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The Gavones of Philadelphia

A Non-Mob Family Comedy
by Joseph Sorrentino
The Gavones of Philadelphia
by Joseph Sorrentino

CHARACTERS

Tony: about 50; a stocky Italian-American blue collar worker

Mary: Late 40's; Tony's wife, also Italian-American

Joey: Mid-20's; Tony and Mary's son

Pauley: Mid-40's; Mary's brother. An overweight, mostly under-employed blue collar worker

Nicky: Late 40's; Mary's older brother. A washed-up, borderline alcoholic lounge singer desperately trying to hold onto his failing voice and classic Italian good looks.

Danny: Late 30's/early 40's; the large, rather intimidating enforcer for a local bookie. Preferably African-American.

THE SETTING: The Mid 1980's

ACT I; SCENE ONE and ACT II, SCENES ONE and THREE: Tony and Mary's kitchen in a modest home in a modest Philadelphia neighborhood
ACT I; SCENES TWO and THREE: Pauley's kitchen, equally as simple and modest.
ACT II; SCENE TWO: A visiting room in a local funeral parlor

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Guns do play a role in this play...although no shots are ever fired

Italian words and phrases are underlined. Americanized versions of Italian words (mostly slang) have been represented phonetically.
Translations of Italian slang words included at end of script.
ACT I; SCENE ONE

SETTING:  TONY and MARY’s kitchen; a table covered with a plastic flowered tablecloth, three chairs, and a refrigerator overrun with small magnets and notes. There is a pantry and exit off right and a door to the dining area and rest of house left.

AT RISE:  PAULEY, dressed as a security guard, enters from the outside. He wears a backpack and carries a book, newspaper and brown bag lunch. He goes to the refrigerator, moves things around then pulls out a lunch pail, looking inside. He exchanges his sandwich for the one in the lunch pail, and then takes the fruit and dessert from the pail and places them in his brown paper bag. We hear TONY OFFSTAGE.

TONY, Offstage

Mare? Mare that you?

PAULEY  
(Quietly closing refrigerator) No. It’s me...Pauley.

TONY  
Oh. Hey— stay outta my refrigerator, Pauley.

PAULEY  
(Looking around; to himself) Whaddya got, cameras in here now? (Louder) I ain’t in your refrigerator.

TONY  
Good. Keep it that way.

PAULEY  
(Opens cabinet; to himself) I’m in your cabinets. (Finds box of pizelle) Ooh…pizelle...I like pizelle...
PAULEY eats one, then another, then empties the box of pizelles into his lunch bag. TONY enters. HE is dressed in a painter’s work clothes.

TONY
(Entering) I don’t mind if a person’s hungry but you...

PAULEY
Relax, would ya? Your refrigerator’s safe.

TONY
Not when you’re around it’s not. Don’t Annie cook for you?

PAULEY
You’ve tasted her cookin’.

TONY
You got a point there. Just show some restraint, would ya?

PAULEY
Mary home?

TONY
She’s at the funeral home. Hadda go check on the flowers or somethin’. I thought she’d be back by now...Guess I gotta make my own breakfast.

TONY starts getting out bowls to make scrambled eggs.

PAULEY
We all gotta make sacrifices, right? (Lights cigarette)

TONY
Hey Pauley, lemme get one of them would ya?

PAULEY
Sure.

TONY
(Lights it) Just hope Mary doesn’t get back. If she catches me...

TONY takes long drag and then puts the cigarette in the ashtray.

PAULEY
Hey Tone, if it ain’t too much trouble...I mean, since you’re makin’...
JOEY enters.

Morning Dad.

TONY

Hey, Joey.

JOEY kisses TONY on the cheek. They hug.

Hey, Uncle Pauley

JOEY and PAULEY hug.

PAULEY

How ya doin’ kid?

JOEY

OK.

TONY

I didn’t expect you up this early.

JOEY

Who can sleep with you and Uncle Pauley making all this racket?

TONY

We ain’t makin’ no racket. You were out late again last night.

I know. So?

TONY

You could stay home once in awhile.

JOEY

And do what? Watch Jeopardy with you?

TONY

You can learn a lot from that show, mister. But...but I’m not sayin’ every night...just once in awhile.

JOEY

(Sits, notices ashtray) You’re smokin’ again.
Me? No. I quit.

So Uncle Pauley, you smokin’ two cigarettes at a time now?

Yeah, yeah. It’s a discovery I made...I’m thinkin’ about patentin’ it. See, this way you get twice the nicotine in half the time.

That’s four times the nicotine then.

It is? Mingya, it’s even better than I thought.

Look, just don’t tell your mother. Besides, one every once in awhile really ain’t smokin’. (JOEY pours a cup of coffee.) I’m makin’ eggs. You want some?

Nah.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. You should eat somethin’. I’ll make ya some eggs.

I’m not hungry.

It’s just eggs, they don’t fill you up...

But I’m not hungry.

Eat ‘em without bread.

Eat them without...Dad, I said I’m not hungry...besides, I don’t like eggs.

You don’t like eggs? Since when?

Since when? Since...since forever. I never liked eggs.
PAULEY
I like eggs.

TONY
No one asked you.

PAULEY
I know...I’m just sayin’...

TONY
How ‘bout some toast then?

JOEY
I don’t want anything, OK?

PAULEY
I’ll take a couple slices.

TONY
Would you stay outta this? I’m talkin’ to my son here.

PAULEY
I thought you was offerin’...

TONY
(Tosses PAULEY bag of bread) Know what? G’head...take the whole loaf...knock yourself out.

PAULEY makes toast.

JOEY
Where’s Ma?

TONY
Funeral home. Ya know, she’s gonna miss your grandfather, God rest his soul.

JOEY
Everyone is.

TONY
You’re right...but it was his time...May he rest in peace. So you were out with...uh...what’s her name last night?

JOEY
Janice?
TONY

Yeah.

JOEY

She dumped me, remember? I was out with some friends. Going out with her’s not an option.

TONY

It’s for the best. I never thought she was good for you.

JOEY

Yeah, you made that real clear to her.

TONY

What’s that supposed to mean?

JOEY

You never made her feel welcome. No one did. No one except Uncle Nicky.

PAULEY

Is that the ‘Merigan you was datin’?

JOEY

Yeah.

PAULEY

Your father’s actually right this time kid.

TONY

Oh, thanks.

PAULEY

I’m talkin’ from personal experience here— Never marry a ‘Merigan.

JOEY

Who said anything about marrying her?

PAULEY

Hey, you know women. Once they get their hooks in ya, fugedaboudit. You marry a ‘Merigan, all they know how to cook is macaroni and cheese and they always overcook the macaroni. You’ll be eatin’ overcooked macaroni covered with that melted yellow crap they call cheese the rest of your life.

JOEY

Maybe there’s more to a relationship than food.
PAULEY
Of course there is. There’s arguin’, too.

TONY
Jeez, look at the time. I better make breakfast. (Cracks some eggs into bowl) It’s the most important meal of the day...Joey, how do you want your eggs?

JOEY
Didn’t I just tell you I don’t eat eggs?

TONY
But I already cracked them.

PAULEY
I’ll take mine scrambled.

TONY
Why don’t you just eat your toast and be quiet?

PAULEY
I am eatin’ my toast. I’m just sayin’, if you already cracked ‘em…it’s a sin to waste food.

TONY
Look, you worry about your sins, I’ll worry about mine.

MARY enters.

MARY
How are my boys? (To JOEY) You’re up early. How are you? (Kisses him)

JOEY
OK

MARY
Pauley, what’re you doing here so early?

TONY
What else? Scroungin’ for food.

MARY
(To TONY; walking to him) Hi hon. (Kisses him; stares)

TONY
What?

MARY
Tony, you’re smoking again?
TONY

No...

MARY

Then why are there two cigarettes in that ashtray?

JOEY

They’re Uncle Pauley’s. He’s smokin’ two at a time now. Gets more nicotine that way.

PAULEY

Four times the nicotine. Einstein there did the math.

MARY

Pauley, how many times I tell you do not give my husband cigarettes?

PAULEY

He made me.

MARY

He made you?

TONY

Thanks a lot, Pauley.

PAULEY

Serves you right. If you’d given me a lousy couple eggs I wouldn’t have ratted you out.

MARY

I’m warning you...when you’re dying a slow painful death...

TONY

Mare, I won’t do it no more. I swear. So how you feelin’?

MARY

All right...considering. I saw Pop. He looks so peaceful. Like he’s asleep. Thank God, no more suffering. I have to go back to the funeral home...the flowers didn’t get there yet. I wanna make sure they’re OK. Joey, you can take me?

JOEY

Sure.

MARY

This heat, I don’t wanna walk back.

TONY

You want me to throw on the air conditioner?
MARY
Sure, throw it on. I’ll get your breakfast.

TONY
I already started it.

MARY
(MARY finds bowl of eggs) Eggs?

TONY
It’s the first time this month, I swear to God. C’mon Mare...if I have one more bran muffin...

MARY
I’m telling you, when your arteries clog...Joey, you eat?

JOEY
Nah. I’m not hungry.

MARY
You have to have breakfast.

JOEY
OK. Gimmee some toast.

MARY
That’s a start.

MARY puts two slices of bread in the toaster.

TONY
I thought you weren’t hungry.

JOEY
I wasn’t then. I am now.

PAULEY
Me too.

TONY
How the hell can you be hungry? You ate a half a loaf of bread already.

PAULEY
I got a hollow leg.

TONY
Matches your hollow head.
NICKY, OFFSTAGE, is singing “Mala Femina” in Italian, very loudly. Dressed in a suit with his shirt collar open, he walks onstage where he finishes the song.

NICKY
Hey, not bad for an old fart, huh? All those years singin’ and the lungs are still good.

TONY
You should have some respect. Your father just died.

NICKY
I got plenty of respect. Pop loved my singing. I gotta sing loud now so he can hear me. (Pinches Tony’s cheek) Good to see you too, Tone. (Turns to Mary) Mary!

NICKY and MARY hug tightly.

MARY
Why didn’t you call when you got in? Joey wanted to pick you up.

NICKY
Nah, I took a cab. I didn’t wanna bother no one. You know that airport...all that traffic... (To PAULEY) Oh! Wyatt Earp! Who’s protectin’ Macy’s from robbers and other vermin if you ain’t there?

PAULEY
Macy’s? I never worked at Macy’s. I worked at K-Mart.

NICKY
Macy’s, K-Mart...

PAULEY
But I don’t work there no more. I work security in a bank now, Nick. A bank.

NICKY
Mingya. A bank. That’s impressive. A big step up for my big brother, huh?

PAULEY
It’s a livin’.

NICKY
I guess. (Hugs NICKY, then to JOEY) Giuseppe, que fa? (To Mary) Mingya, he’s still growin’. You better stop feedin’ this kid. (To JOEY) Comma giva you ungle a hug. (JOEY hesitates.) What you too old? Don’t give me that. (He grabs JOEY and they hug.) Don’t you love these kids? He goes to college, all of a sudden, he’s too old to hug me anymore. I oughta... (Raises his hand pretending to hit JOEY)
TONY
My son hugs me.

NICKY
Yeah? Well I guess he draws the line at uncles.  (Joking) And after all I done for you...desgraziade.  (JOEY laughs.  NICKY gets serious and turns to MARY.) Sorry I couldn’t get here sooner, Mare...you know...show biz. I couldn’t get away. Did Pop...you know...ask for me?

MARY
Nick, he wasn’t himself.

PAULEY has begun to scramble the eggs TONY cracked.

TONY
What the hell are you doin’?

PAULEY

TONY
I cracked ‘em for me. Get away from ‘em before I crack you too.

(To MARY) So...how ya doin’?

NICKY
Fine.

MARY
Don’t you lie to me now.

NICKY
I’m OK, really...considering...

MARY
Everything taken care of?

NICKY
Just about...just waiting for the flowers now. I have to get back. Joey, c’mon, get dressed. We gotta get goin’.

JOEY exits

NICKY
(Pulls out a wad of money, pulls off a couple of bills) Mary...here...for the flowers.
MARY
Nick, you don’t have to...

NICKY
Oh! You gonna argue with me? I said it’s for the flowers. You need more?

MARY
No...this...this is plenty. (Kisses him) We’re having the dinner here tomorrow. Pauley wanted it over his place but he’s too upset.

PAULEY
(Eating) Yeah, I’m real broke up.

MARY
I’m makin’ baked cavatelli...Pop’s favorite.

PAULEY
I hope you’re makin’ enough. You know them people...

MARY
I’m makin’ twelve pounds.

NICKY
Twelve pounds? Jeez.

MARY
They don’t swell when you cook ‘em.

NICKY
Of course. (Pause) Please tell me you’re makin’ the gravy.

MARY
Who else?

NICKY
I love this girl. (Hugging her) I was afraid (Gesturing to PAULEY) his wife might wanna.

TONY
What, a ‘Merigan makin’ the gravy? That’ll be the day.

NICKY
You forget Goomba Jeech’s retirement party?

PAULEY
I told you not to let her make the gravy but did anyone listen?
NICKY
Twenty years ago that was and I still got agida.

TONY
Who the hell puts garlic powder in gravy?

NICKY
‘Merigans, that’s who. No spice in their gravy and even less in their lives.

PAULEY
Hey, you’re lucky she didn’t make macaroni and cheese.

MARY
(Calling) Joey, c’mon! We’re gonna be late.

_Neys enters_

PAULEY
Can yas gimmee a ride?

MARY
But Pauley, it’s in the opposite direction.

PAULEY
I know but at a time like this, family should be together, don’t ya think? Besides, it’ll save me the bus fare.

MARY
All right...C’mon.

JOEY
Uncle Nick, you gonna be around when I get back?

