

# Ray and Stacie

By seven

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*Ray and Stacie take their relationship to the next level when both are away on business.*

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(Just to note that this story is told in first person from both accounts. The name of the character always foreshadows whose account we're hearing.)

Ray

I was lying on an uncomfortable bed in a shitty hotel room flipping through the television. No cable mind you, just a crappy antennae sitting on the small set. All I could pick up aside from the three networks. was some guy with a bad hair piece screaming fire and brimstone. It didn't even pick up Fox, although at this point in the early 90s, I'm not sure Fox was a major network.

I cut the TV off, then got out of bed and looked out the window. The pool looked inviting. But I hadn't thought of bringing a swimming suit plus the house rules stated that the pool closed at dark. Which was something that I couldn't really figure out other than a pool full of people at midnight could possibly disturb guests trying to sleep.

Other than the pool, the view from the room was not that great. Basically all it consisted off was the hotel parking lot, a vacant field and a strip mall that included golden arches on the nearby highway. Maybe I could talk Stacie into taking a tour of the city. Or maybe I could find some nameless bar and down a few.

I felt like I should be sweating, wearing a white t-shirt and smoking a cigarette. Here I was in some crappy hotel in a strange town with a TV that didn't pick up a thing. Then I realized I was wearing a white t-shirt, though not an under shirt. I jerked it off. The air conditioner was barely working.

The telephone rang. I smiled, knowing who it would be.

“Yes.”

“Well, hello Mr. Edwards. How are you this fine evening?”

“Hot, tired and bothered here in 314, Miz Cooper. How’s things in 337?”

“Well, the air is not working. I can’t concentrate on this story that I need to fax off in thirty minutes. And some guy with fake hair and a blue suit is telling me I’m on the highway to hell. If this hotel is anything like hell, I don’t want to go.”

“I think hell must be a lot like South Carolina. But it could be worse for you. You could have a view of the pool.”

“Does it look tempting?”

“Very.” I had been staring at the blue water for most of the conversation, thinking how nice it would be if Stacie and I were together in it.

She changed the subject. “Was this the most boring day you can remember?”

“It was bad.” I sat on the edge of the bed where I could keep my sight on the non-view outside my window. “I think the judge may have dozed off a time or two.” We had been sent to Nashville to attend the first days of a big murder trial. A radio dee-jay from Memphis was on trial for killing his girlfriend and her lover. The proceedings had been moved after his lawyers argued there was no way the defendant could get a fair trial in Memphis. It was big news all over this part of the country but so far, the lawyers were going through the motions, literally, in pre-trial hearings.

“I wish I could have gone to sleep. I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t been there. Somehow the mere thought that you were sitting through the same crap as I was comforted me.”

“Well, thanks. I think.”

We both laughed.

“It could have been worse,” she added. “It could have been longer.”

“Or they could have performed root canals on us during recess.”

“Ouch.” That was right after she had obviously dropped the phone.

“Tearing up hotel property, are we?”

"I dropped the phone on my foot when I was unbuttoning my shirt," she said. "There. That's better."

"What's better?"

"I think this is the first time I've been in a hotel room alone since I can remember. At least the first time over night." She clarified that statement. "It's the first time I've stayed in a hotel room by myself, if you don't count the story I did with Jane. She wouldn't leave me alone, so it felt like we were staying in the same room. The time before that was my fabulous honeymoon at Niagara Falls where he talked business with the man from across the hall most of the time." The sarcasm and bitterness was heavy in her tone. "Before that, man, I would have still been in school. My grandmother took me to see Billy Graham in Louisville. It was the furthest I was away from home until the honeymoon. We went up in the church bus. You've been around though, right?" Trying to change the subject again.

"Yeah, this past year or so, I've been here and there."

"Colorado?"

"I've spent a week or two there twice now. Both in warm weather. It's beautiful out there. All things being equal, I think it may be the most beautiful place I've been, particularly Canon City . I spent more time in that part of the state than the northern part"

"Why didn't you move there? Why Memphis of all places? You've already professed you're out right loathing of Elvis."

"Colorado was beautiful. I liked northern California too. There weren't many places I went to that I didn't like actually. Can't say the east above Virginia really enthralled me that much though. But Memphis felt like home each time I was here. I'm not really sure why. And then finally, it was home."

"Because this is the last place you and that girl..." She was trying to come up with a name. She almost sounded jealous.

"Loretta." I knew where this was going.

