

Easy Money

by

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CHARACTERS

TRUDI	30s to 40s.
STEPHEN SHARP	40s.
TREVOR	Building Manager of The Cutlass Apartments.
NIGEL DE LACEY	Estate agent
SIR ROBERT KINGSWOOD	Former company director. Mayoral candidate. Resident of The Cutlass. Very rich.
CATHERINE	Recently widowed resident of The Cutlass. Very rich.
BISHOP	Of Apocalypse Fundamentalist Church
SYLVIA	Ageing widow
PETER	65 or more. Another new arrival at The Cutlass along with his wife. Very rich.
IVANA	New to New Zealand. Russian/Eastern European. At least twenty years younger than Peter. One assumes she has married him for his money and security.

THE SET

MAIN ROOM OF MODERN HARBOURFRONT APARTMENT.
BACK WALL IS PRACTICAL BALCONY, TWO CHAIRS ON IT.
SUGGESTION OF HARBOUR VIEW. BALCONY EXTENDS TO EITHER SIDE
AS IT CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THE TWO BEDROOMS.
BEDROOM DOORS EITHER SIDE OF BALCONY.
MASTER BEDROOM (ONE USED MOST OFTEN) IS STAGE RIGHT

DOOR LEADING TO BATHROOM.

OPPOSITE IS OPEN KITCHEN (DON'T SEE THIS, JUST ACCESS)

FURNISHINGS INCLUDE A CIRCULAR DINING TABLE WITH CHAIRS.
A SOFA.

ONE OR TWO CASUAL ARMCHAIRS.
A TV, SCREEN UNSEEN BY AUDIENCE.

ON ONE WALL, A COLIN MCCAHERN PAINTING.

FRONT DOOR TO APARTMENT WITH SPY HOLE IN IT. DOOR OPENS
INWARDS SO WE CAN READ "6C" ON IT.

BESIDE THE DOOR A MONITOR FOR INMATES TO SEE WHO IS CALLING
FROM OUTSIDE THE BUILDING. THERE IS A BUZZER FOR CALLS
FROM OUTSIDE. A BELL FOR THOSE IN THE CORRIDOR USING THE
DOOR.

FROM FRONT OF STAGE, PEOPLE CAN LOOK DOWN OUTSIDE TO SEE
WHOSE CARS ARE ARRIVING OR DEPARTING.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE DAY 1 THURSDAY

APARTMENT IS EMPTY.
BLINDS COVERING BALCONY ARE PULLED DOWN.

TREVOR, THE APARTMENTS' MANAGER, ENTERS USING
KEY FROM A BUNCH HANGING FROM HIS BELT.

SHARP AND TRUDI FOLLOW. EACH PULLING A CASE,
PLUS HAND BAGGAGE.

TREVOR IS HOLDING A COUPLE OF LISTS.

HE RAISES BLINDS TO REVEAL THE BALCONY.
SUGGESTION OF HARBOUR VIEW.

SHARP AND TRUDI ADMIRE THE VIEW.

TRUDI Nice.

TREVOR Across the water, Seafarer Apartments.
Identical to these. I manage those as well.
Through here. Master bedroom. Ensuite, of
course. TV. Sky decoder in there as well as
here so no quarrels over the remote.

TRUDI AND SHARP DUMP THEIR HAND LUGGAGE. SHARP
TAKES THEIR SUITCASES IN THE BEDROOM.

TREVOR She's left you a few lists.
List of other residents' names and numbers,
should you need to contact them. Wifi password
for Cutlass.

Air BNB--in fact any form of sub-letting-- is
against the rules of living in The Cutlass. But
a lot of people do it. So if anyone asks,
you're cousins of Cynthia's from Sydney, all
right? "House-sitting as a favour."

TRUDI And where is...?

TREVOR Cynthia...?

TRUDI If we're her cousins, we'd know, wouldn't we.

TREVOR Ah. Her last big trip visiting relatives in
England.

HE INDICATES BOARD THAT HAS KEYS ON HOOKS.

TRUDI These are...?

TREVOR Keys for the mailbox by the entrance. Not much
these days, junk mostly.

HE HAS A FEW ENVELOPES WHICH HE HAS COLLECTED.
PUTS THEM ON BENCH

Front doorbell to the apartment sounds like
this. HE DEMONSTRATES Not that you'll get many
callers. Ah! If someone from outside, they ring
the number at the gate. You can see them on the
monitor. You press that to let them into the
complex. Tell them to come up to the sixth.
Right. That seems to be it. CHECKS HIS WATCH
Coffee time.

HE OPENS A CUPBOARD AND GETS OUT BOTTLE OF GIN.

TREVOR Too early for...? WAVING THE BOTTLE

SHARP Why not?

OFFERS TREVOR A CIGARETTE, WHICH HE ACCEPTS.

TREVOR Forgot to say. INDICATING THE CONDITIONS
No smoking, of course.

TREVOR POURS THREE GLASSES.

TRUDI IS LOOKING AT THE LIST OF RESIDENTS

TRUDI Sir Robert Kingswood?

TREVOR Next door. The bugger's worth millions. His
main place is up the coast. Plus a bach on
Coromandel. He's the Body Corp chairman. In
other words, he's my boss. Pain in the arse. I
didn't say that. Catherine, above you, she's on
the Body Corp, too. Took her husband's place
when he died last year.

TRUDI "Sir" Robert?

TREVOR Knighted for donations to the National Party. He was on the board of several companies. Now on City Council. Fancies himself as the next mayor. He'll come knocking at the door, pretext of welcoming you, but really, just to have snoop.

So...four weeks in Auckland. Business or pleasure?

SHARP] Pleasure.

TRUDI] Business.

SHARP LOOKS ANGRILY AT TRUDI

SHARP Officially holiday; unofficially business. I don't suppose it matters much, but we scope out potential property deals for a group of Sydney investors. We've put together deals over there; now the group wants us to see what might work in Auckland.

TRUDI I shouldn't have said anything.

SHARP Just that once people know what you're up to, suddenly the asking price shoots up.

TRUDI So we beg you, please don't say anything.

TREVOR Absolutely. Safe with me.

TRUDI Thanks. You live on site?

TREVOR Goes with the job. Essential, really. On call 24/7. Soooo. Four weeks. If you're into sport, quite a good time. One dayer against Pakistan on Sunday if you're into cricket.

TRUDI Steve is.

TREVOR Trouble is, these days, who knows, how a game's going to go?

TREVOR'S PHONE RINGS.

TREVOR Trevor. LISTENS You guys said you weren't coming till this afternoon!!! Right. Right. Stay there. I'll be down. RINGS OFF Have to go. Another couple moving in today. Some old bloke and his Russian "bride", ho ho. No fool like an old fool. She's looking for residency, wouldn't you say? Anything you want, don't ask. LAUGHS.

EXITS

TRUDI AND SHARP CAN RELAX NOW HE'S GONE.

THEY DO BITS OF UNPACKING FROM HAND BAGGAGE. PUT ONTO THE TABLE THEIR PASSPORTS. THEY EACH HAVE THREE.

THEY ARE BOTH CONNECTING THEIR LAPTOPS AND PHONES TO THE WIFI NUMBER.

PAUSE

TRUDI SUDDENLY LOOKS VERY TIRED

TRUDI Last time I'm doing this.

SHARP Doing what?

TRUDI This! All this.

SHARP This is news to me!

TRUDI Why are we here? You keep saying Auckland is pastures new. What you mean it's a bolt hole.

SHARP We're here now.

TRUDI Something you're not telling me.

SHARP I thought all this was fun.

TRUDI "Fun"? Once, maybe. I mean this place is nice enough. But not our taste. I mean, only Kiwis would think that's art.
I'll finish the four weeks here and then I'm out of it. I mean if you won't even tell me--

SHARP OK. I had that weekend in Melbourne.

TRUDI Yes.

SHARP I went in for The Crown millions.

TRUDI You said you'd given up poker.

SHARP Yes. Well.

TRUDI I thought you couldn't enter unless you put up the money.

SHARP You can't.

TRUDI Tell me.

SHARP I was soon knocked out of the main game. But there are side games on all the time.

TRUDI If you'd lost your money, how could you--

SHARP I borrowed some! And then I had three tens. Wanted to raise, but all my money was already in the pot. A guy sitting by the table offers to lend me the money, twenty grand, I put it in, he raises me, I borrow another thirty to see him... The other guy has the third queen and I'm out.

TRUDI You were set up?

 SILENCE

TRUDI You were set up!!

SHARP All right. All right. I was set up. The bastards.

TRUDI Bit rich coming from you.

SHARP The irony is not lost on me, Trudi

TRUDI Fifty grand isn't impossible to pay off.

SHARP It is when you've signed to pay interest at 20% a week.

TRUDI The guy was a loan shark!

SHARP Well, of course!

TRUDI Is that why you sold the car?

SHARP It kept him quiet for a few days.

PAUSE

TRUDI So, how much—

SHARP Now? Right now: a hundred and seventy-three thousand, one hundred and sixty dollars.

A COUNTER APPEARS WITH THAT FIGURE IN BLACK.
\$173,160

SHARP In debt.

THE FIGURES CHANGE TO RED \$173,160

TRUDI And if we don't pay?

SHARP Don't even go there. Too horrible to think about. We need to pay it off, get a bank roll together and out of here in two weeks.

TRUDI We've booked for four!

SHARP So they won't expect us to be disappearing earlier... Which if we play our cards right, we'll almost certainly have to do.

PAUSE

TRUDI I should leave you now.

SHARP To do what?

TRUDI Anything. Have babies.

SHARP You!

TRUDI It happens. We've talked before about splitting up the team. Now could be the time—Ah!

SHE HAS FOUND SOMETHING ON THE INTERNET

"Sir Robert Kingswood. Company director.
Mm mm various boards...mm...set up mm mm
"...Married to Daphne. One son, one daughter.
On Auckland Council on the "REDUCE RATES NOW!"
ticket."

SHARP Got him. ON THE INTERNET

TRUDI Maybe I've had enough of setting blokes up.
What sort of lifestyle is it? We're on a
treadmill.

 We're just petty scammers, never pulling off
anything big enough to run away and live in
luxury.

SHARP At least this place is all set up so we can do
the cricket.

TRUDI Yes, and what will we get out of that -a few
hundred? I might do a couple of séances...
that's a few grand.

SHARP Easy money.

TRUDI No it's not! None of it's easy money. Divided
all up, it's hardly worth it. We're just
treading water.

 We've never done a biggie. Sold the Eiffel
Tower, London Bridge, or The Empire State
building.

SHARP Nearly sold the MCG to an American once. Ah!
This could be handy about Sir Bob: READS FROM
THE SCREEN "Resigned from boards for expenses
scandal, though no charges were ever laid."
Sounds like your kind of bloke.

TRUDI GRUNTS Great.

SHARP Hey! Come on. We're here now. Let's aim to
clear our debts-

TRUDI Your debts.

SHARP And walk away from here with a million.

TRUDI In two weeks!

SHARP We can do it. Then we'll decide "Where to
next?" OK?

TRUDI I suppose. PULLS HERSELF TOGETHER OK. A million
it is! You've got an internet date set up?

SHARP SIGHS Yes. "Prime singles; dating over fifty."
SHOWS HER A PHOTO ON HIS PHONE
She looked the most desperate. "Sylvia."

TRUDI Ouch.

SHARP Seeing her Friday night. SIGHS It's such hard work.

TRUDI Extracting cash out of widows? MOCKING But you're so good at it.

SUDDEN THOUGHT

How do you explain to Sylvia you're in Auckland?

SHARP As far as she's concerned, I've always been "in" Auckland. Whoever I'm lining up I'm always "in" their city. Now's Sylvia's chance to come to the party.

TRUDI Here?

SHARP Tomorrow night.

TRUDI I'll case out Sky City.

FX LANDLINE PHONE GOES

TRUDI What's the betting this is the Mayoral candidate now?
"Cynthia's phone." Oh. Yes. It's Trudi.

SHE INDICATES TO SHARP THAT IT'S NOT SIR ROBERT.

TRUDI Yes... Saturday? I'll check.

It's a Catherine. Above us. POINTS TO CEILING AND TO HER NAME ON RESIDENTS' LIST ... Warner, Trevor mentioned her--wanting to welcome us. "Her apartment's being refurbished so could we have it here...?"

SHARP "Here"??

TRUDI That's what she said.

SHARP When?

TRUDI Saturday morning. She'll bring the coffee and nibbles.

SHARP Weird. I guess. Why not?

TRUDI And she'd like to "ask" the two other newcomers, too.

SHARP The others? That's a laugh. Sure, why not?

TRUDI INTO PHONE Saturday at eleven...Catherine. See you then. RINGS OFF So good isn't it--when they come to us.

SHARP IS FLICKING THROUGH CYNTHIA'S MAIL.
MOST HE JUNKS. READS OUT ONE.

"I have buyers queuing up to buy your property. Waterfront properties are always in demand and those in The Cutlass are considered particularly desirable etc, etc.
Let me call in and value your property based on current sales figures. I have sold more apartments in this block than any other agent."
Nigel DeLacey

TRUDI We'll have *him* around. He'll know everything.

