



# **Don't Worry, Ted** by Nick Holle

**FLYMF April 2005, The We Want A Black Pope Issue, Volume 2 Issue 4**

What? Ted. Shit. You can't worry about this stuff so much. It's going to kill you. Okay? Relax a second.

Man, what's with that *fucking* robe? I'm sorry. Don't get all self-conscious about it. I just, you know, at first glance, I maybe thought it was the single most fucking terrible thing that I've seen on a man, but my eyes have adjusted. What kind of lighting do you have in here? Wow. My mistake, Ted. That's a nice robe. Is it Japanese? The only reason I ask is that I *know* a Japanese guy. Yeah, he works over at the deli. What's it called, um, Hobarkers? Yep, that's it. Hobarkers Deli. Yeah, well, this guy works there. I don't know if he's got a robe like that. I'll ask him next time I grab a bite.

Anyway, like I said, you don't have to worry about a thing. The girl? She's not going to press charges. And neither are her parents.

Oh, uh, Doily didn't tell ya?

She was fifteen.

Okay now, Ted. Don't puke on me. You don't want to ruin that nice robe of yours. It's not a big deal. They're not going to prosecute. These things happen. A young girl like that, develops a little early, puts on a little makeup. The next thing you know, she's thirty-five years old. That's fuckin' nuts, man!

Yes, Ted. I know. She was really into it. Perhaps too into it for her own good. In fact, I'm a little skeptical about her parents. What kind of ship are they running over there? Yeah, but I've seen it before. She's liking what you're doing. She's liking it. Responding well. You step up your game a little. She's still liking it. Then, BAM! She turns on you. What are you supposed to do? What did you do anyway, I mean, to set off a girl like that? Because I remember that night. She was pretty pissed.

Yeah, I don't know for sure. I wasn't there. But on the phone you sounded like she was pretty pissed. You may

have bit her. I don't know.

No? Well, maybe it was that thing you do with your chin on the shoulder blade. Maybe she had a bad wing that night.

Hey, I'm just trying to put the whole thing in perspective. My point is that it's all in the past, and nobody is going to give a damn once this buzz blows over. Janice doesn't know about it. Doesn't have a clue. I mean, look at her. She's over there doing what's-her-name's hair, totally oblivious.

Casey? Yes, Casey. Casey's hair. Look at her, man. Cute as a little fuckin' button. They don't know. And, Ted? They're not going to know. Nobody is.

Well, yes. That's true. God most likely knows. But, Ted, we all do crazy things. Some worse than others.

Huh? Yeah, I would say so. She was thirteen.

You didn't know that? Yeah, thirteen. What did I say before?

Fifteen? I meant thirteen. Same thing. In God's eyes, they're both leaning towards the sin side of things. But, man, God forgives. You show your penance like you're doing to me, and he forgives. Jesus died for our sins. That's what it's all about.

Come on. Didn't you ever hear the story of Belfontaine? He was a big time gun runner and dope dealer back in Jesus' time.

Huh? Yeah, you're right. They didn't have guns in Jesus' time. But they did have dope, and he dealt it. Well, Belfontaine was also in the robbery game. Petty stuff. No banks. He'd usually do a house or an apartment when somebody went to Nazareth on vacation.

But, you know, after a while, Belfontaine started building

a major fucking conscience. This was serious mid-life crisis shit. He started worrying about the devil and the wrath-of-God stuff that he remembered from the Old Testament, not unlike what you're worrying about now. He was about to give everything up altogether, but then he heard that Jesus was going to die for the people's sins. This was it. Everything he had done would thereby be forgiven.

So it's the big day, and everyone's gathered out on the street to watch Jesus haul that old cross, and meanwhile, Belfontaine's looting every place on the main stretch. Jewelry, pots, pans, watches, or sundials, whatever. Everything. Jesus dies, rises a couple days later, and it was all for the sins of the people like our friend Belfontaine. So he pawns all the stuff, buys a beach house on the River Jordan, and lives happily ever after. Straight out of the Bible, man. No shittin' ya here. You made a mistake. You're feeling some sorrow. It's all good. All I'm saying, don't keep reliving it.

Ted? Ted? Ted!

Okay. Jesus! Don't bite my head off. I was afraid you were slipping into unresponsiveness. Can't have that. You got to keep it cool. Here's what I want you to do. Take this number. Her name's Zalica. It's a Swedish name or something. Russian maybe? She's great. She'll give you a massage. She'll talk to you even. She's real nice. She'll completely take this off your mind.

Dammit! What was that for? I know that. I can't be held accountable for your actions. This one is legal. I swear it. I've seen her driver's license. I'll have her fax you a copy. Don't worry so much. It's smooth sailing from here on out. In fact, here's what we'll do. I'll take what's-her-name out for some ice cream, and you and Janice can, uh, get it on. You know, just like old times. Your troubles are over, man. What do you say?