

MOJO

*'You know Beryl? She goes to me tonight,
she goes. When Silver Johnny sings the
song my pussyhair stands up'
I see these girls. Shaking like they hate it.
It's voodoo.'*

- Soho, summer 1958: British youth, seduced by the speed and optimism of a glittering American future, have swapped their ration books for rock'n'roll records.
- MOJO takes us on a brutally funny journey through the violent backrooms of the British rock'n'roll business.
- Premiered at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in July 1995, MOJO is Jez Butterworth's first play; it won him the 1995 George Devine Award.

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PLAYS

PRICE £5.99
IN UK ONLY

JEZ BUTTERWORTH

MOJO



ROYAL
COURT
THEATRE

The Characters

MICKEY, thirties
 BABY, twenties
 SILVER JOHNNY, seventeen
 SWEETS, early twenties
 POTTS, early twenties
 SKINNY, early twenties

The Setting and Time

Act One takes place upstairs at Ezra's Atlantic in Dean Street, Soho, July 1958.

Act Two takes place downstairs in the club and starts around 6 p.m. on the same day.

This text went to press before the opening night and may differ slightly from the text as performed.

Act One, Scene One

Upstairs at the Atlantic. SILVER JOHNNY stands alone. We hear the drums, the thudding bass, the screams from the club below. SILVER JOHNNY does steps by himself, tight, menacing, explosive, like a boxer in the seconds before a fight. A low distorted voice announces the act, the girls scream, but he keeps them waiting. The music rises, faster, louder. It reaches its height, SILVER JOHNNY stands at the top of the steel staircase. When the moment comes, he vaults into the stairwell and vanishes, enveloped by sound.

The drums pound on in the blackout. Suddenly they stop and the next second we are back upstairs at the Atlantic, after the show. SWEETS and POTTS are sitting at a table. There is a pot of tea on the table with three pretty cups, on a tray. The door to the back room is shut.

SWEETS. Is that brewed?

POTTS. Four minutes. Relax.

SWEETS. You want a pill?

POTTS. My piss is black.

SWEETS. It's the white ones. Don't eat no more of the white ones
 (Pause.) So where is he sitting?

POTTS. Who?

SWEETS. Mr. Ross.

POTTS. He's on the couch.

SWEETS. Right.

POTTS. Mr. Ross is on the couch.

SWEETS. Good. How is he?

POTTS. What?

SWEETS. Good mood, bad mood, quiet, jolly, upfront, offhand. Paint me a picture

POTTS. Tan suit. No Tie. Penny Loafers. No tassle.

SWEETS. Uh-huh. Right. Anything else?

POTTS. What like?

SWEETS. Does he look flush?

POTTS. He's Mr. Ross

SWEETS. Absolutely.

POTTS. He's a flush man.

SWEETS. Naturally.

POTTS. Ten Guinea Baltimore loafers. Suit sweat a year for you couldn't buy. Shirt undone. Tanned like a darkse. Yes he looks flush.

SWEETS. Ten Guinea Baltimore's? Fuck me briefly.

POTTS. Penny. No tassel.

SWEETS. They're talking about it aren't they . . . (Pause.) Okay. Okay. So where's Ezra?

POTTS. Ezra's at the desk, but he's not in his chair. He's round here to one side.

SWEETS. The Mr. Ross side or the miles away side?

POTTS. Round here to the side on the poochy stool.

SWEETS. Poochy stool. Good.

POTTS. Sit behind the desk it's like I'm the man. Like I'm trying to big you out. Sit round the side on the poochy stool, Hey Presto, we're all a circle

SWEETS. Okay. Okay. So where's the kid?

POTTS. Couch.

SWEETS. Couch. Good.

POTTS. On the couch with Mr. Ross.

SWEETS. Exactly. Let him see the merchandise.

POTTS. What time is it? Okay. Okay. Good. Sweets. Listen. (Beat.) When he announces it -

SWEETS. Hey -

POTTS. When Ezra -

SWEETS. Hey. Hey -

POTTS. If he takes you aside . . . (I know. I know. But listen) -

SWEETS. Could be me could be you. Could be me could be you.

