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*Dramatic Publishing*

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# **All Out**

A Full-Length Play

By

**JOHN RESTER ZODROW**



**THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY**

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JOHN RESTER ZODROW

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(ALL OUT)

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To my Gina,  
my gift, my partner, my love.

ALL OUT  
*A Full-Length Play*  
For Eight Women, Fifteen Men, Extras\*

CHARACTERS

LLOYD WRIGHT . . . . . the announcer  
JOHNNY MITCHELL . . . . . the host  
MARY ROSENBERG . . . . . a contestant  
JULIA COLBY . . . . . a contestant  
CHARLEY RITTER . . . . . a contestant  
GEORGE REEDY . . . . . a contestant  
THELMA SPRINGFIELD . . . . . a contestant  
SID . . . . . Mary's boy friend  
WILLY . . . . . Julia's son  
ELAINE . . . . . Charley's wife  
MRS. REEDY . . . . . George's mother  
JAKE . . . . . Thelma's husband  
STAGE MANAGER  
THREE CAMERAMEN  
TWO PARAMEDICS  
THREE BANK GUARDS  
HOSTESS  
MAKE-UP PERSON

TIME: The Present

PLACE: A Television Studio

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\*Skills. Three or four "leaders" seated in audience.

## A WORD

Recently I attended the taping of a shorter, half-hour version of *ALL OUT* at the CBS television studios in Hollywood. Paul Stanley, that meticulous director, and his associates, John Meredyth Lucas, Mary Williams and John Farrell, had planned the event very well. They had sent out printed tickets, inviting the public to “attend a pilot game show.” The audience therefore arrived unsuspecting of what was about to happen. It was a dramatist’s dream. An audience had been obtained who would try and make the show a winner by applauding and laughing and generally showing their enthusiasm for a new game show. It wasn’t unusual. That’s the way Hollywood does things for its shows. But we wondered at the outcome of *ALL OUT*. Had we gone too far? Would the audience, upon learning it had been duped, tear out the seats and the actors’ throats?

Just before taping was slated to begin, three CBS representatives, including several well-known game show hosts, appeared on our stage. They had learned of the satire we were about to tape and were incensed. Lawsuits were threatened; CBS, looking mildly miffed (for the sake of the game shows, we hoped) listened as the different hosts aired their views. They complained that *ALL OUT* would destroy and undermine their own shows and that all game shows would suffer as a consequence.

Well, I’m glad to relate CBS upheld our First Amendment right to tape *ALL OUT* that day. The game show hosts retreated and are probably still on television today. The audience loved its “involvement” with our fake game show pilot and without any coaxing, participated perfectly, even to the finale. Many said later it was the most powerful drama

they had ever seen. And they had some good laughs in-between.

*ALL OUT* went on to win the prestigious Ohio State Award and was nominated for a Peabody Award. So, here it is and I hope you have as much fun doing it as I have had. Break a leg!

John Rester Zodrow

## ALL OUT

There are three T.V. cameras fully manned by two CAMERAMEN and one CAMERAWOMAN on stage. There is a STAGE MANAGER, complete with headphones, below stage level. We are in a full-fledged T.V. studio. Any props, such as T.V. monitors, applause signs, microphones, etc. should be used to further convince the audience.

The house lights dim. The curtain does not rise. A single spot lights up and Lloyd Wright, the ANNOUNCER, steps out onto the stage. His manner is breezy and fast, as is the entire play. Theme music up. (Something American like Sousa.)

ANNOUNCER. Hiya, hiya, game fans! As you might have guessed, I'm Lloyd Wright, the familiar voice behind your screen every night. Now, don't worry because Johnny Mitchell, the star of our show, will be out shortly. I'm here to do what's called a warm-up, get everybody greased. And since we can't pass out the booze in this T.V. studio, the next best thing is get you to laugh a bit while I tell you the rules and regulations of *ALL OUT* and what we need you to do. Yes, we *need* you, ladies and gentlemen. For without you, this show will be a flop. Hey, I got a good one for you. You know why Christians were made? Well, somebody had to buy retail! (He laughs at his own joke so hard that the AUDIENCE thinks his laughter is what



is funny.) Okay, good, you're a good group! Now, we're on the air shortly. (The STAGE MANAGER raises one finger.) One minute, right, gotcha, Mike. Now, ladies and gentlemen, please forgive us, but you see these three T.V. cameras will be roaming about during our show. Gotta let the other fifty million get a glimpse, right? (He laughs again.) And those applause signs above your heads will light up whenever Johnny or somebody makes a joke or whenever the producers feel it's right to applaud. Now, you don't have to. But, like I said, without you, we haven't got a chance. So, please. What do you say? (He applauds. The AUDIENCE joins in.) Good! Good! Louder! That's terrific! (He "wings" out his arms, like the movement an umpire makes when a runner slides into second and is safe. The AUDIENCE quiets.) Good, fine! You're terrific. Remember we're the only live show on television in America today. And it's up to you to make it a success. Applaud when you feel like it; boo when you want, but make it strong! For the first time, the audience is as important to the success of a show as the contestants. You wanna good night of entertainment, roll up your sleeves and jump in! And have a good time! But, remember, this is our pilot, our first one and it's gotta be good!

