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Dramatic Publishing



Waste Mismanagement

**"A gritty comedy
that isn't afraid
to get down and dirty."
The Rock River Times, Rockford, Ill.**



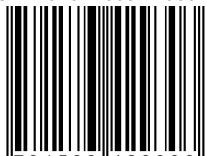
**Comedy by
Dan Doyle**

Waste Mismanagement

Comedy. By Dan Doyle. Cast: 7 to 9m., 3 to 4w., 1 either gender. J.B. Hornsby, a marginally successful criminal defense attorney, pins his hopes for a brighter future on a fast-talking advertising agent who promises to transform the struggling lawyer into a TV tiger who can pummel any opponent into submission. Then in walks a new client, Stacy Jenkins. Her stockbroker husband, Arnold, has vanished, and the cops, suspecting homicide, are breathing down her neck. Their lawyer-client conference is rudely interrupted when the sheriff shows up and arrests Stacy for murder. The sheriff drops a bombshell at the preliminary hearing by testifying that Arnold's body was found by Beulah, a wildly eccentric psychic, buried in the local landfill. Hornsby learns that before his death, Arnold had borrowed money from Vinny Varconi, a ruthless mob loan shark and hit man. Hoping to pin the murder on Vinny, Hornsby attempts to plant an eavesdropping device in the mobster's bar. Vinny unexpectedly shows up and nearly catches Hornsby in the act. Mugsy, bored with her lackluster life as Hornsby's secretary, cooks up her own scheme for nailing the gangster. Using an alias, she phones Vinny and arranges a secret meeting with him under the pretext of hiring him to bump off her abusive husband. She conceals a wire in her purse and engages the thug in exploring the juicy details of a plan for homicide. Unfortunately, a man lurking in a garbage container snatches her purse and escapes with the recording. Hornsby is shocked and astounded when, without explanation, the obstreperous and belligerent judge suddenly drops all charges against his client. Elated with her acquittal, Stacy persuades Hornsby to join her in a weird victory celebration in the form of a séance conducted by Beulah, the psychic. In a startling twist, Beulah employs her supernatural and mystical powers to bring about an astonishing conclusion! *Two int. sets. Approximate running time: 1 hour, 50 minutes. Code: WG8.*

Cover: Pec Playhouse Theatre, Pecatonica, Ill., featuring (l-r) Jamie Button and Penny Wiegert.
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Waste *Mis*management

Mystery/Comedy

by

DAN DOYLE



Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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DAN DOYLE

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Waste Mismanagement was first produced by the Pec Playhouse Theatre in Pecatonica, Ill., from Feb. 10, 2012, to Feb. 26, 2012.

CAST

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| J.B. Hornsby..... | Douglas Rappa |
| Mugsy | Erin Philpott |
| Ed Sharkly..... | James Castree |
| Stacey Jenkins..... | Laurie Miller |
| Judge William G. Goatsworth..... | Patrick Barkdoll |
| Prosecutor | Becky Tidberg |
| Spooky Sadowski..... | Rick Smith |
| Sheriff Smokey Spooner | David Stanley |
| Beulah Thistlebottom..... | Rosemary Collins |
| Vinny Varconi | Tom Dotson |
| Arnold Jenkins (voice)..... | Ed Stiltner |

PRODUCTION STAFF

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Director | Jamie Button |
| Stage Manager | Laura Wiegert |
| Production Manager..... | Michele Schnorr |
| Set Designer..... | Arnie Ames |
| Lighting Designer | Brad Keyes |
| Sound Designer..... | Neal Ter Hark |
| Costumer Designer..... | Kandi Hanisch |
| Set Decorator | Linda Johnson |
| Backstage Manager..... | Stephanie Johnson |
| Hair and Makeup Designer | Penny Wiegert |
| Publicity | Rick Smith |
| Volunteer Liaison | Cheryl Button |
| Props | Rosemary Million |
| Script Coordinator..... | Angela Kay Larson |
| House Manager | Pamela Barkdoll |
| Lighting Operators | Brad Keyes, Linda Johnson |

Waste *Mis*management

CHARACTERS

(7 to 9m., 3 to 4w., 1 either gender)

J.B. HORNSBY (m): A criminal defense attorney. He initially appears to be self-confident but becomes less so as the plot progresses. He must be capable of some physical activity, such as fleeing on hands and knees to hide from mobster, Vinny Varconi.

