

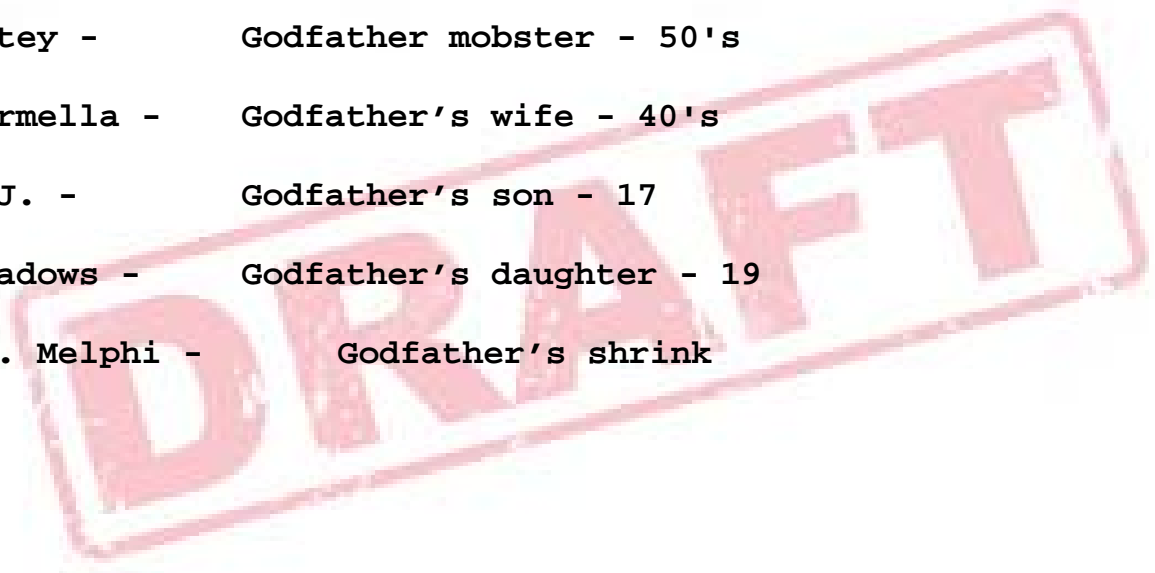
The Pepperonis

A radio/stage play

by

Eric Coble

Bruno - A mobster - 30's
Tony - Senior mobster - 30's
Petey - Godfather mobster - 50's
Carmella - Godfather's wife - 40's
A.J. - Godfather's son - 17
Meadows - Godfather's daughter - 19
Dr. Melphi - Godfather's shrink



SFX: **MUFFLED GUN SHOTS. (BANG BANG BANG!)**

BRUNO There ya go, Tony. That rat fink Louis “loose lips” Luigi won’t be doin’ any more talkin’ to the feds.

Tony Yeah. Too bad Louis “loose lips” wasn’t the one talkin’ to the feds.

Bruno He wasn’t?

Tony Naw, it was his cousin Lenny “lousy oral hygiene” Laconi. He’s the guy we shoulda whacked.

Bruno Ah, well. These things happen. What should we do with Louis’ body?

Tony Drop it in that ditch where we dumped Mario “missing ear”, Frank “fungus toe” and Nicky “no nickname”.

Bruno That’s gettin’ to be a crowded ditch.

Tony You talkin’ back to me, you lazy s.o.b?

Bruno No, Tony, never, Tony.

Tony Okay then. Listen, I gotta go.

Bruno Where you runnin’ off to in such a hurry? We still got business.

Tony Listen, I don’t ...

Bruno We gotta deal with those nuns that didn’t cough up their insurance money, we gotta make our F.O.P. donations, and we gotta unload those 58 crates of prophylactics we stole.

Tony You can

Bruno Personally, I don’t think that was such a good idea in the first place, Tony. I mean, two crates of prophylactics I can see, but 58 . . . that’s a lot of boingy-boingies to unload, you know what I’m sayin’?

