... if you happen to come by someone with herpes, send em to my room."

"I'll do that."

"Thanks man."

Theodore Redmond Jr. was cast to be an actor in series of commercials selling a product that helped people with Herpes prevent from spreading the disease. For some reason he thought that he should contract the disease in order play the role better. He launched a national campaign looking for someone to infect him. After all was said in done, he had caught Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and several other curable Sexually Transmitted Diseases, including one that doctors have not seen before and named it, 'the teddies' after him. Unfortunately, the product he was supposed to promote seemed to work, so he never managed to catch herpes. Feeling like he could not give a good performance lost the acting job to another

guy. Ironic, no?

Ted's agent, fearing that he had gone bat-shit crazy, had him put in Spring Grove, but Lucky for Ted, his Agent had noticed the Irony and supposedly was trying to get a film project on Ted's life Green lit by the studios. The last thing, Ted's agent said to him was, "I've got the perfect project for you. Just hold tight, and I come visit soon." So everyday Ted sat in the waiting room, waiting on an agent that never showed up. The Agent never showed up because he had only told Ted that the studios might be interested in his story, so that he would have something to look forward to while being in the mental institution.

Oh-well, that movie would have sucked anyway.

Josh was about to talk to some more of his mentally ill friends, but it was then that Michelle walked into the room. He had not seen her in 6 months. She had a huge smile as she strolled over to his table and took a seat.

"Honey!" She said excited, "I've got great news for you."

Josh jumped up, and screamed "I'm getting out of here?!"

"No, silly, I just saved a bunch of money on my car insurance by switching to...."

I'll just stop here for now. That joke was so old, a cave man could have told it.

5.

"PENIS!" One of the crazy people loudly screamed, cutting off Michelle before she could finish her sentence. After the one word outburst he didn't say anything else, he just looked around the room confused, as if he was wondering who had just shouted.

"Well," Michelle said, "That was most certainly random."

"Yeah, that's Cameron. They put him in here for some incident involving hot dogs

on a subway train; It's a long story. He screams out cuss words from time to time. You get used to it." Josh said, "But what the hell, Shelly. I haven't seen you in six months! Why am I still in here? Did you find the ticket?" □□She reached across the table and took Josh's hand. "Hun, I've been working to try to get you out of here since day one. The doctor's say you've had a complete mental break down, and that you are stuck in you own little world."

"I'm not crazy!" Josh protested, "I purchased the ticket! I won! Ask Kelly at the liquor store, she sold it to met! She'll tell you."

Michelle sat there, silent.

"Call her, call her right now. They'll let me go. We'll find the ticket and be rich," Josh said.

Michelle took a deep breath, and said, " Oh Josh, this is exactly why the doctor's haven't let you have any visitors."

"What?" he asked.

"They thought that if someone told you the truth," She said, with tears in her eyes. "You might dig yourself deeper into your fantasy."

"There is no fantasy. The doctors here are complete idiots. I Won the jackpot. Come on, let's call Kelly," He begged.

"Josh, I know this is going to be difficult to hear but you need too... You didn't win a lottery. There is no ticket."

Josh pulled his hand away. "Yes there is. I'm telling you."

"No Josh," She said, "The day you left, remember you had moved out all the furniture to the front lawn?"

"Yeah, I'm sorry about your stupid couch, I'll buy you a damn couch factory once

I get out of here.”

“Remember what you said to me? You said it was in your wallet. I checked, there was no ticket. I thought that maybe, just maybe, what if you were telling the truth. I looked all over the house, then finally I called the liquor store. I did talk to Kelly.”

“Yeah, so she told you I had bought the ticket with the winning numbers 1-2-3-4-5-6. Right? For the mega millions jackpot.”

“No.”

“What the hell do you mean, No?”

“I’m sorry Josh, She said there was no jackpot. She said you had came in to buy your beer like you always do, and then just zoned out at the register. She said she called your name a few times until finally you snapped out of it and paid for the beer.” Sadly, she said, “So you see, you never bought a ticket and there never was a 900 Million dollar jackpot.”