SHARP I reckon. GOES TO THE BALCONY You have to admit, it *is* nice here.

TRUDI After Sydney?

SHARP In Sydney, we never lived on the harbour.

HE LOOKS ACROSS THE HARBOUR I tell you what we'll do. As our swan song.

TRUDI What?

SHARP We'll sell someone the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO DAY

ONE THURSDAY LATER THAT DAY

REMAINS OF TAKEAWAY PIZZA ON THE TABLE.

TRUDI WORKING ON HER LAPTOP.
SHARP ENTERS THROUGH FRONT DOOR

TRUDI Where did you go?

SHARP Basement car parking.
Some nice cars down there. A few little-old-lady Kias and Hyundais. One of them Cynthia's. A Jag, three Mercs and a couple of Range Rovers. And in our Mayoral candidate's parking space: a BMW I ex M60.

TRUDI Nice.

SHARP For quarter of a million dollars, so it should be.

TRUDI I checked how many vehicles go over the bridge. Guess. How many. Per day.

SHARP Thirty...forty thousand..?

TRUDI Take a look.

SHARP Wow!

TRUDI And that's just the ones going south. Slightly more the other way.

SHARP Each day!???

TRUDI Yes.

SHARP Wow.

FX DOORBELL RINGS.

SHARP GOES TO DOOR. PEERS THROUGH THE SPY HOLE.

SHARP Unless I'm much mistaken, Sir Robert...

TRUDI Good. Now we begin... Clear the table!

SHE RUSHES THROUGH TO THE BEDROOM
SHARP REMOVES THE PIZZA BOX, THEN OPENS THE DOOR. KINGSWOOD ENTERS WITHOUT REALLY BEING ASKED.

KINGSWOOD Greetings, greetings. Stephen Sharp I assume... Bob Kingswood. Sir Robert as it happens, but no one round here gives a damn. As Chairman of the Body Corp, my pleasant duty to welcome you to The Cutlass. HANDS OVER A VODKA

BOTTLE SHAPED LIKE A SKULL... Piratical touch.
somebody gave it to me. I don't use the stuff.

HE SITS DOWN UNINVITED.

KINGSWOOD You here while Cynthia's seeing her family in
England I presume?

SHARP Ye-es. We're cousins.

KINGSWOOD Yes, well nobody will believe a word of that.
Air BNB and we all know it. But the Body Corp
turns a blind eye once we're satisfied that the
temporary residents are going to...fit in.
And we've got another couple moved in. Peter
somebody and his much younger... *Russian*...
partner, nothing wrong in that, of course, but
very much doubt either of them is related to a
retired judge, who's not above a bit of
discrete Air BNB himself from time to time.
Well now, life at The Cutlass.
Trevor, the manager, be wary of him, I'm sure
you would have told him to keep your business
interests quiet, but he couldn't wait to tell
me.

SHARP We told him very little.

KINGSWOOD He told me enough. Property of some sort. I'm
not asking, I'm not asking, only to say that a
man in my position--on city council boards--
transport, waterfront--I can be of help. Oh...
and Mayoral candidate.

SHARP What are your chances?

KINGSWOOD A knight who has promised to slash rates.
I'm a shoo-in.

Plus Government contacts--I do know most of the
Cabinet. So, if strings need to be pulled, I
can give a little tug.
Now. Residents of interest here. Catherine,
above you...won't be long before *she* comes
sniffing round here.

SHARP As if you're not.

KINGSWOOD OFFENDED What?

SHARP Just saying. Catherine's coming round Saturday.

KINGSWOOD See! She's on Body Corp, not voted on just decided to step in when her husband died. On the bowling green. Massive stroke. DOA. A bit rough round the edges, Mike, good at numbers, made a heap. Developed this place. But! She never handled money. Had never even written a cheque. He'd handled it all. All that money, she has no idea what to do with it. Mike was all set to build apartments on the bowling club--he'd bought it a few years ago--I'm part of the consortium. Now she's inherited the club, she won't have a bar of it. Not even for me.

SHARP 'For you'?

KINGSWOOD She and I... we er... For her age, she's not unattractive. Aren't you going to offer me a drink?

SHARP Oh sure. Your vodka, perhaps?

KINGSWOOD No, I never drink it, I said. I'll have a Cyn's gin. In the cupboard--

SHARP GETS OUT A BOTTLE OF GILBEYS.

No, no, no! She keeps the good stuff at the back. Here. HE GOES TO A CUPBOARD,

RUMMAGES AND PRODUCES BOTTLE OF TOP OF RANGE GIN. GETS TONIC FROM (UNSEEN) FRIDGE.

Cyn calls gin "the jewels of the juniper berry".

HE POURS HIMSELF A GENEROUS GIN. SHARP POURS HIMSELF A SMALL ONE.

KINGSWOOD Cheers. Now. I also keep in touch with my chums on various company boards I was on until I retired from them.

SHARP "Resigned" from.

KINGSWOOD Sorry?

SHARP Wikipedia said "resigned" from. Just saying.
PAUSE

SHARP Expenses? Some misunderstanding? Quite
common.

KINGSWOOD A couple of expenses...overlapped. I thought
it in the best interests of the companies
involved that I stand aside. Didn't worry me
especially, the number of shares I have in each
of them. But it in no way invalidates the
connections I have. If I can help...

PAUSE

SHARP How many vehicles come over that bridge? Every
day.

KINGSWOOD Are you asking me to use my influence to find
out?

SHARP I know the figure. I'm wondering if you do.

KINGSWOOD IS CLEANING HIS GLASSES.

TRUDI ENTERS FROM BEDROOM.
SHE HAS CHANGED AND NOW LOOKS VERY SMART AND
VERY SEXY.

KINGSWOOD PUTS HIS GLASSES BACK ON. NOW HE CAN
SEE HER CLEARLY.

KINGSWOOD Oh my!

HE STRUGGLES TO STAND UP TO GREET HER.

SHARP My partner. Trudi. Sir Robert from next door.

KINGSWOOD Bob, please.

SHE BOBS

KINGSWOOD Oh! What? "Bob." Oh yes. Very good, clever. No
one's ever done that before. We're having a
Cyn's gin.

SHE DOESN'T WANT ONE.

SHE SITS DOWN BESIDE KINGSWOOD

KINGSWOOD Your husband's being very coy about his business plans...

TRUDI So he should be.

KINGSWOOD REASSURING All Stephen did was ask me about the number of cars crossing the bridge each day.

TRUDI Then he's already said too much. Unless of course, you are very rich. LAUGHS

KINGSWOOD Well, a million's not what it was. PATS HER HAND But luckily I have several of them.

TRUDI Is there a Lady Bob...?

KINGSWOOD Mm? Oh. Am I married? Ye-es.

TRUDI You don't sound too sure.

KINGSWOOD Daphne stays a lot of time at our Coromandel place. She likes planting native trees.

TRUDI And you don't?

KINGSWOOD I'm a city boy. Particularly this city.

TRUDI FLIRTING Alone and fancy-free, eh?

KINGSWOOD Oh, well, I wouldn't go so far as-

TRUDI PATS HIS HAND We're all human, Sir Robert.

KINGSWOOD Bob, please. LAUGHS No, no, you don't have to do that again. Well, my dear, I hope you'll be very happy here. Four weeks, is it?

SHARP Four weeks in this apartment yes.

KINGSWOOD PATS HER KNEE. Does he ever go out? LAUGHS

TRUDI SMILING AT KINGSWOOD It depends.

SHARP Well. CUE FOR KINGSWOOD TO LEAVE

KINGSWOOD Ah. Right. Yes. And Mum's the word about the bridge. TO TRUDI Might see you around.

TRUDI I'm sure you will.

HE EXITS. DOOR CLOSES

TRUDI JUST BEFORE DOOR CLOSES SHOUTING AT SHARP You mentioned the bridge!!! How could you!!!

SHARP SHOUTING That's all I did!

TRUDI SHOUTING Did you say anything about tolls?

SHARP SHOUTING I'm not stupid!!!!!! I would *never* have mentioned *tolls*.

THEY STOP

TRUDI PEERS THROUGH THE SECURITY HOLE IN THE DOOR.

TRUDI Just moving off now.

SHARP So he heard every word. That should bring him back.

TRUDI If not, my tits certainly will.

ACT ONE

SCENE 3 DAY TWO FRIDAY EVENING

FX MUSIC IS PLAYING.

SHARP COMES OUT OF THE BEDROOM GETTING INTO A SUIT.

HE CHECKS SOME NOTES ON CARDS (ABOUT SYLVIA)

TRUDI ENTERS, DRESSED TO GO OUT. SHE IS CARRYING SOME X-RAY ENVELOPES

SHARP Your stuff all hidden...?

TRUDI How many times have we done this!

SHARP Can't be too careful.

TRUDI These x-rays are looking so old they could have been taken by Madam Curie.

SHARP No one ever looks at them. They just see the envelopes.

SHARP TIPS SOME PILLS FROM OLD CONTAINERS INTO
NEW ONES.

SHARP "UNICHEM Queen Street."

TRUDI Show me the photo she has of you...
HE INDICATES TO LOOK AT HIS COMPUTER.

HE TAKES PILLS AND THE X-RAYS BACK INTO HIS
ROOM.

TRUDI STUDIES HIS PHOTO.

SHARP COMES OUT OF THE BEDROOM. SHE COMPARES
HIM AS HE IS WITH THE PHOTOS.

TRUDI Yes, I think you're looking a bit worse. Let's
hollow those cheeks just a tiny bit.
SHE DABS ON A BIT OF MAKE-UP. THEN MAKES HIM
SLIGHTLY UNTIDIER IN APPEARANCE. Not quite the
man you were...SNIFFS Poco Rabanne. Should do
the trick.

SHARP Please God, I don't have to take her into the
bedroom.

TRUDI Oh well, if it's in a good cause you know I
give you licence to thrill. It's not as if
we haven't done this before

SHARP You're off to...?

TRUDI Sky City. Lie of the land.

FX **OUTSIDE BELL RINGS.**
SHARP LOOKS AT MONITOR.

SHARP It's her CALLING INTO SPEAKER Come on up.
Sixth floor, turn left.

TRUDI Right. I'm out of here. Happy Hunting.

SHARP You, too. Take care.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM

SHARP Just saying.

SHE EXITS.

SHARP GETS WINE OUT OF FRIDGE

FX FRONT DOORBELL RINGS
HE OPENS THE DOOR.

SHARP Sylvia!

SYLVIA Stephen!?

SHARP The same.

THEY ARE A BIT SHY OF EACH OTHER.
SYLVIA IS SMARTLY DRESSED. WEARING A JACKET OR
BLAZER (WITH TOP POCKET)

SHARP Well. Come in...

SYLVIA At last.

SHARP Yes.

SYLVIA You're taller than I expected. You loo... look..

SHARP Different from my photo?

SYLVIA Yes. Can't quite say how--this is nice, lovely!
I had no idea you lived in a place like this!

SHARP Sometimes not wise to reveal too much to
someone you've never met.

SYLVIA In case I'm after your money.

SHARP Well...or the other way round.

SYLVIA I might have revealed too much. On that score.

SHARP You implied you were "comfortable".

SYLVIA I feel I know you so well.

SHARP It was time we met.

SYLVIA You're a fine one! You're the one who stopped
communicating! Why the long pause, the gap? I
was getting frantic.

SHARP I feel I owe you an explanation. Why I didn't
come to collect you tonight.

SYLVIA You said, you said. Not able to drive.

SHARP HE HANDS HER SOME NOTES. Forty dollars. For the taxi.

SYLVIA No!
SHARP It's the principle.

SYLVIA I'm not touching it!

HE SHRUGS. HE TUCKS THE NOTES INTO HER BLAZER POCKET.

COUNTER GOES UP \$40 TO 173,200

SHE LEAVES THE NOTES THERE.

SYLVIA Don't worry, it's fine being here. This way I do learn a lot more about you.

SHARP True.

SYLVIA God, am I ready for this!

SHARP Let me get you a drink.

SYLVIA Thank you. What time are we due there?

SHARP Seven thirty. Though actually...

SYLVIA What?

SHARP Nothing. As I recall...from our correspondence... your favourite tippie...pinot gris!

SYLVIA Clever man. Gosh, that was ages ago we emailed about that. STILL IMPRESSED BY THE PLACE Oh, wow, it must be so great to live here.

SHARP It is. Not quite so much fun on one's own.

SYLVIA Now you're not. Not tonight anyway. We don't have to go out.

SHARP One doesn't give up a booking at The French Cafe. Well...at last. Cheers.

SYLVIA Your good health.

SHE ENCOURAGES HIM TO SIT BESIDE HER ON THE SOFA.

SYLVIA] I thought for a time this was never going to happen.

SHARP] So what have you been doing these...

SYLVIA Last couple of months when you didn't write...?

SHARP Yes.

SYLVIA A lot. A lot. All disastrous.

SHARP LEANS BACK. A BIT WEAK.

SYLVIA Are you alright?

SHARP Yes. Fine. Why?

SYLVIA You look a bit...

SHARP "Disastrous". Tell me.

SYLVIA Only if you want to spoil a good evening. More to the point--why did you stop writing to me?

