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SF PERUSALS

Blood Money

A thriller

The Heather Brothers

Samuel French — London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood



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BLOOD MONEY

First presented at the Derby Playhouse on 6th May 1994 with the following cast:

Mike Mason	Ben Roberts
Sue Thompson	Emily Joyce
Elizabeth Mason	Eliza McClelland
Dr Campbell	Sally Faulkner

Director Mark Clements
Designer Chris Crosswell
Lighting designer Chris Ellis
Musical underscore David Roper

Subsequently produced by Bernard Havard in an American version at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, on 23rd September 1995 with the following cast:

Mike Mason	Alan Feinstein
Sue Thompson	Juliette Dunn
Elizabeth Mason	Kathleen Doyle
Dr Campbell	Patricia Hodges
Awards Show Host	Nancy Glass

Director Mark Clements
Designer Chris Crosswell
Lighting designer Chris Ellis
Musical underscore David Roper

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(See also page ii)

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CHARACTERS

Mike Mason
Sue Thompson
Elizabeth Mason
Dr Julie Campbell

Voices only:
Carol Mitchell
Policewoman
Policeman

The action takes place in the lounge of the Masons' home, Sussex, England and at a Television Awards ceremony*

Time — the present

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

SCENE 1 The lounge. 5.30 p.m.
SCENE 2 The Television Awards Ceremony
SCENE 3 Late that night

ACT II

SCENE 1 The following morning
SCENE 2 Later that afternoon
SCENE 3 Late that night

* *American Version* — The Masons' home is in New Hope, Pennsylvania, and the ceremony is for the Emmy Awards

See pp. 70-72 for an English/American glossary

Other plays by the Heather Brothers
published by Samuel French Ltd:

Lust
A Slice of Saturday Night

ACT I

SCENE 1

The lounge of the Masons' home. Winter. 5.30 p.m.

The lounge is a large room in a handsomely converted barn. A heavy oak door, complete with ornate wrought-iron hinges, ringed door handle and upper and lower bolts, leads to an enclosed porch and unseen front door. A second door leads to the kitchen. Curtains and interior wooden shutters protect the double-glazed french windows which open out on to a shrubbery-flanked patio. A stairway, with a cupboard under it, leads to the upper floor. Against a wall, between the stairs and the porch door, stands an ornate 1950s' juke-box in pristine condition. Above it hangs a tapestry. The rest of the furniture includes a sofa, an old rocking chair, drinks cabinet, a desk with a lap-top computer and papers on it, bookcases loaded with books, a coffee table with two glasses on it, a television and video, various occasional tables and a telephone. There is also a wall safe. A decorative china plate hangs from one wall and there are various ornaments on shelves and tables. The room has a number of concealed domestic spotlights and table lamps, enabling various areas to be lit while leaving the rest of the room in shadow

When the play begins there is a light coming from the juke-box and the wall safe is open. The curtains are closed and moonlight shines through them from outside

As the house lights go down, there is a sudden loud music chord

After a moment, the figure of a man — Mike Mason, in fact, though he cannot at first be recognized in the darkness — emerges from the shadows and moves stealthily towards the stairs. He is in his forties and has the smooth good looks of the ladies' man he certainly considers himself to be. He is wearing a black polo neck with a white dress shirt beneath it and evening dress trousers and is carrying a gun and torch which we do not see as yet. He bumps into something; there is a clatter. He freezes, then quickly moves to the shadows at the foot of the stairs

A door opens at the head of the stairs and light spills on to the landing

Sue Thompson enters and looks nervously down. She is an attractive twenty-year-old, wearing a dress and jumper

Sue (*frightened*) Who's there?

Silence

(*Edging down the stairs*) Look, I know there's someone down there.

Sue is half-way down the stairs when Mike steps out of the shadows and shines a torch in her face. He points the gun at her

Mike Come here.

