

500 bucks and a pack of smokes

How much is your life worth?

A Comedy in One Act by James Hutchison

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500 bucks and a pack of smokes – How much is your life worth?
A Play in One Act by James Hutchison

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What the Dickens!

Even Scrooge Got a Second Chance

Two Act Comedy, 6M 3F, Multiple Sets, 100 minutes

Marty Fisher has doubts and fears about getting married and staying in Pine Ridge with his fiancée Tami Cooper and so he's been focusing on directing the Pine Tree Players Production of *A Christmas Carol* instead of helping his fiancée plan their wedding. On opening night when his Uncle, who's playing Scrooge, turns up drunk, half the cast gets food poisoning, and Marty gets caught kissing his stage manager Samantha both the production and Marty's relationship with Tami are on thin ice. As the curtain rises and the show lurches forward Marty will do all he can to save his show while trying to salvage his relationship with Tami.

A Christmas Carol

Every Man Has the Power to do Good

Two Act Drama, 26M 12F, 11Boys 7Girls, 56 Characters, Multiple Sets, 100 minutes

Actors may certainly play more than one character and the genders of some characters may certainly be switched to suit casting requirements.

In this fresh, fun and lively adaptation of A Christmas Carol you'll meet Mr. Bentley, learn about the letters Scrooge wrote to his sister Fan, and find out who Mr. Newbury is. You'll still find all the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future along with Tiny Tim, Bob Cratchit, the Ghost of Jacob Marley, Old Fezziwig, Scrooge's nephew Fred, and the love of Scrooge's life, Belle. There are some new scary bits, a few good laughs, a tender moment or two, and some surprises! It's a fresh take on an old tale sure to thrill young and old alike.

Death and the Psychiatrist

Even Death Could Use a Friend

One Act Comedy, 2M 1F, Single Set, 45 minutes

When Mortimer Graves shows up at Psychiatrist Dr. Donna Thompson's office claiming to be the Grim Reaper the good Doctor simply assumes that Mortimer is under the delusion that he is death. Although Mortimer says he is there to escort Dr. Thompson to the other side, Dr. Thompson convinces Mortimer that he should go into therapy in order to help him deal with his loneliness and emotional issues. With the Doctor's help Mortimer confronts his emotional issues and Doctor Thompson, with Mortimer's help, reevaluates her life priorities.

500 bucks and a pack of smokes

CAST of CHARACTERS

Donny Bracco	A Teacher
Vinnie Torelli	A Hitman
Sophia Falco	A Widow
Sid Valencia	A Butcher
Carmen Valencia	A Sister
Detective Murphy	A Cop
Detective Powell	A Cop
Stubby	A Hobo

Vinnie, Sid, Detective Murphy, and Stubby can all be played by the same actor.
Sophia, Carmen, and Detective Powell can all be played by the same actor.

SETTING

Stromboli's Italian Restaurant
The Sausage King
Donny's Apartment

TIME

Donny's 30th birthday

STORY OF THE PLAY

After being told by his doctor that he's dying Donny Bracco put out a contract out on his own life. So, when his Doctor calls him on his birthday and tells him the lab made a mistake, Donny is more than a little upset. Making matters worse, the original killer Donny hired, subcontracted the hit to another killer – who subcontracted it to another killer – who subcontracted it to another killer – who doesn't know Donny is the one who put the hit out on himself. With time running out, Donny has to find the killer and convince him to call off the hit, otherwise this might be the last birthday he ever celebrates.

For Nicole

500 bucks and a pack of smokes

SCENE i: STROMBOLI'S

Setting: *Stromboli's is an old fashioned Italian Family Restaurant.*

At Rise: *VINNIE is listening to DONNY who is nervous and jumpy.*

VINNIE

Sure, sure, sure – not a problem Donny. You have every right to change your mind.

DONNY

I don't want the money back you understand. You can keep it. All fifty grand – that's yours.

VINNIE

Money's already spent Donny. I couldn't give it back if I wanted to – and I don't want to.

VINNIE laughs.

DONNY

Things have changed you see.

VINNIE

I can see that. You seem happy.

DONNY

Life is good.

VINNIE

Someone special in your life?

DONNY

Yeah, maybe.

VINNIE

Is it love?

DONNY

I don't know.

VINNIE

You don't know. How can you not know? Love is everything. You want some wine.

SOPHIA enters carrying a bottle of red wine.

DONNY

No that's okay. I really should be going.

VINNIE

Come on stay; have a drink.

DONNY

Today's my birthday...

SOPHIA pours wine into the glasses.

VINNIE

Your birthday! Happy Birthday Donny.

DONNY

Thanks Vinnie.

VINNIE

You have to have a glass of wine. This is the day of your birth – that's a special day – right Sophia.

SOPHIA

Everybody should celebrate their birthday.

VINNIE

See you have to have some wine.

DONNY

Okay, I'll have some wine.

VINNIE

And you shouldn't drink on an empty stomach. You'll have something to eat as well.

DONNY

Aren't you guys closed?

SOPHIA

To the public we're closed til dinner, but for Vinnie we're always open. Right, Vinnie.

VINNIE

This is my home away from home. I love it here. Come on have something to eat.

DONNY

No, that's okay. I'm still feeling a little – you know – well what if I hadn't been able to find you – then what?

VINNIE

But you did find me. Come on Donny, you have to live a little. You can't come to Stromboli's and not eat. You've had some very good news. Life changing news. So don't crawl back into the life you had – make a new life for yourself. Do what you want. You like Linguini?

DONNY

Sure.

VINNIE

You have to try the Linguini Scoglio – it's to die for – right Sophia.

SOFIA

Fresh clams, calamari, baby shrimp and prawns in a garlic and herb tomato sauce, mmmm!

DONNY

Sofia's Uncle Lou runs the place. He makes everything from scratch, isn't that right Sofia.

SOFIA

Everything you eat, we make fresh – right here in the restaurant. The sauces, the pasta, and the seafood flown in fresh this morning – nothing frozen – nothing out of a can here.

VINNIE

Have the Linguini – my treat. Let's celebrate.

DONNY

Okay, you convinced me, why not.

VINNIE

Why not indeed. Donny just got a new lease on life – didn't ya Donny.

SOPHIA

Congratulations Donny.

DONNY

Thanks.

SOFIA leaves.

VINNIE raises his glass

VINNIE

To life – and all that it offers.

DONNY raises his glass and they toast.

DONNY

To life.

VINNIE and DONNY drink.

VINNIE

You like the wine?

DONNY

It's very good.

VINNIE

Wait until you try the pasta – you'll think you've died and gone to heaven.

DONNY

So, I just want to make sure we understand each other. The contract is cancelled right.

VINNIE

Oh sure, sure, sure. This happens all the time. You know how many husbands and wives put out a contract on their spouse – how many kids come in here wanting to knock off their parents and then they come back the next day and cancel. One in three.

DONNY

That many.

VINNIE

People get angry. They fight. They get mad. They might say they want their husband or wife dead, but when it comes right down to it, they don't want to kill them. They're hurt – upset – people get emotional – it clouds their judgement. I never get emotionally involved. It's business. That's all. That's why I have a 48 hour cancellation policy with a full refund minus a restocking fee.

DONNY

You charge a restocking fee.