“That can’t be,” He said, “I bought it, I went to work and everyone was talking about it. What about Dan call him, he’ll tell you.”

“I called Dan too,” She said.

“And?” He asked eagerly.

“And, he told me you had came to work acting strangely that day. He said that out of the blue you turned pale and ran to the bathroom. He said he heard you screaming to someone, but that there was no one else in the bathroom with you.”

“I was on the phone with the lotto people!”

“He said that you burst out of the bathroom, knocked him down and ran out the of the front door.”

Josh stared at his hands in front of him shaking his head back and forth,

muttering, “No-no-no. That isn’t how it happened.”

“The doctors say that they can’t let you out until you can admit that it was all in your imagination. You simply had a breakdown. It happens to people sometimes.”

“I’ll never admit that!” He said, defiantly, “I won! I’m a damn millionaire!”

Michelle patted his hand and said, “I know you won’t ever say it was in your head, and that means they won’t let you out.” She smiled, trying to make him feel better.

“But I don’t like it here,” He whined, “I don’t feel safe around all these crazy people.”

“It’s perfectly safe,” She said, Reassuringly, “The institution hasn’t had an incident since that mass murderer got loose, killed some staff members, and then committed suicide.”

“What?!” he said shocked.

“Oh, that thing happened years ago.”

“Fine. I still don’t like being here. I just want to go home.”

“If they let you out, all you would do, would be search for a ticket that doesn’t exist.” She said, “That isn’t going to help anything. At least here, you can get the help you need to get better.”

“Would you please tell Dan and Kelly to come visit me so that I can hear this from them directly. I think that would help me a lot if I heard it directly from them.”

“I wish I could,” She said, disappointed, “While you were in here, someone had bought out the company and moved the business to England. They offered the current employee’s a great deal of money if they relocated with the company to

London. So Dan, and the rest of them are all gone.”

“And Kelly from the Liquor store? Could she come see me?”

“I haven’t seen her either,” Michelle said, “Believe it or not, Dan hired her to fill your position when it became clear you were not getting out of here any time soon.”

“So I got fired?” He asked.

“Yeah, Pretty much.”

“And she got the huge raise that should of been mine.”

“Yeah, she moved to London with the company too.”

“Great, Just great.”

“It’s O.k. Just try to get better for me.”

“I’m sorry Shelly.”

“For what?”

“I f I hadn’t had a break down, I would have gotten that job and we could have moved over seas too. I know you would have loved that.”

“Trust me,” She said, “I’m not mad.”

“Now I’m stuck in here for god knows how long.”

“Listen Hun, I’ve been working with the new doctor. I think we can find a way to make your time here a little more enjoyable.”

“How, I’m in a mental institution.”

“Well for starters. All your office friends had left a donation. So with all that

money, I bought you a nice recliner, it even has a built-in heat and massage.”

“Really?”

“Yes, and we also got you your own large screen T.V. Plus you now have a section of the activities room reserved just for you.”

“Well that will make things a little easier.” He said, a bit more cheerful, “But how did you manage to reserve a section just for me, and how are we affording all of this? I don’t even have a job anymore.”

“The hospital agreed to cover the costs as part of my benefits package for being an employee here. It really is a great plan.”

“Oh,” He said. “Still, it isn’t like home.”

“Well wait a second, that’s not all!”

“What’s the one thing you enjoyed most when you came home after work?” She asked.

“I don’t know?”

“You come home, sit in your chair, and watch T.V. and drink...”

Josh’s eyes lit up. “Beer!”

Michelle Nodded.

“You managed to get me Beer?!” He was ecstatic.

“Yes, the new Doc is very reasonable. I’ve arranged for the orderlies to supply you with One 6-pack a day.”

“Wow, this is going to be just like being home.”

“I just wanted you to be happy Hun, you can sleep in, don’t have to stress over

anything.” She said with a smile, “Now lets go see your new T.V. and chair.”

