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Family Plays

BEATS

Comedy by
Jerome McDonough



B.A.T.S.

Due to the producer's demands for a full-length play from producers who recognized Jerome McDonough as one of the world's most creative and sensitive playwrights, he wrote *B.A.T.S.*, his first two-act full-length play. *B.A.T.S.* is peopled with the kind of free-spirited characters that make *FAUGH* and *Roomers* funny. *B.A.T.S.* shows McDonough's perceptive analysis of human foibles and failures that give significance to *Juvie*, *Addict* and most of his other works.

Comedy. By Jerome McDonough. *Cast: 3m., 7w.* What happened to the women in Al Capone's life? Where have all the former gangsters gone? The Baroni Assistance & Transfer Service assisted people to die (by bumping them off) and then transferred them to secret graves in a nearby cemetery. But now crime kingpin Angelo Baroni is dead, and his two widows, Gina and Maria, are distressed because the cemetery is about to relocate its corpses, including all of Angelo's family secrets. Complicating the plot are a stage full of free-spirited and slightly batty characters, like Anraj Depaj Anraj (Skippy), the world's wimpiest terrorist; Harold, former hit man and now the family butler; a terribly confused TV reporter; and Victor and Velma, two quirky elevators which are never seen but frequently heard attacking their passengers. As you watch the play, you wonder: What is evil? What is good? Who wields the power in our world—big business? Organized crime? The media? Or could it be—love? This funny, funny comedy for all groups just might have some answers. *B.A.T.S.* will clear all the bugs out of the stuffiest belfry. *The entire play takes place in the parlor of an old home in Chicago. The time is the present. Costumes are modern with the exception of Skippy's combat jacket, Binky's various on-the-job costumes, Jeannine's disguises and Erik's TV news blazer. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Sound Effects CD available. Code: BH5.*

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B.A.T.S.

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A Comedy in Two Acts

By

JEROME McDONOUGH

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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“Produced by special arrangement with
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

Dedication

To Dorothy McDonough, who has always seen the joyous side—
“Thanks, Mom”

And to the earliest batfolks:

Nancy Adams, Dallas Gimpel, Leslie Hamilton, Gina Lucero,
Christie Moulder, Paul Ramirez, Mark Tate, Suzi Kruger,
Sandy Tate, Chris Whitehead, and Denise Melton.

B. A. T. S.

Cast of Characters

Gina Baroni, probable widow of probably dead crime pin Angelo Baroni
Maria Fellini, ex-something of Angelo Baroni and best friend and house-
mate of Gina

Jeannine Baron (Smithson), actress/daughter of Gina

RayJean Smithson, daughter of Jeannine and Raymond Smithson, grand-
daughter of Gina

Harold, former hitman of Angelo, now a surly servant in the Baroni
home

Skippy (Anraj Depaj Anraj Anraj), extremely shy would-be terrorist

Binky Anraj, Skippy's wife, a hard-working drudge

Erik Matson, TV reporter

Cheryl Wells, new owner/operator of the Baccio Funeral Home and
Memorial Gardens

Naomi Lenks, a shameless man-chaser and movie buff
and

Victor and Velma, two elevators. Fans of Rock and Country music, re-
spectively



Place: The parlor of an old home in Chicago

Time: The present

Synopsis

ACT I, Scene 1: The Baroni Home—Morning

Scene 2: One week later

ACT II, Scene 1: A few hours later

Scene 2: Later that night

Scene 3: Late afternoon, the next day

ABOUT THE PLAY

Here is Jerome McDonough's first full-length play. His medium-length shows—*Juvie, Addict, FAUGH*, and *Eden*—and his short plays—"Roomers," "Asylum," "Fables," "Requiem," and others—rank among the scripts most frequently produced by adult and teen theatres.

Because of demands for a full-length play from producers who have recognized Jerome McDonough as one of the world's most creative and sensitive playwrights, he wrote *B. A. T. S.*

With the kind of unconscionably free-spirited characters that people *FAUGH* and "Roomers" and the perceptive analysis of human foibles and failures that give significance to *Juvie, Addict*, and most of his other works, this play shows us a factor of American life that no other author has revealed. What happened to the women in Al Capone's life? Where have all the former gangsters gone?

