

# **GONE**

a short play

by

Alex Broun

email: [abroun@bigpond.net.au](mailto:abroun@bigpond.net.au)

(C) Alex Broun 2004

**Cast**

**PHIL**

**ROD**

**Gone by Alex Broun**

- ROD: (AT PACE) I didn't notice him at first.
- PHIL: He pissed me off straight away.
- ROD: Why would you notice him ? He was the sort of person you don't notice.
- PHIL: Walks into the place like he owns it. Like he belongs.
- ROD: The sort of person you bypass while you're moving towards something else. He wasn't a destination, he was an obstacle.
- PHIL: He doesn't belong here. He's a guest. I belong here.
- ROD: A fencepost. A squashed rabbit. A fly.
- PHIL: I decide who comes in or out.
- ROD: He was nothing just ... space.
- PHIL: Right now - I'm in charge.
- ROD: That's all he was – empty space. A “space filler”.
- PHIL: I say what goes.
- ROD: It wasn't until later that his presence became apparent. It had been a great night. Shots, banter, flirting but then -
- PHIL: They stood out.
- ROD: An argument. A disagreement.
- PHIL: It was heating up.
- ROD: Pathetic, trifling.
- PHIL: That's what they teach you in "Customer Care". Take the pot off the burner before it starts to boil.
- ROD: And because it was nothing suddenly - he was there. “The Nothing man” – the empty space – stressing out over nothing.
- PHIL: Stepping in now - saves trouble later.

ROD: Standing over us - big fat head, five buck black t-shirt, ridiculous hair cut.

PHIL: "I'm going to have to ask you to keep it down."

ROD: "Why don't you dickheads shut up ?"

PHIL: "You're disturbing the other patrons."

ROD: "You're pissing me off."

BOTH: "Maybe you should take it outside."

ROD: Now usually I'm meek and mannered but something about this guy just really -

PHIL: And then he steps forward - shiny grey suit.

ROD: - fucked me off. He was just so braindead, so thuggish, such an oaf.

PHIL: Slobber on his chin.

ROD: We were having a good time. We were rowdy, sure, but so was everybody else. We'd had a great week and we'd come to celebrate. What do they expect when they're selling Tequila slammers for three bucks a pop ?

PHIL: Breath stinks like a cheap lawn mower.

ROD: So I was up to him - right in *his* face. Intimidating *him*, staring down *him*. "Haven't you ever seen people having a good time ?"

PHIL: It was all top draw stuff.

ROD: The great bouncer was baffled.

PHIL: "Letting off some steam."

ROD: "We're just having a good time."

PHIL: "You're just jealous because you're a brainless thug and -"

ROD: "What are you really angry about ? The fact we're having a good time or the fact that -"

BOTH: "We're us "

ROD: "And you are - "

PHIL: "You." Then it's –

ROD: "Meathead."

PHIL: Like I said – top drawer.

ROD: No words. He has no words, of course. He just grabs me and drags me across the bar.

PHIL: It wasn't what he was saying - that was just drunken shit. It was the way he was saying it. Screaming in my face, veins popping, saliva pouring out all over me.

ROD: In front of my friends, in front of my work colleagues, in front of the other clients - like some kind of dog. And then –

PHIL: So I take him outside.

ROD: I'm on the pavement.

PHIL: Back of the club.

ROD: He's thrown me on the pavement.

PHIL: Lover's lane.

ROD: My fuckin suit is knee deep in shit. Now I'm angry.

PHIL: I take a quick look around. No punters, only Gene - and he's not gonna say anything. Covered up for him often enough.

ROD: Inside I was just joking.

PHIL: Where were his so called "friends" ? Bloody glad he'd been thrown out. The dickhead was pissing them off as well.

ROD: But now I really let him have it. "Listen here you fuckin' two bit meathead."

PHIL: We'd already been through this.

ROD: "Why don't you crawl back to the little tribe that spawned you ? Or don't want they want you hanging around either -you fucking fat moron."

PHIL: One more quick glance - and then –

ROD: So what does he do ? The fucking meathead ? The fucking moron ? He can't put more than two syllables together so he does the only thing he can do.

PHIL: I popped him.

ROD: He hits me.

PHIL: Just a little one. Wouldn't even class it as a punch ?

ROD: He fuckin' hits me. Me !

PHIL: Just tapped him.

ROD: Idiot can't even do that right.

PHIL: I didn't get him but. Not square on.

ROD: He just clips me

PHIL: It was a good punch - I've been boxing for years, I know a good punch –

ROD: On the side of the head

PHIL: But he must've slipped just before I connected. Too fuckin' pissed to even stand up straight. Now that annoyed me.

ROD: And I slip over -

PHIL: I really wanted to feel it. A good clean connection on this dickhead's fuckin' nose. Feel his bones shatter underneath my knuckles. Now that would've felt good. I wanted that. But I just sort of get him on the side. Round arm kind of action.

ROD: And I'm falling –

PHIL: He goes down anyway. Just like a big juicy dump. And then –

ROD: And my jaw -

PHIL: His head hits the pavement - and - beautiful. What a sound.

ROD: Snaps.

