

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Blotto

by Jeremy Johnson

EXTRACT

© 2006 Jeremy Johnson



This script is distributed by The Australian Script Centre
77 Salamanca Place Hobart 7004 Tasmania Australia
email admin@ozscript.org
www.ozscript.org
ph +61 3 6223 4675
fax +61 3 6223 4678

Characters

HARRY ZILCO – mid 60's.	An American Cable Talk Show Host.
SONIA ZILCO – late 40's.	His wife. Californian Blonde.
JOYCIE POUND – late 40's.	Guest House Proprietor, Townsville.
LOLA BUTTON – 50's.	Friend of Joycie's.
DONGER BUNAMURRA – 30's	Joycie's son-in-law
BILLY POUND – 17	Joycie's son
CARLENE BUNAMURRA - 20's	Joycie's daughter
MYRTLE CURRUTHERS – 70's	Guest House Resident
CROUPIER/ANNOUNCER (V.O)	

Scene Breakdown

Blotto is set in Townville.

Time: Present Day.

Prologue : Showroom Casino

ACT ONE

Scene I : Casino Gaming Floor

Scene II : Hotel Suite

Scene III : Casino Gaming Floor

ACT TWO

Scene I : Ill De Capri Boarding House

Scene II : Ill De Capri Boarding House

ACT THREE

Scene I : Backyard. Ill De Capri Boarding House

Scene II : Backyard. Ill De Capri Boarding House

Scene III : Casino/Backyard Ill De Capri

Scene IV : TV Studio Burbank / Backyard Ill De Capri

BLOTTO

Prologue

Spotlights roam in the dark as a bloke's voice booms over the PA in a rich North Queensland twang.

BLOKE

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Townsville Breakwater Casino is very proud to introduce to the stage a man who has been on TV in hit shows since the 70's and is the host of America's number one talk show 'The Private Life of Stars' - Give a big North Queensland welcome to the King of Talk himself ... Mr. Harrrrrry Zilco!

On stage we see HARRY ZILCO asleep on a single First Class airplane flatbed. He is covered in a blanket with eyeshades on. He stirs awake from the light shining on him and peeks through his eyeshade enough to press the buzzer for the flight attendant. He then settles back down with his back to the Audience.

ASM in blacks with headphones on ENTERS and bends down to whisper something to him. HARRY looks at her for a moment. ASM EXITS. HARRY then slowly turns his head towards the audience and slowly lifts the shade from his eyes and face as he takes in the audience with a look of complete shock and surprise.

HARRY

Who the hell are you people? – Where am I?

We see HARRY ZILCO is a man in his mid 60's but in feisty shape with a face that seems to greet the world with tiresome ridicule. The response to his last question is answered from the PA by his wife and Manager, SONIA.

SONIA

(V.O)

Townsville, Harry. Townsville. You're in Townsville.

HARRY

You mean we landed. I actually got off the fucking plane. This is unbelievable. Do you have any idea how far away you people all live from anywhere? I was in a plane fourteen hours. Fourteen fucking hours! It doesn't take that long for the shuttle to get to the space station Forchristsake! – Man! Where the hell is Townsville? I've never heard of you people before.

SONIA

(V.O)

Harry, can't you just be nice to them. They're here because they love ya. They watch you on television and have come to get a good laugh.

HARRY

Oh yeah. Gee thanks Sonia. If I wasn't married to you, I'd make you my Manager.

SONIA

(V.O)

Honey, I am your Manager, and don't you forget it.

HARRY

Fine. Then tell me where the hell I am. Is this even Australia? I was told we were heading for Queensland. ... What's the deal here! Fill me in. Does this place belong to the Queen of England or something? – *(To Audience)* You guys look kinda white. You gotta all be Englanders right? - Do you play rent or something to stay on her land or does she pay you guys to look after it for her? – Help me out here. I am adrift in unknown waters; Completely Gilligan's Island when it come to knowing anything about Australia except for like scary nature specials on the Discovery Channel. I know jack shit about you people. Okay Mel Gibson – Loved Passion of Christ – it was like Scarface without blow. And Olivia Newton-John – I heard her sing at Swifty's Christmas party one year in Malibu: Lovely girl. Russell Crowe: so the guy has image issues. Who doesn't in showbiz! Big deal. But I mean I don't think of them as Australian. They're like actors who come from here and are like regular people who make movies. As for anything else I know NOTHING!!! –

SONIA

(V.O)

What about kangaroos and koalas, Harry. Sydney had the Olympics.

