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Dramatic Publishing

The Man With Bogart's Face

A Radio Play in Two Acts

By

ANDREW J. FENADY

Based on his Edgar Allan Poe Award-winning
novel—screenplay and stage play



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE—
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For Norman Wolfe
and Miss Helen Marie Griffin—
her Radio Production Class
at Woodward High School—
and Ms. Sunne Miller at WTOD

and Mary Frances

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

If so desired—instead of using the name SPENCER DRUE, the actual name of the actor playing DRUE/MARLOW can be used.

And instead of the Lonely Players, the name of whatever organization is doing the radio play can be substituted.

As in the good old radio days, an actor or actress may play several parts—more so than if it were strictly a stage play.

As for the set, simple—an old-time radio studio with drapes on three walls, control booth, door, three old-fashioned mikes, a couple of tables, some chairs, sound effects equipment, etc.

PLUS SCRIPTS

Between acts—over the loudspeaker system—in addition to nostalgic tunes from radio's heyday, some of the singing commercials of the period might add some fun.

A few that come to mind:

Pepsi Cola – Pepsi Cola hits the spot / twelve full ounces, that's a lot / twice as much for a nickel too / Pepsi Cola is the drink for you.

Van Heusen shirts – Van Heusen I'm usin' / I'm usin' Van Heusen / that's the only shirt that I will take / try one and see/you will agree / Van Heusen gives your neck a break.

Pepsodent – You'll wonder where the yellow went / when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent.

There are hundreds of them—from Burma Shave and Barbasol, to Fitch shampoo, to Double-Mint chewing gum, and Vitalis—even war bonds, that's WWII.

THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE

Of all the movie stars, in all the movies, all over the world—Bogart was voted Number One All-Time American Screen Legend by the American Film Institute in 1999, forty-two years after his death.

Is it any wonder then, that someone, somewhere, would want to have his face changed to look like Bogart and in many other ways—*become* Bogart?

In this radio play—someone does and here's what happens as the broadcast starts.

The premier performance of the radio play of *The Man With Bogart's Face* was given June 8, 2002, at the Beverly Garland Theatre in North Hollywood, Calif. It was produced and directed by Peggy Webber; the music score was composed by Kenneth Stange.

CAST
(in order of appearance)

Announcer JOHN HARLAN
Hostess BEVERLY GARLAND
Doctor Inman IAN ABERCROMBIE
Sam Marlow RICH LITTLE
Duchess LESLIE EASTERBROOK
Mother JO ANNE WORLEY
Elsa Borsht LINDA HENNING
Buster WILLIAM WINDOM
Nero's Uncle JOHN BLISS
Horst Borsht ROBERT LEGIONAIRE
Able (a reporter) ROBERT LEGIONAIRE
Baker (a reporter) JOHN BLISS
Charlene (a reporter) LINDA HENNING
Lt. Marion Bumbera H.M. WYNANT
Sgt. Horace Hacksaw ROBERT LEGIONAIRE
Gena Anastas SAMANTHA EGGAR
Petey Cane ROBERT LEGIONAIRE
Jock IAN ABERCROMBIE
Commodore Alexander Anastas IAN ABERCROMBIE
Mr. Zebra TOM WILLIAMS
Nicky Karamavrakinos MARVIN KAPLAN
Cynthia Ashley BEVERLY GARLAND
Mustafa Hakim WILLIAM WINDOM
Wolf Zinderneuf ROBERT LEGIONAIRE

THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE

A Radio Play in Two Acts

CHARACTERS

SAM MARLOW/SPENCER DRUE – principal male
JIM – engineer
CLIFF – engineer – no speeches
JOE
SOUND EFFECTS PERSON #1 – no speeches
SOUND EFFECTS PERSON #2 – no speeches
DR. INMAN
DUCHESS – principal female
MOTHER – principal female
ELSA BORSHT – principal female
BUSTER
NERO'S UNCLE
HORST BORSHT
LT. MARION BUMBERA – principal male
SGT. HORACE HACKSAW – principal male
ABLE – reporter
BAKER – reporter
CHARLENE – reporter
GENA ANASTAS – principal female
PETEY CANE
JOCK
COMMODORE ALEXANDER ANASTAS – principal male
MR. ZEBRA – principal male
NICKY
CYNTHIA ASHLEY – principal female
MUSTAFA HAKIM – principal male
WOLF ZINDERNEUF – principal male

ACT ONE

AT RISE: *The stage is dark until lights illuminate a replica of a radio station of decades ago. The three walls (actually no walls are necessary) covered by drapes, ceiling to floor—except for one padded door, L. Three old-fashioned standing microphones a few feet apart, C.*

A man, SPENCER DRUE/SAM MARLOW, at a table is making notes on a radio script. A pitcher and glass of pineapple juice on table. There are a couple of other tables—one loaded with sound effects equipment. More equipment on the floor nearby.

Higher up, L, a clock slanted so we can't quite make out the time. Also a framed control booth with two engineers: JIM (sound) and CLIFF (music) in evidence.

A sign above control booth—ON THE AIR—not now lit. On the back of DRUE's chair a trench coat and fedora.

Then we hear JIM's voice from control booth speaker at top of booth.

JIM'S VOICE. They're on their way back.

DRUE. Thanks, Jim.

(DRUE looks at his wristwatch then at the clock, takes a gulp of pineapple juice from the glass. PEOPLE start to enter from door—SEVERAL MEN and WOMEN in noir attire—the PEOPLE carry

scripts, all but one man, JOE, whose script is on a table. The TWO SOUND EFFECTS MEN [one can be a woman] also enter.)

DRUE (*cont'd*). All right, people, let's get set.

JOE (*kidding*). Yes, "Orson"—star—producer—director—etcetera—etcetera—etcet...

DRUE (*interrupting*). Never mind that "Orson" stuff. There'll be no "horsin' " around here tonight. It was a pretty good rehearsal. Let's give 'em a better broadcast.

VOICE. Two minutes.

JOE. An eternity.

DRUE (*to JOE*). Just get your script.

JOE. I could do it in my sleep.

DRUE. Sounded like you were asleep in the rehearsal... Energy, everybody! En-er-gy!!

(The EFFECTS MEN are at the table checking items. General walla among actors, clearing throats—"one, two—one, two," etc. JOE walks over and picks up his script. DRUE takes another gulp of pineapple juice.)

VOICE. Let's check the mikes.

(ONE MALE and ONE FEMALE actor go to mike R and give out with "testing—one, two—testing.")

VOICE. OK. Good.

(JOE is at mike L.)

JOE (*fast, imitating Walter Winchell*). Hello Mr. And Mrs. America and all the ships at sea...let's go to press...flash...

VOICE. Very good, "Mr. Winchell."

(DRUE is now at center mike with script.)

DRUE. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the "Mystery Theater of the Air"...

VOICE. Dandy. Thirty seconds to air!

DRUE. Everybody ready?! Effects? Music? Act-ors?!

(Those with the first lines gather around their mikes with scripts.)

VOICE. Twenty seconds.

(An EFFECTS MAN tries out an effect.)

VOICE. Ten! Niner!... Six! Fiver! Three! Two! One!

(The ENGINEER throws cue. ON THE AIR sign lights up.)

THEME MUSIC: suggest "None But the Lonely Heart."

DRUE (*reading from script*). Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to "The Mystery Theater of the Air." This is your host, Spencer Drue. Tonight's broadcast presented by the Lonely Players is entitled "The Man With Bogart's Face."

MUSIC up.

(JOE hands DRUE the trench coat and fedora. DRUE puts them on.)

MUSIC out.