"...yeah, Loretta. This was the last place you and Loretta were a couple, right? I mean, didn't you say she broke up with you on vacation?"

"Yes, she did. Timing was apparently never one of her strong suits. And the answer is no. That had nothing to do with why I moved here."

"Then why did you move to Memphis?" she asked, her voice trailing off for a moment.

"I thought I told you. It felt like home here. Don't you like Memphis?"

"I like it all right, I guess. I think I've just been here too long."

"I feel like I've been here too long, meaning Nashville. Or at least this hotel anyway."

"Does your shower work?"

"I don't know. I haven't checked."

"Mine doesn't," she said. "All that will come out is a little sprinkle. And a cold one at that." She dropped the phone again.

"Stacie, what are you doing?"

"Uhm.... undressing."

"Really? What are you wearing?" I felt my heart beat noticeably quicker.

"Well, right this second, just panties. But..." Her voice trailed off again. "Now I'm not wearing those. Like I said, my air's not working. Now I'm lying on my stomach on the bed."

"I'd like to see that."

Stacie

I laughed. "You already have, silly. Or have you forgotten?"

"How could I forget? They turned out great. The sun in the outdoor shots were great and you looked amazing." I felt myself blush when he said that. "So has he found those pictures yet?"

"Nope. Not yet. I can't get over it. I put them in the drawer with my journal, and he hasn't touched them. I've been keeping an eye out."

"Do you think maybe he did find them and is keeping quiet on it?"

"No. Not Gregg. He couldn't do that." The last person I wanted to think about, much less talk about, was Gregg. "So what are you wearing?" she asked.

"Jeans."

"And nothing else?"

"Just jeans."

“Nice,” I said.

There was a long pause next. I didn’t know what to say. I cracked the door and looked out. No one was around and there was a field beyond the parking lot with a convenience store off to one side.

“So you’ve been in a lot of hotels?” she said. “How does this one compare?”

“Actually, I have been in worse. Coming through Topeka in the dead of night late one Saturday, or early on a Sunday really, there was nothing open. I had been driving most of the day but I hadn’t gotten anywhere because I kept getting sidetracked by trains. I was hoping to make it to Kansas City, but here it was 3 in the morning and all I wanted to do was sleep. I actually thought about pulling into a truck parking lot and sleeping in the backseat.

“I finally got a room in a run-down but expensive hotel, one of those places that probably stays in business only because the town it’s in doesn’t have enough hotels. I think the Royals were in K.C that weekend too.”

“How bad was it?”

“Well, the air was not only broken, it blew out nothing but hot air. The hot water faucet in the sink was broken and the cold water handle in the shower was broken. And the room had mirrors all on the walls. We won’t even talk about the noise coming from next door.”

I laughed and leaned against the door. The air was sticky against my body. “Did you have to pay by the hour or the night?”

“By the night, actually, but I think it’s a pretty good guess what kind of clientele this place went for. I think I got two and a half hours of sleep that night and not in a row I might add. Then I headed out early and got real lucky with some trains at Argentine Yard in Kansas City. So I guess it was worth it.”

Ray

“How does being in a hotel make you feel?” she asked.

“I guess it depends. I liked being on the road. It made me feel free. I had no immediate worries. I had time to think, time to think about my writing and to plan where I was going to go next for my next bout of photography.”

“No, that’s not what I asked. I asked how being in a hotel made you feel, not how you felt on the road.”

“Oh.” I thought about that for a moment as I walked onto the balcony. “I don’t really know what you mean. If it was a hotel like the one in Topeka, I felt like shit. But the one in Memphis was pretty cool. They even had hot tubs in the rooms.” Loretta had liked the hot tub as much as I did.

“I guess I’m not asking the right question,” Stacie said. “It’s just that I feel strange right now, somehow disconnected from who I am and how I normally might act.”

“Oh, OK, I think I know what you mean. I mean, most hotels are faceless, nameless, right? You kinda leave who you are behind, your everyday worries and concerns, at the door.”

“Yeah, I guess,” she said. “I just feel like I’m not going to be in this place again for a long time, maybe ever. Not here, not this hotel, I mean I may not be feeling what I’m feeling right now again. Maybe I should explore it a little.”

I was definitely intrigued by now. I was watching the cars go by on the highway, but my mind was elsewhere at the moment.

“I have a crazy idea. And don’t laugh, OK?”

“OK.”

“What if we went streaking?”

“What!?” I knew I had heard her right, but the words still seemed foreign.

