

**IN THE MOUTH OF THE WOLF**

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## **ABSTRACT**

An ordinary British Italian family's life is thrown upside down when the elderly matriarch falls victim to a scam, which provokes her sons and daughter into seeking retribution, and causes them all to descend into the dark world of crime.

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

IN THE MOUTH  
OF THE WOLF

Written by  
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EP. 101

CORRECTED THESIS:  
11/ 07/ 24

*"Amor di madre, amore senza limiti."*

*A mother's love has no limits.*

- Italian proverb

A WOMAN'S hands.

She is old, and her hands reflect her age. They are gnarled; they have held newborns; they have buried loved ones.

These hands crack an egg, in it goes, into a mound of flour. On an old wooden table, these old hands mix the egg & flour.

MUSIC plays in the background, an aria: *Una furtiva lagrima*. She sings along, as her hands knead & cajole the dough.

This is--

GIULIANA

78. Her hair is white & cut short, but is still primped & permed, still stylish. She wears a freshly ironed pastel tone frock, with a colourful neckerchief. She is short in stature, but this Italian matriarch has grace, grit & soul.

Giuliana is making lasagne, the old way. She uses a wooden rolling pin that's almost the same length as she is tall. She wraps the dough on her giant rolling pin, smoothing it, examining it, caressing it, almost whispering to it.

Then she starts the ragù. A kilo of minced pork loin is coaxed into a pan, along with a muslin wrap of garlic & sage.

And now for the béchamel sauce. She warms full fat milk, while in another pan, there is butter & flour & nutmeg. She whisks them together. Her hands are strong & confident.

She is the master of her kitchen. She sings in Italian.

GIULIANA

*Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.  
Ah, cielo. Si può. Si, può morir.*

She stops her cooking, closes her eyes, & listens, moved.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Giuliana goes over to the fridge, opens the door, takes out some spinach, then wanders off, forgetting to close the door.

The open door of the fridge emits a low, drone-like SOUND... It is ominous, it's a reminder of her age, of her forgetting.

CUT TO:

ITALY in the spring; Italy in the summer. Beautiful & dreamy. Blown-up photographs of gorgeous looking Italians on holiday. The Colosseum, the Duomo di Milano, the Ponte Vecchio. *Italy!*

But we're not there, where we are is--

INT. BEL VIAGGIO - TRAVEL AGENCY - BEDFORD - DAY

A drab travel agency in Bedford, a market town in the arse end of the East of England. Far from the glamour of Italy. Sitting in front of these blown-up promotional tourism photographs, sat at his tidy but old fashioned desk, is--

PAOLO SPADAFORA

62. He runs this travel agency. He is neat, shipshape, chic, if a little faded and frayed around the edges. *But sometimes, the oldest wolves have the sharpest teeth.*

Paolo counts out pills from his dosette box. Pills to thin his blood, pills to reduce inflammation, *pills pills pills.*

SFX: tinkle of the entrance doorbell, as a CUSTOMER enters.

Paolo smiles, *servile*, towards a gauche looking Englishman: all gold chains and flashy watch and beer-bellied wealth.

PAOLO

Good morning, sir. How can I help you today? Please, take a seat.

CUSTOMER

So like, it's me thirtieth wedding anniversary coming up, right.

PAOLO

Congratulations, sir.

CUSTOMER

I wouldn't go that far. Anyway, she loves a boat. So, Venice? I dunno.

PAOLO

Excellent choice. Now, before we begin, can I make you coffee? A proper Italian cappuccino?

Gives his customer a winning smile. Receives nothing back.

CUT TO:

Paolo sighs deeply. He's in the backroom watching the ancient coffee machine as it makes a tepid looking cappuccino.

Paolo comes back onto the shop floor as RAFFAELE enters. Raffaele does not look like a travel agent. Muscled arms, Japanese tattoos. He looks like what he is: a gangster.

PAOLO

Ah, Raffaele, if you could please assist this gentleman?

Paolo speaks to Raffaele in Italian. When dialogue is written in bold italics it is written in English, spoken in Italian, but with English subtitles. When dialogue is written in italics, it will be spoken in Italian, but left untranslated.

PAOLO

*This is what wealth looks like in Bedford. They know how to get it. But once they do? They don't know what to do with it... The ring obtained for free is not valued.*

RAFFAELE

*You are right, Signor Paolo. He has forgotten what hard work means. This man has grown fat and slow.*

PAOLO

*Whoever becomes a sheep, the wolf will eat.*

Paolo & Raffaele stare at the customer, who sips his coffee, then starts coughing, his face goes red, *choking*. They watch.

CUT TO:

Paolo is in the backroom opening up a sophisticated looking SAFE. Inside the safe: piles of money. He pulls out a passport, pockets it. Paolo takes out a LEDGER from the safe, scans it for names of businesses and cash amounts next to those names. Then he picks up a Bedford Times & Citizen newspaper, and flips to their classifieds section. See that: businesses have been circled in red, and crossed off in black. There's more crosses than circles. He phones a number.

PAOLO

It's me, Paolo. And? Did you think about it? The opportunity that I-

The person hangs up. Paolo sighs... Crosses another name off.

INT. STANSTEAD AIRPORT - LATER

Paolo is standing on the travelator with his small wheelie suitcase as it takes him towards his departure gate.



Behind him is a group of BRITISH LADS. They're on a stag do. As they shout shit songs, Paolo lets out a world weary sigh.

ON THE PLANE. Paolo is in his seat. Guess who's sat behind him. The British lads on their stag do. Shouting even louder. Paolo looks... not only tired of *this*, but tired of *life*.

INT. REGGIO CALABRIA AIRPORT - LATER

The plane lands at Reggio Calabria airport. Quick cuts of:

-- Paolo goes through passport control.  
 -- Paolo stops off at an airport cafe to have an espresso.  
 -- Paolo at a car rental place, renting a boring sedan.  
 -- Paolo on the motorway heading towards Reggio Calabria.  
 -- Paolo passes through the city, and heads towards Scilla.  
 -- But he passes the beachfront & the tourists & heads on to:  
 -- A hotel construction site on the outskirts of the town...

EXT./INT. VILLA VIOLA - DAY

As Paolo arrives, he sees clusters of MEN who do not look like construction workers. They look more like... guards. Big boys, big bodies. They are relaxed, but the stink of threat comes off them like steam.

One of the men checks Paolo's car, speaks into an earpiece, waits, then nods at Paolo. *Keep driving, round the back.* When he gets out of the car, they motion for him to follow.

INT. VILLA VIOLA - CONTINUOUS

The unit of men accompanying Paolo arrive at another unit. A GUARD uses a CW-20 wand metal detector and scans Paolo. The device emits a low buzz, but doesn't set off any alarm.

They wave Paolo through to an ante-chamber, motion for him to wait. The man in mirrored glasses motions to Paolo. *Time to go in.*

Double doors open into an immaculately laid out boardroom at the end of which is a conference table, sat at the table are--

DON BEPPINO, 72.

And his daughter, BRUNA, 37.

They are elegantly dressed. He's leant back & at ease with himself. Decades in power have given him poise and force. She is more solemn but self-contained. She has more to prove.

Paolo walks towards them, hiding his fear. Don Beppino gestures for him to come closer. Bruna's face is cold, her voice is calm.

BRUNA

*This is the fifth quarter... Bad luck is two or three. Four or five, and now, I am asking myself-*

PAOLO

*Don Beppino, I can explain-*

BRUNA

*-has Paolo lost it? It's an honest question, you see why I would ask.*

PAOLO

*I'm trying to recruit new businesses, but people are scared-*

BRUNA

*People should be scared, that's the- Why am I, explaining this, to you.*

PAOLO

*I need more time. I can fix this.*

Don Beppino holds up a hand. Paolo instantly stops talking.

DON BEPPINO

*Time is not on your side. I am. But-*

Don Beppino smiles at Paolo, and somehow, this is worse.

DON BEPPINO

*Things change. My daughter Bruna is my counsel now. I summoned you here- man to man, so you know, what is in my heart. You do know, don't you.*

Off Paolo's face. Fear. He knows. He's a man on death-row.

CUT TO TITLES:

**IN THE MOUTH OF THE WOLF**

INT. ST. PAULS CHURCH - BEDFORD - MORNING

Giuliana enters the hallowed nave of the church. She genuflects, kneels briefly & makes the sign of the cross.

TWO ELDER LADIES are gossiping. One of them spots Giuliana, smirks & whispers something to her friend. Giuliana bristles.

As she gets closer to them, she pauses by the ladies, looks that woman dead in the eyes and says--

GIULIANA

*Don't have hair on the tongue. If you have something to say about me--*

ELDER LADY 1

*No one would have any reason to say anything about you, Signora Mancuso. Your husband, however...*

GIULIANA

*And what is that supposed to mean?*

ELDER LADY 1

*Let us say bread for bread and wine for wine, and not pretend, no? Others may not know, but we know. Who he really was, your husband.*

GIULIANA

*Never speak ill of the dead, Signora Morelli. Or have you been in England for too long, and forgotten the old ways?*

Signora Morelli sniffs at that & gathers her things, then her & her friend make their exit, as Giuliana glares at them.

Giuliana sits at a pew, still furious. Her hands clasp together, she bows her head, closes her eyes, begins to pray. There's deep silence in the church, lit by candles & sunlight through stained glass windows. It's beautiful, it's peaceful.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOX - SHORT TIME LATER

Inside the confessional box, Giuliana confesses to REV. ANTONIO BIANCHI (70s). There is warmth & humour between them.

REV. ANTONIO

*I disagree, Giuliana, which sin would it fall under?*

GIULIANA

*It would be lying, Father.*

REV. ANTONIO

*But in order to protect the others? A little bad to do a little good?*

GIULIANA

*Yes but if they found out. Alessio doesn't need it, but Emilia? She works like a dog, as you know, but all she receives is a pittance.*

REV. ANTONIO

*All you are doing is giving money to one of your sons. What is there to atone for?*

GIULIANA

*Salvatore, as the eldest, should need the least help from me. But still he needs the most. But the hiding it from the others? Surely it is a sin, and you must remit these sins from my life, Father.*

REV. ANTONIO

*Ah, Giuliana, you are too hard on yourself, perhaps God can afford to be more forgiving in your case.*

GIULIANA

*But am I making him weak, Father? By giving him the money? I won't always be here, and it frightens me-*

REV. ANTONIO

*You're healthier than I am, you will live to one hundred, I have no doubt-*

GIULIANA

*It keeps me awake, thinking, thinking: has my love made my children stronger? Or has it softened them? If only their father-*

REV. ANTONIO

*It is not for you to question who the Lord takes, and who the Lord leaves behind, Giuliana.*

GIULIANA

*No. It is not. But it wasn't only the Lord's hand who reached out and took him, was it, Father.*

They lapse into silence... He can't comfort her, this wound is old, and she refuses to let it heal.

CUT TO:

Giuliana parts the thick purple curtains of the confessional, and steps back into the church. There's a MAN sat at a pew, facing away, facing the pulpit, facing the statue of Christ. His back shakes slightly. He is weeping. Giuliana's face creases in concern... She moves closer to him... then says--

GIULIANA

*Signor Paolo?*

He wipes his face with his handkerchief, hides his tears before he turns to face her. It is him. Paolo Spadafora.

PAOLO

*Signora Mancuso. Forgive me.*

GIULIANA

*What is wrong? Why are you weeping?*

He walks to her with his wheellie suitcase, he's come directly from the airport. His tears are banished. He's all smiles.

PAOLO

*I was moved by my love of Christ.*

She observes him... disbelieves him... but makes no comment.

PAOLO

*How is your son?*

GIULIANA

*Salvatore is well.*

PAOLO

*Your other son, Alessio. He should come and see me. We could help each other. We Italians are stronger together, no?*

He continues to smile at her. She continues to be silent. But there is frost in her silence. Finally, his smile fades.

PAOLO

*Think about it, that's all I ask.  
You know where to find me.*

*(Beat)*

*And so... it is time for me to ask  
for forgiveness, for my sins.*

He touches his hand to his head, in farewell, and makes his way to the confessional box. She watches him go, closely.

EXT. CASTLE QUARTER - BEDFORD - DAY

WELCOME TO BEDFORD. This market town has the highest number of British Italians in England, due to its history of immigration in the 1950s. It is a thriving community. Italian restaurants, cafes, hair salons, delis, factories. A plethora of people who sound English, but look and feel Italian.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

--a full table: full of food, full of FAMILY, the clatter of plates & people talking over each other & straight in with--

GIULIANA

--he was three years old already,  
my family in Italy were  
scandalised.

ALESSIO

I thought I was like, five?

ALESSIO, 39. He wears a smart suit, in contrast to everyone else. He's thin as a rake, wired & wiry. Quick to laugh, but also quick to take things too seriously & get stressed out.

GIULIANA

No no, you were three, and still  
you were breast feeding- a *scandal*.  
(to Luigi)

***Have you heard this story before?***

LUIGI, 29. An Italian cousin, here for the summer to work on his English. He is bookish, handsome, a bit of a daydreamer; also a hard worker, stoical, & thinks things through deeply.

LUIGI

***My aunt used to love to tell this  
story. She used to say how England  
had corrupted you, made you soft.***

GIULIANA

***Your aunty would tease me, she  
would call me 'The English Queen'.***

Giuliana is excited to be telling stories, to be surrounded by her family. She drinks some wine, then starts coughing.

