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At the end of each script is a list of what is included in the Production Packet for that show. Accessing this review script does NOT confer permission to produce.

THE WEDDING FROM HELL

An Audience-Participation Murder-Mystery

by

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CONTAINS TWO VERSIONS

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ABOUT THE TWO VERSIONS

THE FULL VERSION

is the one we did at the Akron Civic Theatre and most other performances. For this version, the audience is usually divided into teams/tables. It is comprised of the following sections:

1. Pre-show. This is the segment during which the characters circulate, introducing themselves, relationships, and lay the groundwork for what is going to be unfolding.
2. The Play. Running time for this scripted segment is about an hour.
3. The Clue Hunt. This can be as long or as short as you want and can even be eliminated. The Production Manual and the WEDDING Production Packet provide directions for designing your own clue hunt. We send you our clue hunt, answer key, and flow chart to assist you in developing your own clue hunt. The object of the clue hunt is to find three photographs. We provide copies of the photos as part of the Production Packet. At the end of the Clue

Hunt, tables/ teams turn in the last page of the clue hunt - the solution sheet. Again, all this is explained and samples are included with the WEDDING Production Packet.

4. The Solution Scene. Running time for this scripted segment is about 7 minutes.

THE MINI-VERSION

of THE WEDDING FROM HELL is very condensed. This version came about as a result of doing shows on the Cuyahoga Valley Railroad. We had limited time to do the play before boarding the train. While the Mini-Version is usually done as an individual/couple event, it can also be done as a table/team activity, ala the Full Version.

1. Pre-Show. As with the Full Version, the characters circulate but a lot more background is provided. For that, we gave out a society column news clipping - "Out And About." Our version is sent with the WEDDING Production Packet
2. The Play. Running time on this scripted section is about 15 minutes.
3. Circulating and Improv. This can be as long or as short as you want. Basically, this segment is used to impart information that is left out of the shortened script. We gave the audience members a copy of Richard Starkey's report and copies of the 3 photographs, both of which are included in the WEDDING Production Packet. Also, rather than a solution sheet, the audience casts ballots for who they think "dunit." (A master copy of the ballots is provided in the WEDDING Production Packet.)
4. Solution Scene running time is about 7 minutes.

All that being said, it IS POSSIBLE TO COMBINE ELEMENTS FROM EACH VERSION. It is certainly possible to use the Mini-Version script with the Clue Hunt from the Full Version, for example.

Should you decide to produce WEDDING, production materials will be sent for BOTH VERSIONS of the script. This includes supplemental printed materials that can be used for both or are specific to one version.

Finally, there ARE some plot point differences between the versions. But, rather than describing the differences here, we suggest you read both and treat each as a standalone.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BRUCE MONTGOMERY - The groom. Wearing a tux. Mid forties. Urbane and sophisticated on the surface, but a spoiled little boy underneath. Generally considers himself to be entirely too "top drawer" to do anything as mundane as work for a living. Born with a silver pacifer.

TINA FITZHUGH - The bride. Wearing a bridal dress and veil. Mid-twenties to mid-thirties. A very "together" little lady. Believes in standing up for what's right, defending the "underdog" and is a vegetarian and an animal rights activist. Is wearing fingernail polish.

SYLVIA MONTGOMERY - Mother of the groom. Sixties to seventies. Wearing black. Quite chic and sophisticated and charming and elegant. Also ruthlessly devoted to her son, and determined to keep the apron strings as tight as possible. Is not wearing nail polish.

JACKIE FITZHUGH - Father of the bride. Fifties to seventies. If this weren't a formal affair, Jackie would be wearing a loud plaid suit and bow tie. As it is, the rented tux he's wearing is a little too tight, and the pants are three inches too short. And that's the kind of guy he is.

JUDGE EMMETT - Fifties. Dressed in judicial robes. Distinguished, but rather quiet and sad. Also, quite inebriated.

DENNY O'CONNELL - The photographer. Dressed casually. Mid-twenties to mid-thirties. A truly "nice guy" - but unable to make a commitment. He's also a police photographer, but moonlights doing this type of affair because he's saving up to go to clown school.

FANNY FISHBURN - Thirties to forties. The Montgomery family maid. Dressed in plain coat and hat over a maid's uniform. She is hopelessly in love with Bruce and is pathological in her determination to win him. Not wearing nail polish.

KAROLINE KARTER - Late thirties, early forties. A Southern belle and dressed like one. The only flaw in her impeccable outfit is the VERY OBVIOUS run in her stocking which is stopped by a LARGE dab of fingernail polish. Honey simply drips from her lips, but there's malice and venom in her heart. A very dangerous woman. Her nails are unpolished.

RICHARD STARKEY, P.I. - Age unimportant. He's only got one scene but what a scene!

THE HOST/HOUSTESS - The person in charge who is acting as the wedding (and mystery!) co-ordinator. For the sake of clarity, the script will refer to HOUSTESS.

THE SOLOIST - This is an optional character. If live music for the entrance procession is used, it should be someone absolutely out of place, playing something wildly inappropriate. For example, I usually use a guitarist who arrives wearing torn jeans, a headscarf and one earring. He smoked, drank beer from a bottle and answered to "Winston." Also, during the clue hunt, he played again, with his open guitar case in front of him, for "donations." He inadvertently became a really fun (yet, non-essential) character. We've also used an organist with a soloist-who-forgot lyrics ("When did he get to be a beauty? When did she grow to be so tall? Wasn't it only yesterday, when they.....were at the mall?"). And we've also just used taped music run by the hapless Hostess in lieu of a soloist.

FULL VERSION PART ONE - PRELUDE TO MURDER

The event will be advertised as the "Wedding of the Year" and all who are attending will be "invited guests." It will soon be obvious, however, that this is one of those events where anything that can go wrong, will. Part of this will be due to the fact that Jackie Fitzhugh of "Jackie's House 'O' Gags" is arranging the whole thing, as father of the bride. Among the "disasters":

1. The wrong flowers are delivered. The arrangements are for funerals, and the corsages are the large mums worn to college homecomings. Or dead/wilted posies.
2. The cake will be crooked and/or collapsed on one side. (We had one very creative baker who put together a cake that was perfectly straight. But in icing it, she gradually took each tier's piped edge down, so that it looked like it was ready to go!)
3. The napkins will say "Bruce and Tuna."
4. The shop where Jackie rented his tux sent the wrong one. The jacket is too big/small and the pants too long/short. Or, the shop forgot to send a shirt and so Jackie is wearing just a tee shirt with drawn "studs." Also, instead of a boutonniere, he's wearing a trick flower that squirts. This is in keeping with the joy buzzer he's wearing on his hand and the whoopee cushion that he places on one onstage chair.
5. Due to a "mix-up" with the caterer, the reception with buffet line, etc., will be held BEFORE the wedding. (If dinner is served.)

The actors will circulate "in character" with the crowd as they arrive. This includes TINA, who thinks superstition ("the groom shouldn't see the bride before the ceremony") is stupid, and all the characters except RICHARD. KAROLINE is there "incognito," complete with run in stocking. She's wearing dark glasses and is suitably mysterious. (She must be careful to avoid coming face to face with BRUCE or SYLVIA.) Improvised scenes between the characters - revolving around what's going wrong, etc. - should be mapped out in advance. Confrontations that mirror future conflicts can be staged.

The HOUSTESS is also circulating and asking for guests' help. Everything is going wrong with the wedding and as wedding "coordinator" she is sure to be blamed. She makes them promise that if MRS. MONTGOMERY or BRUCE or the bride complain, they will "stick up" for her. The phrase taught to all is: "We think (Hostess Name) is doing a fine job and we've been to much worse weddings than this one." The HOUSTESS will try to avoid the Montgomerys and TINA. If "caught" near any audience members she will lead them in their refrain. She will also assure everyone of the lovely music that will accompany the wedding - a really classy "string quartet" has been hired for the event. If a "Winston" type SOLOIST is used, this can be another confrontation.