Tony Bruno ...

Bruno Maybe if we sold'em as balloons at kids' birthday parties

Tony Bruno ...

Bruno I mean, the Chuckie-Cheese guys might

Tony Bruno!

Bruno What.

Tony You're the deputy of the Association. You take care of it.

Bruno Where you goin' in such a hurry? What's more important than the Association?

Tony Nothin'! I just . . . I got some other business, okay? Do you frickin' mind?

Bruno Sure thing, Tony. Sure thing.

SFX: **DOOR OPENS WITH LITTLE ENTRANCE BELLS TINKLING.**

MUSFX: **ACCORDION MUSIC IN BACKGROUND)**

Petey Tony! Tony Pepperoni! How you doin', man?

Tony Cut it, Petey. You think I want everybody knowin' I'm here?

Petey But it's your pizza parlor, Tony. You own it! You run it! You da man!

Tony And what happens if anybody finds that out? Far as the world knows I'm a nice respectable mob boss. What happens to that reputation if word gets out I actually run a pizza parlor on the side?

Petey It's a nice pizza parlor, Tony.

Tony It's still pizza, Petey! You call it what you want, it's still tomato sauce, dough, cheese and toppings. And god help me, I love it. I got pizza sauce in my blood. It's the only thing I'm really good at.

Petey You're a perfectly fine mob boss too, Tony.

Tony Don't try to frickin' placate me, okay, Petey? Don't you have some calzones to stuff?

Petey Actually that's what I need to talk to you about. We gotta make a decision on whether to go with that thick chicago deepdish style or the crispy crust. Or both.

Tony We gotta decide today?

Petey New menus go to the printer next week.

Tony Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Petey And actually we got worse news.

Tony Worse? You're bustin' my strombolis here ...

Petey There's a new pizza joint goin' in down the street.

Tony . . . in our territory?

Petey On our block.

Tony Is it that Cap'n Tony? Cause if it is, they're gonna find more than sausage in their meat-lovers combo.

Petey It's worse.

Tony Worse?

Petey It's Dominoes.

Tony . . . no. Dear god, tell me you're yankin' me.

Petey Swear to god, Tony. Saw the blue and red logo in the window this morning myself.

Tony Oh god... oh god...

SFX: **(BOTTLE POPPING OPEN AND PILLS POURING OUT, THEN MASSIVE DRINKING)**

Bruno Tony! Tony! What's with the pills? You okay?

Tony My doc prescribed' em. To handle the stress. I can take fifteen an hour. Dominoes. Mother of Mary, Dominoes, those guys are gonna crush us like frickin' bugs! I thought the F-B-I was bad -- but Dominoes -- they got those cheese sticks now, they got cinnamon stix with icing! It's over! We're toast! Close the frickin' doors! Blow out the pilot light, Gracie, we're history!!

Bruno How long's it take for those stress pills to kick in?

Tony I have no frickin' idea, moron! I can't breathe. I gotta get outta here -- I gotta see my wife and kids-

Petey You gonna tell'em about our pizza parlor?

Tony What do you think, I'm insane? And lose what little respect they still got for me? Outta my way!!

SFX: **TINKLE OF THE BELLS ON THE DOOR)**

Petey He never said deep dish or thin and crispy.

MUSFX: **ACCORDION MUSIC STOPS.**

SFX: **DOOR OPENS**

Carmella Well, if it isn't Mr. Mafia.

Tony Can it, Carmella. I got a lot on my plate today.

Carmella Not just on your plate -- you got stains on your shirt too. What is that?

Tony Nothin'. Just a stain.

Carmella Is that . . . is that pizza sauce, Tony?? You been hangin' around a pizza joint?

Tony No! It's just . . . blood. Probably leftover from Louis "loose lips". We hadda whack him today.

Carmella You sure it's not pizza sauce?

Tony Look, a man's shirt is his business, stains and all, *capice*?

Carmella What about his family life, is that his business too, huh?

Tony Carmella...