VINNIE

Well, my accountant pointed out that even a plumber charges a service fee. It's only sixty-five bucks. I'm not going to rip people off and charge them four hundred bucks like those damn lawyers do. If you ask me, the real crooks in this world are the lawyers and the bankers and the stock brokers. Those guys are smooth operators – us folks who make an honest living in crime are nothing compared to the crooks on Wall Street. Those are the real crooks in the world Donny. And those crooks keep me pretty busy, I gotta-tell-ya.

DONNY

Keep you busy, how?

VINNIE

Ah, in the old days I'd be bumping off other guys like me, you know. But now I'm knocking off executives and company rivals left right and centre. Boom! Boom! Boom!

DONNY

People take out contracts on executives and other business people.

VINNIE

Oh sure, sure, sure. Happens all the time. You know some ambitious vice president of international sales gets tired of waiting for the head honcho to drop dead so he calls me and I make it happen. It's just corporate downsizing.

DONNY

I had no idea.

VINNIE

The trick is you have to make it look like an accident. And these rich guys – boy oh boy – do they make it easy; a skiing accident in the Swiss Alps; a helicopter crash in Belize; a snorkeling mishap off the Great Barrier Reef. You just have to know what you're doing. But sometimes you get the workaholics – the ones who spend all their time at the office – from sunrise to sunset – do those guys even enjoy life, I wonder. Anyway, when you get somebody like that you gotta make it look like natural causes you know. A heart attack, or a slip and fall in the bathroom. In the old days, when I was killing guys like me, I could get away with an ice pick to the back of the head. But with these corporate guys, the last thing you want is the cops sticking their noses in where they don't belong. Now days, I mostly use poison.

DONNY

Poison. Um, was that how you were goin'ta – kill me?

VINNIE

For fifty grand Donny I'm not going arrange a helicopter explosion over the Pacific Ocean. If I was going to kill you – not that I am – but if I was, mind you – I'd use poison. It's fast – painless – and almost undetectable. One second you're having a nice glass of wine and enjoying life – and the next second you're lying on the floor dead – eyes staring at the ceiling. Donny don't worry, your wine isn't poisoned. Drink up. Enjoy. Life is good. *(Beat)* There's just one little problem.

DONNY

A little problem?

VINNIE

It's not a big problem you understand. So, I don't want you to get worried or nothin'.

What's the problem?
DONNY

I subcontracted your hit to another guy.
VINNIE

What!
DONNY

I said, I subcontracted your hit to another guy.
VINNIE

Why would you do that?
DONNY

Oh, we do it all the time.
VINNIE

Who did you hire?
DONNY

The Butcher.
VINNIE

The Butcher!
DONNY

Yeah in the business he's known as the Butcher. He's very good. Very professional. I wouldn't subcontract your killing to some low life on the street. That wouldn't be right.
VINNIE

You have to call him.
DONNY

Sure, sure, sure.
VINNIE

Now Vinnie.
DONNY

Relax. He's not supposed to kill you until tomorrow right? We got plenty of time.
VINNIE

DONNY

Why do they call him the Butcher?

VINNIE

His family owns a butcher shop. The Sausage King over on Kensington.

DONNY

Oh, I thought it had something to do with how he kills people.

VINNIE

It does – I mean the guy is pretty skilled with a knife. He usually cuts people's throats. It's fast. You bleed out in seconds. Messy though. Lots to clean up afterwards. You sure you're okay Donny?

DONNY downs his glass of wine and pours himself another.

DONNY

No.

VINNIE

That's why I like poison. Clean. Simple. Nothing to clean up.

DONNY

Can you please – please – please call this guy and let him know the hit is off.

VINNIE

Sure, sure, sure. I'll call him right now.

VINNIE gets out his cell phone – he dials. It rings. No answer. DONNY continues to drink his wine.

VINNIE

Hey Sid, it's Vinnie. Give me a call would ya; I need to talk business. Hey you owe me fifty bucks. The Knicks won on Sunday. *(To Donny)* There I left a message. You happy?

DONNY

What if he doesn't get the message?

VINNIE

Don't worry, he'll get the message and he'll call. Sid's very reliable. Sometimes we work together or we cover each other. I broke my leg last January when I was on a skiing holiday and I was out of commission for two months. Two months! While I was laid up Sid took care of a big contract I had out on the coast. Very big. Had to be done so there was no way anybody suspected murder. Sid's good. He made it look like an accident. This guy, was head of a big construction company. Construction sites are great places for accidents. You get somebody up on top of one of those towers they're building – thirty –

forty stories in the sky and you toss him off the top – and he hits the pavement like a melon. Splat – done.

DONNY

Splat.

Beat

VINNIE

Like a melon.

DONNY

Like a melon.

VINNIE

Nobody walks away from that. You doing okay – you don't look so good.

DONNY

I'm not feeling so good.

SOPHIA enters carrying the pasta and puts it on the table.

SOPHIA

Cannelloni for Vinnie and Linguini for Donny. Donny! You okay. You don't look so good.

VINNIE

He just needs to eat something. Get something in his stomach. Come on Donny, eat up.

SOPHIA

You'll feel better.

DONNY takes a small bite of the pasta.

VINNIE

Did you even taste that?

VINNIE scoops up some pasta on the DONNY's fork and shoves it into DONNY's mouth.

VINNIE

Open up. That's better. Come on chew and swallow.

VINNIE grabs one of the prawns.

VINNIE puts the bottle on the table and reaches into his inside jacket pocket and pulls out an envelope filled with money.

VINNIE

Thanks Sophia. Tony wants to make a move against the Spaniard. He says if we don't do something first he's going to come after us.

SOPHIA

I thought the Spaniard was our friend.

DONNY comes back to the table.

VINNIE

So, did I. Hey, hey, hey, here's our birthday boy. How you feeling, better?

SOPHIA

I know how to make you feel better Donny.

SOPHIA gives DONNY a big kiss.

SOPHIA

Happy birthday!

DONNY

Thanks.

VINNIE

Watch yourself Sophia. This Donny boy is quite the one with the ladies.

SOPHIA

Is that true Donny.

DONNY

Not really.

VINNIE

Sophia's a widow Donny.

DONNY

Oh, I'm sorry.

SOPHIA

Don't be. He was a lazy, fat, bum who never did anything. Twelve years we were married. God rest his soul, but that man sure knew how to make me miserable. The day he died, I could breathe again.

VINNIE

You should ask her out.

DONNY

Ask her out?

SOPHIA

Oh Vinnie, don't embarrass the boy.

VINNIE

How am I embarrassing him? You're a widow; he's a man; you should go out. You two might hit it off.

SOPHIA

Donny you're a handsome man and if you were to ask me out I'd go. But I don't want you to ask me out just because Vinnie here thinks you should. You think about it, and if you're interested, give me a call. You can always reach me here at the restaurant. Or, you can give me a call on my cell.

SOPHIA takes her pen out and writes her number on DONNY's palm.

SOPHIA

Okay?

DONNY

Uh, okay.

SOPHIA

Happy birthday Donny.

SOPHIA kisses DONNY on the cheek and leaves.

VINNIE

She likes you Donny.

DONNY

Well I'm kind-a seeing someone. I told you that.

VINNIE

It never hurts to window shop you know. You don't have to buy, but I don't want you to settle on this other girl without having a look around. Maybe you only think you're in love with this girl because you thought you was dying.

