

Yinzers

By

Craig Elias

Cast of Characters

Don Palowsky, Sr. - Fifty-nine year old ex-steel worker. City of Pittsburgh born and bred. Currently a custodian at a local High School.

Don Palowsky, Jr. - Don Senior's thirty-eight year old son. Known as Little Don or "LD". A former High School quarterback who uses tales of glory days gone by to woo customers at the used car lot where he works.

Francis DeNunzio - Little Don's best friend since childhood. "Greasy Frank's" father owns a pizza joint as a front for bookmaking. Frankie works the counter.

Nancy Nichols - In her late 30's, Nancy is a career waitress at a South Side bar called "Brewser's".

Bernie Kosar - Grew up in Boardman, OH. Attended the University of Miami on a football scholarship and quarterbacked the team to a national championship. Drafted by the Cleveland Browns to resurrect the franchise.

Samantha O'Brian - Kosar's head-turner of a girlfriend.

SCENE

The scene opens in the fall of 1989 at Brewser's, a dive bar in the South Side of Pittsburgh.

Four wooden four-top tables are arranged in a diamond pattern at center stage. Half-empty bowls of popcorn and peanuts sit in the middle of each table. There is a large television upstage, behind the tables, showing an endless loop of lowlights from the most recent loss by the Pittsburgh Steelers to their hated rivals, the Cleveland Browns.

The stage lights are brought up to "bar light". The floor is dirty, dotted with popcorn kernels and peanut shells. The walls are decorated with neon beer signs and Steelers memorabilia from the 1970's. The atmosphere is dim and gloomy.

NANCY, a career waitress in her late-30's, is wiping down the tables and frequently checking the clock on the back wall that reads 1 A.M. Her bangs are tall and puffy and the rest of her quaff has been shaped into an exquisite fe-mullet. Her skin tight, gold tee shirt is tucked into a pair of black stretch pants that reveal way too much of a body that is a decade and a half past its prime. A black apron is slung loosely around her hips.

DON PALOWSKY, SR. leads LITTLE DON and GREASY FRANK DENUNZIO into Brewser's from stage left. DON is an average-sized Pollock. He walks with a noticeable limp, a product of his days working in the mill. He sports a pair of black slacks, a Steelers sweater under a Steelers leather jacket and a Steelers tassel cap.

LITTLE DON is bigger than his father, but not by much. He is also decked out in Steelers gear from head to toe. He is visibly drunk and is carrying a can of beer with him into the bar.

FRANK is not nearly as drunk as LITTLE DON, but wobbles just the same. He navigates his way through life with a happy smile and a jolly belly. The only guy not dressed for the cold, FRANK is wearing a pair of sweat shorts and an enormous old Steelers jersey that fits him like a tarp.

NANCY (takes a break from wiping and points at the clock)

Yer late. I's expectin' yinz an aher ago.

DON

If I wanted that kind of attitude, I'd be home with his mother. (*Pointing at LD*)

FRANK

How's my best girl?

(FRANK ambles over and grabs NANCY in an awkward, drunken embrace)

NANCY (*disengages quickly and smoothly steps back*)

Good, Frankie. How's yer Ma dune?

FRANK

Better. Doc says she otta come home...

(LD walks in between them and hands NANCY his empty beer can.)

LD (*singing loudly, drunk, and off-key*)

Naancee fer ni-ckels, shull swallow pi-ckles.

NANCY (*not pleased about the interruption. It shows on her face, but not in her voice*)

LD. Ain't herd 'at since Worshington School.

LD

Habaht another beer?

NANCY

Sure, hon. (*Looks to the other two*) The usual?

The three men nod affirmatively and emit a chorus of "uh-huhs".

NANCY

Why don't yinz sit dahn an I'll be right back.

NANCY turns to walk away and LD smacks her butt with an open hand in "good game" fashion. She wheels around to face LD with glowering eyes.

NANCY

'Ats two strikes. A third 'n yer aht. Y'ear me?

LD (*like a little kid*)

Sahreeeee.

DON

LD, Sit yer ass dahn! I ain't too old ta give ya a lickin'.

(to NANCY) Sahrrey, Nance. Kid's kina tuned up tanight. He don't mean nuthin' by it.

DON and LD sling their Steelers jackets over the back of their chairs, revealing the next layer of Steelers apparel underneath. The three men sit down at the table that is left-most on the stage. NANCY exits stage right.

DON (to no one in particular)

Damn Stillers make me sick.

DON pulls out a pack of cheap cigars. He offers one to each of his table mates, but they decline. He lights up using a Steelers Zippo lighter.

LD (lets out a long belch)

They make me drunk.

LD pulls out a fresh pack of Camel non-filters and slaps them against his palm. He gives one to FRANK and they each fire up with Steelers lighters of their own.

FRANK

You knowhatha prolem is? Mark Mahlone.

DON

I seen ahnufa him. He can't never hit ah open receiver. Louie Lipps - first rahnder in eighty-four - wide open dahnfield - never gets the bahl.

LD

Mahlone's a bum, but Nolls worse. All I heer is emperer 'is 'n emperer 'aht. He ain't won a champinchip 'n ten years. Whenzee gonna stahp restin' on 'is larrows?

