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Dramatic Publishing

Three Hundred and One

By

DAVID ALLAN DODSON



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(THREE HUNDRED AND ONE)

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Three Hundred and One is extremely interesting, many-leveled, funny, filled with complex characters, flowing on authentic dialogue, and inviting the audience to participate at the what-happens-next level. All that is a considerable accomplishment in my book!

— Tom Key
Author of *Cotton Patch Gospel* and
creative director for Theatrical Outfit, Atlanta, Ga.

Three Hundred and One premiered on November 2, 2007, at the Blessed Trinity High School in Roswell, Georgia, with the following cast and crew:

Rose Shea Lee
Bobby. JD Woodbury
Counter Guy. Paul Markert
Customer Meg Verner
Sandra Kathleen Grissom
Demi Taylor Baudry
Winston Chris Rogge
Bret. Clint Edmondson
Waitress. Julia Agresta
Girl #2 Julia Dahm
Girl #1 Margo Comerford
Manager Andrew Mixon

Director. Allan Dodson
Assistant Director. Brian O'Connor

Stage Managers Devin Alford, Nick Suellentrop,
Greg Vande Loo

Lights Corey Buhay

Sound. Courtney Dyer, Ashton Woolen

Technical Director Lauren Stearns

Costumes Arielle Jacobs, Carly Stephans

Props Ryan Gilson, Dan Wakefield

Set Crew Laura Boullain, Joseph Coppiano,
Thomas Cullinan, Bianca Glade, Max Huddleston,
Jenny Rodriguez, Kadi Vilardo

THREE HUNDRED AND ONE

CHARACTERS

(4m, 7w, 1 either gender)

ROSE Early twenties, newly married to Bobby.
Rose is a smart young woman who is
starting to question some of her choices.

BOBBY Early twenties, married to Rose.
Bobby's ambition usually exceeds his
ability.

SANDRA Late twenties. Sandra is a divorcee,
an escapee from a bad marriage.

WINSTON Early twenties, Bobby's best friend.
Winston wants to live a swinging
singles' life, but has limited success.

COUNTER GUY Mid-twenties, a classic comic-book-
type geek.

CUSTOMER. Mid-twenties, dressed for success.
She is out of place in a bowling alley.

BRET Early twenties, teammate of Bobby and Winston. Bret is renowned as the alley's ladies' man.

DEMI Late teens, teammate of Rose and Sandra. Demi is living on the high of being a beautiful young girl.

WAITRESS. Mid-twenties, sick of her job, sick of the Counter Guy.

MANAGER. Early thirties, bowling alley manager. May be male or female.

GIRL #1. Early twenties, in love with Bret.

GIRL #2. Early twenties, in love with Bret.

SET: The set requires a counter with two stools in the center and two ball returns with three chairs each at stage left and right. In the Roswell production, ball returns were set up at the extreme edges of the stage. The counter was set upstage in the center. Each team "bowled" at the ends of the stage, and room was left in front of the counter for some of the action to take place. All "bowling" is pantomimed.

All of the action takes place in one scene and one setting. No special lighting is required. Props are minimal.*

*See technical requirements at end of play.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

BOWLING: Bowling is done using imaginary balls. In the Roswell production, the characters bowled directly toward the audience. A sound effect of a ball striking pins was used to enhance the effect.

SFX: General bowling ambience at the beginning enhances the sense of place. SFX are often used when Rose bowls to create the effect of her throwing a strike. The final sound effect—a ball striking pins—is essential.

COSTUMES CONSIST OF:

- Matching bowling shirts for each team
- All of the bowlers need bowling shoes
- Uniforms or matching shirts for Counter Guy, Waitress and Manager
- A business suit for Customer
- A shirt and tie for Counter Guy
- The other characters are dressed casually in jeans

THREE HUNDRED AND ONE

AT RISE: *We see a bowling alley with several bowlers throwing practice balls before league play begins. Most of the alley is left to our imagination, but there are two lanes at extreme left and right with ball returns just to the side. A set of three chairs sits on a platform next to the ball returns. The bowlers pantomime bowling directly into the audience. In the center, there is a counter where a MANAGER is silently admonishing a WAITRESS for some offense. SANDRA and DEMI take turns bowling on the lane at right. DEMI is on her cell phone, but we can't really hear what she says. WINSTON and BRET bowl on the left lane. We hear the sounds of a bowling alley as the lights come up.*

JUST AFTER RISE: *A female CUSTOMER enters and sits down at the counter. She is dressed in business attire, just a little too good for a bowling alley. The WAITRESS walks over to her.*

WAITRESS. Can I get you something?

