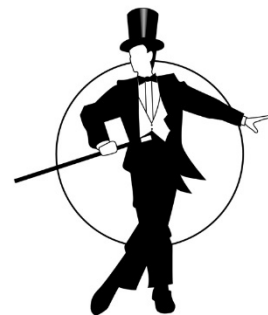


Mike 'Hard-As' Nails and The Case of the Loving Lozanos

Georgia Tuxbury



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MIKE "HARD AS" NAILS AND THE CASE OF THE LOVING LOZANOS

CAST

MIKE 'HARD-AS' NAILS
LOUIE 'THE LOUSE' LOZANO
LOLITO LOZANO

Setting: MIKE's office has a desk with a chair, and to the side of the desk, another chair. The desk holds an ash tray and coffee cups as well as scattered papers and pens. An overflowing waste basket sits to the side of the desk. A hat rack stands in the corner.

At Rise: Rinky-tink piano music is playing. MIKE sits at his chair, feet on his desk. He swings his legs off the desk, rises and, walking back and forth in front of his desk. As he speaks to the audience, music ceases.

MIKE: I'm Mike Nails, 'Hard-As' Nails they call me. I'm a Private Eye. I've handled some pretty tough cases in my day and I've worked with some pretty seedy characters, but none seedier than Louie 'The Louse' Lozano. I was really surprised when he showed up at my door, and not too pleased either. I'd heard some pretty sordid things about the man.

(He takes off his hat, hangs it on the hat rack. There is a knock at the door and he answers it.)

MIKE: Come in. *(he ushers the visitor in)*

(LOUIE 'THE LOUSE' stumbles in)

LOUIE: Hi, I'm Louie 'da Louse' Lozano.

(they shake hands)

MIKE: Please take a seat.

(LOUIE sits on chair and MIKE sits at the desk facing audience)

MIKE: I'm Mike Nails, more often called 'Hard-As.'

LOUIE: Okay, 'Hard-Ass.'

MIKE: That's 'Hard-As,' Louie.

LOUIE: Right.

MIKE: I recognized you as soon as you walked in the door, Louie.

LOUIE: You mean my repotation has pro-ceded me?

MIKE: Yes, it has. Your mug has been plastered over every newspaper in the area.

LOUIE: Hey, did I make da *TIMES*?

MIKE: Yeah, you made the *TIMES*.

LOUIE: Hey, did dey shoot me from my good side?

MIKE: I didn't know you had a good side.

LOUIE: Are you insultin' me? Da last guy dat insulted me ended up wid weights around his ankles.

MIKE: (*excited, he points his finger at LOUIE*) On the bottom of the Rio Grande, I suppose.

LOUIE: Naw, he ended up at the Health Club. His doc told him he had to get in shape.

MIKE: Louie, pardon me for being blunt, but I don't think I care to do business with someone like you.

LOUIE: Aw, come on, 'Hard-As,' I ain't nuttin' like dey says I am. And da only pitchers ya ever seen of me in da paper was advertisin' my business.

MIKE: And your business happens to be Louie the Louse's House of Prostitution.

LOUIE: Yer pernouncin' dat wrong. It's Louie da Louse's House of Pestitution. On T'ird Street. Da place wid da giant cockroach in front. I'm an exterminator. Dat's how I got my name...Louie da Louse. It ain't 'cuz I'm a bad character.

MIKE: You're an exterminator all right. But not of bugs!

LOUIE: Come on now. Ya got me all wrong. I'm just a law abidin' citizen. Tryin' ta mind my own business. I never done nuttin' wrong. Why, one day a clerk gave me a quarter too much change at Walmart, and I drove ten miles to give it back.

MIKE: That sounds like Lincoln.

LOUIE: Naw, I was drivin' a Caddy.

MIKE: Okay, Louie, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. What brings you to Mike 'Hard-As' Nails?

LOUIE: It's my wife, Lolita. First she was carryin' on wid T-Bone Tommy, da butcher, and now it's Harry Hot Buns, da baker.