MUGSY (w): Hornsby's secretary. She seems rather ditzy, but is not unintelligent. She might speak with a heavy Jersey accent and frequently uses malapropisms.

ED SHARKLY (m): An advertising agent. He is a high pressure, fast talker when pitching TV spots, but morphs to a more professional tone when speaking as the FBI agent.

STACY JENKINS (w): Hornsby's client, suspected of murder. She must be reasonably attractive and somewhat seductive. Her clothing is tight and revealing. She is effusive but intelligent.

JUDGE WILLIAM G. GOATSWORTH (m): The judge. An older man with a gruff disposition. He never smiles and has little patience for what goes on in his courtroom.

PROSECUTOR (m or w): Hornsby's opponent in court. A well-dressed person who projects a professional demeanor throughout.

SPOOKY SADOWSKI (m): Someone who is trying to talk his way out of a jail sentence for drunk driving. He appears in a jail jumpsuit.

SHERIFF SMOKEY SPOONER (m): The sheriff. He is a middle aged, street smart good ol' boy. His unsophisticated manner is deceptive, as he is actually quite cagey.

BEULAH THISTLEBOTTOM (w): A psychic. She should be made up to look 70+ years of age. she has dark circles under her eyes and her hair stands straight out from her head, as though electrified. She is wildly eccentric.

VINNY VARCONI (m): A mob loan shark and hit man. He is a typical gangster. He is a gaudy dresser and might chew a cigar. He speaks like a gruff Brooklyn hood with butchered pronunciation and grammar.

MAN (m): A mysterious man lurking in a garbage container.

ARNOLD JENKINS (m): The victim. He is seen by the audience only after his emergence. He has a sleazy appearance, like a con man who has been ducking federal authorities.

BRAD ARMSTRONG (m): An FBI agent. He presents the business-like appearance, dressed in a dark suit and conservative tie.

CHARACTER NOTES

ED SHARKLY and BRAD ARMSTRONG are played by the same actor.

MAN and ARNOLD JENKINS may be played by the same actor.

TIME

The present

PLACE

Small town, USA

SETTING

Many of the events occur either in Hornsby's law office or the courtroom. Ideally, these sets could be back-to-back on a revolving platform or a turntable. Otherwise, they could be side by side, to be selected by the lighting.

The law office should include Hornsby's desk and a smaller secretary's desk, separated by a divider. The secretary's desk must be positioned near the wings, enabling her to step offstage when she is not involved in the action. Each desk has a phone, and Hornsby's desk has a swivel chair. Near his desk, there should be a couch or recliner and a bookcase. A piece of furniture—perhaps a small table—is designed to break when struck with a judo chop.

The courtroom has an elevated bench for the judge with a side witness chair. In front of the bench is a counsel table with chairs on opposite ends for the prosecutor and the defense. An American flag stands at one side of the bench and a large waste basket at the other. There is a door in a wall near one end of the bench.

The set for Vinny Varconi's Bar and Grill could be nothing more than a bar (the judge's bench) and stools, with a table and chairs in front. The table is covered by a long cloth that hangs to the floor. A lighted or reflecting sign, suspended over the bar, identifies the premises as "VINNY'S." If there are shelves of liquor bottles behind the bar, the courtroom could be quickly converted into the bar room by removing a curtain or panel concealing the bottles.

Two short scenes take place on a park bench, illuminated by a street lamp. Proximate to the bench is a garbage container large enough for a man to hide inside. These objects could be kept offstage and moved into position when needed.