POTTS. Exactly. I'm planning I'm . . . listen. He takes you aside tells you takes me aside, it's not important. For me there's no difference.

SWEETS. It's exactly the same thing. Me or you. Exactly.

POTTS. I want this to be in the open. Out there it's not in the open, you know what I'm saying

SWEETS. Exactly, because . . . (Sid, I know.)

POTTS. Out there it's wolves. In here we're, you know.

SWEETS. Don't say another word.

POTTS. You can't talk about these things.

SWEETS. It either all means something or it doesn't. I've never felt more the same . . .

POTTS. Exactly. Good. The important thing is whichever way it comes, when he announces it, act 'Surprised and Happy'.

SWEETS. Surprised and Good. Good.

POTTS. Happy and Good. Good. The end. That's four minutes. (POTTS stands and picks up the tea-tray.) What?

SWEETS. Absolutely. What? Nothing.

POTTS. I'll be straight back.

SWEETS. Right. Good luck.

POTTS. Relax.

SWEETS. I am relaxed. I'm talking.

POTTS. Takes the tea into the back room. He closes the door.

SWEETS. Lights a cigarette. POTTS returns. So?

POTTS. So what?

SWEETS. So what happened?

POTTS. Nothing.

SWEETS. Right.

POTTS. They're drinking the tea.

SWEETS. Right. Good. What about the Campari?

POTTS. What?

SWEETS. Has the kid drunk his Campari?

POTTS. He's sipping it.

SWEETS. Good.

POTTS. It's casual.

SWEETS. Good sign.

POTTS. You know? Loose

SWEETS. Excellent. Excellent sign.

POTTS. Ezra's still on the poochy stool. But he's moved it. He's tugged it over in snug next to Sam.

SWEETS. Hold it. Hold it. Stop. Who?

POTTS. What?

SWEETS. You said Sam.

POTTS. Indeed.

SWEETS. Who's Sam?

POTTS. Mr. Ross.

SWEETS. Oh.

POTTS. Sam is Mr. Ross.

SWEETS. Oh Right.

POTTS. Sam Ross. That's his name.

SWEETS. Since when?

POTTS. Everyone calls him Sam. His mum named him Sam.

SWEETS. Lab-d-doh!

POTTS. Shut up and listen. Sam Ross is here next to Ezra he's got his legs crossed and he's letting his loafer hang off his foot like this. It's bobbing there.

SWEETS. Don't

POTTS. Right next to Ezra's leg.

SWEETS. Stop.

POTTS. Eyes wide like this. Both of 'em. Like long lost puppies.

SWEETS. Fuck me. They're talking about it aren't they. What's the kid doing?

POTTS. Nothing. Sitting in between looking pretty.

SWEETS. Good.

POTTS. He ain't saying nothing. Just sitting there looking foxy.

SWEETS. Good. The kid's doing good.

POTTS. He knows why he's there. He's paid to warble and look pretty. He ain't paid to give it large in the backroom.

SWEETS. Has he got the jacket on?

POTTS. Who?

SWEETS. The kid. Has he got the Silver Jacket on?

POTTS. He's took it off. It's on the table.

SWEETS. Hang on. Hang on. He's took it off?

POTTS. It's on the table.

SWEETS. Hang on. Hang on. What the fuck is he doing?

POTTS. What?

SWEETS. What the fuck is going on?

POTTS. What's the problem?

SWEETS. He's supposed to wear the Silver Jacket.

POTTS. Sweets -

SWEETS. He's Silver Johnny. Silver Johnny. Silver Jacket.

POTTS. Sweets -

SWEETS. Silver Johnny, Silver suit. That's the whole point.

POTTS. I know. Relax.

SWEETS. Ezra buys the Silver Jacket he should wear it.

POTTS. It's hot in there.

SWEETS. I don't give a fuck if it's hot. Mr. Ross deserves the full benefit.

POTTS. Calm down.