STAGE MANAGER. Fifteen!

(A MAKE-UP PERSON runs out, checks the Announcer's face. She dabs in several places. The ANNOUNCER straightens his blazer.)

ANNOUNCER. As you know, we've been on the air for nearly a year now, but non-network. That means we've been picked up in syndication by individual stations. But tonight – thanks, Sally – (The MAKE-UP PERSON runs off. The STAGE MANAGER raises a closed fist.)

— Tonight, folks, is the first time we're nationwide and I don't mind telling you, I've got a few butterflies. (He laughs anxiously.) Me, an old pro whose family goes back to vaudeville, with the jitters! But when you're live . . . and I do mean *live*, anything can happen. And ladies and gentlemen, if you've seen *ALL OUT* before, you know I do mean *anything!*

STAGE MANAGER. Five, four, three . . . (The ANNOUNCER checks himself, throws back his shoulders, smiles, faces camera. The STAGE MANAGER finishes the count-down with his fingers — two, one! Music: Drum Roll.)

ANNOUNCER (into camera). Helllllllooooooo, game fans and welcome to America's newest and most exciting show! You've shivered at the \$64,000 *Question*, wept for the winners of *Queen For A Day*, rooted for *Let's Make A Deal!* Now prepare yourselves for the game show of all game shows! The ultimate, the fantastic, death-defying, the only game show that will ever make the Guinness book, the unbelievable one hundred thousand dollar show of shows . . . *ALL OUT!* (The signs light up. "Applause, Applause." The AUDIENCE follows.) And now, ladies and gentlemen, here's your host of hosts . . . the none other, the one and only, *Johnny Mitchell!* (More applause. Music.)

(The curtains open revealing a set composed at stage C of a neon sign spelling "ALL OUT." Some brightly decorated desks are at L [the kind seen on *What's My Line*. Stage R holds a small stage, complete with closed curtain. Beneath the neon sign of "ALL OUT" is another elevated stage, tiered, like a birthday cake. JOHNNY MITCHELL, all-American good-looker, microphone in hand, raises his hands for the applause to cease. He speaks like a barker.)

JOHNNY. Thank you. Thank you, Lloyd. And . . . welcome

everyone to *ALL OUT* . . . the game show of all game shows . . . the granddaddy of the ancestors . . . the freak of all freaks . . . the big ferris wheel in the sky . . . the only show, even when in syndication, that beat out *Dallas* in the ratings! And now, tonight, ladies and gentlemen, marks our first national broadcast! We are pleased to be here with you. And if it wasn't for our loyal T.V. audience, none of this would be possible! Give yourselves a hand. (The "applause" lights flash.) And now, Lloyd, who are our sponsors tonight? (The ANNOUNCER steps R. He reads from a card in his radio announcer's voice.)

ANNOUNCER. Tonight, Johnny, we have with us our old friend Slam Dunk Peanut Butter. When you eat Slam Dunk, you're a star! And . . . Kiss and Tell Stockings, because you'll want to! The Lord Automobile Company, the same company which brings you the World Series! And this first portion of *ALL OUT* is brought to you by Contract Suds. When you use Contract, you have a contract.

JOHNNY. Thank you, Lloyd. Big league, big league! So, without further ado, without any more fanfare, welcome, ladies and gentlemen of America, to the marathon of wits, courage, greed and insensitivity . . . welcome to *ALL OUT*! Coming live to you from Burbank, California! (The "applause" signs flash.)

(A scantily-clad HOSTESS dashes out with an envelope. She hands it to JOHNNY and blows him a kiss.)

JOHNNY. Mmmm. Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, each show we select five – and only five – contestants from the

studio audience. This is the moment our studio audience has been waiting for! (He begins to open the envelope, pauses.) And I've got to tell you, I heard our studio tickets are being scalped tonight for a whopping hundred dollars just to get a chance on being inside this envelope. (He rips the envelope with a flourish and withdraws a card.) Are you ready? Are you ready out there for your lives to change forever? I guarantee you they will change tonight! Are you ready, audience?

AUDIENCE (shills). We're ready, Johnny!

JOHNNY. I can't hear you!