The final séance scene requires a large round table and five chairs to be moved from offstage to a location near center stage when needed. The center of the table has an opening concealed from audience view by a tablecloth. The opening is large enough for the ghost of Arnold to emerge during the séance.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

During the blackouts between the multiple scenes, there will be theme music from various familiar movie and TV detective shows, each relating to the upcoming scene: such as the theme from *Mission Impossible*, *The Pink Panther*, *Perry Mason*, *Rocky*, etc.

In Act I, Scene 6, a metal canister can appear to be shot off the bar by Vinny Varconi. This requires either that it be electronically controlled or pulled off the bar by an attached string.

In Act II, Scene 4, a small arrow or dart nearly misses Hornsby and sticks in the wall behind him. This can be done by pushing the small arrow or dart in reverse from behind the wall, to be timed with spotlighting.

In Act II, Scene 6, Hornsby leaps off his desk and breaks a table with a judo chop. The table must be constructed to collapse.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Waste Mismanagement may be localized by making minor adjustments to the dialogue. In particular, the Man's last line of Act II, Scene 5, "No. I think it was Blagojevich." alludes to the former Illinois governor. While this is a great line for Illinois audiences, it might be meaningless to audiences in other regions. Similarly, in Act I, Scene 3, there is a reference to the University of Illinois' fight song. This could be changed to another university's song.

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ACT I

SCENE 1

AT RISE: *A morning in July. Attorney J.B. HORNSBY and his secretary, MUGSY, are seated at their desks in his law office. Although HORNSBY's practice is on the skids, he appears unconcerned and confident. HORNSBY toys with a fishing rod while talking to MUGSY.*

HORNSBY. Mugsy, do you know the origin of the word “hospital?”

MUGSY (*filing her nails*). I don't know. Guess I always thought it had something to do with “hospitable.” Like the doctors and nurses are supposed to be hospitable to make a patient feel comfortable.

HORNSBY. Are you kidding me? When's the last time a nurse made you feel comfortable? They'll chew your butt just for smoking in bed.

MUGSY. OK, I give up.

HORNSBY. Spit house! Hospital. Get it?

MUGSY. Spit house?

HORNSBY. Yeah. When half the people in Europe were coughing up their lungs with tuberculosis, they had to put the sick ones away in spit houses to try to keep the germs from spreading.

MUGSY. You really know your history, Mr. Hornsby.

HORNSBY. Do you know who the first Confederate general to be killed in the Civil War was?

MUGSY. I don't think so.

HORNSBY. Do you ever wonder about it?

MUGSY. Not too often.

HORNSBY. Tobias Meredith. A snake spooked his horse and he fell ass over eyeballs into a barbeque pit. Roasted him to a cinder.

MUGSY. That's hard to believe. Are you sure that information's not *erogenous*?

HORNSBY. Erroneous? Of course it isn't. It's a federal felony to misstate Civil War events.

MUGSY. Really? That's a good thing to know. Mr. Hornsby, I've got a favor to ask.

HORNSBY. Just name it.

MUGSY. The next time you go to court on a big case, could I tag along—just to watch?

HORNSBY. I don't know. Who would mind the store?

MUGSY. Let the answering machine do it for a few hours. It's not like we get many calls anyway.

HORNSBY. Why do you want to go to court, Mugsy?

MUGSY. Just for a little excitement. You're going to have such an interesting life, handling those wonderful rapes and murders. Instead of being stuck in the office, maybe I could help in some way.

HORNSBY. We'll see. Let me think about it.

MUGSY. One other thing. If I get to go to court with you, could you introduce me as "Mary Margaret" please?

HORNSBY. What? You don't like "Mugsy?"

MUGSY. It's OK, I guess, but it makes me sound like a contender for the middleweight crown.

HORNSBY. What if we use your last name, "Beanfang?"

MUGSY. Better stick to "Mugsy."

(The phone rings.)

MUGSY *(cont'd)*. Law offices of J. Bartholomew Hornsby ...

No, I'm sorry. Mr. Hornsby is in conference with a client. May I take a message ... ? That's 399-6032? I'll have Attorney Hornsby call you as soon as he's free. Thank you. *(To HORNSBY.)* I wish I didn't have to lie like that.

HORNSBY. What do you mean?

