

# TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

**By Julie Taylor**

Characters:

Adam – a businessman

Dylan – a businessman (not the brightest twig on the branch)

Sergei – a Russian businessman (mafia). Has a Russian accent

Master – A Russian mafia boss. Has a Russian accent

Setting: The play is set in two different offices: that of Dylan/Adam and that of the Russians. Dylan and Adam do not need any specific furniture – an empty space on one half of the stage would suffice (they can use a phone or a laptop to do an online search). The Russians require a couple of chairs, a table, a teddy bear, a tray of drinks, and a violin in a case. Lighting can be used between the two spaces to indicate the changes in scene.

Note: The Master is in a wheelchair throughout the play. He only gets out of the wheelchair at the very end of the play and is obviously able bodied. The Master can speak English perfectly well, but his clients don't know this. His dialogue in those moments is in Russian (either real Russian or gibberish with the odd word distinguishable) – the message of the words should be conveyed via facial expression and vocal tone. We know what he means even if we don't understand the language. He has a teddy bear named Rasputin.

## **Scene 1 Dylan & Adam's office**

*Dylan enters. Adam has been waiting impatiently.*

**Adam:** (*angrily*) Where the hell have you been?

**Dylan:** What do you mean? You know I play golf on Thursdays...

**Adam:** I've been trying to get hold of you all morning!

**Dylan:** You know I put my phone on silent when I play. I like to really focus on each shot...

**Adam:** I wish you'd focus on our business instead.

**Dylan:** I'm getting in some practice for my future life – sunny days with nothing but golf and long lunches ...

**Adam:** (*derisively*) Long lunches? How do you intend to fund this idyllic lifestyle?

**Dylan:** With profits, of course. Tomorrow's big concert is just the first of many. Our entertainment syndicate will make millions...

**Adam:** We're up to our necks for millions all right. But I'm worrying about debt, rather than profits.

**Dylan:** Don't be ridiculous. Tomorrow should be a sell-out!

**Adam:** Have you checked our ticket sales?

**Dylan:** Not recently, no, but who could resist old blue eyes?

**Adam:** I imagine no-one over 65... if we actually had old blue eyes performing.

**Dylan:** I booked him months ago. What's the problem?

**Adam:** He's dead.

**Dylan:** What?

**Adam:** It's true. Frank Sinatra is dead.

**Dylan:** This is terrible! But we have insurance...

**Adam:** No, we don't have cover for this particular problem....

**Dylan:** Why not? We paid everything in advance: the venue, advertising, accommodation, airfares ... We'll be ruined!

**Adam:** Yes. We will.

**Dylan:** How could this happen?

**Adam:** Very easily as it turns out. Because you – you numbskull, you drivelling idiot – you booked a singer who was already deceased!

**Dylan:** Already?

**Adam:** He snuffed it over twenty years ago. Frank Sinatra is dead. Very, very dead.

## **Scene 2 The Russian's office**

**Master:** I think I would like a new Ferrari. I am getting bored with the Lamborghini.

**Sergei:** Of course, Master. But first we must free up some funds. Please examine this list. These loans are due to be repaid next week.

**Master:** Good interest rates?

**Sergei:** We have charged between 20 and 37% interest, depending on the risk.

**Master:** Excellent.

**Sergei:** With very high penalties for late payment.

**Master:** They must pay on time! I want a Ferrari.

**Sergei:** *(looking over the list of outstanding loans)* We have \$200,000 due tomorrow after a house sale is finalised...

**Master:** Not enough! What else?

**Sergei:** Ah this is good. Two million due on Monday from an entertainment syndicate. Their big show is on tomorrow. The funds should be available immediately.