FRANK

C'mon, ya draft Bubby Brister, 'n then ya don't let 'im play. He got a nice arm 'n he kin run the football 'n at. Let 'im see the field ahreddy.

NANCY reappears from stage right with a pitcher of beer and three tall glasses.

NANCY

Here ya' go. Pitcher a Arn City.

NANCY gives each man a glass and then pours DON's for him.

NANCY
Yinz hungry?

FRANK (before NANCY can complete the word "hungry")
Yes.

NANCY removes a pad from her apron and a pen from her hair.

FRANK
I'll have the Itayen Hagie, mericle whip, no mayo, 'n a side a fries.

DON (waits for NANCY to stop writing and give him a nod)
Just a plate a fries 'n gravy.

NANCY
Kay. 'N habaht you, LD?

LD
Beer.

NANCY
You ahreddy gocher beer. How 'baht sumthin' else?

LD
Shotta whiskey.

NANCY looks to DON for approval. DON shrugs.

NANCY
I'll get that red' up and brung aht witha food.

DON
You know 'aht? Better make it three.

NANCY
After 'aht game, it prolly should be six.

NANCY exits stage right. FRANK fills up his glass along with LD's. The men begin to drink, chain smoke, and ash their tobacco products on the floor. They do so regularly throughout the scene.

FRANK

How'd we lose fifty-nine ta nuthin' ta the dang Cleve Brahnies anyway?

DON

In Pixburgh ta boot. Ya know 'ahts seven ina row we dropped ta 'em bums.

LD

They needa runna ball more. Are yinz tellin' me Tim Worley ain't gonna be just as good as Franco and Blier 'n 'em?

DON

I was listenin' ta Cope ona radio 'n he said it right on - the awfensive line jes' ain't getina job done. They ain't getting no mooment ina trenches.

FRANK

It's 'cause deefenses stack the line against Mahlone. When Brister was a baby, his Mom caughtem throne eggs at the frigerator. Na, if 'aht ain't a quarterback 'n at, n' I dunno what is.

LD

It's Noll!

DON

Noll. He got a few good years outta Bradshaw 'n now he's tryinabe Dahn Coryell. The dang Rooneys needa get ridovim.

FRANK

Yeah, but what'd happen to the defense if Noll goes?

DON

Don't gimme 'aht. The Steel Curtin was Bud Carson not Noll. But hell, I coulda coached Ham, Lambert, 'n Mean Joe to a Super Bowl myself. All I'm sayin' is Schottenheimer's been kickin' our asses fer years 'n I'm tired of it.

LD

We still goina see the Bungles nex week?

DON

It's probly the only team we kin beat. Besides, these season tickets cost too much not to use 'em.

FRANK (*reaches into the pocket of his sweat shorts and digs for his wallet. He pulls out a large amount of chipped ham, puts it on the table and continues to dig.*)

You shoulda told me the tickets was so 'spensive Mr. Palahsky. How much I owe ya?

FRANK's spare change clinks on the floor.

DON

Na, don't worry abaht it. But they do cost. I coulda sent this 'un ta Pitt on the money I give ta the Rooneys evry year.

FRANK ignores the coins and eats some of the chipped ham.

LD (*perks up*)

'N Ida walked on the football team with Danny Mahrino.

DON

Proibly'd a earned a scholarship.

FRANK (*to LD between bites of the chipped ham*)

Member when you ran the naked boot for two scores ina same game?

LD (*nodding confidently*)

Proibly'd a beat Danny aht 'n bin All-American.

NANCY reappears carrying their food and shots. As she is distributing the orders, a large man dressed in a flashy suit struts in from stage left. The man is BERNIE KOSAR, starting quarterback for the Cleveland Browns, and he has a young, attractive, provocatively dressed SAMANTHA O'BRIAN on his arm.

The men look up at him and then at each other. Back at him. Back at each other. NANCY eyes SAMANTHA like a guard dog at an unwanted intruder before catching herself and putting her waitress face back on.

NANCY (*awkwardly attempting to subdue her native accent for the unknown, upscale customers*)

Hello. Why don't you folks have a seat and I will be right with you.

KOSAR leads SAMANTHA to the table opposite the men. He pulls out her chair and seats her before seating himself.

FRANK (*to DON and LD*)

Is that?

LD

Can't be.

DON

I think it is.

FRANK

Mmm hmmm.

LD (to NANCY)

Whatta you think?

NANCY (accented)

Only one way 'ta findaht.

NANCY pulls out the pad and pen on her way to KOSAR's table.

NANCY (faking it again)

How are you both this evening?

KOSAR

Doin' well. Thanks.

NANCY (having trouble maintaining)

Would you like ta' get started with something ta' drink?

KOSAR

Beers fine. (he looks to SAMANTHA and she nods in agreement) What's on tap?

NANCY (the list is so routine that she forgets to hide the Pittsburgh accent)

Coors. Coors Light. Rollin' Rock. Arn City. Arn City Light.

SAMANTHA (smirking and prodding KOSAR)

What was that last one?

NANCY

Arn City Light.