Sue, blinded by the light, is transfixed with fear

Sue (*terrified*) Oh my God ... who are you?
Mike I said, "Come here".
Sue (*coming down the stairs, terrified*) What are you going to do ... ? Oh my God, what are you going to do? (*She reaches the foot of the stairs and moves to Mike, still blinded by the torch light*)
Mike (*indicating Sue's jumper with the gun*) Take it off.
Sue What?
Mike (*viciously*) Take it off!

Sue takes off her jumper

(*As she does this*) I've been watching you all evening ... all evening.

Sue drops the jumper on to the floor

Now that dress.
Sue Please — don't hurt me.
Mike Just do it!

Whimpering, Sue unbuttons the front of her dress and lets it drop to the floor; she is wearing a slip underneath

The phone rings

Sue Oh, God.
Mike Oh, shit! Perfect timing.

Sue steps up to Mike, puts her arms round his neck and starts kissing him

Sue Leave it.

The telephone continues to ring

Mike (*annoyed*) It's no good. I'm sorry, I'm going to have to answer it. Stay exactly where you are, we'll pick up where we left off.
Sue You and your little games.

Mike switches on the table lamp by the sofa

Mike (*answering the phone*) Hallo, the Masons' residence.

Julie's voice is heard over a speaker, as if coming from the phone

Julie (*from the phone*) Michael, it's Julie.
Mike Oh hi, how are you? (*He covers the mouthpiece; to Sue*) It's my agent.
Julie (*from the phone*) All set for tonight?
Mike Absolutely.
Julie (*from the phone*) How are you feeling?
Mike Couldn't be better.
Julie (*from the phone*) You are?
Mike Yeah, really, I'm fine.
Julie (*from the phone*) You sound a bit tense.
Mike Well under the circumstances ——

Sue tickles Mike

(*Breaking off*) — aah!
Julie (*from the phone*) I beg your pardon?
Mike Nothing ... nothing ... I — er ...

Sue tickles Mike again

(*Covering the mouthpiece*) Please, this is business.

Pulling a face at him, Sue moves to the juke-box. She stands reading the song titles during the following

Julie (*from the phone*) Michael, are you sure you're all right?
Mike Yes, yes ... honestly, Julie, I'm fine ...

Sue gives Mike a puzzled look, then goes back to reading the titles

Look, I thought we agreed — you know ...
Julie (*from the phone*) I wouldn't call you at home.

Mike Yeah.
Julie (*from the phone*) I wouldn't have. It's just that ...
Mike What?
Julie (*from the phone*) Michael, you haven't let anything slip, have you?
Mike How do you mean?
Julie (*from the phone*) To Liz ... about us. You haven't said anything?
Mike Course not. Why?
Julie (*from the phone*) Well, it's just that ... (*Hesitantly*) Look, I'm not trying to worry you, but I think Liz may suspect something.
Mike (*looking at Sue; apprehensively*) What makes you think that?
Julie (*from the phone*) Well, I bumped into her at lunchtime at the Country Club ...
Mike And?
Julie (*from the phone*) She was ... I don't know — different.
Mike Did she say anything?
Julie (*from the phone*) Not in so many words. It was her attitude. I just got the feeling she knew something ... How is she at home?
Mike (*glancing at Sue*) Same as usual .... You're sure you're not imagining this?
Julie (*from the phone*) I don't know, maybe I am. Maybe I'm reading more into it than there is.
Mike You're not having second thoughts are you, Julie? You're positive you want to go through with this?
Julie (*from the phone*) Of course I am. We've no other choice, Michael. Things can't carry on as they are.
Mike You don't have to convince me.
Julie (*from the phone*) If we want a future together, we have to do something.
Mike My sentiments exactly. As far as I'm concerned, the sooner I'm out of it, the better. (*He puts his hand over the mouthpiece; to Sue*) Damn contracts.
Julie (*from the phone*) I'm sorry I phoned you at home. It's probably just my imagination ——

A car is heard driving up. Headlights sweep the drive

Sue (*peering through the windows, surprised*) A taxi's just pulled up.
Julie (*from the phone*) — but I thought I'd better warn you just in case.
Mike (*covering the mouthpiece, to Sue*) A taxi?
Sue Oh, my God! It's your wife!

