

Field Sobriety

by Katie Norton

A San Francisco cab driver named Jake, a friend of a friend, was my date for the party. I didn't really like him, but I needed someone to bring. In the 70s free love was the norm, but it was hard to have sex with a guy I wasn't really attracted to. Especially someone who would be hard to get rid of. Jake was needy. I picked him up at his apartment in the Mission District and we fooled around a little bit on his bed before we left for the party. He wasn't my type but I felt like I had to bring someone. A single gal's dilemma.

We arrived at Mark and Nancy's house in Foster Shitty. It had a king-size waterbed in every bedroom, which Nancy proudly showed off as she took us on a tour through the house, filled with huge aquariums full of tropical fish. One of the bedrooms had a black vinyl waterbed with a leopardskin bedspread. Mark had all his employees there, Big Daddy.

Our hosts were pouring strong vodka collins. We were basically drinking straight vodka out of pail-sized tumblers. They were the type who insisted that everybody get high with them. Mark kept saying, "Come on, have another drink." We were smoking potent sinsemilla. Then they broke out the cocaine.

I can't remember much of the party, aside from the bright tropical fish tanks and loud music playing. Jake kept saying, "Let's go." He wanted to get into my pants, which could best be accomplished back at my place.

We had come to the party in my car. As Jake and I left the party, I told him I was much too wasted to drive. "You're a professional cab driver, you drive."

"I'm wasted, too," he said.

“Well, we've got to get back to the City,” I said.

He agreed to drive. As soon as he pulled onto Highway 101, he was immediately pulled over by a CHP car.

“Oh shit,” Jake said.

“May I see your license?” the cop said to Jake. Jake fumbled out his license.

“The reason I pulled you over is that you drove onto the freeway erratically from the onramp. You cut across all lanes of traffic and got into the fast lane. You should have entered the right lane, then moved over one lane at a time. You need to step out of the car,” the cop said assertively.

Jake failed the field sobriety test miserably. He was handcuffed and put in the back of the CHP car. The officer said to me, “I can't let you drive this vehicle without giving you the test as well.” Gulp!

By some miracle, the combination of fear and freezing cold wind on the side of Highway 101 sobered me up. Even in 4 inch heels, I passed that roadside drunk test as if I had been stone cold sober. I walked a perfectly straight line. I closed my eyes and touched my nose. I recited the ABCs. Jake glared at me from the back of the patrol car. The cop said I could pick up Jake the following morning at the San Mateo County jail. I hopped in my car and drove back to San Francisco.

The next morning, I picked up Jake from the jail and dropped him off at his apartment. I apologized for the night before. He wanted to see me again. I said I didn't think it would work out between us.

