

Robbery

by

Michael L. Martin

Scene: A liquor store. An elderly clerk is behind the counter. Two middle-aged customers are looking over the merchandise. A young customer enters and looks nervously around the store. He walks up to the clerk.

Young Customer: (he says something to clerk in a whisper that is inaudible)

Clerk: (leaning forward and putting his hand to his ear) Sorry! You'll have to speak up.

Young Customer: (irritated but still whispering, now a little louder) I've a gun. Give me all your cash!

Clerk: You've a son? I couldn't get the other part. Something about having a bash?

Young Customer: (frustrated grabs an order form off the counter and motions that he need something to write with. Clerk hands him a pen. Customer turns form over on its back and starts to write.)

Clerk: (tolerantly turning the form over on its front) No sir. Please don't write on the back. Just check off what you need in the spaces provided on the front of the form.

Young Customer: (violently turns the form over on its other side and starts to write on the back again.)

Clerk: Sir, I'll have to insist that you write on the front. (Starts to reach for the form but Young Customer snatches it out of his reach. Young Customer starts to write, shakes the pen, starts to write again, shakes the pen even harder.)

Young Customer: (He screams and slams the pen on the floor.)

Middle Aged Customer #1: (moving toward the counter) No need to get up set! Please use my pen!

Middle Aged Customer #2: There's really no need to act that way.

Young Customer: (regains control of himself and timidly taking the pen writes on the back of the form and hands it to Clerk. Clerk looks at it, holds it at arm's length and squints. Then takes off his glasses and brings it close to his eyes.)

Clerk: If you don't mind me saying so, you don't write very clearly. It is the cursive style. You would have been far better off going to a progressive school and learning to print really well. It's something about having fun and wanting a rash. But I don't really understand it.

(He looks around hopelessly)

Middle Aged Customer #2: Perhaps I can help. . . (takes the note from the Clerk and stares at it holding it at different angles) Yes, I agree. His writing is terrible.

Middle Aged Customer #1: Let me have a look. I bet I can make it out. (He takes the note from Middle Aged Customer #2 and looks at it at arms length. He then laughs.) Our young friend is confused. He has a gun that he wants cash for. He apparently thinks this is a gun store or a pawnshop.

Clerk: (speaking very slowly and loudly) THIS IS A LIQUOR STORE! GET IT! A LIQUOR STORE! WE DON'T PAWN OR BUY GUNS.

Middle Age Customer #1: Perhaps he doesn't speak English. He looks like he might be Latino. Does anyone here speak Spanish?

Middle Aged Customer # 2: I took French in high school.

Clerk: You could try explaining the situation in French.

Middle Aged Customer #2: Damn! I don't remember the French word for "liquor store."

Young Customer fumbles in his pocket and pulls out a handgun. In his nervousness it slips out of his hand and falls on the floor. Middle Aged Customer #2 quickly picks it up.

Middle Aged Customer #2: Wow! This is a real beauty! A World War II German Luger -- the kind used by the Waffen SS! This is really a collector's item. My young friend, you would be foolish to sell this. (examines the gun) However, you should not be walking with a loaded gun—it might discharge accidentally. I think it would be safer if it were unloaded. If I may. . . . (He unloads the gun.)

Young Customer: (puts his head down on the counter, pounds his fist on the counter in frustration, and runs from the store.)

Middle Aged Customer #2: Wait! You forgot your gun!

Middle Aged Customer #1: There's a pawnshop just around the corner!

Clerk: Wait! We got a sale on Bud Light!