EMILIA

Mamma, can you slow down please?

EMILIA, 43. The only daughter. The burden of looking after Giuliana in her old age has fallen squarely on Emilia.

She worries about her mother, and her mother worries about her worrying about her, that she's not living her own life.

GIULIANA

I'm fine, sit down. Let me tell the story! She never lets me finish.

SALVATORE (SAL), 55. The eldest son. He's a beefy man, strong man, big emotions, big passions, which often lead him astray. He has his big burly arm wrapped around RACHEL, his new girlfriend, who is meeting his family for the first time.

EMILIA

Don't exaggerate, Mamma.

SALVATORE

Can you stop fussing over her?

A flash of self-conscious hurt on Emilia's face at her brother's jibe.

ALESSIO

Hello, back to *me*, people! And then what happened?

GIULIANA

What was I talking about?

Emilia and Alessio share a look. At Giuliana's forgetfulness.

SALVATORE

Is the English too fast for you?

LUIGI

No- yes- a little.

RACHEL

I'm in the same boat. I ain't got a clue what's going on either.

Luigi nods, politely, though he looks a little confused.

SALVATORE

***Did you understand?***

LUIGI

***She said something about boats?***

ALESSIO

Can we get back to the story!

GIULIANA

Anyway...

All her children say *anyway* in her Italian British accent. They love mimicking her, teasing her, playfully.

GIULIANA

*Tssk, anyway-* Ah yes. That night, it was decided. Your father would guard my breasts against Alessio.

SALVATORE

Ma! Do we really have to hear a story that involves your breasts?

EMILIA

Sal, don't be disgusting.

ALESSIO

Can you let mum tell the story!

SALVATORE

What! I just don't think Ricky and Matteo want to hear about Ma's *tits-*

MATTEO and RICCARDO, Sal's sons. Both in their early 20s, big lads. While Riccardo is subservient to their father, Matteo is sullen. In his secret heart, knows his dad is a deadbeat.

Rachel throws his arm off her as Sal protests and says *What!* And pretty much everyone tells him he's an idiot & Giuliana leans over & slaps Sal (not hard) on the back of his head.

GIULIANA

*Sei diventato pazzo?*

Sal laughs, he loves teasing his mother (she loves it, too).

SALVATORE

What! They don't wanna hear it, Ma.

GIULIANA

Well and why shouldn't they? When I was a young woman, I was beautiful.

MATTEO

Why you dragging me into this!

Sal grabs his big beautiful boy in an affectionate bearhug.

ALESSIO

Moving on, people, moving on!

GIULIANA

So one night, I made a deal with your father, that no matter how much you screamed, not to let you into our bedroom. But your father-



EMILIA

He honestly could- it used to annoy me so much- it's so unfair.

GIULIANA

-he would sleep through *anything*!

SALVATORE

It's genetic. I told you I wasn't bored at all your school plays.

ALESSIO

So dad's fallen asleep. And that was when I snuck into your room-

GIULIANA

That's when you *sneak sneak sneak* into my room, jumped onto the bed-

EMILIA

Jumped? He was three years old!

GIULIANA

-he jumped onto the bed, latched onto my breast- *come un vampiro*.

SALVATORE

*Like a vampire!* You little shit.

ALESSIO

Shut up. And then... you said-

GIULIANA

And I *screamed*, "I am going to throw this child out the window!"

They *laugh*, they know it well, but love to hear it. Like all close families, the retelling of stories bonds them tightly.

GIULIANA

And only then did your father wake up... But, well, that was him. He could tell the difference. What was harmless, and what was dangerous. He knew. So. He woke up.

A moment of silence. His presence, his *absence*, is felt. Her children look at her with love, as she holds back tears.

GIULIANA

*Anyway...*

ALESSIO

Anyway... you wouldn't have really.  
Chucked me out the window.

GIULIANA

I would have, I really would have!

SALVATORE

To dad. Here's to you. We love you.  
We miss you. *Salute*.

Everyone cheers & drinks & talks & happiness is in the room.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Sal washes the dishes, Alessio dries, as Emilia clears the table. They stage whisper, conspiratorially.

ALESSIO

Don't act like you haven't noticed.

SALVATORE

She's fine. What, she is.

EMILIA

Don't be daft, you seen the way  
she's walking? She needs her hip  
replaced *now*. I know I shouldn't  
say this, but she should go private-

SALVATORE

She's on the waiting list it's fine-

EMILIA

She's getting *old old*- I'm worried.

ALESSIO

Me too... Look, if she needs to go  
private I know it costs a bomb, but-

SALVATORE

What would you know what she needs?  
Ain't like you're hardly ever here.

ALESSIO

I literally knew this was  
coming. It's like- I  
literally knew.

SALVATORE

Down in London, in his *fancy*  
suit, his *fancy* London lawyer  
friends.

ALESSIO

Is this? Do you see this? This is  
supposed to be a grown up man.

SALVATORE

What, there's no law firms in Bedford? Come back *home*, Alessio.

ALESSIO

Do you even- no there's no law firms in Bedford that pay even close to what I get paid in London.

EMILIA

Speaking of... You know I never ask you for anything...

ALESSIO

I feel like there's a word missing in that sentence?

EMILIA

But...

ALESSIO

There it is.

EMILIA

But can I talk to you later on- it would just be a loan.

ALESSIO

Melia, I would, honestly, help you, if I could, but- all my spare cash-

SMASH as a plate is split in two as Sal snaps it in the sink.

SALVATORE

*FUCK RIGHT OFF!* FUCKING LITTLE SHIT-

EMILIA

Sal- stop it!

ALESSIO

Jesus Sal- what the hell?

SALVATORE

How many fucking times do I have to say I'm fucking sorry?

EMILIA

*Basta*, you'll worry Mamma!

ALESSIO

I didn't say anything- I literally was just saying-

SALVATORE

Don't send me the money then! I'll handle it on my own-

EMILIA

Alessio didn't mean anything by it-

SALVATORE

I can't change the past. And I'm fucking sorry, that I crippled this family, financially, yeah- but I'm working hard. To make things right.

ALESSIO

I know...

EMILIA

We know, Sal...

Sal, this big man, with big passions, finally calms. They are used to his violent outbursts, and are forgiving of them.

SALVATORE

Anyway... I am sorry.

ALESSIO

It's fine. But look, I wasn't gonna mention this, but- things at work are- there's a disciplinary hearing- my job safe's, it's all good, but-

SALVATORE

What's the hearing about? What did you do?

EMILIA

Oh God, why didn't you tell us?

SALVATORE

You did something dodgy, didn't you- Mamma's gonna be distraught-

ALESSIO

I didn't! It's nothing, it's all been blown out of proportion-

EMILIA

Have you told Mamma?

ALESSIO

'Course not. I'm only telling you 'cause we're talking about money.

SALVATORE

Alessio... He said if I don't keep paying him back-

ALESSIO

I know. I know.

SALVATORE

He said he's hurt me. Really badly.

EMILIA

Alessio, I shouldn't've asked, sorry, I don't need- Sal needs it more. I've been looking into moving-

SALVATORE

What? What you talking about?

EMILIA

They pay nurses more in Cardiff. I'd still be on the ICU, but the wages are way more, I've looked. Only as like, a last resort- but if-

SALVATORE

What are you on about? You can't move to fucking *Wales*. Mamma needs you *here* in *Bedford*.

EMILIA

How about what *I* need, Sal? You ever stop to think about that?

ALESSIO

Look, look, it'll all be fine, I'm sorry I mentioned it, no one needs to move to Wales or- or- or- Let's leave it for now, alright?

They all fall silent, but it's still tense. Emilia breaks it--

EMILIA

Subject change then, come on, who is he, I saw on Instagram- who's the new boy? What's his name, his star sign, and when can I meet him?

ALESSIO

Shut up, it's nothing serious yet.

Giuliana enters as Alessio flicks Emilia with the dishcloth.

GIULIANA

What's nothing serious? You've met someone? *Tesoro mio*, I want to know *everything*. Is she Italian?

Salvatore & Emilia exchange a look, Alessio doesn't blink.

ALESSIO

She's no one mum, it's like- date number four. You're not allowed to get excited until, like- at least ten dates in.

GIULIANA

My son... My beautiful children.

She chokes up, & all three of them go over to her, & hold this small woman in the middle of them, wrapped up in love.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Following morning. Giuliana is already neatly dressed. Runs through her morning ritual: precise, practised, clockwork.

The radio is on, playing opera. Giuliana makes the bed, the ancient quilt goes on, stretched to an inch of its life. She smoothes the bed down, house proud, fussy, in command.

Now that everything is just right, only then does she pick up the PHOTOGRAPH on her bedside table.

INSERT: black & white photo of her late husband, Lorenzo.

She kisses the photograph. She sits on the edge of her big bed, and all of a sudden, she looks so alone, in this house.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Giuliana arrives back in her home, her kitchen, & unpacks her shopping. She sings softly to herself as she puts things away. Then-- she tuts, suddenly annoyed, agitated.

GIULIANA

*Ma, che palle!* The one thing I needed. I can't have forgotten it-

She roots around in a shopping bag, to no avail, & then--

THE LANDLINE RINGS. Loud & shrill. She ignores it and continues to root around, searching, upset.

GIULIANA

*Uffa. Dove sei...*

The landline again, still loud, still shrill.

GIULIANA

OK, OK, *sto arrivando*, I'm coming!

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The landline rings. Loud. Shrill. *Ominous*. She answers it.

She doesn't know it yet, but *this* is the storm that blows down your house, *this* is the devil, knocking at your door.

GIULIANA

*Si pronto. Uffa, sorry- hello, yes.*

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Hello, can I speak to Mrs. Mancuso?

GIULIANA

Speaking, who is this?

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Hello Mrs. Mancuso, this is Bedfordshire Police. I'm Detective Taylor, I'm calling to inform you, unfortunately, your bank account has been compromised.

GIULIANA

Oh my God. *Oh my God.*

VOICE ON THE PHONE

We've been notified by your bank that a fraudulent transaction has been carried out, in a store in Birmingham, for five hundred and ninety nine pounds, using your credit card.

GIULIANA

*Ma, impossible- I don't understand- but- I've never been to Birmingham.*

The voice on the phone speaks politely & empathetically.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I understand Mrs. Mancuso, I'm so sorry. We believe that thieves have managed to clone your credit card.

GIULIANA

But- this is terrible, *terrible.*

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I know this is very upsetting Mrs. Mancuso. This is related to a much larger criminal investigation that Bedfordshire police are currently investigating. Now then, could we-

GIULIANA

But I don't understand. How much did you say again- the money?

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Five hundred and ninety nine pounds-

GIULIANA

Oh my God. *Oh my God.*

VOICE ON THE PHONE

As I was saying, Mrs. Mancuso, this is related to a much larger criminal investigation-

GIULIANA

What is your name again? I'm sorry.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's quite alright Mrs. Mancuso, I know this can be a lot to take in. I'm Detective Taylor, from Bedfordshire police.

GIULIANA

What is your first name, please.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

...My name is Jim.

GIULIANA

Jim... My God, this is terrible.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I understand, Mrs. Mancuso. But...

And here it comes, the poisoned honey, dripped in her ear.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

There is something you could do to help us, Mrs. Mancuso.

GIULIANA

Tell me, *please*. What can I do.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

We need you to go to your local bank branch, Mrs. Mancuso, and take out twenty seven thousand pounds.

Giuliana's hand goes to her mouth, she is shocked, shaken.



VOICE ON THE PHONE

But don't worry, all of your accounts are completely, fully insured, so you've got nothing to worry about. And your bank is aware of our investigation.

GIULIANA

But I... I don't understand.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

This is an opportunity, for you to help your community, Mrs. Mancuso.

Silent, something crosses over her face, hard to know what.

GIULIANA

An opportunity... I- I understand.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Mrs. Mancuso I want you to go to your purse, can you do that for me? Get your credit card, and phone the number on the back of the card.

GIULIANA

My purse is... in the kitchen, Jim.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's alright, I'll wait here.

GIULIANA

OK, OK, one second, please.

She places the phone down, and kind of stumbles out the room. We do not follow her out. We stay with the phone. Waiting. Waiting. The awful tension of the silent room, and the phone.

Finally she comes back in, holding her credit card.

GIULIANA

Hello? Are you still there, Jim?

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I'm still here, Mrs. Mancuso.

GIULIANA

I have my credit card.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's great, now, I want you to hang up the phone, and call the number on the back of the card, OK?

Giuliana nods, hangs up the phone, picks it straight back up, and calls the number on her credit card. It rings, it rings, then someone answers. Another voice... Female this time.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Hello good morning, and how can I help you today.

GIULIANA

Oh, thank God. Someone has- uh- how do I say... Well, they have stolen money, from my account, they- they-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Why don't we start by running you through the security questions. Can I take a name please?

GIULIANA

Giuliana Maria Luisa Mancuso.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Thank you, Mrs. Mancuso. And what address are you calling from?

GIULIANA

Yes, it is... Number twenty four, Dudley Street, Bedford, M... K... Four zero... Three... T... B.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's great, and what's the second letter of your security question.

GIULIANA

The- what?

VOICE ON THE PHONE

The second letter of your security question, Mrs. Mancuso.

GIULIANA

I- I don't... *non ricordo*- I don't remember. Oh my God. *Oh my God*.

Giuliana's breathing is becoming laboured, & her hands shake. She is an old woman, she is frightened, & she is alone.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's alright Mrs. Mancuso. I can see here on your file the police have contacted you, is that right?

