The SESSIONS (1) – ‘Mark’ (____) and ‘Cheryl’ (____) – July 2013

From around the 29:00 mark in the film:

- Location: a friend’s HOUSE/bedroom (daytime) -
A bedridden immobilized Mark is waiting with his ‘handler’ for the new ‘sex surrogate’ to arrive. After a BEAT, there is a *knock* at the door. The ‘handler’ goes to greet the ‘sex surrogate’ and, after some brief pleasantries, lets her into the room...

  CHERYL
  Hi Mark O’Brian.

  MARK
  Hi Cheryl Cohen-Green.

  HANDLER (O.S.)
  I’ll be back in uhh say 2 hours?

  CHERYL
  Yes. Perfect.

  HANDLER
  Okay.

Cheryl NODS politely. The ‘handler’ EXITS.

  CHERYL
  So...

  MARK
  Your money’s on the desk over there.

  CHERYL
  (turns) Yes it it. Thank you.

  MARK
  That was the wrong way to start off.

  CHERYL
  Yes it really was. Shall we start again?

  MARK
  Please, you start.
CHERYL
Although the aim is for us to have sex, I’m not a prostitute. You don’t have to pay me up-front. I have nothing against prostitutes, but there’s a difference. We can talk about that later.

MARK
I’m sorry.

CHERYL
The other thing is: there’s a limit to the number of ‘sessions’ we can have. Did Laura mention that when you saw her?

MARK
Ehh, I’m sorry, I don’t remember.

CHERYL
The limit is six. That gives us plenty of opportunity to explore. (beat) So, I understand you are able to have an erection?

MARK
Yes but not by choice.

CHERYL
Do you know how many men there are who would give anything for a natural erection?!! (beat) Is this your place?

MARK
No, it’s a friend’s. The only bedroom furniture I have at my place is an ‘Iron Lung’. I’ve been wondering maybe about possibly buying a futon. You know, in case the need arose.

CHERYL
(set a chair beside him) Might be worth thinking about.
MARK
I’ve got the space I think. It could be expensive though, a nice---(breathes fast)---futon I mean how much do you think those cost because I’ve been saving up and---

CHERYL
Mark, take a deep breath.
(he does)
And let go.
(he exhales)
Good.

MARK
Do I seem anxious?

CHERYL
You do a little.
(sits)
So Laura tells me you’re a poet. What’s it like to be a poet?

MARK
Oh it’s a way of living inside your own head, which is where I spend most of my time.

CHERYL
But not today. Nice shirt, by the way.

MARK
Thank you.

CHERYL
So I’m going to ask you some basic questions, okay?

MARK
Sure.

CHERYL
Explain to me, so that I really understand, exactly what the ‘Iron Lung’ is for...?
MARK
Well it keeps me breathing. I can spend a few hours outside with my portable respirator, depending on how I feel, but I work and sleep in the ‘Iron Lung’.

CHERYL
And how do you feel right now?

MARK
Out of my league.

CHERYL
(chuckles) I meant your breathing.

MARK
Oh. Fine. In fact, better than usual.

CHERYL
That’s great. Shall we get undressed?

MARK
(beat) Sure.

She proceeds to take off his clothes, shirt first.

CHERYL
So it’s good for me to---

MARK
Be careful.

CHERYL
(stops) Did that hurt?

MARK
Not yet.

CHERYL
(continues) Do you have any areas of unusual sensitivity? Any parts of your body you don’t want me to touch?
MARK
I have normal sensitivity all over. I’m not paralyzed exactly, it’s just...my muscles don’t work too good. Well, you can touch me anywhere.

CHERYL
(pulls off sleeve) That’s great.

MARK
OWWW!!!! STOP!! IT HURTS!!

CHERYL
What?! What’s wrong?!

MARK
IT HURTS!! HOLY SHIT MOTHER OF GOD!!! AHHH MY FINGER!! MY FINGER!!

CHERYL
It’s okay, it’s okay.

MARK
MY FINGERS ARE CAUGHT!!!

CHERYL
It’s okay I’ve got it. I’ve got you. Don’t worry.

MARK
Be careful please.

CHERYL
(beat) Mark...I’m going to be really careful with you. I don’t want to hurt you or injure you in any way. And it’s really not sexy when you yell at me, okay?

MARK
I won’t yell at you anymore.

CHERYL
But you’ll tell me, calmly, the minute something starts to hurt.
MARK
Yes.

CHERYL
Okay. Here we go.
(removes other sleeve)
Nice shirt.

MARK
You already said that.

CHERYL
Did I?

MARK
(shirt finally off) Okay.

CHERYL
(moves to pants) I’m going to slide these down...

MARK
Okay just be careful of my feet, okay?! My feet! Be careful.

CHERYL
Hold your breath.

MARK
Okay.
(pants sliding off)
Whoa, careful! Not so fast, whoa!!

CHERYL
That’s it, all done. See?
(beat)
Would you excuse me for one moment?

She goes into the BATHROOM, washes her face. Comes back.

CHERYL
(takes off own shirt) You ready?

MARK
Whoa.
CHERYL
I’m going to take that as a ‘yes’.
(begins to undress)
So the difference between me and a prostitute is that a prostitute wants your return business. I don’t. I’m here to help you learn about your sexual feelings so you can share them with a future partner.
(climbs into bed with him)
Mark, I want you to tell me how it feels each time I touch a different part of your body. Okay?

MARK
You know, whenever I’m naked, everyone else in the room is always dressed. And now that I’m in bed with another naked person, it’s very confusing.

CHERYL
Why is it confusing?

MARK
I was expecting that God, or my parents, would intervene to keep this moment from ever happening.

CHERYL
Not this time. So if something feels good, will you tell me? If something is ticklish or bothers you, I want you to let me know. I don’t want you to tolerate anything.

MARK
Okay.

CHERYL
I’m going to start with the top of your head.
(runs fingers through hair)
You have soft hair. It’s really nice to touch. Does it feel good?

MARK
It does.
MARK (cont’d)

(off her rubbing his ear)

That feels weird.

CHERYL

Weird good or weird bad?

MARK

Just weird.

CHERYL

(rubs his chest) Still good?

MARK

Everything good so far except for the ear thing. Are these the body awareness exercises?

CHERYL

You’re very clever to have worked that out.

MARK

People tell me I’m very perceptive.

CHERYL

Mark, would you like to see what I feel like?

MARK

Sure.

She takes his limp hand and caresses it over her breasts.

CHERYL

You touch one, you have to touch the other. It’s sort of a rule.

MARK

It’s a good rule.

CHERYL

Are you wearing cologne?

MARK

Yes.
CHERYL
I like it. I don’t usually like cologne, but I like that. So Mark, I’m going to move my hand down along your body...

MARK
Uh-huh...

CHERYL
Down to your penis...And if you feel me---

MARK
OOOOHHH!

He climaxes prematurely.

CHERYL
Well...Nice job.

END OF SCENE