HARRY

But we're not in friggin' Sydney. We're in Townsville. – You know something. This is going to be the last show I will ever do. And I'll tell you why. This was sent to my agent and they didn't want me to see it, but I'm gonna read it to you.

(Pulls out fax paper from under the pillow of flatbed and reads it.)

Dear Leon, (Leon's Head of the Agency) Dear Leon, The Board of Directors and shareholders have declined to renew 'The Private Life of the Stars with Harry Zilco' beyond the current eighth season. However the network is committed to honoring your client's outstanding abilities and with deepest respects hope development of further projects will be of mutual interest.'

When did Leon fax you this, Sonia? – Huh? – You weren't gonna tell me I've been axed?? - When was this terrific piece of news gonna be passed on to me? – Like when I'm in the jaws of some ginormous reptile you're gonna yell out "Don't get upset Harry. Your show's been canned so there's nothing to live for anyway."

SONIA

(V.O)

Can we talk about this after *this* show, Harry.

HARRY

But right now, I don't give a bean about *this* show!
Lemme see the Itinerary of what's going on here. Can someone bring me an Itinerary of my goddam tour. The Harry Zilco Downundies Tour." – Who the hell thought of that title.

SONIA

Bevan St. Kevin, the Australian Tour Manager. He's the one who fronts the company bankrolling you, Harry.

*(ASM in blacks comes out and hands HARRY
a copy of the tour itinerary and EXITS.)*

HARRY

Yeah, well Bevan is going to be outa pocket ... I wanna see where else we're going on this tour -- Ok Townsville. That's here! - 2 Shows? There is enough people living in Townsville to need a second show? – Next stop – Gold Coast – That's sounds alright. If it looks like I seen in the photos we'll get along fine. Miami meets Vegas on the beach. I can relate.

SONIA

(V.O)

Do you have to bring up Miami, Harry.

HARRY

Those apartment buildings were your idea.

SONIA

(V.O)

When we bought it we didn't know there were gonna be hurricanes every year. That's what's got me started on the whole global warming kick and doing yoga.

HARRY

(Paying no attention to her whatever)

Ah Ha! Then things go downhill rapidly after the Gold Coast. Tweed Heads. Rooty Hill. Can-berra. Frankston, Hobart --- Correct me if I'm wrong here, Sonia, but I seem to be heading straight for the fucking SOUTH POLE!

SONIA

(V.O)

We're nowhere near the South Pole Harry. Its 100 degrees outside, not that you've left A/C since you've been here. We're going to New Zealand, Hong Kong, Taiwan. We are doing all of South East Asia because they love you. The whole world is our home these days, Harry. That's the great thing about Globalization. There's only one race: The human race.

HARRY

If I wanted you to address the United Nations, Sonia, we shoulda just gone to New York. I love New York. I grew up there. But no. We get to spend a whole day on a plane to go to a place I know nothing about except that their critters are either deadly or carnivorous. That is why I haven't left the A/C since we landed! – I'm sorry Ladies and Gentlemen, I really am. You have my full permission to leave the theatre now and get your money back. I mean it. Or else you can stay and I will still refund your ticket and will tell you everything you ever wanted to know about every actor, congressman, senator, celebrity, radio jock - you name them I'll hold back nothing ... Why any of you would care about the lives of people who can't possibly have anything to do with you I have no idea. I don't know if Australia has a President, a CEO, a Deputy General or what – It doesn't matter – so while I go change outa my pajamas and get into some clothes – you either leave and we'll see you round - or you can stay and we'll shoot some shit

HARRY EXITS.

Blackout

ACT ONE

Scene 1: Main floor of the Townsville Casino.