NICKY
(Joking) Oh, you want me to wait around but you won’t hug your uncle huh? G’head...I’ll be here when you get back. I’m no two-face like you.

MARY kisses TONY then stops.

MARY
Oh, your breakfast...

TONY
That’s OK. I can make it myself. It’s just eggs.

MARY
(As she exits) Your lunch is in the fridge. Don’t forget it.
TONY

I won’t.

MARY

Nicky, you make sure you get something to eat. (To TONY) And you...one egg, cabish?

MARY, JOEY and PAULEY exit. TONY speaks stiffly to NICKY.

You want somethin’ to eat?

NICKY

Whatcha got?

TONY

Eggs. I’m makin’ eggs.

NICKY

Nah, I don’t like eggs.

TONY

What’s the matter with eggs? Am I abnormal ‘cause I eat eggs? The hell with it, I don’t want ‘em either.

TONY loudly and deliberately puts the eggs and bowl in the refrigerator.

NICKY

Hey, Tone, I’m sorry. Don’t take it personal...You got anything to drink? I been up all night.

NICKY takes out small mirror and combs his hair; lights cigarette.

TONY

There’s a bottle in the cabinet. Hey Nick, lemmee have a cigarette, would ya?

NICKY

(Tosses him pack) Knock yourself out.

TONY

I quit but one every now and then really ain’t....

NICKY

Wait, you quit?
TONY

Yeah, but...

NICKY

Gimmee them. *(Grabs pack)*

TONY

C’mon. One every now and then really ain’t...

NICKY

*(Looks in mirror)* Man, I look like terrible. *(Takes out bottle of whiskey and a water glass. He pours a large drink and swallows it.)* There, that’s better. *(He pours a second glass. He continues to drink throughout the scene. He notices a spot on his suit and starts to clean it.)* Oh man, look at that. Damn. I dropped a bundle on this suit. There, that’s better. I’m pretty good at this. Maybe I should get a job in a cleaners or somethin’...somethin’ to fall back on. You know, some shit job. Somethin’ like you got. *(Sits)* So how ya been Tone?

All right...

NICKY

Keepin’ busy?

TONY

Yeah. You?

NICKY

Fuggedaboudit. You know show biz.

TONY

Stayin’ long?

NICKY

Couple of days. Just ‘til they read the will...outta respect for Pop.

TONY

Pauley’s expectin’ to get a lot extra outta it.

NICKY

He deserves it...Pop kept Pauley jumpin’.

TONY

Whaddya kiddin’? Look, Pop was livin’ with Pauley but it was your sister still doin’ most of the work. Of course, Pauley made sure he controlled all Pop’s money and was the one payin’ the bills. Whaddya call it...the executor guy.
NICKY
So?

TONY
So you don’t think he was maybe takin’ a little for himself here and there?

NICKY
He’d never do that. And even if he did, I he deserves a few extra bucks. I loved Pop, may he rest in peace, but he wasn’t always so easy to get along with, ya know.

TONY
Whatever Pauley gets from the will, he’s just gonna piss away...hand it right over to them bookies. He finally got a couple of ‘em real pissed. You know Pauley, always “forgettin’” to pay. But he went too far this time.

NICKY
Them bookies ain’t gonna do nothin’.

TONY
Sal’s after him.

NICKY
Sal? *(Exhales loudly)*. *Mingya.*

TONY
He’ll use his share from the will...that’ll keep Sal off his back for awhile but knowin’ Pauley, next week...if there’s anythin’ left...he’ll bet that.

NICKY
So what? It’s just money.

TONY
It ain’t just money. It’s what Pop left the family. It shouldn’t go to them bookies.

NICKY
Better he pays Sal than we gotta bury Pauley too. Just thank God Pop socked all that money away. *(Pause)* Hey Tone, you got any of them pizelles from Isgro’s?

TONY
Yeah, Mary just bought a box. *(Gets up)* I thought you wasn’t hungry.

NICKY
I wasn’t then. I am now.

TONY
Got ‘em right here. *(Opens cabinet)* Wait a minute...that’s funny.
NICKY

What?

TONY

The box is empty. Mary just bought these...huh...(Pause). That damn Pauley, I’ll kill him. Hey, I got some anisette toast. Want that?

From Isgro’s?

TONY

Where else?

*TONY pulls out the anisette toast, puts it on a paper towel and places it in front of NICKY.*

NICKY

(Eats) I’m tellin’ ya, you can’t get nothin’ like this nowheres else.

TONY

So, how’s...what’s her name?

NICKY

What’s her name? Who the hell’s ‘what’s her name’?

TONY

I dunno...that girl you brought last time you was here. Tall...red head...lottsa makeup...Trish or somethin’.

NICKY

Trish...yeah. Jeez, I forgot about her. Nah...that was over a long time ago...Women, Tony, mingya, you think I’d learn my lesson by now. You...you’re lucky. My sister worships the ground you walk on. Me...Terry, my first wife, she was the only woman I ever really loved. And she left me. She left me. Them other three marriages...

TONY

Four.

NICKY

Four? Now wait...that two-week one don’t count...damn showgirls...

TONY

(Looks at watch) A jeez, I gotta get to work.

*TONY gets his lunch pail, is about to leave.*
NICKY
But Terry, I was happy with her. I don’t know why she hadda leave.

TONY
Probably ‘cause you never treated her good.

NICKY
Whaddya mean? I treated her good.

TONY
You kept screwin’ around. You call that treatin’ her good?

NICKY
So I made a few mistakes. Who doesn’t? That’s all they were...simple mistakes.

TONY
Simple mistakes? Correct me if I’m wrong, but didn’t she catch you with a waitress on your honeymoon? On your honeymoon. You call that a simple mistake?

NICKY
I know what I done. You don’t hafta rub it in.

TONY
I’m just sayin’...

NICKY
Don’t preach to me, Tone. Don’t be playin’ holier than thou with me. You ain’t exactly no saint either.

TONY
I never said I was. (Pause) I’m runnin’ late. I gotta go. (Starts to leave)

NICKY
Saint Anthony we got over here.

TONY
Hey, I never cheated on my wife. At least I never did that.

Yeah, right.

NICKY

TONY
(A little wary) Whaddya mean, “Yeah, right”?

NICKY
Ain’t a man alive don’t cheat.
TONY
Well you’re lookin’ at one.

NICKY
(Stands; faces TONY, studies him) Yeah, on second thought, you’re probably right.

TONY
What’s that supposed to mean?

NICKY
No offense Tone, but a Casanova you’re not.

TONY
Maybe not but I had my chances.

NICKY
Sure, Tone, sure.

TONY
Lot you know.

NICKY
What, you tellin’ me there are women interested in you? You? C’mon...

TONY
You’d be surprised.

NICKY
I’d be shocked.

TONY
You know...the women you end up with...there are women interested in other things.

NICKY
Like what? Sittin’ around watchin’ Jeopardy?

TONY
You’re a real comedian, Nick.

NICKY
All right Casanova...so who was it?

TONY
Nobody.
NICKY
Nobody? What about all these women chasin’ you? All them interested in...in...whatever the hell it is you’re offerin’ them?

TONY
I was speaking...whaddya call it...hypothetical.

NICKY
Hypothetically? Oh, so women are interested in you...hypothetical. You’re so full of it. You ain’t gettin’ nothin’.

Oh yeah?

TONY

NICKY
No way. No broad’s that desperate.

Desperate had nothin’ to do with it.

TONY

NICKY
So you did? You really did?

Well...

TONY

NICKY
I underestimated you...

TONY
Once. Just once. I swear...it was years ago...If Mary ever found out...it’d kill her.

NICKY
Hey, don’t feel so guilty about it. It just shows you’re human, that’s all.

It never shoulda happened.

TONY

NICKY
Look, men are animals. We’re animals. It’s them hormones or somethin’, understand? It ain’t our fault.

TONY
I don’t know...

NICKY
That’s all it is...hormones. *(Lights a cigarette; offers one to TONY)* So tell me, who was it?
TONY
Come on, you don’t hafta know that... It’d kill your sister.

NICKY
I won’t tell no one. You can trust me.

TONY
I didn’t say I didn’t trust ya...

NICKY
Then who was it? If ya trust me, who was it? (Pause) C’mon...

TONY
OK, OK. It was (Somewhat proudly) Madeline.

NICKY
Madeline?

TONY
Yeah, Madeline.

NICKY
Who the hell is Madeline?

TONY
You know...she lived down the street from the old place? Blonde hair...tall girl? I painted her house one summer. It was that place on the corner...

NICKY
Wait a second. You don’t mean Madeline Petrone.

TONY
Yeah, yeah that’s her. I was paintin’ her place, she invited me in for lemonade...

NICKY
Madeline Petrone?

TONY
Hey, keep your voice down, will ya?

NICKY
Look Tony, you gonna cheat on my sister, at least pick someone halfway decent.

TONY
We don’t all have the selection you do, Nick. I didn’t plan it…it just happened...I don’t wanna talk about it no more.
TONY starts to leave

NICKY
(Grabs TONY by the arm) Well that’s just too bad. I can’t believe you cheated on my sister.

TONY
You wanted to know. C’mon Nick...

NICKY
I can’t believe you. You have someone that worships you...worships you...and you’re gonna go foolin’ around with Madeline Petrone?

Tony...

NICKY
You cheated on my sister!

TONY
(Panicking) You wanted to know! You wanted to know! I didn’t wanna say nothin’

NICKY
(Grabs TONY’s lapels) You cheated on my sister! I’m gonna...

JOEY enters the kitchen as NICKY and TONY struggle.

JOEY
What the hell..?

TONY
It’s OK...it’s OK. We was just...

NICKY
...I was just showin’ him...you know...a new kung fu move I learned. I’m studyin’ kung fu.

JOEY
Kung fu...?

TONY
Yeah, kung fu.

NICKY
Just like Bruce Lee. (He releases TONY; looks at suit) Gots, look at that. I hate it when my suits get dirty (He brushes off his suit then takes out the mirror and combs his hair until he notices JOEY looking at him.) Hey, c’mon, siddown.
TONY
I gotta get to work.

NICKY
Hey...you pass Madelin Petrone’s house, don’t ya? You see her, tell her I said hello.

Yeah...sure. See ya Joey.

JOEY
OK...Oh, Ma said she’ll be at the funeral home tonight. She’ll leave your dinner in the fridge. All you have to do is heat it up. She wants you to meet us there.

TONY
OK. See ya. (Exits)

NICKY
Siddown, kid. Have a drink.

JOEY
Little early in the day for me, thanks.

NICKY
Whaddya kiddin’? (Holds up glass) Most important meal of the day, breakfast is. Salud!

TONY

Joey pours another drink as he and JOEY sit at the table.

JOEY
What were you guys..?

NICKY
Nothin’...we was just screwin’ around. Mingya, your father, he’s some piece of work.

JOEY
He sure is. Sometimes...I don’t know...sometimes I hate livin’ here, ya know?

NICKY
So move out.

JOEY
And do what? Start World War III? Man, he can be such a pain in the...

NICKY
Hey—he’s still your father. You show some respect. (Pause) So, how ya been? I ain’t seen you in awhile.
JOEY
Yeah, not since me and Janice caught your show at that VFW in...where was it, Cherry Hill? Why’d you even play there? I mean, a VFW in Cherry Hill...

NICKY
Doin’ a favor for a friend. So, you hear from her?

JOEY
Janice? Hell no. And I don’t want to.

NICKY
I warned you about datin’ a ‘Merigan, didn’t I?

JOEY
Yeah.

NICKY
All I ever do is warn people about marryin’ ‘Merigans. Look at what happened to your Uncle Pauley. He didn’t listen to me and look at what happened. Poor guy has never had a decent meal in his own house. His own house! I hope you learned your lesson.

JOEY
I have. I haven’t seen her since that night. We broke up right after that. Did she say anything to you...you know...about us?

NICKY
Me? Why would she say anythin’ to me?

JOEY
I was just wondering. Man, I really got hammered...that was your fault.

NICKY
What’d I do?

JOEY
Buying me drinks.

NICKY
You weren’t complainin’.

JOEY
That’s ‘cause I was passed out.

NICKY
But you hadda get sick in the back of her car before you passed out.
JOEY
Oh, man...

NICKY
Listen to your uncle, this is gonna turn out for the best, believe me. Forget her...get on with your life.

JOEY
I know but it’s tough...we were getting pretty serious.

NICKY
Serious? Joey, c’mon. You’re still young. Serious...what you gotta do is play the field.

JOEY
Yeah...maybe you’re right.

NICKY
Maybe? Look, there’s plenty of other fish out there. All you gotta do is toss ‘em a line, cabish? But I’m tellin’ you, you start gettin’ serious... (Raises fist) Budda-bing!

JOEY
I won’t. I won’t.

NICKY
Listen...you gotta learn you can’t trust outsiders. Family’s the only ones you can trust.

JOEY
Absolutely. (Picks up glass, pours a drink) A farewell toast to...what’s her name?

NICKY
There ya go. Salud. (Drinks) Just like the old days, huh?

JOEY
Man, how many nights we drive to them shows, just the two of us?

NICKY
Oh baby...kick back in the dressin’ room after the show...have a few drinks...maybe chase a few showgirls?

JOEY
Maybe?

NICKY
Hey—who hooked you up your first time?

JOEY
You did. Man, I was only 16.
NICKY
Old enough, old enough. (Looks at watch) Hey...I gotta run...see some people. We’ll talk more tonight...have a couple of drinks. You do drink at night, don’t you?

JOEY
I been known to.

NICKY
(Standing to leave) Good.

