

CAST

TONY ALTO	A local boss who runs a strip club as a cover
TOFFEE ALTO	His wife, who has the hots for her priest
CHRIS	His incompetent nephew, wants to be a madman and a Hollywood star
UNCLE SENIOR	Under indictment, hates Tony and wants to run things, wears numerous police collars, bracelets, anklets.
NONA	His mother, who hates him for trying to send her to a home
DR. MALAISE	his shrink
FATHER FLIP	has the hots for Toffee
DELIVERY MAN/HITMAN	same actor as Father Flip

AUDITION SEGMENTS/PAGES:

TONY ALTO: 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10

TOFFEE ALTO: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12

CHRIS: 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13

UNCLE SENIOR: 7, 12, 13

NONA: 5, 6, 7, 13

DR. MALAISE: 4, 8, 9, 10, 11

FATHER FLIP: 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11

FATHER. Tony Alto. What didn't you have? God gave you so much to be thankful for, but you abused it. You neglected your beautiful loving wife for power and greed and now look at where it has gotten you. Not even you can keep cheating death.

(TOFFEE joins him.)

TOFFEE. Oh, Father Flip, thank you so much for all your help and, well, being there for me. I know Tony was never a real church going guy and all. And for you to arrange all this in such a rush on his behalf. I know he'd - I'd -

FATHER. Funerals are for the living, not the departed. How are the children doing?

TOFFEE. Not good. Maybe if you had a word with them? I know you've given me - *(thinking sexual)* your piece - *(catching herself)* I mean some piece - piece of mind - um -

FATHER. Of course, I'm always *(thinking sexual)* at your service in your hours or need.

(They virtually lust into each others arms. Almost ready to kiss.)

FATHER. The children.

TOFFEE. The children.

(They suddenly realize they are being watched and quickly break from one another.)

FATHER. Where are the children?

TOFFEE. Oh, ah - well, - my daughter Pasture is right here

(pointing out a female guest) and my son Little Tony *(pointing out a male guest)*.

FATHER. Come children.

TOFFEE. (*Encouraging them to go up to him*) Come on you two.
The father's here to help us get through this.

(**FATHER** and **TOFFEE** get the two audience people to join them by the urn. They all hold hands.)

FATHER. I know this is hard for you – as it is hard for your mother. It's always been hard for your mother. – Er – Nothing I say can make up for your loss, so – I won't say anything. But perhaps it would help if you did. Maybe if you each gave us a memory of your father, Tony Alto. You go Field, being the eldest and his little princess. Tell us your fondest memory of something you did with your father.

(*Who knows what she'll say, if anything. If she doesn't talk, TOFFEE will say she's over come with grief.*)

FATHER. And now you, Little Tony. The new man of the house and your father's name sake. Tell us a lasting memory of something between you and your father.

(*If he doesn't talk, TOFFEE will say he has laryngitis from too much crying.*)

FATHER. (*As if leading a prayer*) Though the body may be gone, singed to a crisp and charred beyond recognition in a fiery explosion that transformed his SUV into a giant ashtray – these fine memories will live on, keeping Tony Alto forever in our hearts. Now, doesn't that make things a little better?

TOFFEE. Oh, Father, you always know – (*sexual*) how to make me feel better. – Er, kids go, sit down again and mourn with the rest of the guests.

(*They send the audience members back to their seats.*)

TOFFEE. Oh, God I can't believe she's here.

FATHER. Who?

TOFFEE. That Russian tramp of his – Tony's mistress. She has the nerve to show up here. That's her, right over there. (*Points and describes a woman in the audience.*)

FATHER. We must let all pay their last respects.

TOFFEE. I'll make her pay, alright.

(*She storms up to the table, but CHRIS stops her.*)

TONY. Psssst.

MALAISE. Excuse me?

TONY. It's me.

MALAISE. Most people I meet don't know who they are.

TONY. I'm Tony, Doc.

MALAISE. You're who?

(TONY takes off the vale. MALAISE is shocked.)

TONY. Shhhhh. Don't say nothin.

MALAISE. Anything.

TONY. What?

MALAISE. Don't say anything. Don't say nothin is a double negative, which would mean you wanted me to say something, which is contrary to your true intention.

TONY. Stop that!

MALAISE. And why aren't you dead? I mean, you're supposed to be dead – I mean, why are you letting everyone think that you're dead?

TONY. Cause that bomb was in my car, which means someone was trying to kill me. So If I let everyone think I'm dead, then maybe I'll find out who was the wise guy.

MALAISE. Tony, did you stop taking the lithium when I told you to?

TONY. Listen, Doc – whoever put the hit on me would come to the funeral to gloat – and make sure I was really a done deal. Now I need your help.

MALAISE. Oh, so now you're actually asking me for help. I remember the first time you came to see me. You gave me a real song and dance.

