

# Grind City

## Characters

Dexter: The 20-something owner of Grind City coffee shop.

Micky: A lesbian writer in her mid-20s, and Dexter's former girlfriend.

Tony: An Italian-American male in his 30s

Place: A gentrifying neighborhood in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Time: 2016

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## **Midpoint of the Play**

(Suddenly the door opens and TONY enters, with slicked back hair and dressed in tight jeans, work boots and a tight black T-shirt. DEXTER quickly puts the Jameson back under the counter.)

TONY

Hey, how you doin'?

DEXTER & MICKY

Hey.

DEXTER

Can I help you?

TONY

Yeah. Uh, let me have a double espresso ... Nice place! Welcome to the neighborhood.

DEXTER

Thank you.

TONY

I own the cheese shop on the corner.

DEXTER

Oh yeah, right. I'm Dexter, this is Micky.

TONY

I'm Tony. I wanted to stop in here while you were renovating. But I've been so busy opening up my own shop.

MICKY

Your place looks kick-ass, man. I passed by it a little while ago.

TONY

Thanks. We're doin' great business so far. I'm tellin' ya, this is gonna be a hot block. All we need now is a good restaurant, maybe a gourmet burger joint, a little boutique market and we'll be good to go.

DEXTER

Yeah, that's what I'm thinking, too. This could be a destination street, right?

TONY

Shit, yeah. You kiddin' me?

DEXTER

Here you go...

(Serves TONY his espresso.)

TONY

Thanks.

(Puts a bit of sugar in it and stirs. Takes a sip.)

TONY CONT.

Mmm, man, that is smooth.

DEXTER

I get the beans from a small-batch roaster in Brooklyn.

MICKY

And he's gonna bring in indie bands and poetry slams, too.

TONY

That all sounds real good.

(There's an uneasy silence for a few beats as the three just look at each other.)

TONY CONT.

But, uh, you know what doesn't sound so good?

DEXTER

What's that?

TONY

A mosque.

DEXTER

Oh yeah. Can you believe it?

TONY

No, I can't believe it . . . And it's not gonna happen. Right?

DEXTER

Well...

TONY

I saw Jihad Jane come in here. I threw her out of my place yesterday. Told her to shove her petition up her ass and get the fuck out of my store.

(DEXTER & MICKY are startled  
by TONY'S sudden rage and  
cringe.)

So, basically, I'm here to find out if you signed that fuckin' thing.

DEXTER

Umm, well, no, not yet. I asked her to leave the information here and I'd take a look at the plans.

TONY

What'd ya need to fuckin' look at? We don't want it. Okay? In fact, I got a petition of my own that says so.

(He reaches into the inside pocket of his leather jacket, pulls out paperwork and lays it on the counter.)

DEXTER

Another petition?

TONY

Yeah, congratulations! You're gonna be my first signature.

DEXTER

Oh, man. Come on. Don't do this.

TONY

So, you want something to be built here that's gonna kill our businesses? Bring a shit-load of people and traffic to the area -- not to mention the fuckin' yammering on a loudspeaker all day?

DEXTER

Not really, but ...

TONY

But what? The last thing we need in this neighborhood is a center for terrorists.

MICKY

Whoa, wait a minute! I wouldn't call it a center for terrorist.

TONY

Am I talkin' to you?

MICKY

I'm just sayin'.

TONY

Don't you see what's happenin' all over the world?

MICKY

Oh, come on! These people are just trying to practice their religion ... like everybody else.

TONY

I know what I see and I know what I hear. It took the NYPD to come to Jersey and clean up that Paterson mosque.

MICKY

That was unlawful surveillance, if you ask me.

TONY

I ain't asking you. All I know is there's a dozen terrorist fucks off the street now because of it.

DEXTER

Uh, look, I'm not happy about this, believe me. I'm worried about my business, my investment.

TONY

Damn straight. I ain't runnin' no Dego mutz shop on the corner, you know. I'm buying \$10,000 worth of premium cheese a month. And it's gotta move or I'm fucked. You hear me?

DEXTER

Yeah ... I, I understand, believe me.

TONY

I'm not so sure you do. Terrorists don't care about "the neighborhood." And ... here's a flash: ISIS is not fond of hipsters. You two would first to go.

MICKY

Well, I don't care. I'm not afraid. They love when we all piss our pants at the same time. That's exactly what they want.

TONY

What they want is for you to be DEAD! That's what they want. Did your little Jihadi angel tell you that she's studying electrical engineering? Oh, there's a big surprise!

DEXTER

Come on, are you serious?

MICKY

That's just straight-out racist.

TONY

Are you two listening to what I'm saying? That thing across the street ain't ... gonna ... happen. Now sign this.

(He pushes the paper closer  
to DEXTER.)

DEXTER

I don't sign anything without taking time to study it.

TONY

You think we have time? They're already measuring drapes over there. I said sign it.

MICKY

Don't be a bully asshole.

TONY

Oh, honey pie, did you learn that in school?

MICKY

All I'm saying is he'll decide for himself which petition he wants to sign.

TONY

(To DEXTER)

Is this your little girlfriend?

DEXTER

Well ... she used to be ... this is, until she started dating my sister, and then we sort of ...

MICKY

Dexter, really?

DEXTER

He asked!

TONY

Hey, listen, I don't give a shit if you two are fucking goats in here. You just need to make sure that mosque doesn't happen.

(TONY grabs his petition again and sticks it in DEXTER's face.)

Now, sign!

(DEXTER recoils while MICKY glares at TONY. They're all frozen for a beat.)

TONY

Okay. All right. You two wanna be dickheads. I'm gonna leave this here so you can read the fine print. You know, the part

where it says we don't want no fuckin' mosque? I'll be back tomorrow to pick it up.

(TONY takes out his wallet and leaves \$5 on the counter. He takes a few steps toward the door, then stops.)

But I'll tell you what, if I find out you signed that other petition? You're gonna see what an *American* terrorist looks like. And I ain't shitin' you two.

(TONY moves to the door, opens it and pauses again.)

TONY CONT.

Oh yeah. Almost forgot. Stop by the shop when you get a chance. I just got some awesome Beaufort d'Ete. It's from the French mountains. Put that baby on a slice of baguette, with a little Sauvignon Blanc on the side...

(Puts his fingertips to his lips.)

Mmmwwwa ... Nothin' better. I'll give you a free taste. Oh, and good luck here. You should do well.

(TONY exits. DEXTER puts his head in his hands.)

MICKY

What a douche! Notice how it's always the tough guys who run scared? And they call us pussies? He thinks we should be afraid of a mosque. I think we should be more afraid of *him*.

DEXTER

All I wanted was to open up a nice little shop where people could come and enjoy their coffee, listen to some mellow sounds, hook up to WiFi. I don't wanna sign either one of those goddamn petitions.