

*Bathsheba* by Jennifer Kearney

LIZ: One night we were working late, David and I, getting Christmas Eve Mass organized. As we're coming back downstairs, there's this man, mid-forties, kind of hunched over in the pews. David hands me the keys and goes over to tell the guy we're closing up for the night. I'm imagining he came in off the streets to get warm or something, maybe fell asleep, but when David puts a hand on his arm, the guy jackknifes up faster than you can imagine and he's holding something and David takes a reflexive step back.

That's when I realize it's a gun.

This guy's been hanging out down here with a gun, waiting for what? Waiting for us to come down? I can feel my heart trying to claw its way up into my throat, and I'm far enough away that I can't hear what David's saying to the guy, but he's speaking in this calm, soft voice, like there isn't a total nut-job with a gun not a foot away from him. I can't go closer because the guy might just panic and get trigger-happy. I can't call out to David, I can't run for help. That's it.

But I'm standing there and I watch the guy get more and more wound up, and then he stands up and he's waving the gun around. David doesn't move, just keeps talking low and slow and calm, even as the guy's shouting over him. I sure in this moment we're all going to die and my heart and my brain are basically turning inside out.

And then it all happens at once. The guy drops the gun. David motions for me to go get help. I drop my box. Somehow, I remember how a phone works and I do finally call the cops and they come and they take the guy and David smiles sympathetically and squeezes his shoulder. And the cops question us. And David's shaking, like all that adrenaline was bottled up and held at bay and now it's engulfing him. And he tells me he's so glad I'm okay, doesn't know what he'd have done if I wasn't... And I take him for a drink to try to calm both our serrated nerves. And we have beers in a dingy bar like we're college kids. And then we're still too wired so we go for all-night breakfast. And then we go back to my place because neither of us wants to be alone. And then. And then. And then...

*Full script can be found in Out on a Limb: Short Plays by New Playwrights, edited by Kit Brennan, Signature Editions 2011, ISBN 1-897109-55-5*