SHARP Only if you want to spoil a good evening.

SYLVIA Well. We're together now. Funny how now we're actually face-to-face, it's harder to communicate.

SHARP I know.

SILENCE

SYLVIA I might just pop into your bathroom...

SHARP Sure. Better use mine. Through there. Other one's not working.

SHE GOES INTO MAIN BEDROOM.

HE POURS HIMSELF ANOTHER WINE.

PEERS AT THE MCCAHOON. SHAKES HIS HEAD, MYSTIFIED. SHRUGS.

SHE COMES OUT.

SYLVIA You could have told me.

SHARP Told you what?

SYLVIA That you had cancer.

SHARP What were you doing looking anyway?

SYLVIA I've found at this time of life with any prospective relationship it pays to inspect their bathroom cabinet. SHE HOLDS UP THE TWO PILL CONTAINERS "Xeloda". "La-Morph" I know what these are for. I didn't bother to look at your x-rays. When were you going to tell me?

SHARP Tonight.

SYLVIA Over the starter...or the coffee?

SHARP I don't know.

SYLVIA Great sort of evening this was going to be. "Oh by the way, I have colon cancer". Why couldn't you have told me!

 This is why you suddenly stopped emailing!

SHARP I didn't want you to know.

SYLVIA Oh for heaven's sake! If you couldn't have told me...I thought we'd been telling each other everything. So which specialist are you seeing..? Recovery rate for colon cancer is very high. You'll be going private?

SHARP I wish! Chemo, surgery. Runs into thousands...

SYLVIA Normal course of events, I'd happily pay.

SHARP No, no, no. I wouldn't hear of it.

SYLVIA Well, I would have. But I've done something very, very silly.

 When you stopped responding to my emails, I felt so much loss, so lonely--I truly thought you were going to be the one-- I turned to God.

SHARP Oh-oh.

SYLVIA "Oh-oh" is the word. I went to a fundamentalist church. The Apocalypse Church of Tamaki. Great music. And the leader was...

SHARP Charismatic?

SYLVIA And how. I found myself committing to a tithe.

SHARP They do that.

SYLVIA A tithe plus a lump sum. Did I believe in God..or their Leader? So I went round to see him. To try and get my money back.

SHARP Is this another "Oh-oh"?

SYLVIA A biggie. In his office...in his palatial office. Oh I'm so ashamed of myself. I don't know why I'm telling you this, can you forgive me, I wasn't going to, but...do you understand? I thought I'd lost you. And then I was smitten.

SHARP It's your life.

SYLVIA Somehow I just kept giving. Financially as well as... Now I've got enough to get by on, but nothing to spare. I might even have to get a reverse mortgage

SHARP Have you tried to get it back?

SYLVIA Of course! But--

SHARP The bastard! The bastard.

HE PUTS HIS ARM ROUND HER TO COMFORT HER.

PAUSE

SYLVIA Aren't we a pair! Neither of us what we said we were. Not when we started.

SHARP No. Right. Call it a day then? Really sorry it hasn't worked out.

SYLVIA I'm not going home!!

SHARP I thought--

SYLVIA Not after this. That's not what I came for! What do you think all those emails were if not a form of foreplay.

SHARP Were they?

SYLVIA Some of those things you suggested online...I read them again before I came out and well, got me turned on-

SHARP That was then.

SYLVIA After all this time, you can't leave me disappointed.

SHARP What about The French Café?

SYLVIA When all is said and done...it's only another meal. Whereas you and I... This way?

SHARP Listen, with this (cancer) I'm not sure I can even...

SYLVIA Course you can.

SHE PULLS HIM TOWARDS THE BEDROOM DOOR.
THEY GO TOWARDS THE BEDROOM.
HE HALF COLLAPSES.
SHE TAKES HIM FIRMLY BY THE ARM

SYLVIA You're not getting away with it that easily.

SHARP Oh, Jesus.

ACT ONE

SCENE 4 DAY THREE SATURDAY MORNING

THE BLINDS ARE DOWN

SHARP IS RUSHING AROUND GETTING THE PLACE READY. LOOKS AT HIS WATCH FREQUENTLY. HE TRIES TO RING TRUDI. NO RESPONSE.

DOOR OPENS, TRUDI ENTERS, LOOKING WORSE FOR WEAR.

SHARP Where the hell have you been!!

TRUDI Sky City. Told you.

SHARP Have you any idea what the time is?

TRUDI No. They don't want you to know.

SHARP You're pissed.

TRUDI Yes. Ecuador.

SHARP The Catherine woman and the others are due here any moment now! Get yourself cleaned up.

TRUDI Already have. Cleaned up. Poker. Won...PRODUCES SOME CHIPS... Three hundred bucks worth!

COUNTER REDUCES AMOUNT BY 300 TO 172,900
Actually a nice man, who I thought I was going to gull, not so stupid after all, except he did give me a few chips to get started. He said: "Ecuador". SHE WAVES SMALL ECUADORIAN FLAG.

SHARP IS STILL GETTING THINGS READY.

SHARP Get yourself ready!!! And I can't find the cards.

TRUDI You remember how Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid got away to Bolivia?

SHARP But they carried on robbing banks. And you want to give up-

TRUDI Hear me out!

SHARP Sorry Sundance.

TRUDI Don't be a fool. I'm Butch.

SHARP Of course. "Ecuador"?

TRUDI This nice man said you could retire there on a million dollars.

SHARP Ecuador. Fine. Get ready!!

HE PUSHES HER INTO THE MAIN BEDROOM.

CARRIES ON GETTING THINGS READY.

TRUDI COMES OUT OF THE BEDROOM STILL GETTING DRESSED.

TRUDI Wait, wait! How was it for you? Last night.

SHARP Disaster. I had to work hard in there and all for nothing.

TRUDI What!!!

SHARP She's broke. No money.

TRUDI I thought she was (rich)-

SHARP She gave it all to the Apocalypse Church of Tamaki.

TRUDI What!!

SHARP Yes. You'll be at tomorrow morning's service.

TRUDI Me?

SHARP You're going to get that money back.

FX DOORBELL RINGS

WAVES AT HER TO GET BACK IN THERE. SHE GOES.

SHARP Coming!

OPENS THE DOOR.

CATHERINE ENTERS.

SHE HAS COFFEE AND A PACKET OF MACAROONS

CATHERINE This is so nice of you. As I said, I would have had you at my place, but I'm redecorating, and believe me when you finally pin down Pavel you don't want to give him any wiggle room. Oh. Sorry. Catherine...as you must realise. You're Stephen. Mini macaroons, look at the colours, aren't they gorgeous! The little man over the road sells them. Jug boiled?

SHARP Coffee's made.

CATHERINE Oh, I'd brought my own. (a packet) No matter. Keep it. A wee thank-you.

TRUDI ENTERS

SHE PUTS A PACK OF TAROT CARDS OUT BUT MAKES SURE CATHERINE DOESN'T SEE HER DOING THIS.

CATHERINE You're Trudi. Catherine. I know you're both here only short term, but as a member of the Body Corps, I do like to welcome newcomers and remind them of them of our little ways. The

social side. It's essential that someone keeps an eye on everyone getting along together and that usually means abiding by the rules.

SHE RAISES THE BLINDS
SOME CLOTHES ARE DRYING ON BACKS OF CHAIRS

Ah, that actually is a no-no. I know they're not smalls, but even so it does look... lower decile. People living in The Scafarer over there do complain. As we do when they do it! But I should wait, shouldn't I, until the others...?

TRUDI Peter?

CATHERINE Peter, yes, and his new bride, arrive. LOOKING ROUND Cynthia does have some lovely things. Most of them put away of course while she does Air BNB. Look at this lovely antique Royal Doulton cup. CHECKS THE BOTTOM. PUTS IT DOWN HASTILY

LOOKS AT THE PAINTING

CATHERINE And I've always coveted her McCahon.

TRUDI]
SHARP] INDIFFERENT Really?

CATHERINE Cynthia told me she paid four thousand for it. Years ago. I thought she was crazy.

SHARP Can't argue with you there.

CATHERINE Now you can rarely get one for under a million!

TRUDI AND SHARP'S JAWS DROP. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER. THEY TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE PAINTING.

FX DOORBELL RINGS

CATHERINE ANSWERS THE DOOR.

PETER AND IVANA ENTER.

CATHERINE Ah! Welcome. Welcome to The Cutlass of course is what I mean. I'm Catherine. Body Corp.
Peter, yes?
THEY SHAKE HANDS.

PETER My wife, Ivana. Ivana's quite new in my life.

IVANA SHAKES HANDS

CATHERINE And of course, Stephen and Trudi. Whose place this is. Pro tem.

PETER Well, this is nice. Thank you. Nice to be made welcome.

IVANA In case you're wondering: no, I'm not his first wife; yes, I married him for his money. No. Seriously, he's a real darling.

CATHERINE You speak very good English.

IVANA Thank you. So do you.

IVANA WANDERS OFF LOOKING AT EVERYTHING IN THE APARTMENT

PETER LAUGHS AWKWARDLY Don't take her too seriously. My first wife died on me. Decided this time to go for a stayer. Usual story. We met on the Internet.

CATHERINE And what do you do, Peter?

PETER Retired.

IVANA He made a lot of money out of health products.

PETER Lucky for me the world is full of gullible people!!!

CATHERINE You sound Australian.

PETER So would you if you'd lived there as long as I did. That's where the big market was. Anyway... sold up. Wanted to come back home. Ideally to buy a decent block of land up north, raise a few llamas or such, but Ivana won't have a bar of it. Will you, dear.

IVANA SHUDDERS My family did everything they could to get away from being peasants. So going back to the land has no appeal...

PETER We're renting while we have a look round...

CATHERINE You need to meet Nigel. He knows all about this sort of thing.

PETER TO STEPHEN AND TRUDI And what do you folks do?

CATHERINE Oh now that's very hush-hush. Or so I'm told. "Property." Yes? I lived with property all my married life and most of the time I hated what Mike was doing. Well, he's gone now. So instead of apartments on the bowls club, it'll now be a green space.

SHARP Residential's not our main interest.

CATHERINE "A Bridge too far"!! Can we say that much?

TRUDI TO SHARP You see! This is how things spread.
TO CATHERINE Sir Robert's been talking to you?

CATHERINE He said you were interested in the number of vehicles that crossed the bridge each year.

PETER Nothing compared to Sydney, I bet.

TRUDI And so it spreads.

CATHERINE Sorree. Well! Shall we take the plunge? LAUGHS
AT HER OWN JOKE.

TRUDI Anyone know anything about Ecuador? As a place to retire to?

CATHERINE Ecuador?

SHE AND TRUDI HAND ROUND THE COFFEES AND
MACAROONS.

TRUDI Supposed to be perfect!

SHARP Let it go, Trudi.

TRUDI Just saying! The cost of living very cheap; great climate; free healthcare. Almost everyone speaks English. Way this person talked about it, it sounds Paradise.

PETER Need to go and check it out first. TO SHARP
Going to watch the cricket tomorrow?

SHARP On telly. Wouldn't go.

PETER Exactly. Can you trust the Pakkies, that's the question.

IVANA NOTICES THE PACK OF CARDS. HOLDS THEM UP.

IVANA Who likes Tarot round here?

SHARP They're Trudi's.

TRUDI. Oh. Yes. Just a hobby.

SHARP Bit more than that, Trudi! In Sydney, people paid good money for you to-

PETER All rubbish, of course.

IVANA Something I've always wanted to give a go.

PETER Oh please.

SHARP Trudi *does* read cards. But she does it professionally.

PETER We're not here for readings. We're here to get to know other people living in The Cutlass

IVANA I'd pay whatever you usually charge.

SHARP Trudi does séances too--but only in special circumstances. If you really want a reading then we will do it professionally and set up a time.

PETER Oh come on, let's do it now. Then we can see it for the nonsense it is.

IVANA TO CATHERINE Do you mind? You're the host.

CATHERINE Love it. Fascinating. I wonder if I could really get in touch with my late husband...

PETER Huh!

SHARP Hate to be mercenary, but Trudi charges \$100 for Tarot readings.

PETER A hundred!

SHARP For a séance it's two thousand per person.

PETER Two thousand! For what is always a fraud.

SHARP All I can say is that many people have been comforted by what Trudi can reveal.

IVANA We'd love a reading. Now.

PETER We would not. I'm not paying-

IVANA No. I am. TO TRUDI And the reading is not for me-it's for him.

PETER Me!!!!??

IVANA Yes. If you're still not convinced, then that's an end to it. But if she does convince me then I'll have a séance some time.

PETER Let's get it over with.

TRUDI Most people prefer to do this in private. In case...

IVANA In case...?

TRUDI Sometimes aspects of people's lives come up that they'd rather keep hidden.

IVANA He's got no secrets from me.

TRUDI STARTS SETTING OUT THE CARDS

PETER I know it's fake.

TRUDI Tarot is a mirror; it's not reading the future. For some people it helps them to see things more clearly. So.

TRUDI GETS HIM TO SHUFFLE CARDS.

SHE LAYS OUT THREE CARDS.

TRUDI Past. Present. Future.