DONNY

Alice and I have talked about getting married.

VINNIE

Yeah, well you ain't married yet. Come on eat up. You'll feel better.

DONNY takes a bite of his pasta as VINNIE digs into his cantaloni.

VINNIE

That's better. Salute!

DONNY and VINNIE toast and drink.

DONNY

Has the Butcher called back yet?

VINNIE

Give him a chance, I only called him ten minutes ago.

DONNY

Will you call him back if he doesn't call.

VINNIE

I'll do better than that. I'll go see him. I want to pick up some steaks and get a couple pounds of sausage, maybe some ribs. You should come. I'll introduce ya.

DONNY

Yes, please – that would be good. Then I'll know for sure, right?

VINNIE

Absolutely, you got nothing to worry about. Everything will turn out fine.

DONNY

Thanks Vinnie.

DONNY takes another bite of his pasta.

DONNY

So, what happened to uh – Sophia's husband.

VINNIE

So you are interested.

DONNY

No. Just asking.

VINNIE

Heart attack. Very sudden. Very unexpected.

VINNIE's phone rings.

DONNY

Is that the guy?

VINNIE

Uh, no. Sorry Donny. Listen I have to take this. You eat up, uh. We'll have spumoni for dessert.

VINNIE exits while talking on his cell phone.

VINNIE

Hey how you doing Mr. Rogers. Sure, sure, sure things are great. I guarantee I'll take care of that little problem of yours by the end of the week. You have my word on it. Sure, sure, sure...

DONNY takes a bite of his Linguini and swallows. He takes the parmesan cheese shaker and adds some to his dish. He takes another bite and chews. He looks at the other spices on the table and picks up one and smells it and puts it back. Then he picks up the bottle of poison and opens it. He smells it and then sprinkles a generous amount onto his pasta. He puts the cap back on the bottle and sets it back in place. He starts to mix the poison into his linguini as VINNIE comes back in.

VINNIE

Sorry about that. Business. How you enjoying your meal?

DONNY

My stomach is a little off. You know I'd feel a whole lot better if you tried calling the Butcher again.

VINNIE

You should eat up. You don't want it to get cold.

DONNY

Can we just try giving the Butcher another call.

VINNIE digs into his cannelloni.

VINNIE

You worry too much. You'll put yourself in an early grave. Relax.

DONNY

Or, I could give him a call.

VINNIE

You could, but he don't know you. It would be best if I'm the one that tells him the hit is off.

DONNY

Oh God.

VINNIE

You got nothing to worry about.

DONNY pushes the linguini away from him.

DONNY

I can't eat this.

VINNIE

You can't let it go to waste. Come on eat up.

VINNIE grabs DONNY's fork and puts pasta on it and holds it for DONNY. DONNY takes the fork.

DONNY

I can't. I'm just too worried.

VINNIE

Look, I already told you you've got nothing to worry about. After lunch, you and I will head down to the Sausage King – we'll see Sid – and sort everything out. Come on; it's good.

VINNIE takes some of the Linguini on his fork and eats it.

VINNIE

Mmmmmm. Eat up would ya. You don't want to insult Sophia and her Uncle do ya.

DONNY

No.

VINNIE

That-a-boy. Now no more talk about death okay. Let's talk about life! This girl you're so sweet on – what's she do?

DONNY

Oh, she's a teacher like me.

VINNIE

She a good cook?

DONNY

We eat out a lot.

VINNIE

Well she must be dynamite in the bedroom, uh?

DONNY

Oh, yeah she's uh. Well you know. We really don't – at least not that much.

VINNIE

Donny – if this girl doesn't turn your crank – if you don't dream of her – desire her – long for the taste of her lips – then she's not the one for you. Love is all there is in life. Love. Find the girl you can't stop thinking about and go after her. This girl you're with – she doesn't sound like the one to me. You can do better. Salute.

DONNY and VINNIE toast each other. DONNY drinks the wine.

VINNIE

Now eat up.

DONNY picks up his fork and is about to eat when VINNIE grabs his chest and collapses dead on the table.

DONNY

Oh my God. Vinnie! Vinnie! Sophia! Sophia!

SOPHIA runs in.

SOPHIA

Oh my God, what is it.

DONNY

I don't know. We were just having lunch and then this.

SOPHIA crosses herself.

SOPHIA

Oh my God! Vinnie don't die.

DONNY

This is horrible. Oh my God!

SOPHIA

Call 911.

DONNY

Right. Right.

DONNY grabs his cell phone and dials 911.

DONNY

Hello police this is an emergency.

End Scene

Scene ii: STROMBOLI's TWO HOURS LATER

At Rise: VINNIE's body has been removed. DONNY is sitting at the table with SOPHIA.

SOPHIA

You okay Donny?

DONNY

Not really. I've never seen anyone die before.

SOPHIA

It can be a very traumatic experience. I understand how you feel.

DONNY

One second he's sitting here and we're sharing a meal the next second...

SOPHIA

...he's gone. It happens. It happens to all of us one way or another. Vinnie he went fast. Heart attack – I've seen it before. I guess if you're going to die it's better to go fast, hey.

DONNY

The faster the better in my opinion.

SOPHIA

Vinnie was a good friend. I'm going to miss him. Didn't know he had any heart trouble though. Shame. Your health is important – right – you gotta look after yourself.

DONNY

Absolutely. If you don't have your health you got nothing.

DETECTIVE MURPHY enters and listens in.

SOPHIA

And being healthy means eating right. Here I want you to take this. You can warm it up when you get home.

DONNY

What is it?

SOPHIA

It's your linguini – you hardly touched it.

DONNY

I don't know.

SOPHIA

You don't like it.

DONNY

No, I like it – I just don't know if I'll be hungry later.

SOPHIA

Trust me, you'll be hungry. Men are always hungry.

DONNY

Thanks.

SOPHIA

And I put some cannoli in there for you as well. Okay?

DONNY

I love cannoli.

SOPHIA

Made fresh today.

MURPHY

Hey Sophia, how about some cannoli for me?

SOPHIA

Gee sorry Detective Murphy, we're all out – wouldn't ya know.

MURPHY

Is that right?

SOPHIA

You want something sweet you can go to a donut shop. You need anything more from me?

MURPHY

No, you can go. I've got your statement.

SOPHIA

I know what you guys are up to. You're just using Vinnie's death so you can go poking around here asking your dumb ass questions and causing trouble. Well there ain't nothing going on here – you hear me? I don't know how many times I gotta tell you that. This is a nice family restaurant – it ain't no mob hangout. Vinnie was a good customer and a friend, that's all. You should have some respect – you hear me.

MURPHY

I hear ya. This is a nice family restaurant. Well then, you got nothing to hide, do ya.

Can I go? SOPHIA

Sure you can go – just don't go too far. MURPHY

You call me Donny, if you need anything. SOPHIA

I will. DONNY

I mean it. SOPHIA

I know. DONNY

SOPHIA exits.

Listen, Detective Murphy how much longer is this going to take? DONNY

You gotta be someplace? MURPHY

Yeah, my mother's in the hospital. She's getting a kidney transplant and I'm the donor. DONNY

You seem pretty nervous Mr. Bracco. MURPHY

I'm not nervous. I'm upset. Wouldn't you be if you were having lunch with a friend and he suddenly drops dead? DONNY

Depends on the friend. MURPHY

Um look, you've got my number – I've told you everything I know – can't I just go? DONNY

MURPHY

I'm just trying to figure out why a high school teacher, like you, is having lunch with a known underworld figure – like Vinnie Torrelli.