**Master:** What is this show?

**Sergei:** Some mega star – an American singer...

**Master:** American? Pah! Would I like this singer?

**Sergei:** Possibly, Master. It is an old geezer called Frank Sinatra.

**Master:** Frank Sinatra? It is impossible!

**Sergei:** That is what it says here...

**Master:** That cannot be true. Frank Sinatra is dead.

**Sergei:** He died?

**Master:** Many years ago!

**Sergei:** Then we have a problem. We must contact them.

**Master:** We can see them now.

**Sergei:** Right now? Without appointment?

**Master:** Now!

**Sergei:** Of course, Master. *(He begins to move the wheelchair towards the door)* I am sure our clients will welcome us. It will be a pleasant surprise. *(They exit)*

### **Scene 3 Dylan & Adam's office**

**Dylan:** Are you completely sure? About Frank Sinatra? It's not just an urban myth??

**Adam:** How many times do I have to tell you?! He's gone! Demised. No longer with us. Unable to be revived!

**Dylan:** There'll be a riot! What will we tell the fans?

**Adam:** What fans?

**Dylan:** The fans who are coming to see him perform!

**Adam:** Well, obviously there aren't any. Real fans would know he's dead. Have you looked at the bookings?

**Dylan:** Not since the initial surge...

**Adam:** Well, that's all there was...an initial surge. Your mum, my deaf auntie, a few seniors, and a group booking from the Alzheimer's Association. Who may or may not remember to turn up...

**Dylan:** That might prove useful ... will they even recall what he looks like? Could we hire an impersonator?

**Adam:** An impersonator? It might work...Let's see what's available. *(He looks online)* Here we go, a Frank Sinatra impersonator who doubles as Elvis Presley.

**Dylan:** A support act, even better...

**Adam:** Does it matter that he's Japanese?

**Dylan:** Just book him! We'll worry about the small details later...

**Adam:** What do we book him with? We've already spent the loan money. We're broke! Unless you have a credit card?

**Dylan:** You mean we spent the entire two million?

**Adam:** Yes, **you** did. When you booked the corpse and his support band...

**Dylan:** Shit! What will we do? Oh, I can't think - that noise is so distracting...

**Adam:** Noise?!

**Dylan:** Yes, the distinctive growl of a Lamborghini...

**Adam:** A Lamborghini?

**Dylan:** Such a unique vibration...

**Adam:** As in the Lamborghini our Russian friends drive?

**Dylan:** What Russian friends?

**Adam:** The ones we borrowed the money from.

**Dylan:** The mafia guys?

**Adam:** The ones getting out of their Lamborghini right now!

**Dylan:** Oh Lord!

**Adam:** Is that all you can say? Oh Lord! The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming!

*(Sergei and the Master enter)*

**Sergei:** Good afternoon, gentlemen.

**Adam:** This is an unexpected pleasure...

**Master:** *(in Russian)* What a small office!

**Sergei:** My Master wishes to offer his greetings.

**Adam:** So nice to see you.

**Sergei:** And to compliment you on your lovely view.

**Master** *(in Russian):* Do not be stupid. They have no view.

**Sergei:** We just wanted to check how preparations were going for the big concert...

**Dylan:** We're expecting a good crowd.

**Master:** *(in Russian)* Surely, they know Frank Sinatra is dead!?

**Sergei:** You will be making good profits, then. Excellent. We would not want you to be late with your loan re-payment...

**Adam:** I'm sure it'll be fine...

**Master:** *(in Russian)* If I do not get my Ferrari, I will be very angry.

**Sergei:** My Master is looking forward to buying a new Ferrari next Monday.

**Adam:** Next Monday!

**Sergei:** After you re-pay the loan. I'm taking him for a test drive now.

**Master:** *(in Russian)* Let's go!

**Sergei:** My Master says it was a pleasure meeting you. I will take him to the car, then return to confirm payment details...

*(Sergei & Master exit)*

**Adam:** We are dead! Dead and buried! Unless you have a better idea than your Japanese impersonator!

**Dylan:** Calm down! Calm down! There must be a way out of this...

*(Sergei re-enters)*

**Sergei:** I am just taking care of business details. My Master demands full payment of the two million on Monday, plus interest. There will be no extensions.