SWEETS. He's not called Shirtsleeves Johnny is he. He was called Shirtsleeves Johnny it would be perfect.

POTTS. It's laid back. It's a jackets off atmosphere. He's right to take the jacket off. It's good.

SWEETS. I'm not happy. (Pause.) Has he got the trousers on?

POTTS. What?

SWEETS. Has he got the silver trousers on?

POTTS. Of course he fucking has.

SWEETS. Well that's something.

POTTS. Fuck do you think they're doing in there? He's gonna sit there in just his pants?

SWEETS. I know. I'm just excited.

POTTS. He's got his trousers on.

SWEETS. I know. Relax.

POTTS. You relax.

SWEETS. I am relaxed. I'm talking.

POTTS. Exactly (Pause.) Always give the bigger dog half the bone.

SWEETS. Exactly. What?

POTTS. See lesser men wouldn't do this. Lesser men would be greedy. Some men find the golden goose they forget the outside world.

SWEETS. Not Ezra. He was born in the outside world.

POTTS. There's only one rule in the outside world. You got yourself a big juicy bone and a bigger dog comes along -- give the bigger dog half the bone.

SWEETS. Only rule in the outside world.

POTTS. And Sweets. Sam Ross is a big dog.

SWEETS. He is.

'Anything makes polite young ladies come their cocoa in public is worth taking a look at.'

SWEETS. Good rule.

POTTS. Great rule.

SWEETS. There's got to be rules and that's a rule.

POTTS. God spoke to me last night Sweets.

SWEETS. Doesn't surprise me an ounce.

POTTS. God said to me, 'Do not be troubled Sidney for your ship is coming in. Yours is the racey big cock-shaped one over there going faster than the rest so just keep your mouth shut and wait.'

SWEETS. Doesn't surprise me an ounce.

POTTS. He's gone 'Keep your mouth shut, unless your nose is in the trough, then open your mouth, and chew like fuck. That's all there is chum.'

SWEETS. You know what God said to me last night? He goes, 'Sweets, There's no God, do what you will, good luck, end of message.'

POTTS. The way I see it it goes like this: Fuck God.

SWEETS. Precisely. Fuck him on a cloud.

POTTS. Fuck God if you know the king. Do you know what I mean? Fuck God if you only know someone knows someone knows the king. Because if you know someone knows someone knows the king, and you wait long enough sooner or later you're gonna get a sweet taste of the king's cock.

SWEETS. Good rule.

POTTS. Great rule.

SWEETS. There's got to be rules and that's a rule.

Enter BABY. He stands there for a bit.

BABY. Drinking wine spo-dee-dee.

Drinking Wine spo-dee-dee,

Drinking wine spo-dee-dee,

Dancing on a Saturday Night.

POTTS. Oh Watcha Baby...

SWEETS. Watcha Babes. How you getting on?

POTTS. How's it going down there? Anyone left?

BABY. Hello Sweets. What a night eh?

SWEETS. Yeah...

POTTS. How you feeling Babes?

POTTS. He's a fucking giant Alsatian.

SWEETS. He is. He's practically a horse.

POTTS. And Sweets. Sweets. Remember. He came to us.

SWEETS. Absolutely.

POTTS. You know? When they write this down I want it to be diamond clear the way round it came. Sam Ross came to us.

SWEETS. Fuck. He did.

POTTS. Eh? Did Ezra have to bake him a pie? Eh? Did Ezra have to spray himself in lavender?

SWEETS. Old Ezra eh? The wily-boy of Dean Street. *(Pause.)* You know Bery? She goes to me tonight, she goes 'When Silver Johnny sings the song my pussyhair stands up.'

POTTS. Relax.

SWEETS. I know. I know. Her pussyhair.

POTTS. We just sit here.

SWEETS. I know. Her fucking nunge.

POTTS. These girls.

SWEETS. Her fur. *It stands up.*

POTTS. I see these girls. It's voodoo. Shaking it like they hate it. Like they hate themselves for it.