Those who seek philosophy in their dramas can find a fruitful field here: What is evil? What is good? Can one ever be mistaken for the other? Was Shakespeare right in saying, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so"? Who wields the power in our world: Big corporations? Organized crime? The media? Or could the answer be Love?

Like all McDonough plays, *B. A. T. S.* is peopled with fresh, carefully sculpted characters. There are Gina and Maria Baroni, widows of crime kingpin Angelo Baroni, a former bigtime Chicago gangster; Anraj Depaj Anraj Anraj, the world's wimpiest terrorist; Naomi, who chases men and movie stars; Jeannine Baron, a movie star who doesn't like to be chased, and her daughter RayJean, who doesn't like her life as a movie star's daughter. And two characters whom we hear frequently but never see—Velma and Victor, a pair of elevators with distinctive tastes in music.*

B. A. T. S. will clear all the bugs out of the stuffiest belfry.

B. A. T. S.
By Jerome McDonough

ACT I

Scene 1

Morning

[The setting is the parlor of the Baroni home. It is a comfortable, if too large, home in an older Chicago neighborhood. Up Center is a landing, to the left and right of which, out of sight of the audience, are two elevators which deliver tenants and visitors to the second and third floor or to the basement. In the Right Center wall is the hallway leading to the front door and thence to the street. At Left Center is the exit to the kitchen and utility areas and to the back door. Up Left is an exit to Gina's and Maria's first floor living quarters. Up Right is a drape which appears to cover a window, but which actually conceals an old stairway down into the cellar.]

Harold, the maid/butler/flunky, lives on the third floor. Naomi, a career man-fancier, occupies the second floor. Anraj "Skippy" Depaj Anraj Anraj and his wife, Binky, live in the semi-finished cellar.

At rise: GINA and MARIA, two elderly ladies, are seated, Left, in comfortable chairs. A small table separates them. Both are actively involved in their own pursuits, GINA sewing and MARIA reading a tabloid newspaper. A love seat or couch is opposite them, at Right. The other furniture in the room includes a coffee table in front of the couch, a telephone table far Down Right, and a hat tree near the Down Left exit. The tranquility of this scene is shattered by an enormous SHRIEK emanating from Up Center. ANRAJ DEPAJ ANRAJ ANRAJ (SKIPPY) leaps onto the landing, armed to the teeth with submachine gun, hand grenades, bullet bandoleers, knives, etc. He rushes to the apron of the stage and menaces some unseen foe above the audience]

SKIPPY. Imperialist pig-dogs! Fall to your knees and beg the forgiveness of the Third World! [He pulls back the bolt on the machine gun and stands ready to fire. He speaks again:] Scum of the earth vermin! [He holds his extremely hostile pose another few seconds, then drops it completely and becomes VERY meek. He moves almost hesitantly to

the love seat and sits, the machine gun clutched between his knees. He speaks to the ladies:] How did I do?

GINA. I think it was much better today.

MARIA. Much.

GINA. But you forgot a line, Skippy—the one that went, “Eat hot lead, fascist maggots.”

MARIA. Wasn’t it, “worm-ridden maggots”?

GINA. We decided that “worm-ridden maggots” was redundant.

MARIA. Oh, yes. Sorry, Skippy.

SKIPPY. Miss Maria, when I am in uniform—would you call me Anraj?

MARIA. Why should I call you that?

GINA. It IS his name.

SKIPPY. [*Proudly reciting his name*] “Anraj Depaj Anraj Anraj.”

MARIA. Talk about redundant. But, whatever you like.

SKIPPY. Thank you.

MARIA. No problem, Skippy. [*SKIPPY is exasperated, but GINA tries to salve the wound*]

GINA. [*To Skippy, uh, Anraj*] After that good rehearsal, you deserve a treat. [*Calling off Left*] Harold!

SKIPPY. [*Excited, like a child*] Treat? [*HAROLD, entering, is unimpressed by Skippy or anything else in this place and it shows. (HAROLD never speaks, but his silence says volumes about his contempt for his situation)*]

GINA. Break out the Hostess Raspberry Koo-Koos for our terrorist. [*HAROLD rolls his eyes, shakes his head wearily, and exits to comply. SKIPPY hastily follows*]

SKIPPY. Thank you, Miss Gina. [*Clapping his hands like a child*] Koo-Koos!

GINA. The world needs a few more terrorists like that.

