

THE CHARACTERS

FRANK BAILEY. Loud-mouthed, aggressive proprietor of a Bondi Beach legal practice. In his mid-fifties he is totally self absorbed and cares little for the plight of others.

BRAD PITT. A lawyer in his forties who finds it difficult to decide if he is a man or a mouse. Completely lacking in self-confidence, he is prone to panic attacks. And no-one believes he is Brad Pitt.

FRANCES DENYER. An elegant and attractive woman in her late thirties, she is a caring and a gentle soul.

SIMON CROOKWELL. A tall, brash, young lawyer who has a take-no-prisoners attitude to everything. Best described as a rottweiler with a law degree, he will crush you as soon as he looks at you.

MAGISTRATE NEWMAN. In her fifties, this judicial officer has a no-nonsense approach to the conduct of cases and wears a permanent scowl on her face but is nicknamed 'Smiley'.

DR. JAMES NASH. A veterinary surgeon in his thirties, he is a composed and thoughtful man, not easily ruffled.

PROF. VON SCHLESSER. Of German extraction, this Chemistry Professor is deeply susicious, overly cautious and very definite and precise in his views.

DR. GAVIN ROBERTS. Australia's leading equine dermatologist is so full of himself his cup certainly runneth over. He has a commanding presence and a pompous tone in his voice.

THE SETTING

Bondi Legal is set in an office and a courtroom.

Bondi Legal was first staged in 2009 in Sydney. Photos: Lightbox Photography.

Act 1

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ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

The lights come up on a desk in the middle of the stage. Upon it are some files stacked in a pile and next to them, a telephone. Behind the desk is an executive chair and in front, two plain chairs.

In the foreground stands FRANK BAILEY, mid-fifties, wearing an Hawaiian shirt, a large straw hat and sunglasses and holding a surfboard under his arm. He looks impatiently out an imaginary window. He checks his watch.

FRANK: Where the hell is that guy?

FRANK throws his arms up in disgust. BRAD PITT, late forties, shoulders slumped and dressed in a suit and tie, appears at the open doorway, carrying an attaché case. He knocks on the door.

BRAD: Excuse me...

FRANK spins around and takes in the awkward looking stranger.

FRANK: Who the hell are you?

BRAD wanders in apprehensively.

BRAD: Um, the agency sent me.

FRANK: The agency! What the hell are you talking about? Huh?

BRAD puts his case down. FRANK confronts him, rather closely.

BRAD: *[shaking]* You see, your normal locum, Mr Hutchinson, slipped in the shower this morning. Banged his head real bad. He's in hospital.

FRANK: Jesus Christ! This is terrible. *[pause]* You mean I'm stuck with you?

BRAD: Apparently.

FRANK paces around the office.

FRANK: Great, great. Just what I need.

FRANK stops and glares at BRAD.

FRANK: And how come you couldn't get here any sooner? Huh?

BRAD: But but I was told to be here by eight o'clock and it's...

FRANK: I've got a taxi waiting outside. My plane is taking off in forty five minutes. How am I supposed to make it to the damn airport if you keep me waiting? Huh? Fine way to start a holiday.

BRAD holds his head, slightly overcome.

BRAD: I'm sorry, Mr Bailey. I just turned up when I was told and if I would have known...

FRANK: *[agitated]* Yeah, yeah. I haven't got time for your excuses.

He moves over to the desk and points at the files.

FRANK: Now, these are all the matters you'll have to deal with while I'm away.

BRAD rushes over to the desk and starts examining the files.

BRAD: I only do conveyancing, you know. Nothing else.

FRANK: Yeah, yeah, conveyancing. Whatever.

BRAD: But there aren't any file notes here. How will I know what to do?

FRANK: Jesus Christ! I haven't got time for file notes. You're a solicitor, aren't you? Can't you use your brain?

BRAD: I suppose so. I just expected...

FRANK: Yeah, well I expected to be on my way to Coffs Harbour by now. I thought paying for a locum would be a bit smoother than this. But you can't have everything, can you?