SWEETS. In the alley. 'Get it out,' she says. 'Get it out I'll play a tune, on it...

POTTS. One day he's asking his mum can he cross the road the next he's got grown women queuing up to suck his winkle.

SWEETS. Sid. Sid: '... and I'll play a fucking tune on it...

POTTS. Fucking little horn.

SWEETS. Seventeen. Child.

POTTS. These girls. They shit when he sings.

SWEETS. Exactly. *(Beat.)* What?

POTTS. Mickey knows. They shit. He seen it.

SWEETS. They what?

POTTS. It's a sex act. It's sexual.

SWEETS. Hold it. Hold it. Stop. Wait. *(Beat.)* They shit?

POTTS. All over.

SWEETS *(beat)*. What does that mean?

POTTS. Means they have no control in front of a shiny-suited child. Sad fucking world. The end. I'm going to use this as a rule for life.

BABY. Well Sid, actually I feel great.

POTTS. Yeah? You look awful.

SWEETS. Go and put your feet up. You look like a corpse.

BABY. Yeah. Well let's play then. Bring a crate up, relax, few disks . . . Let's get it started.

POTTS. Yeah. Actually. We'll get it started later . . .

BABY. Oh. What's up?

POTTS. Nothing.

SWEETS. Nothing at all. No. (Pause.) It's just they're having a bit of a meeting.

POTTS. No they're not.

SWEETS. Exactly.

BABY. What's going on then?

POTTS. Nothing. They're just relaxing.

BABY. What? In there?

POTTS. Something like that. It's nothing. Best keep the noise down.

BABY. Say no more Sidney. (Laughs) Ssshhh!

SWEETS. Exactly. Sssh.

BABY. Look at that. We forgot the cake.

SWEETS. Yeah. That was my fault. I was supposed to take it down at the last song, pass it around. Completely forgot.

BABY. Look at that cake. That is a brilliant cake. You better hide it Sweets. Or you'll be in hot water.

SWEETS. Yeah I will. I'm gonna hide it.

BABY. Well. All right. I'm gonna go downstairs now.

POTTS. Brilliant.

BABY. Have a spruce up drink.

POTTS. Good idea.

BABY. Just to spruce me up a bit. You want to join me?

POTTS. Yeah. We'll be right down.

BABY. Sweets?

SWEETS. Yeah. I'm gonna be straight down.

BABY. All right. I'm going down now.

POTTS. Okay. See you in a bit mate. Play a game later.

BABY. Drinking wine spo-dee-o-dee. My piss is black.

SWEETS. It's the white ones. Don't eat no more of the white ones.

BABY. The white ones. (Laughs.) Spo-dee-o-dee. Sssshh!

Exit BABY.

SWEETS. Do you think he knows?

POTTS. What do you think?

SWEETS. Ezra wouldn't tell him.

POTTS. He couldn't find the gents in this place without asking.

SWEETS. Ezra wouldn't tell him. Ezra wouldn't trust him.

POTTS. Ezra wouldn't trust him to run a tub. He doesn't know.

SWEETS. If you don't know you don't know.

POTTS. Good. Good. The end. (Pause.) Sweets. I heard 'fifty-fifty'.

SWEETS. Okay. Say that again.

POTTS. I don't know.

SWEETS. Okay. Just that little last bit again.

POTTS. I don't know.

SWEETS. You heard fifty-fifty. You said you heard fifty-fifty.

POTTS. I don't know. Don't turn it into nothing. Don't knit a blanket out of it.

SWEETS. Okay. Stop. Sid. Think. Was it Sam? Did Sam say it?

POTTS. Tricky. With the smoke, I'm pouring tea bent double I heard those words. That word. 'Fifty.' Twice. Fifty. Fifty. Five-O. I don't know. And the single word 'Amenaca'.

They look at each other.

SWEETS. Okay. Okay. All we know -

POTTS. All we know is 'Fish are jumping, and the cotton is high.'

SWEETS. Fish are jumping. Precisely.

POTTS. Good. The end. Talk about something else.

SWEETS. Exactly. Good. Great night.