DONNY

His son goes to my school.

MURPHY

Oh. So this is a parent teacher interview?

DONNY

He likes to know how his kid is doing, that's all.

MURPHY

And how is his kid doing?

DONNY

Great. Absolutely great. Got an A in Algebra this term.

MURPHY

Vinnie doesn't have any kids.

DONNY

No?

MURPHY

No. Not any he's willing to admit to.

DONNY

Uh, well...

MURPHY

Why you lying to me Mr. Bracco?

DONNY

Listen I have to get out of here. I have to get to the Sausage King before it closes.

MURPHY

Do ya?

DONNY

Yes. And it's a matter of life and death.

MURPHY

Is that right.

DONNY

Yes, my life.

MURPHY

Well if you start answering my questions, maybe we can work out some kind-a-deal. What were you doing having lunch with Vinnie Torrelli?

DONNY

Okay, listen – we were discussing business.

MURPHY

That's better. What kind of business were you two discussing?

DONNY

It was of a personal nature.

MURPHY

Who are you working for Mr. Bracco? The Spaniard?

DONNY

I'm not working for anybody. I don't even know who the Spaniard is.

MURPHY

Well if you are working for the Spaniard, I gotta tell ya, it takes guts to take on the Garbonzo family.

DONNY

Listen, I'm not taking on the Garbonzo family. I thought I was dying. You understand. I went to the Doctor – I've been tired – run down – not feeling great – and they ran some tests – and when they got the test results back they told me I was dying. That's what this whole thing is about, okay – I thought I was gonna die.

MURPHY

I sympathize with ya Mr. Bracco, but we're all dying. I'm dying; you're dying; you just know when, that's all. Who says I'm going to be here tomorrow, uh? Nobody knows how long they have.

DONNY

Well it turns out I have longer than I thought.

MURPHY

Do ya? Lucky you.

DONNY

Listen Officer Murphy, I have to get out of here.

MURPHY

You think this is the life I wanted – not even close. But hey, you have to find something to do – so I figured why not be a policeman – contribute to the betterment of mankind – the only thing is – I don't think too much of mankind after twenty-seven years on the force. I mean I know there are good people out there, but I'm not usually dealing with the good people. So you'll excuse me if I'm a little suspicious of your story.

DONNY

I'm telling you the truth. I went to the doctor and they ran some tests and when the results came back it wasn't good, okay. It was bad. Very bad. Said I'd be dead within the year. So, I hired Vinnie because I didn't want to end my life stuck in a hospice wasting away. I wanted to go quick and sudden.

MURPHY

Just like Vinnie did.

DONNY

Yes. I swear to God, I'm telling you the truth. Why would I lie?

MURPHY

Just because I don't know why – doesn't mean you aren't. Maybe this is all part of the act. A bit of camouflage to hide your true intentions. How do I know you didn't kill Vinnie?

DONNY

Kill Vinnie! I'm not a killer. I could never kill anyone.

MURPHY

So you say.

DONNY

Do I look like a killer?

MURPHY

What does a killer look like Mr. Bracco?

DONNY

I don't know, but he sure as hell doesn't look like me.

MURPHY

You know you could have just committed suicide. Probably would have been a lot cheaper.

DONNY

I couldn't do that. I knew when the time came I wouldn't go through with it and by the time I decided I really wanted to do it I'd be too weak to do anything about it. I wanted a natural death – you know.

MURPHY

You call a bullet to the back of the head natural.

DONNY

All I asked was that it be quick and painless. Like getting hit by a bus or having a piano drop on you.

MURPHY

Seems like a waste of a piano.

DONNY

Listen, do you think you could put me under some sort of police protection?

MURPHY

Protection from what?

DONNY

I told you, there's a contract out on my life.

MURPHY

A contract you arranged.

DONNY

Yes.

MURPHY

So, what's the problem I thought you wanted to die.

DONNY

That's before I found out there was a mix up at the lab. I never was dying.

MURPHY

You should-a-got a second opinion.

DONNY

I know that now.

MURPHY

So that's why you were here talking to Vinnie. You were calling off the hit.

DONNY

Yes. But he dropped dead. We didn't even get to dessert.

MURPHY

If he's dead he can't kill ya.

DONNY

The problem is he subcontracted my hit to the Butcher and before we could let the Butcher know the hit is cancelled –Vinnie died.

MURPHY

The Butcher, eh?

DONNY

You know him?

MURPHY

Oh yeah, I've been after the Butcher for a long time.

DONNY

Can you arrest him?

MURPHY

On what charge?

DONNY

Conspiracy to commit murder.

MURPHY

I have to have some evidence before I can charge him with anything. Do you have any evidence?

DONNY

Well, no.

MURPHY

Well then, there's not a lot I can for ya. Unless...

DONNY

Unless what?

MURPHY

Unless you were to wear a wire. You know go undercover. Get me something I can use.

DONNY

Oh that's a bad idea. I don't think that would work at all.

Pause

MURPHY

Alright then, you're free to go.

DONNY

I can go?

MURPHY

Yeah, but you better hurry the Sausage King closes early on Fridays.

DONNY

You're not going to do anything to help me?

MURPHY

Well of course I'll fill out a report and if you turn up dead we'll do all we can to find your killer and bring him to justice.

DONNY

I know who my killer is – it's the Butcher.

MURPHY

I'll put it all in the report. Good luck Mr. Bracco.

DONNY

That's it? That's all you're going to do? Fill out a report.

MURPHY

Filling out reports is what we in the force spend most of our time doing.

DONNY

Listen, not that I'm saying I'll do it, but what would be involved with me wearing a wire?

MURPHY

Things are very sophisticated now days. You see this watch? It contains a high definition camera with surround sound. You could shoot Star Wars with this thing.

DONNY

I wouldn't know what to say?

MURPHY

Don't worry, I'll tell you what to say.

DONNY

I don't know.

MURPHY

Listen, you just go in and tell him that you're the guy who put the hit out on Donny Bracco.

DONNY

But I am the guy.

MURPHY

I know that, but what we gotta do is get the Butcher to admit that Vinnie subcontracted the hit to him – and that way we can get him on conspiracy to commit murder. With your testimony and the evidence you get with the wire we'll be able to put him away for two or three years – if he cuts a deal.

DONNY

That's it? Two or three years.

MURPHY

Hey, it's not like he's selling dope you know. If you were to plant a joint on him then we're talking serious time.

DONNY

That's crazy.

MURPHY

Yeah you're right, we shouldn't be planting evidence.

DONNY

I can't believe someone would go to jail longer for possession of pot than they would for conspiring to commit murder.

MURPHY

Crazy world huh – the whole legal system has been turned into a business. You build prisons – you gotta fill them. It's got nothing to do with the law it's all about balance sheets and turning a profit. But every so often you get a chance to do the right thing – like putting the Butcher behind bars – even if it's only for a couple-a-years.

DONNY

I...I don't know.

MURPHY

What other choice have you got. You want to face this guy alone or do you want to wear a wire and live to see another day.