GIULIANA

Lorenzo.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

...Pardon?

GIULIANA

My security question- I remember it now. It is the name of my husband.

For a ghostly second, there is just static, & silence.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

...And is your husband there with you now, Mrs. Mancuso?

GIULIANA

No... no... he is-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's fine Mrs. Mancuso. Now as I was saying, the police have contacted us, and I can confirm that we will be refunding you the five hundred and ninety nine pounds, back into your account.

GIULIANA

Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I can see a note here, says you've agreed to help the Bedfordshire police, in their ongoing investigation into this type of fraudulent activity, is that right?

GIULIANA

Jim, ah, he said something about- I didn't understand, about taking out-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

You've agreed to visit your local bank branch, and take out twenty seven thousand pounds from your savings account, is that right?

GIULIANA

I- I don't uh...

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I can confirm that we will be crediting your account tomorrow with the full amount that you take out today, that money will be completely and fully insured, so you've got nothing to worry about.

GIULIANA

I- don't really understand, I'm sorry, can you speak a little-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I'm going to transfer you back to Detective Taylor now Mrs. Mancuso, who will explain exactly what you need to do next. Thank you so much for agreeing to help the police, we really appreciate your help Mrs. Mancuso. Hold the line please.

Dead air. Static. Then-- "Jim" comes back onto the line.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Hello, is that Mrs. Mancuso?

GIULIANA

Jim, *thank God*, please, the woman from the bank explained many things to me. But- what I don't understand-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

The important thing is- you've spoken to your bank, they confirmed they will be refunding you the money that was stolen, which is great, and that you will now be assisting us in our investigation into your local bank branch. Do you have a mobile phone Mrs. Mancuso?

GIULIANA

Uh- yes, I- Alessio bought me a- uh- one of the... the iPhones.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

I want you to go ahead and give me that number, I'll get a taxi sent over to your address, who'll take you to your local bank branch, and I'm going to keep talking to you on your mobile phone, so that I'm with you the whole way, OK Mrs. Mancuso?

GIULIANA  
Yes... OK... OK... Jim.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Giuliana is in the back of a taxi. She is wrapped in a large coat, despite it being summer, and it accentuates how small she is, how vulnerable.

The taxi snakes its way through Bedford, she remains glued to her iPhone, & we don't hear them speaking, but we know that poison is still drip, dripping from the voice into her ear.

INT. BANK BRANCH - DAY

Giuliana waits in line, waiting, anxious, frail, for the next BANK TELLER, and then it's her turn, and as she is called up, she removes the phone from her ear, walks up to the window, to ask for money.

INT. BANK BRANCH - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Giuliana is still in the bank, but now she is in the office of the BANK MANAGER, who is there with the Bank Teller, and he is clearly grilling her, needing to know, what's this money for, does she really need to take out such a large amount, and as he talks and talks, she just nods and nods, repeating the words, the lies, that the voice on the phone told her to say.

INT. BANK BRANCH - DAY

Giuliana watches as the Bank Teller counts out £50 pound notes, stacking them neatly, rubber banding them. She watches the money, eyes wide.

INT. TAXI - DAY

In another taxi, a new one, the phone is back in one hand, glued to her ear, & in the other hand, glued to her chest, is her handbag, stuffed to the gills with cash, as she listens to the phone, & nods into it, as the taxi drives past PEOPLE already out drinking, already having fun, on this busy summer day, in Bedford.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Giuliana is sat on the sofa, still in her big coat, a plastic bag on the coffee table in front of her, full of cash.

She is waiting by the phone, she has been waiting for hours.

THE PHONE RINGS. *Her heart. The shock.* It skips a beat.

GIULIANA

Jim- is that you? Oh my God, I have been waiting, he has not arrived-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's alright Mrs. Mancuso, he's on his way over to you now. Now, when the courier arrives, don't forget what I told you-

GIULIANA

I give him the bag. I must not forget, he gives me a receipt, telling me- ah, I don't know, uh-

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Telling you the money's been seized as part of a police investigation, and will be held at the police station, for finger printing.

GIULIANA

Yes, OK, I think I understand, but-

THE DOORBELL RINGS. *And again she is shook,* the loud noise, & her nerves, on the edge.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Mrs. Mancuso, that will be the courier, you go and answer the door now, I'm going to hang up now, but we will be in touch, I have your mobile number, and you have mine, so we will speak again soon, OK?

She nods, & then, just like that, he hangs up... & is gone. She stands, picks up the bag, & walks to her front door.

INT./EXT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOORWAY - NIGHT

Giuliana opens the front door a crack, peeks outside, & sees:

RASHID

A *youth*, in a tracksuit & hoodie, pulled up, in the dark.

RASHID

Hey, yeah- I'm the police courier?

GIULIANA

...Hello... good evening.

RASHID

Thank you, for your assistance, uh,  
in this enquiry. I'm here to pick  
up the money? And to give you this.

Rashid hands Giuliana, still hiding behind the door, a piece of paper. It does look official, even though *he* looks about as far from a police officer as you could possibly get.

Giuliana stares at the piece of paper. Rashid looks this way & that, scanning for witnesses. The street is empty. Silent.

RASHID

So can I get like- the money?

GIULIANA

And what is your name?

RASHID

My name...? Uh, it's- Dave.

GIULIANA

Thank you for coming, but please,  
be very careful, I am sure you will  
be, it is a lot of money.

RASHID

Yeah, yeah, 'course, yeah.

She hands it over, the bag, & the money. Rashid looks in the bag. Then looks down the street. Still empty.

RASHID

Someone from the police will be in  
touch, and uh- confirm they've  
received the money. So, you ain't  
got nothing to worry about, yeah.

She nods, unsure, but what else she can she do? And with that... Rashid gets on his moped & races off. Giuliana watches him go, her eyes wide. Then... she shuts her door.

The street returns to its silence.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Giuliana is in her nightgown, the TV is on, but she's only half watching. She can't concentrate. She is anxious.

She picks up the landline, reads the scrap of paper where she has written down "Jim's" phone number, dials it. No answer.

She dials the number again... but again, there is no answer. She is worried, she doesn't know what to do, she stands & leaves the room and the TV continues playing without her.

INT. THE RED DRAGON PUB - BEDFORD - SAME TIME

Sal is in a packed pub. Football blaring on the TV. He has empty pint glasses in front of him, drinking hard with some MATES. Luigi, his Italian cousin, is there with him too. Luigi looks concerned, at how pissed Sal is becoming.

Sal spots a MAN in the corner, goes to him. Luigi watches, as Sal and the man exchange words. The man writes down something that Sal tells him, then Sal hands him a wad of money. The man is a bookie, and Sal is placing bets on the football.

EXT. BAR ITALIA - LONDON - SAME TIME

Alessio is outside Bar Italia in Soho, with some FRIENDS, they can see the football playing on a big screen inside. MAHMOUD, Alessio's date for the night, says--

MAHMOUD

What happened to him was he fouled?

ALESSIO

What do I look like, a referee?

MAHMOUD

I thought all you lot loved football.

ALESSIO

All us lot?

MAHMOUD

You know what I mean.

ALESSIO

Remind me to ask you about the rules of cricket next time it's on. Isn't that what you lot all love-



MAHMOUD

Ha ha, very funny. Shall we kiss  
and make up?

Alessio grins, as his phone goes off in his pocket. He pulls it out, sees that it's his mother calling. He ignores it.

MAHMOUD

Who's that then?

ALESSIO

Stop being nosy. About that kiss...

Mahmoud pulls him in for a snog.

INT. BEDFORD HOSPITAL - ICU WARD - BEDFORD - SAME TIME

Emilia is at work, she's a nurse on the intensive care ward at the Bedford Hospital. Working a late shift. It's hard work, but still, she finds the time for kindness & care.

She's fussing over an ELDERLY MAN (MR. RUSSO) who has an oxygen tube in and a catheter and is hooked up to an IV.

EMILIA

(playfully teasing him)  
Did you move these tubes again Mr.  
Russo? I've gotta keep my eye on  
you. Gotta have eyes in the back of  
my head with you, don't I?

Mr. Russo motions to her, she comes closer to him, and he whispers something to her, something that makes her laugh.

EMILIA

Aren't you a charmer. They're my  
mother's eyes. My green eyes. Hers  
are more beautiful than mine. Shall  
I set you up on a date with her?

He grins, this man who is dying. She strokes this old, sick man's forehead, as he closes his eyes, still smiling.

INT. CLUB 49 - SOHO - THAT NIGHT

LOUD MUSIC. Alessio & Mahmoud are in a club, techno pounding.

Mahmoud glances around, takes a pill out of a small plastic baggie & slips it into his mouth. Leans into Alessio's ear--

MAHMOUD

Do you want one?

ALESSIO

What?

MAHMOUD

*Do you want a pill.*

ALESSIO

Oh! No! Thanks!

MAHMOUD

Come on- don't make me do drugs on my own.

ALESSIO

I can't! You know I'm a lawyer.

MAHMOUD

I know you are, but it's Saturday night babes.

ALESSIO

I can't. I'd get struck off.

MAHMOUD

What?

ALESSIO

*I'd get fired!*

MAHMOUD

How would anyone know?

ALESSIO

I work for an American law firm.

MAHMOUD

So?

ALESSIO

They'd know- they do random drugs tests. I'm already on strike two.

Mahmoud makes a face, but then grins, pulls Alessio in close, for a long kiss, then they break it off, & the music pounds, as they dance, dance, dance.

EXT. THE RED DRAGON PUB - CAR PARK - BEDFORD - THAT NIGHT

Sal is stood outside in the carpark of the pub, his mates have gone home & he's drunk. Like- *properly* drunk. He's pissing against a car, hardly managing to stay upright. His phone goes off, and he blearily looks at the caller ID. It's his mother calling him. He swears at the phone, puts it away.

Two YOUNG LADS walking past notice him & start mouthing off.

CALEB

Oh shit- this old man's pissed  
hi'self you know. This is long fam.

TYRONE

Ain't that Matteo's dad though?

CALEB

This is some wasteman business-

TYRONE

Oi, get up you cretin.

CALEB

You're a fuckin' *disgrace* bruv.

TYRONE

This is bare jokes man.

Tyrone gets his PHONE out & starts filming, as Sal tries to wave them off, shouting incoherently at them.

Luigi comes out of the pub, looking for Sal, & sees what's going on- he rushes to Sal's assistance, gesturing & shouting-

LUIGI

***Get away from him, hey!***

The boys scramble off into the darkness, laughing viciously as they go. Luigi goes to Sal, helps him to his feet, as Sal mumbles. Luigi struggles under his weight, but carries him.

INT. EMILIA'S HOUSE - BEDFORD - THAT NIGHT

Emilia arrives home, late, still in her scrubs, exhausted, her landline phone's ringing, but she ignores it, calling out-

EMILIA

Baguette? Where are you girl?

The sound of miaowing, as a cat, BAGUETTE, in a wheelchair, comes doddering round the corner. She's an old cat, disabled, cute, very friendly. Emilia bends down and strokes Baguette, who purrs with pleasure.

EMILIA

Hello girl, did you miss me? You hungry? Come on, come with me.

Emilia and Baguette make their way into her kitchen, she opens the fridge door, takes out some tuna for the cat.

She shuts the fridge door to feed her. Seen clearly on the door, taped onto the door & highlighted, is a--

ADVERT FOR IVF TREATMENT

The costs per round (£4,500 a pop) are highlighted in red.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PAULS CHURCH - BEDFORD - NEXT MORNING

A beautiful summer morning. Church bells toll, birds sing.

EXT. DUDLEY STREET - BEDFORD - MORNING

Emilia is striding down the street, holding a coffee, she's dressed extra smartly, in her best church clothes...

She arrives at the front door to Giuliana's house. She rings the doorbell & waits. Then rings the doorbell again. Nothing.

So she rummages around in her handbag, for keys. Opens the door & lets herself in--

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

EMILIA

Mum, it's me. You ready?  
Mamma? Where are you?

Emilia climbs the stairs, which CREAK LOUDLY underfoot.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

From inside Giuliana's bedroom, all she can hear is the creak of the stairs as someone, she doesn't know who, ascends...

She phones the POLICE.

OPERATOR

Fire police or ambulance?

GIULIANA

(whispering)  
Police- *police*.

OPERATOR

Police, thank you.

THE SOUND of static, as Giuliana waits, staring, petrified, at the door, at the unknown, her breath becomes ragged--

EMERGENCY OPERATOR

Go ahead caller this is the police  
what's your emergency?

GIULIANA

Someone is in my house!

--THE DOOR OPENS-- GIULIANA SCREAMS.

EMILIA

Mum it's me- it's me Emilia!

Giuliana immediately- as though a dam bursts- starts to cry, inconsolable tears, she is wracked by awful, broken weeping.

EMILIA

What's the matter- mum are you OK-  
mum it's me, it's me, *it's me*.

Giuliana covers her face with her hands, can't bear to be seen. Emilia sees the phone on the bed, sees she's dialled 999. Emilia picks up the phone--

EMILIA

Hello?

EMERGENCY OPERATOR

This is the police- who am I  
speaking to?

EMILIA

I'm- her daughter- I'm- Emilia. My  
mum must've called you by accident-

EMERGENCY OPERATOR

Can you put the lady I was speaking  
to before back on?

EMILIA

I- yeah- yeah- hang on.  
Mum why did you call the police?

