

The BUSKER

SOUND A PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT, DOWNTOWN ON A COLD, LATE MONDAY MORNING IN EARLY WINTER. NOT MANY PEOPLE ARE ABOUT. A BUSKER PLAYS MUSIC ON GUITAR, A BLUES, "CANDY MAN" [Rev Gary Davis version]. IT CONTINUES UNTIL EVENTUALLY IT SLOWS, THEN STOPS

BUSKER BLOWS HIS NOSE, SNIFFS. TUNES GUITAR.

PONCE CALLS] No much money today eh!

BUSKER GUARDED] What?

PONCE CALLS] I'm saying no much money today!

BUSKER NON-COMMITTAL] Mm [OPENS TOBACCO TIN, ROLLS CIGARETTE]

PONCE SUDDENLY] Heh what's that! [STEPS A COUPLE OF PACES FORWARD AND STOOPS TO LIFT SOMETHING FROM THE PAVEMENT] Fucking silver paper man I dont believe it, I could have sworn that was money there. A 50 pence piece. Or even that 2 pound coin, some of them look like 50 pences, have ye noticed? Naw? [SLAPS HANDS TOGETHER, BLOWS INTO THEM] Bloody cold the day

SOUND BUSKER LIGHTS CIGARETTE, STRUMMING GUITAR QUIETLY

PONCE Heh, what"s that empty tin lying there for. Aw it's got a couple of coins in it...

BUSKER CALLS] Hey...!

PONCE Aw is it yours! Christ that's yer takings, sorry, sorry man... [PAUSE.

BUSKER IS STRUMMING

PONCE Hey are you playing there? sorry, I didnay even notice. Sorry man

BUSKER CONTINUES STRUMMING, STARTS ANOTHER BLUES

PONCE CALLS] Sorry man, I didnay realise ye were playing there... [SNIFFS]

SOUND SONG CONTINUES FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS, DECREASE VOLUME ON MUSIC TO BACKGROUND. PEOPLE ARE WALKING PAST THE BUSKER.

PONCE CALLS, AS AN ASIDE] Hey that's good... Hey man this guy's good, eh! [PAUSE] Eh missis eh? the guy's good isnt he! Aye, ye put the money in that tin there. [PAUSE] That tobacco tin, there on the ground, aye, that's where ye put the money. Nay bother missis. The guy deserves it eh! Bloody good isnt he! Yeh... [SLAPS HANDS TOGETHER, BLOWS INTO THEM TO WARM THEM, CHUCKLES] Yeh... Yeh...

SOUND THE MUSIC CONTINUES FOR A MINUTE OR SO THEN BUSKER BRINGS IT TO AN END

BUSKER SLOWLY] Yeh... [OPENS TIN, ROLLS CIGARETTE]

PONCE CALLS] Hullo...! [WALKS A COUPLE OF STEPS TOWARDS HIM

BUSKER MUTTER] Oh no... [SNIFFS, STRIKES A MATCH, LIGHTS CIGARETTE

PONCE SMACKS HIS HANDS TOGETHER, BLOWS ON THEM] [SHIVERS THEATRICALY] Bad time of the year for this game eh! The weather man, fucking murder! [BLOWS INTO HIS HANDS AGAIN] Bloody freezing int it! Ye must be cold yerself! Playing the guitar and all that... Or does it keep yer fingers warm? I suppose it keeps them warm, hitting the strings; what d'ye call it, strumming, all that strumming ye do, it probably keeps yer fingers warm! Eh? Does it? [PAUSE] Mind you, this time of year man it's carols ye should be giving them! Know what I mean, carols. That's what they're looking for man fucking Christmas carols! If ye sang them ye'd earn a few quid.

BUSKER SNIFFS. PAUSE) Yeh jock

PONCE CHEERY SURPRISE) What was that?

BUSKER Christmas carols...yeh. Could be right jock, you could be right

PONCE DELIGHTED] The accent man! Ye're a Londoner! Jesus christ! What a relief! A London voice on a Birmingham pavement man heh! Where you from?

BUSKER London's right

PONCE No kidding! Well well well. Well well well right enough! London eh! I was nay expecting that I mean, here, in the middle of Birmingham. [PAUSE] The old London accent. [PAUSE] Christ eh, that's great. Whereabouts?

BUSKER What?

PONCE Naw in London, I'm talking about whereabouts in London? Whereabouts do ye stay?

BUSKER Oh

PONCE IRONIC] Ye dont stay in Old Holborn eh!

BUSKER PUZZLED] What?

PONCE Yer tobacco man, it's the brand of tobacco I'm talking about. Old Holborn, Old Holborn tobacco. Know what I mean, it's a joke man

BUSKER MUTTERS] Jesus Christ. [ALOUD, WEARILY] Oh right, yeh... Okay [TAKES OUT TOBACCO POUCH] Catch... [THROWS IT TO HIM]

PONCE SURPRISE] Aw!

BUSKER It aint Old Holborn mate, I can't afford it, Old fucking Dustbin this is

PONCE Thanks man thanks, thanks a lot I mean I was nay eh you know I mean I was nay meaning nothing like what I was saying and that, if ye thought I was asking ye for a smoke, I was nay, I was just like eh, just making a joke

BUSKER Sure jock yeh, that's okay.

PONCE Old dustbins, that's a good yin.

BUSKER [PAUSE] I got some cigarette papers inside the pouch there

PONCE Aw, right, good... [SNIFFS, SHIVERS]

BUSKER You okay rolling that mate?

PONCE Aw sure yeh [PAUSE] My fingers just, a wee bit numb. It's with the weather and that man it's cauld.

BUSKER Yeh

PONCE I havenay lost my touch yet! I used to roll my own smokes all the time

BUSKER Mm

PONCE It's a while ago now since I switched to the ready-mades

BUSKER Yeh

PONCE I wouldnay like to tell ye when the last time was! Or even worse man where it was, know what I'm talking about!

BUSKER Yeh jock

PONCE The auld slammer eh! [PAUSE] Life, it's a funny thing, one minute ye're up the next ye're flat on yer back, one minute ye're on top of the world, the next... Well, I dont have to tell ye. [SNIFFS] Heh how long you been here? A while?

BUSKER Nah, not really jock... Hey you sure you're alright?

PONCE What...?

BUSKER The smoke, the rolling?

PONCE The rolling! Aw aye christ [AT LAST HE FINISHES ROLLING THE CIGARETTE] Finished! Look. I made it!

BUSKER IRONIC] Yeh

PONCE It'll be fine once I get it lit, it's just a wee bit kind of lumpy. Like I was saying man it's a while since I've rolled one

BUSKER It looks like a fucking pork sausage mate!

PONCE Yeh... sorry

BUSKER Here's a match! [THROWS THE BOX OF MATCHES.

PONCE CATCHES IT EASILY] Thanks man. (STRIKES MATCH AND LIGHTS CIGARETTE. ENTERS A BAD COUGHING FIT) Oh jesus christ almighty, jesus christ almighty, oh jesus... [END COUGHING FIT IN A SHORT BOUT OF SNEEZING]

BUSKER Alright Jock?

PONCE SNIFFLING] What a state! [SHIVERS] It's that first drag of the day man once it hits the sinuses. Always the same so it is. Nectar but. Nectar! [SNIFFS] Where's my hankie! [SEARCHES POCKETS] I need to give the nose a wipe... (BLOWS HIS NOSE) Where would we be without the auld handkerchiefs eh! What an invention!

BUSKER TUNING GUITAR

PONCE That's science for ye. I missed it when I was at school. Ye didnay get science at the school where I went. What I would've liked was Domestic science, what the lassies got, how to cook a pot of soup and boil an egg, then ye got sewing and darning, darn yer socks and all that, learn how to sew handkerchiefs together. My maw used to make handkerchiefs. She'd rip up an auld sheet or a pair of pyjamas or something then sew round the edges and make a pile of hankies. Good eh! Eh? What do ye think? [PAUSE]

BUSKER TRIES TO IGNORE HIM, TUNING GUITAR

PONCE Yeh, in my day it was the lassies got Domestic Science, needlework and cookery

classes. Eh? Discrimination, sexual discrimination. [PAUSE] Us boys got metalwork and woodwork. Fucking bunsen burners. It's all changed nowadays, nowadays they get physics. Fucking astrophysics, whatever that is! Go to school and ye get sending a rocket to the moon, know what I mean, changed days right enough, how would ye like to be a kid nowadays? Eh? [PAUSE]

BUSKER Mm [TRIES TO IGNORE HIM, STILL TUNING GUITAR]

PONCE So what's that ye're doing man? [PAUSE] Is that you tuning yer guitar? I see them doing that, guitarists, that's what they do. Eh? The auld tuning man eh? [SNIFFS] Aye, christ. (BLOWS HIS NOSE) Excuse me. So... [PAUSE] So how you doing? You earning? [PONCE GIVES THE TOBACCO TIN ON THE GROUND A LITTLE KICK AND THERE ARE COINS INSIDE IT].