Can I have a gun?
DONNY

You're not getting a gun.
MURPHY

I'd feel better if I had a gun.
DONNY

Do you even know how to use a gun.
MURPHY

What's to know – you aim – you shoot – you kill the bad guy.
DONNY

Maybe you kill the bad guy in the movies, but in real life, it's not so easy.
MURPHY

What if something goes wrong?
DONNY

Nothing will go wrong. Come on Donny, you're running out of time. What other choice have you got?
MURPHY

Alright, alright, I'll do it – this is crazy but I will do it.
DONNY

Okay, let's get you set up.
MURPHY

DONNY and MURPHY start to head out.

You know – you've restored my faith in humanity. Restored my faith. Hey don't forget your cannoli and your linguini.
MURPHY

I don't think I want it – I don't think my stomach could handle it.
DONNY

No? Do you mind?
MURPHY

DONNY

No, you go ahead. No point in letting it go to waste.

MURPHY grabs the linguini and cannoli.

MURPHY

Thanks Donny. Now listen, we're going to keep recording and getting as much evidence as we can, but if you feel like things are going a little sideways and you're in danger I want you to say, "Boy, that Ricky Martin is sure one hot Latino!" and we'll come bursting in.

DONNY

Can't I say something else. I feel kind-a stupid saying, Boy that Ricky Martin is sure one hot Latino.

MURPHY

Trust me, something goofy like that – you'll remember.

End Scene

SCENE iii: THE SAUSAGE KING

Setting: This is a typical Butcher shop with display cabinets and an entrance leading into the back where most of the meat is stored and prepared.

At Rise: CARMEN, an attractive blond – short, compact, and strong has several boxes of sausages stacked on a dolly.

CARMEN

Hey Sid, get out here and give me a hand would ya.

SID(Off)

In a minute. I'm just finishing up a job.

SFX of MEAT CUTTING SAW in the BACK

CARMEN

Hurry up I want to gets these delivered and get home. I gotta big date tonight with Angelo.

SID (Off)

Yeah, yeah, I'll be out in a minute.

DONNY enters.

DONNY

Hello.

CARMEN

Hi there, can I help ya?

DONNY

Yeah, um, uh, I'm here to see Sid.

CARMEN

Hey Sid, there's somebody here to see ya.

SID (Off)

I told ya – I was busy!

SFX OF MEAT CUTTING SAW IN THE BACK

CARMEN

He's busy. Is there something I can do for ya?

DONNY

Uh no, that's okay I'll wait.

CARMEN

You want some veal. We have some very nice veal.

DONNY

No, thanks.

CARMEN

Sausages? We got some spicy Italian sausage – best in the city. Hand made. It's what we're known for. We are the Sausage Kings.

DONNY

I'm just here to see Sid.

CARMEN

What about some ribs?

DONNY

No, thanks.

CARMEN

Very tender. Very juicy. Great for barbecuing. You barbecue?

DONNY

Not really?

CARMEN

What's the matter with you – what man doesn't like to barbecue?

DONNY

I didn't say I don't like to barbecue; I just don't do it much, that's all.

CARMEN

We all have busy lives. That's the shame of it. All this technology and instead of giving us more time to enjoy life all it does is steal our lives away.

DONNY

Ain't that the truth.

CARMEN

That's why I got rid of my cell phone.

DONNY

Don't you feel safer having a phone.

CARMEN

Naw, I got something better.

CARMEN shows DONNY her gun.

CARMEN

Anybody messes with me or my family and I blow his balls off – you hear me.

DONNY

I hear ya. I'll keep that in mind. Ha ha ha.

SID enters rolling out another stack of boxes marked sausages on a dolly.

SID

You looking for me.

DONNY

If you're the Butcher I am. Um, I'm friends with Vinnie Torelli. Donny Bracco.

SID

A friend of Vinnie's, hey?

DONNY

Yeah.

CARMEN

Is that right?

DONNY

Yeah.

SID and CARMEN give each other a meaningful glance.

SID

Well any friend of Vinnie's is a friend of ours. This is my sister Carmen

CARMEN

Hey!

SID

Watch out for her, she's a pistol

So, I've seen.

DONNY

And I'm Sid Valencia.

SID

Nice to meet you.

DONNY

How is Vinnie?

SID

He's feeling a little under the weather, if you must know, that's why he sent me.

DONNY

Did he?

SID

Yeah, he had some business he wanted to discuss but he couldn't make it. He left you a message.

DONNY

Oh yeah, I got his message. I called back a couple of times but all I got was his voice mail.

SID

Lunch didn't agree with him.

DONNY

No?

SID

No.

DONNY

You know Vinnie loved to barbecue. Isn't that right Sid.

CARMEN

Oh yeah, no man more so. The guy was crazy about barbecuing.

SID

Crazy! Crazy! Crazy! Especially about ribs.

CARMEN

Loved his ribs.

SID

CARMEN
Crazy about ribs!

DONNY
Don't I know it.

SID
You ever go to his place up at Pine Lake?

DONNY
Oh sure all the time. In fact, we're heading up there this weekend.

CARMEN
Are you now. Maybe we'll drop by.

CARMEN locks the door.

DONNY
Sure, why not. The more the merrier. Why you locking the door?

CARMEN
It's closing time. Why, you got a problem with that?

DONNY
Uh, no. I just don't want to keep you guys late. That's all – you know.

CARMEN
Don't worry about it.

DONNY
Do I look worried?

CARMEN
Yeah, you do.

DONNY
Well, there's so many things to worry about you know; Global warming, the situation in the Ukraine, will Selena Gomez and Justin Bieber get back together...ha, ha, ha.

SID
You know what the secret is?

DONNY
No.

SID

You use coals. Not gas. Not propane.

DONNY

Sorry?

CARMEN

The gas dries em out.

DONNY

Dries what out.

CARMEN closes the blinds on the front windows.

CARMEN

The ribs. Aren't you listening?

DONNY

Oh. Yeah sure. The ribs.

SID

You use coals and lots of sauce.

CARMEN

You start early in the morning and let them cook real slow – on a low heat – all day.

SID

And every half hour you load on the sauce. You can't let them dry out.

CARMEN

You have to keep them hot and moist.

DONNY

Just the way I like em.

SID

So, what can I do for you Donny?

DONNY holds his watch hand up and towards SID as he talks.

DONNY

Well...I thought maybe you could um...you see there was this...thing

SID

Something wrong with your arm.

DONNY

Uh, no just stretching...

DONNY lowers his arm but raises it again as he talks.

DONNY

Anyway...you see there was this thing that Vinnie was supposed to do – only he didn't do it – and he asked you to do it for him but it doesn't need to be done anymore.

SID

Okay, thanks for delivering the message.

SID looks at DONNY's arm. DONNY lowers his arm.

SID

You know – Vinnie loved to barbecue – but he don't have no place up at Pine Lake. Now are you gonna tell me and my sister what you're really doing here or not?

CARMEN takes her gun out and points it at DONNY. DONNY puts his hands over his crotch.

DONNY

Look I told ya. I'm here because of Vinnie.

SID

Vinnie's dead.

DONNY

Oh my God! No! When did that happen?

CARMEN

Around lunchtime.

DONNY

That's horrible.

CARMEN

Didn't you say you had lunch with Vinnie.