MUGSY. Telling them you're with a client and everything.

HORNSBY. Come on, Mugsy. You don't want them to think I'm just sitting around waiting for the suckers to come in, do you? People like to think their lawyers are busy.

MUGSY. I suppose you're right. Maybe we should say you're busy in Washington, advising the president.

HORNSBY. Yeah, well, let's not push it too far. Who was it anyway?

MUGSY. Said her name was, ahh ... Jenkins. Stacy Jenkins.

HORNSBY *(fumbling around on the desk for a newspaper)*.

Stacy Jenkins? You didn't read the morning paper? Her husband, Arnold, has been missing for a couple weeks. The DA says she won't cooperate. He's calling a grand jury to investigate. Why didn't you put her call through?

MUGSY. But I thought you said—

HORNSBY. Yeah. Yeah. You got her number. That's the main thing.

MUGSY. Uh-huh. I think it was 399—something.

HORNSBY. You didn't write it down? What if it's an unlisted number? How am I supposed to call her?

MUGSY *(sheepishly)*. Maybe she'll call back.

HORNSBY *(thumbing through a phone book)*. Jenkins, Jenkins. Here it is. Arnold Jenkins, 515 Hemmingway Place, 399-6032. Go ahead and dial her up.

MUGSY (*dialing*). You're not still busy with a client, are you?

HORNSBY. No. No. You're just catching me before I leave.

I'm late for court.

MUGSY. Mrs. Jenkins ... ? Please hold for Attorney Hornsby. He's just leaving to go to court ... (*Rolls eyes.*) but I caught him.

HORNSBY (*taking the phone from MUGSY*). Mrs. Jenkins ... ? This is J.B. Hornsby. How can I help you ... ? A grand jury subpoena ... ? When were you served with it ... ? OK, my afternoon is pretty full, but I might be able to squeeze you in. Could you come in at 4:30 ... ? Good. See you then. (*Hangs up. To MUGSY.*) Mugsy, I think we've hooked a live one!

MUGSY. You got an actual client? That's fantastic, Mr. H. I'm proud of you. And I've got some news, too. There's someone else just coming toward our door. I saw him getting out of a car with the name ADCO painted on the side. I don't think he looks like a bill collector. Should I let him in?

HORNSBY. Yeah. He's the advertising agent I told you about. Send him in.

(MUGSY admits ED SHARKLY and leads him to HORNSBY's office. Then she exits. SHARKLY enters and shakes hands with HORNSBY.)

SHARKLY. Ed Sharkly here. Happy tameecha.

HORNSBY. I appreciate your coming in, Ed, but I'm a little busy with a big case right now, and I'm not so sure I'm ready yet to hire an ad agent.

SHARKLY. I'm telling you, Hornsby, you've got to get with the 21st century. Advertising is the way to go. Before long, no lawyer in this county will be able to put bread on the table unless that lawyer's puss is on TV. You gotta get into their living rooms. Make 'em feel like they know you. Make 'em trust you.

HORNSBY. You got any experience in TV advertising?

SHARKLY. Sure. Hell, I can sell anything. I'm the guy who wrote those commercials making everybody imagine they've got filthy little creatures tunneling under their toenails. Now they're racing to the pharmacy to get pills to kill the little bastards.

HORNSBY. I don't know. My face might not be right for TV.

SHARKLY. Nonsense. That's what they made plastic surgery for. I got a doctor who can make you look like Brad Pitt. You'll have women knocking down your door to get their divorces. You'll have to beat 'em off with a stick.

HORNSBY. It doesn't sound like a very professional approach.

SHARKLY. Professional? You kidding me? You wanna be a bankrupt professional, or you wanna start raking in the dough?

HORNSBY. I guess it's worth a try. I've been working on a 30 second script for a TV spot. I think it's pretty good.

SHARKLY. Let's hear it.