BUSKER Hey...! There's money in that tin, my money.

PONCE QUICKLY] Just looking man just looking. Sorry... Mm. One pound twenty. Fucking hell, is that all ye've made! [PAUSE] Eh, one pound twenty!

BUSKER Yeh jock, bleeding hopeless

PONCE Christ ye're no kidding! What's up at all?

BUSKER What's that jock?

PONCE I'm just meaning because that's all ye've made. One pound twenty! I mean christ...!

BUSKER Yeh...

PONCE That's murder man know what I mean, fucking terrible

BUSKER Yeh. (STILL TINKERING WITH GUITAR. NOW BEGINS THE NEXT SONG, ANOTHER BLUES, SLOWER)

PONCE CALLS] Yeh, play that guitar, yeh, on ye go man [GENUINE ADMIRATION] Brilliant, brilliant! Aye...

SOUND THE MUSIC CONTINUES, THEN DECREASE VOLUME TO BACKGROUND

PONCE [CALLS] This guy's great int he! [PAUSE] There's his tin ower there. That's where ye put the money! [PAUSE, BLOWS INTO HANDS] Miserable bastard. Gone ya miserable bastard. [CALLS] Heh you ya miserable bastard! Christ there's another yin, nay appreciation. Miserable bunch of bastards. [ANNOYANCE] Heh the guy's playing there man know what I mean, season of goodwill and all that! There's the tin there! Miserable bastard

SOUND MUSIC CONTINUES

PONCE I dont believe that, no putting any money in! Miserable bunch of bastards. Hey...! [CALLS ABOVE THE MUSIC VOLUME] I'm no stealing yer tin man I'm just going to do some collecting for ye! Okay, I'm just going to do yer collecting!

BUSKER LOW MUTTER] Jesus christ [CONTINUES MUSIC]

PONCE SHAKES TOBACCO TIN AND THE FEW COINS RATTLE, CALLS ABOVE THE MUSIC] Just doing yer collecting man!

SOUND MUSIC TO BACKGROUND

PONCE Naw the guy's totally brilliant I mean totally.

SOUND COINS DROP INTO TOBACCO TIN.

PONCE AGGRESSIVELY) Couple of bob for the singer john, eh, couple of bob for the singer? [MONEY RATTLING] Just put it in the tin... What're ye daft? Just put it in the fucking tin [PAUSE, CALLS) Right ye are, thanks, thanks a lot. (RATTLES MONEY) The singer missis, couple of bob for the singer... (RATTLES MONEY) Alright son, aye the guy's great int he! What about a couple of bob! [AGGRESSIVELY] A couple of bob just! Miserable wee bastard. [RATTLING TIN) Ah come on dear eh? Couple of bob for the singer. Eh dear?

BUSKER STOPS SINGING BUT CONTINUES PLAYING GUITAR.

PONCE TOBACCO TIN RATTLING, AGGRESSIVELY] Come on! Come on! Eh? [PAUSE] Heh he might look like a busker but this is a poor forgotten son of song ye're talking abou. Big time, he used to make records! Naw, no kidding ye! [TOBACCO TIN RATTLING. HE LAUGHS) Well done, ta, that's generous, thanks a lot! What're ye going to the dancing! [LAUGHS] Only kidding dear! [PAUSE] Couple of bob for the singer john couple of bob for the singer! (AGGRESSIVELY) Ah come on for christ sake, eh! fucking festive season man know what I mean!

SOUND BUSKER IS NO LONGER SINGING BUT CONTINUES PLAYING GUITAR.
TOBACCO TIN RATTLING LOUDLY

PONCE DISGUSTEDLY] Christ almighty!

SOUND MUSIC FINISHES

PONCE Eh missis? Eh...? (RATTLES TIN AGAIN] Eh?

SOUND BUSKER LEANING ELBOWS ON GUITAR, NOW GETTING OUT HIS
TOBACCO POUCH. ROLLS A SMOKE

PONCE Stopping for a smoke eh? [PAUSE] Aye, you've been rolling them for a while!
Experienced fingers [SLIGHT RATTLE OF COINS. PONCE IS STILL HOLDING TIN] Nay
need for these rolling machines with you about! [CHUCKLES]

BUSKER Mm [SNIFFS. STRIKES MATCH. EXHALES SMOKE]

PONCE Yeh... [BLOWS INTO ONE HAND. COINS RATTLE] Aye! Fucking could yin this
morning eh! I thought we'd be needing the auld sledges! Snow drifts and all that. Polar bears!
[LAUGHS. MONEY RATTLING INSIDE THE TIN] The auld reindeers and that, eh!

BUSKER PAUSE. THEN SUDDENLY] Can you sing jock?

PONCE What...?

BUSKER Can you sing?

PONCE Can I sing? (PAUSE) Eh...

BUSKER No?

PONCE Eh naw, naw... (SNIFFS) It's no that man eh...no really, I'm just no into that eh
country and western stuff. Nay harm to ye man I'm just no into it

BUSKER Blues jock blues I dont sing that country crap. (CLEARS THROAT, HE SPITS]

PONCE Aye. (SNIFFS) I like to sing I mean we all like to sing, the bath and all that - if ye're lucky enough to have one! Naw what it is with me man I seem to get stuck with the same ones. Know what I mean man Dell Shannon, I've been trying to sing that fucking Swiss Maid for years! [CHUCKLES] Auld Dell, ye heard of him?

BUSKER VAGUELY) Yeh, sure

PONCE Maybe a bit before your time right enough.

BUSKER NON COMMITTAL] A bit, yeh...

PONCE It's these fucking yodels get me. I just cannay get it right. It aye sounds stupid! (SNIFFS) Just bloody stupid! [NOW HE SORT OF SEMI-SINGS THE FOLLOWING VERSE

One time, a long time ago

On a mountain in Switzerland yodel odel oh

There lived, a fair young maiden

Lovely but lonely yodel oh oh

One day, her papa said, you'll go,

Down from the hills in the valley

(STOPS) Ah fuck it!

SOUND SLIGHT RATTLE OF THE COINS IN TIN

PONCE AMUSED] Look, I'm still holding yer money tin!

BUSKER DEADLY SERIOUS] Yeh jock so you are.

PONCE Sorry

BUSKER Yeh

PONCE RETURNS TOBACCO TIN OF COINS TO THE GROUND, BLOWS INTO CUPPED HANDS] Time is it?

BUSKER The time! It's getting on jock, getting on...

SOUND QUIET AND SLOW STRUMMING OF GUITAR

PONCE SHIVERS. PAUSE. RUBS HANDS] Heh I can sing that *Kelly*. Know that *Kelly*, the old Del Shannon song?

BUSKER Oh yeh

PONCE I'd gie it a go! Aye, I'd give it a go.

BUSKER Mmm [CONTINUES QUIET STRUMMING OF GUITAR

PONCE I mean if you played the tune man... (MORE LOUDLY) I'm saying if you played the tune man I'd give it a bash

BUSKER STOPS STRUMMING ABRUPTLY. IRRITATION) What's that jock?

PONCE *Kelly*. I'm saying I'd gie it a buzz man, I know the words and all that, so I'd gie it a go, if you played the tune I mean... (SNIFFS) It's up to you - if ye wanted...it's up to you (SNIFFS)

BUSKER RESUMES STRUMMING

PONCE MUTTERED WHISPER] Aye well fuck you too

BUSKER CALLS) Know any Dylan jock?

PONCE Dylan?

BUSKER Yeh

PONCE Yeh. Course. Bob Dylan. (SNIFFS) Only problem I find with him man is the words and that I mean I dont mean they're bad and that man I just eh what I'm talking about, trying to remember them man, that's what I mean, the way sometimes ye dont remember them man, the words - ye ever find that? I mean ye think ye know the fucking things and then ye start to sing it, and do ye! Do ye fuck! (SNORTS) Ye know the song too ye know it, then ye start to sing it man and ye dont know it. That's what good about the karaoke, they give ye the words, ye've got them all written down, that's what I like about it man know what I mean, they give ye the words, it's fucking half the battle.