DR. INMAN. I've worked on thousands of patients, all kinds—movie stars, charity cases. Never had a request like this. I did check with the board. Medically, ethically, there was no reason not to comply. Your face—your money. Well, the bandages are off. Take a look in the mirror. I did the best I could from the photographs. Hope you're satisfied. You look exactly like Humphrey Bogart.

(From now on DRUE will be referred to as SAM MARLOW and he talks like Bogart.)

SAM *(sibilantly)*. Yeah, so I see. That's just swell. So long, Doc. *(Beat.)* I slipped into a brand new trench coat and a gray felt hat. The temperature in L.A. that July day was 92. Come to think of it, there was no sign of rain.

MUSIC.

At the courthouse I had my name legally changed to Sam Marlow. And it's not all that hard to become a private eye. That was my next move. I bought two guns—a .38 police special and a derringer, with plenty of lead.

SOUND: footsteps up the stairs—door unlocking and opening more footsteps in office. MUSIC out.

I had rented a second-story office on the corner of Larchmont and Beverly in Hollywood. A small reception room for my secretary—which I didn't have—and my private office—with roll-top desk, a swivel chair and not much else, except for the portrait of Gene Tierney in *Laura*. I'd swiped it from 20th Century Fox. Across the hall was a ladies gymnasium. Oh, on my door at the hallway was a sign. SAM MARLOW PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR—I DON'T SLEEP. The office was just about ready for the private eye business and so was Sam Marlow.

MYSTERIOUS MUSIC.

SOUND: snoring—high-heeled footsteps approaching.

FEMALE VOICE (*high-pitched, quavery but sexy*). Hi, there.

SAM (*awakening*). Huh? What? Oh!

FEMALE. Oh! Oh!!

SAM. My .38 was pointing right between—a most titillating target. She was a honey blond with big blue-green eyes and luscious wet lips. Yeah, she was something—something that could stop a stampede—or start one.

FEMALE. You can put that rod away. I'm just here about the ad you placed in the paper.

SAM. Which ad, Duchess? I put in more than one.

DUCHESS. In response to being a secretary.

SAM. Oh, I thought maybe you were a client. I get two hundred a day plus expenses.

DUCHESS. That's terrific. How much do you pay for a secretary?

SAM. One hundred a week.

DUCHESS. That don't seem right.

SAM. Why don't it?

DUCHESS. Well...*you* get two hundred a day.

SAM. Plus expenses. But then I take the chances.

DUCHESS. Well, my unemployment's run out so I'll take the job.

SAM. I decide that. I stood up, circled around—and gave her the up and down. Uh-huh.

DUCHESS. “Uh-huh”—what’s that mean?

SAM. It means you’re hired.

DUCHESS. Terrific—say, aren’t you hot in that trench coat?

SAM. Naw. I don’t wear underwear.

DUCHESS. Neither do I.

SAM. I noticed that.

DUCHESS. You know, you remind me of somebody.

SAM. Yeah, who?

DUCHESS. I can’t quite place it. But maybe it’ll come to me while I sleep. Things come to me in bed.

SAM. Yeah, I’ll bet they do.

DUCHESS. Well, see you in the a.m. Good night.

SOUND: high-heeled footsteps—fading—MUSIC.

SAM. More than a month of “good nights” went by. Duchess was built like Marilyn Monroe and made as much sense as Chinese music. In all that time the phone rang twice. Once it was a wrong number. The other was an obscene phone call. Duchess took it down as best she could.

SOUND: drawer opening—bottle, glass—pouring—drinking—MUSIC.

SAM (*cont'd*). I guess it all started that hot summer night. I took a hit from the office bottle, thinking about this and that—and then it happened. She was the biggest woman I ever saw. In fact, she was the biggest *anything* I ever saw.

MOTHER (*voice like a hungry seal*). I'm Mother.

SAM. Want a hit from the office bottle?

MOTHER. I don't drink and neither should you.

SAM. Is this business—or what?

MOTHER. It ain't "or what." Take a look at this picture. It's me and my husband Nicky. He's disappeared.