CUSTOMER. Sure. Do you have a menu?

WAITRESS. Not really.

CUSTOMER. Okay. Let's see. I'm in a bowling alley. How about a hot dog and a Coke?

WAITRESS. Okay.

CUSTOMER. When in Rome, right?

WAITRESS. Whatever.

(WAITRESS exits, crossing with COUNTER GUY as he enters. He looks around for a moment and immediately spots CUSTOMER sitting at the counter. He goes to her quickly.)

COUNTER GUY. Can I help you?

CUSTOMER. The girl already took my order.

COUNTER GUY. Oh, I know that. She can take your order, but she can't help you.

CUSTOMER. What?

COUNTER GUY. She can bring you some pretzels. Maybe even an order of nachos. But help you? No, I'm afraid that's left to me.

CUSTOMER. What are you talking about?

COUNTER GUY. I see people like you wandering in here once in while. A fish out of water. A kid out of school. A nut without a bolt.

CUSTOMER. Are you saying I'm—

COUNTER GUY. Please don't be offended. I seem to be doomed to a life of inundatory frankness.

CUSTOMER. Inundatory?

COUNTER GUY. Frankly, yes.

CUSTOMER. I'm not sure what you're—

COUNTER GUY. Have you ever been in a bowling alley before?

CUSTOMER. When I was a kid.

COUNTER GUY. Yes. You see us as lower class. The proletariat. And perhaps you're right. Yet here you are.

CUSTOMER. I'm supposed to meet somebody here. She's in a league. A church league? The Holy Rollers?

COUNTER GUY. Yes. They bring their nine-pound balls and their theology to the far end of the alley. Way down there.

CUSTOMER. Maybe I'll just head down there and meet her.

COUNTER GUY. You could do that. But I don't recommend it. You'll need someone to guide you through tonight's emotional maze. I'm your only hope.

CUSTOMER. I don't think I need a guide.

COUNTER GUY. No?

CUSTOMER. I've done just fine without one so far.

COUNTER GUY. Ah. Perhaps you think life is easy here. Bowling is, after all, a simple game for simple people. But every night I watch them come and go. Some throw strikes, some end up in the gutter. It's dangerous territory.

CUSTOMER (*starting to rise*). Yeah, well, just the same...

COUNTER GUY. And besides that, you don't have your hot dog yet.

CUSTOMER (*sitting*). Hmm. I guess I'm stuck with you for a couple of minutes.

COUNTER GUY (*bowing*). The pleasure is all mine.

CUSTOMER. That's for sure.

(COUNTER GUY moves to do some other work behind the counter as ROSE and BOBBY enter. ROSE walks in quickly with BOBBY trailing behind. They are obviously in an argument. They stop among the tables before reaching the lanes.)

ROSE. Bobby, I don't want to talk about it anymore. Let's just bowl.

BOBBY. I just don't see what the problem is.

ROSE. What the problem is? A decent apartment, that's all I asked for. Does that sound extravagant to you? No. So we get a decent apartment. We're happy. I'm happy. And now you want to quit your job. And you don't see what the problem is.

BOBBY. But this is a good opportunity.

ROSE. It's not an opportunity. It's idiotic.

BOBBY. Don't call me an idiot, Rose.

ROSE. I'm not calling you an idiot. I said your idea is idiotic. There's a difference. They used to tell me that in school all the time.

BOBBY. It's not idiotic. It's like Barry said. You just have to change your buying habits.

ROSE. It's Amway, Bobby. Have you ever heard of Amway?

BOBBY. Of course I've heard of 'em.