AUDIENCE (shills). We're ready! We're ready!

JOHNNY. What did you say?

AUDIENCE (shills). We're ready! Ready! Ready!

JOHNNY. That's good, because, Mary Rosenberg, I want *you . . .* to come on *down!*

(MARY ROSENBERG, a very pretty, red-haired young woman, flounces down from the AUDIENCE. A spot picks her up as she approaches the stage. "Applause" signs flash.)

JOHNNY. Well, well, Miss Rosenberg! It is "miss," isn't it?

MARY. "Ms.," Johnny. I'm a feminist. A soft one.

JOHNNY. Not tonight, Mary. May I call you Mary?

MARY. Sure, Johnny, but why aren't I a feminist tonight? (JOHNNY grins at her knowingly, turns to AUDIENCE.)

Oh, I almost forgot! That's one of the rules, isn't it?

JOHNNY. Right, Mary! You nearly failed before you started. Everyone who joins us on stage here tonight is pretending to be someone else. So, tonight, Ms. Rosenberg, who are you? And remember, we don't want the truth! And if it is, don't let us know. (He winks at the AUDIENCE.)

MARY. Well, tonight, okay, I know you want something dramatic. (She looks at the AUDIENCE nervously.)

I . . . I don't like myself, how's that? I mean, I gotta be a realist. I really hate myself, if you have to know.

JOHNNY (whistling). Pretty strong stuff, Mary.

MARY. Honest, Johnny. I mean, I was born to hate myself. At least that's the way I feel sometimes. I knew that from the first time I was born. So I'm a realist. And That's why I have to win tonight. Because tonight I'm gonna prove to Sid I'm worthy of him. He's the man I love!

JOHNNY. And just who *is* this lucky guy, Mary?

MARY. Sid is my boy friend. We've been dating now for six years. We were childhood sweethearts, went to school together, even attended the same synagogue. He wants to get married, but he hasn't asked me yet.

JOHNNY. Well! He *wants* to get married, but he hasn't *asked* you yet?

MARY. That's it, Johnny.

JOHNNY. Well, if he hasn't asked you yet, Mary, how do you know he will? Or that he even *wants* to?

MARY. He's said he wants kids and I know that he loves me.

JOHNNY. And tonight you plan to prove that you're as good as Sid and that will convince him to marry you?

MARY. It's a little more complicated than that, Johnny. But, yes, that's what I hope happens tonight.

JOHNNY (to AUDIENCE). Scarlett O'Hara has nothing on this woman! (To MARY.) Now that we know *why* you're up here, Mary, and of course, we all know this is just a little white lie you're telling, don't we? (He turns and winks to AUDIENCE.) Suuuuuure, we do! (To MARY.) So, tell us quickly about your fictitious self tonight, won't you?

MARY. I'm twenty-one. I live in West Los Angeles. Recently, I graduated at the top of my class from UCLA and have a B.A. in journalism. I'm currently planning to pursue

a Master's in that same subject.

JOHNNY. After — or before — you have a family?

MARY. Before. Kids are a full-time occupation in themselves. I come from a broken home, Johnny. And I swore that my kids would get my full attention while they grew up. Not like me. I saw my mom and dad maybe once a week. He traveled . . . she was a psychologist . . . or is.

JOHNNY. So, tonight, Mary Rosenberg, tonight you will boldly pursue your loved one and you will hope to emerge not only with one hundred thousand dollars but a marriage proposal!

MARY. That's right, Johnny. That's what I intend to do.

JOHNNY. Plucky girl! (To AUDIENCE.) A modern Romeo and Juliet right here on our T.V. stage, ladies and gentlemen. Sounds good to me! Does she stay, audience, at least for the first round? (The "applause" signs light, flashing. The AUDIENCE, especially the shells, clap.) Okay. Welcome aboard, Mary Rosenberg! (MARY runs toward the desks and takes a seat. The HOSTESS stands near her.) Now, for our next contestant . . . journeying all the way from Los Angeles to Burbank . . . Julia Colby! Come on down, Julia!

JULIA (still in audience). Accchhhhh! I don't believe it!

(JULIA, a huge woman, excuses herself through the AUDIENCE and pounds down the aisle.)

JOHNNY. Come on up, let me help you, Julia. That's right. (JULIA stands with JOHNNY.) Hellooooooo, Julia! Are you excited?

JULIA. Oh, Johnny, I'm so excited . . . I can't stop crying! (The AUDIENCE laughs sympathetically.)

JOHNNY. Well, Julia, you've just been picked to try to win one hundred thousand dollars. What do you think of that?

JULIA. I'm real tough, Johnny. I'm gonna give it my best!

JOHNNY. And how about it? Who are you tonight, Julia?

