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THE HOUSE OF HORACE

Episode 3

"This Gun for Hire?"

Written by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. GYPSY CARAVAN - DAY
(VIOLCA, STEVO, BLACK CAT)

The 1975 calendar the wall shows June.

VIOLCA is melancholy knowing that her **BABY** and the **YOUNG MAN** have gone. She is sitting at a small table shuffling a deck of Tarot cards.

On the table is the sleek **BLACK CAT** sitting patiently watching **VIOLCA** as she shuffles and lays out some cards face down.

STEVO, her father the gypsy-king, is sitting at another chair polishing his earrings.

The **BLACK CAT** stands and indicates one of dealt cards with his paw. **VIOLCA** turns it over.

[Dialogue spoken in Italian with English sub-titles]

VIOLCA (SUBTITLE)
The Fool.

The **BLACK CAT** paws another card. **VIOLCA** turns it.

VIOLCA (CONT'D)
The Chariot.

The **BLACK CAT** paws a third card and **VIOLCA** turns it.

VIOLCA (CONT'D)
The Hanged Man.

The BLACK CAT paws the fourth.

VIOLCA (CONT'D)
(Turning the last)
Nooo...Death.
You know what this means, daddy?

STEVO (SUBTITLE)
That that imbecile hanged himself
when he fell off the chariot trying
to escape from us. I wish.

VIOLCA (SUBTITLE)
No! It means he has escaped and we
will never find him, daddy. They
will never return. Daddy, I want my
son!

STEVO (SUBTITLE)
Rest assured, Violca, I'll find
them. There is no place to hide.

The BLACK CAT stands up, alert and agitated.

FADE OUT.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. ALLEY WAY BEHIND "RAM AND BULL" HOTEL - EVENING
(DRAGO, BULL)

O.S., the sounds of a man being punched and kicked resonate through the dark, empty alley.

The beaten man, **DRAGO**, his expensive clothes torn and sullied, is flung into frame and against the wall where he slides down and crumples to the ground moaning and semi-conscious. His face is bloodied and bruised. He looks the beaten thug he is.

BULL, a huge, rough-looking tough about the same age, looms over him, fists bloodied.

BULL
And stay off my turf, weasel,
unless you wanna be an anchor.

INT. THE LOUNGE OF THE "RAM AND BULL" HOTEL - CONTINUOUS
(BAR PATRONS, HORACE, SPIT, ANDREA, DRAGO)

Lots of **BAR PATRONS**, lots of noise - very busy.

HORACE, **ANDREA** and **SPIT** are at a table with drinks. It is after a day's work. **SPIT** shows **HORACE** a photo of a Chihuahua dog with a cat's head. **HORACE** examines it closely. **ANDREA** is amused.

HORACE
This can't be real.

SPIT
It is real. A cross Chihuahua-
Cornish Rex. It's called a
Trembling Pastie Pussy Dog.

HORACE
A cat-dog hybrid? That's
incredible.

ANDREA
Horace, he's having a lend of you.
(Takes the photo, then to
SPIT)
Your new photo editor?

SPIT
(Taking the photo)
Yeah, pretty cool, eh?
(Re HORACE)
Had you fooled eh, Horace?

HORACE

As if.

SPIT

Had them little neurons zapping
around your brain like piss on a
hot plate, eh?

ANDREA

You could sell this. Make a bit of
money to buy those spare parts for
your motor cycle.

HORACE

That pile of junk?

SPIT

It's a classic, mate! A Triumph
Thunderbird.

HORACE

Next year's ball bearings.

SPIT

(To ANDREA, ignoring
HORACE)
Shoulda seen the one I slipped
Victoria.
(He smirks, wiggling his
eyebrows)

HORACE

Victoria? You gave her one of
those?

SPIT

Not quite like this one. But I
reckon she won't be showing the one
I give her to no-one but.
(He wiggles his eyebrows
again)
Ha ha ha...

HORACE

What's that supposed to mean?

ANDREA takes the photo.

ANDREA

(Re photo)
Is that your dog Satan? I can just
barely make out the name on the
tag. S. A. T. I? N? Satin?

HORACE

Satin? Some killer-dog name that
is.

SPIT

Nah...nah...my dog's a big, mean
pit bull bastard, not some wussy
little Chihuahua. Gimme a break!

ANDREA

Whose is the cat?

SPIT

That feral mongrel belongs to the
Leb next door, Abdul the Arab. Tell
you what, that cat's just about
done with his nine lives.

HORACE

What do you mean?

SPIT

I've already wasted four slugs on
it.

ANDREA

(Shocked)

You shot it?

SPIT

The mongrel's getting fat on me
goldfish!

ANDREA

You can't go around shooting
animals!

DRAGO skulks into the lounge, heading for the men's toilets,
past the group's table.

SPIT

Why not? Anyhow, it's a friggin
cat. Good for nuthin 'cept
fertiliser. They're as useless as,
ugh, spiders and just as ugly. They
only use up the air and clutter up
the landscape. They upset the ekky-
system.

ANDREA

Ecosystem.

SPIT

Swat I said. Sides, you should
appreciate what I'm doing, Andrea,
you being a black, greenie pinko.
I'm doing all youse Nature Nazis a
favour.

ANDREA

I can't believe what you're saying!
Every species on earth has a reason
to be here! You exterminate one and
it upsets the whole ecological
balance. You can't go around
killing things you think are ugly
or useless.

SPIT

If I could, there'd be fewer
sitting at this table, eh Horace?
There's lots what do what I do an
there's lots what pay to get it
done. I've been paid big bucks to
get rid of ferals.

DRAGO approaches the table.

ANDREA

That's blood money!

DRAGO'S attention is drawn to the conversation and he slows
down a little to listen.

SPIT

It's a service. An I get paid to
get rid of vermins and ferals.

ANDREA

Cold-blooded murder!

SPIT

Hey! A job's a job. An I work
clean. It's not like I leave the
carcasses lying around. No
evidence.

ANDREA

You're lucky the police haven't got
involved.

DRAGO moves on to the men's.

SPIT

I'm too smart for them dumb-clucks.

HORACE chokes on his drink.