ROSE. Everyone hates everyone that works for Amway, Bobby. It's in the job description.

BOBBY. Nobody's gonna hate us.

ROSE. Us? You. They'll hate you. Not us. I'm not doing it.

BOBBY. I just don't want to work on a loading dock the rest of my life, Rose.

ROSE. You're not going to work on the dock forever, Bobby. Do I look like a girl that would marry a guy without a future? If you want off the dock, why don't you apply for a job in the office?

BOBBY. You know I can't do that. You ever see those guys wearing their suits to work every day?

ROSE. The suits come off; they're not permanently attached. They're just normal people, Bobby.

BOBBY. Well, I don't want to be that normal.

ROSE. What's wrong with the dock anyway? You make good money. We're doing fine.

BOBBY. I just want to be my own boss. Like Barry.

ROSE. Barry works for the IRS.

BOBBY. He won't for long, though. He says—

ROSE. Barry, Barry, Barry. We're talking about a guy that puts locks on people's houses for a living, and you make him sound like Mother Teresa.

BOBBY. Barry's not even married.

ROSE. Bobby, you have to work to be your own boss. It doesn't just show up in the mail one day.

BOBBY. That's what I'm trying to do.

ROSE. Look, can we talk about this later? It's almost time for the league to start. I'm barely going to have time for a practice ball.

BOBBY (*looks up and sees WINSTON and BRET*). All right. (*ROSE starts to move away.*) Can I get a kiss?

ROSE (*stops*). My lips belong to only you, my prince.

(BOBBY walks over to her and gives her a quick kiss on the lips. They look at each other, then move to their respective lanes. ROSE joins SANDRA and DEMI. SANDRA is just finishing bowling, and DEMI is on her cell phone. During the following, ROSE is getting on her shoes, getting out her ball, etc.)

SANDRA. Thought you weren't gonna make it.

ROSE. What? Miss all this?

SANDRA. You want to throw a couple?

ROSE. Sure. (*Indicates DEMI.*) She been on the phone the whole time?

SANDRA. She puts it down to bowl.

ROSE. That's generous.

SANDRA. Young love.

ROSE. Problem is that she's in love with every man in the tri-county area.

SANDRA. So am I. She's just got a better chance of reel-ing them all in.

ROSE. I guess.

SANDRA (*nodding toward BOBBY*). Trouble with Dipstick?

ROSE. I wish you wouldn't call him that.

SANDRA. I wish he wouldn't be a dipstick.

ROSE. Shut up, Sandra. He's *my* dipstick, okay?

SANDRA. All right. I won't say another word.

ROSE. Right. You gonna stop breathing, too? 'Cause that's really not such a bad idea.

SANDRA. You gonna bowl, or what?

ROSE. I'm gonna bowl.

(ROSE gets up to bowl, and our attention shifts to BOBBY, WINSTON and BRET. During the above, a GIRL has entered and gotten BRET's attention. He has moved L and is talking to her. BOBBY has just finished bowling.)

WINSTON. I don't see how you think you're gonna bowl your best when you show up two minutes before we're supposed to start.

BOBBY. I have at least five minutes.

WINSTON. Whatever. You know what I mean.

BOBBY. I'll be all right. Just bowl, okay?

WINSTON. All right. I've just been sitting here by myself all night.

BOBBY. All night? What's it been, fifteen minutes? Where's Bret?

WINSTON. Over there.

BOBBY (*looks at the girl*). That a new one?

WINSTON. God knows. I can't keep up.

BOBBY. Jealous?

WINSTON. Damn right.

BOBBY. Well, tell him it's bowling time. He's up.

WINSTON. You get any practice?

BOBBY. Nah, I got here too late. (*BOBBY stares off toward ROSE.*)

WINSTON. Everything all right?

BOBBY. Yeah. Let's bowl.

WINSTON. I'll go get our boy.

(WINSTON walks over to BRET and pulls him back as our attention goes to the counter. During the following, we see all of the bowlers take their turns. The scores and reactions are unimportant except for ROSE—whenever she bowls, we should be aware that she's thrown a strike.)

COUNTER GUY. Anything I can get you?

