

Mr. Pink

By: Christian Sandler

## Mr. Pink

I always told Mick that he'd have to do it eventually. You can't get through life without doing it. It's not even something people think about it. It's common courtesy. It's like shopping online. The price you pay isn't what you see next to the product. There's usually tax and a shipping cost. It's expected. But Mick is the type of guy that believes you should pay exactly what you see. Mick doesn't believe in tipping.

That's right. Like Mr. Pink from Reservoir Dogs. He claims it's not from the movie, but I call bullshit. It comes up constantly. "I don't tip the cashier at Burger King when I order a 20 count," he'll say, "Why should I tip a waitress? There's no difference. She's just giving me food that I paid for. Why is she special? Because she walked my Sprite to the table? I have to walk to the Coke machine to get my drink at Burger King. You don't see them giving me a discount for that shit."

I always told him that he'd do it someday. And sure enough, I was right.

We were at Roxy's, our local diner downtown. It's pretty much your typical run-down place. Dinged up chrome-coated tables and a busted 50's jukebox in the corner. There are old black and white pictures that hang crooked on the wall, and laminated records for menus. The booths are black cherry red with shining little sparkles in them; rips and holes everywhere. It always smells like greasy burgers and heavily salted fries.

“You see the Bucs blew the lead in the 8<sup>th</sup> again last night?” I said, “Morris came in and gave up three straight hits.”

“He fucking sucks,” Mick said, “The whole bullpen blows. We’re not gonna catch the Cards.”

“Not a chance. I think I’m feeling grilled cheese today.”

“Burger for me,” he said, tossing a Buddy Holly album on the table,

“Wait... who the hell is that?”

Turns out there was a new waitress working there. She stood out because we we’re there all the time, and knew the whole staff by name. Her name was Amber. She had a subtle white smile and tucked a pen behind her ear along with her wavy brown hair. Her sleeves were rolled up, revealing her pale, smooth skin.

She was new at Roxy’s but it was clear she had waited tables before. She gracefully moved between chairs and didn’t need a pad to take orders. Her hazel eyes lit up as she handed us our sodas and reeled off the specials. She was cute. Why she was into Mick, I don’t know.

“Here’s another Dr. Pepper. Your burger will be right out,” she said, smiling at him.

“Alright, groovy.”

I handed my menu to Amber and waited for her to walk away.

“Groovy? Did you seriously just say groovy?”

“Dude, does this girl want me or what?” Mitch said.

“Uh huh.”

“I’ll be right back. Gotta hustle.”

He quickly walked back to the bathroom and purposely grazed Amber's shoulder while she was leaning over another table. As she looked up, he turned back and smiled and their eyes met. I have to admit, it was a pretty smooth move. He sat back down with his shirt unbuttoned and his hair wet. He kept running his fingers through it and using the silver napkin dispenser as a mirror.

"Seriously?" I said.

"Did you see the way she was looking at me, man?"

"You're a real muppet, you know that?"

"A muppet? What the fuck is a...shit, here she comes."

"Wow there's a huge stain on the front of your shirt," I said pointing at him.

"Shut the fuck up."

"Alright guys, here ya go," Amber said, holding a plate in each hand, "One grilled cheese and one burger."

"Thanks," I said.

She turned right to Mick. "Let me know if you need anything."

"Oh I'll tell you what I need, Amber," he mumbled as she walked away, "I need you."

"Gimme a break," I rolled my eyes.

"She's so hot, man. Where the hell has she been all this time?"

"You know what this means, right?"

"Yeah, it means I'm getting lucky," he said with a mouth full of fries.

"It's means you're gonna have to leave a tip."

"Woah there, cowboy. Let's not get out of hand."

“We pay up at the register, man. If you want to leave your number, you have to leave a few bucks behind.”

“No way. I’ll just leave my number. Don’t need a tip.”

“That’s not how it works, dude. If you don’t leave a tip, I guarantee you she doesn’t contact you. It makes you look bad.”

“Listen, Johnny, as she made quite clear, I look anything but bad. She wants the digits, and I’m giving em to her.”

“You’re an idiot,” I said, “If you don’t leave a tip, it’s like ‘yeah you were a shitty waitress, but you’re hot, so give me a call.’ It doesn’t work. If you leave a good tip, you’re complimenting her without even saying anything. You’re making a good impression.”

“I don’t believe in tipping man,” he replied, “We’ve been over this. It’s not...”

“Yeah well, apparently you don’t believe in making yourself look good, either.”

We argued for a few more minutes, and he kept quoting Buscemi. “I don’t tip because society says I have to.” “Tipping automatically is for the birds.” He claimed Amber was a nice girl, but she was just doing her job. It wasn’t until she came back over and handed him his check with a little smiley face on it that he had second thoughts.

“Alright, fuck. Alright. Just slide me a few bucks. And I’m only doing this because of her. Don’t think you like changed my ways or anything. It’s still bullshit.”

“What do you mean, slide you a few bucks?” I said, “If you want to talk to this girl so much, leave your own damn tip.”

“I don’t have any cash, dude. Why the hell would I carry cash? I don’t tip. I never need it.”

“You owe me. Especially cause I saved your ass with Amber here. I don’t know if you *believe* in interest, but I’m charging it.”

“Oh wow,” he said, “I’m gonna need to start waiting tables. You know they get tipped by every single one of their guests? You believe that?”

“Gasp. What a concept.”

As we were leaving, Mick picked up a paper from a rack next to the door, and shoved it in my face. There was an article on the front page headlined: “Jewelry Store Robbed” in big bold letters.

“See that?” he said, “Robbery. I’m Mr. Pink. I’m supposed to be the one robbing people. I just paid 12 bucks for a nine-dollar meal. I just got robbed. Robbed by society.”

“You know why you’re Mr. Pink? I said. “Because you’re a faggot.”

“Jesus Christ, Jonny, fucking forget about it. It’s beneath me. I’m Mr. Pink.”