POTTS. Great night. Exactly. We're fucking made.

SWEETS. My life makes sense.

POTTS. Go upstairs see if there's an angel pissing down the chimney.

SWEETS. My whole fucking life makes sense. (Pause.) Hold it. Hold it. We've not been told.

POTTS. Makes no difference.

SWEETS. Have you been told?

POTTS. Have you been told?

SWEETS. No.

POTTS. Exactly. Makes no difference. Because, Sweets -

SWEETS. Exactly.

POTTS. You know? Listen. Because - 'He Got There Alone.'

SWEETS. Exactly. Bullcrap.

POTTS. Meaningless. Never fuckin' happened. Listen. Everybody needs -

SWEETS. I know. I know. Others.

POTTS. Go to the museum.

SWEETS. I will.

POTTS. Go down take a look at any picture Napoleon. Go take a butcher's at the Emperor Half the World. And you'll see it. You'll see. They got a lot of blokes *standing around*. Doers. Finders. Advisors. Acquaintances. Watchers. An *entourage*.

SWEETS. Big fuckers in fur boots. On the payroll.

POTTS. Napoleon's chums. And they're all there. Sticking around. Having a natter. Cleaning rifles. Chatting to cherubs. Waiting. Waiting for the deal to come off.

SWEETS. They weren't there they wouldn't have fuckin' painted them.

POTTS. And how much do *they* know? Do they need figures? Clauses? Amounts? Like every time Napoleon wants to move his army half a mile somewhere more strategic, to the other side of the forest, over there behind those rocks, there's got to be a pow-wow? Bollocks. I'll tell you what he does. He has a *think*. Like he's Paid To Do. He *reflects*. Then he goes 'Right. We're going over here, who's fucking coming?'

SWEETS. Bull's-eye.

POTTS. Just 'cos now he's got a big horse don't mean he don't need chums. He's got big, they've put him on the big pony, his mates go - 'Maybe Napoleon don't want us around no more. Cramping him up. Holding him back...' 'Cos one thing Sweets. They've put you in seal-skin boots told you you're Emperor, that's when you need mates. 'Cos one day they're gonna lift you back out, stand you in the snow watch your fucking toes drop off.

SWEETS. Listen. Okay. All we know -

POTTS. All we know is 'Fish are jumping, and the cotton is high'.

SWEETS. 'Fish are jumping.' Exactly.

POTTS. 'It's a Nice Day' and 'Oh look the Fish are jumping, and will you look how high that cotton's got.' Good. Good. The end. They're going back to his

SWEETS. Tonight?

POTTS. Billiards. They're going to Sam's house for billiards.

SWEETS. Clover

POTTS. Knee-deep. Thrashing around in it.

SWEETS. Charging through clover on the golden pony.

POTTS. Please sir show me the way to Meadowland? You're standing on it. Lie down take a nap wake up surrounded by wood nymphs.

SWEETS. Humker down my woodland beauties.

POTTS. He's got dyed hair.

SWEETS. Who?

POTTS. Sam Ross has got dyed hair.

SWEETS. You're kidding.

POTTS. He's took his hat off whom! Bright yellow dyed hair. Not blond or nothing. Yellow. Like a banana.

SWEETS. I never thought I'd know that. I never thought I'd know that detail.

POTTS. Sweets. Sweets. The shoes. The motherfucking *shoes* on the man.

SWEETS. Buckskin. Hand-stitched.

POTTS. Baby buckskin. Baby fucking hand-stitched buckskin.

SWEETS. Baby fuckin' buckskin handstitched by elves.

POTTS. Baby fucking buckskin.

SWEETS. Baby what? Who *knows*...? (Laughs.) Eh? Who fucking *knows*?

POTTS. Something rare. Something rare and soft. Something young, can hardly walk, kill it, turn it inside out -

SWEETS. Unborn pony.

POTTS. That's the one. Still attached. Still in the -

SWEETS. Still in its mother's womb.