[*NAOMI, a middle-aged woman of indeterminate background, bursts in from the entrance hall, speaking excitedly. A pair of binoculars hang from her neck*]

NAOMI. What a morning! Oh, baby!

MARIA. A successful hunt, Naomi?

NAOMI. Was it ever! I went down to the park, just to, you know, look around? And it was the starting line for a 10K Run! Talk about a smorgasbord! There were men of every size and shape you could imagine. Woo! I’d have killed for a camera.

GINA. Naomi, aren't you ever ashamed of yourself?

NAOMI. Never ever. [*Fiddling with her binoculars*] These things may be permanently steamed over.

GINA. Why are you back so soon?

NAOMI. I could only keep up with them for the first six miles. [*Crossing toward Up Center*] I'm going to catch the finish back at the park. I hope my video camera battery isn't low. Are the elevators okay?

GINA. Velma's being difficult.

NAOMI. Then I'd better sing to her. [*NAOMI disappears through the Up Center exit turning Left singing, in an extremely loud and very twangy voice, a contemporary country favorite or some traditional Western song such as . . .*] From this valley, they say you are going. I will miss your bright eyes and sweet . . . [*Her voice trails off, the unseen elevator carrying her upward as the PHONE rings. MARIA rises to answer it*]

MARIA. I'll get it, Harold. [*Into the phone*] B. A. T. S. . . . No, this is Baroni Assistance and Transfer Service. We don't sell baseball equipment. Actually, we don't even assist or transfer much any more. [*Hangs up as BINKY (Mrs. Anraj Depaj Anraj Anraj) roller skates in, wearing a pizza delivery shirt*]

BINKY. Hi.

GINA. Hello, Binky.

MARIA. What's that garb for?

BINKY. I'm delivering pizzas in my spare time. Anraj and I have so many expenses.

MARIA. Machine gun prices skyrocketing, are they?

BINKY. Like you wouldn't believe.

MARIA. Why doesn't he get a job, too?

BINKY. He has to prepare for the revolution.

MARIA. He can't prepare after work?

BINKY. He's totally dedicated.

MARIA. [*Under her breath*] He's totally something.

BINKY. I have to change and then fix Anraj's lunch.

GINA. He may not be hungry. [*A little sheepishly*] Harold's been feeding him again.

BINKY. Now he won't eat and he'll be cranky by this afternoon.

MARIA. I hate a cranky terrorist.

BINKY. Oh, there are some sandwiches he can munch on later. [*Exiting toward Up Center*] Are the elevators okay?

GINA. Velma's having one of her spells. [*BINKY presses a button just right of the landing, then steps out of sight*] You don't see such a devoted wife very often.

MARIA. Not outside of an institution. [*We hear BINKY speak again, from off Up Right*]

BINKY. Victor isn't working, either.

GINA. You know what to do.

BINKY. Yeah. [*She breaks into a full-voiced rendition of some raucous contemporary hard-rock number totally out of keeping with her meek style. Her voice trails off as Victor rocks her down to the cellar*]

[*The DOORBELL rings*]

MARIA. [*Speaking toward the kitchen as she crosses Right*] I'll get it, Harold. [*No response, of course*]

GINA. Who is it, Maria?

MARIA. Let me answer it first. Geez. [*Opens door off Right*] Angelina!

JEANNINE. [*Hissing, from off*] Shut up and let me in.

GINA. [*Rising*] Angelina?!

JEANNINE. [*Entering, disguised in trench coat and dark glasses. She dodges Gina's attempted embrace*] I have not been "Angelina" since I escaped from this belfry thirty years ago.

GINA. [*Dropping arms*] Excuse me. Jeannine.

JEANNINE. Is anybody else in the house?

MARIA. Do I count?

JEANNINE. Only in the broadest sense. [*An old hostility obviously exists here*]

MARIA. You should know about that sense.

JEANNINE. [*Ignoring her, to Gina*] Any others?

GINA. Just Harold and . . .

JEANNINE. He isn't dead yet?

GINA. [*Kind of hedging*] Ummmm—no.

JEANNINE. Too bad.

GINA. And there's . . . [*But Gina cannot finish speaking before NAOMI, video camera in hand, appears on the landing and shrieks her delight in seeing film star Jeannine Baron right in her parlor*]

NAOMI. JEANNINE BARON! JEANNINE BARON! I CANNOT BELIEVE IT! [*To Maria*] Maria, this is Jeannine Baron! I CAN-NOT BE-LIEVE IT!