HORNSBY (*reading from a script*). "Are you a law abiding person who finds yourself caught up in the confusing maze of the court system? Are you looking for the right professional to lead you through that maze to reach a just result? If so, I'd be glad to talk with you. I'm J.B. Hornsby, an attorney with 15 years of legal experience and with a background of—"

SHARKLY. Hold it! Hold it! You're putting them to sleep. No one is looking for an experienced professional. They want a fighter. A bare-knuckled, ear-biting, crotch-kicking sonofabitch who's going to kick their opponents' butts into the next county! Lose that "just result" malarkey. These folks don't give a damn about justice. The only thing they're interested in is *winning*. Here, read this pitch I've written for you.

(SHARKLY hands a script to HORNSBY.)

HORNSBY *(reading)*. “Hi, there. I’m Bulldog Hornsby. Somebody trying to muscle you around in the justice system? Hey, I know how to handle those creeps. None of that Ivy League sissy stuff for me. I learned the law the hard way, working for the Teamsters and the Green Bay Packers. I got the momentum of a tank and more legal firepower than a bazooka. Just put me on the front lines of your legal battle and the other guys will be waving the white flag. When the Bulldog growls, they jump. Let the Bulldog fight for you!” *(Growls.)*

SHARKLY. That’s better, but you gotta have a fire in your belly. You don’t look mean enough. Put thumb tacks inside your shoes. It’ll get your blood pumping. In the meantime, I’ll be back this afternoon with a photographer to get some promo shots of the outside of your office. Get some steroids and keep practicing your growl. GRRRR.

HORNSBY *(timidly)*. Grrr.

SHARKLY *(more forcefully)*. GRRRRR!

HORNSBY *(a little stronger)*. Grrrrr.

HORNSBY & SHARKLY *(in unison as SHARKLY exits.)*
GRRRRRRRRR!

SCENE 2

(Later that day, at 4:30 p.m. STACY JENKINS is seated next to HORNSBY’s desk.)

HORNSBY. So, Mrs. Jenkins, I’m glad you called me. You don’t want to walk into that grand jury without legal representation. They could eat you alive. Just out of curiosity, who referred you to my law firm?

STACY. I found your card on the bar at Hooters.

HORNSBY. It might have been providence that you found that card. The Lord works in strange and mysterious ways. Now, your husband is an investment broker, right?

STACY. Right.

HORNSBY. When did he disappear?

STACY. Two weeks ago last Saturday.

HORNSBY. Where was Arnold when you last saw him?

STACY. We had lunch at the country club. He left in a terrible huff.

HORNSBY. And you haven't heard from him since?

STACY. No. Not a word.

HORNSBY. Stacy. May I call you Stacy?

(STACY nods.)

HORNSBY *(cont'd)*. The newspaper said that you and Arnold had an argument at the country club. What was that about?

STACY. He kept accusing me of sleeping with Roland Frampton. You could hear his big mouth all the way to Baraboo. I was never so humiliated in all my life.

HORNSBY. Who is Roland Frampton?

STACY. He's the club tennis pro.

HORNSBY. Were you?

STACY. Was I what?

HORNSBY. Sleeping with Frampton?

STACY. I don't think that's any of your business. Do I have to answer that?

HORNSBY. You don't have to answer anything. But, whatever you tell me is confidential. Look, I'm not asking you because I'm curious about your love life. If I'm going to represent you, I need to know all the facts. If you hide anything from me, it would be like tying my hands behind my back.

STACY. Oh, he never did that.

HORNSBY. Did what?

STACY. Tied my hands behind my back.

HORNSBY. So, you were sleeping with him then?

STACY. I certainly don't think so.

HORNSBY. What do you mean you don't think so?

STACY. There wasn't any sleeping involved.

HORNSBY. OK, I think I get the picture. So, how did your husband find out that the two of you weren't ... ahh, sleeping?

STACY. He hired a private eye to spy on me.

HORNSBY. And did this private eye come up with any evidence that you were having an affair?

STACY. I wouldn't call it evidence exactly.

HORNSBY. What would you call it then?

STACY. A color video. *(Beat.)* High definition.

HORNSBY *(looking at a newspaper)*. The newspaper reported that, during the argument, you threatened Arnold.