During the following, Sue frantically gets dressed

Mike (*alarmed*) I've got to go, Julie, Liz has showed up.

Julie (*from the phone*) But she's supposed to be at the Clinic.
Mike (*hanging up*) I've got to go.

In a burst of frenzied activity, Mike pulls off the polo neck to reveal the white dress shirt and rushes around tidying up the room. He puts the gun into the wall safe and closes it. During the following, the porch light comes on

Sue I thought you said she was at the Clinic.
Mike She's supposed to be ... For God's sake, hurry up.
Sue (*looking round desperately*) My jumper ... where the hell did you put my jumper?
Mike (*throwing it at her*) Here.

Mike picks up the glasses from the coffee table and runs into the kitchen

Sue struggles to put her jumper on; it ends up inside out

Mike enters and switches on the main lights

(*Noticing Sue's jumper*) Sue, it's inside out.
Sue Oh, my God!

Sue whips her jumper off and turns it the right way round. Mike signals for Sue to sit in the rocking chair. She dashes across to it and sits. As she does so ——

Elizabeth (Liz) Mason enters. She looks to be in her forties, but is probably younger. Although once glamorous, an over-indulgence in alcohol has taken its toll. She is dressed in expensive casual clothes. It is obvious she has been drinking

Mike and Sue try to appear calm and relaxed

Liz Why, look who's here again. Little Susie Thompson from next door.
Mike (*in mock surprise*) Liz ... ? What are you doing here?
Liz I live here, Mike. Remember?
Mike I thought you were going to the Clinic.
Liz (*looking at them, knowingly*) Of course, I was supposed to be at the Clinic, wasn't I ...? (*As though having a sudden thought*) Oooo — I hope I haven't interrupted anything.
Mike (*trying to make light of it*) I should be so lucky. (*He laughs*) No, no, Sue just popped over to wish me luck. Isn't that sweet of her?
Liz (*insincerely*) Very.

There is an embarrassed silence

Sue You must be very excited, Liz.
Liz Really? About what?
Sue Tonight.
Liz Tonight?
Mike (*wearily*) The awards ceremony, Liz.
Liz Oh, that ... Yes, ecstatic. I can hardly contain myself.
Sue I was just telling Mike, all my friends'll be keeping their fingers crossed for him.
Liz (*insincerely*) Is that right? Isn't that sweet, Mike ... ? Mind you, it'll take more than crossed fingers for you to win, won't it, pet? More like divine intervention.
Mike As you've no doubt gathered, Liz doesn't rate my chances too highly.
Liz Correction, Liz doesn't rate your chances, period ... You see, Sue, to win the "Television Personality of the Year Award", one must have a personality.
Mike (*trying to laugh it off*) Yes, all right, Liz.
Liz Well, it's true, pet. I'd have thought even you would've known that. Either wit, charm, personality — something outstanding ...
Mike To hear Liz, no one'd think I'd been nominated every year for the last seven years.
Liz Yes, but you've never won, have you, pet? (*To Sue*) I keep telling the poor dear, they only nominated him to make up the numbers.
Sue (*laughing, embarrassed*) I'm sure you don't mean that, Liz.
Liz Don't I? Why else would they have nominated him then?
Sue (*flustered*) Well ... after all, Mike is a household name.
Liz So is Armitage Shanks, dear, and they weren't — (*to Mike*) even though they deal in the same commodity ... (*To Sue*) Personally, I don't think they should be allowed to broadcast rubbish like "Bargain Basement" without a government health warning.
Mike As you so delight in telling everyone.
Liz Well, I may be a lot of things, Mike, but a hypocrite I am not. If I don't like something, I say so, even if it does mean denting your ego. (*To Sue*) They actually have the gall to advertise it as "light entertainment"; I'm surprised they haven't been prosecuted under the Trades Descriptions Act. (*To Mike*) Entertainment — it's nothing but mindless drivel. (*To Sue*) Don't you agree, Sue?
Sue (*embarrassed*) Well, no ... I wouldn't describe it as mindless drivel.
Liz Oh? So how would you describe "Mike Mason's Bargain Basement"? Intellectually stimulating?
Sue No, of course not.
Liz How about intellectually mindless stimulating drivel?