JOEY
Oh— I almost forgot. I bumped into Sal when I was coming out of the funeral home. Strange guy, Sal...said we all gotta be careful...once there’s one death in the family, everyone else has to be careful...weird. Anyway, he said to say hello to Uncle Pauley.

NICKY
I’ll be sure he gets the message.

NICKY exits. LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT I; SCENE TWO

SETTING: PAULEY’s kitchen; later.

AT RISE: PAULEY sitting at kitchen table, reading. In this scene, his attention stays on the book until NICKY mentions money. Phone rings. PAULEY answers.

PAULEY
Hello? Oh, hi Sal. How ya doin’? (Pauses, goes to cabinet, takes out pizzeles and eats as he talks). Of course I know what day it is. It’s Wednesday. What the hell kinda question is that? (Pause). Oh...well, my father just died. Don’t ya got any respect? (Pause) I have been makin’ payments. (Pause) OK, OK, so maybe I missed one or two (Pause) Nah, that many? (Pause) Sal, I have never said you were stupid...Look, I’m gonna be straight with you here...money’s a little tight right now, you know, with the funeral and all. If you can wait a couple, two, three days, a week at the most... (Pause) Sal...Sal...Sal! Aspet! Mingya! What the hell got into you? I swear to God, I’m gonna pay ya. Look, I can get you a couple hundred now and... (Pause) What’s so funny? (Pause) How much? Tomorrow? I can’t get that much by tomorrow. Look, you wait ‘til they read the will, like I said, a couple, two... (Pause) OK, OK. Listen, I’ll talk to Larry, Pop’s lawyer, tell him I need my share of the will early. Now, tomorrow’s the funeral but for you, after the dinner, I’ll come over... (Pause). No, you don’t gotta come here, I’ll come to you. (Pause) Whaddya kiddin’? Of course you can come over if you want. I’m just tryin’ to save you the trouble... (Pause) Cavatelli...Mary’s makin’ cavatelli...twelve pounds... (Pause) Yeah, but they don’t swell
when you cook ‘em. (Pause) Sal, I swear to God I’m gonna pay ya. (Pause, then with bravado) Or else you’ll what? (Stares at receiver) Oh man...oh man...

*NICKY enters*

NICKY

Yo! Pauley!

PAULEY

Oh...hey, Nicky.

NICKY

(Holding up a bottle of liquor) I love stealin’ Tony’s booze. C’mon, siddown. Drink?

PAULEY

Little early in the day for me. (Starts reading a book)

NICKY

Don’t nobody in this family drink before sundown? (Pours a drink) Salud! You OK?

PAULEY

Yeah...you know...considerin’.

You don’t look so good.

PAULEY

It’s, you know, the funeral and all.

NICKY

One more day and it’s over Pauley. You just gotta hang in there one more day. I know you’re missin’ Pop but mingya, he was a handful those last couple years.

PAULEY

You’re tellin’ me.

NICKY

You know what Pop was, Pauley? Huh? You know what he was? He was senile. Senile.

PAULEY

Yeah.

NICKY

That’s what Pop was, Pauley. Senile.
PAULEY
Yeah, senile.

NICKY
You know what that means?

PAULEY
Yeah, I know.

NICKY
Huh? Do ya?

PAULEY
Yeah, it’s...

NICKY
Do ya know what senile is Pauley?

PAULEY
Yeah. Jeez, I just told ya I did, didn’t I?

NICKY
It’s when you lose your mind Pauley. It’s when you lose your mind. Nobody can tell you nothin’ no more. You go batty. Man, I hope they shoot me before that happens. It runs in families Pauley, did you know that? Jeez, can you imagine me on stage singin’ my lungs out and I forget the lyrics? And my kids, they wouldn’t take me in like you did with Pop. They’d put me in a home. One of them places where they dress you in them pajamas...the ones with the strings down the back. They feed you baby food, keep you in one of them beds with the railings on the sides...I don’t wanna go like that, Pauley. I wanna be shot before that happens. I swear to God I do... (Sits) Would you shoot me Pauley?

PAULEY
What?

NICKY
Would you shoot me?

PAULEY
Why would I shoot you?

NICKY
If I’m senile.

PAULEY
You’re senile?
NICKY
No...if I was senile.

PAULEY
But you’re not. So why would I shoot you?

NICKY
Pauley, I’m sayin’ if I was senile. Would you shoot me if I was senile?

PAULEY
(Pauses a moment) No. No, I wouldn’t shoot you.

NICKY
But I want you to.

PAULEY
I’m not gonna shoot you.

NICKY
But I want you to.

PAULEY
I’m not...

NICKY
Pauley, you have to. I don’t wanna embarrass myself.

PAULEY
Shoot you? Nick, this is crazy talk.

NICKY
You gotta shoot me Pauley.

PAULEY
I ain’t gonna shoot...

NICKY
You have to...

PAULEY
Nick...

NICKY
Promise...

PAULEY
OK, OK. If it’ll shut you up, I promise to shoot you.
Good. I feel better.

But that’s what Pop was...senile. Hey, you got any of them pizelles from Isgro’s?

No, no...we’re all out.

Too bad. I really got a ooli for them.

Hey, if I got ‘em, you got ‘em.

Don’t I know that? That’s the way you are. Just look at how you took Pop in. You and your wife...uh...

...Annie...

Right, Annie. You and Annie, takin’ care of him when no one else would. It fell to you, Pauley, and you took him in. I know Pop split everything he had equal between us kids...that was his way... but them others don’t deserve a cent...

As the topic turns to money, PAULEY begins to pay attention.

Well...

Even I don’t deserve as much as you do. I shoulda seen Pop more but too busy, right? Too busy chasin’ this career...this lousy career and all them women. And what do I got Pauley? Huh? What do I got? Fame...all the money I could ever want...a broad in every city. And you know what Pauley?

What?
NICKY
It don’t mean nothin’. All that money, them broads chasin’ me, the fame...I swear to God it don’t mean nothin’. You could make a pile with all the money...toss my little black book on top for spice and torch it. Make a bonfire outta it and I wouldn’t give a damn if I could just have Pop back for one day. Just one day so I could tell him how much I love him... Damn it, I shoulda took the time. It’s too late now. It’s too late, Pauley. I know I didn’t get back here for a couple of months...

PAULEY
(Closes book) More than that.

NICKY
What?

PAULEY
I said, “Imagine that” But who’s countin’?

NICKY
You can bet them others are.

PAULEY
But...But about that money?

NICKY
Money?

PAULEY
Yeah, you said you could make a bonfire outta it...?

NICKY
Oh yeah, light the whole damn thing up. It don’t mean nothin’.

PAULEY
You know, Pop’s funeral’s really costin’.

NICKY
He left money in the will for that.

PAULEY
Oh yeah, sure, but we can’t get to it now... Larry, Pop’s lawyer, that stroonz...he won’t lemmee have a cent...not even for the funeral...and this funeral Nick, it’s really costin’.

NICKY
You sayin’ you need money?

PAULEY
Well...
NICKY
Tell me.

PAULEY
I can’t ask...

NICKY
What do you mean you can’t ask? You’re my brother. Now tell me, you need money?

PAULEY
It’s just ‘cause Larry won’t lemmee have none from the will.

NICKY
(Takes out wad of bills, tosses them on the table) Here, take it. I don’t know how much it is...somethin’ like a grand. It’s yours. And if that ain’t enough, I’ll get more. I just gotta call my manager and tell him to send it. He’ll love that. He’s always sayin’ I spend too much money but the hell with him. It’s my money and this is family.

PAULEY
A grand...jeez Nick...I can’t...

NICKY
Don’t argue with me. What’s money? Huh? What the hell is money? It’s just paper. Family, that’s what matters.

But Nick...

PAULEY
I’ll burn it then.

NICKY

NICKY takes out his lighter and puts it to the money. PAULEY grabs the money.

PAULEY
OK, OK, I’ll take it.

NICKY
You’re my brother. My flesh and blood. That’s what matters. Not this lousy paper. I love ya. You and your wife Anna—

PAULEY
Annie...

NICKY
...Annie, whatever...you’re my family. I wish I had a wife that loved me...
PAULEY
Nick, I gotta tell ya. We’re havin’ problems.

NICKY
Problems?

PAULEY
She...well...she ain’t happy. I know that. You know her...she likes good stuff... fancy stuff.

NICKY
(Looks around apartment, sarcastic) Yeah, I can see that.

PAULEY
She wants a house. She hates this apartment. And me...this new job I got...bank security guard? It don’t pay nothin’...damn jobs...I figured a bank would at least pay decent, but it’s like all the rest of them jobs... I’m trapped.

NICKY
Didn’t I warn you about marryin’ a ‘Merigan?

PAULEY
Yeah...

NICKY
I told ya they ain’t like us. (Pause) Pauley, listen to me.

Yeah?

PAULEY
You listenin’?

NICKY
Yeah, I’m listenin’...

PAULEY
You sure?

NICKY
Yeah I’m sure. I just told you I was listenin’, didn’t I?

PAULEY
That money? Don’t use it for Pop’s funeral. Use it to take Angie...

NICKY
...Annie...
NICKY
...use it to take her out.

PAULEY
But the funeral...

NICKY
My manager will send more. It’ll give him somethin’ to do. All he ever does is sit around
derin’ out how to steal my money. Why the hell did I hire Vito...embezzlin’ rat. I’m
tellin’ ya Pauley, never hire family. Ya can’t trust ‘em...

PAULEY
Hey...when it comes to money, family don’t matter.

NICKY
Now that’s a depressin’ thought.

PAULEY
But this money... Nick, I don’t... I don’t know what to say... I’m overwhelmed...

NICKY
You don’t hafta say nothin’. You’re my brother. I wouldn’t be a man if I didn't help ya. I
couldn’t look at myself in the mirror no more. (Standing) You need more, you tell me, hear?

PAULEY
Yeah, OK. Nick...I...thank you.

NICKY
Be quiet now. I don’t wanna hear nothin’ more about this. You buy...Abb— your wife
somethin’ nice.

PAULEY
I will. Damn right I will.

NICKY
And hey, don’t you go investin’ none of that on them ponies, cabish?

PAULEY
I won’t, I swear. Hand to God. I don’t do that no more. Jeez, I blew a bundle on ‘em a
couple months ago. Danny, you remember Danny, don’t ya?

The bookie.

PAULEY
Right. Anyway, Danny calls me, says you got any money, put it on this long shot at
Belmont. Fortun. Fourth race this was. You know Danny, he’s not gonna screw ya so I do
PAULEY, Continued

it. Horse pulls up lame comin’ outta the gate. Never even got started. Can you believe it? Right outta the damn gate this happens. (Pause) Dropped three grand.

NICKY

Three grand? Where the hell you get three grand? I thought you was broke.

PAULEY

I had some stuff goin’ good for awhile. You know, on the side...under the table stuff...kept it from the wife.

NICKY

So what happened?

PAULEY

I just told ya...damn horse went lame.

NICKY

Not the horse. The under the table thing.

PAULEY

Oh that...well, it was a one shot deal, ya know? I was helpin’ Danny move some merchandise and after a couple weeks we was done and...I know I shouldna bet on that horse, with my luck...but Danny said it was a sure thing. Good thing I placed the bet with Sal instead of Jimmy...that stupid Wop never remembers who owes him what.

NICKY

Joey just saw Sal at the funeral home. You better square this with him.

PAULEY

He ain’t gonna do nothin’, that stupid Wop’s gonna mouth off but...

NICKY

Hey, you forget what happened to Johnny? (Pause) You learn your lesson?

PAULEY

Damn right I did. (Crosses his heart) No more ponies. I swear. But if that horse runs like it’s supposed to, my worries are over. Just one big score, my worries are over.

NICKY

One big score. (Laughs)

PAULEY

What’s so funny?

NICKY

I don’t know...maybe Pop was right.
PAULEY

Whaddya mean?

NICKY

You know how he was always wantin’ us to join the union like him. “You earn a good livin’” That’s all he ever said, “You earn a good livin’” But I used to watch him practically crawl home after layin’ them bricks and I said, “Forget that. There’s gotta be more to life than that.” So I spend my life lookin’ for that one big score and here I am, 40 years later, still lookin’ for it.

PAULEY

You’ve had plenty of shots Nick. Me, I’m a workin’ stiff. How’m I gonna get a shot like you? I gotta take a chance now and then. All’s I need is one big score. One sure thing. I’d risk everythin’ for it. Everythin’.

NICKY

How many times you risk everythin’ on a sure thing Pauley? Huh? How many times you come to me needin’ some money for a sure thing?

PAULEY

Hey, you want your money back...

NICKY

Forget the money. It’s history. It ain’t about the money. You got a job, a wife...why can’t you be satisfied?

PAULEY

Satisfied? (Laughs) What the hell I got to be satisfied about? Know what I got? I got gooboyka...nothin’. Satisfied. I’m a workin’ stiff. I wasn’t born with the talent to be some big shot singer or the brains to be a bank president. I gotta work for a livin’. I can’t even stand the thought of goin’ to work no more. Be satisfied bein’ a security guard? The job’s a joke. They won’t even give me a gun. Don’t wanna create the wrong impression. Somebody comes in to rob it, I’m gonna stop ‘em? Yeah, right. Help ‘em fill their bags is more like it. The job’s drivin’ me nuts, standin’ there day after day, starin’ at the walls, watchin’ that money rollin’ in and rollin’ out. All that money. I hate that lousy bank, I swear to God I do.

NICKY

So quit.

PAULEY

And do what? Get another lousy job? Them jobs are all the same...don’t pay nothin’. And you think Annie’s on my back now... I quit? Fugedaboudit... I’ll never hear the end of it... All I hear is buy me this, buy me that...buy me a house.