Pokies everywhere. Noise: A cacophony of money accumulating in melody.

LOLA BUTTON sits in a comfy chair downstage waiting for the Keno numbers to start rolling. LOLA is the earlier side of 50 but you'd guess older. She keeps her hair long and likes to flirt with all men.

We hear another BLOKE over the PA.

BLOKE

Last call for game number 138.

JOYCIE POUND ENTERS carrying 2 rum and milks for herself and LOLA.

JOYCIE is in her late 40's too. She has seen some sun in her years which in tandem with life's struggle gives her a look of simmering weathered iron.

LOLA

Hurry up, Joycie. The numbers will be rolling in a sec, Luv.

JOYCIE

Rum and milk all right?

LOLA rummages in her bag for a fag.

LOLA

Norman doesn't like me coming home after I've drunken too much rum and milk. – Reckons it makes my breath pong.

Both laugh. Wheezily and heartily. JOYCIE catches a whiff of LOLA's breath.

JOYCIE

Pooh! He's not wrong.
(Hiccups)

LOLA

Well brought up. Pity you weren't.

Another Laugh.

JOYCIE

Just a little bit more said the old lady as she piddled into the sea.

Their eyes give the room a once over as the sip their rum and milks.

LOLA

Would you look at Scarlet Smoothie raking in the chips on the Chockie Wheel.

JOYCIE

Saw her collect one hundred and fifty bucks on TAS!

LOLA

TAS?? - I hope she's sensible and hangs on to it.

JOYCIE

Don't be stupid, Lola. No one sensible spends anytime in a Casino.

LOLA

Did you hear what Cliffy Watlow's boy did to Scarlet's dog?

JOYCIE

Clubbed it to death with a cricket bat.

LOLA

Yairs. Right in front of half a dozen St. Immaculatus kiddies waiting for their school bus. You wouldn't read about would you.

JOYCIE

Well ... You would actually, Lola. You would read about it.

BLOKE

(V.O)

Game number 138 is now closed.

JOYCIE

(Cont...)

Always thought that Craig Watlow had a cruel streak in him. Not at all surprised he works in public services in Flinders Mall. – Him and Billy used to pulp each other after school. Craig was a good six years older than Billy and called Billy a boong. - Billy'd come home swearing "I hate that fucking mongrel Craig Watlow Grr Grrr`Grrrr!" – and his poor little face pummeled raw.

LOLA

Such a shame for poor Cliffy, raising that boy alone and being so respected in the community.

JOYCIE

Rotary and Lions.

LOLA

President of the North Queensland branch of the Ant Farm Club.

BLOKE

(V.O)

And the first number is legs 11.

JOYCIE and LOLA adjust their specs which hang from their neck chains and grab their Keno cards – Looking up in hopeful rapt attention to a screen located somewhere beyond the fourth wall of necessity.

JOYCIE

Got 11, Lo.

LOLA

No.

Bloke keeps announcing numbers in a slow steady monotone.

BLOKE

34

BOTH

No.

BLOKE

23

BOTH

No.

BLOKE

80

JOYCIE

Oooh, got 80.

BLOKE

72

JOYCIE

Yes.

BLOKE

5

JOYCIE

Got 5.

Haven't got a blasted one yet.

LOLA

10.

BLOKE

Is that 10?

LOLA

Yes.

JOYCIE

21.

BLOKE

Goodo. Got 10 – Hmmmm 21?

LOLA

JOYCIE and LOLA's heads nod up and down between the screen and their Keno cards as the numbers continue being called.

3 ... 64 ... 66 ... 67 ... 63 ... 12 ... 18 ... and the final number is 40.

BLOKE

I think I got 6 which is ten bucks.

JOYCIE

I'm Arthur and Martha with the numbers tonight. I got only 3.

LOLA

Too much bloody effort for ten dollars. I think we're better off on the pokies, Luv.

JOYCIE

Yairs.

LOLA

As they collect their stuff to head off to Pokie land HARRY Crosses in front of them followed by SONIA. HE seems pissed off.

Harry Waaiiit!

SONIA

LOLA without thinking accosts HARRY mid stride.