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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE**

**A Play in Two Acts**

**by**

**ANDREW J. FENADY**

**Based on his novel and screenplay**



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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## 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 play—someone does.

And here's what happens after that ...

## **Author's Notes and Suggestions for making this play easier and more fun to produce**

Producers and directors of *The Man With Bogart's Face*, please feel free to use considerable latitude in staging the play.

Don't feel it's necessary to overproduce. The piece can be done with minimal furniture and props.

You can divide the stage so approximately one-third is reserved for the area of Sam's office and Duchess' tiny reception area where about thirty percent of the play plays. This set should stay dressed.

The rest of the stage can be used for the remaining, almost impressionistic, scenes: Hollywood Bowl, Horst Borsht's house, Petey Cane's club, the Commodore's house, etc.

If you want to build a few platforms or levels, fine—even a revolving platform for this area. Use doors and walls only when absolutely necessary.

Some of the transitions might be a little tricky, but that's what makes life in the big city—and the small stage—interesting.

Make friends with the lighting crew. Their job is a mite dicey, but do-able.

If you want to drop a curtain during some of the transitions while Sam is speling, that's okay too.

Let fly your imagination. Don't fear to bend or disjoin a few rules. Go ahead and try some different effects. Experiment with levels and lighting and with your creative instincts and impulses.

Have fun. Have flair. Have at it. But please, don't monkey with the dialogue.

And... break a femur, sweetheart.

# THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE

A play in two acts  
For 7 men and 5 women

## CHARACTERS

DR. INMAN  
SAM MARLOW – principal male  
DUCHESS – principal female  
MOTHER – principal female  
ELSA BORSHT – principal female  
BUSTER  
NERO'S UNCLE  
KANGO  
HORST BORSHT  
LT. MARION BUMBERA – principal male  
SGT. HORACE HACKSAW – principal male  
ABLE (reporter)  
BAKER (reporter)  
CHARLIE (reporter)  
GENA ANASTAS – principal female  
PETEY CANE  
JOCK  
GEORGE  
COMMODORE ALEXANDER ANASTAS – principal male  
TERESA ANASTAS  
MR. ZEBRA – principal male  
NICKY  
CYNTHIA ASHLEY – principal female  
MUSTAFA HAKIM – principal male  
WOLF ZINDERNEUF – principal male  
BELLY DANCER #1  
BELLY DANCER #2

Supernumeraries and offstage voices

**Possible Casting Combinations**  
**howsoever**  
**mix and match as suited**  
**examples**

Inman/Kango/Zinderneuf

Cane/Borsht/Nicky

Mother/Teresa

Jack/Able/Rescuer's voice

George/Baker

Cynthia/Charlie

etc.

**Buster and Nero's Uncle also can double as other characters**



## ACT ONE

AT RISE: *The stage is completely dark, until light illuminates a small area upstage. DR. INMAN is unwrapping the bandages from the face of the MAN who sits in a chair with his back to the audience. The MAN wears a trench coat.*

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, I did the best I could from the photographs. *(Gives the MAN a hand mirror.)* ...hope you're satisfied.

*(The MAN looks into the mirror, studies the result, which the audience still cannot see.)*

MAN *(sibilantly)*. Swell!

*(The MAN hands back the mirror, rises, takes a fedora-type hat from a standing rack and starts to walk downstage. Light fades from the doctor area, then as spotlight illuminates the MAN's hat and trench coat, we see for the first time, a face that has an eerie resemblance to Humphrey Bogart. The MAN lights a cigarette, twitches from time to time, and with a slight lisp addresses the audience.)*

MAN (SAM). I had my name legally changed to Sam Marlow. I bought two guns—a .38 police special and a deringer, and plenty of lead. Oh, by the way, this all happened a few years—and a lot of dead men ago. In those days, when there were causes and dames and flags worth fighting for, this sort of story was usually told by a narrator. That's the way it's going to be told here. And guess who's going to do the telling? That's right—so from time to time, I'll be stepping in and out of the caper, just like this, in order to bring you up to snuff.

