



# Amster “Damn It”

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We were young, dumb and...horny. So we were definitely in the right city (Amsterdam). And we were definitely in the right part of the city (Red Light District). But when you're young, you do dumb things. And when you're horny, you do dumber things. When you put it all together, you make Harry and Lloyd from *Dumb and Dumber* look like cosmic physicists. And you also end up getting robbed.

If there were a heaven on earth for a young guy, though, this was it. Hot, scantily clad women in glass display cases dotted up and down the street? My prayers had been answered. The four of us walked the strip gazing at gorgeous women, the sun tall in the sky. The sun fell, the red lights intensified, and we kept looking, walking, drooling.

It was night now, and a sex show was about to start. We purchased tickets to the Casa Rosa and walked inside the theater. Everyone was sitting down, eyes focused on the curtained stage. Most were ordering drinks from the exotic waitresses. It looked like some of the 'waitresses' had walked right in from their "office" on the street and grabbed a tray. We took our seats, ordered our drinks and waited for the curtain call.

After a few rounds of Jack and cokes, the lights dimmed and the curtains were drawn. The show was starting. A man stood on stage in a Batman uniform. Were we in the right place? He walked up and down the stage. A naked woman came out. We were in the right place! Another round of drinks, please.

It wasn't long before the two were going at it in front of the whole audience. When they were done, a new group came out. More sex. I sat there wide-eyed and buzzed. Then a woman came out alone and sat on a rotating chair to play with more toys than a child at Christmas. I glanced at my friends. Their jaws were close to scraping the ground. I felt my own jaw and found the same result. The curtains closed. Show over. I couldn't believe what I had just witnessed. Surely, this must have been the best \$20 I'd ever spent.

We walked back outside to the red-lighted street. A new group of people had crowded the streets, all of them glossy-eyed and staggering. Rain was falling heavily, and we needed to get back to our hotel. Problem was, it was on the other side of the city. Reality had sunk in as the doors to the fantasy world of Casa Rosa closed behind us. How the hell do we get home? My friend said he had the answer, and we followed him.

We wove our way home through the side streets of the Red Light District, harassed by women not pretty enough to make the main drag. We finally came to an alley.

"This is a shortcut," said my friend Jeff.

We stopped. "You sure about that, dude?" I asked as I peered down it. It seemed pretty thin.

"Positive," he said. "That's the main street right there on the other side. Once we get there we can order a cab."

My two other friends and I looked at each other and then back at Jeff. At each other, then again at Jeff. They nodded.

"Let's do it, then," we decided.

We walked off the street and entered the alley. Rain kept falling. There was a group of people about 200 feet ahead of us, making us wonder whether they too far away to hear our screams. The alley was longer than we thought, making it seem like we wouldn't reach the other side for hours, and it also became crowded when three very large men appeared sitting on a set of stairs on our right side. Our feet shuffled faster as we avoided eye contact. Suddenly we could feel their presence approaching from the shadows. They came upon us like vultures circling their prey. I was the first one to go.

My feet came to a stop as a man twice my size cut off my escape route. He held a knife in his right hand, blade pointing at me.

"Give me your money, man," he demanded.

I tried to speak rationally but my friend Jack Daniels that I met at the Casa Rosa decided to do the talking. "No!" Jack said.

The robber was baffled. I was on his turf, and he was armed. I was a midget, and he was a giant. I was ignorantly drunk, and he was probably strung out. Little white boy from America was in no position to call the shots. It didn't take him long before he started pillaging my pockets. Right pocket first: he pulled out a pack of cigarettes, eyeballed it, then shoved it back in my pocket. Next, the left pocket. He pulled out my camera, which had more value than any cash I had on me. He gave it a look over then gave it back to me. Then he began to reach around to grab my wallet from the back pocket, but doing so he managed to jut his knife blade right into my thumb.

"Ahh!" I screamed. "You stabbed me."

The man pulled back with my wallet in his left hand. His eyes darted to his knife. "Oh, sorry," he said.

"That's ok, I guess," I responded, befuddled. I glanced at my thumb. It appeared to be okay, although Jack was making all the judgment calls by this point.

The robber rummaged through my wallet. It didn't have much. In

fact, it was just a decoy wallet for situations just like this. All things of value to me (passport, credit cards, ID) lay tucked away in my money belt wrapped around my stomach. I kept this information to myself as the robber pulled out the cash. Only \$15 bucks. He took it.

By this point I realized that two of my other friends were also being robbed, but they had given up their wallets without a display like mine. The fourth friend, the one who had suggested the easy alleyway shortcut, had escaped.

The robber said thanks then began to sprint back to his staircase to assume his post.

“Can I at least have my wallet back,” I shouted. The robber flicked the wallet back at me. I caught it in surprise. The other two robbers gave my friends back their wallets, too. Then they were gone, enveloped in the shadows of the alley. We all looked at each other.

“Nice robbers,” my friend Steve said as we bolted toward the street.

When we got there, our friend Jeff who had escaped was chatting with the police. He had flagged them down in their car.

“But they’re right there,” he said, pointing down the alley. “They’re still in the alley. You can still kind of see them.”

One cop looked at the other and then back at Jeff.

“You can file a report in the morning if you’d like. Did you get a good look at them?”

“No, we didn’t get a good look at them,” I said. “It was dark. But if you go down there you can probably still get them.”

The cop peered down the alley. “They’re probably long gone by now. Anyway, you guys are lucky you got away pretty much unscathed. What were you thinking walking through there?”

We looked at Jeff. “What?” he said, shrugging his shoulders.

“Just file a report in the morning down at the station and we’ll see what we can do,” said the other cop.

We walked away from the cops and flagged down a yellow cab. The rain was still falling. We were soaked. The cab pulled up to the curb, and we jumped in, finally out of the rain.

“Anybody want to file that report?” I said. “You think they’ll catch them?” Everyone laughed.

“I think it’s time we catch the train out of here,” said Jeff. “We’ve overextended our welcome.”

“But the Casa Rosa’s having another show tomorrow!” I spoke up. Or maybe Jack did.