SPIT (CONT'D)

Are you saying I'm stupid?

HORACE

No. That would insult all the
stupid people.

SPIT

Yeah!

(Slow realisation)

You're both giving me the irrits.
I'm going to the loo.

He leaves for the men's.

HORACE

Don't kill anything ugly on the
way. Stay away from mirrors...on
second thoughts...

ANDREA

(Re the photo)

Wonder what sort of photo he gave
Victoria.

INT. THE MEN'S ROOM AT THE "RAM AND BULL" HOTEL - CONTINUOUS
(DRAGO, SPIT)

DRAGO is washing his face as SPIT enters and goes to the
urinal. DRAGO watches him in the mirror. DRAGO goes to the
urinal next to SPIT. They do the men thing.

SPIT casually looks down over to DRAGO and then down at
himself and smirks. DRAGO glances sideways at him.

Beat.

DRAGO

You're a shooter?

SPIT looks down at the job in hand, puzzled.

SPIT

Eh?

DRAGO

I heard you did jobs on ferals.

SPIT

Oh, that? Yeah.

(Noticing)

What happened to your face?

DRAGO

A feral happened to my face.

SPIT

Wow, bloody big feral.

Beat.

DRAGO

How much?

SPIT

For what? Hey, now, wait a minute!

DRAGO

What?!

(Noticing what they're
both holding)

Not that! How much to job a feral?

SPIT

Oh!...Oh, dunno. Usually charge
fifty or a hundred. Depends on how
far I have to travel.

DRAGO

Local. Right here.

SPIT

How big a job is it? I mean, like,
I gotta cover the cost of ammo,
getting rid of the body.

DRAGO

Big bastard.

SPIT

Only one?

DRAGO

Yeah.

SPIT

Let's say fifty - special
introductory offer.

DRAGO

Deal. Half now, half when you've
done the job.

SPIT

Cool. Tell me when and where.

DRAGO finishes up and tucks himself away.

DRAGO

I'll contact you. Where do you
work?

SPIT

Just up the road at Solomon and
Solomon, the book publishers. I'm
the driver.

SPIT finishes as well.

DRAGO

(Under his breath)

Didn't think you were the C.E.O.

(MORE)

DRAGO (CONT'D)

(Then louder)

I'll contact you in a couple of days.

DRAGO offers his hand and they shake. DRAGO leaves. SPIT watches him go, pleased but confused. He absentmindedly shakes moisture off his hand, then looks at it disgusted.

INT. THE LOUNGE OF THE "RAM AND BULL" HOTEL - CONTINUOUS
(ANDREA, HORACE, DRAGO, SPIT)

ANDREA and HORACE are still at their table as DRAGO hurries by on his way out.

HORACE

Do you think they'll ever produce a hybrid dog and cat?

ANDREA

Nah. Who needs a schizoid pet? Friendly one minute, aloof the next.

SPIT comes back and sits, still puzzled.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

(Noticing)

What's up?

SPIT

That guy what just left, the woggy one with the re-arranged face, he offered me fifty bucks to get rid of a large feral cat what attacked his face.

HORACE and ANDREA turn towards the door.

HORACE

Well, that'll buy you a grommet for your classic pile of scrap.

INT. HORACE'S DINING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING
(HORACE, GIACOBBE)

HORACE and **GIACOBBE** are finishing their dinner. GIACOBBE is not paying attention, engrossed in his meal.

HORACE

...and then Spit, the drop kick, takes the job! I mean, he doesn't even know who this guy is!

Beat. HORACE looks over to GIACOBBE.

HORACE (CONT'D)

You haven't heard a word I've said.

GIACOBBE

Ei?

HORACE

I've been talking to you for the last hour about Spit killing animals, listening to you grunt and snort, and I thought you were paying attention.

GIACOBBE

I eat. I listen.

HORACE

What did I say?

Beat.

GIACOBBE

You want dessert?

HORACE

I give up!

HORACE stands and gathers the dirty dishes.

GIACOBBE

I hear what you say. You say man in pub was going to take picture of Mexican cat and give it to Vittoria.

HORACE

Close.

(Exploding)

Spit's getting paid to kill a feral cat!

(Re GIACOBBE)

Maybe he'll do two for the price of one!

GIACOBBE

Ei! You no talk like that of your father.

HORACE

Hah! That, you understood!

GIACOBBE

This is no Sicily. You no hire killer for kill your father!

HORACE

Oh, for God's sake! I wasn't talking about hiring someone to kill you. Although, sometimes...

GIACOBBE

Ei!

HORACE

Pa! I was talking about Spit.

GIACOBBE

What about Spit?

HORACE

He's been hired...ah, forget it.
I'm going to do the dishes.

He takes the dishes to the kitchen.

GIACOBBE

Ice cream...?

FADE TO

INT. SOLOMON AND SOLOMON OFFICE CORRIDOR - MORNING, 2 DAYS

LATER

(SPIT, VICTORIA)

SPIT shuffles through the main entrance into the corridor, concentrating as he fingers through the bundle of papers in his hand and bumps into **VICTORIA** as she hurries into the office.

SPIT

Watch it, dic...

She pushes past him.

SPIT (CONT'D)

Yo! Vicky!

She stops and turns with malevolent purpose.

VICTORIA

Vic. Toria.

SPIT

Yeah, whatever. Just wanted to know
if your laptop was okay. Nuthin
broke on it, was it?

VICTORIA

No.

She turns to go.

SPIT

Good, cause like I went through a
lot getting it to you, you know. A
real big lot.

She turns back.

VICTORIA

So...?

SPIT

Nuthin. But it musta been real important like. Having a meeting at a place like Foris musta been real top secret like, you know?

VICTORIA

What are you getting at?

SPIT

Nuthin. Just a little gratitude. A bonus. Like.

VICTORIA

Don't be ridiculous!

SPIT

Kinda saved your arse, that computer, eh? Foris is a real spooky kinda deserted place for doing a deal. No corporate office, no cappuccino machine...

VICTORIA

Are you attempting extortion?

SPIT

Nah. I'm attempting gratitude. In cash.

VICTORIA

You don't know what you're dealing with.

Beat as they stare each other down.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Get on with your job.