*(Note: It is also MARLOW's tendency, as it was Bogart's, to occasionally tug at the lobe of his ear, or rub his jaw with his thumb.)*

SAM. I had rented a second-story office on the corner of Larchmont and Beverly in Hollywood.

*(An area of the stage is illuminated, revealing a small roll-top desk—on the roll-top there is a replica of the Maltese Falcon, but then again, maybe it's the genuine article—a wooden swivel chair, and a minimum of other furniture. Facing downstage there hangs a portrait of Gene Tierney as Laura. The office area is separated from a tiny reception room with an open door leading to a hallway. The upper half of the door is frosted glass with lettering. A spotlight features the door and lettering.)*

SAM MARLOW  
PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR  
"I DON'T SLEEP"

SAM. Across the hall there was a ladies gymnasium. (*He drops the cigarette butt and steps on it.*) The office was just about ready for the private-eye business—and so was Sam Marlow.

*(Stage goes dark. Music. The song can be the theme from the movie, See the Man With Bogart's Face, or any nostalgic melody from the 1930s or '40s. As light comes up, SAM MARLOW is sitting on the swivel chair, feet on desk—still in trench coat and hat, and—asleep. Simultaneously with the lights there is a KNOCK, KNOCK on the roll-top desk by a female hand. With the light the female is revealed. SAM reflexively pulls the .38 out of his trench coat and points it at DUCHESS, the gun right between her full-moon breasts. She's honey blond, big blue-green eyes, luscious pink lips, a small circle of waist that valentines into healthy hips tapering down long, well-turned legs. She wears a spaghetti-strap dress consisting of just about enough material to make a pillow case. DUCHESS' voice is high-pitched, quavery, but sexy.*

DUCHESS. I'm here about the ad you put in the paper.

SAM (*lowers his weapon and twitches*). 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 twenty-five 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.

*(The blond shrugs and the moment sends ripples all over her glossy polka-dot dress.)*

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

SAM. I decide that. *(He rises, slowly walks around the blond and eyes her up and down, then sits.)* Uh huh. You're hired.

DUCHESS. Thanks. Could I ask you something?

SAM. Ask.

DUCHESS. 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 bends and picks up a paper clip from the floor. Her full-blown breasts heave against the spaghetti-straps converging across her bosom. SAM holds his breath. DUCHESS hands him the paper clip.)*

DUCHESS. See you in the a.m.

*(She starts out of the office. It's a Marilyn Monroe exit. SAM pulls out a cigarette and match, rises and faces the audience as he lights up. Stage goes dark except for a spotlight on him.)*

SAM. More than a month of "good nights" went by. Duchess was built like Marilyn Monroe and made as much sense as Gracie Allen. 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. *(He starts back to the desk. Opens a drawer and removes a bottle of bourbon and a glass—he pours as he continues to talk. Still only a spotlight on him.)* I guess it all started that hot summer night. I took a hit from the office bottle and was 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.

*(Lights in office area up suddenly to reveal a huge woman—MOTHER. SAM swivels around.)*

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

SAM *(points)*. Want a hit from the office bottle?

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

*(SAM pours himself another—a double.)*

SAM. Is this business—or what?

MOTHER. It ain't "or what."

SAM. I get two hundred a day plus expenses.

(MOTHER produces a Polaroid photo and hands it to SAM.)

MOTHER. Nicky's my husband. He's disappeared. Here's a picture of the two of us.

SAM. Short, isn't he?

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

SAM (*twitches*). 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 across the hall. 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; that's why I don't use it. Find him fast. I'm lonesome ... lonesome as a coyote. (SAM's lip *twitches*.) 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 all the washing anyhow.

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

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

*(MOTHER turns abruptly and walks out. The phone rings. SAM picks up the receiver.)*

SAM. Sam Marlow.

WOMAN'S VOICE. Oh, Mr. Marlow, thank heavens you're there. I need your help.

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.