CUTS CARDS. TURNS OVER CARD

TRUDI It looks like you're probably Leo.

IVANA SURPRISED Huh. Yes, he is!

TRUDI "Happiness." SHE LOOKS TROUBLED

IVANA Oh Peter's very happy. Aren't you? Or else.
LAUGHS

TRUDI Matrimony. Ah. Two wives before Ivana?

IVANA One! She died.

TRUDI Oh. Sorry. PUZZLED Well...MOVES ON I see four children...?

IVANA Two.

TRUDI I'm only going on what the cards tell me.

IVANA Two. I've met them. TO PETER You were right.
It's a fake. Don't pay her.

PAUSE
PETER IS EMBARRASSED

PETER Actually...the cards have got it right.

IVANA Right! What do you mean "right"?

PETER I do have four children; I have had two wives.
My first wife did die, but my second wife is
still around.

CATHERINE VERY IMPRESSED Oh my!

IVANA You have a wife who's alive!

PETER Yes.

IVANA You lied to me!

PETER I didn't actually lie--my first wife did
die--I just didn't tell you that I have a
divorced wife in Ballarat.

IVANA Why not?

PETER Because I wanted to impress you. I was in love
with you, and I thought being a widower is more
attractive than being an ageing divorced
bloke.

IVANA IS TOUCHED

CATHERINE So the cards were telling the truth.

PETER Yes. I have to admit I'm impressed.

IVANA You must all think I married him to get residency, yes?

OTHERS LYING No! No. No.

PETER OFFERS TRUDI BANK NOTES TO PAY FOR THE TAROT

TRUDI No...you don't have to. You didn't learn much. Put it towards a séance for Ivana.

PETER Good idea.

IVANA Who would I want to get in touch with?

PETER Your great-grandmother.

IVANA STUNNED. Oh. Yes.

PETER Ivana's great-grandmother was in the siege of Stalingrad. Nineteen forty two to forty three.

IVANA She knew Shostakovich. She knew all the musicians. And she had my grandmother..just a baby then.

TRUDI That would be a challenge.

IVANA There's one question I've always wanted to ask her...

PETER We'll talk it over. Get back to you. AS THEY GO OUT THE DOOR You should do it.

PETER AND IVANA EXIT

CATHERINE I was so impressed! Maybe I *should* dare a séance. It would comfort me so much if Mike could accept the bowling green being called The Mike Warner Memorial Playground.

TRUDI You understand I can never guarantee contacting a loved one. Anyone who promises that, well then you *know* they're a fake.

SHARP Trudi's not cheap.

TRUDI And the loved one has to want to appear.

SHARP She charges two thousand dollars.

CATHERINE Oh WAVES THE SUM AWAY AS INSIGNIFICANT
SHE IS GATHERING HER THINGS TO GO.

TRUDI We'll see what we can do.

CATHERINE Thank you so much. LOOKING AT THE MCCAHOE
PAINTING (LOVING IT) Mmmmmmm.

TRUDI AND SHARP EXCHANGE A LOOK, SHARP NODS

TRUDI We do have friends who have one of his
early works.

CATHERINE Lucky them.

TRUDI Yes. Well, we happen to know they're wanting to
sell it. And considerably less than you'd
have to pay a dealer.

SHARP They don't want people to know.

CATHERINE Oh wonderful. Wonderful. Will you email me a
photo?

TRUDI Ah. No-o.

SHARP This couple so old they wouldn't have a clue
how to do that.

CATHERINE But it does have words on it?

TRUDI "Words"?

CATHERINE His best works have words on them.

SHARP If it doesn't, we'll paint them on ourselves.

CATHERINE LAUGHS Oh that's very funny. Oh, how kind of
you both.

SHARP Not entirely altruistic, Catherine. They will
be paying us a commission. Would you like us to
find out more?

CATHERINE Oh please. Would you.

THEY SEE HER OUT, ALL SMILES

CATHERINE Thank you.

TRUDI] We'll be in touch.
SHARP] Bye.

DOOR CLOSES

TRUDI Yesssss!
SHARP STARTS PUNCHING IN A NUMBER.

TRUDI Cheung?

SHARP Who else? He could knock one of these off by morning tea.

TRUDI STARTS MEASURING THE McCAHON.

SHARP ON PHONE Cheung? Steven Sharp here. Sydney. We were. Been a while. You did a big Brett Whitely for us...and a Drysdale, right. We're in New Zealand now. So we want a Kiwi artist. McCahon. Yes, there's a website. Colin. M small C Big C 'a', 'h' STRESSING THE 'H' LOUDER h! h!! Got him? Got a client who wants one now. No, we can't think why either. As if painted in the early seventies. Found any with words on? She wants one with words. From the Bible. Yep. Oh...

HE LOOKS AT TRUDI

TRUDI (say) 100 by 60. (WHATEVER FITS THE SPACE)

SHARP 100 by 60. Five grand in your account overnight as usual. Ten!!! That's a bit greed--no, no, ten's fine. I'll email you the new delivery address.

RINGS OFF He'll have it on the plane as soon as the money's through.

Ten.

COUNTER INCREASES 10,000 TO 182,900

THEY RELAX

SHARP A great morning's work.

TRUDI One future séance, people nibbling at the
 bridge,

SHARP The bowls club might have potential.

TRUDI Fifty to eighty grand with the old
 painting scam.

SHARP Hope she doesn't know too much about painting.
 That she can be fooled.

TRUDI Oh, I would think so. She thought *this* was an
 antique Royal Doulton.

 SHE HAS PICKED UP THE CUP AND SHOWS HIM THE
 BOTTOM.

SHARP "Microwave safe."

ACT ONE

SCENE 5 DAY FOUR SUNDAY AFTERNOON

SHARP IS FIDDLING WITH THE TV AND THE RECORDER.
CRICKET IS ON, BUT NO SOUND.

TRUDI ENTERS FROM OUTSIDE.

SHARP Did you commit to Jesus?

TRUDI I hated it. I'm going to design a T-shirt: "If
 You're Happy And You Know It, Please Shut Up".

SHARP Big congregation?

TRUDI Huge. All of them worshipping the Pastor.
 Jesus hardly got a look-in.

SHARP And what did you think of the Pastor?

TRUDI I could see why women melt. And I made sure he
 got an eyeful. SHE CHECKS HER WATCH. INDICATING
 THE BEDROOM TV All tuned in there?

SHARP All set up. The Pakkies won the toss; bowling.

TRUDI Perfect.

FX DOORBELL RINGS

 SHE RUSHES INTO THE BEDROOM

NIGEL AND TREVOR ENTER.

TREV Nigel DeLacey. Stephen Sharp.

NIGEL SHAKES HANDS

TREVOR Trudi not in?

SHARP Church TO TREVOR You said you wanted to call
 in and bring Nigel...?

TREVOR "Property". Nigel here can tell you everything
 you want to know.

SHARP Ah. You're the one who claims HOLDING THE FLYER
 "to have sold more Cutlass apartments than any
 other agent."

NIGEL And Seafarer for that matter. HANDS HIM SHEET
 OF PAPER Recent sales figures for The Cutlass
 and The Seafarer.

TREVOR If you're going in for property, you should buy
 into here. Great investment.

NIGEL Would have been better if the America's Cup's
 was still going to be held here. GOES INTO HIS
 SPIEL Buying into the Cutlass or Seafarer
 ensures a lifestyle that is unique in vibrant
 downtown Auckland. Close to restaurants and
 cafes, nightlife, shopping, harbour bridge and
 ferry. Located in the grammar zone. Whether for
 living or letting.

SHARP It's not in the grammar zone.

NIGEL Sorry?

SHARP It's not *in* the Grammar Zone. Or maybe it is
 for certain buyers bidding from an overseas
 country...?

TREVOR Got you there, Nige.

NIGEL RESUMES HIS SPIEL Close to the grammar zone.
 Whether for living or letting these apartments
 represent--.

SHARP Oh give it a rest. You think I'm going to be
 taken in by--

NIGEL As it happens I do have two at The Seafarer right now. HE GOES TO BALCONY AND POINTS Exactly the same configuration as this. Empty. Could walk in tomorrow, if you wanted.

SHARP So Trev, you asked to call in to introduce me to Nigel here out of the goodness of your heart?

TREVOR Well...

NIGEL It's business. Trevor introduces someone to me. If a sale eventuates, I give him a finder's fee.

TREVOR One percent. Common practice.

SHARP True enough.

FX SHARP'S PHONE GOES.

SHARP Sharp. Yes. Right. Thanks. RINGS OFF. Gentlemen. TURNS ON TV The cricket.

TREVOR Who's batting?

SHARP Black Caps.

NIGEL Cricket!

SHARP TO TREVOR You'll enjoy this. If a certain Pakistan bowler bowls a no-ball, I am about to make a lot of money.

NIGEL, ON HIS WAY OUT, PAUSES.

TREVOR Fair chance of that happening! LAUGHS

TREVOR SITS DOWN TO WATCH.
PUTS KEYS DOWN. SHARP POCKETS THE KEYS.

TREVOR You know which one?

SHARP Second ball third over.

NIGEL I'm at a loss here.

TREVOR Stephen is going to put money on a particular ball being a no-ball... You know what a "no-ball" is?

NIGEL Tch!(of course!)

TREVOR But he's just been told *which* ball to bet on.

NIGEL Yes....?

TREVOR It's fixed, you idiot. Indian bookies. And Steve here's in the know.

NIGEL But isn't that illegal?

TREVOR Of course it is, that's the whole point.

SHARP Here we go. They're in the third over.

HE TURNS UP THE SOUND

FX CRICKET MATCH VOICE OVER Well up...and through the covers for four. Meat and drink to Guptill.

FX CROWD APPLAUSE

TREVOR This one? This is going to be the no-ball...?

SHARP That's the plan!

FX VOICE OVER Short-pitched, oh but it's a no-ball!

SHARP Yesss!!!!

TREVOR Jesus, you did know.

NIGEL. CONTEMPTUOUS Sport!

TREVOR This *isn't* sport! VERY IMPRESSED AND LOOKING AT SHARP WITH ADMIRATION How much did you make on that?

SHARP Maybe enough for a down payment here.

TURNS OFF THE TV

TREVOR Holy cow! Could a man get a piece of that!

SHARP No. TO NIGEL You need to understand that Trudi and I aren't interested in buying one apartment. Way below the scale we operate on.

NIGEL Did Trevor say anything about the big block of apartments all planned to go where the bowls club is?

TREVOR Until Catherine veto-ed it.

SHARP Kingswood told us.

TREVOR We all thought we were going to get a piece of that. Then the silly bugger goes and dies. Listen--about that no-ball thing--

NIGEL The apartments were all set to go. Brochures printed and everything.

SHARP Bob Kingswood explained. Everyone involved are very pissed off.

TREVOR I wouldn't mind risking a bob or two on that no ball thing--

NIGEL She said she wants "The Mike Warner Memorial Playground" but what would be wrong with The Mike Warner Apartments?

TREVOR Exactly. About the no-ball.

NIGEL Priced on the brochures for \$2.1 million but on completion they'll be closer to three...

SHARP We're used to handling cranks in Sydney who want to hold up development. Happens everywhere.

NIGEL What's the answer?

SHARP All right. Let's put it this way: if we get Catherine to give you guys permission to go ahead--what's it worth to you? How many apartments planned?

NIGEL A hundred and two.

SHARP Here's the deal: if we swing it, you give us an apartment?

TREVOR That's a bit rich!

SHARP One apartment out of over a hundred.
That's less than one percent. The finder's
fee you pay Trevor.

TREVOR Put it like that...(it's reasonable).

SHARP Say a million cash. But on signature. Not
completion.

NIGEL No violence? Nothing illegal?

SHARP No, no.

NIGEL I'll have to ask the others.

TREVOR Next match is the day-nighter on Wednesday.
You got something on that?

SHARP I might have.

TREVOR Can you put something on for me?

SHARP Huge risk, Trevor. I mean a bowler can bowl a
no-ball and the umpire miss it. Money down the
gurgler.

TREVOR Yeah, yeah.

SHARP I'd need the cash the day before.

TREVOR Nige, you should put a bob or two on.

NIGEL One thing my mother told me. Money's hard
enough to come by without gambling it away.

TREVOR She's dead now, so you don't have to--
THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY OUT.

NIGEL How about half a mill on signature; the rest on
completion?

SHARP No. I don't budge. A million on signature.

TREVOR AND NIGEL EXIT

SHARP TAKES TREVOR'S KEYS OUT OF HIS POCKET AND
BEGINS TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEM FROM ALL
ANGLES.

TRUDI COMES OUT OF BEDROOM.

TRUDI All went well?

SHARP Get back in there. Trevor'll be back any sec
once he realises he's left his keys here.
One of them must be for The Seafarer.

FX DOORBELL RINGS

SHARP Coming Trevor!

ACT ONE

SCENE 6 DAY FIVE MONDAY

CATHERINE, KINGSWOOD, TRUDI AND SHARP ON THE
BALCONY.

CATHERINE So kind to have me round again. I'll have you
round just as soon as Pavel has finished-

TRUDI No, no, we understand.

SHARP The painting should be here by then.

CATHERINE Can't wait.