Whatever location is used, there is a "playing area" - where the wedding will take place. Centered there is a trellised archway, decorated with flowers, etc. Directly in front of this is a large pulpit/lectern. On either side of the arch are three chairs. This can all, most definitely, be plastic and tacky. There is pre-wedding music, either taped or courtesy of SOLOIST.

FULL VERSION PART TWO - THE PLAY

As the house goes dark, JUDGE EMMETT enters and walks, center stage. He waits there with only a sway or two to reveal his condition. Throughout the play, he will take drinks from his flask. The light comes up around him, and the center aisle is lit. The TAPED MUSIC or SOLOIST begins "Sunrise, Sunset" as SYLVIA enters down the center aisle, escorted by BRUCE. As they walk through the crowd, they can acknowledge "friends" and wave and smile - all the while they are arguing. This is basically centered around "it's not too late to change your mind" and "what's the rush" to "Now, Mummy, I love the girl!" and "What do we have to wait for?" As they reach the front of the house, DENNY will appear and take pictures, for which they will both stop and pose. As they reach the stage. . .

SYLVIA: I didn't say to call it off completely, Bruce, darling. Just wait a bit. Remember, "good things come to those who wait."

BRUCE: Oh, Mummy-kins, we've been over this ground before. I don't want to wait anymore. I've waited long enough. I hate waiting. It's so terrifically boring. And, don't you see, Mummy, dear Mummy, that Tina is the good thing that's come to me!

SYLVIA: Oh, Brucie...

BRUCE: Now, darling, you promised....

SYLVIA: Brucie, I didn't want to say this, but....

BRUCE: (Tight-lipped.) Go ahead. Go ahead. You might as well get it out.

SYLVIA: Oh, never mind. Forget it.

BRUCE: No, what were you going to say? Out with it.

SYLVIA: Nothing. Nothing. (To the audience). Children! You cook for them, sew for them, change their diapers, powder their little behinds. And what is your thanks? They ignore you. They tell you to "shut up." Never mind, Brucie. I'm just your mother. What I have to say doesn't matter. (Sniffing into her handkerchief.)

BRUCE: WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO SAY, MUMMY? I REALLY WANT TO KNOW. HONEST.

SYLVIA: It's nothing. Nothing. Pretend I didn't open my mouth. See. My lips are sealed. (She locks her lips and "throws away the key.")

BRUCE: Oh, spit it out. Come on. Say it. (SYLVIA's lips are locked, however, and she shakes her head.) Oh, darling don't do this. I can't STAND it when you lock your lips. (notices JUDGE EMMETT) Oh, you must be Judge Emmett! How do you do. Bruce Montgomery. (BRUCE shakes his hand.) And this is my Mummy, Sylvia Montgomery.. Say hello to the judge, Mummy. (SYLVIA just nods and shakes his hand.) I'm afraid Mummy has gone and locked her lips again, Judge. Bruce really hates it when Mummy does that. Say, Judge, here's an idea! Let's just look around and see if we can't find the key to Mummy's mouth. Although, between us, I must say, Bruce has sometimes been very tempted to just let Mummy's mouth stay locked. (To the JUDGE who is offering his car keys. Conspira-torally.) No, no, 'fraid not, old son.Y'see, she threw away the key. I...(Spots something on the floor)...wait...wait.... Judge, do you see something on the floor over there? Could it be....(He crosses, followed by the JUDGE.) Well, what do you make of that? (He points to an imaginary key on the floor.) A key. (The JUDGE is completely bewildered.) I wonder....could it be....(He "picks it up")....Let's try it, shall we. (The JUDGE nods and follows him over to SYLVIA.) And we put it in, so,...and turn it....and

SYLVIA: Don't be an ass, Bruce.

BRUCE: Hallelujah! It works. Tell you what, old man. Why don't you hang on to the key for me. Ssshhh. We won't tell her. Our little secret....(He gives the "key" to the JUDGE who stares at it, wonders what to do with it, and finally lifts his robe and puts it very carefully into his pants pocket.) So, Mummy, what were you going to say?

SYLVIA: Well, I was just going to ask if you couldn't wait for just a few months. I didn't want you to know but...well, I'm going to need a little surgery.

BRUCE: Mummy! Why didn't you tell me? What are you having done?

SYLVIA: Oh, just the usual. It's nothing. Forget I even brought it up.

BRUCE: (Puzzled) The usual???? (Realization dawns.) Oh, Mummy, not again! I think you're just perfect the way you are. And if they tighten your face anymore, you won't be able to chew.

SYLVIA: Bruce! It's just a little wrinkle removal and a lid lift. But I thought you might be worried enough to wait for me to recover, but I suppose that's asking too much.

BRUCE: Mummy, I can't change my plans every time you have plastic surgery! Why, you belong to the Nip and Tuck of the Month Club.

JUDGE: How'd ya do? Good ta meet ya.

SYLVIA: Yes, yes. (Appalled, to BRUCE) Brucie, is that the man who's supposed to marry you? That is really a judge?

BRUCE: Yes, he's a friend of Tina's father.

SYLVIA: Explains a great deal about our judicial system. Oh, it's a sign, son! Everything about this wedding is jinxed. I just have this feeling. Something awful, horrible, unspeakably dreadful is about to happen!

BRUCE: Oh, you old sillikins, I'm just getting married, that's all.

SYLVIA: See, I was right. Listen to me, Bruce. Tina is a very nice girl. But, frankly, darling. Well, I'm just going to have to blurt it out. YOU CAN DO BETTER.

BRUCE: (Laughing) Oh, Mummy, you are a stitch. From the moment I saw Tina Fitzhugh on the Nordic track machine at Scandinavian (or local spa), I knew she was the girl for me! She's young, beautiful, smart, talented, and filthy rich. It doesn't get much better than that.

SYLVIA: Oh, all right, so she's young and beautiful. But we're just as filthy as she is, don't forget that.

BRUCE: You're filthy, Mummy. Not me.

SYLVIA: Oh, let's not go into that again, Bruce! You get a perfectly adequate allowance. You want money, how's this? I'll give you ten thousand not to go through with this tonight.

BRUCE: Mummy, you are twenty years and several million dollars too late. My days of being bought are over. Starting tonight, Bruce Montgomery is his own man. I know I've been a playboy, raconteur, and a n'er do well. A scamp, a rake, a scapegrace. But that changes tonight, Mummy. Tonight is the first night of the rest of my life. Tonight, the apron strings are cut. Tonight, Bruce Montgomery stands on his own two feet, looks squarely at his mother and says, "I don't want your money, Mummy." God, the freedom!! To be able to walk down the street in my own Gucci's! To have a Diner's Club card with my very own name on it! To be able to buy a Maserati without having you ask for the change! After tonight Bruce Montgomery has money of his own!

JUDGE: (Moved) Tha wass beautiful.

SYLVIA:(Sniffing)Your money. You mean hers.

BRUCE: No, Mummy, you heard me correctly. My money. Because, do you know what that crazy, wonderful girl did? She insisted we go to a lawyer together. And as soon as we are married, the minute that the Judge here pronounces us "man and wife," one-half of her assets become mine. Something like four million.

SYLVIA: Still, Bruce, there's something about her that doesn't quite ring true....Maybe if I had more time - to get to know her, to find out more about her...to...to...

BRUCE: To have her checked out ? I know you keep a private detective on retainer for just that purpose. Go ahead, Mummy. It won't work any more. Judge, are you ready?

JUDGE: Who, me? I'm ready. Anytime. I'm fine. Let's do it. (Takes swig from bottle. All go to their respective places. The music begins..."Bridal March." It is interrupted from the back of the house.)