Mike (*pleasantly*) Let's just drop it, shall we, Liz?
Liz (*innocently*) What's wrong, Mike? Aren't we interested in what the "younger" generation think of your show?
Mike It's not supposed to be *Open University*. It's a game show, love. Just a little bit of fun, that's all.
Liz Really? A little bit of fun? (*To Sue*) I'd never have guessed.
Sue Actually, I think it's great.
Liz There's no need to be polite on Mike's account, dear.
Sue I'm not being polite. I really do enjoy it.
Liz (*suggestively*) I'm sure you do. (*She looks at Mike*) But then, I suppose there's no accounting for taste ... Can I get you a drink?
Sue No thanks, Mike's already given me one.
Liz Really? (*To Mike*) I thought you said I hadn't interrupted anything.
Mike (*embarrassed*) Liz ...
Liz (*with mock innocence*) It was a joke, love ... You're not offended are you, Sue?
Sue No, of course not.
Liz (*moving to the drinks. To Mike*) There you are, what did I tell you? (*To Sue*) He's such an old stuffed shirt. (*She pours herself a drink during the following*)
Sue What always amazes me, Mike, is how you manage to think of those ad-libs.
Liz (*laughs*) Good God, you don't actually think he makes them up, do you, Sue? He reads them off those card thingies. Don't you, Mike?
Mike Some of it's scripted, yes.
Liz Some of it ... ? (*To Sue*) It's a standing joke with the crew that Mike wouldn't remember his own name if it wasn't written up on one of those ... what do you call them again? Oh yes. Idiot cards.

The phone rings

Liz picks up the phone

(*Into phone*) Hallo, Mike Mason's House of Ill-repute.

No answer; there is silence on the other end of the telephone

Hallo ... ? Hallo ... ?

The caller hangs up; the dialling tone is heard

Strange. That's the fourth time it's happened this week.
Mike What is?

Liz (*replacing the receiver*) Someone's hung up on me.
Mike Probably a wrong number.
Liz Either that or it wasn't me they wanted to talk to.
Mike Meaning?
Liz Meaning it's peculiar how it only happens when *I* answer the phone.
Mike In other words, you think it was for me. Is that what you're saying?
Liz I just find it rather odd, that's all. (*To Sue*) Of course, if I had a suspicious nature, I might think there was something going on behind my back.
Mike Don't be ridiculous.
Sue Actually, I really should be going.
Mike There's nothing going on behind your back.
Liz Nobody said there was, pet. I was simply pointing out that if I did have a suspicious nature, it could conceivably look that way. (*To Sue*) Mind you, if he was fooling around behind my back, he'd hardly tell me, would he, Sue? (*To Mike*) At least you never have in the past.
Mike Liz, let's talk about this later, all right ... ?
Liz (*interrupting*) You know, I really would appreciate it, Mike, if you didn't give your "lady friends" our home number ——
Mike (*to himself*) Here we go.
Liz (*to Sue*) — I don't think that's too much to ask, do you? I really don't see why I should be subjected to this sort of thing.
Mike Liz, I don't know what you're talking about.
Sue I really should leave ...
Liz No, no, no, of course you don't, pet. I'm being totally unreasonable as usual, aren't I?
Mike I didn't say that.
Liz But that's what you're implying. (*To Sue*) What do you think, Sue?
Mike Leave Sue out of this.
Liz (*innocently*) I'm just asking a question. (*To Sue*) Sue, do you think I'm being unreasonable? If every time you answered the phone someone hung up, wouldn't you find it just a teensie-weensie bit suspicious?
Sue (*embarrassed*) Look, I'm sorry, Liz, but I really don't think this has anything to do with me.
Mike Exactly. Now let's drop it, shall we? (*To Sue*) I'm sorry about this.
Liz (*turning on him, furious*) What did you say?
Mike What ... ?
Liz Just then. To Sue. What did you say?
Mike Liz ...
Liz (*to Sue*) He apologized for me, didn't he? (*To Mike*) How dare you! If anyone deserves an apology, it's me!
Mike (*calm*) Liz, you're making a fool of yourself.
Liz That's right! Go on, twist it round, Mike. You're very good at that, aren't you. Twisting things around. Making it appear I'm in the wrong. Nothing's

