

THE SUICIDE YOU PREVENT MAY BE YOUR OWN (ROUND 2)

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Description: A probationary suicide prevention counselor receives a call from a man who thinks he's calling a local pizza parlor.

Setting: Divided set. A man in his living room with a phone. A woman at a desk in a call center.

Set needs: A recliner (Russ's home); a desk and an office chair (Janet's work station)

Characters:

Janet: A woman in her 40s, dressed in professional attire with a head set

Russ: A middle-aged man, dressed in casual clothes, sitting in his recliner and drinking a beer

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Sound of phone ringing.

JANET: *(reading a script in a very officious way)* This is Lifeline, your suicide prevention center, where we believe that every life is precious. This is Janet. How can I help you?

RUSS: Yeah, you can help me. I'm trying to reach Luigi's Pizza Palace. I want to order an extra-large Kamikaze Boom Boom - triple sausage double cheese.

JANET: *(nervous, fumbling through pages on a clipboard)* Sir, when you did first start having thoughts of suicide?

RUSS: Is this a joke? *(laughing)* Yeah, this must be some sort of promotional thing you guys are doing. That's what it is.

JANET: No, sir. We don't promote suicide. We do our best to prevent it.

RUSS: Well, I'm outta here. I've got to round up some pizza. Bye. *(hangs up)*

JANET: *(frantic, to herself)* That's a hang-up. Oh Lord, we can't have any hang-ups.

RUSS: *(He thumbs through a phone book).* Restaurants...restaurants...pizza...where the hell is Luigi's?

(She hits the call back button. Phone rings. He picks it up.)

RUSS: Yeah?

JANET: Sir, I'm so sorry, but this is Janet again. With Lifeline. I have to fill out the client in-take form. Can I please have your name? It's procedure.

RUSS: *(exasperated)* All right. My name is Russell Huggins. Is that it?

JANET: *(desperate)* I've got to get through Part A at least. Please. Just a couple more questions. Your current address—

RUSS: I don't have time for this, lady. It's the freaking Superbowl. My buddies will be here any minute.

JANET: Good, good. We're up to Part B.

RUSS: Part B? What's that?

JANET: In training, they tell us to find out if the client has any friends or family nearby. Looks like you do.

RUSS: Yeah, lady. They're my old teammates. And they'll be hungry when they get here. So I gotta go.

JANET: *(pleading)* Wait, don't hang up again. Please. I'm a single mother with two kids to take care of. I need this job.

RUSS: *(softens)* I'm sorry about that. But I don't see what this has to do with me. I'm just trying to host a Superbowl party.

(Janet starts crying.)

RUSS: Come on. Quit crying. Nothing's that bad.

JANET: You don't understand. I've already gotten two warnings. (*puts head in her hands*) Oh God, I forgot about the confidentiality clause.

RUSS: Huh?

JANET: I need to tell you that anything you share with Lifeline is completely confidential. Oh, I'm going to get written up again because I didn't tell you this at first. The only thing that can fix this if I truly stop you from killing yourself.

RUSS: I am not going to kill myself. I'm perfectly fine. Okay? I just want to order a pizza and watch the game.

JANET: (*irate*) Are you telling me you've never had thoughts of suicide? I know I have. When I was eight years old, and my first cat got run over, I wanted to die. And there's no shame in that.

RUSS: Let me get this straight. You're supposed to be preventing suicide and it seems like now you're trying to talk me into it.

JANET: Well, aren't you the lucky one that your life has always been so perfect.

RUSS (*resigned*) Okay, Janet. (*thinking*) Back when my girlfriend dumped me, I did threaten to kill myself. But I wasn't serious because she wasn't worth it.

JANET: (*crying*). Well, it's obvious that I can't help you. As for me, my life's over. I might as well go jump off a bridge. A tall one. Maybe I'll pass out on the way down.

RUSS: Hold on here. (*eureka moment*) I got it. Here's the deal. If you don't get me Luigi's new phone number, I'm gonna blow my brains out. Do you think you can handle that?

JANET: (*Opens phone book, relieved*) I knew if I stayed with you long enough, I'd be able to help you somehow. We've followed procedure. They won't fire me now.

RUSS: That's the ticket. (*He grabs a pencil.*)

JANET: (*Finds number*). Okay, I found it. (*joyful*) Luigi's Pizza Palace. 555-2189.

RUSS: (*writing it down*) Thanks, and take care of yourself, you hear? Bye. (*Hangs up*).

JANET: (*beaming, to herself*). One hundred percent success rate today. I just might get promoted!

—THE END—