NICKY

How the hell you gonna swing that?
PAULEY
That’s what I keep tellin’ her... I can’t. My own bank won’t give me a mortgage. When I went in...manager laughs in my face when he sees how much I make...and they’re the ones payin’ me. Right in my face. Damn bank. Ya know, I shouldn’t ask ‘em for it. I should just take the money. Walk right in and take the damn money... (Realizes something; sits, distracted) Just take it...

NICKY
(Pauses) Hey, look at us. A couple of jooches gettin’ all depressed. (Laughs) Go on, finish your book. You’ll feel better. (Looks at books) Whaddya readin’?

PAULEY
Just some books...

NICKY
“The Life and Times of Frank and Jesse James”... “Willie Sutton”...what, you plannin’ a heist?

PAULEY
What? No...of course not. I just love to read is all. I’ll read anythin’. The library, it’s a great resource.

NICKY
I never have the time. I’m lucky I watch two, three hours of TV a night, just to unwind. (Looks at watch) Jeez, look at the time. I’m supposed to be at Mary’s for dinner. How do I look? (Takes out a mirror, looks. He takes another drink, looks at mirror again, combing hair.) There, that’s better. See ya, Pauley.

PAULEY
Yeah, see ya.

NICKY exits. PAULEY looks at the books. He paces a moment, about to leave then he reaches into his pocket, pulls out a wad of bills. He thinks a moment then dials the phone.

PAULEY, Continued
Danny? Hi. Yeah, Pauley. Listen, the Phils are playin’ tonight...yeah, the Mets...I hate the Mets. I wanna put some money on the Phils. A grand... (Pause) Yeah, I got the money. What the hell kinda question is that? I got it right here in my hand (He takes out the money and waves it.) Of course I know I owe Sal but it’s only a couple... (Pause) Well, he’s wrong. I just talked to him and we straightened it all out. That stupid wop got his books all screwed up again. So...you takin’ my bet? (Pause) I’m not gonna screw ya Danny. (Pause) All right, the hell with it. But I’m tellin’ ya, I got a thousand bucks right here in my hand and when Jimmy hears you ain’t takin’ my bets...(Pause) Yeah I do. I gotta tell him. Me and Jimmy, we go way back. (Pause) That’s right, Einstein, the will. I got a little advance. (Pause) All right, then. (Pause) No, no. Don’t come over now. I’m goin’ to the library.
PAULEY, Continued

(Pause) Because that’s where the books are, you illiterate...Look, just bring the money tonight. (Hangs up and gets more excited) The library. What a great resource.

PAULEY races off stage. LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT I; SCENE THREE

SETTING: Same.

AT RISE: PAULEY’s kitchen; later that same evening. PAULEY sits at the table, a pile of books and papers laid out in front of him. He’s furiously poring through “The Great Train Robbery.” Detective novels and mysteries are among the stacks of books. There’s a knock at the door.

PAULEY

Yeah? Come on in.

DANNY enters.

Yo Pauley!

PAULEY

Danny. Que se diche?

DANNY

Uh...what’s the answer to that again?

PAULEY

All these years we known each other and you still don’t know. Why do I even try?

DANNY

Ain’t my fault. Italian’s a funny damn language man...So how ya doin’?

PAULEY

OK...considerin’, you know, the funeral and all.

DANNY

Sorry about your father. A good man he was.
PAULEY
Senile is what he was. It was his time, though. Too bad it came in the middle of a heat wave.

DANNY
It is pretty damn hot, ain’t it?

PAULEY
You’re tellin’ me. This heat takes a lot outta ya. You drinkin’ enough fluids? You gotta be sure of that.

DANNY
Yeah, I think so...

PAULEY
I got a book outta the library last month, right when the weather started to get hot to find out what to do. You ever go to the library? It’s a great resource. Whenever I got a question, I go there. They got so much...

DANNY
Pauley, I didn’t come to talk about the library.

PAULEY
Huh? Oh yeah, the Phils. Where’s my money?

DANNY
Your money? That’s the wrong question. The correct question is, where’s Jimmy’s money? They lost.

PAULEY
Whaddya mean they lost? They was leadin’ by two in the eighth.

DANNY
New York scored three in the ninth.

PAULEY
They lost? How the hell could they lose? They were ahead...

DANNY
They blew it. What else is new? Gimmee the money and I’m outta here.

PAULEY
Damn it...Them damn Mets. I hate ‘em.

DANNY
Yeah, so does everyone else in the city. Now just gimmee the grand and...
I ain’t got it.

Whaddya mean you ain’t got it? You had it this morning... You said you had it right in your hand. What the hell you do with it?

My wife...you know how she is...

She spent the whole grand? Pauley...How’d she get it?

I had it stashed under my socks.

Yeah. That’s original.

Woman never cleans, never does the laundry, today she decides to go through my sock drawer. I swear, she’s got some sorta sixth sense it comes to money...sniffs it out. Damn it, how the hell could the Phils lose?

Forget the Phils. You got a serious problem here Pauley. You think Sal’s pissed at you? When Jimmy hears about this... How could you be so stupid?

Don’t you call me...

Ya placed a bet and ya don’t have the money to cover it. If that ain’t stupid...

It was Annie...

You gotta lay down the law with her.

My wife ain’t none of your business...

But collectin’ for Jimmy is. You make me look like an idiot. You set me up for this and now I gotta catch hell from him. I ain’t coverin’ for you this time. Ya know, Jimmy was gonna send Frankie Pazzo over to collect.
PAULEY
What?

DANNY
That's right. Crazy Frankie. Jimmy’s tired of gettin’ jerked around. When I tell him you ain’t got the money...

PAULEY
Danny, you gotta...you gotta tell him I’m good for it.

DANNY
(Angry) How the hell I’m gonna tell him that? You ain’t got the money! You just told me that. You want me to lie to him? Hey Pauley, you got yourself into this, you get yourself out. I’m tired of coverin’ for you. I’m turnin’ this over to Frankie.

DANNY starts to walk out; PAULEY grabs him by the arm.

PAULEY
Danny...Danny...wait...come on, siddown. Hey, how long we known each other? Huh? How many years. We grew up together...

Don’t start with that...

DANNY
We was like brothers. It’s like family with me and you. And you’re gonna walk out on me when I need you? Come on, siddown. (DANNY sits.) I’ll get you a beer.

DANNY
No beer. I’m on a diet.

PAULEY
How ‘bout some pizelles then?

DANNY
They from Isgro’s?

PAULEY
Where else?

PAULEY pulls pizelles from the cupboard and puts them in front of DANNY.

DANNY
Well...maybe one or two. (Eats) Damn these are good... You lied to me Pauley. You lied to me.
PAULEY

(Sits) No I didn’t. I made a mistake is all. I had the money... Who woulda believed the Phils was gonna lose? They’re on a tear. Then Annie found the money...

DANNY

You gotta do somethin’ about her.

PAULEY

I can’t say no to her. She knows that.

DANNY

Maybe it’s time you learned. But that’s your problem. Whaddya gonna do about the money?

PAULEY

I need time...

DANNY

(Standing; yelling) You ain't got time. Don’t you understand Jimmy’s fed up with you? When I tell him...

PAULEY

You ain’t gotta tell him.

DANNY

Yeah I do. I ain’t stickin’ my neck out for you no more.

PAULEY

I’ll get the money, don’t worry.

DANNY

Yeah sure, don’t worry. Somebody's gotta worry. You sure as hell ain’t. (Pause) Why don’t you borrow it from Nick?

PAULEY

Nick? I can’t borrow it from him.

DANNY

Why not? Ain’t he loaded?

PAULEY

Yeah he’s always talkin’ ‘bout how much money he got...but you wouldn't believe how tight that louse is. Never gives no one a cent. And when he does, he’s on your back forever about payin’ him back.

DANNY

Really? Man, I never knew...
PAULEY
Oh, he’s a real pain... Ya can’t borrow no money from him. Yeah, he’s always, “family this and family that” but in the end he’s a cheap son of a...

DANNY
What about the will? I don’t mean no disrespect here but there’s gotta be money in the will. Your old man was always sockin’ money away.

PAULEY
Yeah sure, but who knows when they’re gonna read it...damn lawyers. It’s gonna be weeks...if Jimmy can wait...

DANNY
He can’t. So whaddya gonna do?

PAULEY
(Pause) I got a plan.

DANNY
Plan? What plan?

PAULEY
I can’t tell you.

DANNY
Whaddya mean you can’t tell me? Whaddya want me to do, go to Jimmy and say, “Hey Jim, how ya doin’? How’s the family? They doin’ good? Good. I’m happy for ya. Oh, by the way, Pauley just screwed ya outta the grand but don’t take it personal. And don’t worry ‘cause he got a plan. No, I don’t know what it is but he got one.” And Jimmy’s gonna go for that? I suggest you start takin’ this serious; very serious ‘cause Jimmy wants that money by tonight.

PAULEY
Tonight? I can’t get the money by tonight.

DANNY
You better come up with somethin’ by tonight.

PAULEY
I can get you a hundred...maybe two. The rest’ll be here tomorrow. I told ya I got a plan.

DANNY
What the hell is this plan of yours?

PAULEY
I can’t tell you.
DANNY
You better ‘cause if you don’t come up with more than two hundred by tonight, Jimmy himself is gonna come over for a visit. **Cabish?**

PAULEY
All right...All right...I’m...you can’t tell no one.

DANNY
Pauley, I ain’t gonna tell no one.

PAULEY
OK, OK. *(Long pause)*

DANNY
Pauley!

PAULEY
OK, OK...I’m gonna hit First Federal.

DANNY
What?

PAULEY
I’m gonna rob the bank.

DANNY
You’re nuts. You’re outta your mind, Pauley. Your father ain’t the only one that went senile. Ain’t that the bank you work at?

PAULEY
Yeah but...

DANNY
That ain’t a plan. That’s a joke.

PAULEY
No, no. Listen. That’s the beauty of it. I know their whole operation. I know the place, the people...they got idiots on security. There’s only two people there when they open up. It’ll be a cinch. A piece of cake.

DANNY
It’s just down the street.
PAULEY
Look, I stick it up, sneak down the alley and I’m home before they even ring the alarm. I do it tomorrow, they have a new guy on and I got an alibi—Pop’s funeral. Hey, tell ya what, this caper can really use one more guy. You help, we split the money. Fifty-fifty. Right down the middle.

DANNY
Thanks but no thanks Pauley. I ain’t as dumb as I look.

PAULEY
Fine. I’ll do it alone. More money for me.

DANNY
You’re nuts. They’re gonna recognize ya.

PAULEY
I’m wearin’ a disguise...hat, dark glasses... I got Annie’s wig. They’ll never know.

DANNY
Pauley, you can’t do this. You don’t know how to pull it off.

PAULEY
Yeah I do. I got all these books. I’m gettin’ lottsa ideas. It’s a great resource, the library.

DANNY
(Picks up a book) “The Great Train Robbery.” I thought you was robbin’ a bank.

PAULEY
I’m gonna modify it.

DANNY
Modify it? Pauley, this is not a good idea.

PAULEY
What choice do I have? Either I get the money or I’m walkin’ with a limp the rest of my life.

DANNY
But a bank... Man, I don’t know...

PAULEY
Unless you got another idea... You just tell Jimmy I’ll get him the money tomorrow. Tell him with Pop’s funeral and all, you didn’t wanna bother me. I’ll get him the money tomorrow. Right after the funeral’s over.

DANNY
Man...You got a gun?
Uh-uh.

DANNY
How the hell you gonna hold up a bank without a gun? What, you’re gonna ask ‘em nice for the money and they’re gonna hand it over?

PAULEY
I don’t need a gun. I got this. *(Holds up a large bar of soap)*

DANNY
Soap? What the hell you gonna do with a bar of soap?

PAULEY
I’m gonna carve a gun outta it...use black shoe polish... They won’t know the difference.

DANNY
It’ll never work.

PAULEY
Yeah it will. That’s what this guy in Florida did. I got the article right here...take a look.

DANNY
*(Reads slowly)* It says the cops shot him.

PAULEY
Exactly.

DANNY
So this guy gets shot for pointin’ a bar of soap at a cop and you think this is good?

PAULEY
They shot him ‘cause they really thought it was a gun.

DANNY
*(Taking out his gun)* Here, take my gun.

PAULEY
I don’t want a gun.

DANNY
You gotta have a gun.

PAULEY
But it’s illegal. I don’t got a permit.
DANNY
Robbin’ a bank’s illegal. You think they’re gonna ask to see your permit? Now take the gun.

PAULEY
What about you?

DANNY
I got plenty of guns.

PAULEY
OK but keep the bullets. I don’t wanna hurt no one.

DANNY
You won’t hurt no one. Just don’t fire it. It’s a psychology thing, understand? It’ll make you feel safe...in control. Keep the bullets.

PAULEY
I don’t know...I mean, that guy in Florida used a bar of soap...

DANNY
Listen to me Pauley. You gotta come up with that money some kinda way. You don’t, you’re not the only one Jimmy’s gonna be pissed at I damn sure don’t want him comin’ after me. Take the gun and the bullets. If you’re gonna do somethin’ stupid like robbin’ a bank, you gotta cover yourself.

PAULEY
(Turning the gun over in his hands) Yeah, right.

DANNY
As soon as the funeral’s over, you’re gonna pay. Right?

PAULEY
Right.

DANNY
I’ll keep Jimmy off ya until then.

PAULEY
Don’t tell him about the heist...

DANNY
I’m just gonna tell him you’re all broke up about your father...you’ll pay him tomorrow. (Starts to leave) And Pauley...no games this time. Cabish?
PAULEY
No...no...no games. Thanks Danny. Thanks. (DANNY exits. PAULEY stares at the gun, turning it over in his hands. He puts it in his waistband, struts around the stage. He stops, pulls out the gun and points it above the audience while holding it with both hands.) OK Mister Bank Manager, you little rat, you. I’m in charge now. Remember how funny I was when I asked for a mortgage? Well, how funny am I now? You do what I say or I’ll blow a hole in you so big they’ll drive a truck through it.