MIKE: *(rising and walking back and forth, he speaks dramatically)* The butcher, the baker. Next it'll be the candlestick maker, right?

LOUIE: *(hands on hips)* You makin' fun a me? Da last guy dat made fun a me ended up wid cement shoes.

MIKE: *(standing in front of him with hand on hip, pointing one finger at LOUIE)* On the bottom of the Rio Grande, right?

LOUIE: Naw. He run across a driveway when dey was pourin' it.

MIKE: *(he sits back down at his desk)* Okay, Louie, go on with your story.

LOUIE: I started suspectin' sometin' when all of a sudden she's servin' me all a dese baked goods. First it was dese wonderful, fresh cookies. *(puts fingers to lips and smacks)* Den it was biscuits dat would melt in yer mout'. *(puts fingers to lips and smacks louder)* Den it was doughnuts as fluffy as a cloud. *(puts fingers to lips and smacks even louder)*

MIKE: So why does any of that make you suspicious?

LOUIE: Hey, she don't even own no apron!

MIKE: That's no reason. Lots of women cook without aprons.

LOUIE: Well, she don't own no stove either.

MIKE: Of course, that might do it.

LOUIE: When I married her she said, "Just remember I ain't no Betty Crocker." It didn't make no difference to me. I didn't care if she wasn't no good in the kitchen, if you know what I mean.

MIKE: Yeah, I know what you mean. But let me get this straight. Because she brings you baked goods, you think she's got something going with the baker.

LOUIE: Now ya got it.

MIKE: Wouldn't you say that was jumping to conclusions?

LOUIE: I don't jump to nuttin'. I keep both feet on da ground. One day I look at da bottom of da pie tin and it says "Harry Hot Buns Bakery." So I know she's got sometin' goin' wid Harry Hot Buns.

MIKE: I still think you're jumping to conclusions, Louie.

LOUIE: (*shaking finger at him*) When Louie da Louse says he knows it, he knows it. Da last guy dat doubted me ended up feedin' da fishes.

MIKE: (*again talking excitedly, pointing finger at LOUIE*) Feeding the fishes on the bottom of the Rio Grande, right?

LOUIE: Naw. He got a job at PetSmart.

MIKE: Okay. Okay. Have you ever met Harry Hot Buns?

LOUIE: Sure. Before my wife started havin' dis whole bakery in her pantry I used to stop by dere for Napoleons every mornin'. He's got dis girl workin' for him named Lupita. We call her Lou. She'd ask me if I wanted coffee, and I'd always say, "No, wid my Napoleon I'll just have water, Lou!" (*he laughs*) I made a joke. You better laugh.

MIKE: Ha ha ha.

LOUIE: I don't know what she sees in Harry. He's dis tubby little guy. Looks like da Pillsbury Dough Boy. He ain't got nearly da class dat I got.

MIKE: Class isn't everything. If he's a baker, maybe he's sweet talking her. Something that you probably don't do.

LOUIE: What? (*pointing his finger at MIKE*) You sayin' I can't make sweet talk? Da last person dat said dat ended up in a iron coffin.

MIKE: (*talking excitedly, pointing his finger at LOUIE*) An iron coffin on the bottom of the Rio Grande, right?

LOUIE: Naw. He ended up in Vegas. An escape artist. Got outta dat coffin in t'irty seconds. What a guy!

MIKE: But back to the baker.

LOUIE: Oh, yeah. I t'ink Lolita liked da baker cuz he's rolling in dough. (*he laughs*) I made a joke. You better laugh.

MIKE: Ha ha ha. Okay, so what do you want me to do?

LOUIE: I want you to take her out!

MIKE: (*taken aback*) Now, just a minute, Louie. I'm not one of those pistol-packing punks that you hire to take someone out. It's against my principles!

LOUIE: Hey! You got me all wrong! All I want you to do is...take her out! You know, like on a date!

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!