TRUDI You're looking very serious, Bob.

KINGSWOOD Trying to count cars going over the bridge.

TRUDI The answer's bound to be on Google.

SHARP Sort of information the next mayor should
Have at his fingertips anyway.

KINGSWOOD Good point.

CATHERINE Isn't it exciting. He's so far ahead in
the polls. Ooooh.

KINGSWOOD By rights, I should be out showing up at
every possible public event. But I don't
need to.

TRUDI You must love living here. We do and
we've been here only a few days.
It's got everything. And so central!

CATHERINE Oh I do love it here.

KINGSWOOD Even more now Mike's gone. The coast is always clear. LAUGHS Know what I mean?

CAHERINE Bob! You've sworn me to secrecy often enough

KINGSWOOD Oh who cares! Not as if we have to book a room at Sky City.

CATHERINE We did once.

KINGSWOOD Before Mike died, yes! LAUGHS

CATHERINE Sometimes you are a very coarse man.
Mike died on the bowls green...

TRUDI]

SHARP]

KINGSWOOD]Yes, yes, yes.(we know!!!!)

TRUDI Did you say he developed The Seafarer? The ones over there?

CATHERINE Yes.

TRUDI LOOKS AT SHARP. HE NODS. HE PRESSES
A NUMBER ON HIS PHONE.

CATHERINE We never had children...so I want it to be--
My God, did you see that!

SHARP What?

CATHERINE In the apartment over there! Just a glimpse.
I could have sworn it was. . . Michael.

SHARP]

TRUDI] Michael!!

CATHERINE There was definitely a man there.

KINGSWOOD I thought I saw something.

TRUDI It could have been anyone. What made you think it was Michael?

CATHERINE Because he was dressed in white!!! He was wearing bowls gear. See! There! There!

KINGSWOOD Yes! There!

KINGSWOOD] Gone.

CATHERINE] Oh, he's gone.

SHARP But Trevor says that's an empty apartment.

CATHERINE It was him! Trying to get back to me. Got confused with the wrong apartment complex; they're almost identical.

KINGSWOOD Probably nothing.

SHARP If you're convinced it was him... Trudi could help... with a séance?

CATHERINE Oh. Yes!

FX THE MONITOR BELL BUZZES

SHARP FURIOUS AT THE INTERRUPTION

SHARP Who the hell's that!

TRUDI GOES TO IT. LOOKS AT THE SCREEN.

TRUDI My God! It's worked! TO SHARP It's the Bishop!!!

SHARP Shit!

TRUDI HUSTLING CATHERINE AND BOB OUT You should go over and satisfy yourself there's no one there.

CATHERINE Yes Bob, you'll come with me?

KINGSWOOD Can't. Sorry. Meeting.

THEY EXIT.

SHARP CALLING OUT TO CATHERINE We'll let you know when the painting arrives.

FX BUZZER RINGS AGAIN. SHE SHOUTS INTO THE MONITOR

TRUDI Come up to the sixth.

SHARP Fuck, fuck, fuck. We had her.

TRUDI Remember the game plan? If this happened.

TRUDI IS PRIMMING HERSELF. CLEAVAGE. PERFUME.

SHARP She was going to go for the séance. She was!

TO CLEAR THE TABLE ON THE BALCONY, HE THROWS
THE COFFEE CUPS AND PLATES OVER THE SIDE.

TRUDI Stay in there... BEDROOM Ear to the door.

SHARP Phone at the ready. I know.

FX HE GOES INTO THE BEDROOM JUST AS THE FRONT
DOORBELL RINGS.

TRUDI OPENS DOOR. BISHOP ENTERS.

TRUDI Well, Bishop, this is a surprise.

BISHOP I doubt that.

HE WALKS IN AND LOOKS AROUND.

BISHOP You were at church yesterday.

TRUDI You noticed me?

BISHOP You're an attractive woman.

TRUDI Thank you.

BISHOP Plus it's not every day someone puts five one-
hundred dollar bills in the collection plate.

COUNTER INCREASES BY \$500 TO 183,400

Together with their business card. If this was
fishing, your fly would have made such a splash
you would have spooked the trout. Suggests
you wanted me to follow up. So here I am.

TRUDI Here I am.

BISHOP Nice place. HE LOOKS OUT OVER THE BALCONY Worth
a bit.

TRUDI I'm not without means. What can I offer you? No
alcohol, of course. Or caffeine, I assume?

BISHOP Thank you. Nothing. So what did you think?

TRUDI About what?

BISHOP The Church. The Service.

TRUDI If it wasn't for the music, no one would come.

BISHOP Huh?

TRUDI What they liked best was the singing.

BISHOP And I thought I was the attraction.

TRUDI You are! Of course. You preach a powerful sermon.

BISHOP I do.

TRUDI What's your view on casinos?

BISHOP Beg your pardon?

TRUDI Casinos. Poker machines in particular.

BISHOP An abomination. Casinos are institutions set up to take advantage of the vulnerable.

TRUDI And your Church isn't?

BISHOP What is this? Are you a journalist?

 HE STARTS LOOKING AROUND

BISHOP Where's the camera?

TRUDI Camera?

BISHOP I may be born again, but I wasn't born yesterday. This has all the makings of a set-up. The media keep trying to catch me out. They hate what we do. What they say we do.

TRUDI What's that?

BISHOP Get rich.

TRUDI Don't you? All those donations. The tithes.

BISHOP Tithing is common in many countries.

TRUDI But you do seem to be doing all right. I noticed the car you arrived in: a Lexus.

BISHOP A very fine vehicle. On loan from a dealer in my flock. He puts the name of our church on the side together with the name of his dealership.

What's the press got against us? We persuade the young-especially Māori and Polynesian-to give up alcohol, drugs, smoking, make-up. To resist gambling. That homosexuality is an abomination. Same-sex marriage even more so. But above all, to thank the Lord for all His gifts. If most people followed these rules then the country would be a better place.

TRUDI That's your opinion.

BISHOP My belief. You mentioned casinos. Any reason?

TRUDI Pokies. I know a way of striking a jackpot.

BISHOP So why don't you do it?

TRUDI I did. Twice. Then they barred me. Can't play there anymore. Chance for you to make some money; at the same time strike a blow against them.

BISHOP Cheating a casino, not sure about the ethics of that.

TRUDI "Ethics". That's rich, coming from a notorious womaniser.

PAUSE

BISHOP It's a funny thing. The more a man gets a reputation of being a womaniser, the more women are attracted to him.

TRUDI Including Sylvia.

BISHOP 'Sylvia'?

TRUDI Getting on. A bit plump.

BISHOP That's narrowed it down to about forty.

TRUDI SHOWS HIM SYLVIA'S PHOTO Her.

BISHOP Never seen her before. Or if I have, I don't remember.

TRUDI You should: she's given you nearly all her money.

BISHOP Given the Church all her money. So what's it to do with you?

TRUDI She's hired me to get it back.

BISHOP I still don't remember her.

TRUDI That's known as having a convenient memory.

BISHOP At times like these, I find it best to call on the Lord for his help.

 HE KNEELS. WAITS

TRUDI Cash would be better.

 HE WAITS

 TRUDI RELUCTANTLY KNEELS BESIDE HIM

BISHOP Oh Lord, please help me as I welcome this woman into my flock and make her see the joy of following You.
May she commit her soul...and body.

 SHE LOOSENS HER CLOTHING AS IF BEING WILLING.

BISHOP Forgive Thy servant as he prepares to worship Thee through one of the greatest gifts you gave your children. In your name... amen.

 SHE LETS HIM START UNDOING HER TOP.

BISHOP By God, there are some attractive women in my flock, but you...!

 HE PUSHES HER DOWN.
SHE WRIGGLES OUT FROM UNDER AND THEN GETS ON TOP OF HIM.

TRUDI I like to be on top. Symbolic.

 SHARP COMES OUT OF THE BEDROOM. HE IS TAKING PICS WITH HIS PHONE.

SHARP Morning Vicar!

BISHOP "Bishop"! Who the hell are you?

SHARP Hubby TAKES MORE PICS Nice. Yes. Good!

BISHOP THROWS TRUDI OFF AND LEAPS UP

SHARP Just right for the Church newsletter

BISHOP IS STRONGER THAN SHARP, TWISTS HIS ARM
AND GETS PHONE OFF HIM. GOES TO BALCONY AND
THROWS PHONE INTO THE HARBOUR.

SHARP That's my phone!!!!

BISHOP You're not very fit. "Hubby".

SHARP My phone! My fucking phone!!

BISHOP Join my Church--we offer gym classes. TO TRUDI
I'll be off. In my Lexus. My warm regards to
Sylvia-- whoever she is.

HE EXITS LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN.

TRUDI How did that go so wrong?

SHARP It's at the bottom of the sea! All my contacts.
Everything. And that five hundred
dollars you put in the collection plate.
Wasted!
Well done, Trudi, you did really well!!!

TRUDI He wouldn't have got it off you if you weren't
such a wooss!

THEY BOTH SIT. EXHAUSTED.

SHARP You know what? I can't wait for Ecuador.

TRUDI Me, too.

CATHERINE COMES IN DEPRESSED THROUGH THE OPEN
DOOR.

CATHERINE It was empty. No one there.

TRUDI Oh.

EASY MONEY SEPTEMBER 2022

CATHERINE But I could have sworn it was Mike.
He must be trying to get in touch with
me.

SHARP It does make you wonder.

CATHERINE There's only one way to find out isn't there.
Have a séance.

TRUDI If you're really sure. No promises.

CATHERINE Here. I raided it from my cash-for-emergencies
fund. Two thousand dollars.

COUNTER GOES DOWN BY \$2000 181,400

KINGSWOOD ENTERS THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR

KINGSWOOD EXCITED You know how many vehicles cross
the harbour bridge each day!! I've just
checked. Eighty-six thousand. In each
direction!!!!

SHARP AND TRUDI SMILE AT EACH OTHER. HE'S
HOOKED.

TREVOR ENTERS WITHOUT KNOCKING OR RINGING THE
BELL

TREVOR Knockety-knock. TO SHARP The one-dayer...

SHARP Not now, Trev.

TREVOR HANDING HIM CASH Four grand. Maybe more by
Wednesday.

COUNTER GOES DOWN BY \$4000 TO 177,400

SHARP AND TRUDI SMILE AT EACH OTHER.

TRUDI You know what!

SHARP]

TRUDI] Fuck Ecuador.

INTERVAL

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 DAY SIX TUESDAY

SHARP AND TRUDI ARE PITCHING TO KINGSWOOD,
CATHERINE, PETER AND IVANA, WHO ARE ALL SEATED.
IT IS NOW QUITE FORMAL

TRUDI Eighty-six thousand vehicles...in each direction.
Every day.

SHARP DRAMATICALLY And no one's clipping the ticket.

IVANA "Ticket"?

PETER He means charging a toll.

SHARP Who owns Sydney Harbour Bridge?

KINGSWOOD I know the answer to this.

SHARP A company called Transurban.

KINGSWOOD I've got shares in them!

TRUDI Well, if Sir Robert has them, they must be
good. Tell the others what Transurban does, Sir
Robert.

KINGSWOOD Transurban owns and operates toll bridges in
Australia and USA.

TRUDI Tolls are one of Nature's highest revenue
earners. It's a mystery why it's taken an
Australian group to point out that the
Auckland Harbour Bridge is one of New Zealand's
biggest assets.

SHARP And what do New Zealand governments do with
assets?

KINGSWOOD They sell them.

SHARP They sell them. Right now, Treasury is
preparing-- in complete secrecy-- and
Jesus Christ if what happened here is an
example of Kiwis keeping a secret, heaven help
them--

CATHERINE Sorry.

- IVANA You've said all this before. Give us some figures.
- SHARP Coming to that.
- CATHERINE If I remember, tolls were paid going in one direction only.
- KINGSWOOD We used to pay both ways and then they realised they'd get just as much money collecting one way only.
- SHARP OK. The figure for this exercise is a toll charge of \$3. Might end up more, but let's be conservative. Per day that's-
- PETER USES CALCULATOR ON HIS PHONE About quarter of a million dollars.
- SHARP Quarter of a million dollars per day. So...per year..?
- PETER CALCULATES Near enough ninety-two million.
- SHARP Agreed. That's if everyone paid the same. They'd probably have express centre lanes at a higher rate
- PETER As they do in Sydney.
- SHARP As they do in Sydney.
- TRUDI Give or take-- a hundred million dollars a year.
- CATHERINE Surely people won't want the Auckland Harbour Bridge owned by Australians.
- SHARP Bit late in the day for that to be an issue, isn't it? Australians own the ANZ, Bank of New Zealand, Westpac, most of your supermarkets, most of your retail chains.
- KINGSWOOD "Just saying."
- TRUDI But no, it wouldn't be a good look. Which is why we are looking for a handful of New Zealanders to get in on the ground floor.

SHARP The syndicate we represent is issuing options. Sky City did the same thing when they were setting up. It allows people to test the water without involving a major financial institution with all the attendant costs of launching an IPO: prospectus, legal fees, commission etc etc. Ten cents per option now allows you to buy shares at a dollar when they come on the market. In effect, for the privilege of queue jumping.

