

This Way Out of Brooklyn

A play by

Michael Serrian

michaelserrian@hotmail.com
10061 Riverside Dr. #265
Toluca Lake, CA 91602
www.thiswayoutofbrooklyn.com
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Tony.....Older brother, Italian-American (44)

Mikey.....Younger brother, Italian-American (34)

Aphrodite.....Tony’s “Forbidden Fruit” girlfriend (20-ish)

Frankie.....Hired killer, Italian-American (in his 50s)

Time: 1999. Summer. 24-hour period from morning to the following morning.

Place: Tony and Aphrodite’s small rental house in Venice, California.

The Set: Breakaway set featuring small mid-century house. On the left is living room with sofa and chair. There’s a picture window with venetian blinds on the left wall. Next to window is the front door with peephole that opens into living room. A small bar with two stools is nestled in corner. There is a fake Persian rug in the middle of the floor. Then there is doorway to back bedroom and bathroom. The kitchen is to the right of the living room. There is tacky animal print décor scattered through out. A large photo of the Brooklyn Bridge hangs on the wall above the sofa.

Additional breakaway sets: Small bedroom comprised solely of queen-sized bed with canopy-style mosquito netting perched above like a spider’s web. Outside “schoolyard court” comprised simply of a freestanding chain-link fence area on pavement.

ACT I

- Scene 1: Tony's house; morning
- Scene 2: Living room; late morning
- Scene 3: Living room and kitchen; noon
- Scene 4: Kitchen; afternoon
- Scene 5: Bedroom; evening
- Scene 6: School yard basketball court; night
- Scene 7: Living room; 1 a.m.

Act II:

- Scene 1: Living room; 3 a.m.
- Scene 2: Living room, 4:30 a.m.
- Scene 3: Bedroom; later
- Scene 4: Bedroom; 5:30 a.m.
- Scene 5: Living room and kitchen; 7 a.m.
- Scene 6: Bedroom; later
- Scene 7: Kitchen; breakfast
- Scene 8: Bedroom; later
- Scene 9: Living room; morning
- Scene 10: Living room; late morning

Act I

SCENE 1

(The lights rise on TONY sitting on a bar stool reading a newspaper with his back to the room. He's wearing a Hawaiian shirt and shorts with flip-flops on his feet. Suddenly, MIKEY enters the house quietly. He's dressed in a suit and carries a metal briefcase in one hand, a six pack of beer in the other hand. An expensive leather duffle bag is swung over his shoulder.)

MIKEY

I buried our father yesterday.

(TONY looks up from the newspaper. His back is still to MIKEY.)

TONY

Jesus, Mikey, you almost scared me to death.

(TONY turns to face MIKEY.)

MIKEY

Mom was looking for you, Tony. She was wondering where her oldest son was on the day of his father's funeral.

TONY

Shit...what is it, like 2,500 miles away?

MIKEY

Tell me about it. I've just come from the airport; I caught the red eye out of JFK.

TONY

Y'know how it was between him and me.

MIKEY

Still, Tony.

TONY

Yeah, yeah, I know the drill.

MIKEY

We buried him in that old Catholic cemetery where we planted Grandpa. Saint somethin' or another. Remember?

TONY

Sure. Stuck in the middle of that rat's nest.

MIKEY

Not anymore. Now you can't afford the rent in that neighborhood.

(TONY rises, gestures with his hand.)

TONY

Come in, come in, you wanna beer, Coke?

MIKEY

I came prepared.

(MIKEY holds up the six-pack of beer while TONY awkwardly embraces him.)

TONY

Crack a deuce and sit your ass down.

(MIKEY places the briefcase and duffle bag on the floor, then follows TONY into the kitchen. (Briefcase will remain conspicuously in same spot through Scene 7.) MIKEY removes his suit jacket and drapes it on the back of the kitchen chair. He undoes his tie and sits down. MIKEY and TONY open their beers.)