SAMANTHA (giggling a bit)

I'm sorry?

NANCY

Arn City... (NANCY catches herself) Iron City Light.

SAMANTHA (to KOSAR in a loud whisper)
You're right. They do talk funny.

NANCY (embarrassed and a little angry)
So, it'll be IC Light?

KOSAR
That'll be great.

NANCY begins to walk away, but stops and turns back and looks at KOSAR.

NANCY (to KOSAR)
I'd kick myself if I didn't ask. Ain't you...?

KOSAR (cutting her off)
Bernie Kosar? Yes I am.

NANCY (In Pittsburghese)
Ew. Rilly? I was gonna say Steve Guttenberg. I'll be back wicher arn.

The guys, who have been intently watching the scene unfold, spring to life.

FRANK (to all)
I knew it.

LD
I told yinz. (he turns towards KOSAR and coughs into his hand badly disguising the insult) Jag off.

DON (to LD)
You ain't tell me nuthin'.

FRANK (shaking his head)
Three hundred twenny five yards 'n two touchdahns. 'Ahts three games worth fer Mahlone.

DON (looking over at KOSAR, who is happily flirting with SAMANTHA)
In ahr bar? Over my dead bawdy.

NANCY returns with a pitcher and two glasses. As she puts the items on the table, DON lobs a peanut over her that lands in KOSAR's lap.

KOSAR *looks over, but DON acts like nothing happened. When KOSAR turns his attention back to SAMANTHA, the men snicker quietly.*

NANCY (to KOSAR and SAMANTHA)
Yinz want anything else?

SAMANTHA
That will be all for now.

NANCY *walks back to the PALOWSKY table to check on them. The pitcher of beer is nearly empty.*

NANCY (pouring the remainder of the pitcher into DON's glass)
Hah 'baht a refill? 'Isuns ona hass.

The men smile and nod, while FRANK tosses a peanut over her shoulder. It lands squarely in the middle of KOSAR's table. KOSAR sees the peanut, but says nothing.

NANCY
Take it easy boys.

FRANK
Ah, lighten up. Were jus' playin' ahrand.

LD launches a third peanut over his shoulder, hitting SAMANTHA.

SAMANTHA
What the hell?

KOSAR (stands up so fast that his chair falls down hard behind him)

Who threw it?

The men look at each other. No one says a word.

FRANK (breaking the prolonged silence)
Mark Mahlone!

The group erupts with laughter.

KOSAR
Nobodies. This whole town. A stinkin' bunch of drunks and losers. (he picks up his chair and sits back down) Just like your team.

LD (to KOSAR)
Whadya say, Bernard?

SAMANTHA
What are you - stupid and deaf? Steeler fan loser.

FRANK
'Least we ain't no chokers. The Fumble. The Drive.
Always made a career outta crushin' yer dreams.

NANCY (to the PALOWSKY table)
Boys. Time ta simmer dahn now. Fight nice.

SAMANTHA (to NANCY)
That's right. Call off your attack rats.

KOSAR
I haven't lost in this city since eighty-five. The Dawg
Pound runs the show around here!

LD
Aht's it!

*LD stands up way too fast for the amount of alcohol he's
consumed. He tries to take a step towards KOSAR and falls flat
on his face.*

KOSAR (getting up from the table)
C'mon, baby. I don't need this. We're outta here.

NANCY (pointing to the pitcher)
What abahcher beers?

*KOSAR reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wad of cash.
He unfolds a few bills and throws them on top of LD, who is
struggling to stand up.*

KOSAR
Take it outta that and buy some Browns tickets with the
rest.

*FRANK gets up and helps LD into his chair. KOSAR walks
close by their table with SAMANTHA and scoffs at DON as he
moves towards the exit.*

DON
Hey, Kosar.

Despite his pronounced limp, DON "runs" at KOSAR with his fist cocked. DON is so slow that KOSAR has plenty of time to react. He winds up and cracks the old man square in the face with a straight right hand. DON meets the floor abruptly and is out cold.

KOSAR

Aw, shit!

KOSAR shakes his right hand and grabs it with his left before burying it between his thighs.

SAMANTHA (wide-eyed, she moves to examine the damaged hand)
Lemme see.

KOSAR (he shoves her away with his left)

Are you a doctor? Just drive me to a hospital.

KOSAR and SAMANTHA exit stage left. NANCY and FRANK rush to DON's side, slapping his face and trying to wake him up. LD wobbles over and kneels down next to his fallen father. All three of them call his name and beg him to be okay.

Finally, DON sits up. He's dazed and rubbing his cheek. LD, FRANK, and NANCY are silent.

DON

I gaht 'im in 'is throne hand.

CURTAIN

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From the Cell of Craig Elias

March 29, 2013

Safe Streets Arts Foundation
2512 Virginia Avenue NW
58043
Washington, DC 20037

RE: Prison-to-the-Stage Submissions.

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed are a pair of plays, *Yinzers* and *The Kids Don't Stand A Chance*, that I am submitting for presentation at your next Prison-to-the-Stage show. Thank you for your time and consideration of my work.

Sincerely,



Craig Elias
FR 1993

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