DONNY

Ha, well yeah. *(To Carmen)* Do you have to point that at me?

CARMEN

And now, Vinnie's dead.

DONNY

I had nothing at all to do with Vinnie's death. He had a heart attack.

SID

You working for the Spaniard?

DONNY

No, I'm not working for the Spaniard.

CARMEN

What are we gonna do with this guy?

SID

I don't know. Let me think.

CARMEN

Hey, weren't you supposed to do a hit on a guy named Donny Bracco this week.

SID

Oh yeah, the guy who put the hit out on himself.

DONNY

That's me. I'm Donny Bracco!

SID

You're the guy!

DONNY

I'm the guy.

DONNY, SID, and CARMEN laugh.

SID

Right, you only had like six months left to live.

CARMEN

And you had some weird disease that was going to leave you wasting away in bed.

DONNY

That's right, only thing is I'm better – all cured – no need to kill me now.

CARMEN

And that's why you was having lunch with Vinnie?

DONNY

Yes, and he told me he had subcontracted the kill to you and that's why he called you so he could cancel the hit on me but then he – you know...died.

SID

Huh, alright then.

CARMEN puts the gun back in her holster.

DONNY

So, we're good?

SID

I'm not giving the money back.

DONNY

No, I understand you can keep the fifty grand.

SID

Fifty grand?

DONNY

Yeah.

SID

Uh, he told me you paid thirty.

DONNY

No it was fifty.

SID

How do you like that?

CARMEN

That cheap bastard.

SID

He gave me fifteen thousand – said it was half – he should have given me twenty-five – that's what he should have given me. By my calculations, I'm out ten grand.

DONNY

Well, not much I can do about that is there.

SID

You wouldn't happen to have ten grand on ya, would ya?

DONNY

Uh, no. I don't carry around that kind of cash.

SID

That's okay, I'm just messing with ya.

DONNY

Oh – thank God, you have a very hard to read sense of humour.

SID

There's just one little problem.

DONNY

There is?

SID

I subcontracted your hit to the Black Widow.

DONNY

You didn't.

SID

I did. She's very good. Very reliable. A bit of a recluse though.

CARMEN

You okay?

DONNY

No, I'm not okay.

CARMEN

You don't look so good.

DONNY

I don't feel so good.

DONNY leans against the stack of boxes SID brought in.

SID

Hey, don't lean against those. You don't want to knock 'em over.

DONNY

Sorry. I'm just...this has been a rough day you know. I mean Vinnie dies and I track you down and you give my hit to someone called the Black Widow – you'll forgive me but I'm a little upset – okay. You have to call her. You have to call off the hit.

SID

Sure but it might take a day or two. She arranges everything on-line. She don't like to meet with people or talk over the phone. She's got an app you can download if you want to get in touch with her right away.

DONNY

She has an app?

SID

Naw, she doesn't have an app. Boy are you easy to mess with.

DONNY

Oh, God.

SID

Now I suppose I could figure out how to get in touch with her faster if you was to pay me a small fee.

DONNY

I don't have ten thousand bucks.

SID

You got five?

DONNY

Five bucks?

SID

No ya dope, five grand.

DONNY

But you already have fifteen thousand.

SID

How much is your life worth Donny? Five grand? You were going to pay fifty to end it – what I'm offering you is a bargain.

CARMEN

It's a good deal Donny. You should take it.

DONNY

Oh, God, oh God, what am I gonna do? Alright, alright I'll get you the money but I can't withdraw more than a thousand bucks on my bank card.

SID

That's okay you got AMEX, VISA, MASTERCARD.

You take credit cards.

DONNY

Sure we take credit cards.

SID

Why wouldn't we.

CARMEN

Credit cards are the legitimate loan sharks of capitalism. Have you seen the fees those guys charge – it's a crime I tell ya. A God damn crime, and a tax upon the poor. You got Air Miles.

SID

DONNY hands SID his VISA and SID runs the card through the interac.

No.

DONNY

You don't collect Air Miles?

SID

Uh, no.

DONNY

If you sign up today Donny, you'll get 500 bonus Air Miles.

CARMEN

Plus you can redeem your Air Miles for a lot more than just flights and hotels you know. Our new sausage grinder in the back was bought entirely with Air Miles.

SID

Really.

DONNY

Oh yeah, and it's one sweet machine I gotta tell ya. Fast – efficient – grinds up a side of pork in seconds or anything else you choose to throw in there, eh Carmen?

SID

It's a thing of beauty.

CARMEN

My watch.

SID

Air Miles. DONNY

My gun. CARMEN

Air Miles. DONNY

You bet. CARMEN

I had no idea. DONNY

Oh yeah. It's a great deal. SID

DONNY
Okay, can you call her or send her a text – do whatever you gotta do.

SID hands DONNY his VISA.

SID
Sure I'll let her know. Good doing business with you Donny.

DONNY
Hold on a second, I'm not going to leave here until I know you've cancelled the hit.
What's to stop you from pocketing my money and doing nothing.

SID
Can you believe this guy. You questioning my professional integrity? Is that what you're doin'?

DONNY
I'm not leaving here unless I get confirmation that the hit is cancelled. I paid five grand and I want some kind of proof that the hit has been called off.

DONNY knocks over a box of sausages and a hand falls out of the box.

SID
Ah geez. I wish you hadn't done that.

DONNY

Hey, what you put in your sausages is up to you.

DONNY picks up the hand and puts it back in the box.

DONNY

Ewwahhh – there everything’s back to normal, right? I didn’t see a thing.

SID

I think you did.

CARMEN

I know he did. What are we gonna do?

CARMEN pulls out her gun.

SID

We got no choice.

CARMEN

Damnit, and I wanted to go home early. I told you I have a big date tonight.

SID

You and Angelo are getting pretty serious, uh.

CARMEN

I think he might be the one.

SID

I’m happy for ya sis. You deserve a good guy.

CARMEN

Thanks Sid.

SID

Tell you what – why don’t we take him in the back. Bullet to the head and we stuff him in the freezer overnight. How does that sound?

CARMEN

We can’t do that we’ve got the health inspector coming tomorrow.

SID

Damnit. *(Beat)* Hey, what about that construction site over on tenth.

CARMEN

We could dump a load of bricks on him.

DONNY

That Ricky Martin is sure one hot Latino.

SID

What did you say?

DONNY

I said, that Ricky Martin is sure one hot Latino.

CARMEN

You like Latino men do ya Donny.

DONNY

I just have a thing for Ricky Martin.

CARMEN

Hey, who doesn't.

SID

Would you guys shut up. I need to think.

DONNY

Look, you don't want to kill me.

CARMEN

It's not that we want to kill you Donny it's that we have to. You've seen something you shouldn't have seen. Sorry.

DONNY

You can't kill me. I'm wearing a wire.

SID

You're what?

DONNY

I'm wearing a wire. This watch has a microphone and a camera in it. You're under police surveillance right now.

SID

You son-of-a-bitch!

CARMEN

Well you're going to be one dead stool pigeon you hear me you little rat.

SID lunges at DONNY but DONNY runs behind the counter.

SID

Hold on a second. If you're wearing a wire where are the cops? I don't see no cops do you?

CARMEN

Yeah, how come I don't see no cops.

DONNY

That Ricky Martin sure is one hot Latino!