She turns to head back into the main entrance.

SPIT

What's the S.G.A.?

Freeze.

EXT. SOLOMON AND SOLOMON CAR PARK - ABOUT NOON
(DRAGO, MR SOLOMON)

DRAGO is nervously lurking about waiting for SPIT. His face is cut and bruised but healing.

In the background, an emergency siren becomes louder as the vehicle approaches. DRAGO snaps his head around trying to see what's coming. The siren fades away.

MR SOLOMON drives his Rolls Royce in and, as usual, has difficulty threading the marked spaces, nesting it across two bays. He gets out of his car, clutching his ever-present aluminium briefcase, and appraises his efforts.

MR SOLOMON sees DRAGO and wanders over to help.

MR SOLOMON

Er, good morning, young man. Can I be of assistance to you?

(Noticing face)

Oy gavalt!

DRAGO

(Jumpy)

Who are you?

MR SOLOMON

Why, I'm, ah...I'm...

(Noticing company signage)

Oh, yes no, Solomon. Yes, Samson Solomon, no?

They tentatively shake hands.

DRAGO

I'm waiting for Spit. I've got something for him. Is he here?

MR SOLOMON

Who?

DRAGO

Spit.

MR SOLOMON

Why?

DRAGO

What?

MR SOLOMON

Why do you want me to spit?

DRAGO

No, I'm waiting for Spit. He works here.

MR SOLOMON

Oh, does he? Spit...Spit...

DRAGO

Tall guy with a mullet.

MR SOLOMON

Yes no...I can't recall anybody here with a fish.

DRAGO

A mullet hairstyle. Short top and sides, long at the back.

MR SOLOMON

Oh, long at the back. Yes no, yes, but we call him Victoria.

DRAGO

No! He's your driver!

MR SOLOMON looks at his Rolls Royce, then realisation.

MR SOLOMON

Oh, him! Spit! Why didn't you say so?

DRAGO

Is he here?

The emergency siren slowly fades back in, making DRAGO even more nervous.

MR SOLOMON

The van's not here so I suppose he's out on delivery...Or he didn't come in today...Or he's in but someone else has the van...Or the van's been stolen...

DRAGO

Stop! I haven't time for this! Give him this when you see him.

He pushes a brown paper bag into MR SOLOMON'S hand.

MR SOLOMON

What's this?

DRAGO

Er...lunch.

MR SOLOMON

Heavy...

DRAGO

Bagels.

MR SOLOMON

But they've got holes in them.

The siren is becoming louder.

DRAGO

Look! I've got to go. Make sure Spit, your driver, the guy with the mullet, not Victoria, gets it, okay?

MR SOLOMON

You can depend on me.

DRAGO slinks quickly and warily away as the siren passes by and fades out.

MR SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Gey gezuntheyt. Oh, and you should buy yourself a new razor.

(Looking at bag)

Now what did that young klutz say? Give this lunch to... not the mullet...Spit...Victoria's bagels...these are rather heavy...

He goes into the building, mumbling away.

INT. VICTORIA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

(VICTORIA, TURPIS, MR SOLOMON)

VICTORIA is at her desk and in deep contemplation looking at two object on it: her mobile phone and a photograph, placed neatly side-by-side.

VICTORIA

You won't get away with this one, my friend. I'll show you gratitude.

She hesitantly picks up the phone and punches in a number, and waits.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Turpis?

TURPIS (V.O.)

(Deep, slow)

I told you never to call me.

VICTORIA

(Trepidation)

I...I...have a problem. Someone is poking around -

TURPIS (V.O.)

Don't involve me in your sexual activities.

(Sardonic, wet laugh)

VICTORIA

I need you to remove some rubbish. We may have a breach -

TURPIS (V.O.)

You know what a compromise means. You are no longer useful.

VICTORIA gasps.

TURPIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So, do we have a breach?
(Beat)
Deal with it. You're the expert
on...removals.
(Malicious laugh)

He ends the call with a sharp snap. VICTORIA closes her eyes in an attempt to keep composed.

MR SOLOMON comes in, preoccupied with the parcel he is carrying. He puts his aluminium briefcase on VICTORIA'S desk.

VICTORIA puts down the phone and quickly hides the photo in the back of her drawer. She collects herself. MR SOLOMON apparently has not noticed.

VICTORIA
Mr Solomon. I thought you were
taking today off.

MR SOLOMON
Hmm?

VICTORIA
What do you have there?

No reaction.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
In your hands, Mr Solomon.

MR SOLOMON
Oh. Ah. Heavy bagels.

VICTORIA
Your lunch?

MR SOLOMON
Yes no, I don't like mullet.

VICTORIA
Where did you get it?

MR SOLOMON
Er...a young sheygetz with a dull
razor gave them to me. These bagels
smell rather insipid.

He opens the bag and pulls out a handgun.

VICTORIA
Mr Solomon!

MR SOLOMON is puzzled and looks inside the bag for the bagels, carelessly scratching his temple with the muzzle of the gun.

MR SOLOMON

No wonder!

VICTORIA

Be careful with that.

MR SOLOMON

He lied.

VICTORIA

Let me take that...

MR SOLOMON

There are no bagels in here!

VICTORIA eases the gun from MR SOLOMON.

VICTORIA

I'll hold it for you.

MR SOLOMON reaches into the bag.

VICTORIA examines the gun and realises it is real and loaded!

MR SOLOMON retrieves another, smaller parcel and holds it up triumphantly.

MR SOLOMON

Aha! Nosherye!

He enthusiastically unwraps the parcel and is dismayed to find a wad of notes. VICTORIA reacts.

VICTORIA

What the hell...?

MR SOLOMON

These aren't bagels!

He tosses the money onto the desk. VICTORIA picks up the money.

VICTORIA

There are thousands here...

MR SOLOMON turns the bag inside out. A folded sheet of paper falls out and onto the desk. MR SOLOMON picks up the paper.

MR SOLOMON

Maybe this will explain all...

He unfolds the paper and a photo falls out. He picks it up and looks at it and then reads the paper.

MR SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Aha! All is revealed! The address of the fellow who made the lunch...and a photo of what he looks like! I'm going to get my bagels.