JEANNINE. You're mistaken, I'm not Jeannine Ba . . .

NAOMI. [*Pointing the video camera at her*] You can't fool me, Miss Baron. I've seen all your movies—

JEANNINE. [*Trying to hide her face, but NAOMI keeps working around her, shooting successfully*] I'm often taken for her.

MARIA. Or for a human being.

NAOMI. [*Ignoring the protests of Jeannine and making a beeline for the telephone*] Heloise is going to die. [*Dials furiously as JEANNINE tries to stop her*]

JEANNINE. Really, you . . .

NAOMI. Hel? Naomi—I just came downstairs and who do you think was standing in the parlor? . . . JEANNINE BARON! The movie star!

JEANNINE. I am not Jeannine Ba . . .

NAOMI. Okay, I'll ask her. [*To Jeannine*] Would you do the "Line" for us?

JEANNINE. What line?

NAOMI. From MY LOVE BURNS LIKE A BLAST FURNACE, when you said, "I cannot go with you, Harvey. My heart is here—with the pig iron."

JEANNINE. I am NOT Jea . . .

NAOMI. [*Whining and begging*] Oh, PLEASE!

JEANNINE. [*Finally giving up*] All right, all right. [*"Dogging" the delivery completely, putting zero emotion in it, as NAOMI holds up the phone with one hand and operates the video camera with the other*] "I cannot go with you, Harvey. My heart is here—with the pig iron."

NAOMI. [*Into phone*] Isn't it uncanny? She sounds just like she did in the movie . . . Talk to you later. [*Hangs up*] I've got to get my auto-graph book, Miss Baron—don't go anywhere. [*She bustles out Up Center. During following dialogue, we faintly hear her singing to the elevator*]

JEANNINE. Who was THAT?!

GINA. I was trying to tell you—we've been . . . [*But she can't speak before SKIPPY has re-entered, Koo-Koo crumbs surrounding his mouth*]

SKIPPY. [*Pronouncing it the best he can, but the message is clear*] JEANNINE BARON! JEANNINE BARON! I CAN-NGT BE-LIEVE IT!

JEANNINE. [*To herself*] I don't believe it either.

SKIPPY. Miss Gina, it is JEANNINE BARON!

JEANNINE. I am NOT Jeannine Baron!

SKIPPY. [*Without missing even a beat*] Oh. [*Exits to Up Center, then Left, into the elevator*]

JEANNINE. *[To Gina]* You're running a Halfway House for the Criminally Stupid, aren't you? *[SKIPPY is heard, singing:]*

SKIPPY. Oh, bury my knot with a long prairie! Where the howls are free and the coyotes *[a pause]* sometimes are free . . . *[His voice fades down into the basement]*

JEANNINE. What was that all about?

GINA. When we were having the elevators fixed a few years ago, the man suggested we put in a music system. Well, Victor and Velma just hated it. They refused to run until we ripped the speakers out.

JEANNINE. Victor and Velma?

MARIA. The elevators.

JEANNINE. So—the elevators—don't like elevator music.

MARIA. Velma left us a nasty note. It said, "I am NOT a dentist's office."

JEANNINE. I'm not going to listen to any more.

GINA. Don't you want to hear about Victor's note?

JEANNINE. No. But who are those two mutants who just waltzed through here?

GINA. We took in a few people who seemed to need someone.

JEANNINE. What those two need are brain implants. But, back to my point. Raymond and I have decided . . .

MARIA. Who's Raymond?

JEANNINE. *[To Gina, referring to Maria]* Does she have to stay?

MARIA. I'm the pest patrol.

JEANNINE. Well, it applies to you, too. Raymond— *[To Maria]* Smithson, my husband—and I have been getting involved in California politics. *[Pausing for effect. Gets no response]* I'll be running for Congress this fall. And I don't want or need your support— *[to Maria]* or contempt.

MARIA. It's no trouble.

JEANNINE. All I want from the Baroni family and from any resident leeches is a clean slate. Raymond has engaged a firm to create a past for me and I'm here to dynamite this one.

MARIA. Smithson knows about your family?

JEANNINE. Don't be insane. I told him I was an orphan.

GINA. Do you have to deny us completely?

JEANNINE. Absolutely. You and Dad are now unlisted.