TINA: Oh, damn! (The organ stops. An argument is heard.) Go ahead. Play. (The organ begins again. TINA, escorted by JACKIE, enters down the middle aisle. She is limping because the heel has broken off of her shoe. The organ will hit a "clinker" just as she reaches the middle of the house. As they reach the front of house, DENNY will jump out and begin taking pictures, just as he did with BRUCE and SYLVIA. After several pictures, TINA will attempt to move on, but DENNY will stop her with another shot...and another...and another.) Okay, that's it! Daddy I can't believe you did this to me. Why is he here?

JACKIE: Tina, baby, I told you. You needed a photographer.
(They come onstage, still arguing.)

TINA: I do not believe you did this to me, Daddy. Hi, Bruce. Daddy, how could you?

DENNY: Oh, chill out, Tina. I'm taking pictures.

TINA: You owe me an explanation, Daddy. What is HE doing at my wedding?

JACKIE: You want pictures. He takes pictures. What? What? What is the big deal? Bruce, m'boy, good to see you. This your ma? NOOOO!! This sweet young thing can't be your mother. This foxy lady? Hey, there, babe, what's your name?

SYLVIA: Sylvia. Mrs. Sylvia Montgomery. You may call me Mrs. Montgomery. Or, better yet, don't call me at all.

JACKIE: Well, hey, I say, hey there, Sylvie, baby. Let's have ourselves a wedding! Oh, glad you could make it, Judge.

JUDGE: Yes. (Whispering and pointing.) I unlocked her mouth, Jackie.

JACKIE: Yeah? Maybe you oughta work on loosenin' up the southern portions, eh, Judge?

TINA: I am waiting for an answer, Daddy. With all the photographers in this town, why did you ask HIM to take my pictures?

BRUCE: You have a problem with the hired help, sweetie?

TINA: Hell, yes, I do! He's not hired help. He works for Daddy. Part-time. When he's not working for the cops. He's a police photographer, for Pete's sake!. Gosh, Denny, this must be a switch. Taking pictures of the living!

DENNY: I don't know, Tina. From what I've seen of your future in-laws, I'd say it's all in a day's work.

BRUCE: Ooh, nice guy. Tina, m'dear, why are you limping?

TINA: Because I broke the damn heel off of my damn shoe just as we started down the damn aisle. I've got to tell you, Bruce. So far this has not been the wedding of my dreams.

SYLVIA: You see, Bruce, darling, even Tina knows that maybe we should re-think this whole thing.

JUDGE: Ahh, don't let a little bad luck stop you, honey.

TINA: Luck doesn't have anything to do with it. I don't believe in LUCK.

JUDGE: But, ya gotta believe in luck. Life's a crap shoot, honey. I know.

TINA: Life is what you make of it! No more, no less. Life isn't a gamble! It's an investment! You only get back what you (notices that JUDGE is rather unsteadily making an effort to understand her....realizes she doesn't know who he is) What am I doing? (To BRUCE) Where did he come from? He reminds me of someone.

BRUCE: That is your daddy's judge. And the man who is going to marry us.

TINA:(Appalled.) Daddy, Bruce, over here. Let's talk. Okay, guys. First, I lose Mama's locket.

JACKIE: You didn't find it?

TINA: No, I've spent the last week looking for it - I'm afraid I may have taken it off before working out and it got lost or stolen. And I'd trade the eight million she left me for that locket. But that's just the beginning. (The following "list" of things-which-have-gone-wrong can be adapted for your event.) Next, the caterer is misinformed about the times, so we have the reception FIRST, followed by the ceremony. Then, the florist gets our order mixed with (a local funeral home) and the (local school name) Rugby Awards Banquet. The baker gets in an accident while delivering the cake, which now looks like Mt. St. Helen's. The tux shop sends you the wrong tux. I break the heel on my shoe. My ex-lover is the photographer. The judge is drunk. AND, our wedding napkins read, "Bruce and Tuna."

BRUCE: The photographer is your what?

TINA: Not to mention that your mother is wearing BLACK to our wedding. Oh, and the caterer completely disregarded my wishes and served dead animals at the pre-ceremony reception.

JACKIE: Tina, honey, you make it sound like road kill.

TINA: I'm a vegetarian, Daddy. I won't be part of anything that causes animals to suffer. This, so far, has not been a fun time. Although, all in all, I guess I should take some comfort in the fact that there is simply nothing else that can go wrong.

JUDGE: S'cuse me, I think I'm gonna be sick. (He exits.)

BRUCE: The photographer is your what?

SYLVIA: What do you expect, darling, her family has a string of novelty stores.

JACKIE: Hey, Sylvie, not just novelties. "Jackie's House 'O' Gags" has costumes, and magic tricks, and practical jokes of all kinds. We got your fake vomit, your doggie doo-doo, your fly-in-the-ice-cube, your dribble glass, your....

SYLVIA: A real cornucopia, eh' Mr. Fitzhugh?

JACKIE: You said it, babe. Say, how 'bout after the wedding you n'me get to know each other better. I got me one of them trucks with monster wheels. We could take a little spin around town. (A local suburb or land mark) is beautiful this time of year.

SYLVIA: Bruce....

BRUCE: The photographer is your what, Tina?

DENNY: Ex-lover. Ex-lover. Ex-lover. With an emphasis on EX. This is just a job, Tina. I'm doin' it as a favor to your Dad, kid. That's all. And to make a few extra bucks. I'm saving up for clown school.

BRUCE: Tina, dear, I don't think you've mentioned all this to me, darling.

TINA: Trust me, Bruce, there was nothing to tell. Denny is one of Daddy's party clowns. He started about the time Uncle Boffo quit.

BRUCE: Ooh, I remember Boffo the Clown. You had him for one of my parties, didn't you, Mummy? Ten. Or was it eleven?

SYLVIA: It was ten. Eleven was Annette Funicello.

BRUCE: Oh, yes. I remember. I tried to corner her in the rumpus room. She was one very healthy Mouseketeer. But, anyway, Tina, darling, about this ex-lover business....

TINA: Wait a minute. Bruce, have I ever once asked you about your past? Have I ever asked for chapter and verse about your former relationships? No? Then you will just have to take my word for it, Denny and I are in the past.

DENNY: Definitely.

JACKIE: Boffo. Now there was a party clown. He made them laugh. He made them cry. And he loved you, Tina. But he's gone now. The last of the great birthday party clowns.

JUDGE: (Returning) So, are we going to have a wedding or not?

SYLVIA: Do we get to vote?

TINA: C'mon Bruce, enough of this. (Speaks with great conviction as if convincing herself.) I love you, I want to marry you, I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

JACKIE: And I want grandbabies. I wanna teach 'em about the business. Just think. A little tike following me around the store. Sayin' "What's this, Granpa?" And, I'll say, "Why, little Jackie, that's your nail-through-the-finger trick. Not as popular as your bullet-hole-in-the-head, true, but a lot more realistic." What'dya say, Sylvie, I betcha can't wait to babysit. (SYLVIA groans.) Ya know, Bruce, I think maybe your mama ain't feelin so good. Here, Syl, why don't you sit down and take a load off. (He helps her to the chair with the whoopee cushion, she sits and..... JACKIE whoops with laughter.) Now that, honey, is your basic whoopee cushion. A real ice-breaker.

JUDGE: Are we ready to begin? Please, take your places. (JACKIE and SYLVIA are stage right. DENNY is hovering and taking pictures. BRUCE and TINA stand before the JUDGE.) We are gathered here together to join this man, Brice Evelyn,

BRUCE: That's Bruce"Ee-ve-lyn"..

TINA: Your middle name is EVELYN, I mean Ee-ve-lyn??

JUDGE: And this woman, Tina Louise, in the bonds of holy matrimony. Matrimony is (He is making this up as he goes) a lot of things. It's a.....it's a...(looking to JACKIE for help.)

JACKIE: (Stage whisper) State...

JUDGE: It's a steak...a big, thick, juicy STEAK

JACKIE: STATE. STATE. It's a state.