BUSKER BEGINS AN INSTRUMENTAL TUNE.

PONCE CALLS) I'll give it a go but! [PAUSE] Something by Bob Dylan. Okay? I'll give it a go!

BUSKER IGNORES HIM, CONTINUES INSTRUMENTAL.

PONCE LOUDLY) I'm saying I'll give it a go man - something by Bob Dylan! What will you play the tune or what?

BUSKER PAUSES IN PLAY) What'd you say jock?

PONCE Are ye ready? (SNIFFS]

BUSKER IRONIC] What're you gonna sing one jock?

PONCE Aye, sure. [SNIFFS] I'll sing that yin eh... Christ! Cannay even mind its fucking name now! Eh...

BUSKER IRONIC] By Dylan?

PONCE DEFENSIVELY] Yeh fucking Dylan, sure fucking Dylan man [PAUSE] I just cannay remember the name of the damn thing

BUSKER Just sing it

PONCE Just sing it?

BUSKER Yeh

PONCE PAUSE) Bare you mean?

BUSKER Well yeh jock. And I'll follow you in. Alright? Once you've kicked off. You just kick off. Alright?

PONCE Aw, okay, yeh. (SNIFFS, RUBS HANDS TOGETHER]

BUSKER PAUSE, STILL WAITING] So you just sing jock yeh?

PONCE Aw sorry. Yeh, I just sing, aye, sure... [CLEARS THROAT. SUDDENLY SHOUTS)
Tambourine Man!

BUSKER Right jock

PONCE Imagine forgetting that, Tambourine Man! [PAUSE] Okay. Okay. What is it, one two
one two... [SNIFFS. PAUSE]

Hey Mister Tambourine Man play a song for me
I'm not sleepy and there aint no place I'm going to
Hey Mister Tambourine Man play a song for me

DIRECTION THIS SONG BY PONCE SHOULD NOT BE SUNG AS A PARODY, AND
NO IRONY. PONCE DOES HIS BEST. BUSKER JUST PLAYS ALONG TO HIM, NEITHER
IRONIC, NOR DISASSOCIATING HIMSELF FROM PONCE.

BUT GRADUALLY THE SONG BECOMES WAYWARD THROUGH PONCE'S FAILURE
WITH THE WORDS, HE DOESN'T KNOW THE WORDS, IS SOON REPEATING BITS,
THEN HE HUMS TO FILL IN THE GAPS. HE GETS SELF CONSCIOUS. EVENTUALLY
STOPS. BUSKER CONTINUES AS INSTRUMENTAL, THEN BRINGS TUNE TO A
CONCLUSION

PONCE Hey man, it was better with me just doing the collecting for ye. [PAUSE] No think
so?

BUSKER Mm [STRIKES MATCH, LIGHTS CIGARETTE, EXHALES

PONCE Eh? We no better just sticking to that? Eh? What about it man, what do ye think? We
no better sticking to that? You do the singing and the rest of it, I'll hold the tin man collect the
dough, know what I mean? Eh? We were getting no a bad turn that way! Eh man? What d'ye
think?

BUSKER BEGINS PICKING OUT A TUNE

PONCE CALLS) No fancy it?

BUSKER IRRITATION] What's that jock?

PONCE I'm saying if you just do the singing man, I'll do the collecting, know what I mean,

like we were doing earlier on. We were doing okay...the auld tobacco tin and that, we were making a few bob

BUSKER Nah! [CONTINUES PICKING THE TUNE)

PONCE You could even just do that man know what I mean, that instrumental the way you're doing

BUSKER IRONIC GRUNT] Instrumental

PONCE Yeh man, you dont need to bother singing

BUSKER It's songs they like jock!

PONCE Oh sure, I know that... This time of year man that's what I was saying, Christmas carols and all that - it's red nose reindeer time!

BUSKER Yeh... [DOES A SORT OF VIRTUOSO FLOURISH WITH THE JINGLE BELLS TUNE]

PONCE APPLAUDS] Brilliant! That is brilliant! No kidding ye man I mean all you need to do is the intrumental. I'll get the dough off the punters. No danger.[PAUSE] That is just brilliant... Eh... So...I'll just get the tin man. [PAUSE. BENDS TO GET TIN FROM GROUND, COINS RATTLE SLIGHTLY

BUSKER SUDDEN COMMAND) No! [PAUSE] Leave it

PONCE HEAVILY IRONIC) Very sorry...

BUSKER Yeh yeh. [SNIFFS] How much I got there jock?

PONCE Eh... [NUDGES TOBACCO TIN WITH HIS TOE] Eh...ten, twenty...sixty eh...[RAPID COUNTING] do do do do do do [PAUSE] Three quid I think nearly, yeh, about three quid, maybe three and a half

BUSKER Three and a half?

PONCE About that

BUSKER Not bad, not bad

PONCE Yeh, remember that wee lassie with the yellow coat man she dropped in a pound! A pound! (AMUSED) I think she fancied me! Rare pair of legs by the way. I thought she might've come back. [PAUSE] She might do yet. Ye never know... Heh man fancy a couple of rolls or something? Eh? Ye hungry? Pork pie or something?

BUSKER Just had me breakfast jock!

PONCE Breakfast!

BUSKER Yeh

PONCE Breakfast... Hh!

BUSKER Yeh... [PICKS OUT ANOTHER PIECE, PLAYS FOR SEVERAL SECONDS

PONCE IRRITATED, CALLS) I'll tell you something man, I've no eaten for days. I'm talking about days. And I'm no kidding ye! Bar a tin of fucking sardines. That's the whack man, that's it, a tin of sardines. No kidding ye man that's the fucking truth, that's all I've had. Terrible! Naw I mean that's how when you talk about breakfast... [BUSKER CONTINUES PLAYING. MORE IRRITATION) Tell ye something man! you and yer fucking breakfast man I mean christ! Breakfast! You really dont know, you just do not know. Breakfast! Fucking breakfast man. What world do you live in... [PAUSE] Anyway...[SLIGHT RATTLE OF COINS IN TIN] I'll just do yer collecting

BUSKER COMMANDS] No [STOPS PLAYING]

PONCE ANGRILY) What's wrong with you christ!

BUSKER Nothing wrong with me mate [RESUMES PLAYING, AGGRESSIVELY]

PONCE AGGRESSIVELY) Eh, is there something wrong with you?

BUSKER IGNORES HIM

PONCE ANGRILY) I'm asking if there's something wrong with you?

BUSKER STOPS PLAYING] Leave it out jock

PONCE Leave it out! Leave what fucking out? (PAUSE) If it wasna for me you'd have forty pence in that fucking tin there. Cause that's all ye had till I arrived! (LESS AGGRESSIVELY) Naw man, seriously, if it wasnt for me that's all ye'd have, no kidding ye.

BUSKER IMPATIENT] Yeh yeh yeh, yeh yeh yeh. Yeh jock yeh, I know all that, if you hadnt've come along I'd still be out there a bleeding pauper, yeh, I know all that..

PONCE PEEVED] Yeh well aye, ye'd still have that forty pence just that's all I'm saying. They were giving ye fuck all till I arrived man, the punters, they werenay giving ye nothing. No till I started collecting the dough and aw that man, that's all I'm saying

BUSKER Yeh yeh yeh collecting; collecting the bleeding dough, that's the problem jock innit

PONCE What?

BUSKER Too heavy

PONCE Too heavy? How d'ye mean?

BUSKER Too heavy mate. Ten more minutes of you and the Man'd be here, sticking me for extortion

PONCE The Man?

BUSKER Yeh jock the Man.

PONCE You talking about the busies?

BUSKER SNIFFS] Here...want a smoke [THROWS HIM THE TOBACCO POUCH

PONCE Yeh [CATCHES IT] Ta

BUSKER It just aint the way jock . [IRONIC] You know the name they got for that?

PONCE Who the Busies?

