

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Lucky

by Toby Schmitz

EXTRACT

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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

House lights. Audience enters to see LUMPY asleep in his warehouse office. There is a petty cashbox under his elbow. Midday. Winter. Occasional clatter of crates and forklifts. Sounds of the distant docklands can also be heard.

As the house lights fade and the music rises LUCKY appears in a doorway and stares at the box. After a while he carefully approaches, the lights close in around him. As if on cue, LUMPY removes his elbow in his sleep. LUCKY opens the box and withdraws three fat wads of folding moolah. He closes the box and sprints off as the beat kicks in. LUMPY obligingly replaces his elbow. Lights tumble to black.

A street scene. Busy commuters fill the stage and snap to variants of slow-motion. LUCKY the only real time figure among them, weaves his way desperately stuffing the money further into his parka pocket. The GIBBERING MAN peels himself from the crowd.

GIBBERING MAN

Suddenly, you've caught up half-way through a story, doesn't make it your fault, huh? Not my fault. Same for everybody. It's a race. Race, damn, race yes it is. Once you realise its a race you can start spending the rest of your, come on come on, life catching up. Take a number. Welcome to the curb. Kiss the bitumen. I'm a pony at the place. When I lost my job, have I told you this, did I tell you this, when the lights go out...at the place, we're allowed to cuddle after lights out. As long as you're allowed cuddling time, I say. And watch your bags. Clever people steal too. Wanna get home for pony time you've gotta be more clever. Love and sick good words to say now and then you need a hand to go your way. Next queue. Next park. I'm telling ya. When fate gives us a kiss we should try and pay attention, there's normally something to be learnt.

Full lights. LUCKY'S tiny, empty flat. Morning.

LUCKY is sitting up against a wall clutching his blanket. A small pile of clothes. MUZZO is leaning against the wall. PAULY is at the foot of the bed.

PAULY

There's a common mistake. People think of a city as the sum of it's total. They think a city to be the same as a town, judged on it's sense of itself, put up a big concrete sheep, everyone calls you by your first name, leave the door unlocked all year round, a whole, - a community, ya know? Not here. The city is individuals. Right? Lotsa solo performers under the one tent. No community spirit, no *sense* of nothin'. Just people tryin to GET ALONG, with minimum friction. Looking after yourself becomes the only essential skill. Do you watch anyone's back, mate? You don't do you, who backs you watch? Right. And that's how it is here. You may think someone's on your side, a partner a some sort, 'well at least they lookin out for me.'

LUCKY

No.

PAULY

Nuh-huh. Even they, especially they, will fuck you over at some point with a side order of pain. End of the motherfucking day, mate, everyone ends up going to bed with themselves. Key word in selfish isn't fish. That's all you got. You make a mistake, even a common one, nobody's watching for you. Muzzo watches my back coz I pay him. I, among others, watch Mr Vlad's back, coz he pays me. Nobody's paying you Lucky. And you made a mistake.

LUCKY

Yeah, I have.

PAULY

Mistakes. Plural. This is not business. It's not fun.

LUCKY

No. I-I need to keep a thing, a diary, Paul, I'm so s-sorry-

PAULY

Good. Humility is the key, we can move on to reparations.

LUCKY

Christ I so *have* it, Pauly...man, and I just I totally forgot-

PAULY

No no. Don't regress. You didn't forget anything. The original incident. The avoiding. Now lying.

LUCKY

Now-

PAULY

My wife sees me sitting alone in a restaurant, what does she think?

LUCKY

It's in two parts. Two grand in the bank, and I've got, you know why I- I didn't make it to the, ah-

PAULY

You gotta bank account.

LUCKY

Yeah. What? I'm, I'm not gonna have that kinda thing sittin round in some socks or-

PAULY

I'm not here to judge your credit rating. Something about two parts.

LUCKY

Right. Actually three. I'm not thinking.

LUCKY coughs.

Some, six of it is with my girlfriend in, secured, in, the back of Maroubra. Some still owed to me by a guy who works at The Bar. Phil the glassie, Muzzo, you seen him there, that slashed up bugger, to be collected. She, other hand, doesn't finish work till five so I, yeah so that's why I totally forgot about Scalia, I figured that I couldn't get the s-sum, ah, total until five anyway-

PAULY

OK, let's see if we can get a better reception here, Muzzo and I did not spend an hour at Scalia looking like the Friendless because of a little slip of mind, huh? We got stood up in front of people we know, ok. Paddington people. Because you needed what, a sleep in? Please. You're scared so you're hiding.

LUCKY

Pauly, listen, its all. Here. In a few hours.

PAULY

I strike you as a man who enjoys roaming godforsaken warehouses searching for halfwit little thieves like you.

LUCKY

Ha! Paul. Bank, bar an-and a bag. I'm not scared, I just shift boxes, look...

LUCKY starts to get out of the bed.

MUZZO

Stay.

He does. PAUL looks at his watch. MUZZO puts on a pair of leather gloves.

PAULY

You're a weird fuckin kid, you know that?

LUCKY

Don't *kill* me here, come ON! I'LL GET IT NOW!! Can- PLEASE PAUL!

PAULY

OK. Sh. Don't get silly. We're talking reparations.