“You know what streaking is, right?”

“Of course. But I wonder if you do.”

“Why not? Hasn’t it ever occurred to you before? Or at least something similar? Like getting ice in only a towel or something. Or nothing.”

“Well, now that you mention it...” I walked back inside and sat in the chair nearest the door and propped my feet up on the bed.

“Oh, this sounds good,” she said. “Tell me.”

“In Canon City, the drink machines were right across the hall from my room. And I was thirsty, you know, and maybe only in my underwear...”

“So you were in your underwear? Not nude?”

“No, I wasn’t nude. You sound disappointed.”

“Funny. Then why don’t you take your jeans off and come on over here? I have a drink machine just down the hall.”

“For that matter, so do I.”

“See. That takes the fun out of it. We need to do it together. Whatever trouble I get into tonight, I want you with me.”

“Oh, really? That means so much to me.”

“I think you’re chicken.”

“Chicken? Maybe. But going to jail for public nudity doesn’t seem nice to me. That’s not a phone call I want to make to Paul. Send another photog to cover the trial, I’m in jail.”

“What about when I was posing for you? You wouldn’t undress for me then either. I think I would have been the one going to jail that day.”

I had an answer waiting. “First of all, we were in a private place. Secondly, I tend to think that cops, who are typically male, would be a little more understanding of a naked woman than they would be of a naked man.”

“Oh, you do, huh?”

“Yes, I do.”

“So you are chicken then?”

I laughed. “Yeah, I guess I am.”

“But why not? What are the chances of us getting caught? And do you really think they’d put us in jail for this?”

“You’re not going to let this drop, are you?”

“Nope,” she said.

I turned the tables on her. “Then why don’t you come over here? Bring your ice bucket and nothing else.”

“OK,” she said. Just like that.

“Huh?”

“Oh, now you don’t think I’ll do it. Where is my ice bucket anyway? Oh. There it is. But there is one thing first.”

“Yes.”

“You have to be naked too. Nude, that is. No underwear.”

“I’m not wearing underwear.”

“Really? Is this an everyday thing? Or are feeling spunky today?”

“Spunky? Like Spunky Brewster.”

“Who?”

“Every now and then, I go without underwear. Today was one of those days.”

“Interesting thought. I’ll be there in two minutes. You are going to take your jeans off, right?”

“Of course, Stacie. I’m unbuttoning them as we speak.” That wasn’t true.

“I’m on my way.”

Dial tone.

Oh, shit. I hung the phone up, opened my door and stepped outside. I couldn’t see anyone at the moment, but there were lights on in some of the rooms. I stepped back inside and looked for a watch. Right. The hotel in Topeka at least had a digital clock; Nashville couldn’t even afford a cheap wind-up Wal-Mart special. It had to still be early though. Not much after ten.

I stood at the door for a moment, my hands on my buttons. Why not? I thought. Even if Stacie wasn’t in her birthday suit, why not just open the door when she knocked and be nude? I started to take them off, even got them unbuttoned and halfway to my knees. Because I’d feel really dumb then, I reasoned. Hell. Maybe she hadn’t even been taking her clothes off when we spoke. I pulled them back up. But then again, she had posed nude for me on three different occasions. I shuddered.

I poked my head out the door in the direction she would come from, then went back inside. If I hesitated long enough, she’d be at my door.....

She knocked at my door. Instead of looking out first, I swung the door open. To find her standing there wearing a smile, a pair of tight short shorts and a white t-shirt.

“Chicken,” she said as she walked in, handing me her ice bucket.

“Me? What about you?”

She flopped down on the bed. “I knew you wouldn’t go through with it.”

I didn’t say anything. It was obvious neither of us had gone through with it.

Stacie

“Actually, I guess maybe I chickened out to,” she said. What he didn’t know was that I had stepped out onto the balcony, ice bucket in hand, naked when my stomach suddenly did a back flip. I had every intention of going through with it, but I felt frozen with a slight case of panic. “But I have another plan.”

“OK. Let’s hear it.”

“There’s a dinky little convenience store on my side of the hotel. I was thinking maybe we could get some beer.”

“You drink beer?”

“Well, not yet,” I admitted. “You may can imagine that my grandmother was pretty strict in that regard. And Gregg doesn’t drink anything stronger than coffee, but what did I say about acting outside what is generally considered the norm for you?”

Ray laughed. “Not drinking at all used to be abnormal for me not too long ago.”

“Then let’s go. Maybe it’ll loosen me up.”

