

ONCE BITTEN....

Written by

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An Original Monologue

First performed by
Matt Williams
For

MONOROGUE'S
WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE

Old Red Lion Theatre
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For performance permissions
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After BILLY PAUL has been introduced by the host, the lights dim and he launches immediately into a tirade:

BILLY

I'm NOT a fucking loan shark! The next twat who says I am, I'll bite their fucking head off, got me!?

He picks on an audience member and stares right into their face. Suddenly embarrassed/defensive

BILLY (CONT'D)

Watch you looking at? Looking at me like that. Naff off, go on, naff off! I mean, can you fuck. king. be. lieve it, I end up in the dock, yeah, that's right, except it aint right, yeah, no, 'cos now I got form, just for helping out, yeah, HEL -PING - when all them other tossers turned their backs. I am a GOOD. SAMARITAN, me, with very low interest rates. Twenty five percent, thirty max, so don't call me no fucking loan shark, 'cos I am so fucking ready to bite your fucking head off if you do.

For a moment, he turns his attention back to an audience member

BILLY (CONT'D)

I deserve respect, me - R.E.P.C.T - 'cos I am so fucking trustable right, yeah? Like my nan, right, she let me take her dentures out for a walk when she was bedridden, right, with the lumbago, just so part of her got some fresh air. She loved me...I miss my nan, after she passed, when she passed away like, she passed everything she had onto me, which was handy 'cos I was down on me luck. I was the only one she could trust. Ter-rust. Taught me a lot that did. I owe her everything. Put it all to good use. Set up meself up with a stall down Norman Street. Billy Paul, that's me, the market stall pawn broker with the porn star name.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Fruit and veg, even avocados when there was no real call for them at the time. I had the best Maris Pipers and the sweetest little gems going. English tomatoes, Shropshire runners, beetroot from the fens, wonky carrots from Norfolk and asparagus in season, you name it, yeah, none of this foreign shit, all British. I was Bull Dog right down to the last turnip and everyone came to Billy Paul for their weekly veg. And I mean every fucking body, 'cause I had a name, a reputation. Rep. U. Tation. I'd made my mark. If only my name was Mark, that would be fucking perfect. I was the envy of the green grocer trade within a ten mile radius, I was on first name terms with the guvnor at New Covent Garden, and now I'm godfather to his fucking niece, Freya Tulip Wassername. Then one day, a regular of mine, Mrs. Ackroyd, she stood before me all distressed, like, dead behind the eyes, like her brains had been sucked out by a zombie - fucking weird, it was, but - get this right - she'd been mugged down Allerton Grove, her bag snatched, took all her pension, rotten thieving bastards. I told her to take her pick of me King Edwards, free of charge, nada, that's the kind of bloke I am. You know what, she cried. Turns out her leccie bill, her council tax and the HP on her 64 inch widescreen were all due at the end of the week - two hundred nicker she no longer had. Well, I just came out with it, didn't I? Offered it to her, there and then, I says, "you pay me back in six months at twenty five percent, darlin'". None of this AP fucking R at four thousand percent like them proper sharks you get online." No, for her, this was two fifty, all in.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

We agreed, shook hands, she cried some more and I handed over the readies along with me dirty hanky, but she didn't care by then. And you know what? In that moment it was like....it was like...

SFX: MUSIC - ATOMOS XI (A WINGED VICTORY FOR THE SULLEN)

Billy Paul seems transfixed....he soaks in the moment.

BILLY (CONT'D)

It was like I was.....*transformed* into the Good Samaritan I am, yeah. I had this funny feeling inside of me, this ger-low, it was like taking drugs to a Pink Floyd album I'd never heard before but I knew all the toons, all the words, in an instant, like I'd written them myself and I could play all the instruments an' all. I'd found my very own Wembley Stadium moment and out there was the crowd, waiting for my concert to start. I was enthralled - I don't say that often 'cause it makes me sound like a right proper queer - but I have to admit, I was turned....*on*. And before I knew it, Freddie Scrivner, from "Screw You Hardware" on Gatestone Street came to me looking for five hundred nicker - *five hundred*, I ask yer - to replace his display cabinet for all his nuts and bolts, "no problem" I said, "30 percent, mate, that alright?" And fuck me, we shook hands and I wrote his name down. Then the 'chapati king", Devindra, he's looking for some dough for a tandoori oven 'cos he was branching out, "30 percent?" and we shook hands; Edna Tossington, loaned her a ton for the surprise clown at her grandson's birthday, last minute do 'cos he just survived a brain tumour "25 percent?", we shook hands, she even hugged me, tears streaming down her face but she wouldn't take me hanky. Charity Hemlock for her wedding dress - number three, mind, don't know how, face like hers;

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Percy Pratt, 30 percent, massive fail on his MOT, the bastards fleeced him; Aggie Starr to settle her account, six months overdue at that Chinky Nail place on the corner, don't wanna piss that lot off; Ahmed 'the terrorist', flying home to Paki fucking stan for some bloody wedding...and so it went on and on and on... And they came, in their tens and in their dozens, from all over, begging, pleading for my help, so that's what I did, while the regulars bought their 5 a day. And I never chased no-one, no-one got hurt 'cos of me, no-one got a cricket bat round the lugholes, I was so fucking accommodating, I was the Prince of the Purse, everyone left my handshake with a wad of notes and the queen's happy face in their pockets. I had the currency of kindness stuffed down my money belt, and, boy, I was fucking raking it in...That is until some bastard grassed me up to trading standards. On account of me black market fags I was selling on the side. Didn't I mention that? In the end, I was done for over two hundred grand, they called it a loan racket. I kicked up a fucking racket when they said that, I can tell ya. Racket, my arse! I was the dog's bollocks, I was the go-to boy on the block to most people. But they treated me like scum. That was *my* pension pot, *my* retirement, but now I don't have a pension pot or a pot to piss in, thanks to them. They barged into my house, took some bags of cash from under me divan and my little black book of names, which made me look like a right proper fucking gangster. I hate stereotypes, me. On the day, I gets 12 months, suspended for two years and I'm spared doing time cos me interest rates were too low. Hello? Can anyone explain that? Plus they throw in two hundred hours unpaid community service. They're having a laugh. I was the fucking community service.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Just shows, decent blokes like me
don't stand a chance. So the next
twat who calls me a loan shark I'll
bite their fucking head off.

As he prepares to leave the stage he stops and confronts the
audience member again.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Watch you looking at?

End.