LUCKY

Yes. Good! I'll be there at five o'clock, get the five o'clock tram meet you at half past, earlier even-

PAULY

No no. We'll see you at Scalia tomorrow. We'll pretend tomorrow morning is now, and today never happened, we can arrange these things. So. Smile. Nine okay Muzz?

MUZZO nods.

LUCKY

No. Look. It'd f-feel better if I got it to you ASAP, I don't need till then-

PAULY

Yes you do.

LUCKY

Scalia at nine. I'll, I'll polish my sneakers. I'm like a sieve, Pauly, truly, god.

PAULY

In ten seconds time Muzzo is going to break your left arm or your left leg.

LUCKY

Hm?

PAULY

Choose. Left arm or left leg or in eight seconds he'll break both.

LUCKY

Heh. Come on. NO!

PAULY

Yes.

LUCKY

JESUS PAUL! I don't think so OK!

PAULY

Four.

LUCKY

You said rep-puh-puh-rations! I'VE GOT IT!!...Gimmie a certain amount of hours or - What is this Pauly, hey, look at me, what is this?

PAULY

A reminder for you to set your alarm clock.

LUCKY

Oh...arm. My arm.

MUZZO breaks LUCKY'S left arm. An audible snap. LUCKY screams silently into the pillow.

PAULY
(to LUCKY)

Only one person's ever gone the leg. A Dutchman he was.

MUZZO
Belgian.

PAULY
Belgian. He was too. My mind's going.

BLACK. A distant scream. Traffic and upbeat happy music.

CLAIRE appears on a headset in a Novotel uniform. Busy.

CLAIRE
Hello Novotel, Claire speaking can I help you? One minute sir.
Hello Novotel, Claire speaking can I help you? Putting you through now.
Are you there? Sorry, it's the middle of check out. Are you in a hospital? Yes, but are you OK? Oh. I can hear it hurting, I can. You'll be alright. Breathe and take it one thing at a time. Can you see a clock? You can see one. Then good. Count it down. Divide it up. You'll be fine. Don't think of pain in the bones baby just...well, think of me.

Emergency Ward. Morning. LUCKY still in pyjamas and a duffel coat (his costume) sits amongst a queue at the hospital. He is nauseous with pain. Now and then barely distinguishable announcements are made over the speaker.

BARBARA
(on mobile)

-if Craig is still in with Ken's brother by the time Dale's back, I don't see why Leeza should hafta have her back in the, in the house, it's her house Mum, her bloody abode an all, she's suddenly got all Murray and Ling Wy's kids there... see... Craig...my exactly, my point exactly, see, right, see you don't know half Mum, keep ya beak out all right, coz Lynn's getting a bit sick of it, and to be frank me and Frank are too.

SPEAKER
Nurse Romy Station Four.

BARBARA
Right...right.

SPEAKER

Nurse Haversham Station Four.

BARBARA

The Donellys let them fuckin kidsa theirs play in the dump for Christ's sake! Who are they to say that, to judge me like....I don't care, she fuckin' said it is all. You tell her to go raise her own bloody- what? Yeah, yeah. They ah, lookin at his left eye....Left. Eye.....well he's got a bit of fuse in it doesn't he?...Fuse...fuckin fuse, Mum. F-U-C-E. It goes in the end of the firecracker, little bugger lights it, it blows up, e gets a face full of fuse, but everything's okay but this eye thing ok? Jesus... yes...

SPEAKER

Nurse Romy Station Four.

BARBARA

...WHAT DID SHE SAY?

SPEAKER

Nurse Haversham Station Four.

LUCKY

Someone help me...

BARBARA

...that's it, I'm calling her right now...yes I am...Lynn can answer for her own convictions all right, Mum? She can't get away with...yeah. Yeah ... coz I'm gonna be stuck in here waiting for the fuckin fuse doctor aren't I, not gonna be home till bloody tomorrow probably, got nuthin for food and smokes and when Frank gets here I'm gonna have to keep him from strangling the little bugger for playin with his matches, so it's shaping up to be a seriously fun evening. Yep. LuvyaMumbye.

She hangs up the mobile.

OLD MAN

I'm awfully glad that's over.

Two teenagers enter. PETER and MEHMET who has been shot in the hand.

PETER

Oh fuck man, this is all fuckin up...sa fuckin queue for fucks....

LUCKY

Of course.

PETER

Whereas a fuckin doctors, huh? Sit downs man.

MEHMET sits. He leaves. Pause.

SPEAKER

Nurse Romy, Station Four. Nurse Haversham, Station Four.

Pause.

OLD MAN

(resuming)

So. Then. When Chamberlain stepped off that plane, we just knew everything was going to be alright. My wife said, 'There he is!' I was only a young press photographer at the time, cars were still a -

MEHMET

No fuckins THANKYOU OLD MAN! Everyone shuts the fuck up. This fuckin hurts like a new kind of shit so just shut up.

BARBARA panics a little.

SPEAKER

Doctor Tsyrendolopoulos you're needed in surgery. Doctor Tsyrendolopoulos.

Silence. PETER returns.

PETER

This place is FUCKED it's gonna be like twenny minutes least, man.

LUCKY

Who said ... twenny minutes?

PETER

Huh? What, man?

LUCKY

Nothing's happening is it.

OLD MAN

There's a queue.

PETER

'There's a queue.' Fuck off, cunt. There's no queue-