That was enough for him. He went for his shirt.

“Go like you are. No shirt, no shoes. What are they going to do? Refuse you service? I’m going barefoot.”

Ray

I made sure I had my wallet and my keys, then we walked out of the room, down the hall, then the steps and across the parking lot to the store. There was the usual weekend mix, mostly people like us searching for beer. A few people noticed us as we walked in, but they mainly looked at Stacie. I realized why when I saw her in good light. She wasn’t wearing a bra. The shirt was tight and did not do much to conceal anything. She caught my eye as we headed toward the back of the store and I

knew she had worn the shirt on purpose.

After we picked out the beer and were walking back to the hotel, I couldn't resist saying something. "Nice shirt."

"Oh, you like? I normally just wear it to sleep in. Did you notice that black guy checking me out?"

"I think everyone in there checked you out, even the girl behind the counter."

She stopped walking and looked at me. "Really?"

"Yes. And why not? You look beautiful."

She blushed. "Thanks. But look at you. They had to notice that chest on you."

"Oh, I don't know. I think they were mostly looking at your chest."

She laughed, then threw her hair back and went for the bag that was at my side. She took it from me, then sat it on the ground so she could open the twelve pack of beer inside. She handed one to me, then took one for herself, opened it and took a big swallow.

Stacie

I knew that the shirt was practically see-through. I had made sure before I left the hotel room. It was the oldest shirt I had and had worn thin over the years. My nipples got hard every time I put it on because it was so tight. I liked the way it looked on me.

"Man, this tastes awful. Do you get used to it?"

He hadn't opened his beer yet. "The more you drink, the better it tastes," he said. Even though that was a concept I didn't yet grasp, I took a breath, then took another swig. Maybe the feeling it gave you was a lot better than the taste. We stood there for a moment drinking before heading to the room.

Once inside, there wasn't anywhere to sit except one uncomfortable chair and the bed. It was a carbon copy of my crummy little room. I sat on the edge of the bed while Ray stood. As soon as he opened his beer, I put my empty bottle on the night stand and took his right from his hands. He didn't miss a beat and went for another bottle.

We weren't speaking, just looking at one another, alternating between drinking and trying not to laugh.

“Those are the shorts you wore on the railroad tracks,” he said.

“Oh, you noticed them.”

“I’ve thought about them a lot.”

That was the cue I was waiting on. I put the beer next to the empty bottle, took the shirt off and threw it across the room.

Ray

“Is this how you remember me?” she asked, recreating the best pose from that day as best she could on the bed.

“That’s one way,” I replied, as she stood up.

She moved closer to me for a moment, then went for the door. Somehow I was not that surprised when she opened it up and walked into the hallway. The door closed behind her before I was able to join her at the balcony. She was looking at the pool. I was scanning in all directions, realizing that no one was around to pay us any attention. There seemed to be fewer rooms with lights on.

She turned around to me, then walked back inside. I followed her in just enough time to see her slip out of those tight shorts, grab the nearest ice bucket (mine, for the record) and walk down the hall nude. She got to the ice machine and filled the bucket all the way, before turning around to me and walking down the hall.

I couldn’t stop looking at her face. There was something about it. She was glowing. Maybe it was the alcohol buzz, I don’t know. Or the excitement.

She got to the door, held it open for me, then we both went inside. Nothing was said. She simply put the bucket down, then we kissed. It wasn’t that one or the other started the kiss. It was natural, as if we had been expecting it for some time. Which I guess was the case.

She lay back on the bed with her legs slightly spread. Her eyes told me what I already knew as I went to take my jeans off, then climbed into bed. Nothing was said about turning the lights out. We lay side by side, looking into one another’s eyes.

“I’ve been waiting for this moment for a long time,” I said softly.

“Me too, love,” she said, kissing me again. My hands caressed her side.

"I've wanted this to happen since we first met," she whispered. "It just took me a long time to admit it to myself."

I put my finger to her lips. There was so much we both wanted to say, but at the moment, words weren't needed. I kissed her again, then rolled over pulling her on top of me. Her hair fell into her face as she looked down on me. I reached for her breasts, then slid my hands down her sides.

I held onto her waist and guided her over me. She slid down easy and began moving up and down slowly.

"You're so beautiful," I said, knowing I could never tell her just how magnificent I really thought she was.