POTTS. Asleep in the fucking exactly. Wake it up, rip it out, lah-di-dab, pair of shoes. Bom. It's over. I'm going out.

SWEETS. You don't like it? Who cares? I'm fucking paying.

POTTS. I'm going to speak to him.

SWEETS. Exactly. What?

POTTS. What?

SWEETS. What. You're going to speak to Sam?

POTTS. You don't think I should speak to him?

SWEETS. Yes. No. Yes but let Ezra speak to him first.

POTTS. Like I'm going to burst in there giving it the wide.

SWEETS. I know.

POTTS. Like I'm going to burst in there start swinging my cock around.

SWEETS. Sid -

POTTS. If you think I'm going to do that punch me in the face right now.

SWEETS. I don't have to. I know you.

POTTS. I mean *after*. Let the ink dry.

SWEETS. Exactly. Relax. Sit down.

POTTS. Because I have a position in this.

SWEETS. Exactly. We both do.

POTTS. I mean who fucking discovered the kid?

SWEETS. Right.

POTTS. Fact. One solid gold forgotten fact. Ask Mickey Up Camden. Luigi's.

SWEETS. Luigi who fucks dogs.

POTTS. Yes. No. Luigi with the daughter. Parkway. With the Italian flag up behind the. The thing behind the

SWEETS. With the daughter. Does the liver and onions.

POTTS. That's him. I'm up doing all the Camden jukes. Three weeks running Luigi's light on his peanutes. Every machine in Parkway is pulling in eight me quid a week. Luigi's it's one bag, two, three quid if you're lucky. So I say stop having a chuckle, inky pinky blah blah blah you're gonna get a kidney punched out.

SWEETS. Only fucking language they speak.

POTTS. So he's gone, listen, he's gone 'No-one's playing the machine.'

SWEETS. Yeah right.

POTTS. He says. Nobody's playing it.

SWEETS. Like we're in Outer Russia.

POTTS. Like it's the moon. Outer Russia. Exactly. He says . . . Listen . . . He says, this is the bit . . . *They're doing it themselves.* He says they've got a kid comes in here, gets up in the corner, does it himself. The fucking shake rattle roll himself. I mean. Camden kids?

SWEETS. Micks.

POTTS. Do me a favour.

SWEETS. Micks and Paddies.

POTTS. Do me a good clean turn.

SWEETS. Micks and Paddies and wops who fuck dogs.

POTTS. I'm gonna smack him in the face in front the whole caff.

SWEETS. You should smack him in the face in front the whole caff.

POTTS. He says, listen, he says 'Come back tonight, you'll see.' So I come back tonight. And I take Ezra, Mickey, we're gonna scalp him take the rig back if he's told us a fib. (Pause.) Lo and behold.

SWEETS. No.

POTTS. In the corner, all the moves. Doing 'Sixty Minute Man'. Everyone watching in the corner. A *child* (Pause.) That's what happened. (Pause.) I'm not whinning.

SWEETS. I know.

POTTS. I'm not bleating. You know, am I supposed to get back in the van doing sums?

SWEETS. You don't think to . . .

POTTS. 'I want xyz. Twenty, thirty, forty per cent.'

SWEETS. You're not some fuckin' vulture.

POTTS. I'm not some fucking *doorboy* Mickey has a viewpoint. And I have a viewpoint.

SWEETS. Too many viewpoints. Always the way.

POTTS. I'm not bleating. I want what's fucking mine.

SWEETS. I know. And I'm helping you.

POTTS. What am I talking about? Everything?

SWEETS. Not everything. Not everything.

POTTS. Am I talking about *Greef*? No, I'm not. I'm talking about what's due. I'm talking about a fair taste. A nose in the trough. Good. Exactly. The end.

Feet on the steps

Don't say nothing. Fish are jumping.

SWEETS. The cotton is high.

Enter SKINNY with a broom. He is seething, furious.

SKINNY (*shouts*) You cheap fucking . . . sweaty . . . fucking . . . fucking . . . Jew fucking . . . (Pause. SKINNY lights a cigarette.)

