

## TO CATCH A PEN-PAL

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE, KITCHEN. EARLY EVENING.

SARA, early 20s, is on one side of the kitchen, away from the door. She's speaking with CHRIS HANSEN, early 40s. Chris is holding some papers. They are casually chuckling as the scene opens.

SARA

That was a pretty good one.

CHRIS

Yeah we really nailed that guy. He tried to play dumb, but when we showed him the transcripts of what he said in the chat room he knew we got him.

SARA

Did you see him trip over the garbage can while he was trying to run away?

CHRIS

No, I didn't watch the cops arrest him this time, I had to take a leak.

SARA

I think my favorite thing about posing as a teenage girl on the Internet to lure child predators into sting operations is the look on their face when they realize I've exposed them.

CHRIS

Actually, I think I'm the one who exposes them.

SARA

Please. No one goes trolling the Internet for TV hosts. Without your bait you'd have nothin'.

CHRIS

Well without the TV cameras and cops you'd just be some girl in a house with a pervert coming over for tea.

SARA

Whatever, if my mother had wheels she'd be a bicycle. What's the deal with the next guy?

CHRIS (*looks at watch*)

The next one should be here any minute actually. I'm pretty sure it's this one here (*shuffles through papers*). Gerald Tillman. Wow, this guy is sick, you should see what he wrote -

SARA

Hold on! I think I hear a car pulling up!

Sara runs over to the door.

SARA

Oh, I think he's here! Hide.

Chris dashes out of the room. Sara scurries away from the door quickly. Then waits for the man to get to the door.

SARA

Hey there! So glad to see you! I need to slip into something more comfortable, I'll be right back!

Sara leaves the room.

FELIX, early 30s, enters the room sheepishly. He's wearing shorts, a baseball cap and a cheesy T-Shirt. He's carrying a 6-pack of Miller Lite.

FELIX

It's cool, I'll just hang out of over here.

Felix sits down.

Chris enters the Kitchen and walks right up to Felix. Felix looks up in panic and is about to stand. Chris extends his hand evenly and motions for Felix to sit down.

CHRIS

Hi there, why don't you have a seat?

FELIX  
I'm already sitting.

CHRIS  
Strictly speaking you were already halfway  
out of your chair.

FELIX  
Look, I know, this is a big mistake.

CHRIS  
What is a big mistake? Coming here looking  
for sex with an underage girl?

FELIX  
Man, look I'm sorry. I swear I was just going  
to talk to her. Warn her not to talk to folks  
on the Internet.

CHRIS  
Is that why you sent her pictures of your  
genitals?

Felix is becoming more and more agitated and despondent.

FELIX  
Nah, it ain't like that man. Aw, man. It  
ain't like that.

CHRIS  
This is some pretty terrible stuff you said  
here in these chat transcripts (*holding  
papers*)

FELIX  
I didn't mean it, oh man. Please don't tell  
my wife! I swear I've never done this before.

CHRIS  
Look, there's one more thing I need to tell  
you, and then you're free to go. My name is

Chris Hansen and I am with Dateline NBC.  
We're doing a story on child predators and  
you are being filmed right now for national  
television.

FELIX  
Aww shit no! NO! NO! My life is ruined!

Felix starts to cry, and then wail, and then after a bit,  
pauses and looks up.

FELIX  
Wait, is that Hansen with an "e" or an "o"?

CHRIS  
That's Hansen with an "e". But this isn't  
about me, this is about you and the wrong  
thing you've done.

FELIX (*drying eyes*)  
That's really weird. I have a cousin named  
Chris Hansen for works for CBS on some show  
or another. He is like a reporter guy. My  
mom's been keeping me up to speed on his fame  
and whatnot.

CHRIS  
OK, well that's fine, but you are still going  
to have to face what you've done.

FELIX (*sniffling*)  
I haven't seen him in 25 years, but when we  
was kids, our moms had us write letters to  
each other. We was like Pen Pals. Nothin' gay  
or nothin' we used to write about sports and  
games and shit. Oh god, am I going to jail  
now? I don't want to go to jail.