BUSKER Yeh. They got a name for what you're doing. [CHUCKLES] Extortion, jock, that's what they call it

PONCE Extortion! What does that mean christ extortion? it's no as if I was touching them man I mean I wasnay touching them or nothing... Or threatening them, naybody could say I was threatening them. Fucking cops man they're paranoiac... That isnay extortion what I was doing

BUSKER Yeh well... [SLIGHT COUGH, NOW IGNORES PONCE. RESUMES TUNING, FOOTERING WITH GUITAR

PONCE SNIFFS] Heh eh look man I think eh, I mean, I think I'm christ due something I mean eh I think I'm due something. [NUDGES TOBACCO TIN WITH HIS FOOT]

BUSKER IMMEDIATELY) Take a duece

PONCE Naw naw I'm no due that much, a duece... Not at all, a pound just, I'll take a pound

BUSKER Take the duece jock

PONCE PAUSE] Ye sure?

BUSKER IRONIC] Take the duece

PONCE Aye well okay then but I'm starving man, really, no kidding ye. Fucking ages since I've ate anything... [LIFTS TIN, COUNTS CONTENTS AND SHOWS IT TO BUSKER] Two quid, see, okay?

BUSKER WEARILY] Right jock yeh

PONCE RETURNING TIN TO THE GROUND] Listen eh I was going to ask...ye wanting something yerself? [PAUSE] Want a roll and sausage or...?

BUSKER Nah jock, if it's all the same

PONCE Ye sure?

BUSKER I'm sure

PONCE It's no bother, know what I mean, it's no a problem, if ye wanted something... Heh what about a bottle of milk then? Or tea! A mug of tea, what about a mug of tea man there's a cafe round the corner? A mug of hot tea man it'll heat ye up and that for fuck sake ye must be freezing, yer hands and all that, they must be about numb, yer auld fingers and that, they must be about falling off...!

BUSKER GENUINE RESPONSE) Yeh jock, a drop of tea, that would be nice. Yeh.

PONCE SURPRISE] What ye want one?

BUSKER Yeh, okay?

PONCE HESITANT] Aye christ nay bother... (PAUSE) Mug of tea eh?

BUSKER Nice, yeh.

PONCE SNIFFS, SLIGHTLY PEEVED) So I'll buy ye it out of this, the two quid ye gave me...?

BUSKER BEGINS ANOTHER BLUES

PONCE PAUSE. CALLS] Right then I'll away for tea, I'll be back in five minutes!

BUSKER SINGING.

TIME ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER

BUSKER SINGS A DIFFERENT SONG

BUSKER WHISPERS] Aw jesus christ [CONTINUES PLAYING]

PONCE Heh! How ye doing mate? Alright! [SLAPS HANDS TOGETHER] Aye, earlier on

man.. [BUT HE STOPS SPEAKING. THE BUSKER SINGS MORE LOUDLY.

BUSKER BRINGS SONG TO A CLOSE.

PONCE CALLS] Aye, earlier on man, just after I left ye, I bumped into this friend of mine, hadna seen him for a couple of weeks, wound up I had to go a message, a wee bit of business and that.

BUSKER INTERRUPTS, PLAYING MORE OF THE SONG

PONCE SHOUTS ABOVE THE MUSIC] So then while I was away there was this big pile up of traffic and then crowds of folk and just terrible busy so then... [BUT THE MUSIC TOO LOUD, SO HE GIVES UP, MUTTERS) Bastard! [MUSIC CONTINUES. PONCE WALKS A PACE. SLAPS HANDS TOGETHER, SHIVERS, BLOWS INTO HANDS]

BUSKER BEGINS NEW SONG, AN UPBEAT ONE, AGAIN BY DYLAN; EG "NEW MORNING", "IF NOT FOR YOU"

PONCE WHISPERS] Heh who's she... who's she... [LOW APPRECIATIVE WHISTLE] Heh, she's dancing! [SNAPS FINGERS. WHISPERS] Who's she...

BUSKER CONTINUES SINGING

PONCE WHISPERS] Heh she really is dancing... [CALLS] On ye go honey...

LADY CONTINUES DANCING, HAND CLAPPING, ENJOYING THE MUSIC

PONCE CALLS] Aye the guy's good int he! [PAUSE] He's good int he!

LADY He's bloody brilliant.

PONCE SURPRISE] Yeh... [CLAPS HANDS TO RHYTHM]

LADY He's bloody brilliant alright

PONCE HESITANT, EXCITED] You from Glasgow?

LADY Shh, no the now [CONTINUES DANCING, HAND CLAPPING.

PONCE CALLS] Sorry!

LADY OCCASIONALLY JOINS IN ON THE LINE ENDINGS OF THE SONG. SHE KNOWS IT WITHOUT KNOWING IT VERY WELL.

PONCE ATTEMPTS TO JOIN IN WITH LADY, LINE ENDINGS ETC. BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE HE HAS NEVER HEARD THE SONG IN HIS LIFE BEFORE

PONCE WHISPERS] Christ what's she doing with her handbag? She's putting her handbag on the ground, it's so she can dance better! Hoh! [CALLS] Aye the guy's good int he! He definitely is good

BUSKER BRINGS SONG TO ITS END, IN A VIRTUOSO FLOURISH THEN STOPS. LAUGHS BRIEFLY] Ha

LADY A LITTLE BREATHLESS] That was great!

BUSKER QUIETLY] Thanks... [STRIKES MATCH, EXHALES]

PONCE PAUSE, CALLS) Aye, he is good him - makes ye wonder how he's still playing at street corners! know what I mean, pedestrian bloody precincts, there's better gigs!

LADY Ah well, some ye win, some ye lose

PONCE Aye, true, true enough

LADY PAUSE, MURMURS) Some people dont bother

PONCE Aye...

LADY PAUSE) You got a smoke?

PONCE Eh aye, yeh, yeh... [LOOKS IN HIS POCKETS] I've got one somewhere... I've got that many pockets! Here!

LADY Thanks. [PAUSE. DISAPPOINTED] Aw it's a roll up.

PONCE Yeh...

LADY It's all lumpy, look. And it's been lit already...!

PONCE Eh aye... (SNIFFS)

LADY Ye got a light?

PONCE Aw aye. Aye. [CALLS] Hey you got a match there man?

BUSKER CLEARS THROAT, TOSSES PONCE THE MATCHBOX. PONCE HAS DIFFICULTY CATCHING IT THIS TIME .

PONCE Ta... [STRIKES MATCH] here ye are

LADY GETS A LIGHT, PUFFS, EXHALES] Thanks.

PONCE CALLS] Here [THROWS MATCHES BACK TO BUSKER]

LADY CALLS TO BUSKER) Look, I'm reduced to smoking roll-ups now! [IRONIC] So are you right enough.

BUSKER NON COMMITAL] Yeh...

LADY I liked that song you sang there

BUSKER Thanks love.

PONCE CALLS] Dylan!

BUSKER SARCASTIC, TO LADY] Just if you dont know

LADY Pardon?

BUSKER Nothing

LADY Tch, the bloody cigarette's gone out

PONCE PAUSE. CALLS FIRMLY) Heh man, you got a light there? The lady's fag's gone out!

BUSKER SIGHS LOUDLY. HE FLINGS THE MATCHBOX TO PONCE

PONCE CATCHES BOX] Ta. [STRIKES A MATCH. PONCE TOSSES THE BOX BACK TO BUSKER)

LADY Thanks. [CALLS] Hey pal you should be on records!

BUSKER AMUSED] Who me?

LADY Ye should be, do ye know that? [IRONIC] Top of the Pops...! [DANCES A FEW STEPS TO ILLUSTRATE, ACCOMPANIES HERSELF WITH HAND CLAPS, AND HUMS] Doo Di do di do do do do do.

PONCE LAUGHS] On ye go!

LADY STOPS] Naw but I'm serious. Ye're definitely good enough to be doing yer own records.

PONCE Course he is. Trouble is but with the telly and aw that, they're no wanting real singers. Same with records and that, they're no interested. Maybe if he was in a band or something.

BUSKER CHUCKLES QUIETLY

PONCE TO LADY) Course ye've got to get the right songs and that I mean, if ye've no got the right songs...eh, I mean, ye'd be as well chucking it. There's too many folk into it these days, ye've got to have some kind of thing, a gimmick or whatever

LADY VAGUELY) Yeh, I suppose...

PONCE It's like everything else. A guy I knew had the one leg just. But that was good, he got on the telly with it and that. So he got his publicity. It was like a selling point.

LADY Mmm. (LAUGHS BRIEFLY) Eh what's that one again? Eh...

PONCE What?

LADY That song, I'm trying to remember. It's a song I used to like...

PONCE Eh...

LADY Oh God it's eh... Tch, what was it again

PONCE PAUSE] It'll come to ye.

LADY Eh...

PONCE I mean is it a new one or what?