MARIA. What a break, Gina, unloading this sleaze by her own choice.

JEANNINE. I'm now going to remove every trace of me from this building.

GINA. Must you? Your room is just the way you left it. Except that Harold has it and he dragged your things down to the cellar. And repainted.

MARIA. And installed a hot tub.

GINA. And a body-building studio.

JEANNINE. [*Sarcastically*] I hope it's not too painful seeing the old place again. [*She moves toward the landing*]

MARIA. I hope it is. [*JEANNINE pushes the left button and steps out of sight into Velma, the elevator*]

GINA. Why are you so testy with her?

MARIA. She's erasing your entire family and you jump ME!?

GINA. A mother can't hurt her children.

MARIA. Oh, try. [*HAROLD is moving slowly toward Center*]

JEANNINE. [*From upstage*] What's wrong with this stupid elevator?

GINA. Sing to it, dear.

JEANNINE. That's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard.

MARIA. [*Looking to see which elevator*] Velma? Be sure it's rock 'n' roll! [*JEANNINE immediately starts to sing a modern rock number*]

GINA. Country! Country! [*But it is too late. There is a huge MECHANICAL NOISE followed by JEANNINE's scream as she is jettied to the basement by the piqued Velma. HAROLD has entered and stands quietly smiling and chuckling to himself*] Oh, my. Harold, would you like to help Angelina? [*HAROLD shakes his head, "No"*] Well, do it anyway, please. [*HAROLD sighs deeply, then steps to the Up Right exit as NAOMI rushes out of the right elevator and enters the parlor breathlessly*]

NAOMI. Where is she?

GINA. Who?

NAOMI. Jeannine Baron!

MARIA. Downstairs.

NAOMI. I finally found my autograph book. All the great actors are in here. [*Holding the book open before the ladies*] Look—*Troy Donahue AND Sandra Dee—on facing pages! Couldn't you die? [**Update as needed with "pop" movie starts of some two decades past.*] Thumbing through the album quickly] And back here, are you ready for this—Adam "Batman" West. What that man could do for a leotard. [*Crossing to landing, pushing the right elevator button*] Downstairs, huh? [*And she is gone, into Victor, the Rock elevator*]

GINA. Who is Adam “Batman” West?

MARIA. Who cares? [*From Up Right, we hear NAOMI singing a doo-wop rock “riff” as she descends into the basement*]

NAOMI. Shooba-doo-wop, shooba-doo-wop.

[*A badly shaken JEANNINE, supported by BINKY (now attired in a white karate gi), half-falls onto the landing from Left*]

JEANNINE. What’s with that elevator? It tried to kill me!

MARIA. It’s the thought that counts.

GINA. Harold’s gone to help you.

JEANNINE. A big help—the slug.

BINKY. Don’t get so excited, ma’am. You might be in shock.

JEANNINE. I am perfectly [*falling against Binky*] fine. Full rational thinking back in place.

BINKY. Are you sure?

JEANNINE. Yes. Now let’s stuff Harold and Maria in the microwave.

GINA. We don’t have a microwave.

JEANNINE. How about a [*relishing the word*] SLOW cooker?

BINKY. You should sit down, ma’am.

JEANNINE. [*To Gina, referring to Binky*] Who is Florence Nightingale, here?

GINA. Binky, meet Ange—Jeannine Baron. [*JEANNINE tries to shush Gina, fearing another “Jeannine Baron!” scene, but BINKY just smiles*]

BINKY. How do you do?

JEANNINE. [*Peering closer at her small size and karate suit*] I can see why you’re taking karate lessons.

BINKY. Oh, I’m not taking lessons. I work there—at the Matsamuki School of Tae Kwan Do and Full Contact Kick Boxing.

JEANNINE. You’re an instructor?!

BINKY. Not exactly. When the instructors demonstrate their jabs and punches and kicks—they demonstrate on me.

JEANNINE. I’m getting out of this animal shelter as soon as I grab everything that’s left. [*Pointing to Up Right*] Is that staircase still behind there?

GINA. Yes, but it’s easier to take the elevator.

JEANNINE. [*Heading for drapes, Up Right*] That is a matter of opinion. [*She exits as BINKY speaks*]

BINKY. [*Moving Left*] I’ve got to rush. When I’m late, the Master won’t demonstrate on me. I feel so hurt.