JUDGE: It's a state. A...a state....it's a state with borders. On all sides. So there's no escape. And there's border guards. Guards. Guards. Like.....lawyers. Yeah, lawyers. Divorce lawyers. And there are dogs at the border, yeah, big dogs. That drool and....snarl. So...um....today, you are charged with staying inside the state of matrimony so you won't get attacked by lawyers or dogs. (Ahem.) Do you, Bruce, take this woman, Tina, to be your awful wedded wife? To cherish her and keep her and, abide with her, and, walk with her, and um, sleep with her and forsaking all others stick with her through sickness and health all the days of your life and as long as you both shall live? Forever and ever?

BRUCE: I will.

JUDGE: And do you, Tina Louise, take this man Bruce, for your awfully wedded husband? To love him and honor him and covet him and keep him holy on the Sabbath and smite him not. And give him counsel and comfort, yea and verily, though he walk through the valley of shadow?

TINA: (Pausing to see if he's finished.) I wi.....

JUDGE: (Becoming the evangelical) And will ye lead him not into temptation but along paths that are virtuous, righteous, and fit and meet and just and good? And, lo, though he may stray, and his body be covered with scabs and open sores, will you forsake him not? Will you, in this vale of tears and woe, will you, Tina Louise, will you..... (if using live music, this can be a musical cue and be "sung")stand by your man?

TINA: (Pausing, during which DENNY will step forward taking a flash picture - which strengthens her resolve.) I WILL.

JUDGE: And so, if there be anyone here who knows why these two should not be joined together, let them speak now or forever hold their peace.

KAROLINE:(Loudly, from the back of the hall) Am I late? Ah haven't missed it have I? Why, I will just die if I have missed this wedding. (She ad-libs more of the same as she comes down the aisle. The group onstage will remark, "who is that?" etc.) Well, don't just stand there, Brucie, sugar, give an old girlfriend a hug!

BRUCE: Karoline?.....Is it you? Karoline, little darlin'. (She runs to his arms and he sweeps her off her feet.) Mummy, look, see who's here. It's Karoline Karter. Remember. From college.

SYLVIA: I remember, Bruce. The Georgia Peach. Pit.

KAROLINE: Why, Mother Montgomery, you haven't changed a bit. You're just the same sweet, OLD thing you ever were. Only more so.

BRUCE: Why, Karoline, I am so surprised to see you....how did you know, I mean, how did you come to be here, how?...I am just agog, pet, simply AGOG.

KAROLINE: Let a girl catch her breath, will you, Broo-boy. (To others) That was my pet name for him. Broo-boy.

BRUCE: And you were my Karo-kiss.

JACKIE: ("Checking" her out) Hey, Bruce, introduce your future father- in-law.

BRUCE: (Aghast) Oh, my manners. I should be taken out and whipped.

KAROLINE: Oooh, are you into that now, Broo-boy? How'd y'all do. I'm Karoline Karter. Of the Georgia Karters.

JACKIE: No kiddin'? Say, are you related to Jimmy and Rosalyn?

KAROLINE: That goober farmer? Not likely. We are the Karters with a K. And I am Karoline with a K.

TINA: Well, I am Tina with T and I'd really....

KAROLINE: I am so very sorry to come crashin' in on you-all like this, but when I saw in our alumni newspaper that Br oo-boy was getting married.....I just had to come and give him a big wedding kiss. (She grabs him and plants a good one.) Some things never change, Bruce, baby, thank God your lips are among 'em.

SYLVIA: Still having that old shyness problem, eh, Karoline?

KAROLINE: Oh, yes, some things never change, do they, Mother Montgomery? Y'see, Tina, honey, you are not the first to be engaged to our boy, here. Ah had that honor. Back in 1967. Broo-boy and I were in college together. At Jefferson Davis University in Georgia. I was there on a cheerleading scholarship, and Bruce was trying once again to pass those pesky little freshman history requirements. We met and - what can I say - it was like Rhett and Scarlett, Guinevere and Lancelot, Madonna and Sean Penn. Well, Madonna and just about EVERYBODY. But like all of those, it was not meant to be. It was just the rottenest luck. (DENNY takes her picture.) Ooh, you're cute. Anyway, sugar, we got engaged and were all set to get married, but LUCK stepped in. Luck. That old black magic called LUCK.

(She sings...accompanied if possible by SOLOIST) Down and down I go, round and round I go.

JACKIE: Isn't it that "old black magic called LOVE"?

KAROLINE: Not for me, honey. It's luck, pure and simple. And I hope for your sake, Bruce, darlin', that "Luck Is A Lady Tonight" (If live music is used, she may look expectantly towards the SOLOIST. He can reply that "hey, he's on break.")

TINA: We don't need luck, Miss Karter. We have each other.

KAROLINE: Well, sweetie, you just better believe in luck. Why, if it weren't for an incredible stroke of BAD LUCK, you wouldn't be standin' here tonight. Because I would be Mrs. Bruce Montgomery.

SYLVIA: It wasn't a stroke of bad luck, dear. It was me.

KAROLINE: One and the same, Mother Montgomery, one and the same. Y'see, Tina, my future mother-in-law hired herself a private detective to look into my personal life....

BRUCE: Mummy was a trifle over-protective in the old days.

TINA: She hired a detective? You're kidding. This is too much.

SYLVIA: It's a good thing I did! He found out that Miss Karo Syrup, here, had, at one time or another, been "engaged" to most of the varsity squad at J.D. University. But, worse than that - she was a fraud!

JACKIE: (To KAROLINE) What'ya do, honey? Can't have been that bad!! Sylvie, sweetie, we're almost related, so I g otta tell ya. Stop livin' in the Fantasy Suite at the La-La Motel.

SYLVIA: She was a fraud, I'm telling you! She lied to you, son, didn't she?

BRUCE: We-e-e-ll lying is such a harsh word. She neglected to tell me something, that's all.

KAROLINE: You all want to know my heinous crime? My big, horrible secret. I was poor. Poor. That was it. Ah have a fine old name, a fine old rottin' plantation, and a fine old empty bank account. And because of that, Broo-boy and I couldn't be married. We didn't have any money. And his mother wouldn't give us any. It was just sooo sad.

DENNY: What's sad? I don't suppose it occurred to either of you to work for a living..... (BRUCE and KAROLINE look at each other.)

KAROLINE AND BRUCE: (Overlapping) No, no, not really. Though I suppose we could have....We thought about working....You did? Really? Never occurred to me?

KAROLINE: Well, now, honey, it has all worked out just fine. I think your darling Tina here is just too cute for her li'l broken shoes. And Mother Montgomery, it has taken me a number of years and several thousand dollars in counseling

but I forgive you for breaking my heart. Luckily, my therapist did his doctoral dissertation on the role of the Yankee Bitch in American history, so he was able to give me special insights into your twisted little mind.

DENNY: S'cuse me, but, if there isn't going to be a wedding, I'm going to have to be moving along.

TINA: What's the hurry, Denny? Have a date? You didn't actually commit to a date, did you? From what I remember, you couldn't even handle subscribing to a magazine.

JUDGE: Hey, I'm here. I'm ready to marry anyone at any time. (Takes a swig.) Just point me in the direction of the happy couple.

BRUCE: Righto. C'mon, Tina, let's finish this.

JACKIE: Sure, then we can party. Hey, Syl, put me on your dance card. (SYLVIA smiles weakly.) JUDGE:

Where was I....Did I do the "death us do part" stuff?

JACKIE: Yeah, you got as far as the "if there is anyone here present who knows why these two should not be joined...

JUDGE: Oh, yeah...together, let them speak now or forever hold their peace. (Pause) Then...

FANNY: (From the audience. Standing and wailing.) NOOOOOOOO.....

(There is general ad-libbing as FANNY makes her way to the stage, crying and moaning and whining. The reaction onstage is "who is that" to "is that Fanny?")