Carmella The beauty shop is still chargin' me forty bucks for the tint and style, plus sixty for the nails and pedicure. I told'em if they didn't back down on the fee that all the papers in town would be receiving compromising photos of Darius the head beautician and his blow dryer. They laughed in my face. Now I wanta know where those photos are!

Tony I don't got'em yet. Donny "developing fluid" Draco still hasn't come through yet.

Carmella Can you at least arrange a little "accident" with their conditioner?

Tony No!

Carmella You call yourself a mob boss??

A.J. Hey, pops.

Tony A.J.! My boy! How you doin' -- come give your old man a hug!

A.J. That's okay, pops. I gotta run.

Tony No time for your own father?

A.J. Actually... there is one thing I wanted to ask you.

Tony Shoot.

SFX: **SOUND OF A GUN SAFETY CLICKING OFF**

Tony I meant it figuratively, you little dip!

A.J. Oh.

Carmella A.J., you're not holdin' the gun right anyway. Keep your grip here, with this finger resting on the trigger. And keep your target half an inch above the sight-line, like this . . .

A.J. Thanks, ma.

Tony Will you put that thing away??

A.j. Well, what I wanted to ask you was, today at school in lunch line, Todd Wilkerson cut in front of me to get a chocolate milk.

Tony Yeah?

A.j. It was the last chocolate milk.

Tony Yeah?

A.j. So can you whack him?

Tony What??

Carmella Oh, please, your father can't even extort a poncey hairdresser -- what makes you think he's got the gorgonzolas to off Todd Wilkerson ?

Tony Will you butt out?

Carmella Paging Don Corleone! Paging Don Corleone!

A.J. So you'll let this kid disrespect me in front of the whole school and everybody?

Tony It was milk!

A.J. Chocolate milk!

Carmella The last chocolate milk!

Tony Where are my pills-

SFX:

DOOR OPENS

Meadows Oh, hi, Dad!

Tony Meadows -- thank God -- I need someone who talks sense in this house

Meadows I wanted to talk to you too, Dad.

Tony Gimme a hug

Meadows That's okay. Listen, I got my grades back from college . . .

Tony Yeah

Meadows . . . and in my "Threats and Graft 101" class, the teacher totally gave me a "c+" on our "Money laundering for fun and profit" Exam.

Tony Yeah?

Meadows So can you whack him?

Tony No!

Carmella You might as well ask him to put a horse's head in your professor's bed -- not our Mr. Queasy-weezy.

Meadows What's the point of being a mob boss if you can't even change your daughter's G-P-A ?

Tony Is that the only thing this family can think about? Mob, mob, mob! There is more to life than the Association, you know!

(BEAT)

Carmella Children. Go upstairs.

A.J. What's dad talking about, mom?

Carmella I cannot believe you'd say such a thing in front of your own offspring!

Tony Where's my stress pills

Meadows Benny “no cuticles” Banano’s dad never acts like this!

A.J. I hate my life!

Meadows Me too!

A.J. & Meadows Wwaaaaaaa

Carmella You see? You see what you do to this family? You think Paulie “can’t find the remote control” Romano pulls this sort of crap?

SFX: **(KIDS KEEP CRYING. SOUND OF TONY POURING LOTS OF PILLS AND DRINKING)**

Carmella How many pills is that??

Tony Doc says I can take thirty an hour. I gotta . . . I gotta see my shrink-

SFX: **(DOOR CLOSSES. KIDS KEEP CRYING)**

Carmella Children. Children, sit down. Sit down. We got work to do. We’ll have some dinner. And then we still gotta figure out what to do with these 58 crates of prophylactics Bruno unloaded on us.

MUSFX: **GENTLE BRIDGE)**

Dr. Melphi (VERY CALM, HUSKY VOICE) So what seems to be the problem this week, Mr. Pepperoni?

Tony It’s like I’m bein’ torn in two. Like I’m a piece of a chicken that’s leftover after it’s eaten, that has two parts, where half the people I know got one part and the other half got the other part and they both pull to make a wish and I snap -- I’m like that, you know?

