

ANSWER ME  
(excerpts)

by  
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**BITS OF 3 SCENES. THEY'VE BEEN ALTERED SLIGHTLY TO WORK BETTER AS SIDES. TAKE A BREATHER IN BETWEEN...**

TONI (O.S.)  
Mr. Pruitt, I'm conducting a survey--

DARREN  
Miss, I'm sorry, I'm at work and I don't have time to play twenty questions or whatever.

TONI (O.S.)  
Please? I'm a psych student at State and the survey is for my senior project. Just a few minutes of your time would be a big help.

A sigh --

DARREN  
How long will this take?

TONI (O.S.)  
Not long at all, just a few questions.

DARREN  
Alright. Fire away.

TONI (O.S.)  
Excellent. First, a couple of background questions. Socioeconomic status? Working class, middle class, upper--

DARREN  
Upper middle.

Realizing how mindless the questions are, Darren leans forward to get back to his report.

TONI (O.S.)  
Race?

DARREN  
Fill in the blank. Thought that was illegal to ask?

TONI (O.S.)  
Not for scientific studies.

Darren picks up his pen to make a mark as the caller continues --

TONI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Let's see, you're forty years old  
and have been married for just over  
a year and a half, correct??

DARREN  
How do you know that?

TONI (O.S.)  
My list has birthdays and marriage  
license info. Public records, ya  
know?

DARREN  
Oh, okay.

TONI (O.S.)  
Between public records, insta-face  
and everything else, there just  
aren't any secrets anymore.

DARREN  
Yeah, I don't really get into all  
that.

TONI (O.S.)  
Probably wise. You and your wife  
have been together how long total?

DARREN  
Three, give or take.

TONI (O.S.)  
Have you been faith--

Interruption --

DARREN  
(quick, into phone)  
Sorry, gotta go.

**BIT LATER**

---

Grace brings the wrong file --

DARREN  
I need the Coleman financials not  
ours.

GRACE  
Oh, shit. Sorry.

A hint of anger --

DARREN  
Grace, today is not...  
(regrouping)  
If we don't land this contract,  
there will be layoffs. So I need  
you to focus, okay?

GRACE  
Will do, boss.

DARREN  
Thank you.

The door closes behind her and --

Darren's office PHONE RINGS.

DARREN (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
Grace.

The RINGING continues.

DARREN (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
Grace.

Grace pokes her head through the door.

GRACE  
You bellowed?

DARREN  
Did I not just ask you to hold all  
of my calls?

GRACE  
That's your direct line.

DARREN  
Oh, sorry.

He presses a button to answer.

TONI (O.S.)  
You are really beginning to try my  
patience.

DARREN

Me? I've given you more time than I can spare and you keep harassing me.

**LATER BUT STILL ON THE PHONE WITH TONI** \_\_\_\_\_

DARREN (CONT'D)

What? We met a few years ago and you've had some sort of twisted crush on me ever since? And now you're getting Molly out of your way to-

TONI (O.S.)

Don't flatter yourself.

DARREN

Okay. I'll play along. She's cheating on me and you're doing all of this for me, right?

TONI (O.S.)

Not exactly but go on.

DARREN

Then, I've changed my mind. I would kill her lover instead.

TONI (O.S.)

Nice try but too late.

DARREN

Why? It's what I want. I was lying the first time to skew your study.

TONI (O.S.)

Actually, you first said that you wouldn't kill either of them. So who can know which is true?

DARREN

That's right. You can't know what I would really want if she were cheating on me. And since she's not, you have two extremely compelling reasons to let her go.