Felix starts crying again. Chris pauses in consternation.

CHRIS  
Look ... Gerald ...

FELIX  
Nah, man \*sob\* my name is Felix.

Chris glances down at his cheat sheet and pauses again while Felix cries.

CHRIS  
OK that's weird. Yeah, sorry, Felix. So, out of curiosity, what is your mom's name?

FELIX  
Her name's Maureen. Oh, shit, my mom's gonna see this on the TV. This will break her heart.

CHRIS (*more concerned*)  
OK. Hmm. Uh, where does she live?

FELIX  
She lives in down in Macon. Oh god, she'll be devastated, Daddy too.

CHRIS (*to the side*)  
Hey guys, do me a favor and cut the cameras for a second.

CHRIS, back to Felix  
Felix, is your dad's name Greg?

FELIX  
Yeah, why?

CHRIS  
Wow ... well you are wrong about your cousin, he doesn't work for CBS. He works for NBC. I'm your cousin, Felix! Jesus I haven't heard from you in 15 years. Oh my god.

Chris pulls up a chair.

CHIRS

God, how've you been. I haven't seen you since you were 13. Shit you're an ugly asshole now. My mom says you started a contracting business.

FELIX

Yup yup, right out by the highway, I got a yard and a couple trucks. Meanwhile look at you, fancy TV star.

CHRIS

Well, I wouldn't say I'm that fancy. It still is only basic cable. Not even CNN or Fox or anything, either. The whole channel is me and a bunch of prison documentaries. Workin' on it though, I can't imagine they'll have me doing this pedophile beat forever.

FELIX (*chuckles*)

Geez, I bet you see some sick shit in this job.

CHRIS

I do, but half of it ain't as crazy as some of the shit we used to write letters about. OK that's not true, it's all the worst humanity has to offer, but still I remember some of those crazy stories we had.

FELIX

Yeah, like the time you found a porno in the woods and sent me half of it?

CHRIS

Ha! Or the time you set the catcher on your little league team on fire. That was a great story.

FELIX

I think my favorite of your hijinks was when you tried to mail the neighbor's dog to Chicago.

CHRIS

Yes! That almost worked too. If only it hadn't woken up while I was at the post office. Man I got grounded pretty hard for that.

FELIX

Ha ha, good times.

The two men pause in comfortable silence for a moment.

CHRIS

God, Felix, what are you doing here man?

FELIX (*whispering*)

Well, Chris, I guess I wanted to have sex with an underage girl.

CHRIS (*excitedly*)

Shh! Shh! Shh! Shh! Shh!

Listen, if I take you down, my mother is going to kill me. With Thanksgiving coming up, it's all I'll hear about. And Aunt Maureen, what will she say after I got her son locked up as a child predator. Shit. Shit. Shit.

OK, look. The cops are waiting outside, they're supposed to arrest you and file charges and parade you in front of the cameras. (*looking around*)

There's a back entrance to this house, over there (*pointing*), I want you to slip out there. But don't make too much noise, the control room with all our techs is in the den over there (*pointing*).

Here are the keys to my car (*gives keys*). Drive to the Applebees on Route 12, I'll meet you there around midnight.

FELIX

What, are you sure? Ain't you got a job to do?

CHRIS

Yeah, but fuck it man, I don't need the grief from Aunt Maureen. Give me a hug and get the fuck out of here.

Chris gives Felix a big hug and then Felix grabs the keys and dashes towards the back of the kitchen.

CHRIS

Felix, wait! One more thing.

FELIX

Yeah?

CHRIS

The Internet predator thing. Try and cut that out, OK?

FELIX

OK, will do. Later gator. And don't worry, I still ain't told nobody about the time you and Mark from down the street-

CHRIS (*cutting Felix off*)

Felix! Just go. Now.

Felix exits.