VICTORIA

Wait! Mr Solomon, wait just a minute, please. Maybe that's not quite it. Maybe this wasn't meant for you. You don't like...mullet, remember?

MR SOLOMON

Oh yes no. Quite right.

VICTORIA

Try to think. The young man...with the blunt razor...did he mention a name...? Someone you should give this parcel to, perhaps?

MR SOLOMON

Hmm, yes no yes, now that you mention it, yes no, yes.

VICTORIA

Who?

MR SOLOMON

What?

VICTORIA

The name of the person you were to give this parcel to.

MR SOLOMON

Oh, that. Yes, yes, yes no funny sounding...a bodily...grepse... cough... snore...

VICTORIA

Spit! I should have known. May I see the note?

MR SOLOMON hands her the paper and the photo. She reads the note and ponders it. Her demeanour changes to one of realisation and blood lust.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

(To herself)

He's been hired to take someone out! I've got you right where I want you, you blackmailing, murdering miscreant. The police will solve my rubbish removal problem for me.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And you won't be serving up any more of your disgusting trick photos where you'll be going, my sick, perverted friend.

MR SOLOMON

Hmmm...?

She scribbles the information on a piece of paper and stuffs the money, note, photo and gun back into the paper bag and gives it to MR SOLOMON.

VICTORIA

Mr Solomon, this parcel was meant for Spit. You remember? He's our driver, for the time being. Now, don't tell anybody about this...it's a surprise joke. Can you do that? Give this to Spit when he comes back?

MR SOLOMON

Oh, yes, yes, yes. I'd be delighted to. I love surprises.

VICTORIA

Good. Now. What about lunch?

MR SOLOMON

Oh, yes no, thank you, Victoria, I've eaten.

VICTORIA

Ah-ha...all right, then. I'm going out to grab a bite.

She leaves.

MR SOLOMON follows then turns back to collect his briefcase. He stops, looks at her desk and goes to the drawer. He finds the photo and takes it out and slowly goes goggle-eyed and gape-mouthed.

INT. HORACE'S DINING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING
(HORACE, GIACOBBE, MRS WILSON-SMITH)

HORACE and GIACOBBE are having dinner. HORACE is trying to read and edit a manuscript as well as eat.

GIACOBBE reaches across for the salt. He cries in pain.

GIACOBBE

Ooo...pass the salt. My shoulder.
Che male!

HORACE passes the salt without looking up.

GIACOBBE (CONT'D)
(Reaching for the pepper)
Pepper. Ahhh-ooo.

HORACE passes the pepper still not looking up or reacting.

GIACOBBE (CONT'D)
(Annoyed)
Pass the butter. Careful my
shoulder.

HORACE
Pa, I'm trying to read!

GIACOBBE
My shoulder is killing me!

HORACE
Use your other arm...unless you
want to die?

GIACOBBE
You want me to die, ei? You no
care.

HORACE
Pa!

GIACOBBE
You want this house, ei, all my
money, my clothes...you can't wait
for me to take my last breath!

HORACE
At least you'd stop talking!

GIACOBBE
You are bad son!

HORACE
You are impossible! I don't know
how I live with you!

GIACOBBE
Impossible?! Impossible?! You no
can live with me? Why you no shoot
me, ei? Why you no pay Spit to
shoot me? Fifty dollars for cat,
hundred dollars for father! You no
have? I give!

He gets up, fumbles for his wallet and rips out some notes.

GIACOBBE (CONT'D)
Ecco! Five, ten, twenty...eh! Take
the rest from inheritance!

MRS WILSON-SMITH cheerily pops her head around the kitchen door. She is neatly dressed as always.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Hello, boys. I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

She comes in carrying a pan of bread and butter pudding.

HORACE
No, we're just finalising a contract.

HORACE gets up, takes the notes from GIACOBBE and stuffs them into his own pocket.

HORACE (CONT'D)
You owe me eighty.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
I thought you might like a little something fresh out of the oven. Bread and butter pudding.

HORACE
Ooooo, yes, please.

GIACOBBE
(Holding out his sore arm)
Give me back money.

HORACE
We have a deal. How's your shoulder?

Frantic knock at the front door.

HORACE (CONT'D)
Get that, Pa, and use your other arm.

GIACOBBE
(Mumbling as he goes out)
Servant! Porca la miseria! He should be serving me...

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Is he all right, dear? His shoulder?

HORACE
Shoulder's fine but his bum could do with a well-planted foot in it.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Oh, don't be harsh on the poor old dear, dear.

GIACOBBE returns.

GIACOBBE

(To HORACE)

Ei, Moe, Curly and Larry are here
to see you.

HORACE goes out.

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Pudding, dear?

INT. HORACE'S LOUNGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(SPIT, ANDREA, HORACE, GIACOBBE)

SPIT and ANDREA are anxious. SPIT is carrying the now very
crumpled paper bag.

HORACE comes in.

HORACE

What's up?

SPIT

Crisis, mate! It's not a cat,
it's a Bull! It's tonight!
I'll never see my family
again! If I don't...my prize
goldfish...my wife...my
doggie! She'll kill me! He'll
kill me! I've never done
anything on two legs...he
might shoot back!

ANDREA

Spit's done it! He's really
done it this time! The job's
a...I can't believe this! I
can't believe what this fool
gets himself into! You know
what he's got to do? It's not
a cat! The hit's a...I can't
even say it...the hit's
a...the hit's a...the hit's
a...

HORACE grabs ANDREA by the shoulders and shakes her.

HORACE (CONT'D)

What are you gabbling about? Speak!

ANDREA

(To SPIT)

Show him!

SPIT gives HORACE the money from the bag.

HORACE

Wha...?!

ANDREA

Twenty-five thousand. Half the
payment for the hit.

HORACE

For a cat?!

SPIT gives HORACE the photo.

ANDREA
Photo of the target.

HORACE
He gave you a photo of the cat?

He takes the photo and looks at it.

HORACE (CONT'D)
Who's this?

ANDREA
The target.

HORACE
A man?!
(To SPIT)
You've got to kill a man?!

ANDREA
But wait. There's more.

