William Van Wert, "Psychoanalysis and Cut Rates."

In the room with Margaret listening.

There is no human kindness in their conversation; no pity for the mark. The fake cop complains: "How come I always gotta play the straight guy?" Joe complains that he threw his arm out 'battin' that bitch around." Mike answers: "You pay for it—that's realism." In their world, acting is the order of the day, appearances and surface are everything, so that "realism" is something extra. Sex as well is something figured into the budget, an added touch or realism to be paid for. "A small price to pay," Mike says when reminded of the sex. The biggest joke at her expense is her kleptomania. "The broad's an addict," "She boosts my lucky pocket knife," "The bitch is a booster, a real deaf man."

In the airport baggage area.

Once he's wounded, he begins a return tirade, the words of which clearly come more from Margaret and her sessions with Darlene than from any relationship Mike and Margaret have had.

You thief. You always need to get caught, cuz you know you're bad. I never hurt anybody. I never shot anybody. You shot this out. This is what you always wanted. I knew it the first time you came in. You're worthless, you know it? You're a whore. You came back like a dog to its own father. You sick bitch. I'm not gonna give you shit... Thank you, sir. May I have another?

We could underline the words for emphasis: thief (her real crime—kleptomania); worthless and whore (her sessions with Darlene); "You came back like a dog to its own father" (nonsensical, since dogs have little or no relationship at all with their fathers; but with a final inversion, "dog" to "god," the statement accrues psychoanalytical import). And the final statement ("Thank you, sir. May I have another?") makes no sense at all within the context of this situation, which is to say that it is ludicrous: that is, ludic, not realistic.