MIKEY

Is it always this hot out here?

TONY

C'mon, it's the summer. It's hot everywhere. Less humid out here than Brooklyn for chrissakes.

MIKEY

I really can't believe this place.

TONY

(waves his arms around as he "presents" his surroundings)

It's not so bad; it has character.

MIKEY

I mean the city. Y'know, the fuckin' palm trees and all.

TONY

Whattaya mean the palm trees? What's wrong with palm trees? I like the fuckin' palm trees.

MIKEY

They're not even native here.

TONY

I don't give a fuck. Native? Nuthin' out here is native. Hell, when I think of Brooklyn I think of brown brick buildings and everything is...like, old --

MIKEY
 -- it's called charmin' --

TONY
 -- out here everything is more, y'know, new and colorful.

MIKEY
 But don't you miss the seasons?

TONY
 We have seasons out here, too - summer and not summer.

MIKEY
 Yeah, yeah, yeah...I assume you got my voicemail...that I was comin' out and all...the change of plans. You should've picked up the phone. I didn't want to leave a message for obvious reasons.

TONY
 Don't worry, I erased it.

(Long pause.)

MIKEY
(settles back in chair, sighing.)
 Mom, she just doesn't understand, Tony.

(TONY shrugs, tossing back his beer, pacing anxiously.)

MIKEY (Cont'd.)
 She doesn't seem to know what went down between you and the old man.

(TONY stops and peers intently at MIKEY.)

TONY
 She knows very well what went down!

MIKEY
 Tony, Tony, we're family here.

TONY
Family. *(beat)* Fuck that shit.

MIKEY
 C'mon, you said you were going to be there.

TONY
 Ah, I thought about it.

MIKEY

Yeah, and then what happened? We had a plan.

TONY

Well...it's just...I'm not very liquid right now.

(MIKEY waves a dismissive hand, shakes his head.)

MIKEY

What a piece of work.

TONY

Hey!

MIKEY

Okay, okay, what's your *scam du jour*?

TONY

It ain't no scam; it's legit.

MIKEY

Uh-huh.

TONY

(*righteous*)

I'm a businessman here.

MIKEY

Of course you are. Just like the old man was a businessman.

TONY

No, that prick was a loser!

MIKEY

Like I said.

TONY

Fuck you!

MIKEY

All the same...you should've showed up.

TONY

Enough already. I was there...in spirit.

MIKEY

In spirit? Ha! You didn't return any of my phone calls after it went down. What was I supposed to think, Tony?

TONY

I was...busy. Running the business and all. Y'know how it is.

MIKEY

Speaking of which, what is this new business of yours?

TONY

I'm...a...manager.

MIKEY

A manager? Whattaya mean? Like for a restaurant? A bar or some shit?

(beat)

TONY

Hmmmm...money.

MIKEY

(smiling)

A money manager? You're a money manager? Now I've heard everything.

TONY

Me and a couple, three other guys, eh - businessmen - are managin'...a mutual fund.

MIKEY

(laughs)

Ha! Are you serious?

TONY

(intensely)

Like a heart attack.

(Suddenly, the bathroom door opens and APHRODITE pads in holding a bath towel against her still wet, naked body. A knockout, she's obviously very immodest about showing off her assets -- her whole backside is exposed. She comes over to TONY to hug him as MIKEY stands, gives her the once over, and takes the whole scene in.)

MIKEY

(to APHRODITE)

Well, hello.

(to TONY)

Who's this?

APHRODITE

The *femme fatale*.

TONY

Mikey, this is Aphrodite. *(beat)* Aphrodite, this is my baby brother, Mikey, from Brooklyn.

MIKEY

Nice to meet you...Aphrodite.

APHRODITE

Nice to meet you, baby brother, Mikey, from Brooklyn. I don't see much of a resemblance except the olive complexion and bad disposition.

MIKEY

With dad we could never be sure if we shared the same mother.

APHRODITE

Your family seems so...charming.