SPIT gives HORACE the gun from the bag.

HORACE
Oh my god!

ANDREA
It's real. It's loaded.

HORACE
Oh my god!...Oh my god, you're not
going through with it, are you?!
Call it off!

ANDREA
Can't. No return address. This guy,
Drago, called Spit today and said
if he didn't go through with it -

SPIT
My goldfish, my dog, my wife,
history! I don't know what to do.
You've got to help me, Horrie.

HORACE
No, no, no! Don't get me involved
in this. You made the deal...

Angle on GIACOBBE coming to the doorway and eavesdropping.

HORACE (CONT'D)
I don't want to be implicated in
any way whatsoever. Take the gun
and do what you've been paid to do.
Just think of the money. Now you
can buy a new Thunderbird. That'll
motivate you.

GIACOBBE

Vacca ma! That was quick. He is going to kill me. For twenty dollars deposit.

He retreats.

ANDREA

Horace, please, you've got to help. If not for him, for my sake.

HORACE

For you?

ANDREA

Where am I going to find another driver who'll work so cheaply?

SPIT reacts.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

(To SPIT)

Sorry, mate, the truth hurts so brace yourself.

(To HORACE)

Look, I know he's not the brightest star in the galaxy -

HORACE

He's a bloody big black hole.

SPIT

Hey!

ANDREA

He's xenophobic, misanthropic, misogynistic, belligerent -

SPIT

Thanks, Andrea.

HORACE

(To SPIT, askance)

Sheep-dip.

ANDREA

But he's been with us for years. We'd have to break another one in. Come on, for me.

HORACE deliberates; looks at the gun, looks at SPIT and ANDREA. They look lost, bewildered and pitiful.

HORACE

Oh...Oh my god, what am I doing?

SPIT

Thanks, mate, thanks! I owe you big time! So what's the plan?

HORACE

Plan? Police.

SPIT

Um...no...too many missing cats.

HORACE

Can't give the money back...so why not go to the victim and reason with

(Re the photo)
this guy?

SPIT

Bull.

HORACE

Then you come up with something better, chicken liver!

INT. HORACE'S DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
(MRS WILSON-SMITH, GIACOBBE)

MRS WILSON-SMITH is dishing out the pudding as a stunned GIACOBBE comes in.

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Is Horace ready for his pudding?

GIACOBBE

No, not yet. Maybe after he kill me.

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Oh, righto. I'll keep it warm, then.

GIACOBBE

You no care too, ei, Mrs?

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Hmm?

GIACOBBE

You no care my only son kill his only father. And for one hundred dollars!

MRS WILSON-SMITH

I'm sure you're mistaken, Jacob. A hundred dollars? Really! That's not very much even for an old cocky that's about to drop off his perch.

GIACOBBE

You no believe, ei? Come. Listen.

He drags her out by the arm.

INT. HORACE'S LOUNGE ROOM. - CONTINUOUS

(GIACOBBE, MRS WILSON-SMITH, SPIT, ANDREA, HORACE)

GIACOBBE pulls MRS WILSON-SMITH to the doorway both unseen or unheard by HORACE and Co.

SPIT

(Pushing the gun back to
HORACE)

Oh, no, no, no. You keep the gun!

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Gun?

GIACOBBE

Si! Gun! See?

SPIT

(Grabbing hold of the
money)

I'll keep the money.

ANDREA

(Pulling the money back)

I'll keep the money.

SPIT

(Pulling the money bag)

Just a coupla thou to fix me bike.

HORACE

Oh, for goodness' sake!

(He slaps SPIT'S hands off
the money bag)

Where is this place?

ANDREA

It's the old deserted warehouse on
Erskine Street.

HORACE

Okay then, let's go. Let's get this
over and done with before I lose my
nerve. Pa! I've got a job to do.
I'll be back in an hour!...God
willing.

HORACE, SPIT and ANDREA LEAVE. As they leave...

SPIT

You're a great pal, Horace.

HORACE

Can't you sound more sincere?

SPIT

I'm doing my best.

ANDREA

Sincerity doesn't come naturally to Spit.

SPIT

Yeah...what?

GIACOBBE

See? See? They are going to kill me. My son will be an orphan. Serves him right!

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Pull yourself together, Jacob. They're not going to kill you. This is more serious than that.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. AN OLD DERELICT WAREHOUSE - A SHORT TIME LATER.

(BULL, JINX, DRAGO, HORACE, SPIT, ANDREA, VICTORIA, MRS WILSON-SMITH, GIACOBBE)

Dark and shadowy. Mostly empty with several stacks of cartons in various locations.

A black cat, **JINX**, trots across an open space and disappears.

BULL is restacking some cartons oblivious to HORACE, SPIT and ANDREA as they tippy-toe in. BULL leaves to get some more cartons.

HORACE, SPIT and ANDREA cross the open space bunched together, all senses alerted, terrified. They disappear into the shadows.

BULL re-enters carrying a carton. He dumps it on the stack. He hears a sound and whips around to see JINX. It trots up to BULL and rubs itself against his leg.

BULL

Jinx. How you doing, puss? Been a good widdle pussy while I was away? Off you go, daddy's got work to do.

JINX wanders off into the shadows.

BULL leaves to get another carton.

Angle on a SHADOWY FIGURE and the glint of metal - a gun?

HORACE, ANDREA and SPIT stumble back into view looking about and unsettled.

HORACE
(Whisper)
So where is this guy?

SPIT
Why don't we just call him?
(He takes a lung-full of
air but is stopped)

HORACE
No! We don't want to frighten him.
Gently. Quietly.

ANDREA
I'm scared. I want to go home.

HORACE
It's okay. Nothing to be scared of.
Nothing.
(Horace snaps to, eyes
popping)
I hope that's you.

ANDREA
What?

HORACE
Rubbing against my leg?

ANDREA
Horace! I'm not like that.

HORACE
(Sharp intake of breath,
looks down)
Agh! A black cat!

JINX runs off. SPIT jumps back.

SPIT
Gimme the gun! Gimme the gun!

ANDREA
Don't!

HORACE is petrified.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
Horace. It's okay. It was only a
cat.

HORACE
A black cat.