MARIA. That seems backwards, somehow.

BINKY. [*Stopping near the Left exit*] Tell Anraj there are some of his favorite sandwiches in the refrigerator.

MARIA. Camel's milk cheese on raisin toast?

BINKY. [*Disappearing into the kitchen, nodding*] With the crusts trimmed off.

MARIA. Yummy.

GINA. That marriage was made in heaven.

MARIA. On holy practical joke day.

[*The DOORBELL rings again. MARIA crosses to get it once more*]

MARIA. [*Sarcastically, exasperated at having to do Harold's work*] I'll get it.

GINA. We'll have to get Harold some help if this keeps up.

MARIA. [*From off Right*] Great plan. [*CHERYL WELLS's voice is heard off Right as Maria supposedly opens the door*]

CHERYL WELLS. Mrs. Gina Baroni?

MARIA. Who wants to know?

GINA. Maria, for heaven's sake, let the woman in.

MARIA. [*Whispering to Gina, leading the woman in*] You never know what cops are gonna look like since those brain-damaged models got into it on TV. [*A very efficient-looking woman follows MARIA into the room. She is CHERYL WELLS. MARIA sits, looking suspiciously at her*]

CHERYL WELLS. I'm Cheryl Wells, the new manager of the Baccio Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens, Mrs. Baroni.

MARIA. What happened to Baccio?

CHERYL WELLS. He retired and sold the firm to my company. We need your signature on a form, agreeing to our renovation plans, Mrs. Baroni.

GINA. What renovation plans?

CHERYL WELLS. [*Placing her brief case on the coffee table and extracting a form from it during the next few exchanges*] We've purchased the rest of the block in which the cemetery is currently located and we...

MARIA. "Currently"?

CHERYL WELLS. We have decided to build on the current site of the cemetery.

MARIA. You want to build a new funeral parlor on top of Gina's relatives?

CHERYL WELLS. Of course not. All of the remains now in Memorial Gardens will be relocated half a block south.

GINA. [*A look of mild panic crosses GINA's and MARIA's faces. GINA recovers first*] You want to move my Grandma Campanella? My Uncle Antonio?

CHERYL WELLS. With all dignity, I assure you.

GINA. What if they don't want to move?

CHERYL WELLS. Well, we . . .

MARIA. If we wanted them half a block south, we'd have buried them at the 7-11.

GINA. Why not build on the new land?

CHERYL WELLS. Oh, one-way streets, zoning . . . best visibility from the freeway . . .

GINA. Grandma didn't like to travel when she was alive and she wouldn't want to start now. [*NAOMI bursts on to the landing, autograph book in hand, wild eyes in her head*]

NAOMI. Which way did Miss Baron go?

MARIA. Have you tried the chimney?

NAOMI. The chimney! Good! [*She tears off through the Up Left exit to Gina and Maria's quarters. CHERYL WELLS is taken aback for a count, then decides to let it pass and get back to her mission. She shows a diagram to Gina*]

CHERYL WELLS. Let me show you a sketch of the new cemetery—may I call you Gina?

GINA. No.

CHERYL WELLS. [*Letting it go by without any reaction*] We've already been to the Board of City Development, the . . .

MARIA. Would you like to call me Maria?

CHERYL WELLS. Certainly.

MARIA. Well, don't. [*Before CHERYL WELLS can regroup, we hear SKIPPY rising from his lair in the Left elevator, singing . . .*]

SKIPPY. . . there was blood with a saddle and blood served a round, and a great big paddle wiped blood on a hound. [*He notices the visitor*] Oh. Excuse me. It is snack time.

MARIA. Won't you share your camel's milk cheese with our guest? [*CHERYL WELLS looks suitably horrified*]

SKIPPY. [*Whining quietly to Maria*] Miss Maria, the camel sandwiches are for Anraj. [*An idea hits him and he speaks to Cheryl Wells*] How about some fresh lizard fries? They are much less greasy since we learned taking off the skin first.

CHERYL WELLS. None for me, thanks, uh . . . I had them for lunch.

MARIA. She's lying, Skippy. *[SKIPPY is crestfallen. He looks at Cheryl Wells, his lip starts to quiver, he takes a few quick, near-tearful breaths, and he moves to the kitchen, mumbling . . .]*

SKIPPY. There is no discounting for taste. *[CHERYL WELLS shakes her head violently to clear all of this scene, then tries valiantly to return to her errand. She presents the form again]*

CHERYL WELLS. Mrs. Baroni, why don't you sign and avoid any problems with us?