MIKEY

Aphrodite...is that your real name or a stage name?

TONY

(annoyed)

Aphrodite is my assistant.

MIKEY

Does she get paid by the hour or the trick?

TONY

Don't go there, baby brother.

(APHRODITE comes closer to MIKEY, sizing him up.)

APHRODITE

Why, you're a regular Prince Charming, aren't you?

MIKEY

I've been told.

APHRODITE

You're the normal one. The married one. The one with the two-point-five kids, and the pretty wife, and the two Caddies and the brownstone in the Heights --

MIKEY

-- are you psychic or has my brother been talking about me? --

APHRODITE

-- the one who took over the family business. Whattaya call 'em -- pizza palaces?

MIKEY

Pizza parlors...pizzerias...Italian restaurants. All owned and operated by people of Italian extraction. Unlike the tofu pizza shitholes out here. We don't make pizza back home with ham and pineapple on it for heaven's sake. We make pizza with freshly grated mozzarella and parmesan cheeses, and a rich, tangy tomato gravy --

TONY

-- sauce --

MIKEY

-- it's gravy, not sauce!

TONY

I'm interpretin' here.

MIKEY

There's a difference.

(beat.)

Tomato gravy. All on a fine, thin, crispy crust that melts in your mouth. I'm not talkin' that deep-dish Chicago shit that looks like a pan of after-birth. I'm talkin' real pizza here.

APHRODITE

Why, I never knew pizza could bring out such passion in a man.

TONY

You don't know my family.

APHRODITE

I don't think I want to know your family.

(MIKEY sits down while APHRODITE slinks into the bedroom to get dressed. She doesn't bother to close the door. MIKEY has a front-row seat to her "Dresssing" performance.)

MIKEY

(eyes peeled on her)

Nice.

TONY

Hands off!

MIKEY

My hands aren't anywhere near her.

TONY

I mean your eyes, too.

(MIKEY watches her intently, oblivious to TONY.)

MIKEY

It's a lot like strippin', only backwards.

TONY

I said eyes off!

MIKEY

(facing his brother.)

What street corner did you find her on?

TONY

For your information, she has an MBA.

MIKEY
Yeah, I'll say - Major Bodily Assets.

TONY
I'm serious.

MIKEY
So am I.

TONY
Listen, she's helping me attract potential investors.

MIKEY
Hey, I'm all hot and bothered to invest.

TONY
This is a serious business venture.

MIKEY
Can I call my broker and invest in your business? By the way, what's the name of this mutual fund of yours? *(beat)* The Pyramid Fund?
(laughs)

TONY
Ha-ha. You crack me up. At least, I'm starting up my own business.

MIKEY
What kind of fund is it?

TONY
Huh?

MIKEY
Y'know -- conservative, moderate, aggressive?

TONY
I would have to say aggressive.

MIKEY
Uh-huh, high risk, I bet.

TONY
I know what you're trying to do.

MIKEY
What am I trying to do?

TONY
Keep me down. Your big brother, the one you supposed to look up to, all you ever did was try and knock me down in front of mom and dad. You are one fuckin' over-achiever who has to show me up any chance you get.

MIKEY
That's not true. I can't help being who I am.

TONY

The better son. The more successful son. The son who stuck it out with them regardless. The son who gave them their friggin' grandkids.

MIKEY

My, you sound bitter. You had the same opportunities I did. We just went our separate ways.

(APHRODITE returns wearing a skimpy bikini. TONY eyes her disapprovingly.)

TONY

What's this? You call that dressed?

APHRODITE

(cranky)

What? It's too hot to wear clothes.

TONY

Put on a pair of shorts or somethin'. We have company, for chrissakes.

(With a huff, APHRODITE turns and wiggles her ass at them before stomping off to the bedroom, slamming the door.)

TONY

Sometimes she's a handful.

MIKEY

I have to admit, your new business venture has great assets!

LIGHTS DOWN.