SPIT
Would've been a dead cat...

ANDREA
(To HORACE)
You're not superstitious?

HORACE
No. I...I'm allergic to...black
cats.

A noise from O.S.

HORACE (CONT'D)
Hide!

They duck behind a stack of cartons.

SPIT
Why are we hiding? I thought we was
supposed to talk to this goober.

HORACE
To regroup.

BULL re-enters with another carton and stacks it. They peer
from around their hidey-stack.

ANDREA
Oh, mummy, he's big.

SPIT
Friggin huge.

HORACE is overwhelmed.

SPIT (CONT'D)
(Pushing HORACE)
Well, go and talk to him.

HORACE
No, wait, wait, wait. Let's think
about it.

SPIT
What's to think? Your plan is
brilliant. Talk to the guy. Where's
the gun?

SPIT frisks HORACE. HORACE squirms with ticklishness. SPIT
retrieves the gun from HORACE.

SPIT (CONT'D)
Here. Hold it up so he can see it.

HORACE

I don't want the gun.

They push the gun back and forth between them.

ANDREA

What are you doing? Put the gun away.

SPIT

No, if he sees a bulge in your jacket, he'll think you're armed.

HORACE

And if it's in my hand, he won't?

SPIT

(Holding the gun)

Trust me, I know guys like him. Show em a gun an they'll show you respect.

BULL

Yeah? You mean like this?

They turn to see BULL, gun in hand and pointed at them.

They scream. Panic. SPIT thrusts the gun into HORACE'S hand.

SPIT

Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I got a wife an Chihuahua!

He cowers behind HORACE. ANDREA pushes her way in between SPIT and HORACE. They peer out from behind HORACE.

BULL

Shut up! Keep still! Who the hell are you, The Keystone Kops?

HORACE

Cops?! Cops? No! No!

BULL

Stop waving that gun around.

HORACE

Ooo! Ooo! Sorry. Listen, we just want to talk.

BULL

Okay, tell me what you're doing here.

Angle on the SHADOWY FIGURE listening.

HORACE

Um, my friend and colleague, here,
Spit, um, he sort of, um, he
thought you were a cat and, um, he
sort of, um...would you mind
putting that thing away?

BULL

You're talking but you ain't saying
nothing. It's good you're all lined
up like that. Only need one bullet.

SPIT and ANDREA react and jump out from behind HORACE.

They realise they are exposed and regroup in behind HORACE.

BULL (CONT'D)

Now talk sense!

Angle on a SECOND SHADOWY FIGURE, apparently clutching a gun.

HORACE

Okay, okay, okay. Some guy hired
Spit to...how can I put it -

SPIT

Kill you! Rub you out, exterminate
you. Job a feral.

HORACE

Thanks, Spit. You can stop now. We
don't want him to use his bullet.

BULL

Drago.

HORACE

Look, we don't want hurt anyone.
It's all been a big
misunderstanding. We just came here
to give you the money and the gun
and go home.

ANDREA

Here's the money.

DRAGO

Morons!

DRAGO jumps out and trains his gun on BULL and then on HORACE
and back again.

DRAGO (CONT'D)

You idiots!

ANDREA, HORACE and SPIT react. ANDREA and SPIT realign
themselves behind HORACE.

The SECOND SHADOWY FIGURE moves around.

BULL

(Gun on DRAGO)

Drago. I see the face fairy has visited upon you. Does it hurt? Hope so, my fists do.

DRAGO

(Gun on BULL)

You're dead meat, Bull.

HORACE

(Gun on DRAGO)

No! Wait! You can't shoot him.

DRAGO

(Gun on HORACE)

Why not? This is a gun. It's loaded. Watch.

(Gun on BULL)

HORACE

No! We can work it out. There's no need to shoot. All we have to do is talk about what's upsetting you. Calmly.

DRAGO and BULL look at each other and then train their guns on HORACE.

HORACE (CONT'D)

Then again...maybe you two should settle things on your own.

BULL

(Gun on DRAGO)

You hired these clowns to kill me?

SPIT

(Timid)

Clowns?

ANDREA

(Soft)

That's a bit rough.

DRAGO

(Gun on BULL)

You beat me up! You threatened to kill me!

SPIT

(To ANDREA)

Shoulda seen his face. Pizza topping.

BULL
You invaded my turf. Stole my
business.

ANDREA
Ooo, not nice.

DRAGO
I had the goods, you didn't. Supply
and demand, mate.

ANDREA
Good business principle.

HORACE
(To ANDREA)
Quiet.

DRAGO
No, she's right. I was able to
supply when Bull wasn't.
(To BULL)
Your customers came to me, I didn't
go to them.

BULL
That's right! My customers. Mine.

DRAGO
What? Are they married to you? They
can't buy off someone else?

HORACE
The solution seems quite simple,
really -

Startled, BULL and DRAGO train their guns on HORACE. He
reacts.

HORACE (CONT'D)
Easy...easy...

BULL
You still playing with that?

HORACE begins to shake violently.

DRAGO
They say you should never point a
gun -

BULL
Unless you intend to use it.

DRAGO
Do you intend to use it?

SPIT

Friggin oath! He ain't scared of a couple of fatheads like youse!

ANDREA

Shut up, Spit. Horace is trembling so hard I can hear his teeth rattling.

BULL

So what's it going to be?

HORACE

How...how about...we all put our...guns down...together?

BULL

I'm not putting mine down until he puts his down.

(Gun on DRAGO)

DRAGO

(Gun on BULL)

Uh-ha. You first.

BULL

Uh-ha, no way. Bozo, Bimbo and Boofhead are just dopey enough to shoot.

SPIT

Who's Fathead calling Bimbo?

ANDREA

Me, you're Boofhead.

Beat.

VICTORIA, dressed head-to-toe in tight-fitting black lycra and her hair pulled back into a bun, jumps out, mobile phone in hand, ready to punch the call button.

VICTORIA

For chrissake! Give the gun to Boofhead so I can call the police!

BULL

Who the hell are you!? What the hell is this, open house?

DRAGO

Wow...

SPIT

Gor...

ANDREA

Maaa-meee...

HORACE

Oh my god...