LADY (SIGHS) Tch! Mamma Carra, Mamma Carra! (NB SHE SAYS IT LIKE "MAMMA MIA")

PONCE PUZZLED] Pardon?

LADY (SIGHS) Tch. I can't smoke this auld roll-up! Hey pal you got a decent smoke there at all?

BUSKER PAUSE) I'm rolling them love.

LADY I did notice.

BUSKER Yeh? [AMUSED] So what you asking for?

LADY (CHUCKLES) I just meant if ye could roll one for me. This one he gave me, I can't get a draw out it

PONCE (SARCASTIC) Very sorry

BUSKER Watch it love you might hurt his feelings

LADY NOTING HIS ACCENT] Hey you're no a Birminging, a Birminghammer?

PONCE He's from London. He's a Cockney. And you're from up the road yourself eh? same as me

LADY More or less

PONCE So what ye doing in this neck of the woods?

LADY What do you want to know for?

PONCE Pardon?

LADY I'm saying what d'you want to know for?

PONCE SNIFFS) How do ye mean?

LADY TO BUSKER) He's like the bloody police isnt he!

BUSKER Yeh...

PONCE The police! Me!

LADY Aye you!

PONCE That's a bloody good yin. [BLOWS INTO HIS HANDS]

BUSKER TINKERS ON HIS GUITAR

LADY QUIETLY] Oh I remember it now. [SINGS]

I'll be with you, in apple blossom time,

I'll be with you, in apple blossom time.

Oh I'll be with you, in apple blossom time

PONCE Aw that one! Yeh!

LADY QUIETLY] My mammy used to sing that.

PONCE Yer mammy?

BUSKER TINKERS ON HIS GUITAR

LADY CALLS) Hey pal where's yer case?

BUSKER What's that love?

LADY Yer case. For yer guitar. Ye no supposed to have one? I thought ye usually kept them there at yer feet so's the people could put in their money?

BUSKER Yeh

LADY Ye no got one?

BUSKER No

LADY PAUSE) You did have one but eh?

BUSKER Sure

PONCE Did somebody thieve it?

BUSKER PAUSE) Yeh jock, as a matter of fact

LADY Aw that's awful

PONCE Was there money in it at the time like?

BUSKER No

PONCE NODS) Was it out in the open or what?

BUSKER IRRITATED] What's that?

PONCE Naw I mean yer case and that man, for yer guitar, when it got stole, was it out in the open or what? (PAUSE) Was it in the house?

BUSKER SIGHS, THEN CHALLENGING) How d'you mean jock?

PONCE I'm just wondering

BUSKER AGGRESSIVELY] What you wondering jock

PONCE Eh just if it was out in the open, broad daylight and all that, I mean when ye were actually working, know what I mean, if ye were singing at the time.

LADY PAUSE) See you and yer questions! I'm no kidding ye, you're worse than the bloody police!

PONCE What! Me? Naw I'm no, what ye talking about? Worse than the police! Not at all christ what d'ye mean?

LADY You know what I mean.

PONCE Naw I dont

BUSKER Hey love... Your bag there... Dont leave it on the ground like that.

LADY Oh my bag!

PONCE Christ aye hen ye've got to be careful round here

BUSKER [SNIFFS] Somebody might steal it

LADY I'm just stupid at times [LIFTS HER HANDBAG, SNAPS IT OPEN LIKE SHE'S CHECKING THE CONTENTS]

PONCE A lady's handbag eh!

LADY Huh

PONCE AMUSED] Always full of stuff!

LADY What?

PONCE DEFENSIVELY] Naw, I'm just saying

LADY I know what ye're saying. [TO BUSKER] Thanks pal

BUSKER Yeh you're okay love

LADY PAUSE] So why are ye no playing? Look, ye're missing all the folk, they're just walking by

BUSKER Yeh well.

LADY CHEERILY] Come on, start playing

BUSKER Nah

LADY No time for hanging about, no in this life.

PONCE She's right man. Everybody going by ye's going by ye. Know what I'm talking about? [SLAPS HANDS TOGETHER] All that money?

BUSKER What's that jock?

PONCE People arenay gauny give ye money if ye're no playing

BUSKER Oh yeh?

PONCE No kidding ye man I mean the lady's right, ye dont earn the wages by sitting on yer arse...

BUSKER HARSHLY) Where's me tea jock?

PONCE Yer tea...?

BUSKER Yeh me fucking tea jock!

PONCE No need to swear man there's a lady there christ!

BUSKER Where's me fucking tea?

PONCE CALLS TO LADY) His tea! I was gauny bring him a mug of tea and I forgot

BUSKER Yeh you forgot!

PONCE ANGRILY) Aye I forgot aye, big deal eh. big bloody deal

BUSKER DISGUST) Aah!

PONCE What will I go and get it the bloody now or what!

BUSKER PAUSE) I wish you'd just fucking piss off altogether mate. (PAUSE) Yeh, I wish you'd just fucking piss off.

LADY SIGHS, MURMURS) Oh oh...

PONCE You talking to me?

BUSKER You're a ponce mate

PONCE AGGRESSIVE) What d'ye mean?

BUSKER You're a ponce mate that's what I mean!

PONCE Dont you call me a ponce. Heh you! (LOUDLY) Dont you fucking call me a ponce. Hey, I'm talking to you!

LADY WHISPER] Quiet

PONCE Naw

LADY Sssh...

PONCE Ah well nay wonder! [ANGRILY] Calling me a ponce like that and I'm here doing the business for him man I'm doing his collecting, and he's turning round and calling me a ponce! A fucking ponce! Calling me a ponce, know what I mean, a ponce! I dont take that from naybody

LADY Hey...calm down

PONCE Naw

LADY Ssh

PONCE Ah it's no bloody fair, it's no bloody fair.

LADY WALKS A PACE TO BUSKER) Hey pal, you're a bit out of order there eh! Surely? I mean he was doing yer collecting.

BUSKER Aw yeh, yeh, collecting, yeh

LADY SIGHS AND LAUGHS QUIETLY) Mamma Carra! Mamma Carra...

PONCE Heh what does that mean, Mamma Carra?

LADY Never you mind what it means

BUSKER RESUMES TUNING GUITAR

PONCE Is it like Mamma Mia?

LADY Ssh.

PONCE IRONIC] Sorry

LADY Heh, you going to give us a song. [PAUSE, INSISTENT] Eh? What about a song?

BUSKER ANGRY) Look love this is my work, alright, my work. Like I'm trying to bleeding work here, you know? Work?

LADY Aw now listen pal dont start that patter with me!

PONCE CALLS) I mean he cannay even sing! That's the best of it. It wouldnt matter if he could sing, but he cannay, he cannay! Okay he's no a bad guitarist, fair enough, but see they fucking songs he sings man they're rotten. No kidding ye they are fucking rotten!

BUSKER LOSING HIS TEMPER) Yeh! Yeh! Well just fucking piss off then you cunt, just fucking piss off!

PONCE What?

BUSKER You heard

LADY SIGHS. CALLS TO BUSKER) Hey, can you play any reggae?

BUSKER CONTROLLING HIMSELF WITH DIFFICULTY] What's that love?

LADY Can ye play any reggae? (PAUSE. DOES A COUPLE OF DANCE STEPS) I love that reggae... (SIGHS. LAUGHS TO HERSELF, SINGS)

Red red wine...

Stay close to me

All I can be

AND CONTINUES SINGING, SWAYING TO RHYTHM)

PONCE On ye go hen! On ye go!

SOUND LADY DANCING SLOWLY. HUMMING THE TUNE. NOW QUIETER, SELF ABSORBED.

PONCE Good dancer too, some rhythm she's got [CHUCKLES] On ye go hen

BUSKER PAUSE THEN CALLS SOFTLY) Hey love...better watch it eh...the dancing and all that. Just the people walking by. Here, have a smoke

LADY Thanks. Aw no another roll-up!

BUSKER What!

LADY AMUSED) Only joking.

BUSKER TO PONCE] Here, you as well!

PONCE Aw thanks man

BUSKER Light... [STRIKES MATCH

LADY EXHALES] Thanks pal

PONCE EXHALES] Ta [SNIFFS, BRIEF COUGH]

BUSKER Watch you dont choke jock [CHUCKLES]

PONCE Aye very funny

BUSKER Yeh, life is funny

LADY SHIVERS) Oh I'm glad it isnay raining

PONCE Mind you hen if it was raining it wouldnay be so bloody cauld [SLAPS HANDS TOGETHER

LADY I dont think it's that bad.