Dr. Melphi You feel like a wish bone.

Tony A wishbone! Yeah! That’s exactly what I feel like. It’s like I’m a sponge-like thingie that just fills up and fills up and fills up and then I’m pressed against a window to clean it and all the stuff just come pouring out.

Dr. Melphi You feel like a squeegee.

Tony A squeegee! Exactly! I'm like a guy with two brains in one head -- like that mutant calf I saw in a museum one time, only both my brains are about to explode out of my frickin' ears.

Dr. Melphi You feel like a mob boss who secretly runs a pizza parlor.

Tony No, not like that at all.

Dr. Melphi You feel like a squeegee.

Tony Yes!

Dr. Melphi It seems to me the problem is your unconscious self using every method of denial and sublimation to hold together two diametrically opposed facets of your pre-verbal personality . . . But your stunted inner life is no match for your increasingly intolerable external realities.

Tony I'm like a squeegee.

Dr. Melphi You're like a squeegee. Why not give up on the pizza business? Walk away.

(TONY LAUGHS)

Dr. Melphi What ?

Tony You don't "walk away" from the pizza business. You go out face-first in a mountain of mozzarella and grease. Or your sleeve gets caught on the pie pan and you're dragged into a 400 degree to bake like a ziti. Or you're speeding to deliver some pies downtown and broadside a livestock truck and you're crushed beneath the weight of thousands of pounds of cattle and poultry. That's the way a pizza man dies! There are a hundred ways to go, but no one ever -- ever -- "walks away" from pizza.

Dr. Melphi I see.

Tony "Walk away".

Dr. Melphi Then I have a question for you, Mr. Pepperoni.

Tony Shoot.

Dr. Melphi I don't have a firearm, Mr. Pepperoni.

Tony It's a frickin' figure of frickin' speech!

Dr. Melphi No need to shout, Mr. Pepperoni. I've been talking to my own psychiatrist about trying to counsel a man such as yourself . . .

Tony Yeah, I'm a handful, ain't I.

Dr. Melphi – and he keeps telling me my problems aren't really with you, but with my own father.

Tony Yeah?

Dr. Melphi So I was thinking . . .

Tony What.

Dr. Melphi Could you whack my father?

Tony What??

Dr. Melphi Or at least my psychiatrist. He's driving me up the frickin' wall.

Tony No! What is it with you people??

Dr. Melphi Then I think this session is over.

Tony I just got here.

Dr. Melphi Here are 400 more stress pills, Mr. Pepperoni. Go nuts.

MUSFX: **(QUIET MUSIC FADES. A DOOR OPENS WITH TINKLING BELLS. ACCORDION MUSIC STARTS UP IN THE BACKGROUND)**

Petey Tony! Welcome back to the pizza parlor!

Tony . . . Thanks, Petey...

Petey You don't look so good. Can I get you somethin'? Lasagne? Linguini? Moo goo gai pan?

Tony What?

Petey I'm kiddin'. Here, have a slice of onion and anchovy. Mangia! Mangia!

Tony I ain't . . . I ain't hungry . . .

Petey Some vino? It's from the old country. Out near Ashtabula.

Tony No! No wine.

Petey Okay. But as long as I got you here, I gotta ask you somethin'-

Tony I'm not whackin' anybody!!

Petey ...okay. That's good to know. I was actually just wonderin' if we should order more of these red and white checkered tablecloths or if we should go with somethin' a little more Hip. I can get these cute little lacy numbers -- like doilies -- paper doilies, you know? But bigger?

Tony I don't care...

Petey . . . also people are beginnin' to suspect.

Tony (Alarmed) suspect what?

Petey That all these autographed photos on the walls may not be legit. Like that one of Frank Sinatra that says "To Petey and the gang -- best pizza in town."

Tony What's wrong with it.