Every inch of me, my entire body, was feeling the sensation. It was as if my hands were feeling every pore, every goose bump on her body, and sending shockwaves through my veins. I couldn't close my eyes, unwilling to miss anything about her. Her face was glowing. Small beads of sweat began forming over her chest.

She bent down just enough to allow me to open my mouth and bite gently on her nipple. Murmurs of passion were beginning to fill the room as the movements became faster. The bed was squeaking and hitting the wall. The thought that someone was being kept awake by the sounds of our lovemaking made me go just a little harder, a little further in her.

She kissed me hard, my teeth just momentarily biting her lips as her tongue entered my mouth. My hands roamed her back, once in her long hair, then slowly reaching the small of her back. I grabbed her ass and held on, then in one quick movement turned her over. Now I was on top. She grabbed my shoulders and dug her nails in.

I buried my knees into the bed, allowing me to thrust harder. Her head began hitting the headboard, making the bed hit the wall. I put one hand between her head and the board. But at that moment, she managed to push herself toward the end of the bed, away from the wall, and further onto me. There was a slight, but noticeable, change in position. The sensation changed and I felt myself go deeper her.

I thought back to when she had posed for me, how much I had wanted her then and how I had resisted the urge to make the first move, even though she seemed to be throwing hints for me to. Then I remembered the first time I saw her, the way she took my breath away.

I raised up just enough to let her know I was ready to change positions. We maneuvered ourselves so that we were both sitting up, her in my lap facing me. I held onto her ass while she had thrown her arms around and was holding on tight. She bit into my neck to stop from screaming just as I was ready to explode.

And then there was no movement, just us holding each other tightly in the middle of the bed. Slowly, we separated from one another and lay side by side on the end of the bed, staring at the ceiling.

Stacie broke the silence a few minutes later.

“Wow.”

I looked at her, then asked, “Was it that good?” Thinking to myself what a stupid question to ask.

“Wow,” she said again. Then she hopped up and got another beer, then disappeared into the bathroom. A few minutes later, I heard the shower cut on.

“Hey, we’re in luck. This one works pretty good.”

She was already in the shower by the time I joined her.

Stacie

I couldn’t sleep due as much to the uncomfortable bed as to the giddiness I felt inside. I had waited for the moment to arrive for so long, unable to tell myself that it would for fear my hopes would be dashed. I felt alive for the first time in a long time. Maybe this feeling would go away as soon as I was under my roof again. Maybe the cold reality of my life would return.

Regardless, I didn’t want to lose this feeling. I looked at him lying in the low light coming in from outside. He looked so peaceful. I slid out of bed as quietly as I could and walked into the bathroom. I got a towel and tried to wrap it around me. No good. The cheap hotel towels barely made it around my body. If I had to, I could hold it against me.

I tip-toed through the room so as to not wake him, then opened the door slowly and quietly. At 4 a.m. the place was dead. There was an eerie stillness to the night. I closed the door behind me and with the towel to my side, walked toward the stairs. On the ground level, I peaked around the corner and didn’t see anyone. Confident that no one would see me, I walked to the pool, left the towel on the ground and stepped in. No need to make noise diving.

The water was cooler than at Gillian’s house. It got my blood racing as I swam laps. I swam quickly, subconsciously, perhaps, thinking that the faster I went, the less likely someone who was watching could tell I was naked. I laughed to myself at the silly notion.

Just a few laps into my late night swim, I realized there was, in fact, someone watching me. I imagined he had a smile on his face and that he was shocked.

Ray

I woke up alone. I tried to get my bearings. It was still night. There was no sound coming from the bathroom. With a sense of doom, I turned on the light. Her clothes were still on the floor. I stood up. The bathroom door was open and there was clearly no one inside.

A wild thought led me to the window and I looked at the pool three floors below. Sure enough, there she was, nude, swimming laps quietly. She looked totally at peace and I wondered if maybe she was still drunk. After we showered, we had downed a few more beers as we watched traffic across the field. What else would allow her to skinny dip in a pool where, although it was the dead of night, anyone in thirty or more rooms could see her?

I went to the bathroom to get a towel and realized one was missing. It wouldn't wrap around me, so I held it in front of me as I walked onto the hallway. It took a moment before she noticed me. By that time, I was wishing I had my cameras with me. She waved at me like it was nothing, then climbed out of the pool, dried herself off and headed for the stairs. I scanned the area for the fourth time in as many minutes. I didn't see anyone.

And then she was walking down the hall toward me, the towel to her side. We went back inside and made love again, then fell asleep in each other's arms for the rest of the short night.