SWEETS. Alright Skinny? What's up?

SKINNY. Nothing. *(Pause.)* I'm leaving. I've had enough. I'm telling Ezra. I'm going to get a proper job. I'm going to work in a bank.

SWEETS. Oh yeah? Something gone wrong.

SKINNY. Can I ask you a question? Tell me true. Do I have bad breath? *(Pause.)* You know the one in the dress with the thing up the back? We're having a chat, she's up for it, and Baby swans up, stands in here, close, and he does the thing with the . . . Says the thing about bad breath. The thing about that I've got bad breath. About my breath being bad. I get fifteen minutes free time, yeah, enjoy the night before the coats start leaving and he gives it the breath. *(Pause.)*

I'm tickets at the door seven Saturdays in a row. Seven straight. 'Skinny, you're on the door.' 'Skinny you're on coats.' The juke's fucked, who finds a spanner greases up his new shirt? 'Skinny chum, mop this pile of sick up for two and six an hour.' Yeah? Meanwhile, right, what's he doing? What's he doing? Oh look, he's at the bar. Oh look, he's leaning on the fucking bar. Is that Alan Ladd? No. I don't think so.

POTTS. Come here. *(He does.)* Breathe. *(He does.)* Skinny, your breath smells beautiful.

SKINNY. Thank you.

POTTS. It smells like English roses.

SKINNY. What? Thank you. Thank you.

POTTS. It's a pleasure.

SKINNY. Start of the night about five people in here, he comes up behind me on the door squeezes my bollocks. Not playful. Really gripping. And you know when you're not crying but water comes to your eyes. *(Pause.)* Fucking night. What you doing up here?

POTTS. Nothing.

SKINNY. Fucking weekend. Where's Ezra?

SWEETS. He ain't here. He's gone home.

SKINNY. It's all right, you just sit up here have a natter.

SWEETS. They all cleared off?

SKINNY. That dardie's still down there dancing on his own.

POTTS. Chuck him out.

SKINNY. You playing a game later?

SWEETS. Dunno.

POTTS. We'll see.

SKINNY. Is Baby playing? Because I'm not playing if Baby's playing.

SWEETS. Skin. Pop up the Half-Wops, get us all a frothy coffee, come back, then we'll all play.

SKINNY. Okay. I'll go and get a coffee. I've had enough of all this I'm going to get hurt. I might want to have children one day. *(Pause.)*

POTTS. Go up the Half-Wops, come back, we'll play.

SKINNY. Fucking weekend. My piss is black.

SWEETS. It's the white ones. Don't eat no more of the white ones. *Blackout. Drumming.*

Act One, Scene Two

Upstairs at the Atlantic. SKINNY is tied with his hands around the back of a juke box, his pants round his ankles. BABY, naked from the waist up, wild, is wielding a shotgun and screaming at SKINNY that he is going to die. The others are all appealing to BABY to stop, but BABY swings the shotgun around pointing it at each of them in turn. SWEETS gets up on the desk, still shouting as BABY pushes the two barrels into SKINNY's cheek. Enter MICKEY.

SWEETS is the first to spot MICKEY in the doorway. He calls to BABY over and over, and after the music ends it is a full ten seconds before the din subsides and SWEETS is just calling 'Baby' over and over, his eyes shut. Having won BABY's attention, SWEETS indicates to the door.

BABY. Oh. Hi Mickey.

SKINNY. Mickey. Christ. Thank Christ.

BABY puts the shotgun down.

POTTS. Hey Hey Hey. My Ace

MICKEY walks to the blinds and opens them. Bright sunlight pours into the smoke-filled room. MICKEY opens the window. *Sounds from the street.*

POTTS. Gonna be another corker Mickey. Look at all that sunshine.

SWEETS. Mickey mate. How hard is this eh? I try to tell him. I be like a dad.

MICKEY just stands there.

POTTS. How's your head cold Mickey?

SWEETS. Mickey, how's your head chum? You feeling better chum? Bit more like it eh?