TONY. Oh, yeah. I remember.

(Lights dim, spot on Tony as he sings hip/hop rap song "RESPECT.")

TONY. *(Singing)*

FATHER. Dearly beloved. We are gathered here today to join with our friends in celebrating this most special of occasions.

(Everyone looks at one another, puzzled.)

TOFFEE. Psssst! Father, I think you may be on the wrong page.

FATHER. Oh *(turns pages)* ah – yes, lets see. *(Finds his place, clears throat and begins his sermon)* Anthony Alto – Tony to his friends. What can we say about Tony Alto that hasn't already been said – under deposition? *(Sermonizing)* He was many things to many people – husband, father, friend, godfather, goodfella, wise guy, soprano in the choir – a man who knew law and order but sometimes had the NYPD Blues. Tony Alto was a take charge kind of guy. Whatever he felt needed to be done, he would go the whole nine yards. In his own favorite expression – Badda Bing, Badda Who.

CHRIS. Boom!

FATHER. Yes, boom is what happened to our Tony. And now, here he lies *(pointing to urn)* – er – well at least what's left of him – ah – *(looks back in book)* And now, here before Gods eyes and those of many friends and relatives, we have come to honor one of our most holy of sacraments. For today, we share in the happiness of a new beginning – in the paving of a new road – in a journey of two hearts –

CHRIS. I think you are on the wrong page again there Father.

UNCLE SENIOR. But not far off. Huh, Nona?

NONA. Bite your tongue and choke on it.

UNCLE SENIOR. What's with you?

NONA. What's with me? What's with me? My own flesh and blood is dead! Isn't that enough?

(Sob) He may have been a no good, back-stabbing, disrespectful, house thief – but he was still my son. *My son!*
(Cry)

TONY. *(To MALAISE)* You see, I told you she loved me.

NONA. You? I don't love you, for Christ sake.

TONY. *(Taking off vale)* It's me, ma!

NONA. Who are you calling ma? I'm not your mother. I don't have no pillar of salt ugly daughter.

TONY. I'm not your daughter, ma. I'm your son.

NONA. I don't have no transvestite son neither. That's my son
(*pointing to urn*) My one and only son Tony. (*Sob*)

TONY. I'm Tony, Ma.

FATHER. You're not Tony. You're his cousin, Antoinette – the
stripper.

TOFFEE. He ain't got no cousin Antoinette. Although he's gotten
plenty of strippers.

NONA. Antoinette?

(*TONY starts taking off the shawl & dress. He has his clothes
on underneath.*)

FATHER. See. – Young lady, I know that may be your profession,
but you can't do that here.

CHRIS. I'll say, you're too ugly to do it anywhere there's lights
on and guys are sober.

TONY. I ain't no stripper. I'm freakin Tony Alto.

(*He takes off the hat and vale.*)

EVERYONE (*Except MALAISE*) TONY?

(*NONA clutches her heart and faints into a table of guests.
TONY dashes to her.*)

TONY. Ma?

(*He lifts her up. She opens her eyes – hits him and pushes him
away.*)

NONA. Get away from me you, you – you – You're trying to give
me a heart attack? I wouldn't let you put me away in a home, so
now you're trying to kill my heart! (*Pounds her chest*) Here,
here take it – rip it out with your bare hands.

TONY. That would take a steak and a silver bullet.

NONA. We're having steak?

UNCLE SENIOR. You ain't dead?

FATHER. You're not dead?

CHRIS. (*to guest*) He's not dead?

NONA. (*Slaps a guest on the shoulder*) You told me he was dead!

(Who knows what they'll say – hopefully that he wanted to find out who was trying to kill him.)

CHRIS. Yeah – like she said. But Uncle Senior, you seem to be looking more upset once you found out Tony was alive than when you thought he was dead.

UNCLE SENIOR. What are you talking about? You're patza! I came to his wake didn't I? I brought my only sister, to give her strength and support in her hour of need.

NONA. Bite your tongue and choke on it!

UNCLE SENIOR. What? What's wrong with you Nona?

NONA. *(Standing up)* What's wrong with me? *(To guest)* What's wrong with you? You plannin on standing all night? You're giving me agida standing around like that, hovering over me. Sit down. And he wants to know what's wrong with me? *(To UNCLE SENIOR)* I'm getting older. It's what's wrong with everybody. You'll see. It'll start getting to you too. There's no escaping it. You start life with "always" and end up with "Depends." From the moment we're born, we start to die.

CHRIS. But some people try to hurry things up, don't they, uncle Senior?

UNCLE SENIOR. What are you talking about?

CHRIS. I'm talking about what we do.

UNCLE SENIOR. I don't know nothin about what you do.

CHRIS. You're just saying that cause you're afraid there's a wire here some wheres. Being under indictment and all as you are, you gotta be freakin careful.