CARMEN

Alright, you got the hots for Ricky Martin, we get it already.

DONNY looks at SID and CARMEN and then runs into the back of the butcher shop.

DONNY

Hey you little bastard get back here.

SID and CARMEN run after DONNY.

There is some commotion in the back shouts and screams. DONNY burst through the door being chased by SID. They weave around the stacks of sausages.

SID

Get back here you little prick.

DONNY

You stay away from me.

We hear a police siren as the flashing light of a police car lights up the front of the store. We hear police breaking down the door in the back.

POLICE (OFF)

Police drop your gun.

CARMEN (OFF)

Oh yeah, why should I?

SFX: GUNFIRE

DONNY runs into the back followed by SID. There is more gunfire. Then the sound of something being ground up in the sausage grinder and a scream followed by more gunfire.

End Scene

SCENE iiv: THE SAUSAGE KING - LATER

At Rise: DONNY is talking to OFFICER POWELL.

POWELL

And you really are a High School teacher.

DONNY

Swear to God.

POWELL

Well you're one lucky son-of-a-bitch I gotta tell ya.

DONNY

Lucky? How am I lucky? You heard him, he said he sold my contract to the Black Widow.

POWELL

Yeah, well I ain't never heard of no killer called the Black Widow.

DONNY

No?

POWELL

No. I think he was just trying to hustle ya. Get some more money out of ya. And it worked didn't it?

DONNY

Yeah, I guess so. What took you guys so long? I gave you the line, I've got the hots for Ricky Martin. I mean I'm hot for Ricky Martin...uh oh you know what I mean.

POWELL

We had a little crisis of our own. Detective Murphy...suffered a heart attack.

DONNY

Oh my God, is he alright?

POWELL

Afraid not. He died on his way to the hospital.

DONNY

Poor guy.

POWELL

Yeah, he was sitting there eating some pasta and suddenly grabbed his chest and fell back in the van. Weird uh. This day is full of death. First Vinnie – then Sid...

DONNY

Yeah, I didn't need to see that.

POWELL

So, how'd he end up in the sausage grinder anyway?

DONNY

He went for me – I ducked – he slipped – and well –

POWELL

And well...sort of a fitting end for the sausage King – don't ya think.

DONNY

What about his sister?

POWELL

What about his sister? Carmen was always a bit of a hot head. Of course there's going to be an investigation – there's always an investigation when there's a shooting, but it was a clean kill. She fired first.

DONNY

So, what happens now?

POWELL

You can go home Mr. Bracco. We've got the tape – your statement – you've had a long day.

DONNY

Some birthday uh.

POWELL

One you won't soon forget.

DONNY

I guess not.

POWELL

You did a brave thing tonight Mr. Bracco. Not everybody would have done it. You go home and get some rest and we'll call you if you need anything else.

DONNY

Yeah, I'll do that.

POWELL exits into the back of the Butcher shop.

DONNY takes out his cell phone and dials SOPHIA's number off his hand.

DONNY

Hello? Sophia? Hey it's Donny. I know it's a bit late but I was wondering if you wanted to grab a drink or go for a late dinner and help me celebrate my birthday. I could really use the company. Really? That's great. Do you want me to pick you up or do you want to meet someplace. Sure thing – I'd be happy to pick you up. About half an hour? Super.

DONNY exits.

End Scene

SCENE v: DONNY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Setting: This is a tasteful but small Bachelor apartment.

At Rise: We hear the sound of breaking glass down the hall. A moment later STUBBY appears. HE carries a sawed off shotgun. He looks around the apartment then crosses over to the bar and pours himself a scotch.

STUBBY

Ohhhh, that's good stuff.

STUBBY looks at the other bottles of booze in the bar when he hears voices outside the door. STUBBY hides behind the curtain to the balcony. DONNY and SOPHIA enter the apartment. DONNY is in a good mood.

DONNY

You want a drink?

SOPHIA

I wouldn't say no to a glass of wine.

DONNY heads over to the bar and gets out a bottle of wine and two wine glasses.

DONNY

What a day eh?

SOPHIA

Days not over.

DONNY

No, I guess not.

SOPHIA

You woke up thinking this might be your last day on earth and look what happened.

DONNY

I know.

SOPHIA

So, what are you going to do now? You going to keep teaching?

DONNY

I don't know. Teaching was plan B.

Oh really. What was plan A?

SOPHIA

I wanted to be a writer.

DONNY

Well why don't ya then?

SOPHIA

Because it takes talent.

DONNY

And you don't think you're talented.

SOPHIA

I don't know. It's been a long time since I've written anything. I don't know if-id-be any good.

DONNY

Well you're never going to know if you don't try.

SOPHIA

True enough.

DONNY

You know what you should do.

SOPHIA

Well I know what I'd like to do.

DONNY

What's that?

SOPHIA

Get to know you a little better.

DONNY

Oh, you're sweet.

SOPHIA

That's why I called you. Life isn't really worth living unless you've got somebody to share it with, is it.

DONNY

That's true.

SOPHIA

DONNY

And I think there's a little something between us, don't you.

SOPHIA

I do. You're a nice guy Donny. A nice change from my husband. You appreciate a lady.

DONNY

Yeah, well this whole dying and almost getting killed thing has really made me think about my life and how I'm living it. You know the old Donny Bracco would have never given you a call. But he would have gone through his entire life wishing he had. The old Donny Bracco was afraid of life.

SOPHIA

And the new Donny Bracco.

DONNY

He's not afraid anymore.

DONNY takes SOPHIA in his arms and gives her a passionate kiss.

STUBBY steps out from the curtain with the shotgun.

STUBBY

Well, isn't that sweet.

DONNY and SOPHIA turn and face STUBBY.

DONNY

Who the hell are you?

STUBBY

Stubby.

DONNY

Stubby?

STUBBY

Stubby the hobo.

DONNY

Well, that would explain the shotgun.

STUBBY

I'm sorry to break up your little romance here but I have a train to catch.

DONNY
Are you working for the Black Widow?

STUBBY
Never heard of the Black Widow.

DONNY
But you've been hired to kill me.

STUBBY
A guy has to make a living.

DONNY
Well then who are you working for?

STUBBY
The Guillotine.

DONNY
The Guillotine.

STUBBY
Yeah. You know him?

DONNY
Never heard of him.

STUBBY
Really.

DONNY
Really. So, who's the Guillotine working for?

STUBBY
He usually works for the Spaniard.

DONNY
Does he?

STUBBY
Oh yeah.

DONNY
And just how much is the Guillotine paying you.

STUBBY

500 bucks and a pack of smokes.

DONNY

That's it?

STUBBY

Hey, I know guys who would kill ya for fifty bucks and a six pack.

DONNY

Tell you what I'll do – I'll give you a thousand dollars, right now, if you just go away.

STUBBY

Sorry, but I can't do that. I have my reputation to think about. If I let you go I'll never work in this town again.

DONNY

Listen Stubby, I don't care what happens to me but I want you to let Sophia go.

STUBBY

I can't really do that.

DONNY

Sure you can. You're not being paid to kill her, are ya.

STUBBY

I hate killing women, but how was I to know you'd go and bring a dame home. Do you mind if I have a drink?

DONNY

No. No. No. Not at all. That's a great idea.

STUBBY

I had some of your scotch before you got home. Hope you don't mind.