POTTS. Priar's balsam, in a bowl, loads of steam, six minutes. Bingo.

MICKEY. Everybody having a good time?

POTTS. Looks bad doesn't it?

SWEETS. Looks dreadful. Tell me how bad it looks. Tell me.

POTTS. Last night Mickey!

SWEETS. You missed a night. Like everyone's birthday at once. Place looks like a palace.

POTTS. One word. Sequins.

SWEETS. I'm going to say one word now and it's just been said . . . The fucking Sequins

POTTS. Sequin after sequin after sequin. Sequins on the walls. Sequins on the ceiling. Sequins round the bar.

SWEETS. Looks like Little Richard walked in and exploded.

POTTS. I was saying only just now, wasn't I! Sweets. *Underwater* theme. 'Ezra's Atlantic'. See, we noticed. The whole joint sparkles like the briny deep. Like Neptune's cove. Don't tell me it wasn't your idea 'cos it was. Tell me it wasn't my head flies off because it was it was it was.

SWEETS. Mickey. Mickey. Listen. *Thought*.

POTTS. Exactly. Thought. Makes the difference between a shit-hole and a palace. We say 'More'. We do. We say 'Go The Extra Mile'. Coral bar, dress the birds up as mermaids - Speak to him Mickey . . . Get. Get. Get a big shipshape stage like like like a fuckin' . . . like a like . . . Front of a boat.

SWEETS. A prow.

POTTS. Get . . . put a prow exactly something -

SWEETS. A prow.

POTTS. Get it exactly get it in there get a false beard on everyone some some . . . it'd look Mickey. Mickey. What do you think? It's an idea. What do you think?

SKINNY. Hold it. Hold it. I say 'Fuck the Decor'. I say back to the issue of Me Being Tortured.

SWEETS. Look, this sprung from, you know, from circumstances. Y'know night ended, great night, no-one's sleepy, still fancied it, you know, fancied a bit more knees up. Someone suggests a game of chance. A game of chance oh look there's some cards. So we play some King-Sting, some Put-and-Take -

POTTS. Chicago Sixes. Four fingers -

SWEETS. Speculation, Polish Bank -

POTTS. Pursuit. Reverse Pursuit.

SWEETS. Revenge Pursuit.

POTTS. Read 'em and Weep -

SWEETS. Read 'em and sneer -

POTTS. Read 'em and Shit Fire -

SWEETS. Few Drinks Few laughs. Few pills.

POTTS. Great pills. Sweet's pills.

SWEETS. M'mum's pills. Slimming pills.

POTTS. You have to wolf hundreds but in the end . . .

SWEETS. So. Few drinks. Few laughs. Few pills . . .

POTTS. Then lots of pills

SWEETS. Our big mistake.

POTTS. Giant Mistake. Turned sour see. Big up then a big dipper down. What's the word? Emotional.

SWEETS. Emotional. That's Mum. Thin as piss but so emotional.

POTTS. You're up then 'bing' - (what's the word?) 'Jivey'

SWEETS. 'Antsy'. Antsy in the pantsy.

POTTS. Puts the big gorilla monkey on your back.

SWEETS. Pale Ale, Chevis Regal, play a bit, drink a bit . . .

POTTS. Few pills Pale Ale. Big head, it's all tense, Skim here whips the King of Spades out his sock

SWEETS. Clean out his loafer.

SKINNY. I swear. It fell on the floor.

POTTS. I miss it, Sweets missed it, Baby sees it, he's got Queens-over-eights. Nine fucking guineas lying panting on the table.

SWEETS. And the rest is history.

POTTS. Exactly. The rest mostly speaks for itself. So.

SWEETS. So. That's what happened. That's what happened up until now.

POTTS. So now you see. Hold it. Hold it. (*Beat.*) My heart's stopped.

SWEETS. Breathe.

POTTS. I can't breathe. My heart's stopped.

SWEETS. Are you sweating?

POTTS. I got no pulse.

SWEETS. Take a white one.

POTTS. I already had a white one.

SWEETS. Have your feet gone dead?