But Giuliana won't look at her, won't take her hands away.

EMILIA

She's- she can't really talk right  
now- why did she call the police?

EMERGENCY OPERATOR

Could you confirm what address you  
are at there?

EMILIA

Yeah, but...  
Mamma... what's happened?

EXT. SALVATORE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sal wakes up. He's slept on the sofa. He stinks of piss.  
He looks... like *shit*, obviously.

But he feels... the *shame* of a man who, once he's started,  
can't control when to stop.

INT. MAHMOUD'S FLAT - BEDROOM - LONDON - MORNING

Alessio is fully dressed, staring down at Mahmoud, who is  
still in bed, still asleep, still naked.

Mahmoud stirs, then opens his eyes, sees Alessio leaving-

MAHMOUD

Where you going? What time is it?

ALESSIO

It's nine thirty...

MAHMOUD

Get back in bed. It's Sunday.

ALESSIO

I can't, I've got to go.

MAHMOUD

Go where, you doughnut.

ALESSIO

Church.

Mahmoud *really* wakes up, gives Alessio an incredulous look.

MAHMOUD

Are you shitting me?

ALESSIO

No I got to go- it's in  
Clerkenwell.

MAHMOUD

Why?

ALESSIO

Because- they do mass in Italian on  
a Sunday-

MAHMOUD

I meant why as in- wait so you're talking about the Catholic church-

ALESSIO

Yes obviously of course Catholic-

MAHMOUD

The church that's *most* full of paedophiles and homophobes and-

ALESSIO

It's in Clerkenwell, I have to go-

MAHMOUD

But- why? Is this- a kink thing? I get it, Daddy issues are hot, but-

ALESSIO

OK bye then Mahmoud!

MAHMOUD

Alessio! Sorry. I'm serious though. Why? After my Imam realised I was gay, he made my life a living hell. I ain't never go back to mosque. So why. Are you. Going to church.

ALESSIO

I-

His mouth is open but the things that normally come out, *words*, don't. Instead, he just laughs. Then shrugs, sheepish.

ALESSIO

I have to go.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Emilia is sat on the edge of the bed, looking at her mother, who still cannot look at her daughter.

EMILIA

Mum I'm going to call Sal and Alessio, yeah, and tell them to come over right away, so they can be here when the police arrive.

But let's get you up. Let's go get you a cup of tea.

Giuliana shakes her head.

EMILIA

You gotta get up. Come on now.

She shakes her head. Emilia is losing patience, she starts to try & take the bed covers from Giuliana, to force her up--

GIULIANA

*Non toccarle- lasciami sola.*

EMILIA

*Mamma, non essere sciocca.*

GIULIANA

Emilia, no!

EMILIA

Mamma! You have to get up!

Emilia tugs on the bed covers & this time Giuliana *screams--*

GIULIANA

Who do you think I am? I am your mother! I'm not just a- I'm not a- I can care for myself. Get out!

EMILIA

What's the matter- what's wrong!?

Giuliana pulls the covers right up to her chin, & again she refuses to look at Emilia. Emilia... begins to understand.

She touches the bed, nearer her mother's body. It is wet. Giuliana has wet the bed... Giuliana shakes, with shame.

EMILIA

Mum... it's alright... It's OK... Please let me help you...

Giuliana shakes her head. Her whole body shakes.

EMILIA

Don't worry about a thing, Mamma, we're gonna get you to the shower, I'll give you some privacy, I'll change the bed sheets, then we'll go downstairs, we'll have some tea, and we'll wait for your sons to arrive, OK, mum. And then together. We will make things right, Mamma. *Te lo prometto.* I promise you.

Giuliana slowly takes her hand away from her face, and looks at her daughter. Vulnerability & strength. Both are present.



She removes the bed sheets. The wet nightgown clings to her small body. Emilia helps her up. With one arm around her mum, they leave the room together. Giuliana holds her head high.

INT. ST. PETER'S ITALIAN CHURCH - LONDON - LATER

*Santa Messa.* Holy Mass. The PADRE stands at the altar, he holds a GOLDEN CHALICE. He pours wine & a little water into the chalice, & it becomes the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Over the chalice, he places a fine white linen cloth, the purificator, & then the veil, & as he does so, he speaks, in Italian, intoning the liturgy of the Eucharist.

PADRE

*Benedetto sei tu, Signore, Dio  
dell'Universo, dalla tua bontà  
abbiamo ricevuto questo vino,  
frutto della vita, e del lavoro  
dell'uomo.*

Alessio enters the church. He crosses himself, then takes a seat at the back. He watches in silence as the sacred vessels & linens are assembled.

CONGREGANTS approach the altar to receive Holy Communion from the Padre. Alessio arrives at the altar, & the Padre places the Body of Christ on Alessio's tongue.

PADRE

*Il Corpo di Cristo.*

Alessio says amen, and is blessed by the Padre.

INT. SAL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - BEDFORD - MORNING

His PHONE RINGS. It's Emilia. He doesn't even look at it. It stops ringing, & he continues to just sit there, vacant.

His PHONE RINGS again. Emilia again. He looks at it. But doesn't answer. It rings off. Vacant.

His PHONE RINGS-- *this time*, he picks up--

SALVATORE

*WHAT EMILIA- WHAT DO YOU WANT-*

He stops mid sentence & his face at first shows confusion. Then, *rage*.

EXT. ST. PETER'S ITALIAN CHURCH - LONDON - MORNING

Alessio is leaving the church, putting his jacket on, about to head home, when his PHONE RINGS: Emilia. He answers.

ALESSIO  
Hey sis, what's up.

Listens to what she has to say. His hand goes to his mouth. On his face, *pain*.

ALESSIO  
Yeah I'll come right now. Yeah I'll be there. Yeah of course.

INT. TRAIN - LATER

Alessio is on the St. Pancras train to Bedford. There are a load of FOOTBALL FANS on the train, on their way to a match.

Alessio sits like a stone amongst the revellers.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - BEDFORD - DAY

A tableau:

Family at a kitchen table. The Mother sits in the middle. Her Children surround her, leaning in. Their arms around her, they whisper to her.

She is weeping, though she doesn't look sad, now. A family that has suffered, will suffer, and will endure.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. POLICE CAR - DUDLEY STREET - BEDFORD - DAY

A squad car pulls up slowly outside Giuliana's house. There are two police officers inside, PC COLLINS and PC AZZARELLI.

PC COLLINS  
You wanna take this one or shall I?

PC AZZARELLI  
What is it again?

PC COLLINS  
Courier fraud. Third one this week.

PC AZZARELLI  
Oh, fucking hell. What's the name?

PC COLLINS  
It's- Giuliana... Mancuso. One of  
your lot.

PC AZZARELLI  
Mancuso? Oh, shit.

PC COLLINS  
Why, you know her?

PC AZZARELLI  
Uh... yeah. I- went to school with  
Salvatore Mancuso. It's his mum.

|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| PC COLLINS                | PC AZZARELLI         |
| Salvatore, as in, the Sal | Yeah, the very same- |
| that you-                 |                      |

PC COLLINS  
-arrested for money laundering? Did  
he do time in the end? Was it just  
a fuck off big fine he had to pay?

PC AZZARELLI  
If things get heated in there,  
leave the talking to me.

PC COLLINS  
Why, you gonna start-a a-speaking  
in-a Italian? *Ma vaffanculo!*

They get out the car & head to the door.

PC AZZARELLI  
(wearily)  
*Stronzo.*

PC COLLINS  
I know what that means you know.

PC AZZARELLI  
I know you know what it means  
'cause I taught you what it means  
so you'd know what I was saying  
when what you're being is a *stronzo*-

PC COLLINS  
I do have feelings you know.

PC AZZARELLI  
Oh, cry me a river.

They arrive at the door & PC Azzarelli knocks & they put their officious looking faces on. Emilia answers the door, looking ashen.

PC COLLINS  
Hello there, I'm PC Collins, and  
this is PC Azzarelli-

Emilia looks at PC Azzarelli strangely, hard to read... It's probably anger, what he did to her brother. Something's off.

EMILIA  
I know who he is. Come in.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

The two officers are sat opposite Giuliana. Sal stares with barely concealed hatred at PC Azzarelli, who ignores him.

Alessio & Emilia are flanking their mum, protective.

PC AZZARELLI  
After you handed the money to him,  
Mrs. Mancuso, you said he gave you  
a piece of paper. Is it nearby, by  
any chance? Could we take a look?

She takes the piece of paper, folded neatly, from the pocket. Her clothes are tidy (thanks to Emilia), but something about her... is so different to the woman we have briefly come to know. Something has been lost, her spirit has been dampened.

GIULIANA  
Here you are... here it is... I am-  
sorry, what is your name again?

PC AZZARELLI  
It's PC Azzarelli, Mrs. Mancuso.

SALVATORE  
You know who he is, Ma.

GIULIANA  
Azzarelli, yes, *certo, certo*... And  
what is your first name again?

PC AZZARELLI  
It's Gabriele.

GIULIANA  
*Gabriele... Come l'angelo.*

PC AZZARELLI

*Sì, certo.*

GIULIANA

(trance like)

And then the angel said... I am Gabriel, I stand in the presence of God... I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you the good news.

Do you bring good news, Gabriele?

PC Azzarelli looks briefly at PC Collins, then back at her.

PC AZZARELLI

Mrs. Mancuso, we will have to refer your case to the Action Fraud team- there isn't much else we can do I'm-

ALESSIO

Sorry what? There's been a crime. This is a matter for the police-

PC AZZARELLI

Of course, of course it is-

ALESSIO

So what exactly are you saying-

PC AZZARELLI

Bedfordshire police doesn't have a dedicated fraud investigation team.

SALVATORE

You're gonna do fuck all basically.

PC AZZARELLI

No- we'll refer your case to Action Fraud, they assess on a case by-

SALVATORE

Do your fucking jobs- catch the fucking criminals-

PC COLLINS

We do catch criminals-

SALVATORE

The fuck is that supposed to mean?

EMILIA

Sal calm it down yeah-

PC AZZARELLI  
What PC Collins means is-

SALVATORE  
I know what he means.

Sal stands, & paces, & prowls. PC Collins tracks him with his eyes, cold. But the temperature in the room is rising.

ALESSIO  
What's Action Fraud's jurisdiction?  
Are they an enforcement agency? Are  
they a police force? What are they-

PC AZZARELLI  
They're a crime reporting centre-

ALESSIO  
So they're a call centre-

PC AZZARELLI  
We've got every faith that the  
Action Fraud team will be more than-

ALESSIO  
How many of the referrals that go  
to them end up in a conviction-

PC AZZARELLI  
When a fraud has been perpetrated-

ALESSIO  
You should know the  
conviction rate-

PC AZZARELLI  
I understand your frustration-

ALESSIO  
How many roughly- do you know.

PC AZZARELLI  
It's... look, I'm not gonna lie.  
Fraud cases are complex and-

ALESSIO  
One in every seven hundred cases...  
Not even one percent of these  
crimes lead to a criminal justice  
outcome. So forgive us, if we don't  
share your faith in the system.

PC COLLINS  
The system in *this* country, works.

ALESSIO

*This country? What is that- what is that supposed to mean.*

Giuliana knows exactly what that's supposed to mean. Her face darkens. PC Collins holds his hands up, like: *Just saying, sorry...* While PC Azzarelli motions with his hands for calm.

PC AZZARELLI

Look, guys, we'll do everything we can.

SALVATORE

Maybe we'll do everything we can, seeing as you ain't doing shit.

PC AZZARELLI

Do not try and take matters into your own hands- these gangs are- they are organised, they are dangerous, they are-

SALVATORE

Maybe we are too. Dangerous.

PC AZZARELLI

You've done enough dragging your family's name through the mud-

Giuliana can be silent no longer. Fire in her eyes, fire in her voice. She switches to Italian, to better vent her fury.

GIULIANA

***My family's hard work- our money- helped build the Italian church in Bedford. Our sweat and blood is in this town, in this country. You will not come into my house and disrespect my family.***

PC AZZARELLI

Forgive me, Signora Mancuso. But-

GIULIANA

***It is time for you to leave.***

PC AZZARELLI

I just- I need to say, the people you got involved with, Sal- you paid a price for getting involved with them. Don't do it again.

EMILIA

My mother asked you to leave...

Emilia stares hard at PC Azzarelli, who nods, then stands--

INT. POLICE CAR - DUDLEY STREET - BEDFORD - SHORT TIME LATER

They get back into their squad car & PC Collins sighs a sigh of relief at getting out of Giuliana's house.

PC COLLINS

Fuck me... well that was intense.

PC Azzarelli doesn't reply. Not in the mood. He's been deeply affected by what's happened. By what happened to Giuliana.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

The four of them are sat at the kitchen table, in silence. Alessio breaks it.

ALESSIO

I'll take the week off. I'll go with mum to the bank. We'll get them to refund the money. They have a duty of care to protect their customers. I'll call Action Fraud-

SALVATORE

One in every seven hundred Alessio. We have to deal with a call centre? Not even the police? It's *fucked*-

EMILIA

If Alessio says we can get the money back, then we'll get it back-

ALESSIO

I mean- I think- I hope- I dunno-

SALVATORE

What, and the people that did this just get away with it- do they?