ever your fault, is it? Oh no, never good old Mike's. It's always Liz. Liz over-reacting. Liz being unreasonable. Liz making a fool of herself. It's always Liz, isn't it, Mike? Always me. Always my fault.

There is an embarrassed silence

Sue (*checking her wrist-watch*) Right, well, I'll be off then. Thanks for the drink.
Mike I'll show you out. Thanks for coming over.
Sue My pleasure. It's all right, I'll see myself out.
Mike You'll do no such thing.
Sue Bye, Liz.
Liz *Ciao.*

Mike and Sue exit through the porch

Sue (*off*) Good luck for tonight.
Mike (*off*) Thanks. Bye.

The front door is heard closing

Mike enters

Where the hell have you been?
Liz Out.
Mike I realize that.
Liz Then why ask.
Mike (*furiously*) You've been drinking, haven't you?
Liz I refuse to answer on the grounds I'll never hear the end of it.
Mike You were at the club drinking. Don't lie. Someone saw you.
Liz All right, all right, I confess, I stopped at the club for one teensie-weensie drinkie.
Mike One? Since when did they start serving vodka by the bucket?
Liz (*unconcerned*) So I had a couple. I know my girlish figure belies the fact, but I am over eighteen, Mike. (*She stumbles, then steadies herself*)
Mike Look at you. You can't even stand.
Liz Not true. If I couldn't stand, I wouldn't be able to fall over. (*She falls backwards on to the sofa, giggling*)
Mike You know how important tonight is, how much it means to me. Couldn't you have restrained yourself just this once?
Liz Obviously not.
Mike Well, thank you very much.
Liz (*smiling sweetly*) Any time.

Mike What's the point in spending a goddamn fortune on a therapist to sort out your drink problem if instead of going to the Clinic you go and get smashed? Not only is it a waste of everybody's time, it's a complete waste of goddamn money. Do you know what I think?

Liz I'm not in the least bit interested in what you think, Mike.

Mike You're not interested in anything unless it comes out of a bottle. I think you went out and got smashed just to piss me off.

Liz Don't flatter yourself. I can assure you, pet, my motives were completely selfish. I had to anaesthetize myself against tonight's barrage of self-congratulatory schmaltz ... Anyway, what's the big deal? No one's going to notice. Everyone's drunk at these "do"s.

Mike By the time they leave, dear, not when they arrive.

Liz Yeah? Well, you should count yourself lucky I've agreed to go. I can assure you I've better ways to spend an evening than watching you chat up every cute-arsed bimbo that wanders within striking distance.

Mike So why are you coming? Nobody forced you.

Liz Matrimonial duty, my darling. A wife's place is at a husband's side at moments of great disappointment.

Mike Screw you!

Liz (*sweetly*) Oooooh, language, Mike.

There is a pause

Mike Look, it's obvious you don't want to go. Why not do us both a favour and stay at home?

Liz Oh, but I couldn't do that, Mike. Like I said, my place is at your side — cramping your style.

Mike Oh, I see, it's going to be one of those evenings, again, is it?