VICTORIA

What are you all gawking at?

(To HORACE)

Are you dribbling?

HORACE

(Wiping his mouth)

No, no.

ANDREA

Victoria, what are you doing here?

VICTORIA

That's what I was about to ask you.

Get out here.

ANDREA dislodges himself from behind HORACE.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

(To ANDREA)

What are you and Maurice up to?

HORACE

Horace.

VICTORIA

(To SPIT)

You were supposed to be here alone.

(Re BULL)

With him! You're supposed to shoot each other.

(To DRAGO)

Who are you?

DRAGO

Um...um...I'm Drago...

BULL

Hold it! Hold it!

(To VICTORIA)

What are you doing here, lady? Who the hell are you anyway?

VICTORIA

(Going toe to toe with

BULL)

Don't you talk to me like that, you fat son of a pig or your life expectancy will be measured in minutes!

ANDREA

Victoria, no!

BULL

Is that so, lady? I've got a gun.
You've got a phone. Yours will
cause brain damage in forty years,
mine will take but a second...

(He raises his gun to
VICTORIA)

HORACE

Nooooo...!

HORACE rushes towards BULL. Mayhem breaks loose!

HORACE tackles BULL each managing to grab hold of each
other's gun hand.

VICTORIA'S phone is knocked out of her hand and is kicked
away by the scuffling BULL and HORACE. She goes on all fours
looking for it.

ANDREA rushes towards HORACE to help but is grabbed by DRAGO.

DRAGO

Gimme me money!

SPIT rushes to help ANDREA.

SPIT

Hey! Let go of her, slime ball!

DRAGO

You drongo!

SPIT and DRAGO fight and Spit manages to get hold of DRAGO'S
gun hand.

ANDREA latches on to DRAGO'S clothes screaming.

HORACE has his arms and legs wrapped around BULL and is
clinging on for life. BULL is trying to shake him off.

BULL

Get off me, you octopus! Let go!

MRS WILSON-SMITH

(Stamping her foot)

That will be enough!

MRS WILSON-SMITH and GIACOBBE have come in unseen by the
melee-makers. MRS WILSON-SMITH is disgusted. GIACOBBE is
astonished.

The fight stops immediately: HORACE still clinging to BULL;
SPIT in DRAGO'S headlock; ANDREA pulling on DRAGO'S clothing;
VICTORIA with her bottom stuck in the air.

MRS WILSON-SMITH (CONT'D)
You ought to be ashamed of
yourselves. Grown men and women
behaving like children! Just look
at you!

(She goes to DRAGO)
Let go of him dear, I'm sure that's
not very comfortable for him.

(To SPIT)
Are you all right, dear?

SPIT
Yeah, thanks.

SPIT punches DRAGO in the guts. DRAGO doubles over.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Stop that.
(She grabs SPIT'S ear)

SPIT
Ow, ow, ow, ow...

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Go and stand in the corner until
you know how to behave.

SHE takes DRAGO'S gun from him.

MRS WILSON-SMITH (CONT'D)
And I'll have that. Jacob.

She gives the gun to GIACOBBE.

MRS WILSON-SMITH (CONT'D)
(To ANDREA)
And you, Andrea, screaming like a
banshee. Not very ladylike.

ANDREA
I'm sorry.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
That's all right. I know you'll do
better next time, dear.

She goes to HORACE.

MRS WILSON-SMITH (CONT'D)
You can let go of him now, dear.
I'm sure he'd like to breathe.

HORACE
Would you get his gun first,
please, Mrs Dub?

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Of course. Let go, please. Thank
you. Jacob.

(She hands both HORACE'S
and BULL'S gun to
GIACOBBE)

HORACE climbs off BULL and backs off as BULL catches his
breath.

VICTORIA locates her phone and begins to dial.

MRS WILSON-SMITH takes the phone from her.

MRS WILSON-SMITH (CONT'D)
We don't really want the police
involved now do we, dear?

(She studies the
dishevelled group)

I must say that I am thoroughly
disappointed in each and every one
of you.

(To BULL)

And you, I know you. Billy Johnson
isn't it? You showed such promise
in primary school. How did you get
involved with all this illegal
activity?

BULL

Just sort of fell into it, Mrs
Wilson-Smith. Just one of them
things.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
"Those" things, Billy, "those."
(To DRAGO)

And what about you, Serge
Dragonovitch, what excuse do you
have? You and Billy used play
together.

DRAGO

If he could do it, I could do it.
Easy money.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Nothing worthwhile is easy, Serge.
Your parents would be so
disappointed. Now, why don't you
and Billy make up and be friends.
I'm sure there's enough business
for the both of you. Perhaps you
could form a partnership like you
did when you were boys. Batman and
Robin, the Lone Ranger and Tonto...

BULL

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

DRAGO

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.

SPIT

Dumb and Dumber.

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Archibald!

(To DRAGO)

Take your money and put it to a
good cause.

DRAGO takes the paper bag from ANDREA. He looks at BULL.

Beat.

BULL

Let's talk.

THEY go off.

HORACE

Whew! Thanks, Mrs Dub. Got a bit
hairy, there.

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Oh, it's not finished yet. You
three, what possessed you to take
the job, take the money and then
try to talk yourselves out of it?
What devil made you do it? Greed?

HORACE, ANDREA and SPIT look at each other guilt-ridden and
repentant.

GIACOBBE

(Reflective)

No.

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Glory?

GIACOBBE

No.

MRS WILSON-SMITH

Stupidity?

GIACOBBE

Bingo!

MRS WILSON-SMITH

You could have gotten yourselves
killed or, worse still,
(Going to VICTORIA)
(MORE)

MRS WILSON-SMITH (CONT'D)
gaoled! Which brings me to you,
Miss Victoria.

VICTORIA
(Defiant)
What about me.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
You should be helping your
colleagues not hindering them.
Horace just risked his life for
you. A little gratitude wouldn't go
amiss.

SPIT
Don't ask for cash.

VICTORIA
(Derisive snort)
Give me my phone.
(To SPIT)
You're still in my sights, my
perverted, extortionist friend.

SPIT reacts with feigned innocence as VICTORIA swaggers off
sneering. HORACE and ANDREA look at each other baffled.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
That young lady has a lot of anger
in her.