KINGSWOOD And you're assuming they'll come onto the market for more than a dollar.

TRUDI Well over.

IVANA How much over?

TRUDI You should get several times that. Of course, hold on to them long term you'd have an income stream for life...

We're selling ten million options.

PAUSE

KINGSWOOD Hate to rain on your parade folks--but this is all bullshit.

SHARP Sorry?

KINGSWOOD It's not going to happen.

SHARP Really?

KINGSWOOD Tolls would be political suicide. Tolls will never be re-introduced. They promised.

CATHERINE They did! I remember.

KINGSWOOD All those North Shore Eastern Bays seats would be lost overnight.

TRUDI Exactly right, Sir Robert.

SHARP Had Sir Robert waited a moment or two longer I would have confirmed that no, no Government will re-introduce tolls.

KINGSWOOD Told you.

EASY MONEY SEPTEMBER 2022

SHARP They're going to call it a Congestion charge.

SILENCE

PETER "Congestion charge"! Oh, now that *is* clever.

CATHERINE LAUGHS Oh it is.

SHARP Even better. The congestion charge would *also* apply on the Southern and Western Motorways. Whichever way you come into Auckland, you'll pay the congestion charge.

TRUDI Happens in Sydney. We're going to clip that ticket, too!!!

CATHERINE Better and better!

IVANA I will put money in this.

PETER You mean you'd put some of my money in.

IVANA Don't be a meany, Pete.

TREVOR ENTERS

TREVOR Knockety-knock.

TRUDI] We're in a meeting!

SHARP] Private meeting, Trev!

TREVOR Is this about the Bridge?

TRUDI] No.

SHARP] Oh for God's sake!

IVANA] Yes.

SHARP We might as well stop here and now. Obviously no one round here can keep a secret-

CATHERINE] Sorry.

PETER] Keep going.

IVANA] Don't stop.

TREVOR IS TRYING FURTIVELY TO GIVE ENVELOPE TO SHARP.

SHARP What?

TREVOR Cash. Cricket. Tomorrow.

EASY MONEY SEPTEMBER 2022

SHARP How much is in here?

TREVOR Six thousand seven hundred and sixty dollars.

 COUNTER GOES DOWN BY \$6760 TO 170,640

SHARP Oh God!

TREVOR I've cleared out my savings account.

SHARP Talk to you later.

TREVOR And this! HANDING HIM ANOTHER ENVELOPE

SHARP What?

TREVOR From Nigel. Two hundred.

 COUNTER GOES DOWN BY \$200 TO 170,440

SHARP Wow. Big time.

KINGSWOOD Is this meeting happening, or not!!

TREVOR I'd like to stay. The Bridge isn't it. Tolls?

SHARP Was this building a leaky building!!! Must have been. Must have been! What did they use for reinforcing? A colander made of Chinese steel?

CATHERINE Oh let him stay.

SHARP Really? So you think he'll have twenty-five grand to put up? 'Cause, folks, that's the sort of money we're talking about. Quarter of a million options at ten cents each--that's the minimum. PAUSE And if this not the sort of sum you're prepared to risk now's the time to leave.

KINGSWOOD Face it, Trev, this is out of your league.

TREV Not after Wednesday.

KINGSWOOD Eh?

IVANA Can we please get on with it.

SHARP Here it is, folks HANDS OUT SHEETS OF PAPER
 The figures for you to peruse at home.
 Trudi and I are taking up the first 250,000
 options: the rest are up for grabs. Bank
 details at the bottom for internet banking.
 First in, first served.

FX MONITOR BELL GOES

TRUDI LOOKS OUT OF WINDOW.
 TO SHARP Courier.
 PRESSES BUTTON
 INTO MONITOR Come up to the sixth.

SHARP USHERS EVERYONE OUT.

IVANA ON HER WAY OUT Great investment.

PETER You would think.

SHARP Deadline. Friday!!!!

FX THEY ALL LEAVE. A MOMENT LATER,
 DOORBELL GOES.
 A ROLLED-UP PACKAGE IS HANDED IN. THEY SIGN FOR
 IT. TRUDI ENTERS

TRUDI Let's see what Cheung's done for us this time.

 THEY UNROLL IT. A "McCAHON" WORD PICTURE.

A greedy man stirs up strife. Proverbs

McCahon

TRUDI READS IT "A greedy man stirs up strife."

SHARP Applies to everyone at The Cutlass.

TRUDI We can talk.

SHARP Just saying.

TRUDI Once this is in the frame (the one on the wall)
 no one'll know it from the real thing.

ACT TWO

SCENE 2 DAY SIX TUESDAY

TRUDI AND BISHOP ARE SEATED. THEY ARE
DRINKING SOFT DRINKS.

TRUDI Never expected to see you again, Bishop.

BISHOP No.

TRUDI So what brings you here? I doubt if you've
suddenly remembered who Sylvia is. Or come to
return her money.

BISHOP I told you, I have no idea who--

TRUDI Well then, of course I believe you.

BISHOP Casinos.

TRUDI An "abomination". I recall.

BISHOP You said you had a guaranteed way to collect on
a jackpot.

TRUDI I did.

BISHOP I have been considering. Since jackpots have to
be won by someone...then better that money falls
into the hands of the Church.

TRUDI Exactly.

BISHOP And one can't cast out a sin, until one has
committed it...

TRUDI Wisely argued.

BISHOP So...?

TRUDI So "How do you do it?"

BISHOP Yes

TRUDI What happens is on the right day the person goes to the casino. Near the elevator, there will be a man in a striped shirt playing a machine. You--if it's you--will say "No luck?" He will say to you, "I've been here an hour, hope you have better luck than I've had." You take over.

BISHOP Is that it?

TRUDI No. You pay three thousand dollars for that information.

BISHOP Three thousand!

TRUDI Well don't then, why should I care? For what can be fifty thousand dollars, that's a good return. Then ten percent of whatever you win to me.

BISHOP Ten percent!!!

TRUDI It's called tithing...

BISHOP But how do you know that--

TRUDI Poker machines are manipulated--perfectly legally--to increase ... or decrease the odds. We have someone on the inside who does this...and on the right day, reduces the odds to such an extent it's almost a sure thing.

BISHOP Sounds straight forward.

TRUDI He sells us the information. About which machine is most likely to produce a jackpot.

BISHOP Is that what you did? Before you got barred?

TRUDI Yes. Give him the cash very discreetly. They have cameras everywhere.

PAUSE

TRUDI You asked me, I've told you. Over to you.

BISHOP When?

TRUDI Friday. Early Friday evening.

ACT TWO

SCENE 3 DAY 7 WEDNESDAY

SHARP AND TRUDI HAVE THE PAINTING, NOW IN A FRAME AND WRAPPED, ALL READY TO TAKE IT TO CATHERINE. THEY ARE WAITING FOR HER TO CALL.

TRUDI What are you doing about Sylvia?

SHARP Nothing. No point. I've nothing to say to her.

TRUDI Are you still hearing from her?

SHARP I get emails every day.

TRUDI And?

SHARP I don't reply...

TRUDI That's a bit unfair. You've raised the poor woman's hopes, given her a bit of lovey-dovey and you're dumping her. She doesn't deserve that!

SHARP What's the point? She's broke.

TRUDI True.

SHARP She'll get the message soon enough.

TRUDI Or she'll turn up here.

SHARP Please God, no.

THE PHONE GOES.

TRUDI Trudi. Yes. Now's fine. Coming right up. RINGS OFF She's ready.

THEY GO OUT THE DOOR CARRYING THE PAINTING.
WE CAN SEE THE DOOR NUMBER, 6C.

ACT TWO

SCENE 4 DAY SEVEN WEDNESDAY

CATHERINE'S APARTMENT

SUDDENLY IT IS CATHERINE OPENING THE DOOR TO HER APARTMENT BUT NOW THE NUMBER ON THE DOOR IS 7C. THE FURNITURE IS COVERED WITH SHEETS BECAUSE THE INTERIOR DECORATOR IS STILL WORKING.

TRUDI AND SHARP ENTER, SHARP CARRYING THE LOOSELY WRAPPED PAINTING.

CATHERINE Let's see it, let's see it.

SHARP UNWRAPPING IT Don't hurry me. This is a valuable painting.

CATHERINE Oh yes! "A greedy man stirs up strife."
True! From the Bible? PEERS AT IT. "Proverbs."
Now I know it's genuine.

I can hardly believe it. Something I've always wanted.

TRUDI We knew you'd love it.

CATHERINE Oh, I do. I do!
Well now. You said the owners wanted eighty thousand for it.

TRUDI Yes.

CATHERINE Even though that's less than the going rate...

TRUDI I think they're a bit out of touch. At their time of life, they don't care so much...

CATHERINE WRITES THEM A CHEQUE.

CATHERINE Eighty thousand, yes?

COUNTER GOES DOWN BY \$80,000 TO \$90,440

SHARP Sold! LAUGHS you're happy; we're happy; the sellers paid \$4000 for it, so *they're* happy.

CATHERINE I thought it would look just marvellous here.
Hold it up.

SHARP HOLDS IT UP WHERE IT WOULD GO.

SHARP] It would.

TRUDI] Perfect

SHE ADMIRES IT FOR A MOMENT.

CATHERINE Trouble is...

SHARP What?

CATHERINE Pavel says "No".

TRUDI "No"? What do you mean, Pavel says No?

CATHERINE I told him I was getting a McCahon and where I
would put it, and he put his foot down. Said it
simply wouldn't fit into his colour scheme.

TRUDI It's black and white.

SHARP You're the client. He has to do what you tell
him.

CATHERINE He says he'd rather walk away and leave all
this unfinished if that's what I'm going to do.
Pity.

SHARP MUTTERING Fuck.

TRUDI Well of course in that case...we'll take the
painting back. TO SHARP Won't we.

SHARP I don't know about that. We took a lot of
trouble-

CATHERINE Oh I didn't say I wouldn't buy it. I have
bought it! I think I'm being rather clever.
I checked prices of sales at a recent auction
and they sold two McCahons for over a million!

SHARP Each?

CATHERINE Oh yes. I'll put it in the next auction.
They're sending one of their experts round to
come and look at it.

TRUDI] No, no, no.

SHARP] Not a good idea!

CATHERINE Why not? I'll make a decent profit!
Mike wouldn't believe it: I'm turning into a
hard businesswoman.

SHARP A hard businesswoman would allow the
apartments to be built.

CATHERINE I'm holding firm on that.

TRUDI When er...when's this expert coming?

SHARP ALARMED Not today?

CATHERINE Early next week. Exciting. As you
say: everyone's happy.

SHARP AND TRUDI CLEARLY AREN'T HAPPY

ACT TWO

Scene 5 WEDNESDAY EARLY EVENING

TRUDI AND SHARP ARE LOOKING AT COMPUTER SCREEN.

TRUDI Do I take these flights, or don't I?

SHARP PULLS A FACE I suppose.

TRUDI If we had our million, we could go straight to
Ecuador.

SHARP I know!!

TRUDI Just saying.

SHARP We still might.

TRUDI By Monday! When Catherine's McCahon expert
will be blowing the whistle.

SHARP Take them (the flights).

DOOR OPENS

TREVOR Knockety-knock!

SHARP For God's sake Trevor, what is it now?

TREVOR Here we are!

TREVOR IS IN BLACKCAPS SUPPORTERS' OUTFIT.
HOLDING CANS OF BEER. HE IS VERY EXCITED.
SLIGHTLY DRUNK/ GIGGLY. SHARP AND TRUDI REALISE
THEY HAVE BOTH FORGOTTEN.

SHARP]
TRUDI] TO EACH OTHER The cricket!

SHARP Nigel not coming?

NIGEL Here I am!!!!

NIGEL ENTERS. HE HAS DRESSED UP FOR THE
CRICKET, BUT IN A MORE SUBDUED WAY. INSTEAD OF
BEER HE HAS (SAY) A SMALL BOTTLE OF SPARKLING
WINE. TRUDI HEADS TOWARDS THE BEDROOM.

TREVOR Aren't you going to watch!

TRUDI STOPS. NO POINT IN GOING IN THERE.

TREVOR You haven't even got it on!

HE TURNS ON THE TV.

NIGEL But wait. That's not all!

FLOURISHES A FORM

NIGEL Talked to the others. They all agree you're a
greedy prick...but get Catherine to sell us the
bowls club, there'll be a million in your
account.

TREVOR NOW SEATED AND WATCHING THE
CRICKET. NIGEL JOINS HIM.

TREVOR Pakkies only got 130. Not many chances to bowl
a no ball. So, it has to be early in the
innings, right?

TREVOR OPENS A CAN AND DRINKS.

NIGEL OPENS HIS WINE, EXPECTS TO HAVE A GLASS.
THINKS ABOUT IT, THEN SWIGS IT.

FX CRICKET COMMENTARY Amir coming in...Guptill
plays it to mid-wicket, no run.

NIGEL This is my second today!!!! Oh, I never gamble.

TREVOR It's not gambling, Nige. It's fixed. That's the whole point.

NIGEL I've never done anything like this in my life.

TREVOR Shut up Nige. You've got only two hundred on. I've got ten thousand seven hundred and sixty dollars on.