*(She hangs up. So does SAM. He rises and faces the audience as the office lights dim and a spotlight follows him.)*

SAM. The private-eye business was picking up. In fact in the last few minutes it had just doubled. She sounded desperate and lovely. Probably a brunette. *(He looks toward the still-lit portrait of Gene Tierney as Laura.)* Dana Andrews was swell in *Laura*, but what if Bogart had played Lieutenant McPherson? God almighty—just think of Bogart smoking his cigarette and looking up at that portrait of Laura. What a love scene. And neither one of them naked. I hopped into my 1939 Plymouth coupe and headed across Cahuenga Pass to the Hollywood Bowl. In the pocket of my trench coat I packed the derringer and a bag of unshelled peanuts. *(Takes a couple of steps toward the center of the stage.)* The Hollywood Bowl is a concrete cup with 17,256 seats. Now you know damn well that we couldn't get that many seats up here—so just try to use your imagination.

*(SAM extracts peanuts from his pocket, cracks and drops the shells, eats, and walks upstage as lights illuminate a lone figure sitting and waiting.)*

SAM. The brunette was sitting where she said she'd be. Only she was a redhead. *(He extends a hand.)* Have 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. (*He spits out the skin of a peanut.*)

WOMAN. Borsht.

SAM. Once again.

WOMAN. Borsht. Elsa Borsht. (*She stares at SAM.*) I saw your ad in the paper. Did anyone ever tell you that you look like ...

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

ELSA. It's about my father. He's been acting strange. Upset. Unstable.

SAM. Sounds like he needs a doctor, not a detective.

ELSA. No. He's been getting phone calls and he's being followed by several men.

SAM. Does he owe any bills? Or wife trouble, maybe?

ELSA. No. Dad's a widower and retired... a prop man for motion pictures.

SAM. Uh huh, why did you pick this spot for the meet?

ELSA. I work here in the office.

SAM. You know the acoustics here are among the finest in the world.

ELSA (*puzzled*). Yes, I know ... about my father ...

SAM. What's his first name, Miss Borsht?

ELSA. Horst.

SAM. *Horst Borsht?!*

ELSA. That's right.

SAM. Those men who've been following him—I wonder if one of them looks anything like the fellow who's creeping up the aisle toward us?

ELSA. What? (*Her head snaps around.*)

SAM. He's been crawling on my peanut shells for the last few minutes. *(SAM pulls out the .38—turns quickly with the weapon aimed.)* Stand right up, Buster, and make yourself known.

*(A slight pause, then BUSTER stands up wearing a ski mask and aiming his .38.)*

SAM. Well, I got one and you got one. Want to negotiate?

BUSTER. No deal. Look behind you.

SAM. Aww, horse feathers. That chestnut's older than Nero's Uncle.

VOICE. Meet Nero's Uncle.

*(A second ski-masked gunman appears—flanking SAM and ELSA. The two gunmen commence to converge.)*

SAM. Such a lot of guns.

BUSTER. Yeah. Put yours down on the seat. You wouldn't want the lady to get hurt.

SAM. I wouldn't want anybody to get hurt—on our side.

*(SAM puts the .38 on the seat. The two ski-masked men come closer—both pointing their guns.)*

BUSTER. You're gonna stand for a frisk.

SAM. Sure. Go ahead.

BUSTER. Miss Borsht, you step back.

*(ELSA moves away a couple of steps. BUSTER lays his .38 on the seat as SAM's hand comes out of his pocket. With the derringer, SAM fires, hitting NERO's UNCLE)*

*in the gun arm—the gun drops. Both men whirl and vanish into the darkness. SAM turns to ELSA, her birdlike hands covering most of her face.)*

SAM. It's all right. I'll take the case.

ELSA. Oh, thank you. Thank you.

SAM. On one condition—besides the money.

*(ELSA is still trembling as SAM puts his arms around her.)*

ELSA. Whatever you say.

SAM. That's *it*. Whatever I say. I do the thinking for the both of us. *(ELSA nods and comes even closer. SAM touches her cheek with the tips of his fingers. The kiss is soft, moist, long. SAM pulls away.)* I think we better go see your father, the prop man. Say did he ever do any John Wayne pictures?

ELSA *(shrugs)*. I don't know.

SAM. You don't? Hmmm.

*(Lights go dark. A spotlight hits SAM as he walks downstage once again to address the audience.)*

SAM. This kid wasn't as bright as she first seemed. How could she not know something like that? Anyhow, I collected the artillery and we drove over to the house where she lived with her father, Horst Borsht. There was another car parked on the dark street. Once again I had that old feeling. As we got close to the house I heard three honks *(A car horn honks three times.)* then—gunshots.