PAULEY pretends to shoot then stops, shaken. He stares at the gun, removes the bullets and is looking at them as LIGHTS DOWN.

END ACT 1

ACT II; SCENE ONE

SETTING: MARY and TONY’s kitchen, the morning of the funeral.

AT RISE: The room is empty. PAULEY rushes in, dressed in a raincoat that’s too small for him, carrying a garbage bag and ANNIE’s wig. He stops, stuffs the wig in his pocket. From offstage, we hear MARY approaching, calling “Tony, c’mon we’re gonna be late!” PAULEY panics, runs to the pantry with the garbage bag, re-enters the kitchen and washes his face at the sink. Takes a drink of water and then leans on the counter. MARY enters dressed for the funeral.

MARY
Pauley? Pauley what are you doing here?

PAULEY
I...I...

MARY
Why aren’t you dressed? Is that Pop’s raincoat you’re wearin’?

PAULEY
Well, I...I...

MARY
It’s gotta be 90 out already.
PAULEY
I know but...it...it...makes me feel close to him, ya know? Like’s he’s still around. Almost.

MARY
(Helps him out of the raincoat) He passed away, Pauley. His funeral’s in an hour. You have to pull yourself together.

PAULEY
I know, I know. Look, Mare, the uh...the washing machine, in our building, it broke. The super said he’d fix it tomorrow.

MARY
Yeah...so?

PAULEY
Well, see...I got all this laundry...I gotta do it for work tomorrow, right? So I brought it here. I didn’t think you’d mind. I stuffed it in a plastic bag... that’s all there is...just one bag. I put it in the pantry. But where I put it, it’s outta the way. I’ll do it after the dinner. If that’s OK with you, that is.

MARY
It’s fine Pauley, but...

PAULEY
Look, I better get changed. I’m gonna leave out the back...don’t wanna bother no one.

MARY
You won’t bother...

PAULEY
Oh...your back door? It was locked.

MARY
Yeah? So?

PAULEY
So when I come over, I hadda come around the front. No big deal. Not really. It’s just...I didn’t want no one to see me ‘cause I’m grievin’ and all. But the back door was locked.

MARY
We’re all goin’ to the funeral. No one’s gonna be home so of course it’s gonna be locked.

PAULEY
Right, right. Like I said, no big deal. You got other things to worry about, right? So, OK. I’m gonna go now. But I’ll lock that door. Don’t you worry. OK. See ya. Bye.
PAULEY exits, NICKY enters wearing a black suit.

NICKY
Mornin’, Mare. *(Kisses her, notices she’s perplexed)* You OK?

MARY
Yeah…I’m OK…considerin’…but…Pauley was just here. He came over with his laundry.

NICKY
What?

MARY
Said the machine in his buildin’s not workin’…put it in my pantry.

That’s a little strange.

MARY
What’s strange is he’s wearin’ Pop’s raincoat. Said it makes him feel like Pop’s still around.

NICKY
He ain’t takin’ this too good.

MARY
I know. I just hope he can make it through the funeral.

TONY enters, also wearing a black suit.

TONY
Mare, it’s time to go. You ready?

MARY
Yeah. Nick, we have to get there early. OK if you go with Joey? He should be down soon. Give him a holler if he isn’t.

NICKY
You two go ahead. I’ll bring the kid.

NICKY lights a cigarette.

MARY
And do me a favor, tell him to get the tablecloths for the dinner. They’re in a bag in the pantry…on one of the shelves.

NICKY
OK. See ya there…cigarette, Tone?
TONY
No thanks. I quit.

NICKY
Oh really?

MARY
I’m telling you, when you’re lyin’ there gaspin’ for air…no sympathy…none at all.

TONY
Oh yeah? Well if you’re so concerned with my health, how the hell can you give me a baloney sandwich for lunch?

MARY
What’re you talkin’ about?

TONY
That’s what I had for lunch yesterday.

MARY
I’ve never given you a baloney sandwich.

MARY picks up her purse to leave.

TONY
Well somebody did...

MARY
(As they exit) Well it wasn’t me.

TONY and MARY exit. NICKY gets a bottle of whiskey out of the cabinet and pours a glass. He quickly downs the drink, pours a second one, picks up the phone and dials.

NICKY
Oh! Vito! Nicky, yeah…Listen, I want you to send me some money. I had to lay out a bundle for this funeral...(Pause) Because I had to, that’s why…Whaddya mean there’s nothin’ left…you embezzlin’ piece of…Look, there’s always somethin’ left...(Pause) Well sell a car or somethin’… (Pause) We already did, huh? OK, loan me a couple of grand, just ‘til I get back on my feet again. I’m good for it (Pause) You lousy, cheap...(Pause) Don’t tell me to calm down! I’m broke, understand? (Calms down slightly) Come on, I got that gig next week...(Pause) They cancelled? How the hell…it’s a community center. How…? (Pause) So tell ‘em I ain’t drinkin’ no more. Damn it. (Pause) What about the will? (Pause) In a few days, why? (Pause) Of course there’s money in it but…see if you can follow this, all right moron? I am completely broke right now, understand? That money ain’t doin’ me no good ‘cause I ain’t got it. And I need that money to get the hell outta this one-horse town. Is that
NICKY, Continued

clear enough now you stroonz? Look, just loan me the money... (Pause) All right, that’s it. You’re fired... And what’s so funny?...Hello? Hello? (Slams down the receiver) Desgraziade!

NICKY downs his drink. He thinks a moment and then dials again.

NICKY, Continued

Hey Janice, how are ya? (Pause) Nicky...Ni... (He is cut off.) Yeah, thanks a lot. Same to you...women...

NICKY puts down the phone just as JOEY slowly enters, apparently suffering from a hang-over. He has on a black suit but is not wearing a tie and his shirt tail is out. He sits, placing his head on the table.

JOEY

My head...my head...

NICKY pours them both a drink.

NICKY

When are you gonna learn you can’t keep up with me...especially drinkin’? Here, this is what you need. Hair of the dog... Go ahead, drink it. You’ll feel better.

JOEY

Yeah?

NICKY

Yeah, trust me.

JOEY

Well...

NICKY

G’head, drink it.

JOEY takes a sip; NICKY drinks all of his and then pours another.

NICKY (Continued)

Here’s to Mom and Pop. (He raises his glass and drinks. JOEY does the same. NICKY pours two more drinks.) Their worries are over now. They’re at peace.
JOEY
Yeah.

NICKY
They’re together again now. Can you believe all the crap they musta went through? Pop comin’ over here by himself, leavin’ Ma back in the old country…What trust they had, what trust. And love... Man, it don’t happen like that no more.

JOEY
You can say that again.

NICKY
You ask me, it’s all that women’s lib crap.

JOEY
Whaddya mean?

NICKY
They think they can do whatever they want now...have all the flings they want.

JOEY
That’s not true.

NICKY
No? Look at you and what’s her name...

JOEY
Janice?

NICKY
Thinkin’ she could do whatever she wanted.

JOEY
What are you talkin’ about?

NICKY
Joey, grow up would ya? Face facts. There ain’t some fairy godmother lookin’ out for you, you know.

JOEY
I don’t know what you’re talkin’ about.

NICKY
Look, forget it.

JOEY
Wait...there’s another guy?
NICKY
Bingo! Light bulb goes off.

JOEY
I knew it!

NICKY
What do you care?

JOEY
I don’t....It’s just...ah, the hell with her.

NICKY
Look, your mother wants you to get some tablecloths. They’re in the pantry...in a bag or somethin’. Better hustle up, the show’s about to start.

JOEY
OK. (He stands to go, then stops.) I gotta know. Who was it?

What does it matter?

JOEY
I’ll call the poor fool...wish him luck. Thank him for taking her off my hands.

(Pause) You’re welcome.

NICKY
For what?

JOEY
For takin’ her off your hands.

(Stunned) You’re the guy?

NICKY
Yeah.

JOEY
You?

NICKY
Yeah. Fugedaboudit, huh? Did you a big favor.
JOEY
You? You son of a...

NICKY
Hey, you just said you wanted to thank the guy...

JOEY
But...but you’re my uncle. Uncles aren’t supposed to do things like that.

NICKY
Really...I musta cut class the day they taught that.

I can’t believe you...

*They tussle a bit but NICKY quickly gets the best of JOEY, twisting JOEY’s arm behind his back.*

NICKY
Whaddya want from me? I took her off your hands. *(NICKY pushes JOEY away.)* Fangool! Get the damn tablecloths! *(NICKY sits at table and pours another drink. He rubs his eyes, looks into his mirror.)* Damn kids...

*JOEY laughs from OFFSTAGE.*

NICKY
*(Stands)* What the hell’s so funny?

*JOEY enters carrying a gun.*

JOEY
*(Laughs)* Look what I found.

NICKY
Joey, put that down.

*JOEY (Struts with gun) Jeez...*

NICKY
Where’d you get that?

*JOEY My fairy godmother musta left it. Who said she ain’t lookin’ out for me, huh?*
NICKY
Easy with that thing.

JOEY
Nice piece, huh?

*JOEY pauses, checking out the gun. He laughs.*

NICKY
Yeah...yeah, sure. C’mon...careful with that.

JOEY
You could really do some damage with this. *(Draws gun)* Man, this feels great.

NICKY
*(Reaches for gun)* Stop playin’ with that. That ain’t a toy.

JOEY
*(Avoiding his reach; still in control)* I know that. Don’t you think I know that? *(Draws again)* Just like John Wayne.

NICKY
Gimmee that before you...

JOEY
Get away.

NICKY
You ain’t careful, you’re gonna shoot someone.

JOEY
Now there’s an idea... *(Points gun at Nick)* Siddown. *(NICKY hesitates.)* Siddown!

NICKY
*(Sitting)* Stop playin’ around.

JOEY
Playtime’s over Uncle Nick. Hey, you wanna join Grandpa? Would you like that?

NICKY
Joey, you gotta see...Janice...she wasn’t no good. You gotta see that.

JOEY
Yeah...I mean, if she’s foolin’ around with washed-up old drunk like you.

NICKY
*(Starts to rise)* Why you little...
JOEY

*(Points gun)* Siddown! *(NICKY sits.)* Everything’s OK. See, now I know the truth. That’s what family’s all about, right? Truth, trust, all that crap. Family, that’s all that matters, right? Relax...it’ll be over soon.

NICKY

No. Not me...please...not me...

JOEY

Then who? Janice? You want me to shoot Janice?

NICKY

Well... it was her fault.

JOEY

Women...they do have a way of doin’ things to you.

NICKY

You’re right. You’re absolutely right...

JOEY

Tell ya what. I’ll shoot you first and then I’ll shoot her.

NICKY

I don’t think you gotta shoot me.

JOEY

Yeah I do.

NICKY

No you don’t.

JOEY

Yeah I do... Think about it...you’ll get to see Grandpa again...tell him how much you love him... *(Points and cocks gun)* Tell him I said hi, Uncle Nick.

MARY walks in, sees JOEY with the gun.

MARY

Joey!

JOEY

*(Turns to MARY)* Ma?

NICKY lunges at JOEY and grabs the gun. There’s shouting as they grapple. The gun is pointed upward as both of them hold it.
NICKY

Leggo. Leggo of it.

MARY

Joey...Joey my God...

JOEY

Stop it...Stop it...It isn’t loaded.

All freeze for a moment.

NICKY

What?

JOEY

It isn’t loaded. There aren’t any bullets in it.

NICKY takes the gun and opens the barrel. It’s empty.

NICKY

Son of a...

MARY crosses to JOEY and slaps him.

NICKY

Hey, let me...

MARY

You stay away from him. Joey, what were you doing? (Hugs him) What made you do something like that?

JOEY

I...I don’t know...I...

MARY

Where did you get the gun? (To NICKY) Is it yours?

NICKY

No it’s not mine.

MARY

Then whose is it? Where’d you get it?

JOEY

The pantry.
MARY
Pantry? Pauley put his laundry out there...Does he have a gun now too?

NICKY
I guess that bank finally gave him one. Just like him to forget to load it and leave it somewhere ain’t it?

MARY
But Joey, why point that thing at your uncle like that?

NICKY
He was just foolin’ around (Pours a drink) ...got carried away. A good act but too realistic for me Joey. Way too realistic. You were just yankin’ your uncle’s chain, ain’t that right Joey?

MARY
Joey..?

JOEY
I’m sorry Ma. I was just fooling around, like he said. I got carried away. I’m sorry.

NICKY
Yeah, he got carried away.

NICKY goes to take a drink but MARY grabs it from him.

MARY
I need this more than you. (Takes a sip) This heat is making everyone crazy. Pauley’s not making any sense. It’s Pop’s funeral and all he talks about is doing his laundry. Everybody’s running around talking about the bank robbery...

NICKY
Bank robbery?

MARY
...and you two are playing with a gun. What’s going on?

NICKY
What bank robbery?

MARY
Didn’t you hear? First Federal, where Pauley works. Thank God he wasn’t working today. Someone robbed it this morning, right when they opened. Can you believe that? Right in our own neighborhood. Nothing is safe anymore. What a world. (Drinks a little more whisky) I just came back for my checkbook. (Goes to a drawer and removes it). I forgot it this morning. I have to pay the balance on the funeral because Charlie, my own cousin, can’t
MARY, Continued

wait a couple of days until we get the money from the will. I’m tellin’ you, family... *(Drinks some more whiskey, hands the rest to NICKY)*. Joey, you come with me. I don’t want you doing anything else crazy today...pointing a gun...If I don’t get an ulcer before today’s over...You drive your father’s car. Nicky, you take Joey’s car and meet us there.

