

THE MAN WHO WENT INSANE FROM MONEY

by ANN WUEHLER

CHARACTERS

TYLER BLUMHELDT: a loan officer. 20's-30's

MRS. ALEC FURBEE: rich executive's wife whose husband has just left her. 30's

AMBROSE GELLER: the bank manager, careful to do everything right. 30's-40's

SETTING

A BANK. A desk with a computer, in/out basket, stacks of important looking papers. Two chairs pulled up to front of desk, a chair for person working at the desk. Lots of pens. Light is bright, time is now...

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THE MAN WHO WENT INSANE FROM MONEY

[Tyler sits at his desk center stage. He studies a sheet of numbers, runs his fingers through his hair, then loosens his tie. He looks up as Mrs. Alec Furbee rushes in, followed by Ambrose Geller. Mrs. Furbee wears a tight hot pink pant suit. She carries a briefcase, which she opens and dumps on Tyler's desk, bills and papers, etc.]

MRS. FURBEE

I demand that you unfreeze my account here. I've been a regular customer for years now. Years. Doesn't that mean anything??

AMBROSE

Mrs. Furbee, let's calm down, shall we? Let's sit down and sort this out...

TYLER

Fuck off. You don't have any money here anymore. Fuck you, you hag in a woman suit.

[Silence. Mrs. Furbee stares at Tyler. Ambrose draws back, hand to his heart. Tyler continues in a conversational way.]

Just turn on your too-high heels and totter out of here. Go get drunk and find a new man to suck dry, though you are kind of old. I'd max out your one remaining credit card for some plastic surgery, get your ass tightened up, your vajayjay, too. The boobs, goes without saying. Get those wrinkles filled in. Do some high class fucking and sucking and then presto, back in business. Just some friendly free advice.

AMBROSE

Uh...Mr. Blumheldt-- can you wait a bit, Mrs. Furbee? Obviously, Mr. Blumheldt isn't feeling well. I can assure you...

MRS. FURBEE

What is a vajayjay?? How dare this little sawed off bit of nothing talk to me at all??? I am worth millions to this bank, what is he worth?? I want him fired. Right now. Now!!

TYLER

Vagina. I hear they can surgically drawstring em back up. Fire me? What for? For telling the truth about your financial situation? Since when is it a crime to tell the truth? Millions??

AMBROSE

Tyler, for God's sake...

TYLER

No. Is there anything else? The accounts can't be unfrozen. Your name is not on them. You had permission to dip into them but that permission is now gone. Should have made it into a joint account, you silly trusting bitch. But don't worry, Mr. Furbee will tire of his new young thang and find the next young thang who will put up with his wrinkled ball sacks. They, too, will be in here demanding we unfreeze the accounts...just like you. Isn't that comforting?

MRS. FURBEE

He told me he loved me. He told me to trust him, that he would never hurt me. Goddamnit. I was in love with the hairy little dwarf.

[She sinks into one of the chairs at desk, then bursts into noisy tears. Ambrose glares at Tyler, makes a slashing motion across his throat. Tyler shrugs at this. he takes out a large bottle of Jack Daniels from his desk drawer, takes a big swallow, makes a face, then offers it to Mrs. Furbee, who shakes her head, then reconsiders, takes a huge swig and chokes.]

That's ice tea!! I want...something...stronger...goddamn hairy little dwarf.

TYLER

I'm an alcoholic. I can't drink. So I put iced tea in my last known bottle of Jack and pretend. It's vastly comforting. I pretend I have the career I really wanted-- the new Jean-Claude Monet, action star and...

AMBROSE

Are you quite finished? Enough. You are fired. I want you cleared out and out of here, now. I want your keys turned in, now...

TYLER

No. I don't think so.

[Unbuttons his shirt, reveals an elaborate package of wires and such taped to his chest. Ambrose steps back at once. Mrs. Furbee goes very still, now watching Tyler with a surprised, horrified expression.]

MRS. FURBEE

He's one of those Middle East mad bombers...except he's a...little skinny thing in a tie.

AMBROSE

I need you to think very carefully about this, Tyler. I know about your problems...

TYLER

Uh? What? What problems? I'm just trying to do my job. Do you want some stranger to blow up the bank or would you rather have a friend and associate do it? Except we're not really friends, we don't understand each other.

MRS. FURBEE

They have pills for this. I know they do.

TYLER

I don't even take aspirin. I'm fine. Did you have any more questions about your account here with Bank of Oregon National Trust and Loan? Isn't that the name outside? Or is it the Bank of Fuck you very much, we're going to charge thirty percent interest on your credit cards to cover costs at our Christmas parties, except we can't use Christmas because it offends everyone who's not Christian, so we say holiday, but then people still get offended because it's an oblique reference to holy or some such shit...I can't remember all the PC ramifications. Huh?

MRS. FURBEE

Is that a real bomb? Are you a terrorist?

TYLER

I'm just your average bank employee...stop giving Shirley signals, you poophead. She won't get them anyway. She's no good at charades. hey, Shirl-- gonna take Friday off again so you can have a three day weekend?