**Dylan:** No extensions?

**Adam:** What he means is, could you accept...say...a partial payment on Monday, and the rest shortly afterwards...?

**Sergei:** No. My master is not a conciliatory man.

**Adam:** Oh...

**Sergei:** But do not worry. We have ways of extracting the money.

**Dylan:** Really?

**Sergei:** I am sure it will not be necessary in your case... But I presume you gentlemen know the meaning of the word 'eunuch'? *(They nod)* Enough said. I will leave you with that image.

*(Sergei exits)*

**Dylan:** You're right. We're dead.

**Adam:** Not just dead. Much, much worse.

#### **Scene 4 The Russian's Office**

*(Sergei and the Master are chatting. Adam enters carrying a white flag)*

**Sergei:** A white flag. How entertaining! Not a common sight in the Motherland. *(To Adam)* Greetings. I see you come bearing gifts.

**Adam:** More of a peace offering, really. We need to talk. There's a problem with the money. *(He goes to join them at the table)*

**Master:** *(In Russian)* Do not sit on my teddy bear!

**Sergei:** My master wishes to inform you that the seat is already occupied by Rasputin. You will need to stand and deliver, so to speak. *(He puts a violin case on the table)*

**Adam:** Please don't shoot! It's not my fault! I'm as much of a victim as you are...

**Sergei:** We are listening.

**Adam:** It's my business partner. He's taken all the money. The concert was a ruse – apparently, he's dead, Frank Sinatra that is, not my business partner –

**Master:** *(In Russian)* He is not dead yet, but he will be if he's stolen my money!

**Adam:** He used the money to fund his flash lifestyle - I had no idea what he was doing! But perhaps we can get it back...

**Sergei:** You had better sit down. *(To teddy bear, as he moves him)* Sorry Mr Rasputin, we have business to discuss. *(To Adam)* Your partner has spent the money in a frivolous fashion?

**Adam:** Yes. Multiple golf club memberships, long lunches...

**Sergei:** But you have a plan?

**Adam:** He has assets that could be sold...

**Sergei:** He owns his own home?

**Adam:** And a bach, cars, a motor home...

**Sergei:** We may be able to find a way, come closer...*(they all lean in and talk quietly and quickly)* It is all settled. Tell your partner to meet us here. I will prepare the documents.

*(Adam moves downstage and makes his call. Sergei exits to get documents and champagne. The Master cuddles Rasputin and quietly stretches his legs)*

**Adam:** Dylan, are you outside? The meeting with our Russian friends went well. Yes, I still have all my body parts. Listen, it's all sorted. They've accepted our terms. I'll explain it all later. We just need you to sign the paperwork and we're in the clear. Come on in. It's perfectly safe.

*(Sergei enters with tray of drinks and paperwork. He very deliberately stirs a strange substance into the drinks. The Master returns to his default wheelchair position as Dylan arrives)*

**Dylan:** I hope I'm not late...

**Sergei:** Perfect timing. Comrades, we are here to celebrate. We just need a final signature on these documents and our business is complete.

**Dylan:** Yes, of course, happy to oblige. *(He signs)*

**Sergei:** Just here, and there... Now, a toast to conclude the transaction. *(He indicates the champagne. They all pick up glasses)* To our ongoing friendship! *(They all raise their glass but only Dylan drinks)*

**Dylan:** What's the matter? I feel woozy...

**Sergei:** Possibly the champagne? It is Russian, after all. *(laughs)* Did you really think we would be fooled by your fake Frank Sinatra ruse? It is time to finish you off for good.

**Master:** *(in Russian)* I will protect my ears!

*(The Master and Sergei put on noise cancelling headphones. Sergei opens the violin case, takes out the violin and plays extremely badly)*

**Adam:** Please, don't, put an end to this misery.... *(He rushes to the table and grabs a drink)*

**Dylan:** Noooo! *(He collapses and dies)*

**Adam:** Stop, nooo, the torture!!!! *(He faints and dies. Sergei stops playing. He motions to the Master that it is safe to remove the headphones)*

**Master:** That was quick!

**Sergei:** But painful. Well, we now have the deeds to his property. That should more than cover the debt.

**Master:** At least a new Ferrari will sound better than your violin!

**Sergei:** Time to go shopping! *(Master gets out of his wheelchair. They both walk out together)*