Petey Well . . . you probably shouldn't have signed it in crayon. Looks fishy, ya know? And it's dated 2000. Old blue eyes bought it in '98. You know, little tip-offs like that.

Tony So take down the pictures -- re-forge'em, I don't care . . .

Petey and the name of the restaurant, Tony.

Tony What's wrong with our name?

Petey I know you don't wanta have any connection between this place and your Italian heritage -- like you're ashamed of us

Tony I'm not ashamed --

Petey It's okay if we're somethin' you sweep under your rug.

Tony You're not under my rug

Petey You wanta be a closeted pizza man, that's your . . .

Tony I'm not closeted!

Petey Okay. Fine. But the name -- especially since Dominoes is movin' in

Tony Where's my pills -- where's my pills

Petey I think we need a more Italian name for our restaurant.

Tony What's wrong with the name we got?

Petey "Saul Herskowitz's Kosher Deli" just don't say "pizza", Tony.

Tony I gotta cover my trail!

Petey You're coverin' it too well.

Tony I need more pills. I gotta calm down -- and will someone shut that accordion player up before I whack him?!

MUSFX: ACCORDION MUSIC STOPS

Voice (In the distance) Sorry . . .

SFX: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING AWAY. DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES

Petey Oh, sure, you'll whack Joe "squeeze box" Mancoti, but you won't whack

that kid who took your son's chocolate milk.

Tony He told you about that?

Petey: he stopped in earlier. Don't worry. I didn't tell'im nothin'.

Tony I gotta get home -- I gotta lie down...

Petey So you never answered me about the crusts

Tony (From the distance) I don't care!

SFX: **(DOOR SLAMS)**

Petey ... and for a name I was thinking a compromise: Saul "The Sicilian" Herskowitz's Kosher Pizzeria. How's that sound? Ha?

MUSFX: **(MUSIC. DOOR OPENS. IN STAGGERS TONY)**

Carmella Well, welcome home, Mr. Wussey-man.

Tony I don't... what's with all the balloons?

A.J. Uncle Bruno brought'em by. 58 crates full. So we blew'em up and decorated the house.

Tony Those aren't ... balloons...

Carmella Can't you enjoy any frickin' nice thing we do for you, you pig?

Tony ...i don't got... any patience for your lip... right now, Carmella...

Carmella Fine, you don't wanta hear my apology, you won't hear my apology.

Tony You was gonna... apologize?

Carmella Listen, honey. Me and the kids, we was all thinkin' you're out bustin' your rigatoni 24 - 7 to put food on our table and a roof over our head

Meadows - and a 60 inch plasma HDTV in every room, including the garage.

Tony Yeah...

Carmella We realized that extortion, murder and ruinin' people's lives was your day job -- how could we ask you to do it in your family time too?

Tony Yeah.

A.J. We love you for who you are, pops. Not what you do for us.

Tony ...you do?

Carmella So we're gonna forget the scumbags at the beauty salon, and the dirt wipe who cut A.J. off, and the piece of filth professor that screwed Meadows over.

Tony Okay

Meadows - and just have a nice meal. Just the four of us.

Carmella And your Uncle Junior and Silvio Lugnuts and Aunt Stiletto and Richie "paper or plastic" and the rest of the family.

Tony That sounds great! Thank you, guys!

A.J. And we already ordered in supper! See?

Tony Is that ... is that ...

A.j., carmella, & meadows Pizza!

Tony Oh my god.

Carmella Do you like it? It's from that new Dominoes down the street!

Tony Erg ... gurrk ... hurrrr...

Meadows You okay, dad?

A.J. He looks kind of purple.

Tony gliiiiiii...

SFX: **(THUMP. BEAT.)**

Carmella A.J. Go call an ambulance. I think your father just suffered a heart attack.

A.J. Can we eat the pizza first, while it's still warm?

Carmella Well . . . I don't see why not. Just step over your father there and cut some pieces for Uncle Junior and Cousin Toupee. Big slices. Don't be stingy --

(MUSIC UP)

End

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