NICKY

Sure.

MARY

And you put that bottle away. You’ve had enough. *(To JOEY)* Let’s go.

MARY and JOEY walk out but before leaving, JOEY stops and stares one last time at NICKY who looks away and sits at the table. He finishes the rest of the whisky in his glass and pours another. LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT II; SCENE TWO

SETTING: The viewing area of the funeral home.

AT RISE: NICKY and PAULEY stand in the foreground, a spotlight on them.

NICKY

Pop looks good, huh Pauley?

PAULEY

Yeah, real good.

NICKY

Nice turn out too...even Uncle Nunzio showed up. Jeez, Pop didn’t talk to him for what...20 years?

PAULEY

At least.

NICKY

And all because Nunzio never paid him the two hundred bucks he borrowed...the nonsense people put themselves through...and for what? For money...for some lousy piece of paper. Don’t make no sense...no matter what ya do, this is where ya end up. Right here. Jeez, makes ya wonder why we ever argue. *(Pause)* He looks so peaceful...
PAULEY

Yeah.

NICKY

Everyone took it good, too. None of that hysterical cryin’ for the deceased. I hate that kinda stuff. Only one real upset was your wife ‘cause she couldn’t find her wig...

PAULEY

Yeah, well...women...you know. Jeez, look who’s here.

Who?

NICKY

PAULEY

Madeline...Madeline Petrone. Nice of her to show up. *(Waves to her)* I haven’t seen her in years. She’s still lookin’ good.

NICKY

Putan.

PAULEY

Hey, you didn’t mind when you was, you know... *(Makes gesture that indicates something intimate happened between NICKY and Madeline. NICKY glares at him.)* So I guess you’re headin’ back tomorrow?

NICKY

Nah. I’m gonna stick around ‘til after they read the will.

PAULEY

But it’s gonna be a few days...maybe a week before they read it, Nick. Lawyers...Larry’s gonna milk us for every cent he can. No sense you stickin’ around that long.

NICKY

I’m in no rush.

PAULEY

But Nick...

NICKY

Just between me and you? I hope you get a little somethin’ extra, I really do. I just wanna see Tony’s face when they read it and you get more than him.

PAULEY

Tony ain’t so bad...not really.
NICKY
No? See what happens when you get more than him. I just hope Pop still knew what you was doin’ for him. You should get extra for all you done.

PAULEY
I just... I just did what I had to.

NICKY
That’s what I love about you Pauley, you’re humble. All you done and you never asked for nothin’ extra.

PAULEY
I did what I believed in my heart was right, that’s all.

NICKY
My brother. You’re some piece of work. Some piece of work. You feelin’ all right?

PAULEY
I’m OK. Fine... considerin’, you know, the funeral and all.

NICKY
Yeah, I know it’s been tough on you Pauley. But it’s almost over. Now you’re gonna send me the bill for all this right?

PAULEY
Nicky, you been so generous already.

NICKY
Hey, don’t gimmee no trouble. You just use that money for you and... uh... your wife. Don’t worry about none of this. I’ll take care of this.

PAULEY
If you insist, I guess I better. I don’t wanna insult you.

NICKY
Good. Family, Pauley, that’s all that matters. (Pause) Oh, hey I almost forgot. I’m gettin’ as bad as Pop forgettin’ things. But I should talk... you know what you forgot at Mary’s?

PAULEY
Mary’s? I forgot somethin’ at Mary’s?

NICKY
In the pantry?

PAULEY
The pantry?
NICKY

On a shelf?

PAULEY

I didn’t put nothin’ on a shelf. I put that bag of laundry out there, that’s all.

NICKY

It ain’t just laundry you left there.

PAULEY

Yes it is.

NICKY

No it’s not. Pauley, look, I know what you left there.

PAULEY

You do? Hey...you’re my brother. You gotta understand.

NICKY

Understand? I do understand Pauley. You gotta look after yourself these days.

PAULEY

That’s right. You gotta. No one’s gonna help you.

NICKY

Just thank God the damn thing wasn’t loaded.

PAULEY

What?

NICKY

(Taking the gun out of his waistband) The gun. Thank God it wasn’t loaded. That wacko nephew of ours finds it and starts wavin’ it around like he’s John Wayne...pointin’ it at me. Scared the hell outta me. That kid is a total wacko. (Pushes gun at PAULEY) Anyway, here.

PAULEY

It’s not mine.

NICKY

Whaddya mean it’s not yours?

PAULEY

It’s not mine.

NICKY

Mary said you was in the pantry today...we figured the bank finally gave you a gun. But if it ain’t yours, who’s is it?
PAULEY

I don’t know but it’s not mine.

NICKY

How the hell did it get there then?

PAULEY

Beats me.

NICKY

You say it’s not yours, it’s not yours. But it’s gotta be somebody’s. Mary better call the cops.

PAULEY

Cops? Why? Why call the cops?

NICKY

It don’t belong to no one in the family...it had to get there somehow. Someone hadda stash it there. Wait...that robbery. Jeez, you think someone we know done it and stashed the gun there? Damn...why couldn’t they be stupid enough to stash the loot there too?

PAULEY

Nobody we know done that...no reason to call the cops...

NICKY

I don’t know...Mary better call ‘em...they can trace the gun, find out who owns it.

PAULEY

(Pauses, thinks it over.) You’re right. It is mine.

NICKY

Whaddy mean? You just said...

PAULEY

I forgot, is all.

NICKY

Forgot? How the hell could you forget?

PAULEY

I got a lot on my mind. I been distracted lately. Here, gimmee the gun.

*PAULEY takes the gun from NICKY and puts it in his coat pocket.*

NICKY

You just forgot?
PAULEY

Yeah, yeah. Just forgot.

MARY approaches.

NICKY

You forgot..?

PAULEY

That’s it...forgot. Quiet, here comes Mary.

NICKY

They say that senile stuff runs in families, Pauley. You better watch yourself. Maybe you should take a vacation or somethin’. You and Annie.

PAULEY

...Angie...

NICKY

Angie?

PAULEY

Annie. It’s Annie.

NICKY

Annie. That’s what I said. Yeah, you better take a vacation Pauley.

MARY

You boys ready? It’s time to say goodbye to Pop. C’mon.

MARY links arms with PAULEY and NICKY. They look at one another and exit. LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT II; SCENE THREE

SETTING: PAULEY and ANNIE’s kitchen, not long after the funeral service.

AT RISE: PAULEY enters carrying two suitcases, one of them with clothing hanging out, one empty. He goes to the phone and dials.

PAULEY

Yeah...look, I need a number for an airline...I don’t care which one. American, Continental, one of them...Damn it, just gimmee...
Pauley! Yo! Pauley!

PAULEY

Mingya...Damn it. Hurry up! All right, fine...American... Just hurry up...

DANNY

Yo Pauley!

PAULEY

(Into phone) What? Wait...

DANNY enters. PAULEY immediately hangs up and shoves the suitcase under the table.

PAULEY, Continued

Don’t you have doors where you live? Aren’t you supposed to knock or somethin’ before you barge into someone’s home?

DANNY

I’m sorry man. I’m all excited. You did it! You really did it! You hit the bank. The damn bank. (Hugs him) Just like a gangster you was. Man, I didn't know you had it in ya.

PAULEY

Keep your voice down, will ya?

DANNY

Yeah, yeah. Sorry. Jimmy didn’t believe me when I told him what you was gonna do.

PAULEY

Jimmy? Why the hell...didn’t I tell you not to tell no one?

DANNY

C’mon. It’s just Jimmy. He’ll help ya launder the money.

PAULEY

I don’t need no help. I can do it alone.

DANNY

Well, he offered. You change your mind, give him a call.

PAULEY

Yeah, yeah, sure. Look, I’m in a hurry here, so if you don’t mind...
DANNY
Hold on, Pauley.

PAULEY
Why?

DANNY
Why... This guy... *(laughs)* The money. The grand. Remember? I’m here to collect.

PAULEY
You said I had ‘til the funeral was over.

DANNY
It’s over Pauley.

PAULEY
No it ain’t. We ain’t had the dinner yet. Once we have the dinner, then it’s over.

DANNY
With all respect, Pauley, once the body is in the ground, it’s over. The rest is just for show.

PAULEY
It ain’t for show. It’s mournin’. We’re still mournin’

DANNY *(Getting angry)* Look, there’s no use arguin’. I ain’t makin’ the decision here. It’s Jimmy. He said as soon as your father’s in the ground, he wants his money. Your father’s in the ground and I ain’t leavin’ here without the money. *(Pleading)* C’mon Pauley, you got it.

PAULEY
I ain’t got it.

DANNY
Whaddya mean?

PAULEY
I mean I ain’t got it.

DANNY
Don’t gimmee that crap Pauley. You wanna play, you gotta pay. Now it’s time to pay. *(Pleading again)* You hit the bank. Gimmee the money and Jimmy’ll be satisfied. I won’t hafta come here no more.

PAULEY
I just said I ain’t got it.
DANNY
Then where the hell is it? And don’t gimmee nothin’ about your wife takin’ it, neither.

PAULEY
I stashed it where it’ll be safe. I’ll get it after the dinner. You said I had ‘til...

DANNY
Damn you Pauley

PAULEY
Don’t you curse me. (Calms down) Don’t worry, it’s safe. I leave it here, Annie’s always snoopin’ around...she’s gonna find it. After the dinner, you come back. It’s just a couple of hours. I’ll give it to ya then, I swear. Tell Jimmy...

DANNY
(Grabbing him) Shut up and listen to me! I’m through playin’ with you now. All you ever do is jerk me around. It’s over now, cabish? I ain’t coverin’ for you no more. Now where’s the money?

PAULEY
Take it easy Danny. What’s the matter here? We’re just like...

DANNY
And don’t gimmee that “we’re just like brothers” line. It’s over Pauley. It’s over. Now where’s the money? Where’s the money?

PAULEY
(Visibly shaken) At Mary’s

DANNY
(Shakes him) Where at Mary’s?

PAULEY
The pantry...in a garbage bag...

DANNY
(Releasing PAULEY) All right...now I'm just gonna take the grand, is all. The rest is yours. (Straightens PAULEY’S clothes) Sorry about this Pauley. It ain’t nothin’ personal...it’s just business.

DANNY starts to exit. PAULEY, visibly shaken, reaches into one coat pocket, pulls out a handkerchief and wipes forehead. He reaches into other pocket and pulls out the gun. He points it at Danny.
PAULEY

Danny..? Danny!

DANNY

(As he stops, turning back) Now what..? Hey c’mon Pauley, put that away.

PAULEY

You ain’t goin’ near my money. No one is.

DANNY

Pauley, put it down.

PAULEY

You think I’m stupid? I’m supposed to believe you’re only gonna take the grand?

DANNY

That’s all I’m takin’, I swear. Pauley, you’re makin’ a mistake.

PAULEY

I’m ain’t makin’ no mistake.

DANNY

(Walks towards PAULEY trying to call his bluff) You ain’t gonna use it Pauley. You ain’t got the guts.

DANNY reaches in his suit. PAULEY crouches with both hands on the gun aiming directly at DANNY’S chest.

PAULEY

That’s enough! Show me your hands. C’mon...hurry up or I’ll blow a hole in you so big they’ll drive a truck through it. (DANNY freezes.) The bullets, Danny. Remember how you told me to keep the bullets? You said it was a psychology thing. (Laughs) Psychology thing... It’s a psychological thing, you jerk... But you was right, Danny. I feel in control now. I am in control now. (Crosses to Danny) Put your hands up!

DANNY

Pauley, listen...

PAULEY

Shut up! Turn around! (Reaches into DANNY’S coat; pulls out gun) Danny, my brother. You’re just like a brother to me...just like my brother. (Reaches into DANNY’S waistband; pulls out another gun.) All that talk about carin’ but all you wanna do is take what’s mine...ready to turn on me...no one’s gettin’ a cent of my money. No one. (PAULEY gropes along DANNY’s back and pulls out another gun.) Got any more?
DANNY
No.

PAULEY
(Pats DANNY’s legs; finds another gun) What’s this?

DANNY
C’mon Pauley, that’s the gun my Daddy gave me.

PAULEY
Too bad. Now gimmee your car keys...c’mon...hurry up. Good...Now, empty your pockets...c’mon...all your change...you ain’t makin’ no phone calls... Is that all?

DANNY
That’s it. I’m clean.

PAULEY
OK. Take off your belt.

DANNY
What?

PAULEY
Your belt. Take off your belt. I gotta tie you up.

DANNY removes his belt, hands it to PAULEY

PAULEY
Now siddown. (DANNY hesitates) I said siddown! (DANNY does. PAULEY starts tying him up) Good thing I was in the Boy Scouts.

DANNY
Pauley, they kicked you out the first day ‘cause you was stealin’ food.

PAULEY
It was their fault leavin’ them cupcakes out. But I was there long enough to learn how to tie a knot. (PAULEY finishes tying him, then grabs a kitchen towel)

DANNY
Now what?

PAULEY
Sorry, brother, but I don’t want you yellin’ and attractin’ any of Jimmy’s other goons. (Stuffs towel in Danny’s mouth) All right. Now I’m tellin’ you, if I see you, Jimmy or any of them other goons anywhere near my money, I’m gonna come out shootin’. I swear to God I will. After the dinner, I come back here, untie you and then I pay you. Cabish? (Pause) Well, maybe...just to be safe. (Hits DANNY in the head with the gun to knock him out.) Danny?
PAULEY, Continued
Danny! Sleep well, brother. (PAULEY keeps one gun, puts the rest in the suitcase, starts to exit.) Like I said, soon’s the funeral’s over, I’ll give you the money. (To audience) Yeah. Right. (Exits)

DANNY slowly lifts his head—he wasn’t knocked out—and struggles against the knots.

LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT II; SCENE FOUR

SETTING: TONY and MARY’s kitchen; about the same time.

AT RISE: JOEY comes out of the pantry, upset. NICKY enters.

NICKY
(Uncertain) Joey? How ya doin’? (JOEY turns but doesn’t answer.)Whatsa matter? You upset about the funeral? Look, your grandfather went peaceful. It was his time.

JOEY
It’s not that.

NICKY
Look, if it’s about that girlfriend of yours...

JOEY
Just shut up about her, all right?

NICKY
Don’t talk to me like that. Who the hell you think you are? I’m still your uncle.

JOEY
Lucky me, huh?

NICKY
Hey, the hell with you. I just thought we should talk is all.

JOEY
(Tosses a stack of money on the table) You wanna talk? Talk about this.

NICKY
What’s that?
JOEY
Money, I think.

NICKY
I can see that. Where’d it come from?

JOEY
I don’t know but there’s a lot of it. When I went to get the tablecloths, I found a garbage bag...when I reached in I found this. It’s full.

NICKY rushes to the pantry. Returns with bag and some money.

NICKY
(Reads wrapper) First Federal? How the hell..?

JOEY
Someone we know must have robbed the bank.

NICKY
Get the hell outta here. No one we know’s got the brains. Pauley’s the only one in the pantry today and he sure as hell don’t.

JOEY
Wait a minute...wasn’t that his gun? Do you think..?

NICKY
Mingya...he said it was his laundry. (Picks up money) Some laundry.

JOEY
(Rising to get the phone) We better call the cops.

NICKY
(Blocking his path) No. This is a family problem.

JOEY
A family problem? He robbed a bank. How the hell is that a family problem?

NICKY
Look, Pauley’s in trouble. Lotta trouble. We gotta cover for him. Protect him ‘til we can sort this out. And...we don’t know for sure he done it.

JOEY
Yeah we do.

NICKY
We can’t call the cops. Not yet.
From offstage, TONY and MARY call for JOEY to help them with the food they carry. They call “Joey!” several times but the conversation with NICKY keeps him from leaving.

JOEY
That’s Mom and Dad. They’ll call the cops when we tell them.

NICKY
We ain’t tellin’ them.

JOEY
What?

NICKY
Look...today’s been tough on your mother. Tell them now, your father goes through the roof...

JOEY
Yeah but it’s a bank robbery.

NICKY
...and your mother gets all upset. She’s had a rough day already. At least wait ‘til after the dinner... Joey, think about your mother here.

JOEY
(Pauses) All right. But only until after the dinner. Then we have to tell them.

NICKY
Oh, absolutely. Now you’re thinkin’ straight. See, nobody gets upset this way. Your mother’s had a tough couple of days. We gotta make sure it don’t get no tougher. (He takes the money and stuffs it in his pocket.) I’ll hold onto this...for now...

NICKY takes the garbage bag to the pantry.
JOEY rushes to grab the food his parents carry.
They all enter the kitchen together.

TONY
Thanks Joey.

MARY
Nicky, you OK?

NICKY
Fine, fine...Everything’s fine.
JOEY

(Sarcastically) Oh, yeah

MARY

(Crosses to JOEY and kisses him) Nice ceremony, wasn’t it? It’s so peaceful there.

NICKY

Yeah. Pop’s restin’ with Ma now.

MARY

I’m glad they’re together again... Pop’s not sufferin’ anymore. And with the funeral over, we can all get back to normal.

TONY

All over but readin’ the will.

NICKY

There ain’t gonna be no surprises there. Pop always said he was splittin’ things equal between the kids.

MARY

Joey, go set the table. Get the dishes out there.

JOEY gets some dishes out.

TONY

Unless Pauley got at it already.

NICKY

Whaddya mean?

TONY

Just that. You know Pauley. He was in charge of Pop’s money.

MARY

Joey, no. The good dishes.

JOEY gets them and exits

NICKY

Ma fanabla. Don’t go talkin’ about my brother like that.

TONY

No? Why not? It’s true. You know that yourself.
NICKY
He’s my brother. My flesh and blood, that’s why not. Everything’s split equal, just like Pop wants. Your problem is you’re an outsider. An outsider always tryin’ to stir up some kinda trouble.

TONY
I ain’t tryin’ to stir up nothin’. I’m just facin’ facts is all. All I’m sayin’ is I wouldn’t be surprised.

NICKY
He wouldn’t do that and he wouldn’t do some of the things I know you done.

TONY stares at him hard.

MARY
Look you two, can’t you let things rest for just one day? We just buried Pop. Let’s not have any arguments today. Just one day. Is that too much to ask?

NICKY AND TONY
Yeah...yeah.

NICKY
It’s just that...

MARY
That’s enough.

PHONE RINGS.

TONY
I’ll get it.

MARY
(To NICKY) Can’t you two please get along? Just for one day?

NICKY
I just don’t like him gettin’ on Pauley like that. He’s always puttin’ him down... makin’ trouble.

TONY
(Into the phone) Hold it, hold it... I can’t hear you. I’m gonna use the other phone. (Exits)

MARY
He’s not trying to make trouble, Nicky. He’s just...stubborn. A gabbadost. Now come on, I’m asking you for Pop’s sake...for my sake. Don’t cause trouble. Just for today.
NICKY
All right. For you. But he better not be say nothin’ bad about Pauley or so help me...

MARY
(Kissing him on the cheek) Good. Now shut up and open the wine. People’ll be here soon.

TONY enters, visibly upset.

MARY
Tony, what’s the matter?

TONY
(Pointing a finger at NICKY) Know who that was? That was Larry...Pop’s lawyer. Your brother...Pauley...don’t say nothin’ bad about him, huh? He wouldn’t do nothin’ to the family, huh?

NICKY
Don’t start with me, Tony. I swear. I made a promise to my sister but don’t force me...

TONY
You sap. You know what he did?

NICKY
Yeah, he took care of Pop all those years, that’s what he did. Pauley took care of Pop. You didn’t do a damn thing the whole time.

TONY
No? And what the hell did you do big shot?

MARY
Stop it. Stop it, both of you. Tony, what..?

NICKY
Your problem is you don’t know what family is. You have no idea what it’s all about.

TONY
Oh I don’t, huh?

MARY
Nicky, be quiet. What was that phone call?

TONY
Phone call? I better not say ‘cause Mr. Genius, Mr. Intuition here wouldn’t like it if I said somethin’ bad about his brother. His brother the saint. He’s a saint, did you know that?

NICKY
Tony, I’m warnin’ you.
TONY
His brother the sufferin’ one, takin’ care of Pop all those years. You’re a sap! That’s what you are. A sap!

JOEY, hearing the commotion, enters

NICKY
(Taking a step towards TONY) That’s enough. Nobody can say one bad thing about my brother, hear me? Especially you, you rat. At least he don’t cheat on his wife.

You son of a...

TONY grabs for NICKY; NICKY slaps his hand away.

MARY
What...

NICKY
Yeah, my brother’s a saint compared to you, you slime ball. You...you ain’t fit to even speak his name.

What did you say Nick?

TONY
You stroonz!

You’re the stroonz!

NICKY
You rat!

NICKY reaches for TONY but JOEY steps in.

JOEY
Get away from him!

TONY
Fangool! Just like your brother!

NICKY
Don’t say nothin’ about my brother you..!

NICKY reaches past JOEY; grabs TONY.
TONY

The money’s gone! It’s all gone!

NICKY stops and they all freeze for a moment.

What?

NICKY

He went through it all...close to a hundred grand.

NICKY

A hundred...

TONY

It’s all gone. Pauley talked to Larry at the funeral...wanted him to put off readin’ the will...there’s nothin’ in it now. Not a cent. Larry figures maybe Pauley’s gonna skip...

NICKY

But how...how could he..? All that money...

TONY

He had control of all the money...all Pop’s stock...all gone.

NICKY

Pauley..? Pauley..? My brother...flesh and blood...?

Nicky...

MARY

NICKY

I’ll kill him. I swear to God I’ll kill him.

MARY grabs for NICKY as he rushes off.

MARY

(Calling) Nick stop! Damn it, we just buried Pop. Can’t you have some respect?

Doorbell rings.

MARY, Continued

Oh God, people are here already. Joey, go tell them we’re still setting up. Don’t let anyone in.

JOEY

OK... Dad, you all right?
TONY
Yeah. Yeah, Joey, I’m all right. Do what your mother said...go on.

JOEY exits. There is an embarrassed silence as MARY and TONY straighten their clothes. MARY fusses with food. They avoid looking at each other.

TONY
Mare, I... (MARY turns.)

MARY
You... (Slaps him) What were you, bragging to Nick about all the women you’ve been with? What a great lover you are?

TONY
No...

MARY
Good thing ’cause I know the truth.

TONY
Look, it was years ago.

MARY
I know.

TONY
You know?

MARY
What do you think I am, stupid? All of a sudden you’re coming home with flower...following me around the house like some little puppy dog. Men... (Laughs) ...Boys is more like it. You all think you’re so damn smart.

TONY
(Trying to brush it off) Look, it was no big deal...one time it was. Ain’t a man alive that don’t...

MARY
I was going to leave you Tone...

TONY
What?

MARY
That’s right. You’re lucky Annie talked me out of it...I don’t want to talk about it anymore.
TONY

I’m sorry...I...

MARY

I said I don’t wanna talk about it. Cabish?

TONY

Sure...sure.

MARY

Company’s here. Bring them some food. I’ll get some more. (TONY exits toward dining room. MARY enters the pantry. She kicks a bag and from offstage we hear...) Ma Fanabala Pauley! You and your damn laundry!

LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT II; SCENE FIVE

SETTING: TONY and MARY’S kitchen; dinner time.

AT RISE: Dinner is in full swing. SOUNDS OF GUESTS OFF. There are plates of food on the table; a newspaper on the counter. MARY enters with empty plates, picks up some food and is about to walk out when TONY rushes in and grabs a dish towel.

MARY

What’s the matter?

TONY

Goomba Jeech.

MARY

What’d he do this time?

TONY

Pinched Mrs. Donatucci. Right on the butt. Spilled onion dip down the front of her dress.

MARY

Oh God. Good thing her husband’s dead.

TONY

Jeech is 84 and horny as ever.
MARY
Men never change. Never. Here, take these bread sticks with you. Those aren’t people out there. It’s locust. I don’t think they’ve eaten since the last funeral. (As she exits out carrying a bowl of food) You seen Pauley?

TONY
(Exiting close behind) He come over with Annie but I ain’t seen either of ‘em since.

PAULEY, carrying his suitcase, enters from the pantry. He is quite visibly upset. He places the suitcase on a chair and starts pacing.

PAULEY
It’s gone…the money’s all gone. Damn it. I don’t believe it.

NICKY enters from the dining room, unnoticed.

How are ya Pauley?

NICKY
Nicky! You scared the crap outta me.

PAULEY
What? Think I was a ghost or somethin’? (Notices suitcase) Goin’ somewheres?

PAULEY
Huh? Oh, the suitcase...no, no…it’s just…I wanna…I wanna get my laundry outta here. The machine…all of a sudden, it’s workin’ again. Machines, right? Go figure. I’m just gonna stuff it in this. It’s neater, you know, with company and all. That’s all this suitcase is for.

NICKY
You oughta stop worryin’ about this laundry thing Pauley. You got bigger things to worry about.

NICKY pulls out a chair and sits.

PAULEY
I do? What’s that supposed to mean? (He sits. Nicky ignores him, picks up the paper and starts reading.) What’s that supposed to mean Nick?

NICKY
Huh?

PAULEY
You said I got bigger things to worry about. What things I gotta worry about?
NICKY
This dinner’s gonna be very emotional for you, you bein’ so close to Pop and all. You don’t wanna fall to pieces in front of everyone.

PAULEY
Yeah, yeah. We was close me and Pop. Very close. We shared so much. That’s why I wanna stay in here for a minute. Collect myself. You go ahead. I’ll be right out.

NICKY
I don’t wanna leave you here Pauley...mournin’ all alone like that.

PAULEY
No, I’m fine. Really. I appreciate it but...

NICKY
(Rising) Hey Pauley, tell ya what, let’s have a drink together. Just me and you, before we go out there. Whaddya say?

PAULEY
I don’t think so.

NICKY
(Still looking at the paper) C’mon. One drink. I love drinkin’ Tony’s booze.

PAULEY
Really, I just wanna...

NICKY
Get the bottle Pauley.

PAULEY gets the bottle and two glasses. NICKY reads as PAULEY pours. PAULEY hands him the glass. NICKY stops reading; takes the glass.

NICKY, Continued
(Raising the glass) Salud!

PAULEY
Salud!

To family.

They clink glasses and drink.
PAULEY
I know this ain’t none of my business, Nick, but don’t ya think ya oughta stop drinkin?

NICKY
You’re right. It ain’t none of your business. *(Drinks)* But thanks for your concern.

*NICKY returns to reading.*

PAULEY
*(Drinks)* Hey, whaddya know? I feel better. You go ahead. I’ll be right out. Mary’s gonna be worried...

NICKY
Oh my God, Pauley, listen to this... “Bank Robber Sentenced to Die in Electric Chair”

PAULEY
What..?

NICKY
Says here they convicted a guy of robbin’ a bank in Florida and sentenced him to the electric chair. They know how to do things down South, don’t they? That’s the thing to do, fry the stroonz.

PAULEY
For robbin’ a bank? Lemmee see that.