EMILIA

The *money* is what's important. Mamma *had* enough to go private, but now she ain't got nearly enough-

GIULIANA

(fibbing)

I don't *need* a hip replacement, I'm *fine*, please stop fussing Emilia-



EMILIA

Yes you do Mamma- that's what your savings should be for, for anything to do with health- it's *your* inheritance from dad-

SALVATORE

Twenty seven grand's a huge chunk, but she's got enough left over-

EMILIA

No she don't! Who does her taxes? I know how much she's got. And yeah I don't know for sure if she gave you money, but I can bet my life that if she did, that you wasted it-

SALVATORE

DON'T START- *DON'T FUCKING START-*

But this time, Emilia won't let Sal's indignation take over--

EMILIA

*MA CHE CAZZO, SALVATORE.* Are you really gonna shout and scream when-

SALVATORE

Yeah 'cause I'm angry!

EMILIA

-our mother is the one who's suffering- not you- *idiota egoista.*

Sal is ashamed. He goes to Giuliana, crouches at her feet.

SALVATORE

*Mi dispiace, Mamma... Mi dispiace.*

GIULIANA

***Everything will be alright, you will see. This is good. It is good. Together, we will find a way.***

SALVATORE

I can go and speak to Don Paolo.

GIULIANA

(to Alessio and Emilia)

***What do you think?***

EMILIA

You've always said we need to stay away from him...

Giuliana's mouth turns downwards, a kind of frown, while her head also kind of nods. An expression of: *I know, but, maybe.*

GIULIANA

**You're right. We are a respectable family. We moved to England to leave the old ways behind... But...**

She leaves some silence. Her children look at each other. This is the first time she's ever left room for doubt.

GIULIANA

**Anyway. Alessio will fix it. He'll make it right.**

ALESSIO

I'll go back to my flat tonight. Talk to my boss in the morning- then come back tomorrow. Then we can make a plan. Make things right.

Giuliana smiles at Alessio, trusting & hopeful. He tries to reflect that back at her, even though, he doesn't feel it.

INT. THE RED DRAGON - PUB - BEDFORD - LATER

Sal is sat at the bar, pint in front of him, & empty glasses. A football match is on and the CROWD is lively, on edge.

Sal drinks, alone in the crowd, not watching the football.

Goal & the whole pub goes crazy with joy. Not the whole pub. Sal drinks like a man searching for oxygen in a plane crash.

INT. BANK BRANCH - NEXT DAY

Alessio & Giuliana walk into the bank branch, where she came to take out the money. The Bank Teller who served her looks up from his desk, and sees Giuliana, with this smart looking man in a suit (Alessio), and he mutters under his breath--

BANK TELLER

I knew it...

INT. BANK BRANCH - MANAGER'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER

Alessio & Giuliana are sat across from the Bank Manager. Alessio looks angry, the Bank Manager looks unaccommodating.

ALESSIO

--you have a reimbursement code of conduct.

BANK MANAGER

I'm very aware of that sir, however-

ALESSIO

*Excuse me-* your bank has signed up to a reimbursement code, that stipulates- in the event of fraud-

BANK MANAGER

The code covers APP scams, however, what it doesn't cover-

ALESSIO

The ruling on this matter is *absolutely clear*, in the event of fraud, it is a bank's duty-

BANK MANAGER

It's only applicable, sir, if- the code states that- only "no-blame" customers will be refunded.

GIULIANA

Are you saying- that I am to blame?

BANK MANAGER

The CRM- the contingent reimbursement model- in any case, I'm sorry, but- cash withdrawals aren't covered by the code.

ALESSIO

(to Giuliana)

You aren't to blame. That's not- no one is saying that-- How could you even imply that? She's an elderly woman, how dare you blame her-

Giuliana flinches. Not the blame bit. At the *elderly* bit.

BANK TELLER

I'm not trying to blame- I'm just saying that- customers must have taken sufficient steps to verify the identity of the cold-caller. And- in this case- well.

GIULIANA

***Oh my God. What have I done. What have I done.***

ALESSIO

*Va bene, Mamma, va bene*, it's going to be OK- this isn't your-

(MORE)

ALESSIO (CONT'D)

(to the Bank Manager)

This is *your* fault, entirely *yours*,  
I am going to hold you *personally*  
*liable*-

BANK MANAGER

Sir? It doesn't work like that. As  
you well know. Threats like that.  
That's not how we do things here.

ALESSIO

Here? Sorry, what do you mean  
"here", as in here in this bank?

The Bank Manager purses his lips, and ignores the comment.

BANK MANAGER

Thank you for coming in, and I  
truly am sorry, Mrs. Mancuso. But  
as I told your son... there really  
is nothing more we can do for you.

Giuliana looks at Alessio. He can't look back at her.  
He's failed her. The Bank Manager stands, dismissing them.  
They stand, awkwardly, and leave.

INT. POLICE STATION - BEDFORD - DAY

PC Azzarelli is marching through the station, trying to keep  
up with SUPERINTENDENT BENNETT, his boss.

PC AZZARELLI

It's the third one this week, sir.  
They're clearly targeting the area-

SUPERINTENDENT BENNETT

You know what the SOP is.

PC AZZARELLI

I do know, sir. But I just thought,  
seeing as we're dealing with-

SUPERINTENDENT BENNETT

You send it up to ECU, and that's  
it- that's you done.

PC AZZARELLI

Yes, sir... I just thought- if we  
came at it from a different angle-  
if it was a Section 90-

SUPERINTENDENT BENNETT

Did you give them the leaflet?

PC AZZARELLI  
I gave them the leaflet.

SUPERINTENDENT BENNETT  
Are you trying to fuck with my PRC?

PC AZZARELLI  
No, sir.

SUPERINTENDENT BENNETT  
What's this all about Gabriele?

PC AZZARELLI  
There's more I can do- every other person seems to have a doorbell cam these days, the courier is bound to have been caught out. If I pull on that string, the rest could fall into play, sir. I can do *more*.

SUPERINTENDENT BENNETT  
This isn't a Section 90, Gabe. It's a lower-level offence. I'm hearing noise from above- the Home Office is considering excluding fraud next time they report statistics from the ONS... It's not on us. We're cutting crime, PC Azzarelli. That's what we're doing. Agreed?

PC AZZARELLI  
Yes, sir.

The Superintendent marches on, & PC Azzarelli watches him go. Then turns on his heels, & heads in the opposite direction--  
He finds PC Collins at his desk, eating (messily) a sandwich.

PC AZZARELLI  
Come on- we're door-stopping neighbours.

PC COLLINS  
(mouth full)  
What neighbours?

PC AZZARELLI  
Giuliana Mancuso's neighbours.

PC COLLINS  
That's not SOP!

PC AZZARELLI  
Can you not speak with your mouth  
full?

PC COLLINS  
(mouth still full)  
Why not?

PC AZZARELLI  
Why-? You're an idiot.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Alessio and Giuliana are in the back of a taxi, heading home.  
They are nearing St. Pauls Church. Alessio is on the phone.

ALESSIO  
--can you look up for me what the  
CRM model covers, in terms of cash  
withdrawals and safeguarding.  
Especially in regard to...  
(he sneaks a look at his  
mum, lowers his voice)  
"Vulnerable" customers...

Giuliana is looking out the window of the taxi, and Alessio  
might *think* she's not paying attention but she definitely is.

ALESSIO  
Yeah no I'll be here all week...  
Yeah I handed over that file  
already but if you could keep an  
eye on it- yeah... Ah thanks...  
Yeah she's fine, we're all fine,  
it's- not great, but we'll be fine.  
I've got this. I'm gonna sort this.

St. Pauls church comes into view and Giuliana watches it  
approach: thinking, thinking, thinking...

ALESSIO  
I'll have to do it all myself, but  
it'll be better that way. No they  
won't be any help, not really. Yeah-

When-- she shouts out--

GIULIANA  
Stop the car! Please! *Stop!*

ALESSIO  
Mamma-- I'll call you back-- Mamma,  
what's up what is it?

GIULIANA

I need to get out- I need to explain- to Padre Antonio, why I was not at church on Sunday-

ALESSIO

OK, can you- can this wait? I need to get us home so I can call the financial ombudsman, so I can-

GIULIANA

I have not missed mass for twenty seven years- not since- I have to speak to Padre Antonio-

ALESSIO

OK, Mamma, we'll stop the- Sorry mate, but can we pull over?

The taxi stops, and Giuliana, in a panic, gathers her things.

GIULIANA

The banks won't help us! The police won't help us! Who is there left? Who can help us? Who?

Alessio opens his mouth to speak. Then closes it again.

GIULIANA

I will pray for guidance. I can't bear it, to think how I have *failed* you- failed *all of you!*

ALESSIO

Mamma, please-

GIULIANA

...I will pray that you, my son, are guided.

INT. / EXT. THE TAXI / ST. PAULS SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Alessio watches his mother walk towards the church, anxiety and concern etched on his forehead. His thoughts swirling.

Giuliana, who moments before had been close to hysteria...

Now the panic falls from her face like a mask being removed. Suddenly she is calm, composed, and resolute.

INT. ST. PAULS CHURCH - DAY

Giuliana enters the silence of the church. She sits at a pew, she clicks her rosary, whispers prayers, eyes closed. When--

She hears someone else enter the church, and sit down in the creaking, wooden pew, two rows back from her. She lifts her head. Opens her eyes. Does not turn around. There's no need. She knows. It's him. There is a faint smile is on her lips.

It is Paolo Spadafora, who is sat behind her.

Giuliana stands, her footsteps resound in the silence of the church, as she walks down the centre aisle. As she gets closer to Paolo, she drops her rosary beads. He bends and picks them up. He holds them out, to give back to her. But she closes his hand, over her rosary, giving them to him...

Their eyes meet. Understanding passes through them in the silence of the church. She continues on her way. Wordlessly.

EXT. DUDLEY STREET - BEDFORD - DAY

PC Azzarelli & PC Collins stand outside the door to the house opposite Giuliana's, waiting for an answer to their knock.

PC COLLINS

Does the Superintendent know we're doing this?

PC AZZARELLI

Yeah, 'course.

PC COLLINS

So that's a no then.

Door opens, a NEIGHBOUR (LUCIA) eyes them with apprehension.

LUCIA

Is it Carla? Wha' she done this time? Oh fuck's sake Carla.

PC AZZARELLI

Hey, Lucia. No, it's not Carla.

LUCIA

Alright Gabe- oh thank Christ, that girl's gonna be the death of me-

PC AZZARELLI

It's Giuliana, from across the road-



LUCIA  
*Signora Mancuso? Cosa è successo?*

PC AZZARELLI  
 She's been the victim of a fraud.

LUCIA  
*Ma dai.*

PC AZZARELLI  
 We were wondering if you had one of those doorbell cameras.

LUCIA  
 One of what? Oh, the-

PC COLLINS  
 (condescending)  
 The cameras, in your doorbell? When someone walks past your door, they record a video? Ring any bells?

She stares at him, an old hardness towards the police descends on her.

LUCIA  
 I ain't never heard of 'em.

PC COLLINS  
 Everyone knows what they are!

LUCIA  
 Well clearly not fucking everyone.

She gives PC Collins the evil eye. He sighs.

PC COLLINS  
 Whatever.

PC AZZARELLI  
 You know anyone else that might have one- anyone on the street?

She shakes her head, hardened. PC Azzarelli thanks her, & they leave her standing in her doorframe, watching them go.

They chat on their way back to the car.

PC COLLINS  
 I knew this wasn't Standard Operating Procedure. You've got to accept reality. We ain't set up as a force to deal with this shit.

(MORE)

PC COLLINS (CONT'D)  
*That's reality- we can wish it  
 wasn't- but wishing is for wankers.*

PC AZZARELLI  
 You finished?

PC COLLINS  
 No I'm not- because I know you're  
 too much of a dickhead to let this  
 go- and I'm telling you, you're  
 wasting our time.

PC AZZARELLI  
 Policing is patience. That's how we  
 do what we do. End of.

PC Azzarelli gets in the car, PC Collins looks on gormlessly.

PC COLLINS  
 Is that it? *Policing is patience,  
 end of?* Fuck me, you are a wanker.

They get in the car & PC Azzarelli drives off. Silence. Then--

PC COLLINS  
 Why you so invested in this anyway?  
 Are you like, atoning for arresting  
 her son or some bollocks like that?

PC AZZARELLI  
 Can you leave it out.

PC COLLINS  
 'Cause you know crime and  
 punishment don't work like that.  
 It's not a see-saw. It's a slide.  
 And the only way is down, brother.  
 Down into the pit.

EXT. STREET - BEDFORD - DAY

Matteo is chilling on a street corner near his home.

REVVING SOUND OF A MOPED--

Caleb & Tyrone are sat on that moped, watching him.

MATTEO  
 What's going on, what's good.

CALEB  
 Y'alright Matteo, what's good yeah.

TYRONE

You need to check your socials.

MATTEO

Oh yeah? Why? Your girl been sliding into my DM's again.

Caleb laughs snidely at that, as Tyrone bristles. In the background, Luigi appears. He watches this exchange.

TYRONE

Nah. Your old man's been bringing disrespect to your name.

MATTEO

What you chatting 'bout.

TYRONE

Check your DM's, bruv. You don't want me posting that shit all over the place? You better pay up.

Tyrone revs the moped & they dash off. Consternation clouds Matteo's face, as Luigi comes over to him, & says--

LUIGI

**What did they want?**

MATTEO

Nothing man, don't worry about it.

