

T.O.S.

written by

Evan Skolnick

evan@evanskolnick.com

EXT. WIRELESS STORE - DAY

A nondescript cell phone retail store (called "Phone Home") in a somehow even less-descript STRIP MALL. A sunny winter day somewhere in suburban America.

PAT JOHNSON (V.O.)
...just gimme a break, okay? Dogs bark. That's what they do.

INT. WIRELESS STORE - DAY

PAT JOHNSON (38, female, dumpy, extra hairspray) slouches casually behind the front counter, talking angrily on her cell phone. She wears a "PHONE HOME" GOLF SHIRT and a NAME TAG on it that reads "PAT".

She's alone in the store.

PAT JOHNSON (CONT'D)
I don't give a shit what hours you work! The dog needs to be outside when I'm not there.
(beat)
It's not that cold out.
(beat)
No, it isn't.

The front door opens with a JINGLE. She barely looks up.

PAT JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Yes, he has water.
(beat)
That was one time!

A well-dressed CUSTOMER walks in and approaches the counter as she argues on her phone. Male, mid-50s, handsome silver fox, slick, not a hair out of place.

He carries an unusual-looking CELL PHONE in his right hand. Its screen is dark.

PAT JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Look, you want to call Animal Control on me again, feel free. It'll be the same as last time.
(beat)
You're the worst neighbor I've ever had, you know that?
(beat)
Yeah, well, fuck you!

She stabs her phone angrily with her thumb, then starts to snap at the customer.

PAT JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
What do you--

She stops herself, puts on her customer service face, complete with forced, unconvincing smile.

PAT JOHNSON (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... how may I help you?

CUSTOMER
(with a smirk)
It isn't as satisfying as it used to be, is it?

At her confused expression, he nods at her phone.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
Hanging up on someone.
(beat)
We used to be able to really slam the handset down on the cradle. And it would make that great clanging sound when you did. So satisfying.
(beat)
Remember?

PAT JOHNSON
Oh yeah, the old landline phones. When I was a kid.
(beat)
So, what can I help you with today?

He puts his odd-looking phone on the counter in front of her.

CUSTOMER
My phone died and I don't have a charging cable in my car. I was just wondering if you'd be so kind as to give me a few minutes of juice.

She takes the phone from him, inspects it curiously.

PAT JOHNSON
What is this? Never seen this model.

He SHRUGS.

PAT JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Sure you don't just want a new one?
We have a great deal going on
(right now)--

CUSTOMER
No, just the charge, if you don't
mind. It'll only take a few minutes
of your time, and I promise I won't
forget the gesture.

She shrugs, pulls out a CHARGING CABLE from under the
counter, checks the connection type, then plugs it in.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
Thanks.

He rests his hands on the counter and we can now see a CAST
covering his right wrist and hand. His fingers are barely
poking out.

NOTE: This cast wasn't on his hand when he walked in.

She does a slight, puzzled double-take at the cast, then she
shakes it off.

PAT JOHNSON
(re: his wrist)
Ouch. What happened?

CUSTOMER
(with a grin)
Too much cracking the whip at work,
I suppose.

They both CHUCKLE.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
No, actually, I fell.

PAT JOHNSON
Bad fall!

He looks at the cast ruefully.

CUSTOMER
It was a long one, that's for sure.

His phone CHIMES, and the screen lights up. She looks at it,
a bit puzzled.

The screen is filled by the beginning of a long legal
statement.

At the top it says "TERMS OF SERVI..." but the rest of the phrase runs offscreen. She scrolls down. Tiny, tiny print.

PAT JOHNSON

What's this, a T.O.S.? It shouldn't do that on startup.

CUSTOMER

Oh, it's so annoying. For some reason lately, I have to sign this long legal document every time I restart my phone.

She keeps scrolling down the document. And scrolling.

PAT JOHNSON

That's weird. Did you install some unusual app just before this started?

CUSTOMER

Not that I recall.

She scrolls down to the signature line (marked with an "X"), hands him the phone. But he gestures with his cast, helplessly.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

Unfortunately I'm right-handed. I usually just have a friend sign it for me. Would you mind?

After a moment's consideration, she takes the phone back from him and reaches for a soft-tipped TOUCHSCREEN STYLUS.

PAT JOHNSON

I guess not. What's your name?

CUSTOMER

Pat Johnson.

PAT JOHNSON

No way! That's my name!

He seems equally surprised.

CUSTOMER

(laughing)

You're kidding!

(beat)

But it's a pretty common name, right? I run into other Pat Johnsons all the time.

PAT JOHNSON

Yeah, it's not unique, that's for sure.

(beat)

Well anyway, I guess that makes this extra simple. Spelled like it sounds?

He nods.

She signs "Pat Johnson" on the line with the stylus as he watches expectantly. The phone UNLOCKS, apps now visible on the home screen.

He takes the phone back and unplugs it. Then gives her a formal little bow.

CUSTOMER

Thank you so much! A copy of the agreement will be emailed to you for your records. I look forward to working with you, Ms. Johnson.

PAT JOHNSON

Wait, what? What agreement?

CUSTOMER

Why, the one you just signed, of course.

(with significance)

Your name. In your hand.

PAT JOHNSON

What? How would you even know my email? What was in that contract? Let me see!

He holds the phone up to her so she can see, but doesn't allow her to grab it. At the top of the document we can now see it says TERMS OF SERVITUDE.

CUSTOMER

It's mostly boilerplate stuff, not really worth slogging through. But trust me, it's ironclad.

He pockets the phone and casually heads for the door. His cast is gone again.

PAT JOHNSON

Is this some kind of joke? Who the fuck are you?

CUSTOMER

Oh, don't worry, we're going to get to know each other very, very well.
(looks at his watch)
But not for another... well, that would be telling, wouldn't it?

She's stunned into silence.

He opens the door, causing it to merrily JINGLE again. He pauses at the threshold, turns back to her.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

But between now and the day we meet again, may I give you a bit of advice?
(beat)
Always read the fine print.

He leaves.

Her phone PINGS with a new email. She looks at it blankly.

From her POV, we see the email's subject line. It says "Signed Agreement re: Eternal Soul"

She runs toward the door.

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She bursts out of the front door and into the parking lot, calling after him.

PAT JOHNSON

(panicked)
Hey! HEY!!

But, impossibly, he's nowhere to be seen.

END