*PAULEY grabs for paper but NICKY pulls it away.*

NICKY
C’mon Pauley, you read all the time. Gimmee a chance. Lemmee see if I still can. *(Clears throat)* Listen to what this moron did...he hit a bank in his own neighborhood. His own neighborhood, can you believe it? I mean, how stupid can ya get, huh Pauley?

PAULEY
Well...

NICKY
...and then he hides the money...wait a second...you’re gonna love this...hides the money in his sister’s house. Brilliant. This guy’s a genius. Like nobody’s gonna find it.

PAULEY
Did anybody find it?

NICKY
*Mingya*, you ask me, they’re doin’ him a favor fryin’ him. Put him outta his misery. He’s gotta be pretty miserable bein’ that stupid.
PAULEY
Maybe he had a plan…

NICKY
A plan? Only plan he better have is makin’ peace with his maker.

PAULEY
They can’t do that though, can they? For robbin’ a bank, they can’t...

Why not? Jails are too crowded.

PAULEY
But that’s in Florida. They’d never do that here, not in Philly.

NICKY
Philly, Florida, what’s the difference? Gotta do somethin’ with the criminal element. You fry one, the rest’ll get the idea.

PAULEY
But you don’t really think... I mean for a bank robbery..?

*From OFFSTAGE, we hear JOEY*

JOEY
All right, Ma. I heard ya...yeah, yeah...the provolone *(Enters)* Jeez. *(To nobody in particular)* They’re really scarfin’ up out there. Must be afraid no one’s gonna die for awhile. *(To NICKY and PAULEY)* Whoa—lookit that. Frank and Jesse James.

*JOEY picks up a plate of cheese and starts to exit.*

NICKY
Hey wise guy...Gimmee some of that cheese.

*JOEY* *(Holding out plate)* Knock yourself out.

*NICKY takes some; JOEY exits.*

PAULEY
What’d that mean?

NICKY
What?
PAULEY
Frank and Jesse James. What’d that mean?

NICKY
(Shrugs, eats) You know, they gotta test it before they really get her juiced up.

PAULEY
Test it? Test what?

NICKY
The electric chair. I seen it on TV once...public television. You ever watch public television? It’s a great resource. See, they gotta make sure all the connections is right, so there’s no problems when it’s crunch time. They give you a little juice. Just enough to make you tingle. (He raises his hand and pretends to pull a lever.) Ffftttt!! Damn, this is good cheese, huh Pauley? C’mon. Mangia!

PAULEY
What? Oh...yeah...

NICKY
Then they jack it up a little to make sure the straps don’t pop off... You don’t want the straps poppin’ off in the middle of an electrocution, do you Pauley? Especially in front of the witnesses. (Pulls “lever” again) Ffftttt! (Eats) What’s the matter? Not hungry?

PAULEY
I lost my appetite.

NICKY
Figures...with the funeral and all. But more for me right? Then they have to get the witnesses. They leave the guy sittin’ there by himself. Whaddya think goes through the poor moron’s head while he’s waitin’ for the final jolt?

PAULEY
I...I don’t know. I don’t wanna hear no more.

NICKY
He probably thinks about all the stuff he done in his life. Like maybe how he screwed over his family or how he never shoulda robbed the bank. Think he regrets bein’ so damn stupid? (Points at some pepperoni on a plate by PAULEY) You gonna eat that?

PAULEY
No. G’head.

NICKY
Yeah, they know how to treat the criminal element in Florida. They really do. I hope they fry the guy that hit First Federal.
They won’t do that here. This is Philly. We’re the city of brotherly love. We’re very compassionate.

Not so compassionate no more. Everyone’s gettin’ tired of all this crime. Once one state starts fryin’ ‘em, others are gonna do the same. They’re settin’ a president, that’s what it is, a president.

President? The word is precedent...it’s precedent.

President, precedent, what the hell does it matter? Once they got you strapped in the chair, what the hell does it matter?

From OFFSTAGE, we hear TONY.

Look, just sit him down. He’ll be fine. (Enters quickly and grabs a wet dishtowel) Jeez.

What’s the matter?

What else? Goomba Jeech. Has a couple glasses of wine, wants to do the tarintella, grabs Mrs. Donatucci, who is not interested at all. Mrs. Donatucci... budda-bing... Mingya, what a punch that old broad’s got. (Sees PAULEY) Hey Pauley didn’t see you. You’re still alive.

TONY exits.

What’d that mean?

What?

‘You’re still alive.’ What’d that mean?

NICKY shrugs.

(Continued) (Rising) Maybe I better go out there.
NICKY
Now you’re sittin’ there, all alone... *(PAULEY sits)* ...the witnesses start filin’ in, real slow. They don’t look up, don’t make eye contact. It’s almost over...it’s just a matter of time Pauley, just a matter of time...you start gettin’ nervous...you look around...you start sweatin’...You’re so scared you can’t hardly breathe no more... You’re waitin’. You don’t know when it’s gonna come. It’s a lifetime for you. Then all of a sudden... *(Pulls “lever”)* Ffftt!! They jolt ya.

PAULEY
Nicky, c’mon. You’re makin’ me sick...

NICKY
The smoke starts curlin’ up from your ankles...smells like a barbecue. *(Holds up piece of pepperoni)* Pepperoni?

PAULEY
Get that outta here.

NICKY
Suit yourself. But sometimes, you don’t go out with the first one. Sometimes it takes another shot so they hit you again. Ffftt!! And again. Ffftt!!

PAULEY
Stop! Stop it! I can’t take it no more. I didn’t wanna do it. I had to. Nicky, you gotta believe me, I had to. I...I need your help. If they catch me...You gotta help me. You gotta. You’re my brother...flesh and blood...please...

NICKY
Oh! Fugedaboudit. Absolutely. But first I’m gonna help myself to your...what did you call it...your laundry?

PAULEY
But Nick...

NICKY
No buts here, Pauley. I’m takin’ my share of that money. The share I was supposed to get outta the will, you *stroonz*. After that I don’t give a damn what happens.

*NICKY goes to the pantry, walks back into the kitchen, hands up. DANNY is pointing a gun at him.*

DANNY
Where the hell is it?

NICKY
Where the hell is what?
Don’t play stupid with me.

PAULEY

What the hell? I tied you up!

DANNY

You tie a lousy knot, Boy Scout.

PAULEY

You said you didn’t have no more guns.

DANNY

I lied.

PAULEY

To me? You lied to me?

DANNY

Go figure, huh? Now. Pauley. Where’s the money?

PAULEY

That’s what I was tryin’ to tell him. I don’t know.

DANNY

I’m gettin’ real tired of this Pauley.

PAULEY

I’m tellin’ you it’s gone.

DANNY

I’ll shoot him, Pauley. I swear to God I will.

PAULEY

Go ahead.

NICKY

What?

PAULEY


DANNY

I ain’t foolin’ here, Pauley.

PAULEY

So whaddya waitin’ for?
Danny...

Pauley...

I can’t stand him anyway.

Nicky

You son of a...

Pauley

And I’m sure no one’s gonna hear the shots, right Danny, you imbecile? Oh...but of course, a genius like you, you probably got a silencer. You got a silencer, moron?

Danny

Stop callin’ me names, Pauley. (Points gun at Pauley) All right. Let’s go. Me and you. We’re gonna find that money.

Pauley

(Points gun at Danny) I don’t think so.

Nicky crawls under the table

Got a silencer, moron?

Pauley

Self-defense, you jerk.

Danny

You ain’t gonna shoot me.

Pauley

You sure? Put it down.

Danny

You put yours down first.

Pauley

Like hell.

Danny

Looks like we got a problem.

Pauley

Looks like it.
Don’t make me shoot you Pauley.

I’ll shoot you. I swear to God I will.

Don’t make me do this.

I’m warnin’ you.

Pauley...

This is it.

I’m through playin’ around.

DANNY

PAULEY

DANNY

PAULEY

DANNY

NICKY (Sticks head out)

Goddamn it! Would one of you idiots shoot?

PAULEY AND DANNY

Shut up!

NICKY crawls out from under the table as MARY walks in. PAULEY hides gun. DANNY lowers his. She walks up to NICKY and smacks him on the back of the head.

NICKY

Ow! What’s that for?

MARY

That’s for blabbin’ what my husband did in front of Joey. You think I don’t know what he did? (To PAULEY) And you, it’s about time you showed up.

PAULEY

I’m sorry I’m late. I had to, you know, compose myself.

MARY smacks PAULEY.

PAULEY

Jeez. What got into you?
MARY
Stealing all Pop’s money like that. How could you?

PAULEY
I’m gonna make it right. Believe me.

MARY
How, Pauley? How are you gonna make it right? Whaddya gonna do, rob a bank? (She laughs. After a second they laugh with her. She motions to DANNY.) Or is he here because you finally hit it big with the ponies? That’ll be the day. (Sees DANNY’s gun.) What, you playing cops and robbers now? Put that thing away before I smack you too. Go ahead. Do it. (DANNY puts gun away.) You guys all think you’re cowboys or something. (Pause) You get anything to eat?

ALL
No. Not yet.

MARY
You better get out there or there won’t be anything left.

NICKY
Pauley’s still too upset. I’m gonna stay in here with him. We’ll be right out.

MARY
(Taking out another tray of food from the refrigerator) Well you better eat something. Here. Sit down. (To DANNY) You too, come on. Mangia. This is all from Claudio’s. Best in the city. (They sit, begin to eat. She starts to exit.) I want you out there soon, cabish?

PAULEY
Hey Mary, you know that laundry I brought over?

MARY
Don’t start with the laundry Pauley. As soon as the dinner’s over, you can do your damn laundry. (As exits) Honestly, as if I don’t have enough to worry about.

DANNY
(To PAULEY) You brought your laundry over?

PAULEY
No. I told her it was my laundry. It’s the money. I put it in a garbage bag.

DANNY
So where the hell is it?

PAULEY
I don’t know. I hid it out there. I figured it’d be safe.
DANNY
What am I gonna tell Jimmy? *(To NICKY)* Lemmee have some bread sticks, would ya?
Thanks.

NICKY
*(To PAULEY)* You tellin’ me the money’s gone?

PAULEY
Yeah.

NICKY
And you have no idea where it is?

PAULEY
No. *(To NICKY)* Wine?

NICKY
Yeah. Somebody musta took it.

PAULEY
They always leave that back door unlocked. Somebody musta walked in, looked in that bag…

NICKY
Jeez, ya can’t trust no one these days. Hey Pauley, lemmee have some of them olives, would ya? *(To DANNY)* You should try these. These are the best.

DANNY
*(Tries one)* Man, these are great. What the hell could have happened to the money? You know, Jimmy’s comin’ over to pay his respects. He’s gonna want his money. If it’s not here...

PAULEY
*(Stands)* What am I gonna do?

NICKY
If you didn’t piss away all the money from the will...

PAULEY
What’d you want me to do, leave it for you, you lousy drunk? You never did nothin’ for Pop. You never did nothin’ for nobody.

NICKY
Who the hell gave you money whenever you asked for it?
PAULEY
But I always had to ask. How do you think that made me feel, havin’ to ask for money? I’m the older brother. I ain’t supposed to ask you for nothin’...

DANNY
Whoa! Whoa! You guys wanna continue this some other time? We gotta put our heads together and find that money.

PAULEY pauses. HE sniffs the air then opens the oven.

PAULEY
Hey, you guys want some cavatelli? *(He puts on an oven mitt, takes the food from the oven)*

Ya think?

NICKY
Sure. Mary made twelve pounds.

Mingya, that’s a lot.

DANNY
Yeah, but they don’t swell when ya cook ‘em.

How the hell you know that?

NICKY
You kiddin? Everyone knows that.

DANNY
*(Starts serving)* I’m tellin’ ya, Mary makes the best gravy.

NICKY
What do you do when your wife makes macaroni?

PAULEY
Whaddya kiddin’? I eat out.

DANNY
*(Eating)* Man, this come good. Lemmee have some of that bread, would ya?

NICKY
I don’t care what anyone says— Claudio’s, they got the best bread in the city.
DANNY
Whadda you people say?

ALL THREE
Fugeddaboudit!

NICKY
Now we gotta do this logical. First, who else knew about that money?

PAULEY
Nobody.

DANNY
Somebody musta known.

PAULEY
Nobody knew.

DANNY
Anyone else in the pantry today?

NICKY
Just Joey.

PAULEY
That little...

NICKY
No way he’d steal it. I mean, he’s family. He wouldn’t...

*JOEY enters. They stop and look at him.*

JOEY
What?

NICKY
*(Gets up) Joey, siddown. Let’s have a little talk.*

JOEY
Don’t touch me.

DANNY
Siddown kid.

*Danny takes gun out and puts it on the table.*

PAULEY takes out his gun.
Put it away, Danny.

PAULEY

You put yours away first.

DANNY

Looks like we got a problem.

PAULEY

Looks like it.

DANNY

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

Continue to next page for Production Notes with translations of Italian slang words appearing in the script
PRODUCTION NOTES

The scene changes between kitchens can be very simply done by just changing the tablecloth—something like a red checkered one for Mary & Tony’s kitchen and green checkered for Pauley & Annie’s.

‘Merigan  American
Mingya  An exclamation, akin to “damn”
Desgraziade  Ungrateful
Gots  Balls
Cabish  Understand
Ooli  Said when a person really wants something
Stroonz  Literally, calling a person a shit.
Gooboyka  Nothing
Jooch  Idiot
Que se dice?  What do you say? Kind of like, “what’s happening?”
Pots  Pazzo, crazy
Putan  Whore
Fanabala  Literally, “Go to Naples” but used to mean, “Go to hell.”
Gabba dost  Thick-headed
Pompanara  Cock-sucker
Mangia  Eat
Managia  Damn