LUIGI

**Matteo, I am your cousin, we are family. If you have a problem, then I have a problem.**

Matteo looks into his cousin's eyes, and nods his assent.

INT. SALVATORE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Matteo walks into the living room of his house, where Sal is watching TV. Matteo eyes his dad, then heads straight on into the downstairs bathroom. He takes out his phone. Clicks through to Insta. Sees a video in his DMs. Opens it--

INSERT: Shaky phone footage of the other night, when Caleb & Tyrone filmed Sal, pissed as a fart, shouting incoherently, as they laugh at him, and taunt him, *vicious*.

On Matteo's face: *shame*. And: *anger*. A lethal combination.

CUT TO:

Sal is on the phone when Matteo comes back into the living room.

SALVATORE  
 --yeah yeah yeah I'll come now.  
 (to Matteo)  
 Matty, I need to go see Alessio and  
 Milia, I can't take you to  
 football, can you take the bus?

Matteo nods at his father, the fury on his face is visible, but Sal is too busy to notice, as he rushes out the door.

Luigi watches Matteo, he sees his anger. He sighs, worried.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Alessio & Emilia are at their mum's kitchen table. Giuliana isn't with them. The front door open, then Sal walks in.

SALVATORE  
 Hey. Is Ma out?

ALESSIO  
 She's upstairs. She's in bed.

SALVATORE  
 But it's Monday. She goes to Club  
 Italia. Mondays and Saturdays.  
 For dancing.

EMILIA  
 She said she didn't want to go.

SALVATORE  
 But she always goes.

EMILIA  
 Well, she didn't want to go.

Sal sits down & the three of them lapse into silence... Then--

ALESSIO  
 I don't know if I can get the money  
 back. We don't have recourse to the  
 contingent reimbursement model-

SALVATORE  
 Can you speak fucking English-

ALESSIO  
But- oh piss off Sal-

EMILIA  
Both of you- knock it off.

ALESSIO  
Because it was a cash withdrawal-  
I'll try threatening legal action-

EMILIA  
We sure the police can't do more?

SALVATORE  
Don't hold your breath Milia-  
you'll die from lack of air.

EMILIA  
We can't do nothing-

SALVATORE  
I'll think of something.  
I ain't gonna let this lie-

ALESSIO  
Sal I don't think you understand  
the situation we're in-

SALVATORE  
I'll find a way- *I do understand-*  
I'll find a way to fix this, even  
if I have to go back to him, I will-

ALESSIO  
I thought Mamma doesn't want you  
getting involved with that man  
again, Sal. There has to be another  
way-

SALVATORE  
There isn't- Emilia, back me up.  
I'm not asking him for money. I'm  
asking him for help, in finding the  
fuckers who did this to Mamma. We  
need to take care of this ourselves-

EMILIA  
Alessio if it's the only way? We  
have to protect Mamma. Together.

ALESSIO  
Then I'll go, Sal. To see him.  
Let *me* do this. I can do this.

SALVATORE  
'Lessio... this ain't your world.

ALESSIO

I know. That's why it'll be stronger. If it's me. He'll know we really need it. His help. If I go.

SALVATORE

But what will he want? In return? From you? From us?

The questions hang in the air. But the children are resolved. All of them. To do. Whatever it takes.

INT. GIULIANA'S HOUSE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Giuliana is stood at the top of stairs, listening to them, as they argue. Strangely, very strangely... She is smiling.

SMASH CUT TO:

A BLACK SCEN. SILENCE. THEN--

The SOUND of a PLATE SMASHING. Voices--

OPEN ON:

Giuliana is stood in the hallway outside her kitchen. She is listening to the voices of her children. She is not smiling.

TITLE CARD: TWO DAYS AGO

Giuliana listens, anxious at what she's hearing. Her children arguing about money, about their jobs, and Emilia thinking of moving out of Bedford... She listens to them, deeply worried.

SMASH CUT TO:

A BLACK SCEN. SILENCE. THEN--

The SOUND of a LANDLINE PHONE RINGING.

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Hello, can I speak to Mrs. Mancuso?

GIULIANA

Speaking, who is this?

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Hello Mrs. Mancuso, this is Bedfordshire Police, I'm Detective

(MORE)

## VOICE ON THE PHONE (CONT'D)

Taylor, I'm calling to inform you that, unfortunately, your bank account has been compromised.

## GIULIANA

Oh my God. *Oh my God.*

## OPEN ON:

Giuliana on the phone. She looks shaken, scared.

## VOICE ON THE PHONE

This is an opportunity, for you to help your community, Mrs. Mancuso.

Silent, something crosses over her face, hard to know what.

## GIULIANA

An opportunity... I- I understand.

## VOICE ON THE PHONE

Mrs. Mancuso I want you to go to your purse, can you do that for me? Get your credit card, and phone the number on the back of the card.

## GIULIANA

My purse is... in the kitchen, Jim.

## VOICE ON THE PHONE

That's alright, I'll wait here.

## GIULIANA

OK, OK, one second, please.

She places the phone down, and kind of stumbles out the room. This time, we do follow her out. She goes to the kitchen. She pours herself a glass of water. And calmly, drinks it. She looks up at something on the wall, thinking, thinking.

INSERT: framed photo of Lorenzo, looking back at her.

Calmly she washes the glass, then leaves it on the side to dry. She goes to her purse, and takes out her credit card.

Finally she comes back in, holding her credit card.

## GIULIANA

Hello? Are you still there, Jim?

## VOICE ON THE PHONE

I'm still here, Mrs. Mancuso.

GIULIANA  
I have my credit card.

SMASH CUT TO:

A BLACK SCEEN. SILENCE. THEN--

The SOUND of a DOORBELL RINGING.

OPEN ON:

Giuliana is in her nightgown, at her bedroom window, looking down at--

Emilia is at the front door, in her best Sunday church clothes, ringing on her mother's doorbell. Giuliana watches her, thinking, thinking. Then--

She goes to her bedside table, there's a glass of water there. She picks it up, empties it onto her own bed. Then she gets into bed, calmly, she picks up her phone, and dials 999.

OPERATOR  
Fire police or ambulance?

GIULIANA  
Police- *police*.

SMASH CUT TO:

A BLACK SCEEN. SILENCE. THEN--

The SOUND of VOICES.

OPEN ON:

Giuliana's stood at the top of the stairs, listening to her children argue. And strangely, very strangely... She smiles.

SALVATORE  
I'll find a way- *I do understand-*  
I'll find a way to fix this, even  
if I have to go back to him, I will-

ALESSIO  
I thought Mamma doesn't want you  
getting involved with that man  
again, Sal. There has to be another  
way-



SALVATORE

There isn't- Emilia, back me up.  
I'm not asking him for money. I'm  
asking him for help, in finding the  
fuckers who did this to Mamma. We  
need to take care of this ourselves-

EMILIA

Alessio if it's the only way? We  
have to protect Mamma. Together.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEL VIAGGIO - TRAVEL AGENCY - MORNING

Paolo Spadafora is sat at his tidy but old fashioned desk. He is counting out pills from his dosette box. Wearily he counts them out, like the opposite of magic beans.

SFX: tinkle of the entrance door bell, as a CUSTOMER enters. He looks up to greet whoever this new customer is, and says--

PAOLO

Good morning. How can I help you?

Standing in front of him, is--

Giuliana Mancuso. She pulls out the chair, sits down. Calm, composed, defiant.

Then there's silence, as these two Italians in England regard each other, take each other in. She is here, in his domain. Both of them, though it is unspoken, know what that means...

PAOLO

*Would you like some coffee?*

GIULIANA

*At my age, it gives me headaches  
and heart palpitations... Which is  
a pity, as I still love the taste.*

PAOLO

*I am at the age when, forgive my  
lack of manners, but it makes me  
need the bathroom even more than I  
already do... But what can I do?  
Without espresso, life is...*

GIULIANA

*A life without small mercies, and  
small pleasures, is no life at all.*

He gives a wry shrug. They are saying nothing, these are empty words. But with their eyes, they size each other up.

PAOLO

*How can I help you Signora Mancuso?*

GIULIANA

*How can you help? Signor Paolo, if I am here, in this place, with you- I think you know how you can help.*

PAOLO

*But still you need to say it. Even Satan is powerless over us, until he knows what he can give, and what he'll get in return.*

GIULIANA

*Is that how you see yourself, Signor Paolo?*

PAOLO

*It's how you see me. Which is more important than how I see myself.*

GIULIANA

*You are not the devil. And I am no saint.*

PAOLO

*No, no, you are right, you are right, Signora Mancuso. But still, I ask again. Do you want my help? And do you know what it means, if I give it to you?*

Giuliana holds his gaze. Her green eyes firm. Then says-

GIULIANA

*Soon, my youngest son will come to you. I want you to help him.*

PAOLO

*I have extended my hand to Alessio before. He refused it.*

GIULIANA

*This time, will be different. This time, they will all be involved.*

And now, now he begins to understand...

PAOLO

*Ever since I have known you, you have kept your children away from this path. Yet now, you usher them onto it. What has changed?*

GIULIANA

*That's got nothing to do with you.*

PAOLO

*I don't allow tourists to journey with me.*

GIULIANA

*They won't be. They will strengthen your hand.*

PAOLO

*If you think this is a way to keep them together, to gather them to you, like a lost flock... Then Signora Mancuso, with all due respect, you are not as intelligent as you appear to think you are.*

GIULIANA

*And yet I have eyes to see. And ears that hear things.*

*I hear Don Beppino is building a shiny, expensive, brand new hotel in Scilla... Clearly, the family is thriving. And yet... if my eyes do not deceive me... This old, run down, impoverished shop from which you run your business has not had any investment, any facelift, any love, for years, and years, and years. Almost as if, Don Beppino no longer cares for its upkeep... No?*

PAOLO

*What do you want, Giuliana.*

GIULIANA

*For us. To help... each other.*

She holds her hand out. It is wrinkled, and frail, and there is a tremor in her wrist. But her gaze is fixed and strong. Paolo holds her gaze. He leans in. Then... he takes her hand.

CUT TO BLACK.

# IN THE MOUTH OF THE WOLF

6-part returning TV crime drama series

Written and created by

**Nicholas Segalla-Mensinga**



**TV series bible**

February 9<sup>th</sup> 2024

## LOGLINE

An ordinary British Italian family's life is thrown upside down when the elderly matriarch falls victim to a scam, which provokes her sons and daughter into seeking retribution, and causes them all to descend into the dark world of crime.

## OVERVIEW

**Bedford, present day.** The **MANCUSOS** are a loving, loyal, charismatic British Italian family. **GIULIANA MANCUSO** (78), the matriarch, left Italy to raise her young family in England, but she is Italian through and through. Having fought her way up in a society that was hostile to foreigners, she found a place for herself – adored by her community and her family. Her now grown up children are **SALVATORE** (55) – the eldest, beefy, quick to anger, but soft on the inside; **EMILIA** (42) – middle child, stubborn, capricious and kind; and **ALESSIO** (39) – the youngest, a lawyer, loyal to the bone. Giuliana has raised them with a strong sense of their culture and Italian pride, but they are not aware of their full family history...

Everyday life comes to a screeching halt for The Mancusos, when the unthinkable happens – a banking scam fleeces Giuliana – who loses most of her life savings, her pride, and all her confidence. Seeing their mother broken, the family demand justice. Alessio attempts to reclaim the funds via legal means, to no avail: the bank claims customer fault, so insurance isn't an option either. The police wash their hands of it, despite the British Italian officer, **PC AZZARELLI** initially assigned to the case, who attempts to do more (against his superiors orders). The family finances were already in a precarious position, with Alessio and Giuliana propping up Sal and his restaurant business (whilst Sal tries to clear his debts). The stolen money wasn't just an optional luxury, it was essential to Giuliana's retirement. They need to get it back. With legal means exhausted, Sal is adamant they take a more unconventional approach, but faces strong opposition from his siblings. Giuliana (who at first seems broken and defenceless in response to this robbery) will be the one who leads her family onto the path of retribution. And ultimately, even further – onto the path of crime.

In fact, Giuliana is more familiar with the world of crime than she has let on to her children. Little do they know of the family history Giuliana fled, when she migrated to Bedford. Their late father, **LORENZO**, was a member of the San Donà di Piave cartel. Ruthless in their pursuit of profit, they committed extortion, racketeering, and murder in Italy in the 1950s. Giuliana could not abide the sins of her husband, and as he loved her more than he loved his ill-gotten gains, he allowed himself to be convinced by his wife to leave that life behind.

They planned their escape – and it was an escape, as no one *leaves* a cartel – they ended up immigrating to England, following in the footsteps of thousands of Italians who made their way to Bedford in the 1950s, after the Marston Valley Brick Company found itself short of labour during the reconstruction boom of the post war years, and started recruiting Italians from the villages of Southern Italy. Giuliana and Lorenzo had to start again from scratch. They got a ticket to England and a bed in a converted prisoner of war camp. The work was heavy and hard. But they were out of the clutches of the cartel... Or so they thought.

When Giuliana eventually tells her children the truth – that their father used to be an enforcer in the mafia, Alessio and Emilia are horrified (Alessio because of the criminality, Emilia because of the secrecy), but Sal? *He knew it*. He felt in his bones a pull towards crime. Something is awakened in Giuliana: she believes she weakened her family by forcing her husband to give up his talent for crime, and in doing so, left her family vulnerable to being preyed on by wolves. And the way to protect your family from wolves... is to become lions.