UNCLE SENIOR. They ain't got nothin they can stick to me. Nothin, unless someone in the family was to sell out and take some witness relocation crap. Someone who couldn't take it anymore and never should have been taking it in the first place.

CHRIS. Someone like Tony? Is that what you're saying uncle Senior?

UNCLE SENIOR. I'm not sayin nothin.

CHRIS. Yeah – well that's just the way it should be too. As a matter of fact, Big Kitty and I was just saying nothin the other day – *(To man pre-selected to be Big Kitty)* Weren't we, Big Kitten? Come here a moment, will ya?

(CHRIS gets "Big Kitty" up and together they approach UNCLE SENIOR.)

Scene III

(Music. Lights dim and come up full. MALAISE is bandaging TONY's arm while TOFFEE holds it still. Everyone but father is near by.)

TONY. I know this ain't your usual doctoring, so thanks Doc. At least I didn't get no scarface.

MALAISE. Tony, after meeting all these people you've talked about in our sessions, I think I have a better outlook on the external forces in your life.

TOFFEE. The worse external forces are the ones made of lead.

MALAISE. I wouldn't want to make any snap judgements and possibly misrepresent anyone –

TOFFEE. Go right a head. TV and movies, they misrepresent us Italian-Americans all the time.

TONY. Hey, Once upon a time in America – things were even worse for us.

TOFFEE. That was the jews.

TONY. Jews, Italians – same thing, only we got better food.

TOFFEE. Don't worry about offending nobody here, Doctor Malaise. You just tells us what you think.

MALAISE. Well, its not really what I think that matters. Its what Tony thinks, about the people surrounding him.

TONY. I think someone's trying to kill me, that's what I think. And don't go tellin me that's some paranoia crap or nothin.

MALAISE. No, I wouldn't consider bullets to be a dementia of paranoia.

TOFFEE. Its gettin worse and worse – and Tony won't even consider the witness relocation deal – like his friend Mickey Blue Eyes took.

(She walks to a man in the audience.)

TOFFEE. And look, he was nice enough to come out of hiding to attend your funeral. *(Sits on his lap)* God, it was so nice of you to show up like this, knowing that there's a contact out on your life and all. I mean, it really meant a lot to me and Tony.

MALAISE. Sit boy – sit. That’s a good boy. So, now, Toffee, what did you mean by sometimes you think you’d be better off if Tony really were dead?

TONY. Yeah?

MALAISE. And Tony, you have to be nonjudgmental about this. Just let your wife express herself without fear of incrimination.

TOFFEE. That’s the thing all the time – the fear. I wanted to be married to Tony Alto. Instead, I got married to the mob. We’re not close no more. Things have changed and I ain’t sure they’re for the better.

TONY. What do you mean? I got you a huge house, a new car, a George Forman Grill –

MALAISE. Tony! Button it! (*To TOFFEE*) So, what is missing that used to be there? The trust? The intimacy?

TOFFEE. (*Realization*) Yeah, yeah – especially the intimacy and the trust. I pretend to look the other way at his fooling around. But I ain’t fooling myself.

MALAISE. So some times you wonder if there’s some way that could all be changed? If there was some way to start a new life?

TOFFEE. Who wouldn’t? But you can’t divorce the mob – no wonder we’re all catholic huh?

MALAISE. So that is why you said sometimes you wish Tony were dead. Because then you’d be free of the mob – free to find someone you can trust, find some intimacy with?

TOFFEE. (*almost ashamed*) Yeah.

TONY. And collect on my million dollar life insurance.

(She glares at him.)

MALAISE. Which explains your abnormally close relationship with your priest.

TOFFEE. What?

TONY. Oh – now we’re getting somewhere. Don’t stop now Doc.

TONY. You're on a roll now, Doc. Why don't you try the Father?

FATHER. *(Smiling, thinking sex)* Try me how?

MALAISE. Just a figure of speech Father.

(He looks disappointed. She approaches him.)

MALAISE. You seem to be a man who's not quite comfortable with his station in life. Not quite confident – sometimes even nervous for apparently no reason – as if you're afraid of being discovered.

TONY. Oh – she's got you there Father, ain't she?

FATHER. Well – I – er – I don't know what you mean.

MALAISE. From listening to your ceremony, I would guess that you haven't been in the priest hood long, Father.

(CHRIS re-enters.)

FATHER. Well, no, not too long. I'll be celebrating the anniversary of answering the call next month. It will be two years.

CHRIS. That's a long time to hold it in.

FATHER. No, my son. That's how long I've been in the priesthood.

CHRIS. You mean how long you've been out of prison.

(They all look at CHRIS.)

CHRIS. Tony asked that I do some checking up on you, father. You was in the big house there for a few years. You was part of Donnie Brasco's gang. Nabbed you for being the driver on a hit. Accessary. And the hit was on one of ours.