PONCE Christ it's freezing! (BLOWS INTO CUPPED HAND)

LADY You must be cold blooded!

PONCE SERIOUSLY) Naw, I'm no, I'm just...

LADY CHUCKLES

PONCE The joke's on me eh!

BUSKER Unusual

PONCE Thanks

LADY PAUSE) Bloody Birmingham, I cant be bothered with it

BUSKER Not like it here love?

LADY SIGHS) I wish I could go home

PONCE You're no the only one. How long ye been here?

LADY Will ye stop asking these questions

PONCE Oh sorry. (IRONIC

LADY SARCASTIC] Dont mention it [PAUSE] You going to sing?

BUSKER Nah

LADY How no?

BUSKER SIGHS) Ah! Just not right love, it's just not right.

LADY Och! (LAUGHS, AND, SINGS) I'll be with you in apple blossom time...

PONCE On ye go hen!

BUSKER LAUGHS] Yeh

LADY Aye I'm daft enough

PONCE Heh yous I'll sing.

BUSKER CHUCKLES) That fucking *Swiss Maid* jock!

PONCE Naw, serious. I'll sing that one *Kelly*

BUSKER *Kelly*...

PONCE D'ye know it?

BUSKER BEGINS PICKING THE TUNE IMMEDIATELY AND SINGS THE FIRST LINE)
Kelly and I meet secretly

LADY LAUGHS) Aw *Kelly*! I know *Kelly*.

PONCE Aye, auld Dell Shannon

LADY I've no heard that yin for years! Good on ye!

BUSKER CHUCKLES] Yeh!

LADY On ye go

PONCE PAUSE) So what will I sing it or what?

BUSKER Yeh jock why not

PONCE Okay [SNIFFS. PAUSE] Will I just sing it bare?

BUSKER No no - no mate. You just kick off, I'll come on in, I'll pick it up.

LADY That's nice.

PONCE PAUSE) So will I just start?

BUSKER Might as well jock

PONCE Alright. [CLEARS HIS THROAT AND BEGINS, CONFIDENTLY ENOUGH.
BUSKER FOLLOWS HIM IN ON GUITAR)

Kelly and I meet secretly
We stay out all night
When we're in each other's arms
We know it isn't right
We are so in love
But he loves you too

NB NO PARODY, NO SENSE OF IRONY. PONCE SINGS IT AS BEST HE CAN, THE
BUSKER PLAYS TO HIM

LADY OCCASIONALLY GIVES AN ENCOURAGING CLAP AND CALLS] Yeh!

SONG ENDS

LADY That was really good

PONCE MODESTLY] Ah!

LADY Seriously but it was. People put in money.

PONCE INCREDULOUS] I didn't even notice!

BUSKER Amazing!

PONCE Are ye sure?

LADY Well a couple of people did.

PONCE SURPRISED] Huh!

LADY It was good but. (TO BUSKER) Wasn't it?

BUSKER Yeh, yeh, it was alright, yeh. (FOOTERS WITH GUITAR KEYS

LADY TO PONCE) See! Even he says so

PONCE Ah well, I suppose right enough I've been singing it for years. It was like my party piece back home. Plus I know all the words. It aye sounds good when ye know the words. No think so?

LADY Probably

PONCE It does. Ye get away with murder

LADY SUDDENLY) My mammy was a good singer. She knew them all. All the songs. She knew them.

PONCE Did she?

LADY PUFFS ON CIGARETTE] I cannay get a puff out this roll-up. The bloody thing's gone out again!

PONCE It's a pair of bellows for lungs ye need!

LADY Naw but I'm serious. Eh [CALLS], I dont know how ye can smoke them!

PONCE Ask him!

LADY I thought I did. He just didnay answer! Is he in the huff?

PONCE AMUSED] The huff!

BUSKER MILD IRRITATION) It's not that love it's only - I'm supposed to be working you know...

LADY Point taken. What time is it by the way? Can ye see the clock from here

BUSKER Yeh. Ten past I think

LADY DISMAY] Ten past?

BUSKER Yeh...

LADY Aw naw

PONCE What you got something on like?

LADY SIGHS] Oh god...

BUSKER Alright love...?

PONCE CONCERNED] Ye okay?

LADY Yeh... [PAUSE, SADLY] What's the bloody difference anyway... [NOW CHEERILY] Oh come on, give us a song.

PONCE Aye you. Give the lady a song!

BUSKER WEARILY] Jesus christ...

PONCE Heh what was that yin ye were singing a wee while ago? the one about the wine?

LADY SINGS QUIETLY) Red red wi - ine
it's up to you-ou...
it's all I can do-oo

AND SHE CONTINUES SINGING.

PONCE QUIETLY] Yeh, that's the one... [QUIETLY] Here, I can dance to that, here..

LADY INTERRUPTS THE SINGING] Dont mind if I do

PONCE QUIETLY] A wee dance'll keep us going

LADY RESUMES SINGING AS THEY DANCE. HE SINGS ALONG WITH HER

BUSKER DOES A HEAVY STRUM ON THE GUITAR. LADY AND PONCE STOP SINGING IMMEDIATELY

LADY Rude buggar!

PONCE ANGRY) Aye

LADY Isn't he a rude buggar?

PONCE ANGRY] Heh you! You want to relax man know what I'm talking about, you want to fucking relax!

LADY I know

PONCE Christ Almighty did ye ever take a look at yer face! Eh ya moaning bastard! What's up with you at all, fucking moaning bastard!

BUSKER SUDDENLY, IN AN ORDINARY GLASGOW SPEAKING VOICE) What! What did you say! Ya wee bastard ye what did ye say? What did you call me!

PAUSE

BUSKER What did you call me! Wee bastard. Ya fucking wee bastard ye... (ALMOST SPEECHLESS WITH RAGE) I'm sick of it, fucking sick it, the pair of yous I'm fucking sick of yez!

PONCE Christ!

BUSKER On and on ye fucking go with your stupid crazy patter. And I'm standing here having to listen to yez, I'm trying to earn a wage man I'm trying to earn a fucking wage...! I'm working. Know what I mean I'm working, I'm fucking working! Ye understand? Eh? Ye understand? Work! Fucking work!

PONCE I dont believe it!

LADY There's something up with you.

BUSKER Something up with me! There's nothing up with me!

PONCE You're from Glasgow!

BUSKER So what ya wee cunt ye!

PONCE I might've known!

BUSKER What might ye've fucking known!

PONCE Well well well, I dont know

BUSKER Naw, naw ye dont know. Ye think ye do but ye dont. (SIGHS) Aw christ. I mean this is my living. (SLAPS GUITAR) I'm a busker. I get paid dough for playing music. That's it. That's what I get paid for, for playing music. Okay? I'm no here for a party, know what I mean, fucking karaokes in the middle of the street!

PONCE AMUSED) Aye right.

LADY PAUSE] Hang on a wee minute, I want to say something

BUSKER SARCASTIC) Do ye?

LADY Yeh, yeh I do. Do ye mind!

BUSKER Naw I dont mind, it's a fucking free country

PONCE Aye! Exactly

BUSKER What're you blabbing about!

PONCE Hoh!

LADY I dont think you're a real busker

BUSKER What?

LADY No a real one

BUSKER DISGUST) Christ almighty

PONCE The lady's right. So tell us something, how come ye lay on the Cockney accent? Eh?
[PAUSE] I mean what do ye do it for? [PAUSE] Honest, I just want to know

BUSKER Do ye

PONCE Aye

BUSKER Aye well I'll fucking tell ye then it's because of ponces like you

PONCE What!

BUSKER You, ya poncing wee bastard! You and cunts like ye! Everywhere I go I seem to bump into yez. Eh, how d'ye think I left London? [TO LADY] Nay kidding hen I used to have this brilliant pitch down Bayswater, brilliant it was

LADY PUZZLED] Bayswater?

BUSKER Bayswater aye, brilliant it was, just brilliant. About the best pitch I've ever had. Ah christ, nay use talking.

LADY Actually I dont see it [PAUSE] Nay harm to you, I just dont see it.

BUSKER PERPLEXED] See what?

LADY You, at Bayswater. I just dont see it. You at Bayswater

BUSKER What ye talking about?

PONCE Just listen to the lady

BUSKER But what's she talking about?

LADY Just you at Bayswater, I cannay see it

BUSKER I dont even know what ye mean. At Bayswater, me at Bayswater. What does it fucking mean, I dont know!