FANNY: (As she comes onstage) I'm sorry, Mr. Bruce, Miss Sylvia. I couldn't help it. But when a person's very soul is being ripped out and stomped on and crushed under the high heels, high heel of an uncaring girl who knows nothing about REAL, TRUE love, it is hard to remain silent. Mr. Bruce, I know that we promised to keep our love a secret, a tremendous secret. A secret that could only live and thrive and flourish in the darkness of our heart of hearts.but surely, Mr. Bruce, you can't expect me to keep the vows we made to one another in the face of this threat. For ours is a passion both magnificent and terrible that, if left unchecked, will devour us both!

SYLVIA: What the hell is she talking about, Bruce?

BRUCE: You've got me, Mummy.

TINA: Okay, Bruce, who's this one?

JACKIE: I may have underestimated you, Brucie, boy.

JUDGE: Should I just keep going?

ALL BUT BRUCE: NO!!

FANNY: Mr. Bruce, did you think I could stand by and watch you throw yourself away? When my lips are still bruised by your kisses, my arms still ache from the tightness of your embrace, my breasts still heave. . .

JUDGE: I wish she hadn't said that...(He exits, running)

FANNY:my thighs still quiver with desire,.....my nose still twitches from the smell of your manliness...

JACKIE: You oughta consider a new aftershave, Bruce...

SYLVIA: Fanny, have you been into my Harlequins again?

TINA: Were you engaged to her, too, Bruce?

BRUCE: Of course not! She's our maid! She means nothing to me. Although she is the only one to get my shirts exactly right. Not too much starch, just enough to make them crisp.

SYLVIA: And she is an absolute wonder at keeping the windows and mirrors clean. We hate smudges, don't we, Fanny? (FANNY starts crying.) Fanny, Fanny, stop that infernal racket at once!

FANNY: I can't help it! I love you, Mr. Bruce. I've always loved you, I'll love you! And you love me, too. I know you do. You told me so!

BRUCE: Did not!

FANNY: Did too! (They engage in a "did not" "did too" exchange until BRUCE halts it.)

BRUCE: I did not! I most certainly did not.

FANNY: Yes, you did! Remember. It was the night our passion could no longer be contained. In the pantry.

BRUCE: Oh, THAT. (Pause) Oops.

FANNY: Alright, so it was only once. And maybe it was all over in about two minutes. But from that moment on, I knew that someday we'd be together again, forever. Oh, Mr. Bruce, don't go through with this. (She falls to the floor and clutches his legs, wailing.)

BRUCE: Stop that! Stop that! Fanny, you get up at once!

SYLVIA: Bruce, what ever were you thinking of?

BRUCE: (Dragging FANNY on his leg as he takes a step on each of his "excuses".) I was lonely. I'd lost at tennis. I was depressed. THERE WAS NOTHING ON TV, OKAY! Fanny, Fanny, look here, c'mon, get up, get up....up, up, up. (He "whistles" and then helps her to her feet.) I'm sorry if somehow I led you on. And don't think I won't be a gentleman about it. (He reaches in his pocket and presses a bill in her hand.) Look, here's a nice, new twenty dollar bill. Why don't you go out and buy yourself something nice?

FANNY: (Crying louder) Oh, Mr. Bruce!!!

BRUCE: All right, fifty then. Mummy, give the girl some money...

FANNY: (She throws down the money - which BRUCE quickly retrieves - and she pulls a gun.) I don't want your filthy money. I want you. And if I can't have you....

KAROLINE: Oh, for Pete's sake, this is just too melodramatic. (She crosses to FANNY, takes the gun, and slaps her.) Have some pride, girl. I was in love with the bastard, too, and ya don't see me totin' pistols.

FANNY: (Breaking down) I want to die!

SYLVIA: If I get home and find you've been in the gin in order to fortify yourself for this little exhibition, you just may get your wish.

JUDGE: (Entering) Speaking of gin....(To JACKIE) I think it's the gin that's makin' me sick.

JACKIE: Could be, Judge, could be.

JUDGE: So, I'm switching to scotch. (He holds up bottle. Sees gun in KAROLINE's hand.) Whoa, what have I missed?

DENNY: (To KAROLINE) I'll take that. I'm a policeman.

TINA: They call him "Photocop".

JUDGE: Well, are we ready to begin again?

ALL BUT SYLVIA AND FANNY: YES!

SYLVIA AND FANNY: NO!

SYLVIA: No! Bruce, how can you go through with this now? What with the servants being upset and all....

BRUCE: Sorry, Mummy, it won't wash. Tina, my love, are you ready?

TINA: Are we all done with your old girlfriends?

BRUCE: Are we all done with your old boyfriends?

TINA: (Looking at DENNY.) Definitely.

DENNY: Hey, I'm takin' pictures here. (Everyone returns to their wedding places.)

JUDGE: (Very quickly.) So, if there is anyone here who knows why these two should not be joined in holy matrimony, let them speak now or forever hold their peas. (Pause. FANNY sniffles. A groan is heard. All react.)

TINA: Did you hear something?

BRUCE: It was just the wind. (To JUDGE) Get on with it, Judge. (Everyone resumes wedding "positions" facing JUDGE.)

JUDGE: Then, by the power vested in me....(Another, louder groan is heard. All react again.)

TINA: I know I heard something. (To BRUCE - as he's been the cause of the "interruptions" thus far.) Sound familiar?

BRUCE: (Firmly.) It's nothing. Come on, Judge.

JUDGE: By the power vested in me by the state of _____, I now declare you man and wife.

(With that, a man enters, staggering, groaning, which is not surprising as he has a large knife protruding from his chest. In one hand he is clutching a crumpled piece of paper, and in the other he has a locket. All in the wedding "party" react to his entrance, scream, and recoil as he struggles to the stage and then dies, dramatically, before them. They all look to BRUCE expectantly, as if this must also be his fault.)

BRUCE: What...what...what are you looking at? (DENNY jumps down from the stage and examines the body. He takes the papers from the man's fist and reads them as the others continue reactions of ad-lib shock, dismay, outrage, etc.)

TINA: Is he...

DENNY: 'Fraid so. Looks like he's been stabbed. (He bends over the dead man's body and takes his wrist as if to get a pulse.) Wait, what's this? (He looks again.) Usually, we have to wait for the coroner to establish the time of a crime. But the victim's watch is smashed. Probably when he fell after being stabbed.

JACKIE: So when did it happen?

DENNY: (He names a time that is one-half hour before doors were opened.) And he's been bleeding to death ever since. The murderer stabbed him and left him to die. Not pretty.

KAROLINE: You don't have a black cat, do you, honey? Or have you walked under any ladders, or some such? Because though I have personally been to some really frightful weddings, this is truly the worst. Say, you didn't let the groom see ya BEFORE the ceremony, did you? Cause that would it explain it....

TINA: Now THAT is the stupidest load of nonsense I have ever heard!

KAROLINE: Why, sugar, it is not! Why, I remember breaking a mirror once, and the very next day I met Broo-boy's Mummy for the first and last time. I consider that meeting to be the equivalent of seven years of bad luck, don't you?

TINA: Oh, please! Be quiet. This is awful! Denny, should we call an ambulance or a priest or somebody...

DENNY: It's a little late for that, Teeny. The guy is dead.

JACKIE: You know, years from now we're gonna laugh about all this.

BRUCE: Really. (To DENNY who is taking pictures.) Would you be so good to tell me just what you are doing? And tell me I did not hear you, just now, refer to my wife as "Teeny." TINA: It's an old nick-name, okay, Broo-boy.

DENNY: I'm taking pictures of the body so we can get it out of here. Hey, guys, can you give me a hand?

(The body removal specialists enter down the middle aisle. But before they can exit with the "stiff"...))