DONNY

Why would I mind?

STUBBY

Good stuff.

DONNY

Glad you liked it.

SOPHIA

Tell you what, why don't I mix us all a drink. Scotch all round?

DONNY

Fine by me.

STUBBY

Make mine a double.

DONNY

Make them all doubles.

STUBBY

Trying to get me drunk isn't going to stop me from killing ya.

SOPHIA goes to the bar and mixes the drinks. She gets three glasses. Two short glasses and one tall glass. She will, unseen by Stubby and Donny, but seen by the audience, put poison in the tall glass from the same bottle that she gave to Vinnie in the first scene.

DONNY

Why don't we have a drink and talk this through.

STUBBY

I told you I've got a freight train to catch.

DONNY

There will be other trains. Listen Stubby, maybe you've been selling yourself short. You charge 500 bucks right.

STUBBY

And a pack of smokes.

DONNY

And a pack of smokes. Well I know, for a fact, that people are charging fifty grand to knock someone off.

STUBBY

I can't believe how expensive everything is getting.

SOPHIA

It's terrible.

STUBBY

Isn't it. I got a cup of coffee from Starbucks the other day and it cost me five bucks! Five bucks for a cup of coffee. For a cup of coffee.

SOPHIA

It's a crime.

STUBBY

And it's getting harder and harder for some of us folks on the street to survive you know. I mean ever since people started using debit cards they don't carry the change they once did. Well that's why I started killing people. I couldn't make a living anymore begging for change.

SOPHIA

Killing people doesn't bother you?

STUBBY

You think society cares about me? You think they'd care if I turned up dead on the tracks.

SOPHIA takes the drinks over to DONNY. She hands him one of the short drinks.

DONNY

Do you mind if I have the tall glass.

SOPHIA

Oh, I made the tall one for Stubby.

DONNY

You don't care do you Stubby.

STUBBY

Naw. Half the time I drink it straight from the bottle.

DONNY takes the tall glass.

SOPHIA

But Stubby is a guest, don't you think he should have the tall glass if he wants it?

DONNY

But he said he didn't care.

SOPHIA

Well, I care.

DONNY

Okay fine. I'll take the short glass, Jesus!

SOPHIA hands the short glass to DONNY and then hands the tall glass to STUBBY and takes the other short glass for herself.

DONNY

You happy now?

SOPHIA

Yeah, what shall we drink to?

DONNY

How about to mercy? Uh Stubby. Surely to God, you've seen some kindness over the years.

STUBBY

Oh sure – I see lots of it around Christmas time, but not so much other times of the year.

DONNY

Still there are good people out there, and I'm willing to bet you're one of the good ones.

STUBBY

Ah shit.

DONNY

What.

STUBBY

You never talk to the hit.

DONNY

Why not?

SOPHIA

Makes it too personal. Clouds your judgement. You start thinking about them like people. You start to see them for who they are. Fathers and sons and brothers.

STUBBY

Exactly.

SOPHIA

Come on lets drink up.

DONNY

To kindness and mercy.

DONNY drops his drink.

Shit. DONNY

I'll get you another one. SOPHIA

Naw, that's okay he can have mine. STUBBY

No, I'll make him a fresh one. SOPHIA

Why? What's wrong with this one? STUBBY

Nothing. SOPHIA

Okay then, you take this one and I'll have yours. STUBBY

I don't like a tall glass. SOPHIA

Well I have a shot gun that says you do. STUBBY

You don't scare me tough guy. SOPHIA

No? STUBBY

And how'd you get your nickname anyway? SOPHIA

What business is that of yours? STUBBY

It wouldn't have anything to do with a measure of your man hood would it? SOPHIA

You know what, on second thought, I don't think I'm just goin-a-kill you two. First, I'm going tie this little wimp up. And then, I'm going to make him watch while I have my STUBBY

wicked way with you. And then, he's going to watch me kill you nice and slow – before I kill him.

DONNY

Well, I'd hardly call that professional.

STUBBY

Alright you little bastard get over by that chair.

SOPHIA grabs a bottle of scotch and throws it at STUBBY. He ducks and the booze smashes against the wall. DANNY rushes STUBBY and the two struggle over the gun. SOPHIA grabs another bottle of booze and runs over to where DANNY and STUBBY are fighting and smashes the bottle across STUBBY's head. STUBBY's grip on DONNY loosens. SOPHIA grabs the shot gun out of STUBBY's hands. STUBBY stands up.

STUBBY

You bitch you're going to pay for this.

SOPHIA

Am I?

STUBBY

You better believe it.

SOPHIA

Call 911 Donny.

DONNY

Right.

DONNY starts to dial the phone to call 911.

STUBBY

You know what's goin-ta-happin - one night when you're sound asleep without a care in the world I'll be there. I ain't going to be in prison long. It's not like I'm selling dope or nothing. You're never gonna have another peaceful nights sleep in your life. When I get out I'm coming for the two of you. You hear me – I'm coming for the two of ya and I'm going to kill ya both!

SOPHIA blasts STUBBY with the shot gun in the chest. The force pushes him back behind the couch.

PHONE

Hello? Hello? 911. Please state the nature of your emergency. Hello?

DONNY

I can't believe you just did that.

SOPHIA

I like my beauty sleep. Why let him ruin our lives right Donny. You gonna answer that.

DONNY hangs up the phone.

DONNY

Uh, I'll call back, I need a drink.

DONNY grabs the tall drink and is about to down it when Sophia knocks it out of his hand.

SOPHIA

Whoa don't go drinking that or you'll be joining Vinnie at the pearly gates.

DONNY

What are you talking about?

SOPHIA

It's full of poison.

DONNY

Poison?

SOPHIA

Yeah. That's why I didn't want you drinking it.

DONNY

You, poisoned his drink.

SOPHIA

I tried. It would have been a lot less messy I'll tell you that. I'm sorry Donny, but I don't think you're going to get your damage deposit back.

DONNY

I didn't realize – the drink had poison in it.

SOPHIA

Why would you? Thanks for standing up for me Donny. You've got a good heart, but you're no killer. You don't have the instinct for it. If I hadn't been here that hobo would have blown you away.

DONNY

Where'd you get the poison?

SOPHIA

Oh I made a batch up for Vinnie. I gave it to him at lunchtime while you were washing up.

SOPHIA takes the bottle out of her pocket and hands it to DONNY.

DONNY

While I was washing up.

SOPHIA

Oh yeah, Vinnie had some corporate guy working for Rogers he had to bump off, but that ain't going to happen now. We should probably dump it before the cops get here. Look Donny the world's a tough place. You're a nice guy. There isn't a mean bone in your body. I know that. That's why I like you. My last husband was a miserable SOB – he was a lot like this guy you know – just mean – knock somebody's teeth out for looking at him the wrong way – but you're not like that – you're not a killer – you couldn't kill somebody if your life depended on it.

DONNY looks at the vile and then realizes he put the poison in his pasta – the pasta that Vinnie ate and then died.

SOPHIA

Come on Donny lets get out of here and call the cops on your cell. We can spend the night at my place.

DONNY

Yeah, I'd like that. Thanks Sophia. I was thinking I should send flowers to Vinnie's funeral. Lots of flowers.

SOPHIA

You got a good heart Donny. A good heart.

The End