LADY I just cannay see it, sorry. (TO PONCE) Can you?

PONCE Me? [CHUCKLES] Naw

BUSKER What're ye talking about! Bayswater! It's just a place for fuck sake, what do ye mean?

PONCE [SARCASTIC] Ye know what the lady means

BUSKER I dont know what she means. Ye gauny explain it?

PONCE [AMUSED] She means ye're no big-time enough

BUSKER What?

PONCE Ye're no big-time enough

BUSKER [PUZZLED] What ye fucking raving about?

LADY Naw, that isnay what I'm meaning. It's just... (KINDLY) I'm no being cheeky.

BUSKER But it's only a place hen, Bayswater, it's no anything special, it's just the same as here

PONCE The same as here! Aye that'll be right!

BUSKER It's just a place!

PONCE Ha ha!

BUSKER What's up with you at all, ha ha?

PONCE Oh you know fine well!

BUSKER ANGRILY] What you talking about ya fucking half-wit? Eh? Aye well at least I'm no a ponce. (STARTS TUNING GUITAR)

PONCE What?

BUSKER Coming round here trying to con me

PONCE What you saying?

BUSKER You heard

LADY Did ye try to con him?

PONCE Who me! Not all. It was me that got him some money in that supid tobacco tin there, if I hadnay done it for him he wouldnay have had nothing.

BUSKER SARCASTIC] Yeh yeh

PONCE Telling ye dear see before I turned up, he had forty pence in that tin there. I counted it. Forty pence! Then I started and I got him a few bob

BUSKER You'd have got me fucking arrested ya cunt! (TO LADY) Listen hen, I had to give him a couple of quid to go away! But then he came back. Greedy.

PONCE It wasnay like that

BUSKER Was it no? Well what it was it like?

LADY TO PONCE) Folk were putting in money when I came. And you werenay doing nothing, it was just him singing

PONCE I'm no denying that. All I'm saying is that with me here he was doing better - that's all I'm saying.

BUSKER BRIEF LAUGH) Heh listen, I dont want to disillusion you or nothing... But look...

PONCE What?

BUSKER Ssh, just look... [BRINGS OUT A BUNDLE OF MONEY WRAPPED IN A HANDKERCHIEF]

PONCE It's a handkerchief!

BUSKER QUIETLY] Aye but what's in the handkerchief!

PONCE AWED WHISPER] Christ... it's a fortune!

BUSKER Aye and look, look at the notes, see the notes!

PONCE Jesus christ there's fivers and tenners there

BUSKER Fivers and tenners...yeh

LADY AMUSED] He's been kidding ye on

BUSKER SARCASTIC] Do ye seriously think I'd leave all the money lying in that daft tobacco tin! Eh?

LADY LAUGHS

BUSKER CHUCKLES] Aye I might look stupid! See hen ye cannay let the money lie there piling up, otherwise the punters'll walk straight past ye.

LADY Oh...

BUSKER Yeh, because they see it there and they think: Aw wait a minute, this guy's earning more than me!

LADY You're the conman!

PONCE ASIDE) Ponce

BUSKER Naw, not at all. Listen, I play music. It might no be very good music, no to everybody's taste. But I play it anyway. I happen to think it is good music and some people agree with me.

LADY Fair enough.

BUSKER Aye I know it's fair enough, I play alright, I play alright

PONCE She never said ye didnay

BUSKER Is it no about time you were going along the road there jock!

PONCE Jock! D'you hear that? Still calling me jock, same as the English. What d'ye make of it! Imagine calling yer fellow countryman jock! Christ! I've heard of some crawlers in my time but that takes the biscuit!

BUSKER What is he stupid or something?

PONCE Calling yer fellow countryman jock! I mean what is that about?

LADY No think he's got a point?

BUSKER Listen love I couldnay care less what an idiot like him thinks! (SNIFFS) Far as I'm concerned this is my work, it's no a game. Aye and this is my pitch, and I only get it a few hours a day. Somebody else will be taking over soon. So give me a break eh! [STRIKES MATCH TO LIGHT HIS CIGARETTE]

PONCE Look! It's a real cigarette!

LADY So it is

PONCE IRONIC] A ready made cigarette. That beats everything. He's had the ready-mades hid in his tobacco pouch all the time. But he didnay tell us, in case we asked him for one!

BUSKER What you talking about now!

PONCE (SHAKES HIS HEAD) You, with the ready-mades smokes there. Ye didnay want us to see them just in case

BUSKER Just in case! What do ye mean just in case! I gave ye a fucking fag every time ye asked I mean... (DERISIVE) ...ye dont even smoke! poncing wee bastard...

PONCE What!

BUSKER Ye dont even smoke! Ye must think we're all fucking absolute idiots! Did ye notice that hen? He doesnay even smoke! But he's been taking my fags all morning. Probably he punts them to aw the auld alkies down the park!

PONCE (SHOCKED) I do not do that.

BUSKER (MUTTERS) Fucking poncing bastard

PONCE (STILL SHOCKED) Honest. I dont. I would never do anything like that. Never. Never in my life. Hand up to God.

BUSKER Then how come ye take them? How come ye took my fags?

PONCE (PAUSE) What's it got to do with you?

BUSKER JEERS

PONCE It's nothing to do with you!

BUSKER What ye talking about nothing to do with me! It's my fags ye're taking. Then selling

PONCE But I'm no! I'm no selling nothing! I never even asked ye for a fag I mean I didnay. Honest dear, he just kept giving me them. What am I supposed to do, throw them away!

BUSKER Listen to the patter

PONCE Naw but ye just gave me them man, know what I mean, I wasnay going to throw them away. Ye would have done the same yerself

BUSKER FIRMLY] Naw I wouldnay

PONCE Oh naw, you wouldnay. You 'wouldnay take nothing, eh. Oh naw, no you, you're straight as a die - that's how ye keep yer money wrapped in a fucking handkerchief!

BUSKER Aye cause if I dont there's cunts like you'll rob me

PONCE What did you say there?

BUSKER LAUGHS

PONCE What did you say there?

BUSKER You heard

PONCE TO LADY) Did he say I'd rob him there! Eh, did he say I'd rob him?

LADY VERY WEARILY] Oh it's nothing to do with me what he said...

PONCE Aw I see, thanks very much

LADY SIGHS) You're awful silly. DO Ye know that? Awful silly... (PAUSE. SHIVERS] Oh dear, I wish there was someplace to sit down... [SHIVERS AGAIN].

PONCE I'm no kidding ye man you've got a cheek talking about anybody

BUSKER Me? It's no me that's the ponce...

PONCE Oh naw, listen to the patter

BUSKER JEERS] Yeh...! I've seen guys like you for years

PONCE You dont know anything about me

BUSKER Naw and I dont fucking want to

PONCE Know how I landed in this town?

BUSKER Naw, I dont

PONCE Why d'ye think I left Scotland?

BUSKER I dont fucking care how ye left Scotland

PONCE I'm asking ye a serious question

BUSKER What ye talking about?

PONCE Aye you know what I'm talking about

BUSKER You dont even know what ye're talking about. What I know is I need to start work [SLAPS GUITAR], right now. [PAUSE] Hey love ye alright? [PAUSE] Ye alright love?

PONCE WORRIED] Ye alright hen?

BUSKER Oh christ

LADY FALLS TO THE GROUND

PONCE Oh christ she's fell she's fell!

SOUND THE MEN GO TO HER

PONCE Oh jesus christ!

BUSKER She's fainted!

PONCED Oh jesus what're we going to do

BUSKER Hold my guitar

PONCE Aye

BUSKER KNEELS TO EXAMINE HER

PONCE PAUSE] Is she alright?

BUSKER QUIETLY] Wait...

PONCE Is she got a temperature?

BUSKER Dont come too near.

PONCE OFFENDED] I wasn't going to...

LADY GROANS

PONCE Oh thank christ

BUSKER WHISPERS] I think she's okay.

LADY GROANS

BUSKER Alright love?

PONCE PAUSE] Ye okay?

LADY GROANS, SUDDENLY STARTS UP AND GRASPS BUSKER'S WRIST, URGENTLY) What is it! What is it!

BUSKER Heh, take it easy!

LADY What is it?

PONCE Ye're okay dear, ye're okay.

LADY What?

BUSKER Ye fainted

LADY What?