KAROLINE: Wait a minute. Denny, is that your name? Denny, darlin', I am not a detective or anything, but isn't the dearly departed holdin somethin' in his fist? (DENNY pries open the dead man's fist and holds up the locket - dangling from one finger - it is still clasped. He holds it up for everyone to see, as TINA speaks.)

TINA: But that's....that'sthat's my mother's locket. How...What...Can I have it back, Denny?

DENNY: Sorry, Tina, not right now. It's evidence. (He wraps it in his handkerchief and pockets it.)

FANNY: (She runs, falls, and clutches BRUCE, again around the knees) Oh, Mr. Bruce, you've married a murderer.... She tricked you, sir. So, it will be real easy to get it annulled. Why, you haven't even constipated the marriage yet... . And once you're rid of her, then we can be together. And I promise I'll never bring it up again.

JUDGE: (Belching) I wish I could say that.

BRUCE: Let go of me, Fanny. Mother, do something with her.

TINA: I don't understand...

DENNY: It is yours, isn't it, Teeny?

TINA: Yes, it's Mama's locket. (To all) Remember, I told you I couldn't find it? It's been missing for days. I looked everywhere.

JACKIE: Yes, she did! She told me. She told all of us.

KAROLINE:(Overly sweet) Well, ah think that this fellow, whoever he was, was most likely a sneak thief who stole your locket, honey, and then had some sort of a fallin' out with his thievin' gang who then murdered him in cold blood here tonight.

DENNY: Have you ever seen the guy before tonight, Teeny? (She shakes her head "no.")

JACKIE: I don't know how any of you could ever think my baby had anything to do with this. She's so soft-hearted she couldn't hurt a spider.

FANNY: Oh, Mr. Bruce, maybe she loves animals more than people! You'll wake up one morning murdered in your bed! Please, Mr. Bruce, let me save you from her. Use my body as a shield! Let me take the bullet for you!

BRUCE: Mummy, can you curb the maid?

SYLVIA: Heel, Fanny. (She does.) Sit. (She does, but then starts to get up.)

BRUCE AND SYLVIA: Stay. (She does.)

TINA: Denny, what does that paper say? Does it tell who he is?

DENNY: Yes. (There is a chorus of ad-libs, "Well, who is he? What's his name?" etc., that ends with...) Why don't you tell us, Mrs. Montgomery?

SYLVIA: Me! I don't know who he is. How dare you accuse me of....!

DENNY: You ought to know him. You hired him. His name was Richard Starkey, and you were paying him to follow and investigate Tina Louise Fitzhugh. Here is his report.

SYLVIA: I never saw that man before in my life!

DENNY: This would indicate otherwise.

SYLVIA: I'm not saying I didn't HIRE him, I just said I never SAW him. I handled everything over the phone. I didn't actually meet him. I have PEOPLE who do that sort of thing. Goodness, I haven't even seen my own gardener in twenty years. Yes, if that's Richard Starkey, I did hire him to find out about the girl. It's my job. I'm a Mummy!

JACKIE: I love a determined woman!

BRUCE: Oh, my dear, wonderful, misguided Mummy!

TINA: Can we put little old Mummy on hold here a minute, Bruce? I think I'm in some pretty deep trouble here. A private detective, investigating me, turns up dead, clutching my locket in his hand. I'm not a lawyer....

JUDGE: I'll drink to that...

KAROLINE: Well, that would tend to shoot down my sneak thief theory. Now I'd say the case against Tina here could be pretty much....

SYLVIA: Open and shut. Bruce, darling, obviously Mr. Starkey turned up some very damning things about your fiancée, and she, she. . ."bumped him off to keep him from singing."

JUDGE: I saw that movie.

TINA: I didn't do anything. I know it looks incriminating, but, but... Oh, Denny, what am I gonna do?

BRUCE: Hey, sweetie. I'm here. Bruce is here. You don't need to turn to the Kodak Kid for help. I'm with you all the way, baby. We'll get you the best lawyer that your.....our money can buy. Why, there's all kinds of defenses we can use - self-defense, insanity, extenuating circumstances, Twinkies,.....

DENNY: How about "not guilty"? Look, Bruce, maybe I should spell out a little more clearly just who I am. I'm a cop. But I wasn't always a cop. I was a kid. A kid who got in a whole lot of trouble. Drugs. Gangs. Stealing. You name it, I did it. Then one day I met up with someone who changed my life - and it wasn't a minister, it wasn't a teacher. It wasn't even a cop. It was a clown. A clown named Boffo. No one ever saw him out of his make-up, but that didn't matter. Even in a fake red nose and big shoes, Boffo was more real and human and honest than anyone I'd ever met. Sure, people laughed at him. He didn't care. He knew that being true to yourself is more important than impressing shoppers at the mall. And Boffo may have just disappeared without a trace one day, but his memory and lessons live on through me. And that's why I don't judge a man by the size of his shoes, or the color of his nose. And I believe that someone is innocent until proven guilty. (During this he folds the report and tucks it into his pants' pocket.)

JUDGE: So, do I, kid, so do I.

FANNY: Well, I don't! (To TINA) Why don't you just admit that you killed that man in cold blood. Why, you're just a... you, you....(Stutters).

TINA: They call me Mrs. Bruce.

FANNY: WAAAAA (KAROLINE slaps her again.)

KAROLINE: Well, ah for one am very interested in just what is in your pants, Denny, darling.

SYLVIA: Good gracious, the girl's a rabbit.

KAROLINE: Ah am referrin' to the private investigator's report.

DENNY: What report? Oh, this. Boring stuff. Routine. A basic surveillance report.

SYLVIA: Then you won't mind sharing it, will you, Denny?

JACKIE: Go ahead, son.

DENNY: (Reading) From the Desk of Richard Starkey. Client: Mrs. Sylvia Montgomery. Subjects: Bruce Montgomery, Tina Fitzhugh.

Report of Surveillance (Date preceding performance).

Followed BM to hotel, watched as he entered room. 5 min. later, BM left with woman fitting TF descrip. Broke into room, took pix. Heard elevator so left. May have been seen. Will call.

JACKIE: Well, let's see them. The pix.

DENNY: They weren't there. Just the report.

FANNY: She took it! After she killed him! Oh, Mr. Bruce, you can't stay with her. Sure, she's beautiful. Sure, she's young and rich and everybody loves her. But that's how she traps them. Men, I mean. Like a black widow spider. Her bite is deadly. Oh, Mr. Bruce, run away with me! I'll make you happy. Remember the shirts!! WAAA!!

BRUCE: Fanny, you are heading toward another slap.

SYLVIA: Tell me, Officer, were you going to suppress this report? Perhaps because it just might incriminate your girlfriend?

DENNY: Of course not! And she's not just my ex-girlfriend, Mrs. Montgomery. She's also your daughter-in-law. And no, I wasn't going to suppress anything. I do my job. I was going to put it in my report.

SYLVIA: Well, Bruce, I hope you're happy. After all I have done for you. All I have suffered. The years. The years of protecting you. Trying, over and over, to keep you from ruining your life. And how do you show your gratitude? Do you say "Thank you, Mummy" ? Do you devote yourself to my happiness? Do you cling to me in my golden years? No. Not my Bruce. His idea of a thank-you is to marry Lizzie Borden. Well, it will all turn out for you, Bruce. You won't have to worry about me anymore. Because this will kill me. I'll be dead and you can just put me in the ground and get on with your life. Hm. ? Though you will have to buy a dog. Because you won't have old Mummy to kick around any more!

JUDGE: (Reaching in pocket.) What'd'ya say, guy? I still got the key.

DENNY: Well, I think we should organize the guests to look for the pictures that Starkey wrote about.

JACKIE: Hey, where's our wedding co-ordinator? She may not be much of a wedding organizer, but I hear she knows all about mysteries. , where are you, sweetie?