[Takes out a gun from another drawer. Ambrose makes a squeaky sound and looks at the floor. Mrs. Furbee rises until Tyler signals she should remain seated.]

Come and sit, Ambrose old buddy. What a wimpy gassy sort of name. Do you fart a lot? I can picture you farting all day long.

[Makes farting noises to illustrate. Ambrose sits reluctantly, keeps casting his gaze around.]

AMBROSE

Everyone farts, Tyler. Now what is going on? Has something happened at home?

MRS. FURBEE

Who cares, he's got bombs, guns, probably a tank...

TYLER

Nope. Everything is copasetic. You want a hard candy, Mrs. Furbee? Do you have a first name?

MRS. FURBEE

I never eat candy.

AMBROSE

Let's talk reasonably and calmly...

TYLER

Oh let's not, how boring. Let's talk unreasonably and excitedly. You never eat candy?? Never?? Not even Pop Rocks? I love Pop Rocks.

AMBROSE

Is there something you wished us to do, Tyler? Is there something you wished to tell us? Is there...

TYLER

I was talking to Furbee here. I asked her about candy. I just don't believe her when she says she doesn't eat it. I bet in secret you hide in a closet and stuff yourself full of Snickers.

MRS. FURBEE

You would be wrong. I do yoga and eat organic. People can see your gun. They're going to call the police. The police should come. You're crazy.

AMBROSE

Nobody is saying that. That is not our official position.

[Silence. Tyler bites his lip then laughs, long and hard. Ambrose not sure what to do.]

Okay, okay, laughter is good.

MRS. FURBEE

Because he's crazy.

TYLER

I'm not crazy. I'm grieving. I'll get away with everything right now because of my wife. She killed herself in the bathtub this morning. She found out she had osteoarthritis, which her grandmother died from. You know, where your bones start to grind together because the tendons disintegrate.

AMBROSE

Tyler, we can work through this...

TYLER

No. We really can't. We're not a couple, unless you swing that way, baby. Do you? I never heard you did. Nobody ever talks about you, you're terribly boring and forgettable.

AMBROSE

That's quite enough. You're not really attacking me.

MRS. FURBEE

Maybe I should go home. Obviously this whole bomb and gun thing has nothing to do with me.

AMBROSE

Yes. Why don't you do just that, with our apologies, of course. We can't always predict...

TYLER

There's no we. Why would you want to go home? To what? An empty house you can't pay for? How long until the repo men come and cart that monstrosity away? I know for a fact Mr. Alec Furbee, your soon to be ex, did not finish paying off the mortgage, which this bank holds. He very generously put that in your name, by the way, did you know that? That means, if the loan defaults, you pay, it's your credit report it goes on...

MRS. FURBEE

He said he took my name off. Mr. Geller?? Can I get my name off that loan thingie today??

AMBROSE

That is not important right now. We're trying to fix this-- [Nods head at Tyler's chest and the gun.] I am not responsible for your stupid choices, Mrs. Furbee. Why don't you wake up, wise up and figure out a few things yourself instead of depending on us men to take care of you ad nauseum????!! I'm so tired of needy, bitchy, high-maintenance bitches.

[Silence. Ambrose looks away from both, whistles or blows air out.]

I have very poor responses to stressers. Forgive me. Both of you. That was uncalled for.

TYLER

I think that's the first honest thing you've ever said, not that last part, that was all cover your ass and cover up the body stuff.

MRS. FURBEE

So both of you cocksuckers are after me now??

TYLER

This is what I think they call a learning moment, a teachable time. Yes, you're a cartoon, you're a cautionary tale, not even a real person. It's a new century. And you still don't see the patterns developed by powerful men toward rather stupid, greedy, young...

MRS. FURBEE

What patterns? Of course I see them...what patterns?? Are you going to blow us up? I really don't wish to be blown up. Did your wife really kill herself over some arthritis?? How stupid...

TYLER

She killed herself over some future she couldn't live with. Okay?? And if you care to continue discussing this, I am going to stick this up your vajayjay and pull the trigger.

AMBROSE

Okay. Enough. You want to blow us all up? Fine. Push the button.

[Silence. Tyler sits back in his chair, regards Ambrose closely. Then swings his gaze to Mrs. Furbee. Nods, keeps nodding as he fumbles at his chest, obviously looking for the correct button to push.]

What are you doing??

MRS. FURBEE

I don't want to blow up!!

[Rises to flee but there is a loud explosion. Nothing happens to the three on stage, Ambrose freezes in place. Mrs. Furbee turns around in circles examining herself. Tyler examines the papers on his desk. Takes a swing from Jack Daniels bottle.]

What's going on? How come I'm not in a billion pieces? Where...

AMBROSE

I heard an explosion.

TYLER

I think we're dead.

[Offers bottle around, and the other two decline. He takes another swig.]

I pushed the button. Any moment you two should go AWAY.

MRS. FURBEE

But...but...shouldn't there be angels? God?