STACY. I certainly did. I told him that if he didn't shut up he was going to die a slow, painful death. I didn't mean anything by it. We threatened each other all the time. He threatened me much more than I ever threatened him. He once told me that if I didn't stop running around on him, he was going to put me in the landfill.

HORNSBY. Sounds like you have a very unhappy marriage.

STACY. Oh, no. We're really quite close. *(Beat.)* We're Italian, you know.

HORNSBY. So, do you have any idea where your husband is?

STACY. I couldn't really say. Maybe he's with Nora.

HORNSBY. Who's Nora?

STACY. She's the club secretary.

HORNSBY. Why do you think Arnold could be with Nora?

STACY. Because Roland told me she left town.

HORNSBY. How do you think Roland learned that? Does he know her that well?

STACY. Oh, yes. They live together.

HORNSBY. Let me get this straight. You're having an affair with Roland, and your husband was mad about it?

STACY. Uh-huh.

HORNSBY. Roland and Nora were living together?

STACY. Uh-huh.

HORNSBY. And now you think your husband has run away with Nora?

STACY. Beats me. But I certainly wouldn't put it past him. He has very low morals.

HORNSBY. Well, Stacy, it sounds as though we need to find your husband before the police and the DA start to think you've done away with him.

STACY. Oh, they already think that, I'm afraid.

HORNSBY. Why do you say that?

STACY. Because the detectives found his car.

HORNSBY. Where?

STACY. In the river.

HORNSBY. And they're considering you a suspect?

STACY. No. No. They said that I'm just a "person of interest."

HORNSBY. That's a relief. And why do you think the police are interested in you?

STACY. Because they think I pushed his car into the river.

HORNSBY. Why would they think that?

STACY. Because someone saw me do it.

HORNSBY. You actually pushed his car into the river? Why?

STACY. Because I was pissed off at him for yelling his big fat head off about Roland and me. When I got home from the country club that day, his Jaguar was parked in the drive

and the keys were in it. He's always bragging about that car—treats it like some kind of thoroughbred racehorse or something. I knew he'd poop a Fruit Loop if that thing went into the river, so it was a perfectly natural thing for me to do.

HORNSBY. But, didn't you realize how much trouble you could be in if you were caught?

STACY. I didn't plan on some nosey witness being around who doesn't know how to mind their own business.

HORNSBY. Are you sure someone didn't help you? I don't see how you could manage getting the car to roll into the river without help.

STACY. See, that's what the police think. But, really it was a piece of cake. I just lined up the little shiny chrome hood ornament with a channel marker in the river, tied down the gas pedal and let her fly. No problem. EZ-PZ-LEMON SQUEEZY.

HORNSBY. I hope there wasn't anything in the car that could incriminate you.

STACY. There might have been a bullet or two in there.

HORNSBY. What do you mean?

STACY. Well, before the car went into the river I fired a few shots at it. Guess I must have been really pissed off.

HORNSBY. Great. What did you do with the gun?

(STACY rummages through her purse.)

STACY. Oh, it's in here somewhere. I usually carry it in my purse.

(The gun fires. MUGSY screams from offstage. STACY pulls the gun from her purse and waves it wildly as HORNSBY dives behind the desk for cover. MUGSY appears at the door of the office with SHERIFF SMOKEY SPOONER.)

MUGSY. Excuse me, Mr. Hornsby. Sheriff Spooner is here to see your client.

(SHERIFF storms past MUGSY during her line. He quickly takes the gun from STACY and handcuffs her.)

SHERIFF. Stacy Jenkins, I'm puttin' you under arrest for the murder of your husband, Arnold Jenkins. You have a right to remain silent and anything you say may be used against you in court.

HORNSBY. Stacy, you'll have to go with him, but this is very very important. Do not, under any circumstances, make any statements to the police. Do you understand? Absolutely no statements of any kind.

STACY *(to HORNSBY)*. OK, then. *(To SHERIFF.)* Now listen, you asshole, I paid good money for that gun and you have no right to take it just because I threatened to kill Arnold with it!