But tracking down the scammers will only be the beginning. From here, we will see The Mancusos fall from grace – starting out small, but soon descending deeper and deeper into the world of crime. Not just the criminal underworld of Bedford – but back to the Old Country, Italy. What may start out small – smuggling specialty goods (thanks to Brexit), grows to drugs, and eventually worse, which attracts the attention of the Italian authorities. When you awaken old ways, you also awaken old enemies...

How easily a pulled thread starts to unravel. Soon, The Mancusos, and those against them, will have reason to call on the oldest form of justice, *Lex talionis*, where the punishment mirrors the offence committed: eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The ancient law of retribution.

## KEY CHARACTERS

### **GIULIANA MANCUSO, 78**

She is short in stature (4 foot 11 inches), but large of heart. To those she loves she is fiercely loyal. Although in her late seventies, she's adamantly making sure that her advancing age doesn't limit her (of course she knows *it does*, really, but what she can mask, she masks). Independent and proud, she takes an active role in the Italian community in Bedford. After what happens, happens (when she is scammed out of a significant chunk of her life savings), she at first retreats into a protective shell. The vulnerability she feels, the shame she feels, for the first time, makes her feel old and fragile. But then she remembers where she comes from. Then she remembers she is a Mancuso, widow of Lorenzo, and had he still been alive, he would not rest until the people who did this to her paid the price. As he's no longer here, she'll have to do it herself. Her and her family. Which to be honest, when she thinks about it, is no bad thing. She deeply wants to keep them all together, and this way, she can.

### **SALVATORE (SAL) MANCUSO, 55**

He's a big man, with big emotions. Out of all of the family, he's the most reckless. Couple that with a taste for vice, and it's no wonder Sal is the one who has come closest to ruining the family, by racking up bad gambling debts that has left not only him and the family restaurant in trouble, but has also put his brother on the hook for his money owed. When the family have to confront together what to do after Giuliana has been scammed, he's the one that first suggests paying a visit to Paolo Spadafora, the very same man he is in debt to. But as ever, he has the blinkered optimism of a perennial gambler, which blinds him to the obvious truth: if they get back into bed with the man who already holds a knife to their throats, how much more leverage can they afford to give him, before he decides to slice?

### **ALESSIO MANCUSO, 39**

Alessio has always felt like an outsider in his own family, despite (or perhaps because of?) the intensity of attachment and affection that is part and parcel of being a Mancuso. Out of the three siblings, he's the only one that's left Bedford, to live and love a bit more freely in London – his sister and brother know he's gay, and are cool with that, but his mother still doesn't know, and he wants to keep it that way... It's just... easier? Or... less painful?

Feeling like an outsider doesn't mean he doesn't have strong feelings of love for his family, he does – it just means that the love is tempered by a need for some separation, a need that the rest of them don't appear to have. Alessio is proud of his work as a corporate lawyer, although at times it also feels like a burden, as he is hyper aware that the financial responsibility for the welfare of his family largely rests with him. He'd hate to think what would happen if he gets one more strike at work, for drugs related offences... (Shit will hit the fan, is what will happen.)

### **EMILIA MANCUSO, 43**

Emilia is single and at peace with it (kind of). She's been in long-term relationships before, but the men she dates always seem to have an unerring tendency to be bastards who cheat. And anyway, working as an NHS nurse at the Bedford Hospital on the ICU ward, how exactly is she supposed to find the time to go on dates? Better off embracing the cliché: she's a lady who lives alone, with her cat – is that so bad, really, actually, is it? (It's not great that she's protesting so much.) Late at night, when she's dead tired from a shift, she does wonder: Have I given up too much by staying in the place I was born, living three streets down from my mother, and never risking getting the hell out of Dodge (Bedford). She will surprise herself and her brothers by becoming the most vociferous advocate for the family getting involved in the criminal world. She didn't know it... but this is the shake-up she needed.

### **PAOLO SPADAFORA, 62**

The disgrace that forced Paolo out of Italy still haunts him: he lost Don Beppino's dog, Greta. He was walking Greta when he stopped to light the cigarette of a beautiful young woman (ah, if only he could walk past beauty instead of bending to its light, but he can't), when he turned back around, the dog was gone. He's lucky Don Beppino didn't have him killed, lucky his skills as a money launderer were valuable enough to spare him death, but not enough to spare him banishment. To Bedford then, where he's been for the past twenty years, steadily declining, in both spirits and profits. But he knows... if he doesn't turn things round soon, if he doesn't recruit more local businesses to launder money through, then his life could become a data point in the loss section of a profit and loss spreadsheet: he is expendable, and knows it. When The Mancusos come to him for help, he sniffs a chance to enter the corporate world, through Alessio. Paolo is the vampire at their door, asking to be let in...



## EPISODE BREAKDOWNS

### **EPISODE ONE:**

We open on Paolo in Bedford, and clearly his business (which we sense isn't quite what it seems) is struggling. We follow him to Italy, where it becomes clear that Paolo is part of the mafia, and that he's in danger, as he's failing Don Beppino. Back in Bedford, we meet Giuliana Mancuso, in church, and see Paolo and Giuliana's paths cross, and that she knows who he really is, and doesn't trust him. We're introduced to Giuliana's family, her children Salvatore, Alessio, and Emilia, as well as Sal's children and a cousin Luigi. We get a picture of them as a loving family, despite tensions between the children. When Giuliana is caught up in a scam that wipes out her savings, it kickstarts the family rallying round her, trying at first to solve things through normal channels – the police, the legal system – when that doesn't work, they eventually turn to Signor Paolo... The family take the first steps towards crime.

### **EPISODE TWO:**

Paolo tells Alessio he'll use his connections in the underworld to find out which gang did the scam on Giuliana. But the information will come at a price. In return Alessio will have to use his contacts to recruit a new business that Paolo can launder money through. Alessio says no. But when Sal and Emilia find out about the bargain that Paolo is driving, and they realise they have no other option, they convince Alessio to do it. Meanwhile, PC Gabriele Azzarelli is pursuing leads, and we discover he is in a clandestine relationship with Emilia (oh, so she's *not* as single as we first thought). Giuliana drops a bombshell, telling them their father who they always knew as being an upstanding citizen, had been a mafia enforcer prior to leaving Italy. That was *why* they left Italy, because Giuliana couldn't countenance that life. The children have different responses to this news. Alessio's response is to go on a drug bender with his boyfriend, Mahmoud. After he's fired at work, the deal with Paolo is jeopardised. They'll need to find another way to leverage his help, if they still want retribution.

### **EPISODE THREE:**

Giuliana is the one who suggests smuggling. Brexit in the UK is just like Italy in 1992, when the Italian government made an ill-fated decision to ban Phillip Morris cigarettes, which only led to them being smuggled and sold on the black market... Why couldn't they do the same

thing, but with speciality food items, for instance Italian olive oil, the price of which has gone through the roof since Brexit, and smuggle the items into England? They'd sell to all the local Bedford restaurants, and Paolo, in exchange for his help, would get a cut. Since being fired, Alessio has moved back into the family home, living with his mother. He's finding it stifling, but he's still the one that is most resistant to them doing anything illegal. But Sal is adamant, they *need* to do this. He enlists Emilia to convince Alessio. Although she's worried she'll have to end her relationship with Gabriele, she's also feeling more vibrant and alive than she has in years... She finds a way to force Alessio into agreeing. Giuliana's plan is working. All her children together. Growing stronger. In the old ways. Paolo sets things in motion, as the children persuade local Italian British businesses to sign up for orders of illegally imported Italian items.

#### **EPISODE FOUR:**

But of course, when you get a taste for it, the temptation is to go deeper into the honeypot. Why stop at illegally importing food? If you're doing it already, why not go all the way in, and import drugs, too? On a trip to Italy to meet with olive oil producers, Paolo is with them, and he recognises that Emilia is the one who is most susceptible to influence, to taking things further. He gets her to sign off on including a shipment of cocaine in the boat that will smuggle their goods into Portsmouth. Meanwhile, Sal is getting aggravated with Paolo at the lack of tip-offs for the whereabouts of the scammers who exploited Giuliana. Deciding to take matters into his own hands, he arranges a meeting with a local Albanian gangster. Giuliana is starting to doubt that she did the right thing, that this has gone too far, now that Emilia is going deeper and darker. But Emilia won't back down, she has the classic delusion: We'll stay in long enough to make enough money to get out, *then* we'll get out. PC Gabriele Azzarelli is starting to notice... that Emilia is spending more money on things than her NHS salary should allow. Where is that money coming from? Reluctantly, he starts to investigate.

#### **EPISODE FIVE:**

Sal's meeting with the Albanian has produced a result. A name. Not for a gang, but for a contact where Sal could buy 'leads': it's when a data leak / hack means someone owns a tranche of names and numbers, 'leads', that gangs purchase, to use to find marks for scams.

Sal meets the contact, ostensibly to buy 'leads', but really, so that he can force him to reveal who purchased Giuliana's phone number, so he can track them down. Sal's son Matteo has been steadily getting more and more involved with 'the family business', and he comes with Sal, as muscle, to help shake down the guy who sells the 'leads'. They beat him badly, but they get what they came for. Paolo, the canny old wolf that he is, can smell that there are divisions happening within the family, and he seeks to use this to his advantage, and divide and rule, by whispering to Emilia that Sal's obsession with the scammers is causing other criminal gangs to take notice of them, and not in a good way, obviously. While Alessio, who has used his former colleagues as a way in to deal cocaine to HNWI's (high net worth individuals), has become addicted to the drug himself. He's becoming erratic, sloppy, wild. Sal and Matteo stake out the flat where they know the scamming gang are based, they start making preparations for vengeance... they are going to make them pay, for what they did.

#### **EPISODE SIX:**

They burst into the gang's flat, with added help from Luigi, their Italian cousin, and some extra goons hired for the job, and they wreak a terrible revenge, it is bloody and violent. Afterwards Sal tells his mother that it is done, that lex talionis, an eye for an eye, has been served. Giuliana seems satisfied, but also, scared. And she is right to be, because the police are closing in on them, and Paolo's Capo in Italy, Don Beppino, has started to take notice of this new outfit in Bedford, and he wants the family to increase its activities. The latest mafia way to make money? Again, if you're already smuggling things in, why not add to inventory: human beings. Illegal immigrants. The mafia want in on a lucrative business of misery... For Emilia, this is now beyond the pale... But when you invite vampires into your house, don't be surprised when they demand blood. What started as a choice, has become an ultimatum...

#### **SEASON 2:**

Giuliana has been moved into a more expensive home in Bedford, but despite the trappings of luxury, she is lonelier than ever, she sees her children less than before. She decides to drop another bombshell on them: Their father was informed on by someone in the Italian community in Bedford. And that informer, lead to Don Carlo (Lorenzo's former Capo) sending someone from Italy to find Lorenzo, and murder him. Who was that informer? Giuliana doesn't know. But the children have a new task, a new mission of vengeance...

## WRITER'S STATEMENT

In life, you either have *furbo* and thrive, or you don't have it, and you're being conned.

**Furbo**: adjective: in Italian, *furbo* is used to describe a person who is good at avoiding deception and traps, and getting out of dangerous situations, or working a situation to his or her advantage...In English, you'd describe such a person as cunning, sly, or crafty, you'd be being critical of them. In Italian, it is seen as a positive attribute, as clever, smart, or canny, something worthy of admiration.

Therein lies the rub: for the thousands of Italians who made Bedfordshire their home (1 in 5 people who live in Bedford are Italian, or of Italian descent), who do they show loyalty to, England or Italy? It is the classic bones of the immigration story, a deep and perennial question, of where do the people who leave their home and country and settle in a new place belong to? Are they given a new sense of belonging, or an old sense of rootlessness? Who do they owe allegiance to? What customs do they shed like old skin, and which ones cling to them, like stains that can't be removed? And if they've run from their home to try and find a new home, what did they unwittingly bring with them? Like the stain of crime. That was buried for a while. But never exorcised completely.

While this show will be in the crime drama genre, it will do what all of the best examples of its kind have done: to use crime as a metaphor for something larger. In our case, it will be a window to themes of inheritance, and belonging, and loyalty, and forgiveness. Yes, forgiveness. For while the show will go on a journey over its seasons towards the violent end games of retribution, it will ultimately be about the much harder path of forgiveness.

In terms of tone, the show that's the best comparison to this show is MARE OF EASTTOWN. It achieved the balance of being a gripping crime drama, whilst also being a personal, character driven story about grief and its ripple effects. You can do both. Create a show that is intimate and humane and emotionally effecting, as well as thrilling and exciting and with cliff hangers that draw you in. Our show will have humour and heart and darkness and sin. It will bring Italy crashing into England. With a bang.

## MA SCREENWRITING / REFLECTIVE ESSAY / NICHOLAS SEGALLA-MENSINGA

The seed idea for the pilot episode of IN THE MOUTH OF THE WOLF came after reading articles about scams that specifically target the elderly, the incidence of which rose exponentially during Covid lockdowns, and are one of the fastest growing crimes perpetrated in the United Kingdom. On reading the testimony of the elderly victims who fall prey to these type of scams – post office scams, WI FI scams, refund scams, courier scams – the overriding emotions in me were fury and sadness. The people being duped by these crimes cuts across class and gender, there is no ‘ideal victim’ based on either of those categories, and as such, it is possible to draw broad conclusions about how it impacts the injured parties. What they commonly report is that the harm done is not primarily financial (although the financial consequences can be devastating, forcing people who were retired back into the workplace), what is considered to be most harmful is the damage done to the person’s sense of self. They report feeling that whatever confidence they had before being scammed, has been replaced by feelings of vulnerability, shame, and fear that the world is a darker place than they imagined. As one woman touchingly said to a Police Officer, “After it happened, I wanted to hide away. I wanted to hide under the duvet and never come out.” What the scams rob people of is faith in themselves, and faith in humanity (the scams work by exploiting a person’s good nature and trust). My grief for the victims was immense, my fury for the perpetrators unadulterated. These are the most vulnerable members of our society being exploited by the most cynical. Who were the people that could do this type of crime? What becomes of the people it happens to? Both were questions that fired my imagination.