AMBROSE

But I heard an explosion. There's no change. Shirley is still over there counting the wrong amounts of money...we need to fire her. She's a terrible teller. You, Tyler, are one of the best tellers. People like you when you take their deposits...

TYLER

I think we're dead. I don't see Shirley. I see a big black nothingness. What do you see, Mrs. Furbee? Do you have a first name?

MRS. FURBEE

It's Felicity!!

TYLER

Really. All those F's. Fu fu fu. Both of you need to leave.

MRS. FURBEE

Are we blown up or what?? Are we dead??

AMBROSE

Of course not. That would be ridiculous. Death is very personal. We would not all be here together if we were dead. We two would be in heaven, while Tyler here would be in hell, for blowing up the bank and all the innocent people. That's how that works. Of course it's how that works. You blow up innocent people, you go to hell. It doesn't matter if you're Catholic or Buddhist. Or Muslim. Or a Satanist. Or an Oregon Beavers fan. I hate the Beavers. Go Ducks.

MRS. FURBEE

What kind of a mascot is a fucking duck?? Beavers have teeth. A beaver could take a duck any day of the week...

AMBROSE

The Ducks rule. End of story. That's it.

[Both rise like gunfighters about to have a giant gunfight.]

TYLER

Excuse me.

MRS. FURBEE

Green and gold is ugly together.

AMBROSE

At least it's not Halloween colors.

TYLER

Maybe I'm the one who's getting punished. Which is really not fair. You two seem very comfortable here. I'm strangely...not. GO AWAY. I just wanted it to be quiet and dark. I didn't want company.

MRS. FURBEE

Ducks rule? Ducks drool.

AMBROSE

At least we're not named for a woman's body part. Oh yeah, I went there.

TYLER

Are you serious?? Fighting over Oregon college teams?? We are dead. D-e-a-d. I made a real bomb. I blew us up. I blew out the side of the building most likely.

AMBROSE

I simply don't accept that. Nothing happened. Let's fix this mess. We were trying to answer Mrs. Furbee's questions about her husband's account...

MRS. FURBEE

No, no...if we're dead, then I don't have to worry about money anymore. It was driving me crazy. I'm ever so much older and just thinking about trying to find another...oh shit, I left the dog in the house, I was just going to come down here, fix this and go home for a Slim-Fast lunch. I love their new Dark Chocolate shake...it's so much healthier than their milk chocolate one. That dog will crap all over everything if left alone too long. Including my new shoes...I'll never get new shoes again.

TYLER

Are you kidding?

MRS. FURBEE

About what?? I have some very real concerns. I...

TYLER

There has to be a real person in there somewhere. This isn't you. Please. I have hated you above all others. I made fun of you at parties.

AMBROSE

He did. We all laughed...oh...of course it was wrong and not funny.

MRS. FURBEE

You...you made fun of me?

[She moves far away from the two men. Tyler puts his head in his hands, sighs in disgust. Ambrose moves toward her hesitantly, pompously. But she turns on him at once.]

Don't. Do you think I don't know what a ridiculous mess I am?

[Looks at both of them.]

I become what men want...I talk about diets and clothes and my hair. I make sure I smell nice. And it's...it's not enough.

[Silence. Seems to shake off her confessional moment.]

I hate the Ducks. I hope they never win another game again.

TYLER

You always do smell nice. Like flowers.

AMBROSE

Yes, we've all commented on how nice you smell. And...and of course the Ducks will keep winning. It's inevitable.

TYLER

Can't the Ducks and Beavers just get along??

[Tries to laugh but fails.]

I think we're dead. My wife was dead. She took all the pain pills the doctor prescribed. Vicoden.

AMBROSE

If we're dead, then we'll deal with it. Vicoden can be addictive.

TYLER

Get out of my new universe!! Get out get out GET OUT!!

MRS. FURBEE

For how long? How long do we deal with it? Are we stuck here with you? Is someone coming to get us? Are there guides?

TYLER

I don't know. I never considered this part. There are no notes from the other side.

AMBROSE

Uh...what about the Bible?

TYLER

Do we have one here? Not these two, please, God? It's me, Margaret!!

MRS. FURBEE

I'm not a Christian. Your name is Margaret? I thought it was Tyler...

AMBROSE

Oh. I'm a Mormon myself. So I don't think we're dead...

TYLER

Would you stop saying that? Repeating something over and over does not make it true.

MRS. FURBEE

Why would you hate me, Mr. Blumheldt?

AMBROSE

Let's just figure this all out.

TYLER

Oh let's not.

[Places head on his desk. Puts gun to head.]

Can you kill yourself twice?

MRS. FURBEE

I asked you a question.

AMBROSE

Let's just figure this out.

MRS. FURBEE

You always went out of your way to help me. I don't understand.

AMBROSE

Mr. Blumheldt is a wonderful employee of the bank...most days.

MRS. FURBEE

I asked you a question, mister. I am going to wait here until you answer me. Oh. I wonder who's going to pick up the mail. I was expecting a package...

TYLER

Shhh. Just stop talking, just STOP TALKING stop talking stop stop stop
[But they keep talking as the lights fade to black.]

END OF PLAY