GINA. Why don't you keep your hands off my grandma and avoid any problems with me?

CHERYL WELLS. You refuse to sign?

MARIA. You catch on fast for a pushy . . .

GINA. Maria . . . no, no. *[HAROLD has been sneaking up behind Cheryl Wells and is extending his hands toward her throat, but GINA waves him off during the next speech. HAROLD's shoulders droop even more in disappointment]*

CHERYL WELLS. *[Dropping her "sweet" facade, through with being Miss NiceGuy]* Fine. Requesting the signature was strictly a courtesy. We have permission to proceed, whether the property owners approve or not.

GINA. Whose permission?

CHERYL WELLS. The Board of Selectmen, the District Zoning Commission, the mayor's office—several city agencies.

GINA. Well, you can expect to hear from the Baroni agency again.

CHERYL WELLS. *[Closing her briefcase]* As you wish. *[She starts moving toward the door with HAROLD following her. She stops to make one last offer, extending her card to Harold]* If you change your mind, you can reach me at this number. *[She hands the card to HAROLD, who immediately tears it into tiny pieces which he sprinkles in her hair. He doesn't speak, of course. Without losing her composure, CHERYL WELLS turns and exits]*

GINA. Harold, you shouldn't have done that.

MARIA. You should have chewed it up first. *[HAROLD nods in agreement as he exits to the kitchen]*

GINA. We can NOT let them dig up that cemetery, Maria.

MARIA. Baccio sold us out. Even after all the business we've given him. *[JEANNINE enters through the drapes, Up Right, carrying several boxes]*

MARIA. What is?

GINA. You are so wonderfully consistent. *[And they are gone into their rooms, Up Left, JEANNINE's laughter fading with them. After a few counts, HAROLD enters from Left, shuffling toward Up Center. Once on the landing, he turns and looks around the room for a count—just long enough for NAOMI to grab him and throw him over her shoulder, fireman-style]*

NAOMI. Gotcha, my quivering mass of masculinity! *[HAROLD is panicking, but NAOMI has a death grip on him as she speaks to Velma]* Upward to our blissful future, Velma. *[A count, then NAOMI is heard singing happily]*

LIGHTS OUT

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

ACT I, Scene 1:

Needlework or sewing paraphernalia—Gina
 Tabloid newspaper (*The Enquirer*)—Maria
 Submachine gun, hand grenades, bullet bandoleers, knives, etc.—Skippy
 Binoculars—Naomi
 Roller skates—Binky
 Dark glasses—Jeannine
 Video camera—Naomi
 Koo-Koo crumbs—Skippy (around his mouth)
 Autograph book—Naomi
 Briefcase, forms, business card—Cheryl Wells
 Several boxes—Jeannine
 Telephone book

Scene 2:

Small notebook, pencil—Erik
 Overnight bag, purse—RayJean
 Family photograph—RayJean (in purse)
 Bullhorn or megaphone—Naomi
 Multi-spring stretching exercise device—Harold
 Several sheets of paper (petitions)—Maria
 Mail—Binky
 Wet paper pieces—in Cheryl Wells's hair

ACT II, Scene 1:

Petition forms—Harold, Naomi, Skippy

Scene 2:

Luggage—Naomi
 Brightly colored high-top tennis shoes—Harold
 Skateboard—Harold
 Catalog—Binky

Scene 3:

Sheaf of papers—Cheryl Wells
 Large piece of butcher paper—Harold
 Extensive body bandages—Jeannine
 TV remote control—Gina
 News story—handed to Erik

Costumes

Special costumes include **Skippy's** combat jacket; **Binky's** various on-the-job costumes—pizza parlor, karate "gi" or combat shirt, chicken suit; **Jeannine's** disguises (trenchcoat, head covering, etc.); **Erik's** TV news blazer. Otherwise the characters are dressed in the current mode.

Sound and Special Effects

The most spectacular sounds are the antics of the the two elevators, Velma and Victor—door opening, slamming; metal door slamming; metal grinding; screeching of brakes; revving engine; screeching tires; enormous crashes—all available on an audio sound effects tape (cassette ~~or reel-to-reel~~) available from the publisher, I. E.