HOSTESS: Here I am, Jackie! WELCOME TO "THE WEDDING FROM HELL!" IN A FEW MOMENTS, MY HELPERS WILL BE DISTRIBUTING CLUE PACKETS TO EACH TEAM. THESE ARE BASICALLY SELF EXPLANATORY. YOUR JOB IS TO COLLECT THE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY MR. STARKEY.

IN ORDER TO DO THIS YOU NEED TO FIRST, IDENTIFY WHO HAS EACH PHOTOGRAPH. SECOND, DETERMINE THEIR

FAVORITE WEDDING SONG. UPON HEARING THIS SONG, THEY WILL GIVE YOU THE PHOTOS.

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO GO OVER THE DIRECTIONS.

WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM. IF YOU SPLIT UP, PICK A CENTRAL MEETING PLACE.

REPLACE ALL CLUES. NOT TO DO SO IS GROUNDS FOR DISQUALIFICATION.

THIS IS NOT A RACE. WINNERS WILL BE DRAWN FROM THE CORRECT SOLUTIONS.

CERTAIN AREAS ARE OUT OF BOUNDS - THE STAGE BEING ONE.

DON'T FORGET TO COME TO THE (name location) FOR THE CUTTING OF THE CAKE!

HAVE FUN AND HAPPY DETECTING!

FULL VERSION

PART THREE - THE CLUE HUNT

The Mysteries by Moushey PRODUCTION MANUAL provides instructions for designing clue hunts and options for adapting or eliminating it (although if you can do it, the clue hunt is always VERY popular with audiences!).

The three clues needed to solve THE WEDDING FROM HELL are the THREE PHOTOGRAPHS taken by Mr. Starkey. (SEE CENTER OF SCRIPT) Pictured in these photographs:

- 1) A smudged mirror. In front of it is a dresser on which is placed a wig stand.
- 2) The knife/murder weapon and the locket.
- 3) Nail polish and the locket.

NOTE: Included with the Production Packet, are 25 printed copies of each photo. For a small additional fee, you may be sent jpgs of the pictures electronically. See Appendix.

These three clues can simply be distributed or they can be discovered using a clue hunt. The PRODUCTION MANUAL contains complete directions for staging a clue hunt using my model or helping you design your own.

During the clue hunt, the cast will mingle with the audience - "in character" - and help them - without giving it away, of course. They will try not to lie. Unless, of course, they have something to hide. (It would be a short mystery indeed if they simply replied, "Yes, I did it." to direct questions!)

Also during the clue hunt:

FANNY will clean and polish all glass and mirrors.

DENNY can show the locket and private investigator's report to anyone who asks. He should hold the locket up so that it is obvious to all that it is still clasped.

KAROLINE will expose the run in her stocking and bemoan her ruined hosiery.

At the end of the clue hunt, (a pre-determined time) there needs to be a short break before the solution scene is played, to give the actors a "breather" and the Hostess an opportunity to "grade" solution sheets and determine winners. This is a good time for the "cutting of the cake" - dessert, and deliberations.

THE VERY BRIEF SOLUTION SCENE IS NOT INCLUDED IN REVIEW SCRIPTS. IF YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE THE ENTIRE ACTING COPY BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ABOUT PRODUCING, PLEASE CONTACT US 330-678-3893 mysteriesbymoushey@gmail.com

THE WEDDING FROM HELL

MINI-MYSTERY VERSION

An Audience-Participation Murder-Mystery

by

Eileen Moushey

NOTE: Even if your group chooses to perform the Mini-Version of WEDDING, the Full Version is chock-full of fun lines and "bits" you can use during interactive segments.

THE MINI-VERSION

PART ONE - PRELUDE TO MURDER

The event will be advertised as the "Wedding of the Year" and all who are attending will be "invited guests." It will soon be obvious, however, that this is one of those events where anything that can go wrong, will. Part of this will be due to the fact that Jackie Fitzhugh of "Jackie's House 'O' Gags" is arranging the whole thing, as father of the bride. Among the "disasters":

1. The wrong flowers are delivered. The arrangements are for funerals, and the corsages are the large mums worn to college homecomings. Or dead/wilted posies.
2. The cake will be crooked and/or collapsed on one side. (We had one very creative baker who put together a cake that was perfectly straight. But in icing it, she gradually took each tier's piped edge down, so that it looked like it was ready to go!)
3. The napkins will say "Bruce and Tuna." (You can order these from us.)
4. The shop where Jackie rented his tux sent the wrong one. The jacket is too big/small and the pants too long/short. Or, the shop forgot to send a shirt and so Jackie is wearing just a tee shirt with drawn "studs." Also, instead of a boutonniere, he's wearing a trick flower that squirts.
5. Due to a "mix-up" with the caterer, the reception with buffet line, etc., will be held BEFORE the wedding. (If dinner is served.)

The actors will circulate "in character" with the crowd as they arrive. This includes TINA, who thinks superstition ("the groom shouldn't see the bride before the ceremony") is stupid, and all the characters except RICHARD. KAROLINE is there "incognito," complete with run in stocking. She's wearing dark glasses and is suitably mysterious. (She must be careful to avoid coming face to face with BRUCE or SYLVIA.) Improvised scenes between the characters - revolving around what's going wrong, etc. - should be mapped out in advance. Confrontations that mirror future conflicts can be staged.

The HOSTESS is also circulating and asking for guests' help. Everything is going wrong with the wedding and as wedding "coordinator" she is sure to be blamed. She'll make them promise that if MRS. MONTGOMERY or BRUCE or the bride complain, they will "stick up" for her. The phrase taught to all is: "We think (Hostess Name) is doing a fine job and we've been to much worse weddings than this one." The HOSTESS will try to avoid the Montgomerys and TINA. If "caught" near any audience members she will lead them in their refrain. She will also assure everyone of the lovely music that will accompany the wedding - a really classy "string quartet" has been hired for the event. If a "Winston" type SOLOIST is used, this can be another confrontation.

Whatever location is used, there is a "playing area" -where the wedding will take place. Centered there is a trellised archway, decorated with flowers, etc. Directly in front of this is a large pulpit/lectern. On either side of the arch are three chairs. This can all, most definitely, be plastic and tacky. There is pre-wedding music, either taped or courtesy of SOLOIST.

Each guest will also receive a clipping from a local newspaper. This will include a column about the wedding, written by a society gossip columnist. There will also be ads for a private detective agency, Jackie's House "O" Gags, and EVNA (Eat Vegetables Not Animals). A copy of this will be sent with Production Materials to use to adapt to your own event.

THE MINI-VERSION

PART TWO - THE PLAY

As the house goes dark, JUDGE EMMETT enters and walks, center stage. He waits there with only a sway or two to reveal his condition. Throughout the play, he will take drinks from his flask. The light comes up around him, and the center aisle is lit. The TAPED MUSIC or SOLOIST begins "Sunrise, Sunset" as SYLVIA enters down the center aisle, escorted by BRUCE. As they walk through the crowd, they can acknowledge "friends" and wave and smile - all the while they are arguing. This is basically centered around "it's not too late to change your mind" and "what's the rush" to "Now, Mummy, I love the girl" and "What do we have to wait

for?" As they reach the front of the house, DENNY will appear and take pictures, for which they will both stop and pose. As they reach the stage.....

SYLVIA: Oh, Brucie, I didn't say to call it off completely, darling. Just wait a bit.

BRUCE: Oh, Mummy-kins, we've been over this ground before. I don't want to wait anymore. From the moment I saw Tina Fitzhugh on the Nordic track machine at Scandinavian (or local spa), I knew she was the girl for me! She's young, beautiful, smart, talented, and filthy rich. And do you know what the wonderful girl did? She insisted we go to a lawyer together. And as soon as we are married, one-half of her assets become mine. Something like four million. The minute that the Judge here pronounces us. . .