Liz Looks like it.

Mike (*weary*) Suit yourself. But if you are coming, go and get changed. I thought we'd try and arrive on time for once. If that's all right with you?

Liz (*rising to her feet*) For you, pet, anything. (*She moves to Mike; turning her back*) Could you?

Mike undoes Liz's necklace. She turns and puts her arms round Mike

(*Nuzzling his neck. Amorous*) Mmmmmmm.

Mike Liz ...

Liz starts kissing his neck

Liz What's wrong? The old clutch starting to slip? The old Jack-in-the-box gone on strike?

Mike You're pathetic.
Liz Something tells me I've touched a raw nerve.
Mike You touch a raw nerve every time you open your mouth.
Liz Or could it be we're still recovering from this evening's exertions with "Sweet Sultry Sue"?
Mike Oh, I give up.
Liz Don't play the innocent with me, Mike. I know what you two were up to.
Mike She came over to wish me luck.
Liz Oh, I see ... and one good turn deserves another.
Mike Liz ——
Liz (*interrupting*) Don't bother lying, for God's sake. It was perfectly obvious what she was here for, prancing round dressed like that ... credit me with some intelligence, please.
Mike Dressed like what? What's she supposed to wear? Overalls?

Liz starts climbing the stairs

Liz, nothing's been going on.

Liz ignores him

I don't know what the hell's wrong with you these days. I only have to talk to a woman and you have me in bed with her.
Liz (*turning on Mike, furiously*) You can screw whoever you want for all I care, but not in this house. Understand? Do I make myself clear? This is my home. Don't you ever bring your women back here again.
Mike Liz, I'm old enough to be the girl's father.
Liz (*cold*) Knowing you, pet, you probably are.

Liz exits

Mike (*calling after her*) Look, if I wanted to fool around with Sue Thompson, I'd hardly bring her back here, would I? I'm not that stupid.

There is no answer

OK, fine, believe what you want. I can't be bothered arguing any more ... Damn woman.

Mike starts to put his tie on

(*Reciting to himself*) "Ladies and Gentlemen. What can I say, I'm speechless, absolutely speechless — no, no, literally speechless — I was

so certain I didn't stand a chance, I didn't bother writing one. Writing one ... " (*He forgets his words*) Oh shit! (*He takes a piece of paper from his pocket and reads from it*) "Now I know it's usual —— "

Liz (*off, sweetly*) Mike ...

Mike " — I know it's usual on these occasions for the guy who wins to bore the pants off all and sundry thanking everyone they feel is instrumental in them winning ... "

Liz (*off, calling, sweetly*) Mike ...

Mike Yeah, what is it?

Liz Which dress would you like me to wear? The peach one or the yellow one?

Mike I don't know — suit yourself.

Liz How about the red?

Mike No! Definitely not the red.

Liz Which then, the yellow or the peach?

Mike The yellow one.

Liz (*incredulous*) You want me to wear the yellow one?

Mike (*weary*) Yes.

Liz Are you absolutely positive?

Mike (*irritated*) Yes.

Liz All right, darling, after all, it's your night.

Mike (*finding his place in the speech*) "... instrumental in his winning ... don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking it. No, no, credit where credit's due, I mean, it's only right: if someone helps you, thank them. However, saying that, tonight I'm breaking with that tradition. I'm not going to name a single name. Not one ...

He exits into the kitchen

(*Off*) Ungrateful pillock, that's what you're thinking — right? Wrong? Couldn't be further from the truth. I'm not naming names, not because I don't want to, but because it's just not humanly possible. You see, the people responsible for me standing here tonight ——

He enters, carrying a cup of coffee

— the proud winner of this prestigious award, are you, the great British public, who by faithfully tuning in week after week have made "Mike Mason's Bargain Basement" this nation's undisputed number one game show. "Going, going, gone!" And so to each and every one of you out there tonight, I'd like to take this opportunity to say ——

Liz appears in a red dress, carrying a handbag

(*Seeing Liz*) Thank you very much."