NIGEL Twenty to one, more than two hundred K. I can put you into a nice little renter with that...

TREVOR "Renter"? I'm buying into the fucking bridge!

FX CRICKET COMMENTARY Amir bowls. Guptill plays it off his hip through mid-wicket.

TRUDI Look guys. We're really busy. Can't you go and watch the cricket at your place.

TREVOR OK, OK. Just tell us which ball is going to be the no ball.

SHARP Ah. Well. I've got it here ... LOOKING THROUGH HIS POCKETS

TREVOR You must know!!

FX CRICKET COMMENTARY Amir coming in...oh, a no ball.

TREVOR AND NIGEL LEAP UP WITH JOY.

TREVOR] Yes, yes, yes!!

NIGEL] Was that it? We've done it!! DANCES

SHARP No.

TREVOR Two hundred and fifteen thousand...

SHARP No.

TREVOR ...two hundred dollars...

SHARP No.

TREVOR Hell-lo? That was a no ball.

TRUDI MUTES THE SOUND

SHARP That, yes, was a no ball

TRUDI Steve's trying to tell you something.

SHARP But not *the* no-ball.

TREVOR What do you mean, not *the* no-ball.

SHARP That was just a no-ball. Not an arranged one. No-balls happen.

TREVOR Bloody hell.

 SHARP PRODUCES A PIECE OF PAPER FROM A POCKET.

SHARP What over are we in?

TREVOR Third.

SHARP Right... CHECKS THE PIECE OF PAPER BUT MAKES UP WHAT'S WRITTEN ON IT

 Next over...second ball.

TRUDI TO SHARP And if it *does* happen to be a no-ball?

SHARP TO TRUDI We say the money gets paid next week. After we've gone.

NIGEL I am just about wetting myself.

TRUDI Me, too.

TREVOR Nige, it's hardly your life savings! This is it, this is the over.

NIGEL Put it on "Pause". I have to go to the toilet.

TREVOR You've only got to hang on for two balls, Nigel.

NIGEL Story of my life, Trevor.

FX CRICKET

NIGEL Is it this one?

TREVOR Next.

THEY TURN THE SOUND UP

TREVOR This is it, this is it...

FX Amir running up.. The ball goes straight through to the keeper APPLAUSE

TREVOR IS STUNNED

SHARP AND TRUDI RELAX. THEY TURN DOWN THE SOUND

NIGEL PUZZLED Was that a no-ball?

TREVOR No it bloody wasn't!!!!

NIGEL Does this mean we've lost our money?

TREVOR What do you think? They cheated.

TRUDI Or in this case, the Pakistanis didn't cheat.

SHARP I tried to warn you it could happen. There was never any guarantee.

NIGEL I've lost my two hundred dollars. My mother told me.

TREVOR Two hundred! I've lost everything.

SHARP You insisted.

TREVOR TO SHARP You don't look too upset. How much did you have on it?

SHARP What? Oh. Enough.

NIGEL GETS UP TO GO, BUT TREVOR REMAINS SEATED.

TREVOR Something not right here...

NIGEL You'll be forgiven if you pull off that bowls club sale.

TRUDI We are working on it.

NIGEL I want to come to the séance.

TRUDI SURPRISED Really?

NIGEL Catherine told me you were having one. Friday evening. I'd like to contact my mother. I need to know if she forgives me.

TRUDI For losing two hundred dollars?

NIGEL No. Something much (bigger)-

TREVOR TO TRUDI Why did you make a bolt for the bedroom? Just before I turned on the TV?

SHARP Out! Out! I told you again and again it was a risk. I advised you not to put too much on. So don't blame me when you lose.

TREVOR I bloody well do blame you. It just doesn't smell right.

SHARP It's your job to fix any smells round here.

TREVOR I will. And this isn't a smell. It's a stink.

ACT TWO

SCENE 6 FRIDAY EVENING

EMPTY STAGE. BALCONY BLINDS UP. OUTSIDE IT IS DUSK

TABLE IS PARTIALLY SET FOR THE SÉANCE

TRUDI COMES OUT OF THE BEDROOM STAGE LEFT (THE ONE THAT IS RARELY USED).

FX

SHE IS ABOUT TO GO INTO THE OTHER BEDROOM WHEN THE DOORBELL RINGS
SHE IS ANNOYED, BUT HAS TO ANSWER IT.

KINGSWOOD IS THERE

TRUDI You're too early, Bob. The séance doesn't start until-

KINGSWOOD PUSHES PAST HER

KINGSWOOD Hear what I have to say, you won't even bother. I'll have a gin thanks.

TRUDI GETS HIM A TANQUERAY GIN

KINGSWOOD I knew you were both con artists.

TRUDI Sorry?

KINGSWOOD You didn't think I was going to invest in a scheme like this without checking around. I've got good mates in Cabinet, remember.

TRUDI Say what you have to say.

KINGSWOOD The Government IS going to reintroduce bridge tolls.

TRUDI Really!

KINGSWOOD It's being announced next week. No one knows anything about congestion charges.

TRUDI You said tolls would be political suicide.

KINGSWOOD They're making sure the Auckland city council gets the blame. So that'll be the end of your pretty game.

TRUDI Now I need a drink SHE POURS HERSELF A GIN

KINGSWOOD I always had my doubts. Did some digging. I have friends high up in police in Sydney. Both of you wanted over there. Under the names of Frank George Hutton and Linda Victoria Gregg. How am I doing so far?

TRUDI Sherlock Holmes couldn't have done better. So now you'll pass on the options?

KINGSWOOD Obviously.

TRUDI And I'm sure, as a mayoral candidate, shopping a couple of scam artists to the police would make a great story for the press. A good example of civic duty.

PAUSE

KINGSWOOD Well, it doesn't have to come to that. It's up to you.

SILENCE

TRUDI Is this a light at the end of the tunnel?

KINGSWOOD Do you know what "Fake Casting Agent" is?

TRUDI A porn site?

KINGSWOOD Spot on. It goes like this. Naive girl-you-, offered money for posing, has to take her clothes off while the agent-me-films her. Before you know it, she's on her knees giving him-

TRUDI I've got the point.

KINGSWOOD Only in this case, there wouldn't be any actual filming.

TRUDI No. So, what is the naïve young girl being promised?

KINGSWOOD I'll *pretend* take a quarter of a million's worth of options. Catherine will do the same if I tell her to. From what Ivana was saying, I think they're going for it. Police aren't called until you've left the country--which I'm sure you're planning to do pretty soon. Good return for a few minutes-

TRUDI OK, let's get this over.

KINGSWOOD The idea is that the person auditioning shows...initial reluctance.

TRUDI Ah. The tease part.

KINGSWOOD The point is she wants to get taken on, so she's willing to do *anyth-*

TRUDI Got the picture PLAYING THE GAME "Oh...do I have to?"

KINGSWOOD PLAYING THE GAME "Only if you want work. People have to see what you look like. Which means you have to..." HE INDICATES

TRUDI PLAYING THE GAME "Oh...if I truly must."

SHE RELUCTANTLY TAKES OFF HER TOP (BUT WEARING BRA) SHE KNEELS

PAUSE

TRUDI Now you have to show me what you're made of...
 that's only fair...
 SHE HELPS HIM OFF WITH HIS TROUSERS

 Oh my!!!! You are a big boy!!

KINGSWOOD You have played this before!

 SHE SITS ON HIS LAP.

KINGSWOOD No, no. You don't sit on my lap.

 SHE LEANS OVER HIS FACE.
 HE IS EXPECTING A KISS.
 SHE REMOVES HIS GLASSES.
 HE IS NOW SHORT-SIGHTED.

 SITS ON HIS LAP IN AS COMPROMISING A POSITION
 AS POSSIBLE.

 SHE GETS HIS PHONE FROM HIS JACKET POCKET.

TRUDI Just a few selfies.

KINGSWOOD No! no! That's not a good idea.

TRUDI It's part of the game!!! Smile!!!
 THREE QUICK SHOTS.
 SHE GETS OFF HIS LAP
 Now here's the other part of the game.

 SHE GETS HIS WALLET FROM HIS JACKET. TAKES OUT
 EFTPOS CARD AND CREDIT CARDS.

 SHE SITS CLOSE BY HIM AGAIN.

TRUDI PIN numbers.

KINGSWOOD If you think I'm going to give you my PIN numb-
 HE SCREAMS. SHE IS SQUEEZING HIS BALLS.

TRUDI No? Forgotten? One more for luck.

 SHE SQUEEZES AGAIN.

KINGSWOOD GASPS IT OUT 3110

TRUDI 3110. Both cards?

KINGSWOOD Yes.

TRUDI Phone?

KINGSWOOD Same with two extra zeroes.

TRUDI Sure? SQUEEZES

KINGSWOOD Yes, yes, yes!!!

TRUDI Now. Here's how this version of Fake Casting Agent really goes. I've got all your contacts, here (HIS PHONE). One push of a button and they will all get these photos. As will The Herald, TVNZ, RNZ, all the media sites- Don't like your chances of being Mayor then, do you?

KINGSWOOD No.

TRUDI Plus, of course, if Stephen sees these photos, he'll kill you.

KINGSWOOD Yes.

TRUDI Understood?

KINGSWOOD Yes.

TRUDI Sure?

KINGSWOOD Yes. Oh God. Oh God. Oh please

TRUDI You can have your phone back...

KINGSWOOD Yes?

TRUDI Once we've got *all* the investment money. Which includes your twenty-five grand's worth of options. Funnily enough I do have the forms all filled out.

KINGSWOOD I would have done internet banking.

TRUDI This'll save you the trouble. Sign.

HE HESITATES.

HER HAND GOES TOWARDS HIS BALLS.

HE SIGNS.

COUNTER GOES DOWN \$25000 TO 65,440

TRUDI Where can I put these...?(THE TROUSERS) Let me think. HE REACHES FOR THEM.

SHE GOES TO BALCONY AND THROWS THEM OVER.

KINGSWOOD No! What if someone sees me?

TRUDI PULLING DOWN THE BLIND What indeed?

TRUDI BUNDLES KINGSWOOD THROUGH TO THE MAIN BEDROOM.

TRUDI We've got the séance soon and if any of them hears so much as a peep out of you, well then...

SHE MIMES HITTING THE SEND BUTTON ON HIS PHONE.

TRUDI Understood?

KINGSWOOD Yes, yes. Totally.

SHE LOCKS THE BEDROOM DOOR

TRUDI SHOUTING THROUGH THE DOOR. Total silence!

SHARP RUNS IN. HE IS WEARING A STRIPED SHIRT, WIG AND MOUSTACHE. HE REMOVES WIG AND MOUSTACHE.

TRUDI I was starting to think you'd got into a game of poker.

SHARP WAVES A BUNDLE OF MONEY AT HER. I was tempted.

TRUDI Three grand?

SHARP Yes.

COUNTER GOES DOWN BY \$3000 TO 62,440

TRUDI How was the Bishop? Obviously, he didn't recognise you?

SHARP Too nervous, I think. He paid up, anyway. I left him playing ten lines at a time as fast as he could. Both TV One and TV 3 said they'd send News crews soon as. Couldn't resist catching the Bishop playing the pokies.

GOES TOWARDS THE BEDROOM.

TRUDI Bob Kingswood's in there. Without his trousers.

SHARP Naughty boy, was he?

TRUDI Tried to be. Lock him in.

SHARP INTO BEDROOM.
MUFFLED CRY OF ANGER FROM INSIDE.

TRUDI PUTS FINISHING TOUCHES TO THE SÉANCE
ARRANGEMENTS (CANDLES, CRYSTAL BALL).

SHARP COMES OUT OF BEDROOM, DIFFERENT SHIRT.

SHARP I locked him in the wardrobe.
Not sure how long it will hold him.

TRUDI HURRIES BACK INTO THE BEDROOM TO GET
CHANGED.

SHARP ARRANGES A FEW MORE TOUCHES.

FX DOORBELL RINGS

SHARP LETS CATHERINE IN. LEAVES DOOR OPEN.

CATHERINE Really not sure I should be doing this.

SHARP I think you should. Madam Colette nearly
always gets results.

CATHERINE "Madam Col-"? Ah. But what results? That's the
question.

IVANA ENTERS.

IVANA Hi!

SHARP Ivana. Where's Peter?

IVANA He's not coming. Migraine.

SHARP Poor man.

SHE HANDS OVER THE CASH.

COUNTER GOES DOWN \$2000 TO 60,440

IVANA She knows who I'm trying to contact...?

SHARP Your great-grandmother, yes.

IVANA The one.

NIGEL ENTERS

NIGEL Trevor wanted to come but I said No. PAYS

COUNTER GOES DOWN \$2000 TO 58,440

SHARP Quite right. Madam Colette does not allow onlookers.

NIGEL He's still very upset. About the cricket.

SHARP SITS THEM ALL AT THE TABLE.

SHARP Let me put you in the picture. This is not some giggly pushing-the-glass-round-the-table-to-spell-out-words stuff we all did when young. You have indicated to us the name of the loved one you hope to re-connect with. There is no guarantee at all that Madam Colette can make contact. This takes enormous spiritual energy and concentration. I ask you to respect whatever she tells and asks of you...