*(Sound of two gunshots.)* That's when I tore through the door.

*(The spot goes off. Darkness—until the lights go up on living room area. SAM appears, .38 in hand. ONE MAN (BORSHT) is bleeding in an overstuffed chair, a gun still in his hand. ANOTHER MAN (KANGO) holds a gun now pointed at SAM. Gunfire. A bullet whistles past the sleeve of SAM's coat as SAM fires the .38 twice. The first slug hits KANGO's heart. The second slug hits the first slug. KANGO drops deader than a can of corned beef. ELSA runs in, looks at her bleeding father and screams. HORST BORSHT looks up at ELSA and mumbles.)*

HORST *(dying)*. "Ein... Schlag" ...

SAM. What'd he say?

ELSA. I'm not sure, but I think he said "Ein Schlag" ...  
"I'm hit."

SAM. Yeah, he sure was. I'm going to call the police. When they get here, I'll do the talking. You better go into another room—this isn't pretty—make some coffee.

ELSA *(sobbing)*. All right, Sam. *(She starts to exit as lights start to dim.)*

SAM. Oh, and Elsa—you're aces. You got moxie. I take mine black with a dollop of sugar.

*(Stage is now dark except for a spotlight on SAM who walks downstage and brings the audience up to snuff.)*

SAM. I made the call. In short order, Horst Borsht's house was swarming with cops, reporters, video cameras and

photographers. It was like a scene out of an old Warner Brothers B picture.

*(Slowly lights come up on living room area. HORST BORSHT's body and KANGO's have been removed, but there are plenty of living bodies—including: LIEUTENANT MARION BUMBERA, SERGEANT HORACE HACKSAW, a couple of VIDEO CAMERAMEN and REPORTERS whom we'll call ABLE, BAKER, CHARLIE [a female]. We can't hear what they say as yet—not until lights come up all the way and SAM goes back into the area.)*

SAM *(still at audience)*. Lieutenant Marion Bumbera was in charge. He looked like a short Jack Palance. Second in command was Sergeant Horace Hacksaw. In the old days he would've been played by Mike Mazurki. *(SAM starts to walk back to living room area.)* The reporters blazed away with cameras and questions, mostly at me.

ABLE. Were you ever in the movies?

BAKER. Are you *related* to anyone who was ever in the movies?

CHARLIE. Have you got an agent?

ABLE. What's your favorite song?

BAKER. Do you believe in ghosts?

CHARLIE. Have you ever seen a movie called *Casablanca*?

BAKER. Weren't you scared when that gunsel pointed his rod at you?

SAM. Mine's bigger.

BUMBERA *(comes forward)*. That's all. OUT. Everybody who's not in my department—OUT!

*(As the REPORTERS exit, HACKSAW approaches carrying two .38s by the trigger guards.)*

HACKSAW *(to SAM)*. You. What'd you say your name was?

SAM. You saw it on the license. Marlow, Sam Marlow. Private Investigator.

HACKSAW. Yeah, are these the guns from the Bowl?

SAM. They are if you got 'em from my car.

BUMBERA *(to HACKSAW)*. Add 'em to the collection. *(To SAM.)* You, Marlow, stop by headquarters in the morning.

SAM. Sure, sweetheart.

BUMBERA. Don't call me sweetheart, and—try not to shoot anybody else unless it's absolutely necessary.

*(Lights dim and go out as SAM walks downstage and is hit with a spotlight.)*

SAM. I gave Elsa a couple of Seconals and put her to bed. Then I took a couple of hits from Horst Borsht's schnapps and fell asleep where he died. The next morning I stopped by to see Bumbera. He told me the dead gungsel's name was Joe Kango plus a lot of aka's. I picked up a newspaper with my picture on the front page and headed for the office.

*(Spotlight on SAM goes out. Stage is dark for a couple of moments then lights come up on DUCHESS in her tiny office. She is on the phone "secretarying" and we hear the first part of her conversation in the dark.)*