Liz I thought you'd appreciate it.

Mike It's about par for the course these days, isn't it? (*He points to the coffee*) Here, drink this.

Liz (*with mock horror*) Coffee ... ? Good God, you're not trying to sober me up, are you?

Mike (*wearily*) Just drink it.

Liz (*brightly*) Any chance of lacing it with a drop of brandy? No, I thought not.

Mike We'll be sitting with the Cochranes this evening, so don't do anything embarrassing, all right?

Liz Embarrassing ... ? Oh, you mean like attempting to engage the poor dears in an intelligent conversation?

Mike No, like acting frigging superior.

Liz It's so difficult not to with the Cochranes. They're such incredible philistines. Then again, I suppose being a philistine is an essential quality for someone producing a moronic load of crap like "Bargain Basement" — or presenting it for that matter. (*She impersonates Mike*) "Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is 'Mike Mason's Bargain Basement', where everything goes ... (*suggestively*) ... for a price! So girls, if you're looking for that special something, remember, you'll find it in Mike's — two pelvic thrusts — Basement. Going, going, gone ... "

Mike (*angrily*) You're so full of shit, you know that? What did you ever do? Hey? A goddamn actress who made a career out of auditions. I know gratitude was never your strong point, Liz, but you want to remember if it wasn't for those philistines and that "moronic load of crap", as you so eloquently put it, I'd still be scratching a living working the clubs and we, my darling, would still be living in some grotty bedsit above a newsagent's.

Liz (*calm*) There's no need to raise your voice, Mike. If you've got something to say, say it. You don't have to shout.

Mike It's the only way to penetrate that vodka-sodden sponge you call a brain. The Cochranes may lack your acquired social graces, dear heart, but as long as they pay my salary, and you're prepared to spend it, you'll treat them with respect. Do I make myself clear? I couldn't care less if you think they're the biggest bunch of assholes you've ever met, tonight you'll be polite, you will be gracious, you will radiate warmth and charm. Got it? Good! Now drink that coffee and get yourself sober! After all, we wouldn't want you throwing up all over the Waldorf, now would we?

Liz (*thoughtfully*) A vein in your forehead starts throbbing when you get excited, Mike. I never noticed it before. Throb, throb, throb ... Sorry, you were saying?

Mike Oh, I've had it with you.

Liz Not for the last six months you haven't — unless I was reading and didn't notice.

Mike Typical. Snide remarks, accusations, arguments, day in, day out. Well, I've had enough. Tomorrow I'm getting the hell out of here.
Liz How many times have I heard that?
Mike Yeah? Well, this time I mean it.
Liz You always do.
Mike What's the point? We can't stand the sight of each other. We can't hold a conversation any more without you turning it into an argument. I mean, look at us. We spend our entire time picking holes in one another. Scoring points. Well, I'm sorry, but I'm not prepared to put up with it any longer. Life's too short.
Liz Leave me and you'll regret it.

Pause

I mean it, Mike. Leave me and you'll regret it.

For a moment they look at each other. Mike moves up the stairs

And for your information, Mike, I did not make a career out of auditions. You seem to have forgotten I had to turn down work because of you.
Mike You what?
Liz Turned down work. Because your agent, Harry-goddamn-Edison, was concerned it might damage your "family image".
Mike (*derisively*) Yeah, right. All topless.
Liz Once.
Mike Once?
Liz Yes, once! And it was an integral part of the plot.
Mike Oh yeah, sure it was.

Mike exits

Liz (*calling after him*) Well, it was. (*Under her breath*) Bastard. (*She opens her handbag and takes out a small pill bottle. Popping a couple in her mouth, she takes out a hip flask and washes them down with a long swig*)

The telephone rings

(*Answering the phone*) Hallo, the Masons' residence.

Breathing is heard from the telephone

Hallo?

The breathing continues

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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