CUSTOMER. My hot dog would be nice. Or my Coke. Or both.

COUNTER GUY. Ah, yes. Your order. Well, good things come to those who wait.

CUSTOMER. I'll bet.

COUNTER GUY. I've known it to be true. I've spent most of my life waiting.

CUSTOMER. Yeah?

COUNTER GUY. Yes. Waiting for destiny. Waiting for the perfect evening. Waiting for the perfect woman to walk in and sit down in that very spot.

CUSTOMER. Do you talk to everyone this way?

COUNTER GUY. What way is that?

CUSTOMER. Never mind.

COUNTER GUY. I think your hot dog will be here soon. It's a moment I dread like the end of our existence.

CUSTOMER. Oh yeah? Why's that?

COUNTER GUY. The arrival of your hot dog means you'll leave me. Wander off to the Holy Rollers and leave me to my regulars and my shadow existence.

CUSTOMER. Well, you never know. I might decide to eat it here.

COUNTER GUY. I shall await your verdict as a man in the shadow of the gallows.

CUSTOMER. Don't you have other customers?

COUNTER GUY. Not tonight I don't.

WAITRESS (*entering*). You got a big line over there for shoes. You gonna make those people wait all night?

COUNTER GUY. At the moment, I'm solving world hunger. Starting specifically with this young lady who is pining for a hot dog.

WAITRESS. She'll get it as soon as I get it.

COUNTER GUY. The capitalistic creed. *Adieu* for now.

(COUNTER GUY and WAITRESS both exit. Our focus goes to ROSE, who has just finished bowling. SANDRA is high-fiving her.)

SANDRA. Nice shot.

ROSE (*looking down toward BOBBY*). Thanks.

SANDRA (*follows her look*). You gonna stare down there all night?

ROSE. I just might. (*Fake British accent.*) It's lovely down there, don't you think?

SANDRA. A vision. What's going on with you two?

ROSE. Oh, just another one of his get-poor-quick schemes.

SANDRA. Ah.

ROSE. I guess I'm glad he has some ambition.

SANDRA. You've got enough ambition for the both of you.

ROSE. That's what I'm afraid of sometimes. (*Notices DEMI on the phone.*) She gonna stay on the phone all night you think?

SANDRA. I don't know. I'll ask her. Hey, Demi! You gonna stay on the phone all night?

DEMI. What's that?

SANDRA. I said are you gonna stay on the phone all night?

DEMI. Oh. I guess I'm being rude. I'll get off in a minute. (*She goes back to her conversation.*)

SANDRA. Makes your heart go all a-flutter, doesn't it?

ROSE. Maybe you should bowl before you get all romantic and weepy. Isn't it your turn?

SANDRA. Actually, it's not.

ROSE. Then I think I'll get a Coke. (*She walks toward the counter, and SANDRA calls after her.*)

SANDRA. Hey! Don't take it out on me!

(During the following, ROSE is ordering at the counter from the WAITRESS. Our attention goes to BOBBY, who is finishing bowling. BRET is high-fiving him.)

BRET. Nice pickup.

BOBBY. Thanks. *(Nods toward the GIRL, who is still waiting.)* Same to you.

BRET. Ah, she ain't nothin'.

WINSTON. She looks like something from here.

BRET. I don't know. I don't like her much. She's witty.

BOBBY. Witty?

BRET. Yeah.

WINSTON. You don't like her because she's witty?

BRET. Yeah. I don't know.

WINSTON. Do you know what witty means?

BRET. Yeah. She's funny. Makes jokes.

WINSTON. And you don't like that?

BRET. Nah. Not really. I think I'm up. *(BRET goes to bowl.)*

WINSTON. He's a real piece of work, that one.

BOBBY. As long as he keeps bowling strikes.

WINSTON. I guess.

BOBBY. We win all three games tonight, and we'll be in first.

WINSTON. I guess two hundred dollars in prize money is enough to keep our resident Neanderthal around.

BOBBY. Why do you want to talk about people that way? He's a nice guy.

WINSTON. All the women seem to think so.

BOBBY. You're just pissed because everybody's got a girl except you.