Bruno and Clevis, oops, I mean, Mike and Tobias, escorted Michelle and Josh to the activities room. They walked hand in hand, that’s to say, Josh and Michelle, not the orderlies, and for the first time in 6 month’s Josh was smiling. He sat down in his chair. Mike, turned on the massage feature, while Tobias turned on the Television, tuned it to the sport’s network, and handed josh the remote. Michelle popped the top on Josh’s favorite beer and handed that to him.

“Wow, this is great.” Josh said, “Thanks, Shelly.”

Tobias and Mike smiled at each other and then at Josh, the orderlies then walked to the door and waited patiently.

Michelle kissed Josh on the forehead and said she had to go. Josh had already tuned out the world and was focused solely on the T.V. screen. She smiled and shook her head, she knew he would be happy. As she walked over to meet the orderlies to be escorted be escorted out of the building, A commercial break occurred, breaking his attention away from the T.V. he turned to look at Michelle leaving.

“Hey Shelly?” He said.

She stopped and turned to meet his stare. “Yes, Josh?”

“How did you know the jackpot was 900 million, if it wasn’t real. Did I tell you that?”

Michelle cocked her head to the side, “Oh Josh, You’re going to need to let that fantasy go, that is, if you ever want to get out of here.”

He smiled, “You’re right,” he said, “I’m just going to sit here and relax, drink my beer, and watch some T.V. Good night Shelly.”

She smiled back and said, “Good night, Josh. I’ll come to visit again as soon as I

can.”

Michelle continued out the doors followed by the orderlies. While walking she said to them, “Make sure he stays happy. That’s you’re Job, remember that.”

“Yes Ma’am,” Mike and Tobias, said at the same time. The two orderlies went one way, heading back to their nursing station while Michelle headed for the front door. She reached into her purse and pulled out a cell phone and quickly dialed a number. It rang and finally someone answered.

“Hello,” Michelle said, cheerfully. “Yes I’m fine. I am just leaving the hospital now. Josh is fine, don’t worry he’ll be happy. Did you receive your package today?” She waited for the answer. “Good. So I won’t be hearing from you again?” The person responded. “Great,” Michelle said. “Well, I got to get off of here. Enjoy London, and don’t spend it all in one place.” Michelle Laughed at something the person said, And she replied, “Yeah well I still got to give Ted’s Agent a call. He’s expecting his share too. But take care Kelly, Give my best to Dan and the rest of the guys, it was nice working with you.”

Michelle closed the phone and dropped it back in her purse. She grabbed her car keys and hit the remote start. In the parking lot a 2007 Ferrari 599 GTB roared to life. With a smile she jumped in to her new sports car that she had just saved a ton of money on the insurance by switching carriers.

She picked up the expensive jewelry that she had laid on the passenger seat before going inside to visit Josh. One by one, she put on a ring, each worth more than most people make in a year.

After she was finished putting back on each of the pieces, only two items remained on the passenger seat. A business card that read: Axis Investment Group. “Invest your unexpected large Sums of cash with us!” and a pair of designer sunglasses. She put on the glasses, adjusted the rear view mirror so that she could see herself. She smiled, blew herself a kiss, and then slammed on

the gas peddle of the Ferrari, peeling out of the Parking lot.

She dove towards the sunset, passing a sign right outside the facility that read:
NEW NAME! NEW OWNERSHIP! SPRING GROVE IS NOW THE JOSHUA
HARRIS INSTITUTION. VISITORS ARE NOT WELCOME.

Josh had heard a car squeal out of the parking lot. "Show-off." he muttered to himself. Just then, a new commercial came on. It was a commercial about a product that helps prevent the spread of genital herpes. In it, a man was horse riding next to a lady, they were both smiling with a voice over that said, "I've got herpes, but I won't let it control me." Josh leaned closer to the T.V. Squinting his eyes.

"Hey, Wait a minute," He said to himself, "God damn, that guy looks exactly like my new doctor."

Imagine that.

THE END.