

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Cox Four

by Robert Jeffreys

EXTRACT

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COX FOUR

CHARACTERS

MURPHY: forties, large, anxious to please.

SPIDER: forties.

WEASEL: forties..

HOLLY: forties, tall attractive.

SETTING

AN EXECUTIVE SUIT OF A PERTH HOTEL. ONE NIGHT

ACT 1

Scene 1

A LUXURY HOTEL ROOM. BOTTLES OF SPIRITS ON THE BAR; AN ESKY BESIDE IT. SCHOOL COLOURS AND ROWING BANNERS DECORATE THE ROOM. THE CENTRE PIECE IS A LARGE 1960'S PHOTO OF A SCHOOL ROWING FOUR, WITH COX.

MURPHY PUTS ON A CD, GETS HIMSELF A DRINK, TOASTS TO THE PHOTO, PREPARES HIMSELF FOR THE PHONE CALL

MURPHY: [POMPOUS AND SELF ASSURED] Murphy here. Murphy. The booking's under Murphy... Yes it's me. My name is Murphy, Kylie's Murphy. All the girls know me... Yes, tonight. It's been lined up for weeks... We do this every five years.. No, I just want to make sure I'm getting who I ordered... What?... Twenty Marching girls? We're not the bloody Eagles. [STARTS TO PANIC AND THE VULNERABLE MURPHY APPEARS] We're rowers. There's four of us. yeah one died, Kylie... Yes she's the one. I always have her. She knows me pretty well... Right... [CHECKING HIS NOTES]... No, no no I want to check this now... Right first off, I don't care that you have found it. I still want to check it. First off, Spider... no., that's his name. .that's it:... tiny, tight miniskirt, high heels, stockings, long legs, big boobs, slim hips... Oh yeah ... Ok... Cindy [WRITES IT DOWN]... and don't forget to tell her she mustn't talk on the job. Not a word. Spider's wife is a shocker and if she talks he can't perform... [CHECKING LISTS]... Weasel... Weasel... big, black, 44 double D... OK, Savannah... Sa-va-nah.... And Pritch... that's right, I ordered something very special for him; He's a special guy... Are you kidding? no, He's normal, straight, married, like the rest of us...

SPIDER ENTERS

SPIDER: Murphy!

MURPHY: Spider! Great to see you Spider! Grab a drink! I'll be right with you. Just finalising arrangements. No we don't want water sports. I tried that once and nearly choked to death... What's that? Tantric?... How do you do that?... Really?... Really?... You're kidding?... They all do?... Right... We'll definitely have Tantric... Yep, that's all... midnight. On the dot. Sheraton Hotel, Presidential Suite... Now, don't forget to tell them to bring lots of toys. Say hullo to Kylie for me, Great, Midnight on the knocker, ok, bye.

SPIDER: Murphy!

MURPHY: Spider! [THEY GO INTO A RITUAL GREETING]

MURPHY: Great to see you. Have you got a night ahead of you? You lucky, lucky bastard.

SPIDER: Pritch and Weasel here?

MURPHY: No, You're the first.

SPIDER: Look, I don't know how late I can stay tonight.

MURPHY: ooooooogha. Come on Spider. What are you drinking?

SPIDER: I'm on a substantial divorce case.

MURPHY: So you're not drinking?

SPIDER: You would have read about it in the newspapers.

MURPHY: No.

SPIDER: I gotta keep a clear head.

MURPHY: Good old Spider you haven't changed a bit. Pam still got the balls?

SPIDER: Drop dead you prick. Look, have we got some business deals lined up?

MURPHY: Yep. Now, you got to keep that phone call I just made a secret.

SPIDER: Why?

MURPHY: A surprise.

SPIDER: What's the surprise?

MURPHY: 'Tantric.'

SPIDER: Tantric what?

MURPHY: Tantric sex. You are not going to believe it.

SPIDER: Probably not.