JULIA. I'm fat and poor but I've never been on welfare a day of my life! And if I win tonight, I'm gonna use that money to move my whole family uptown!

JOHNNY. A laudable dream, Julia Colby. Tell us, do you live in the ghetto proper?

JULIA. Well, I lied when I wrote down on my card that I live in Los Angeles. It's really closer to Gardton, a bad section of Gardton. I mean, on one side of town there are all those gambling clubs with their lights flashing and on mine, across the tracks, in my neighborhood, I mean, it's poor folk.

JOHNNY. Tell us about your make-believe neighborhood and the people who live in it, Julia.

JULIA. Well, the buses don't run regular like other parts of town. See, the bus drivers are afraid to drive through because they get robbed all the time. And every house on my block has bars on the windows and bolts in the doors. A person can't go out without leaving somebody inside. Otherwise, you get ripped off . . . I mean, robbed. You know.

JOHNNY. That's very sad, Julia. And so you feel this is your only chance to escape the ghetto — your one-way ticket, so to speak?

JULIA. I've worked hard, Johnny. I've kept my head above water, God knows. I do industrials. And they're killers!

JOHNNY. Industrials?

JULIA. You know, heavy-duty cleaning. At night. Mostly from seven to seven. I clean up grease spills, mop off machinery, I do locker rooms, too. You should smell the insides of them and the toilets sometime! (Pause.) So, I guess you might say this *is* my big chance! I'm so happy,

I'm beside myself!

JOHNNY. And so this *is* your last chance, is that right, Julia?

JULIA. I hate to think of it that way, Johnny. But it's true. If I don't win tonight, I don't know how much longer I can keep my head above water. You know, with inflation and everything and seven kids, it's hard. And me without a husband.

JOHNNY. Julia, we are glad your name was picked tonight. You are the kind of contestant we like to have with us! (To AUDIENCE.) Does she stay, studio audience? (He begins to applaud. The AUDIENCE follows.) Wonderful, wonderful! A big, big hand for Julia Colby! (JULIA joins MARY at the desks. They shake hands like two fighters about to spar.) Clever choice, clever. Remember, folks, nothing you see happening up here on stage tonight has anything to do with the contestants since they are not representing themselves. Our lawyers – the devils – have ascertained that no lawsuits are possible that way on *ALL OUT*! And believe me, if tonight is like any of our other shows, they are very clever indeed! (He glances down at card.) Our next contestant is . . . Mr. Charles Ritter!

(CHARLEY RITTER, a man in his fifties, rises, surprise on his face. He moves calmly, though. He looks like he'd be a good poker player.)

CHARLEY. My friends call me Charley! I'm gonna win!

JOHNNY. Did you hear that, ladies and gentlemen? Here's a man who's sure of himself. (Applause, laughter.) What makes you so sure of yourself, Charley?

CHARLEY. Because, Johnny, I'm gonna go *all out*! (More laughter.)

JOHNNY. Who are you, Charley Ritter?



CHARLEY. A middle-class victim, Johnny. Up till now, I've played by all the rules and lost every time. Tonight, I'm gonna forget all the things I knew. There is nothing that can stop me! It's my big chance! I'll do anything to win!

JOHNNY. Anything, Charley?

CHARLEY. Anything!

JOHNNY. That's the spirit! Tell us a few incidentals about yourself, Charley.

CHARLEY. Well, we're out here on vacation right now. My wife and me. Hello, Elaine! Do you believe this? (He waves.) We make our home, Johnny, in Colby, Kansas. Nice town. Got a little land, too.

JOHNNY. Do you farm for a living, Charley? What is your mythical occupation?

CHARLEY. My mythi — ? Oh, I get it. Well, my *mythical* occupation is salesman. I sell Bibles, see? I mean, I've sold encyclopedias and vacuum cleaners, but now I sell Bibles. There's a new version coming out soon, so it's going to be heavy-order time. People always love to buy Bibles. It pays pretty well, too.

JOHNNY. What is your favorite way of selling those Bibles, Charley? Any hints to up-and-coming Bible salesmen?

CHARLEY. I don't want to give away all my secrets, Johnny. But I'll tell you one. If I have a real hard sale, I mean, no takers for an entire block, I'll knock on a door and tell that person that somebody who's died inside ordered this Bible.

JOHNNY. You mean, you just go up to a door and hope somebody died inside? I don't understand, Charley.

CHARLEY. No. What you do, Johnny, is you go to the obit column in that town, wherever you are. Every town has one, see? And you look up some names. Take, for instance, a man's name is Dugan, let's say Cliff.

JOHNNY. Okay, Cliff Dugan. What next, Charley?

CHARLEY. Well, then you look up Dugan in the phone book