SAM. Mother photographed like a suit of armor. But then, that's what she looked like. Nicky looked frightened and tired. He came up to her elbow. Short, isn't he?

MOTHER. Yes...and...no. Can you find him?

SAM. Maybe yes...and maybe no.

MOTHER. You haven't paid last month's rent.

SAM. How do you know?

MOTHER. I own the building—and the ladies gymnasium. Find Nicky and we'll work something out.

SAM. I can't use a body-building course.

MOTHER. Can you use three months free rent?

SAM. Sounds okay. Has Nicky got a last name?

MOTHER. It's on the back of the picture. He's Greek and I can't pronounce it. Find him fast. I'm lonesome...lonesome as a coyote. Say, what's wrong with your face?

SAM. Nothing's wrong with my face. Why do you ask?

MOTHER. How come you got a twitch?

SAM. This is a risky business, Mother. I'll have Duchess draw up a contract in the morning.

MOTHER. Who's Duchess?

SAM. My secretary. Private.

MOTHER. Yeah—I saw her going down the stairs. There's not much about her that's private.

SAM. When did he take it on the Jesse O.?

MOTHER. You said what?

SAM. When did you notice Nicky was gone?

MOTHER. I went up to Frisco on business. When I got back he was gone, but all his stuff is still there.

SAM. Still where?

MOTHER. At our place. A little house on North Gower, 555.

SAM. Okay, I'll drop around tomorrow. Don't wash anything.

MOTHER. What?

SAM. Shirts, shorts—stuff like that, might be evidence.

MOTHER. All right. Nicky does the washing, anyhow.

SAM. I'll see if I can have him home before too much laundry piles up.

MOTHER. You do that. I'm lonesome...lonesome as a coyote.

SOUND: MOTHER's footsteps walking away—then phone rings—receiver being lifted from cradle.

SAM. Sam Marlow.

WOMAN'S VOICE (*filter*). Oh, Mr. Marlow, thank heavens you're there.

SAM. I get two hundred a day plus expenses.

WOMAN'S VOICE. Mr. Marlow, I don't know where to turn.

SAM. You just turned right, sister. What's the case?

WOMAN'S VOICE. Not over the phone. Please, can you meet me at the Hollywood Bowl in half an hour?

SAM. Okay, what's playing?

WOMAN'S VOICE. Nothing.

SAM. Well, then, why don't you save the tickets until there's something you want to see?

WOMAN'S VOICE. Please, I'll be in the center section of the bowl waiting. Please hurry.

SOUND: she hangs up—so does SAM.

SAM. The private-eye business was picking up. In fact, in the last few minutes it had just doubled. Clients—cases—danger—dough. Like the old days when there were causes and flags and dames worth

fighting for. She sounded desperate and lovely. Probably a brunette. I got up and took a look at the portrait of Gene Tierney as Laura. Dana Andrews was swell as the detective, Mark McPherson, but Bogart would've been better.

SOUND: automobile driving through traffic.

SAM (*cont'd*). I hopped into my 1939 Plymouth and headed across the Cahuenga Pass to the Hollywood Bowl. In the pocket of my trench coat I packed the derringer and a bag of unshelled peanuts. I also had the .38 right where it belonged with six messengers inside waiting for instructions.

SOUND: automobile door closes—footsteps—peanuts being unshelled and dropping on concrete—MUSIC.

I walked along an aisle of the bowl leaving a trail of peanut shells. The brunette was sitting where she said she'd be. Only she was a redhead. I offered her a peanut.

WOMAN. Thank you.

SAM. That's all right. I got plenty.

WOMAN. No. I mean thank you for coming.

SAM. I didn't catch your name.

WOMAN. Borsht.

SAM. Once again.

WOMAN. Borsht, Elsa Borsht. I saw your ad in the paper. Did anyone ever tell you looked like—

SAM. A detective—yeah. What's the caper?