MURPHY: Oi! Scotch?

SPIDER: No thanks.

MURPHY: Beer?

SPIDER: Look, I'm not drinking.

MURPHY: What do you reckon? [GESTURING THE SUITE] Better than the footy club-house Weasel had us in last time.

SPIDER: We've been here before.

MURPHY: That's right. The first time. Thirty years ago. Pritch organized it. Only now we have the Presidential suite.

SPIDER: [SATIRE]I did get here.

MURPHY: What do you think of the view of the river?

SPIDER: I do see it from my office every day.

MURPHY: So how you going Spider? How's Pam and the family?

SPIDER: Not bad, your kids?

MURPHY: Fighting fit. With emphasis on the fighting.

SPIDER: You thought of family counselling?

MURPHY: Oh, Gee, thanks, Spider. Sure you don't want a drink?

SPIDER: I can't stay long this year.

MURPHY: Come on Spider. We had to drag you out of the clubhouse last time.

SPIDER: With Weasel paying, you think I was going to pass up an opportunity like that?

MURPHY: I'm paying this time.

SPIDER: Responsibilities Murph. Families change. [BEAT] Besides I've got those conveyances to do.

MURPHY: Yeah. I'm looking forward to you telling Weasel you won't be drinking.

SPIDER: You'll see.

MURPHY: Spider, mate, mate...we did swear to this remember.

SPIDER: That was a long time ago, Murph, and a little childish.

MURPHY: Keeping your word is childish? You've been a lawyer too long Spider.

SPIDER: Hey, where did you get the photo?

MURPHY: Oh, this? I had to go to five different photography stores to find the fella to do what I wanted. In the end I had to use a woman.

SPIDER: It's from the school magazine?

MURPHY: I got in touch with old Sharpie the bursar, Remember him? Weasel's mate. He was in jail too.

SPIDER: I wasn't in jail.

MURPHY: Sorry, sorry. What did you call it?

SPIDER: It was an incarceration facility. How many times do you have to be told?

MURPHY: That's right, I'm sorry.

SPIDER: Careful Murphy. [PAUSE] What did Pritch say?

MURPHY: He'll be coming, no worries about that.

SPIDER: Have you spoken to him recently?

MURPHY: What do you mean recently? He's just got back from overseas. Have you spoken to him?

SPIDER: You spoken to Weasel?

MURPHY: Yes I have spoken to Weasel, and yes, he is definitely coming. He has set himself a personal challenge to eat, drink and root me into bankruptcy in one night.

SPIDER: Great to hear he's grown up. Is he still working in that second hand car yard on Albany Highway?

MURPHY: Yes, but he's looking for his own yard still.

SPIDER: Yeah. Good old 'gunna' Weasel.

MURPHY: In fact he rang me, a couple of weeks back. Wanted me to check out a dealership north of the river. Not a bad business.

SPIDER: How long have you been in second hand cars?

MURPHY: No. I just went through the books for him.

SPIDER: Probably setting himself up a story for tonight. He'll tell us he got this great deal for us. What happened?

MURPHY: The shortened version?

SPIDER: Please.

MURPHY: He didn't have the money.

SPIDER: You didn't know that at the onset?

MURPHY: At the onset? He's a mate. So when did you last speak to Pritch?

SPIDER: Before he left. Around Christmas time.

MURPHY: I was with him that Christmas.

SPIDER: I was with him after Christmas. Just before he left.

MURPHY: We had a great time that Christmas.

SPIDER: Did he talk to you about, selling his Chemist shops?

MURPHY: He might have, of course, 'confidentially'.

SPIDER: Yeah. Bull shit. Well he's sold one, the other's on the market.

MURPHY: What?

SPIDER: You're way behind Murph.

MURPHY: How come he spoke to you?

SPIDER: I did the conveyancing and he needed legal advice on resolving his business partnership.

MURPHY: I'm his accountant.