PHIL: He hits chin first and his little face shatters in to a thousand pieces. I'm elated.

ROD: The force of the fall –

PHIL: This was even better than if I'd done the job myself.

ROD: Broken in five places.

PHIL: Now I can't be blamed. Dickhead was just pissed and fell over.

ROD: Shit.

PHIL: Just another drunk.

PAUSE. **PHIL SMILES.**

ROD: I eat out of a straw for three months.

PHIL: Next time I see him is in court.

ROD: I lay charges.

PHIL: Cock face goes to the cops.

ROD: I want justice. This is a violation. A crime. I was assaulted.

PHIL: Dickhead's like him always do. But I'm not worried.

ROD: The problem is no one actually saw it. Another one of the bouncers was holding my friends back inside. He knew what the "space filler" was going to do. He knew there couldn't be any -

PHIL: Witnesses ? He's got zip. Even if he has you'd still say it was a scuffle. Fuckin' assault ? I tell you if I had assaulted him then he'd fuckin' know about it. Worse that can happen to me I reckon is a warning and lose my job at the club, which to tell you the truth, I don't give a fuck about. Place is shittin' me anyway. Other pubs are always looking for "Crowd control officers" because smart arses like him are always mouthing off. Anyway - it's just my word against him. Then I take one look at the magistrate and -

ROD: Right from the start things go badly.

PHIL: - I'm laughing. You can see he hates smart arses like him as much as I do.

ROD: The judge looks at me as if I'm from another planet.

PHIL: I think I'm in for a slap on the wrist. But instead - I think the magistrate's gonna kiss me. "How drunk were you Mr Ryan ?"

ROD: "I was not drunk."

PHIL: "How well do you actually remember what happened ?"

ROD: "I have a very clear memory."

PHIL: "So you fell ..."

ROD: "He assaulted me."

PHIL: "Please don't make accusations."

ROD: "I'm not making accusations." Then the Judge tells me to -

BOTH: "Calm down !"

PHIL: I loved that.

ROD: This thug assaults me.

PHIL: Smart arse went so red –

ROD: Breaks my jaw.

PHIL: I thought his head was -

ROD: Puts me in hospital.

PHIL: About to explode.

ROD: And I'm meant to -

PHIL: But shiny suit man keeps raving on –

ROD: The whole thing is a joke.

PHIL: So the magistrate warns him. He actually warns him. I'm loving this !  
Half an hour later it's no surprise.

BOTH: Case dismissed.

ROD: He's free.

PHIL: And the best bit -

ROD: Scot free.

PHIL: Smart arse even has to pay costs.

ROD: No words.

PHIL: Magistrate even congratulates me on my even handling of the situation.  
The way he's looking at me - looks like he wants to give me a blow job.  
After this –

ROD: Nothing man catches my eye on the way out.

PHIL: I might just let him.

ROD: Smiles. (PAUSE) No words. After it's over I have to take some more  
time off work.

PHIL: Next night I'm back at the club.

ROD: I'm furious.

PHIL: High fives all round. Free beers after closing.

ROD: The rage is so fierce inside me that I can't concentrate on anything.

PHIL: Pat on the back from the boss. "Showed that prick." "Always hated him  
anyway." "I'm not taking you on."

ROD: It takes a month -

PHIL: And better still –

ROD: till I calm down enough –

PHIL: A new respect -

ROD: to go back -

PHIL: from the punters.

ROD: to the office.

PHIL: "That guy broke someone's jaw and got away with it. Watch him."

ROD: And then things really start to -

PHIL: Treat him with respect.

ROD: Slide.

PHIL: I've broken the smart arse's jaw and gotten respect !

ROD: With the jaw and the trial –

PHIL: They don't treat me like nothing anymore.

ROD: I've been off for almost three months now and -

PHIL: I am officially somebody.

ROD: Things have been changing.

PHIL: I'm cruising now.

ROD: They do in my industry.

PHIL: I'm the big gun.

ROD: Young guns always coming through.

PHIL: The heavy hitter.

ROD: Pushing for your job.

PHIL: They only bother -

ROD: Sleeping with your department head.

PHIL: to call me –

ROD: Elbowing -

PHIL: When things really start to  
ROD: aside.  
PHIL: heat up.  
ROD: And the trial only made it worse. "Maybe it was him".  
PHIL: No caution needed now.  
ROD: "He was pissed and fell".  
PHIL: I just wade in.  
ROD: "And if he did it once he'll do it again."  
PHIL: (PUNCHING) One,  
ROD: Whispers –  
PHIL: two.  
ROD: Building.  
PHIL: One –  
ROD: Heads –  
PHIL: two.  
ROD: turning.  
PHIL: One –  
ROD: Eyes -  
PHIL: I put 'em down –  
ROD: looking.  
PHIL: In the club,  
ROD: Eyes –  
PHIL: On the pavement -

ROD: judging

PHIL: in the carpark.

ROD: Eyes !

PHIL: I'm the fucking king ! Just let them try it. Let them try anything. If they try to say anything - if they can talk once I'm finished with them - if they fuckin do, I'll find out where they live and finish the job.

SILENCE.