PONCE Ye fainted

LADY I did not

PONCE Ye did, out like a light! One minute ye're standing there the next ye're bang, out. lucky the way ye fell too, might've broke yer nose or something. A pal of mine done that ance, fainted - landed right on his nose and broke it. He cracked the fucking bone!

BUSKER Huh!

LADY MUMBLING] Oh God, oh God

PONCE What?

LADY GETS TO HER FEET, STAGGERS

BUSKER Here love, take it easy

PONCE Aye, sit down a minute, take a wee rest

LADY MUMBLING) Oh God it's so embarassing

PONCE Dont be daft

BUSKER Ye're okay love

LADY Oh God... [WHISPERS] The folk are all looking at me

PONCE Naw they're no

LADY WHISPERS] Oh they are.

BUSKER It doesn't matter

LADY WHISPERS] Oh God they're staring... [SHIVERS]

BUSKER It's just natural.

PONCE Aye hen ye'd be the same yourself! Ye would. [ASIDE] They are staring but look! Nosy bastards! [CALLS] Roll up roll up! See the fainting woman! Falls on her face and bangs her head! Falls on her face and bangs her head! Roll up! Roll up roll up!

LADY Oh shut it!

BUSKER LAUGHS

PONCE CALLS) Fifty pence a short look two pounds a long yin! Roll up roll up and see the fainting woman, she falls on her face and bangs her head! [STOPS, CHUCKLES] Honest, if I had tickets I would sell them

BUSKER Yeh

LADY SHIVERS] Ye got a fag?

BUSKER Sure

PONCE SERIOUSLY] You shouldnay be smoking

BUSKER He's right love

PONCE Keep it for later

LADY I feel like a smoke[PAUSE] Ye got a light? [STRIKES MATCH. SHE EXHALES, AND IRONIC] Thank you

PONCE Heh, just as well it isnay raining, ye'd have soaked yerself!

BUSKER IRONIC] Always look on the bright side of life eh!

PONCE Nothing wrong with that. Heh listen dear, serious question, when did ye last eat?

LADY A wee while ago

PONCE Exactly. See what I mean, exactly like I was saying earlier on?

BUSKER PUZZLED] What?

PONCE I was saying to you afore, about eating and that

LADY SIGHS] Aw naw, look, my tights! [PAUSE] Bloody ruined... Tch, och...
[STUMBLES]

PONCE Heh careful! (MOVING TO HER)

LADY I'm alright

PONCE Ye nearly fell

LADY I didnay nearly fell at all, I just stumbled. Dont panic.

PONCE Ah well ye never know! [LAYS HAND ON HER SHOULDER]

LADY LOUDLY] Take yer hand off my shoulder.

PONCE [PAUSE] Sorry

LADY Dont ever lay a hand on me

PONCE MEEKLY] I wasnay meaning nothing...eh I wasnay eh...I mean... Ye just fainted

LADY Yeh, well people dont faint twice

PONCE SNIFFS] I never heard of that.

LADY IRONIC] Have ye not?

PONCE You heard of it man, people dont faint twice?

BUSKER TINKERS WITH GUITAR

PONCE QUIETLY] I've never heard of that

BUSKER CONTINUES TUNING, SEEMS ABOUT TO PLAY

PONCE So ye've done alright man, that's good

BUSKER Christmas shopping, it brings people out the house.

PONCE Aye, christ. Then ye've got the January sales, and they go and spend their dough all over again. They do it for Christmas and they do it after Christmas. That's what I cannay understand. The closing-down sales go up one week then it's the fire-salvage, after that it's Easter and then it's Summer and then before ye know it it's Christmas again. And all hell breaks loose, they all go rushing in, head down and throwing their dough away, just throwing it away! (LAUGHS) Sometimes ye think anybody could con them. Anybody at all. No kidding. It amazes me.

LADY Ye going to play now?

BUSKER Nah...

LADY I'm sorry for all this bother

BUSKER Och dont be silly!

LADY Ye're supposed to be playing

BUSKER Well love if ye want to know the truth, sometimes I just cannay be bothered

LADY Oh but ye've got to bother. People have to make use of their talent. That's what God gives ye it for.

BUSKER IRONIC] Aw

LADY Do ye no believe in God?

BUSKER No really

LADY Ye should. [PAUSE, SUDDENLY) Did you ever play in a band?

BUSKER Oh, sure.

LADY I knew it!

BUSKER NOW RESUMES LONDON ACCENT] Everybody's played in a band love

LADY Naw but I knew ye'd played in a band, cause ye're just too good

BUSKER No no, I'm not, definitely, I'm not. There's plenty of guys better than me love, much better. I mean much better

PONCE CALLS) Hey dear know what I think? He's got a bloody inferiority complex. (NOW TO BUSKER) You, ye've got a bloody inferiority complex.

BUSKER What ye talking about?

PONCE Ye have. I'm no being cheeky man but see if I could play the guitar like you! christ! I'd be a fucking millionaire! Excuse the language dear. But I'm no kidding ye man I mean you're playing stuff as good as you hear on the telly. Better! Christ, see if it was me!

BUSKER Ye're dreaming

PONCE That's what you think

BUSKER Ye're dreaming

LADY Are ye sure about that?

BUSKER Ye just dont know, ye think ye do but ye dont

LADY Ah well, it's your business

BUSKER LAUGHS) Ah but it's no. It's no my business it's the bleeding music business. If it was my business then I would be a millionaire. Yeh (AMUSED), me and... huh [STOPS SUDDENLY

PONCE PAUSE] Who?

BUSKER What?

PONCE You and who? Who were ye gauny say? Ye were going to say somebody there and ye stopped

BUSKER I wasnay gauny say naybody

PONCE Ye sure? I thought ye were gauny tell us somebody's name. I mean d'you know any of them like? These famous yins singers and that, ye know what I'm talking about. Do ye?

BUSKER Do I what?

PONCE D'ye know any of them?

BUSKER PAUSE] One or two

PONCE DELIGHTED) Honest? (PAUSE) Who? Come on! (PAUSE) Ye gony tell us man, come on!

BUSKER Barbra Streisand

PONCE ASTONISHED] Barbra Streisand!! Do ye?

BUSKER Naw! [LAUGHS LOUDLY]

PONCE ANNOYED] Tch, ya bastard.

BUSKER AND LADY BOTH LAUGH

LADY Serves ye right

PONCE Ach ye probably dont know naybody. Eh!

BUSKER AMUSED] Aye that's right

PONCE PAUSE] I dont believe ye

BUSKER You'll never know. Stupid bloody questions

PONCE Me?

LADY SIGHS HEAVILY

BUSKER IMMEDIATELY) Okay? Eh love...?

LADY IRRITATION) I'm fine, I'm fine

PONCE Naw but christ ye just fainted, ye need a seat or something.. [TAKES HER BY THE ELBOW. LADY PUSHES OFF HIS HAND

LADY ANGRILY] I told ye to stop touching me! [LOUDLY] Stop touching me! You're always bloody touching me. Stop it. Just bloody stop it!

BUSKER He didnay mean it love. He was just trying to help

LADY I know he was just trying to bloody help.

BUSKER He wasnay meaning nothing

LADY STILL IRRITATED] I know he wasnay, God!

PONCE If ye want a chair... Do ye want a chair? I can get ye one, if ye want one, I mean...there's a wee cafe round the corner. The woman that owns it is a friend of mine - I go in quite a lot I mean eh...if ye wanted one like, a chair. [PAUSE] Eh man you'll probably know the woman as well, she's got one of these big motor cars with the thingwis at the back, these eh...what do ye call them, these kind of aluminium things, I'm no sure...

BUSKER Yeh

LADY WITH WARMTH) Come here

PONCE What...

LADY You should take better care of yerself

PONCE Me, I do alright

LADY Yeh... Well...

PONCE I do okay

LADY [PAUSE] Time I was away...

BUSKER Ye sure?

LADY Yeh

BUSKER Maybe ye're better waiting a minute - or going round the cafe for a bite to eat, a bowl of soup or something. I've got the money I mean...

LADY Thanks, I've just got to be going. It's just I've a message to go...

BUSKER Right...

LADY Cheerio. [AND TO PONCE] Cheerio

PONCE Cheerio [PAUSE AND SPEAKS QUIETLY, AS TO HIMSELF] That's funny.

BUSKER CALLS] Is she away then?

PONCE Aye.

BUSKER STARTS WITH GUITAR, HE BEGINS PLAYING A SLOW BLUES. THIS CONTINUES FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD

END