

Scare Tactics

by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. JOHNSON HOUSE - DAY

A peaceful middle class Norman Rockwell home, clean and neat, complete with white picket fence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

MOM and DAD, late 40s/early 50s, sit on a couch, a coffee table in front of them. On the coffee table sits a BAG OF MARIJUANA, a sandwich bag full of bright green weed.

DAD

I still can't believe this was in her glove compartment.

MOM

I keep thinking, "What if a cop had stopped me and asked to see my registration?" What are we going to do?

DAD

Let me handle this.

MOM

What do you have in mind?

DAD

I'm going to scare her straight. I'm going to tell her some stories about my old drug days.

MOM

Albert! I didn't know you did drugs!

DAD

There's plenty about my past that must remain a mystery, Daphne. But when our Kitten hears the kind of trouble she could be heading for, she's gonna get off the green stuff and get back on the good kid train A-S-A-P!

MARY, 17, a surly teen in black t-shirt and heavy goth makeup, walks in.

MARY

Hey.

Mary spots her weed on the table.

MARY (CONT'D)

What...? Where'd you find that?  
That's my private stuff!

MOM

I found it while I was taking your  
car to the Jiffy Lube.

Mom stands.

MOM (CONT'D)

You take your little girl's car in  
for a 29-point inspection, oil and  
filter change, and this is the  
thanks you get.

Mom walks out of the room.

DAD

Kitten, have a seat.

MARY

Dad, I told you, I do not answer  
to Kitten anymore.

DAD

All, right, Mary, I...

MARY

Refer to me by my chosen name, or  
I will not respond!

Dad sighs.

DAD

All right...Madame Deathbuzz.  
Please, sit down.

Mary sits.

DAD (CONT'D)

Listen, you may not realize this  
now, but drugs are very bad for  
you.

MARY

What would you know about drugs?

DAD

You'd be surprised how much your  
old man knows regarding the  
Maryjane. I used to be quite the  
reefer addict.

MARY

(sarcastic)

Oh, really?

DAD

Yes, I fired up the ganja while I was working at Sundley's Supermarket. I was a bag boy, and Pigeon Eddie lived in the dumpster behind the store. Mr. Sundley paid him to take care of the pigeons around the store so customer's cars would stay clean.

MARY

"Take care of the pigeons...?"

DAD

He ate them. That's all Pigeon Eddie lived on. He cooked them at first, but later...

He drifts off, then snaps back when Mary asks:

MARY

Does this story have a point?

Mom moves into a doorway, and listens in on his story.

DAD

One day, Pigeon Eddie asked me if I wanted to try some wacky tobackky. I had never smoked before, but I thought, "You've been driving for almost two years, now, Albert. Perhaps you're mature enough to try a cigarette." But this was no ordinary cigarette.

MARY

No kidding.

DAD

No! It was a reefer cigarette. The killer bud, doobage, cheeba, Satan's dreadlocks, the chronic, dopesville! And I took a toke, and that was it! Daddy was a changed man! (beat) I ran straight home, locked myself in my room, and waited till I came down, two days later. And I never did drugs again. And neither should you.

Mary rolls her eyes.

MARY

Wow. Great story, Father. I'm swearing off the wacky tobackky forever.

Mom enters the room, pats Dad on the shoulder.

MOM

You did a wonderful thing, sharing that awful story with our little girl. Now, you go upstairs, and let me talk to her alone, Daddy-Bear!

Dad, pleased with himself, gets up to leave.

DAD

Don't forget what I told you Mar...Madame Deathbuzz.

He exits.

Mom makes sure Dad is gone, sits down quickly, and leans in towards Mary.

MOM

All right, listen up, Mary.

MARY

It's Madame Death...

MOM

Just shut up and listen. I used to work at Sundley's Market, too. I was a checkout girl.

Mary picks up her bag of weed from the coffee table and rolls it up. She stands to leave.

MARY

These stories about the good old days at the grocery store are bitchin', Mommy Dearest, but I have...

MOM

I smoked weed with Pigeon Eddie, too.

MARY

And did you run home and lock yourself in your bedroom for two days after your first toke?

MOM

No, I liked pot. I liked it so much, I couldn't afford my habit, so eventually, I was blowing Pigeon Eddie for joints.

Mary, caught off-guard, sits back down, hard.

MARY

What?

MOM

I needed smoke so bad I was screwing him on a makeshift bed of pigeon bones and feathers. I caught the clap from some businessmen Eddie made me sleep with when I picked up a taste for the horse... heroin... and eventually, I was sold to white slavers in Japan, and forced to make specialty porno reels for men who liked...well, Mommy doesn't think you need to know that right now, Sugar Bear. I ended up killing one of my captors when he let his guard down. Jammed a pigeon in his ear, beak-first. I stowed away on a boat, then slept with enough guys to make bus fare back here to Annapolis. I begged for my old job back at Sundley's, where I told everyone I had been studying in France for six months. Your father and I married a few weeks later. I never smoked weed again.

Mary stares at her Mom, aghast.

MOM (CONT'D)

So, you can keep toking the tasty nugs and find yourself pimped into the Asian sex trade by a homeless bird-eater, or you can go upstairs, wash off that horrible makeup, and come give me a hand with dinner. We're having Chateaubriand with Béarnaise Sauce.

Mary rises, dazed, sees the weed in her hand, drops it with a look of horror, and starts to leave.

She pauses, doubles back, and gives her Mom a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

MARY

I love you, Mommy.

MOM

I love you too, Mary. And let's not tell Daddy, about this, shall we?

Mary smiles, shakes her head, and starts for her room.

Dad walks in as she's about to leave. Mary throws her arms around him.

MARY

Thank you, Daddy.

DAD

You're welcome, Madame Dea...

MARY

Call me Mary, Daddy. No, call me Kitty! I love you!

She skips out of the room.

Mom picks up the bag off the coffee table, and looks at it thoughtfully as Dad sits down.

DAD

That's quite a change.

MOM

I think those stories from Sundley's Market really got to her.

DAD

Well, I hated to tell her how her old man broke the law, but I think she needed to hear some of the cold, hard facts of life.

MOM

I'm sure you're right, Dear.  
(beat) I wonder what ever happened to Pigeon Eddie?