ROD: I'm demoted. My department is re-aligned. I'm on the way out. Couple of weeks later - the tap on the shoulder. A package offered. I'm done. I go home.

PHIL: I get a raise.

ROD: I just sit there -

PHIL: And for the first time –

ROD: In the dark.

PHIL: For as long as I can remember –

ROD: I sit there – a long time.

PHIL: I'm happy.

ROD: Thinking.

PHIL: Content. I calm down.

PAUSE.

ROD: And then, slowly, the rage starts to change. It grows into something, stronger, fiercer, more powerful. Something begins to emerge. A lust. A deep ache. A plan. Two weeks later I find myself down the gym.

PHIL: I get lazy.

ROD: I've got myself a personal trainer. I'm living on my credit cards. I should be out looking for a job but I don't care. I'm obsessed.

PHIL: Flabby.

ROD: I'm down the gym every day. I need to get fit. I don't even know what I'm going to do yet - but whatever it is. I know -

PHIL: Loose.

ROD: I need to be fit.

PHIL: And I like it.

ROD: Then I start hanging out at the cafe across the road from his club. I don't notice I'm even doing it at first. It's accidental. But one day I see him arriving for work and there's no accident anymore. Now there is just cold, hard purpose. I go back to the gym. I go every morning and night. I'm flat broke. I'm on the point of exhaustion but I don't care. I don't sleep. I don't eat. I just train. I swap the personal trainer for an ex boxer. He's a thug. A moronic thug even more moronic than Mr Nothing – and he's perfect. He teaches me what I want to know. One punch. That's all I want. After that I don't care what happens. I just want one good punch.

PHIL: Life goes on.

ROD: Then one afternoon in training I catch my ex-boxer with a quick uppercut. He staggers, almost goes down. Blinks at me - in surprise. I'm ready. That night - I wait.

PHIL: Then one night -

ROD: The club closes. Nothing.

PHIL: after a few -

ROD: Other people leave. Nothing.

PHIL: staffies -

ROD: Maybe he's not on tonight.

PHIL: I'm going out –

ROD: Eventually .

PHIL: to the car.

ROD: There he is. I follow close behind. He gets to the car door and puts the key in. He fumbles a bit to find the lock. He's pissed - just like I was. Perfect.

PHIL: I open the door and -

ROD: I'm a step behind him now.

PHIL: Guess what ?

ROD: I open my mouth:

PHIL: I hear a voice behind me.

ROD: "Hey, moron." That's what comes out. Stupid, pathetic, I know - but I don't care. I'm not thinking words now. I'm thinking fist.

PHIL: I turn around. Guess who ? Smartarse. Smartarse has come back to for more.

ROD: The blood is pumping around my fingers now. My knuckles know what's coming.

PHIL: And I'm just in the mood to give it to him.

ROD: My hand starts to clench.

PHIL: I smile and go to the close the door.

ROD: He's smiling. Why is he fucking smiling ?

PHIL: But smartarse –

ROD: I'm furious. I don't even think. I –

PHIL: Lets one fly. (PAUSE) Shit.

ROD: I connect beautifully.

PHIL: Where did that come from ?

ROD: I hit him dead centre.

PHIL: It's on me before I even see it.

ROD: A bullseye.  
PHIL: He connects, square on.  
ROD: And then -  
PHIL: Flush.  
ROD: I feel his face –  
PHIL: I feel my jaw –  
ROD: Underneath my fingers –  
PHIL: My whole face –  
ROD: It's unimaginable.  
PHIL: I feel my jaw -  
ROD: I can't believe it.  
PHIL: Shatter.  
BOTH: Glass.

PAUSE.

ROD: Who would've thought Mr Muscleman, Mr Nothing - would have a glass jaw.  
PHIL: And then something really weird happens.  
ROD: His eyes glaze over.  
PHIL: I'm out.  
ROD: They go -  
PHIL: Unconscious.  
ROD: blank.  
PHIL: Completely ...

ROD: He disappears somewhere back inside. Behind his eyes. His knees buckle under him and he drops. Like a stone. The car door is still open and he falls.

PHIL: All I see is this red shard.

ROD: The edge of the door pierces his ...

PHIL: It's in my head.

ROD: An inch.

PHIL: This red shard.

ROD: Two inches.

PHIL: I see it but my eyes are closed

ROD: Then he's still. Very ... still.

PHIL: It's like a dream.

ROD: I panic now. I'm terrified. Fuck ! I give him a push. Just a little tap. And he slides off the door and on to the ground. He's still. Very still!

PHIL: Nothing. Just ...

ROD: My knuckles are throbbing. My knuckles are - I don't move. I stand there. Just looking down at - I stand there, it feels like forever

PHIL: I'm floating in this half world.

ROD: And then slowly ...

PHIL: Half light. Half shadow.

ROD: Very ...

PHIL: Silent like.

ROD: Slowly ...

PHIL: I don't feel anything.

ROD: The sun ...

PHIL: I float there for awhile ...

ROD: Begins ...

PHIL: Just quiet ...

ROD: To rise.

PHIL: And then –

BOTH: I'm gone.

FADE.