FATHER. I was lost, but found my way behind bars.

CHRIS. Found your way to an early release by becoming a priest.
(*To TONY*) This guys a freakin smart one, he is. And Brasco's been looking to muscle in on our territory. (*To FATHER*) I bet you're still friendly with some of your old pals, ain't yeah?

FATHER. I'm a purveyor of the good book, now

CHRIS. From what I hear you was preying on the good Brook – she being the Warden's college age daughter. (*To TONY & MALAISE*) While in the slammer he was using his priesthood schoolin scam as a ways to get to the prison chapel and give that co-ed a few religious experiences.

FATHER. Alright – alright. It's true. It's all true. (*Looking up to heaven*) I've tried. Oh dear Lord, I've really tried. I know you've been calling me – and God, you know I've tried to answer – but I have call waiting and the line is always getting interrupted. I don't mean to be putting you on hold, but –

(*TOFFEE approaches with her drink. He throws himself at her.*)

FATHER. Toffee Alto – when we thought your husband was finally dead, I bought you this –

(*He hands her a ring box.*)

TOFFEE. Father Flip?

FATHER. Your husband's probably gonna have me wasted before the night is through, so I just wanted you to have this – as something to remember me by. (*To CHRIS*) Alright, whenever you're ready. I'll be waiting outside – giving myself last rights.

TOFFEE. This is ridiculous! *(Exiting)* I'm getting some fresh air.

TONY. Going to confess to your priest?

(She gives him a mean gesture and exits.)

NONA. *(to a man in the audience)* I thought this would be a nice quiet mourning. Just a little wake, with a few deep sobs and heart felt moans. But nooooo. Not the Altos. Not my family. They refuse to let the dead rest. They gotta drag 'em back up and have them kick you in the gut. This is killing me. They got no respect for their elders, these kids now a days. No respect. I need a seat. Get up and give an old lady your seat!

(She forces the man to stand up.)

UNCLE SENIOR. That's right – no respect. So, Tony, if you wasn't in the car when it took to the sky, why'd you let your family and friends think you was dead? You scared, Tony? Is that it? The top guy Tony Alto is running scared? Maybe you've gone and lost your nerve? Maybe you shoulda never been tryin to run things in the first place? *(Approaching the standing man)* Look at him. Look at the big Tony Alto, sneaking into his own wake dressed as a woman. Now, doesn't that sound like he's scared?

(Who knows what they'll say.)

TONY. Hey, I had my reasons, uncle Senior.

CHRIS. *(to the standing man)* Yeah – he had is reasons.

UNCLE SENIOR. *(to CHRIS)* Like what?

CHRIS. Well, – Well – er – ah –

(CHRIS tries to think of a reason. He turns to an audience member.)

CHRIS. Go on, you tells uncle Senior Tony's reason for laying low.

(Who knows what they'll say – hopefully that he wanted to find out who was trying to kill him.)

CHRIS. Yeah – like she said. But Uncle Senior, you seem to be looking more upset once you found out Tony was alive than when you thought he was dead.

UNCLE SENIOR. What are you talking about? You're patza! I came to his wake didn't I? I brought my only sister, to give her strength and support in her hour of need.

NONA. Bite your tongue and choke on it!

UNCLE SENIOR. What? What's wrong with you Nona?

NONA. *(Standing up)* What's wrong with me? *(To guest)* What's wrong with you? You plannin on standing all night? You're giving me agida standing around like that, hovering over me. Sit down. And he wants to know what's wrong with me? *(To UNCLE SENIOR)* I'm getting older. It's what's wrong with everybody. You'll see. It'll start getting to you too. There's no escaping it. You start life with "always" and end up with "Depends." From the moment we're born, we start to die.

CHRIS. But some people try to hurry things up, don't they, uncle Senior?

UNCLE SENIOR. What are you talking about?

CHRIS. I'm talking about what we do.

UNCLE SENIOR. I don't know nothin about what you do.

CHRIS. You just saying that cause you're afraid there's a wire here some wheres. Being under indictdilement and all as you are, you gotta be freakin careful.

UNCLE SENIOR. They ain't got nothin they can stick to me. Nothin, unless someone in the family was to sell out and take some witness relocation crap. Someone who couldn't take it anymore and never should have been taking it in the first place.

CHRIS. Someone like Tony? Is that what you're saying uncle Senior?

UNCLE SENIOR. I'm not sayin nothin.

CHRIS. Yeah – well that's just the way it should be too. As a matter of fact, Big Kitty and I was just saying nothin the other day – *(To man pre-selected to be Big Kitty)* Weren't we, Big Kitten? Come here a moment, will ya?

(CHRIS gets "Big Kitty" up and together they approach UNCLE SENIOR.)