It is good practice as a screenwriter to read news articles for potential story material, and what I am looking for when scouring the newspapers for starting points is an emotional response. Or I should say a *strong* emotional response. Storytelling can be many things. For example, someone like Bertolt Brecht had fascinating ideas about what storytelling, believing that stories could be told that were less about producing emotion, and more focused on provoking political thought. However, my own credo is that I am predominantly motivated to tell stories that engender in the reader or viewer any one of the eight primary emotions, as defined in Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions: *Anger, Sadness, Fear, Joy,*

*Interest, Surprise, Disgust, Shame.* When reading articles about scams that target the elderly, as previously mentioned, the emotions that were especially activated in me were Anger and Sadness. This is perhaps because, while reading and listening to these heart-breaking stories, I could not help but think of my own elderly parents.

My mother was a psychotherapist, and something happened to her that left my family terrified and anxious. One of her former clients became her stalker. At the time, the police were unable to do anything unless and until her stalker became physically violent. But of course, violence is not only a physical matter. The countless late night phone calls, the thousands of emails, the letters, the letters, the letters, full of vitriol and paranoia... These things take their toll, as does the feeling of helplessness, being unable to stop something that was causing my family so much distress. Speaking personally, my animosity towards this person for what they were doing to my mother frightened me. I do not think of myself as a violent man. So it was shocking to find myself contemplating acts of violence. You cannot know how you will respond when you find yourself in unknown situations until you are in them. They might just shine a light on parts of yourself that had been hidden in the shadows, unseen. And you might not like what you find. I certainly didn't. But it was instructive, it did beg questions of me that I had been sheltered from asking, like what are the causes that could lead someone previously untouched by rage and animosity onto a darker path of violence? (Just to be clear, the problem with my mother's stalker did resolve itself in time, without any escalation into physical violence from anyone.) When I started reading articles about scams that targeted the elderly, that same emotional response was triggered in me, it prompted a remembrance of the incident with my mother, and I began to wonder if there wasn't a story somewhere in all this. A story I wanted to tell due to my own brief proximity to what I was beginning to see as its themes: How far down the path of revenge does it take before the one seeking justice becomes the one inflicting injury? Or as Nietzsche so powerfully put it, "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into the abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you."

The tentative idea became: what if an elderly matriarch in a family was scammed out of her life savings, left bereft and deeply bruised by the experience, and her family were

sent on a mission to not only try and get her money back, but to make the people who did this to their mother pay a price. The theme would be violence and retribution, the shock of an ordinary family descending into an almost Biblical narrative of revenge. With that inchoate starting point, as well as continuing to research scams and their aftermath, I began to think about what world, and what type of family, would work best to situate this story in. That is when some previous research on an unrelated matter connected in my mind with this starting point, and became a major confluence when I decided to put the two things together. The previous research was into the market town of Bedford, in the East of England. It is perhaps a little known fact, that Bedford has the highest concentration of British Italians, or those of Italian descent, in the whole United Kingdom. This is due to the documented historical circumstances that lead to a mass migration of Italian workers into Bedford in the 1950s, when the Marston Valley Brick Company found itself short of labour during the reconstruction boom of the post war years, and started recruiting Italians from the villages of Southern Italy. It took them a while to integrate, many could not stand the weather and moved back to Italy, and there were tensions and frictions between the English and the incoming Italians, but those that stayed in Bedford became an established part of the community. They built churches and businesses and schools and ties that remain to this day. Having spent time in Bedford as research for this project, I can attest to the continuation of the links to Italian heritage that remain in the town. When visiting *La Piazza* in St. Paul's Square, a café in the centre of Bedford, the language of the café proprietor and the customers switched effortlessly between English and Italian. The vegetable sellers at the market shouted out their wares in both languages. When I paid a visit to *Club Italia*, I was in the minority of people who could only speak English and not Italian as well.

It is perhaps pertinent to state here, that my own heritage and background is that I am half Brazilian and half Dutch, but born and raised in London. On the Brazilian side though, there are strong links to Italy, so much so that some of my great aunts and uncles did not speak Portuguese, but rather spoke an Italian dialect specific to Veneto, which is where they migrated from, during a period of famine in Italy. They maintained their Italianisms despite making their home in Brazil, so as well as being exposed to Brazilian culture, I was also brought up in the bosom of countless cousins in Caxias do Sul (a city which like Bedford, also has a long history of Italian immigration) who felt more Italian than

Brazilian (although there are many similarities between the two cultures). My experience of the tension between diverse parts of my heritage, between a Latin sensibility and a European one, informs how I approach telling stories. I try and write scripts that embody the experience of living life from pillar to post, push-pulled in different directions. As a writer, I feel that this quest for integration, the drive to reconcile seemingly opposing tensions, is the very stuff of drama. Characters need to be like a see-saw: they should be the crux in the middle of what they think they want, and what they really need. Being from a multi-cultural background has given me an experiential insight into this tension (although it is, I am sure, a universal tension, being push-pulled by any type of opposing poles), and is another reason it felt right to set this story in Bedford, with its own history of contrasting cultures, British and Italian, meeting in friction and in synthesis.

Of course Bedford, like most places in Britain, also has strong links to other nationalities who have migrated to Britain, like Eastern European, Caribbean, and Asian people, but there is a distinctly Italian influence to the town which I found interesting and memorable. When I reflected on what world, what family, would be best suited to situate a story in that centred a matriarch who has been scammed, I realised that using the history of Italian migration to Bedford could work perfectly as that world for that family. There are associations with Italians that could either be seen as negatively stereotypical, or else more loosely archetypal, with some broad basis in a generalised authenticity. I'm referring to associations of Italians as being passionate, warm-blooded people, the famously quick hand gestures being perhaps synonymous with that Latin heat and fire. Associations of family bonds being paramount to identity, with *Nonna* living next door, family businesses being handed down, and children being expected to stay in the same region as their parents and not travel too far afield. Associations with the Catholic church, its restrictions and keeping communities close. And of course, unavoidably so, the associations of Italy with the mafia.

The history of Italy's relationship with the mafia is well-known, and indeed is still a scourge on Italian society. Also well-known are the tropes of the mafia in film and television, which are part of an established canon in genre. THE SOPRANOS did more than even THE GODFATHER series perhaps, in bringing a nuanced and perspicacious point of view to bear on the individuals that make up the mafia in America. Britain does not have the equivalent



cultural engagement with the mafia, and of course it's true that Britain did not have an infiltration of the Italian mafia to the same extent that America did. However, it's not true that there was zero movement of the mafia in Britain. Bedford (like Glasgow) had its own 'Ice cream wars', and a number of people ended up murdered because of rivals vying for geographical supremacy, or for not giving a cut to the right people. Suffice to say though, depictions of a British Italian mafia story are almost non-existent in the UK TV landscape. This being so means that setting a story in Bedford with its links to Italy and leaning into the mafia genre, affords one an opportunity to tell an archetypal revenge story, but with an originality of place and community, due its previous lack of representation on screen. Having some knowledge of the TV commissioning process, I am aware how hard it is to get an original series greenlit, so anything that can make a project stand out as being unique, or finding a story that has not previously been told, is something to strive for. Not only that, by using the tropes of the mafia genre, I am actively seeking to create a story that will be thrilling and entertaining for an audience. This was also a factor when choosing this particular story to write as a pilot episode, because when I examine my own viewing habits, it is most often TV shows that have a genre hook which capture my attention and make me want to keep watching the series, rather than turn off after the pilot.

When Christopher Nolan was recently asked about how he felt about making his first biopic with his movie *OPPENHEIMER*, he responded by saying he didn't agree with the notion that he'd made a biopic. He said, "It's [the biopic] not a useful genre. I love working in useful genres. In this film ... it's a heist film as it applies to the Manhattan Project and a courtroom drama as it applies to the security hearings. It's very useful to look at the conventions of those genres and how they can pull in an audience ... It's [the biopic] not a useful genre in the same way that drama is not a useful genre. It doesn't give you anything to hold onto." With this project, I was attempting to do what many creators have done before me, namely to use genre conventions as a means of creating anticipatory engagement (What is going to happen next? Will they be caught? Will they find the person that did this?), whilst also telling a character driven family drama, with all the depth and three-dimensionality that goes with that. The question then of course becomes, how can one balance the two obligations? With only roughly 60 pages / minutes to work with, how can one satisfactorily hit the genre beats, and have enough space to create rounded

characters? These were the questions that confronted me as I set out to write my story, and the first thing I knew I wanted to attempt was to use a tried and tested technique, by flashing forward in the opening scene to an exciting and immediately violent event, without explaining how we got there. In doing so, the idea was to create a knowledge gap in the audience, when cutting back from that event to the present story, and the world being very distinct from the violence that had just been witnessed, thus causing the question to be asked: How will we get from here (ordinary family world) to there (a world of violence and crime)?

I used this technique in my first draft, but eventually decided against it, opting instead for unity of time (I do find that flashbacks can be detrimental to a story's momentum, by breaking that unity). Hence why the script now starts with Paolo in Bedford, and follows him in real time to Italy, where although nothing hugely violent happens, the threat of violence and the knowledge that Paolo is in danger, hopefully acts in a similar vein, by projecting the audiences' attention into the future, with the question: Will Paolo be able to turn his fortunes around, or will the Mafia Don Beppino's hand be forced and will Paolo be murdered? Cutting from this opening, with its mafia genre trappings, back into a church where an old woman, Giuliana, is waiting to confess to her priest, and then having Paolo be the man she meets (still with his suitcase, fresh from his flight back from Italy) straight afterwards, was my attempt to create a bridge in the reader's mind: These two worlds, which are meeting here, will at some point clash and invade each other (especially early on in a script, and something to aim for in the whole thing, is for there to be no irrelevant and inconsequential meetings). My hope was that this would afford me space in the next sequence to spend an adequate amount of time setting up and meeting the rest of the family, without a reader becoming bored by there being less story event happening during this sequence, but which I felt was needed to create a believable family dynamic between Giuliana and her three children.

This is something I was constantly trying to keep in balance during the writing of the pilot: the demands of genre, and the demands of character. I think the balance has not yet been fully achieved especially in regard to the character of Emilia, Giuliana's daughter. She seems to me to be the least fleshed out of all the characters, with the least obvious tensions

in her character that are apparent in some of the others. For instance, Salvatore starts the story with the tension of being a man prone to vices, in debt, and having already had a criminal conviction for money laundering. As such, he starts the story with flaws that are readily apparent, and will clearly provide story material. Similarly with Alessio, here is a man who is out to his siblings, but hiding his homosexuality from his mother; as well as this, he's in trouble at work for some as yet unspecified reason (it was to do with being found to be taking drugs), but it is enough to already know that Alessio is the lynchpin for the family's finances, and that if this were to be thrown in jeopardy, the whole family would feel its consequences. Alessio clearly has tensions that will provide storylines for future episodes, whereas Emilia is someone that either needs to be worked on in the pilot, or else she is someone to be aware of giving more attention to as I progress in writing the series.

As a writer who has so far focused his energies on writing screenplays for film, I found the move into television writing challenging, due to the vastly different nature of the structure required for each medium. Film, as is widely known, relies on the three-act structure (or the five-act structure, depending on which theorist you defer to). Film is most often centred around a protagonist who goes on a clearly defined journey, usually changing from one quality at the beginning of the film, into its opposite by the end, and either achieving or not achieving their goal. Whilst it is argued by David Yorke that TV does follow the same structure as film, just on a much wider canvas, and with many more characters, it nevertheless feels like an entirely different beast to me. My opinion is that TV is more about a family of characters, while film is about a hero's journey (as the famous book has it). As such TV has by its very nature a multiplicity of interlinking storylines, whereas film, in its most commercial and clear structural form (think: *THE GLADIATOR*, or *BILLY ELLIOT*, or *THE MATRIX*), does not have as much complexity inherent in its structure. Writing the bible for my show, proved to me how exceptionally difficult it is to think of a story that is spread over a series, and not only that, but to have in one's peripheral vision the required seeds to maintain that story over multiple seasons. It has been a steep learning curve for me, but one that I have been excited and revitalized by. A wider canvas is more daunting because there is more space to fill, but it also allows for richer hues, for more experimentation, for bigger emotions. That was how I started this project, through a big emotional reaction to articles I was reading about elderly victims being targeted for scams, how that created in me strong

feelings of empathy and outrage, and how that lead to forming connections with my own life, through the story of what happened to my mother; then finding in the Italian British community in Bedford a perfect location in which to situate this story, and how that linked to my own Latin background. All of this has taught me a great deal in finding stories that are appropriate to tell in the medium of television as distinct from finding stories to tell via film. Writing this pilot and engaging in this process has made me a bigger, broader, better writer.