SPIDER: Yes. Confidentially was required

MURPHY: It's worth a couple of million.

SPIDER: Nearly four.

MURPHY: But Jan, his wife. She is the business partner.

SPIDER: That's right. He's resolving the partnership.

MURPHY: Pritch and Jan they were fine that Christmas. They're the perfect couple.

SPIDER: The perfect couple are calling it quits.

MURPHY: No.

SPIDER: Yes. She's been going out with Luke Spader.

MURPHY: Luke Spader? He's a school teacher!

SPIDER: She's no doubt. [MOTIONS SEX]

MURPHY: You are talking about Pritch's Jan.

SPIDER: That's the one. Fucking.

MURPHY: No, no. Not Jan. She was the biggest catch at Uni. [BEAT] She worships Pritch. [BEAT] She's got a Ph D.

SPIDER: Would I say something like that, if I wasn't sure of?

MURPHY: Luke Spader. I got more hair than him.

SPIDER: He's fucking, Pritch's Jan.

MURPHY: Pritch will kill him. Fuck. And we will have to help.

SPIDER: Count me out.

MURPHY: You're in.

SPIDER: Jesus, you are so juvenile.

MURPHY: She must have gone mad. Pritch must have thrown her out.

SPIDER: He was away too long.

MURPHY: You think Pritch will still come?

SPIDER: Well he told you he was.

MURPHY: Er, yeah.

SPIDER: He either did or he didn't.

MURPHY: Well I couldn't get back to him.

SPIDER: Shit Murphy. You couldn't organize a root in a brothel.

MURPHY: That's where you are wrong.

SPIDER: You mustn't mention this to Weasel, he shouldn't be the one to tell Pritch.

MURPHY: Right. You'll be the one to tell Pritch.

SPIDER: Go on, I'll have that drink now Murph.

MURPHY: Me too. Scotch?

SPIDER: White wine.

MURPHY: I'll be fucked. oooowarrrrr

SPIDER: Look, are the whores necessary?

MURPHY: They are still necessary to me mate, why, are you a little bit on the...

SPIDER: Be careful Murphy.

MURPHY: Sorry. Weasel's joke..

SPIDER: Weasel will find himself a bigger loser than he already is if he can't learn to keep his mouth shut. The same goes to you Murphy. I've decided I'm not going to take any more of that.

MURPHY: Car'n Spider.

SPIDER: I'm sick of it.

MURPHY: Weasel just likes...[to stir you up Spider]

SPIDER: Murphy face it, the man's a moron.

MURPHY: Pritch doesn't think he's a moron.

SPIDER: Pritch knows he is a moron.

MURPHY: Come on, it's supposed to be a fun night. We're gonna have fun.

SPIDER: (LOOKING AROUND) Where's the agenda?

MURPHY: On the bar. Absolute traditional.

SPIDER GOES TO GET THE AGENDA

SPIDER: My story?

MURPHY: Of course. After the toasts to Chook.

SPIDER: I'm sure Weasel will want to whinge about the agenda. He always does.

MURPHY: That's the rules. It's my night. We'll be sticking to the agenda.

SPIDER: Sure! Weasel's gonna sit around while the cox calls the shots!

MURPHY: Weasel will do what Pritch says.

PAUSE

SPIDER: Hey, about the girls. You mention the points I gave you?

MURPHY: Yeah, yeah.

SPIDER: Did you mention keeping their mouths shut?

MURPHY: (CHECKING NOTES) Yep...but that might be difficult.

SPIDER: Why? [MURPHY PANTOMIMES] You're disgusting Murphy.

MURPHY: It's going to be a perfect night Spider, and this year we are finishing with the rowing. [SETTING CUSHIONS] Last reunion, we were all too pissed.. This year the girls come here and we finish off traditionally. With the rowing.

SPIDER: [CHECKING THE AGENDA] Murphy some of us have grown up since we were seventeen.