SHARP DIMS THE LIGHTS. HE SITS TO ONE SIDE.

FROM THE BEDROOM MADAM COLETTE ENTERS.
LOOKING EVERY INCH AN OLD-FASHIONED
SPIRITUALIST...AND GLAMOROUS WITH IT.

SHE SITS. SHE LOOKS AT THE CRYSTAL BALL FOR A
MOMENT, THEN HOLDS HANDS WITH IVANA AND
CATHERINE. NIGEL COMPLETES THE CIRCLE HOLDING
IVANA AND CATHERINE'S HANDS.

SHARP SITS QUIETLY TO ONE SIDE

TRUDI First you have to empty your minds.

FX SOFT MUSIC IS PLAYED

TRUDI Now concentrate on the loved one you wish to
contact.. They need to know you want to
communicate..

PAUSE

ALL ROUND THE TABLE HAVE THEIR HEADS LOWERED
AND EYES SHUT.

THE CANDLES SPRING TO LIFE.

TRUDI STIRS.

TRUDI This person is far away. So far...she is very faint. She is hard to hear. Not distance... accent.

IVANA Ah.

TRUDI I'm getting something. It might be a name... The name she wants to contact..."So..Sofia...?"

IVANA Sofia!! That's me. Ivana's not my real name. Ask if she was at Stalingrad..during the siege.

TRUDI IN HER TRANCE SHE SPEAKS SOME RUSSIAN. THEN Yes...she was at Stalingrad.

IVANA Ask her...was Shostakovich the father of her child? TO OTHERS It's possible. Imagine-being a descendant of-

TRUDI Sorry? What? Can't hear. Another woman...trying to push in.

NIGEL That'll be my mother. Gloria.

TRUDI If that's Gloria. Your son is here. Just wait a minute.

NIGEL Ask her. Can she forgive me?

TRUDI Forgive you for what?

NIGEL For not giving her any grandchildren.

TRUDI PAUSES FOR A MOMENT.

IVANA TO NIGEL She should wait her turn!!!

NIGEL You never met my mother!

TRUDI Keep holding hands. I have this other voice. Male. Someone very close. Very urgent.

CATHERINE Oh please! Please.

TRUDI To do with a decision. A big decision.

CATHERINE Michael? Michael...?

TRUDI He's desperately trying to tell you something.

CATHERINE Financial...?

TRUDI Shush, shush, he's so close, I've never known a spirit so close!!

THE CANDLES FLARE THEN GO OUT.

THE GLOBE, TOO, DIMS AND DIES.

A FLASH OF LIGHT BRIEFLY ILLUMINATES THE SKULL
(VODKA BOTTLE)

CATHERINE, IVANA, NIGEL ALL REACT WITH A
SCREAM.

THE BLINDS RATTLE UP.

ON THE BALCONY, LIT BY THE BALCONY LIGHTS, IS A
GHASTLY FIGURE DRESSED IN WHITE, BOWLS UNIFORM.
HAT. THE FACE DISTORTED BY BEING PRESSED
AGAINST THE GLASS. IT IS HOLDING A SIGN "SELL".

CATHERINE Michael!! Oh Michael!!

NIGEL The sign. He's holding a sign.

CATHERINE "Sell". It says Sell.

NIGEL "Sell!" He means the bowls club. He's telling
you to build the apartments!!!!

TRUDI That's what he's saying.

THE BALCONY LIGHTS GO OUT.

THE BLINDS TUMBLE DOWN.

THE LIGHTS COME BACK ON IN THE ROOM.

CATHERINE RUNS TO THE BALCONY.
PULLS UP THE BLINDS

THERE IS NO ONE THERE. JUST A BOWLING BALL ON
THE TABLE.

CATHERINE TRIES TO OPEN THE SLIDING DOORS. THEY
ARE LOCKED.

TRUDI SLIDES OFF HER CHAIR UNCONSCIOUS. SHE HAS COLLAPSED FROM THE EFFORT. SHARP TRIES TO REVIVE HER.

SHARP You see! This is why she hates doing these. It takes so much out of her! TO HER Never again, my darling, never again. Now that you achieved what you came for, I think it best you all leave now.

IVANA I'll never know now.

CATHERINE He was there...right there. And then he was gone.

NIGEL So you'll agree to the bowls club apartments?

CATHERINE I hate to say goodbye to the playground.

SHARP If he can come back once, he can come back again!

CATHERINE He'll haunt me?

NIGEL Yes.

HE THRUSTS PAPER INTO HER HANDS.
SHE SIGNS IT.
NIGEL PUTS IT IN HIS POCKET.

SHARP HOLDS OUT HIS PHONE FOR NIGEL.

SHARP BANK TRANSFER. One million. As agreed.

NIGEL HITS SEND.

COUNTER GOES DOWN \$1,000,000 FROM 58,440 TO 941,560 (AND THEN CORRECTS ITSELF TO **941,560** (i.e THEY ARE NOW IN THE BLACK)

SHARP CAN'T HELP HIMSELF Yes!!!!

TREVOR BURSTS IN (USING HIS KEY). HE LEAVES THE DOOR OPEN.

TREVOR It's a scam! The cricket! I know how they did it. I know how you did it.

SHARP I warned you it was a risk, Trevor.

TREVOR Not for you it wasn't! TO OTHERS We're watching the cricket, right? He says second ball next over will be a no-ball and it was!! Said he had a bet on it.

NIGEL So how *did* he know?

TREVOR Puts the TV in here on a couple of minutes delayed broadcast.

Trudi is watching live TV in the bedroom
Phones him when a no-ball happens. A couple of minutes later it comes up on the screen here.
I'm going to refer this to the police.

SHARP Tell the police what exactly? That you were going to put a bet on something you thought was fixed? Willing to profit from a criminal activity.

TREVOR Con artists. I knew it all along. I bet the bridge is a scam, too.

CATHERINE Don't say that! Is it? Please not. I transferred the money yesterday.

SHARP You did, yes. And weren't you the greedy girl! Half a million options!!! Fifty thousand dollars' worth.

CATHERINE It seemed so good. I'll ring the bank now and get it transferred back.

TRUDI Bit late, sweetie. Ever heard of Panama bank accounts?

CASH REGISTER GOES UP \$50,000 to **991,560**

NIGEL SAD So you didn't really make contact with my mother? It was all made up.

TRUDI Yes. All made up. GENUINELY SORRY FOR HIM But I know this much: she does love you. And no grandchildren: she has forgiven you.

NIGEL How can you know that?

TRUDI Because I'm like you—and my mother forgave me.

BISHOP ENTERS

LOOKS ROUND, BEWILDERED. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

SHARP You should still be playing the machine!

TRUDI Bishop! Ignore us. Friends. Social gathering. Fun and Games. You shouldn't have given up so easily, I did say it could take an hour or more before the jackpot came (up)-

BISHOP It did come up. I won.

TRUDI]
SHARP] You won!!

BISHOP It came up after about half an hour.

TRUDI It happened!!!!

BISHOP Yes! It all happened exactly as you said.

TRUDI And...was it...as much as I estimated?

BISHOP No! More! Eighty-four thousand dollars!

SHARP I should have stayed where I was!

BISHOP HANDS HER SOME MONEY As promised. The tithe. Ten percent. Eight thousand four hundred.

CASH REGISTER GOES UP \$8400 TO **\$999,960**

BISHOP And there were TV News crews there, how they knew, I have no idea.

TRUDI Oh well, that was unfortunate. You being revealed as a pokie player.

BISHOP Not at all! I told the cameras that God had guided me there.

SHARP Don't suppose you told them you'd paid three grand for guidance.

BISHOP Sky City was so delighted with all the publicity they're going to sponsor the Church.

SYLVIA ENTERS

SHE IS DRESSED SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY FROM THE FIRST TIME. BUT IS WEARING THE SAME JACKET/BLAZER SHE WORE THEN.

SYLVIA Stephen.

SHARP Sylvia!!

TRUDI TO SHARP Told you.

SYLVIA I thought you must have died!

SHARP Ah. No.

SYLVIA I was expecting you needing care...nursing. And I come here and find you're having a party!

SHARP Not a party exactly-

SYLVIA How could you stop communicating with me all over again.

SHARP I have good news for you.

SYLVIA Oh?

SHARP PUSHES BISHOP IN FRONT OF HER This man has had a windfall.

SYLVIA Well, lucky old him. Who is he? I've never seen him before in my life.

TRUDI You haven't?

SYLVIA No!!

TRUDI Well, that is interesting. He is the man who supposedly seduced you and you donated him most of your life savings.

SYLVIA Oh.

TRUDI Apocalypse Church, remember?

BISHOP I told you I'd never seen this woman before. You wouldn't believe me.

SHARP Hang on! So when you told me you'd lost all your money...that was...?

SYLVIA Just a scam. Oh yes.

SHARP So you were setting me up?

SYLVIA Isn't the internet wonderful. And how is your cancer?

THERE IS A BANGING ON THE BALCONY WINDOW.

CATHERINE It's Michael, Michael's come back! Bishop, a spirit has risen from the dead. Can you offer him spiritual peace?

BISHOP If he can afford it.

SHARP RAISES THE BLINDS

KINGSWOOD IS THERE, IN UNDERPANTS, DESPERATE.

CATHERINE RUNS AND UNLOCKS THE DOORS TO LET HIM IN.

CATHERINE Robert! Oh, Robert *why* are you out there in your underpants?

SHARP Three guesses.

KINGSWOOD You shut up.

SHARP Just saying.

BISHOP PUZZLED Is this the spirit risen from the dead?

KINGSWOOD No, you fool. Call the police. And grab their phones.

TREVOR Calling them now.

KINGSWOOD One of them's *my* phone!!!

CATHERINE You're right. We must get the police!

IVANA STRIPS OFF HER TOP. UNDERNEATH SHE IS WEARING UNIFORM OF NSW POLICE.

IVANA Don't worry, folks, police are here right now!

PETER COMES IN FROM THE OTHER BEDROOM ALSO IN NSW POLICE UNIFORM.

PETER We've had our eye on these two for ages. Followed them here, been doing surveillance.

PETER IS PUTTING HANDCUFFS ON SHARP

IVANA HANDCUFFS TRUDI

IVANA Got extradition orders for these two all made out.

CATHERINE So you're not really Russian?

IVANA Of course I'm Russian! But not Russian wifey going for residency. Sorry to disappoint you.

SHARP TO TRUDI I said we should have gone yesterday!

PETER Couldn't resist one last scam, could you. Frank George Hutton, arresting you in name of law. Anything you say-

SHARP Yeah, yeah, yeah.

IVANA Same applies to you, Sweetie. Linda Victoria Gregg.

KINGSWOOD Pity they can't be up in court here.

PETER We'll need some of you greedy losers to come to Sydney to be witnesses.

KINGSWOOD Pleasure. I'd even pay my own way.

IVANA AND PETER START TO BUNDLE THEM OUT

TRUDI TO KINGSWOOD Hope nothing gets in the way of your race to the Mayoralty Bob.

KINGSWOOD Search her. She'll have my phone on her.

IVANA FINDS THE PHONE

IVANA This what you're looking for, sir?

KINGSWOOD TAKES IT.

KINGSWOOD TRIUMPH I think my mayoralty's safe now, don't you?

TRUDI Wouldn't be so sure about that, Bob. SHE HOLDS SOMETHING UP Your SIM card!

KINGSWOOD Oh God!!

MAKES A RUSH AT HER BUT IVANA AND PETER HAVE
GOT THEM IN THE DOORWAY

SHARP Hang on.

HE REACHES INTO SYLVIA'S JACKET POCKET. TAKES
OUT THE \$40 HE GAVE HER FOR THE CAB FARE THAT
IS STILL THERE.

SHARP You're a woman of your word. You didn't touch
it. Forty dollars. Thanks.

COUNTER GOES UP \$40 BRINGING UP **A MILLION
DOLLARS.**

POLICE BUNDLE THEM OUT OF THE DOOR AND CLOSE
IT.

CATHERINE At least now they're arrested, we'll get our
money back.

TREVOR From Panama? Yeah, right.

KINGSWOOD They've taken us all for a ride.

NIGEL But you will sell the Bowls Club. Like Michael
said?

CATHERINE I don't know. Can I trust you? Can I trust
anyone? Robert, what are you doing in your
underpants?

KINGSWOOD IS LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW BY THE
FRONT DOOR.

KINGSWOOD Forget the underpants! Something strange
going on.

CATHERINE What?

KINGSWOOD All four of them are driving off in my BMW I ex
M60

THEY ALL RUSH TO LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW.

POSTSCRIPT

FX A BEACH. THE ECUADOR FLAG IS FLYING.
SOUTH AMERICAN MUSIC.

EASY MONEY SEPTEMBER 2022

PETER AND SHARP ARE PLAYING CHESS.
IVANA AND TRUDI ARE SHARING A BEACH TOWEL.

TRUDI Made it. You and I.

IVANA Mmmmm. "Butch."

THEY EMBRACE.

SHARP Your move, Dad.

PETER I know, son. I know. Look why can't you be
patient like your sister?

SHARP Just saying.

END