JINX jumps onto a carton and meows.

MRS WILSON-SMITH (CONT'D)
Oh, what a little sweetie.

GIACOBBE
Arg! Un gatto nero!

HORACE
It's okay, pa.

ANDREA
I see your allergy is hereditary.

MRS WILSON-SMITH
Righto, not that any of you deserve
it, but who's for some bread and
butter pudding? I have it right
here.

She picks up a nearby bag containing the pan.

HORACE
I'm in!

ANDREA
Me too.

MRS WILSON-SMITH, HORACE and ANDREA leave.

GIACOBBE is stopped by SPIT.

SPIT

Give us a lend of them guns.

GIACOBBE gives him the three guns and leaves.

Beat.

SPIT (CONT'D)

Here, kitty, kitty, kitty.

FADE OUT.

INT. SOLOMON AND SOLOMON GENERAL OFFICE - THE NEXT MORNING.
(HORACE, ANDREA, SPIT, MR SOLOMON, VICTORIA)

HORACE and ANDREA are at their respective desks. HORACE reads from the Mission Statement on the wall:

HORACE

One mistake doesn't make you a loser.

(To ANDREA)

How many does it take to make a Spit? And extortion? What was that all about?

SPIT comes in with a black eye, scratches down his face and sore ribs.

ANDREA

What...?

SPIT

Don't ask!

HORACE

Those look like scratch marks from a...

SPIT

Shut up!

ANDREA

Why are you bent over?

HORACE

How did you get the black eye?

SPIT

Friggin bloody cat!

ANDREA

Sweet, little Jinx gave you a black eye?

SPIT

No, sweet, little Jinx's daddy give me the black eye. I went back to...say goodbye...to that stupid cat when Bull come out an decked me. Then Drago got stuck into me when I was down and that bloody, friggin, sweet, little Jinx grabbed my face and used it for a scratching pole.

HORACE

Serves you right!

ANDREA

It's called Karma.

SPIT

Like to run over that bloody cat with my Karma.

HORACE

What was Victoria on about when she called you an extortionist?

SPIT

Nuthin. How should I know? Her brain's as twisted as the lazzo in a hooker's knickers.

MR SOLOMON, carrying his briefcase in one hand, comes in peering at a photo he is carrying in the other.

HORACE

Mr Solomon. Are you okay there?

MR SOLOMON

I don't remember posing for this photo with Victoria.

HORACE

Let's see. Oh my god!

ANDREA

What is it?
(She looks over HORACE'S
shoulder)
Oh my...!

HORACE

Where did you get this?

MR SOLOMON

Oh...can't recall...way up the back...under some papers...in a drawer...Victoria's...I think...

ANDREA

Spit, this is your handiwork.

SPIT

Oh yeah, s'good, ain't it?

MR SOLOMON

Funny, I don't remember you being there. I don't remember me being there. But I do photograph well, don't I?

HORACE

Yes, you both have a nice, even tan all over.

(To SPIT)

Um, do you have any extras?

ANDREA

I wouldn't mind one...

VICTORIA comes in and heads towards her office.

VICTORIA

Get to work.

ANDREA

(To SPIT, whisper)

Can you put black leather boots on mine?

END OF ACT TWO.

TAG

FADE IN:

INT. DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT
(GIACOBBE, HORACE, BLACK CAT)

The large, empty room is almost devoid of any light. There is a foggy mist swirling about. Visibility is down arms-length.

GIACOBBE is running, running, running but getting nowhere as if he were invisibly tethered to the spot. He appears anguished and fearful.

HORACE is blindly walking about through the fog, feeling his way with outstretched arms.

HORACE
Mamma! Mamma...mamma!

HORACE bumps into GIACOBBE.

HORACE (CONT'D)	GIACOBBE
(Scream)	(Scream)
Arrrgh!	Arrrgh!

They recognise each other and lock in a tight embrace.

A noise O.S. - soft padding footfalls.

The turn to the sound, senses heightened, very afraid.

Slowly, from the mist, a small dark creature emerges - the BLACK CAT.

GIACOBBE'S and HORACE'S eyes widen. They open their mouths but they are dumb-struck.

The BLACK CAT approaches them slowly, slowly, with each step, father and son become more and more terrified.

Suddenly, the BLACK CAT morphs into a huge BLACK PANTHER and pounces on them with a mighty roar!

SMASH CUT TO

INT. HORACE'S LOUNGE ROOM - LATE NIGHT
(HORACE, GIACOBBE)

HORACE and GIACOBBE shoot up into frame, faces a rictus of fear and sweat covering their brows and upper lips.

The sounds and flickering lights of a forgotten television in the background slowly fill the darkened room.

They look at each other. They rub their sleepy eyes.

GIACOBBE

Gatto...nero?

HORACE

Black cat...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE

ITALIAN DIALOGUE FROM PAGE 1:

VIOLCA

Il Matto.
[The Fool.]

The BLACK CAT paws another card. VIOLCA turns it.

VIOLCA (CONT'D)

Il Carro.
[The Chariot.]

The BLACK CAT paws a third card and VIOLCA turns it.

VIOLCA (CONT'D)

L'Appeso.
[The Hanged Man.]

The BLACK CAT paws the fourth.

VIOLCA (CONT'D)

(Turning the last)
Nooo...La Morte.
[Nooo...Death.]
Lo sai cosa significa, papà?
[You know what this means, daddy?]

STEVO

Che quell'imbecile si è impiccato
quando è caduto dal carro, fuggendo
da noi. Magari.
[That that imbecile hanged himself
when he fell off the chariot trying
to escape from us. I wish.]

VIOLCA

No! Significa si ch'è fuggito e che
non lo troveremo più, papà. Non
ritorneranno mai più. Papà, voglio
il mio figlio!
[No! It means he has escaped and we
will never find him, daddy. They
will never return. Daddy, I want my
son!]

STEVO

Sia tranquilla, Violca, li troverò.
Non c'è nessun posto da nascondere.
[Rest assured, Violca, I'll find
them. There is no place to hide.]

The BLACK CAT stands up, alert and agitated.