BRAD is lost for words. FRANK fishes some keys out of his pocket and hands them over to BRAD.

FRANK: All you've got to do is just hold the fort and enjoy the view.

FRANK escorts BRAD to the window. They both look out.

FRANK: How about that, huh? Bondi Beach. You can't beat it. Best place in the whole world.

BRAD: *[confused]* Then why are you going to Coffs Harbour?

FRANK: You're a nosy bastard, aren't you? *[pause]* Now don't forget to leave the keys in the top drawer at the end of the week. And most of all, don't make any mistakes!

BRAD: I'll try not to.

FRANK smiles sarcastically and touches BRAD's face with the palm of his hand gently. FRANK laughs menacingly.

FRANK: I want you to do a lot better than "try". Understood?

BRAD nods.

FRANK: Okay, I'm off.

He scurries towards the door and then halts.

FRANK: And one last thing. Don't call me unless it's an emergency. Like the place is burning down and peoples' lives are in danger. And even then I may not be interested. Got it?

BRAD: Got it.

FRANK: *[reflecting]* Why do I feel like I've forgotten something. Never mind. You can handle it.

BRAD summons up a nervous smile.

FRANK: What did you say your name was?

BRAD: It's Pitt.

FRANK: Pitt, eh? What kind of pit? Orchestra pit cherry pit, armpit? Huh?

BRAD: It's ah, Brad Pitt.

FRANK drops his head.

FRANK: Everyone's a comedian. Just don't try your little jokes on the clients. I'd prefer to keep them.

BRAD: But that's my real name.

FRANK departs, shaking his head.

FRANK: Brad Pitt! Just my luck!

BRAD returns to the files and starts straightening them into a neater pile. The phone rings.

BRAD: *[unsure]* Ah, hello, Bondi Legal. *[pause]* No, I'm sorry. Mr...ah, Mr Bailey's on leave. Can I help you? *[pause]* My name's Brad Pitt. *[pause]* Hello? Hello?

BRAD shrugs his shoulders and hangs up. He sits down behind the desk and scans the room.

BRAD: *[imitating FRANK.]* And most of all, don't make any mistakes!

He gets up.

BRAD: *[offended]* Mistakes! Hah! I'm a lawyer too, you know. *He strolls over to the imaginary window and surveys the panorama.*

BRAD: Man, and I thought Marrickville was good!

FRANCES DENYER, late thirties, elegant and oh so attractive pops her head in with a sense of urgency.

FRANCES: Excuse me, I'm looking for Mr Bailey.

BRAD turns around, hesitant.

BRAD: I'm sorry. He's on leave this week.

FRANCES: What!!! That wasn't in my horoscope.

She confronts him.

FRANCES: *[flabbergasted]* He can't be. That's absurd. Simply absurd.

BRAD: *[shrinking away]* Why's that?

FRANCES: *[frantic]* Because we've got a court hearing in just under two hours. That's why. I'm supposed to meet him here. Don't you know anything? Who are you?

BRAD steps away and clears his throat.

BRAD: I'm Mr Bailey's locum. He's on holidays.

FRANCES: *[adamant]* Well, you better get him back here right now. The universe is out of kilter and balance must be restored.

BRAD: I'm not sure that's practical.

He indicates towards a chair.

BRAD: Look, just take a seat for a minute. There must be some mistake.

FRANCES sits down.

FRANCES: Yes but I didn't make it.

BRAD sits down himself and starts searching through the pile of files.

FRANCES: *[agitated]* I'm normally very calm, you know. Very calm!

BRAD: I'm sure you are. Ah, what's the name of your matter?

FRANCES: My name's Denyer. Frances Denyer.

He keeps looking.

BRAD: It doesn't seem to be here.

FRANCES: I don't care about that. Look.

She hands him a letter.

FRANCES: See. From Mr Bailey himself. Himself! The hearing's on Monday, the 21st. Today. I should have known something crazy would happen. *[in an eery, hushed tone]* There's a full moon tonight.

BRAD coughs nervously.

BRAD: You appear to be right.

He hands back the letter.