JUDGE: You talkin' 'bout me? Hey, let's get this movin' Let's do it. (Takes swig from bottle. All go to their respective places. The music begins..."Bridal March." It is interrupted from the back of the house. TINA, escorted by JACKIE, approaches the stage. She is limping because the heel has broken off of her shoe. As they reach the stage DENNY will jump out and begin taking pictures, just as he did with BRUCE and SYLVIA. After several pictures, TINA will attempt to move on, but DENNY will stop her with another shot...and another...and another.)

TINA: Okay, that's it! Daddy I still can't believe you did this to me. Of all the photographers in town, why did you get him? (They come onstage, still arguing.)

JACKIE: You want pictures. He takes pictures. What? What? What is the big deal? Bruce, m'boy, good to see you. You too, Sylvie, baby. Let's have ourselves a wedding!

TINA: Just a minute, here. Bruce, do you know who our photographer is? He works for Daddy. Part-time. When he's not working for the cops. He's a police photographer, for Pete's sake! So far this has not been the wedding of my dreams.

JUDGE: Ahh, don' let a little bad luck stop you, honey.

TINA: Luck doesn't have anything to do with it. I don't believe in LUCK. (Watches the Judge take a swig from his flask, pulls Jackie aside.) Daddy, where DID you find him? He reminds me of someone. (The Judge belches loudly.) Okay, that's it. (To JACKIE AND BRUCE as she takes them aside.) Over here. Let's talk. First, I lose Mama's locket - I'm afraid I may have taken it off before working out and it got lost or stolen. And I'd trade the eight million she left me for that locket. But that's just the beginning. (The following "list" of things-which-have-gone-wrong can be adapted for your event.) My dress was never ordered, so I had to pick one up at the thrift store. The florist's van broke down. The tux shop sends you the wrong tux. I break the heel on my shoe. My ex-lover is the photographer. The judge is drunk. AND, our wedding napkins read, "Bruce and Tuna." BRUCE: The photographer is your what?

TINA: Oh, and the caterer completely disregarded my wishes and will serve dead animals at the reception. Which is being held on a train, for Pete's sake.

JACKIE: Tina, honey, you make it sound like road kill.

TINA: I'm a vegetarian, Daddy. I won't be part of anything that causes animals to suffer. This, so far, has not been a fun time.

BRUCE: The photographer is your what, Tina?

DENNY: Ex-lover. Ex-lover. Ex-lover. With an emphasis on EX. This is just a job, Tina. I'm doin' it as a favor to your Dad, kid. That's all. And to make a few extra bucks. I'm saving up for clown school.

TINA:(To BRUCE) Denny is one of Daddy's party clowns. He started about the time Uncle Boffo quit.

JACKIE: Boffo. Now there was a party clown. He made them laugh. He made them cry. And he loved you, Tina. But he's gone now. The last of the great birthday party clowns.

TINA: C'mon Bruce, enough of this. (Speaks with great conviction as if convincing herself.) I love you, I want to marry you, I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

JACKIE: And I want grandbabies. I wanna teach 'em about the business. Just think. A little tike following me around the store. Sayin' "What's this, Granpa?" And, I'll say, "Why, little Jackie, that's your nail-through-the-finger trick. Not as popular as your bullet-hole-in-the-head, true, but a lot more realistic." What'dya say, Sylvie, I betcha can't wait to babysit. (SYLVIA groans.)

JUDGE: Are we ready to begin? Please, take your places. (JACKIE and SYLVIA are stage right. DENNY is hovering and taking pictures. BRUCE and TINA stand before the JUDGE.) We are gathered here together to join this man, Bruce, and this woman, Tina Louise, in the bonds of holy matrimony. Matrimony is (He is making this up as he goes.) a lot of things. It's a.....it's a...(looking to JACKIE for help.) JACKIE: (Stage whisper) State...

JUDGE: It's a steak...a big, thick, juicy STEAK

JACKIE: STATE. STATE. It's a state.

JUDGE: It's a state. A...a state....it's a state with borders. On all sides. So there's no escape. And there's border guards. Guards. Guards. Like.....lawyers. Yeah, lawyers. Divorce lawyers. And there are dogs at the border, yeah, big dogs. That drool and....snarl. So...um....today, you are charged with staying inside the state of matrimony so you won't get attacked by lawyers or dogs. (Ahem.) Do you, Bruce, take this woman, Tina, to be your awful wedded wife? To cherish her and keep her and, abide with her, and, walk with her, and um, sleep with her and forsaking all others stick with her through sickness and health all the days of your life and as long as you both shall live? Forever and ever?

BRUCE: I will.

JUDGE: And do you, Tina Louise, take this man Bruce, for your awfully wedded husband? To love him and honor him and covet him and keep him holy on the Sabbath and smite him not. And give him counsel and comfort, yea and verily, though he walk through the valley of shadow?

TINA: (Pausing, during which DENNY will step forward taking a flash picture - which strengthens her resolve.) I WILL.

JUDGE: And so, if there be anyone here who knows why these two should not be joined together, let them speak now or forever hold their peas.

KAROLINE: (Loudly, from the back of the hall) Am I late? Ah haven't missed it have I? Why, I will just die if I have missed this wedding. (She ad-libs more of the same as she comes down the aisle. The group onstage will remark, "who is that?" etc.) Well, don't just stand there, Bruce, sugar, give an old girlfriend a hug!

BRUCE: Karoline?.....Is it you? Karoline, little darlin'. (She runs to his arms and he sweeps her off her feet.) Mummy, look, see who's here. It's Karoline Karter. From college.

SYLVIA: I remember, Bruce. The Georgia Peach. Pit.

KAROLINE: Let a girl catch her breath, will you, Broo-boy. (To others) That was my pet name for him. Broo-boy.

BRUCE: And you were my Karo-kiss.

KAROLINE: How'd y'all do. I'm Karoline Karter. Of the Georgia Karters. That's Karter with a K. And I am Karoline with a K. I am so very sorry to come crashin' in on you-all like this, but when I saw in our alumni newspaper that Broo-boy was getting married.....I just had to come and give him a big wedding kiss. (She grabs him and kisses him) Some things never change, Bruce, thank God your lips are among 'em.

SYLVIA: Still having that old shyness problem, eh, Karoline?

KAROLINE: Y'see, Tina, honey, you are not the first to be engaged to our boy, here. Ah had that honor. Back in 1967. Broo-boy and I were in college together at Jefferson Davis University in Georgia. I was just a few years older but even that didn't stop us. Anyway, sugar, we got engaged and were all set to get married, and well, if it weren't for an incredible stroke of BAD LUCK, you wouldn't be standin' here tonight. Because I would be Mrs. Bruce Montgomery.

SYLVIA: It wasn't a stroke of bad luck, dear. It was me.

KAROLINE: One and the same, Mother Montgomery, one and the same. Y'see, Tina, my future mother-in-law hired herself a private detective to look into my personal life.

TINA: We don't need luck, Miss Karter. We have each other. Wait a minute - she hired a detective? You're kidding. This is too much.

SYLVIA: It's a good thing I did! He found out that Miss Karo Syrup, here, was a fraud! She lied to you, son, didn't she?

KAROLINE: You all want to know my heinous crime? My big, horrible secret. I was poor. Poor. That was it. Ah have a fine old name, a fine old rottin' plantation, and a fine old empty bank account. And because of that, Broo-boy and I couldn't be married. We didn't have any money. And his mother wouldn't give us any. But, fiddle-dee-dee, that's in the past. I think your darling Tina here is just too cute for her li'l broken shoes. And Mother Montgomery, it has taken me a number of years and several thousand dollars in counseling but I forgive you for breaking my heart. Luckily, my therapist did his doctoral dissertation on the role of the Yankee Bitch in American history, so he was able to give me special insights into your twisted little mind. Now, you just go ahead, Judge Honey.

JUDGE: Okay. Everybody get where their s'posed to be. (They do.) Where was I....Did I do the "death us do part" stuff?

JACKIE: Yeah, you got as far as the "if there is anyone here present who knows why these two should not be joined..."

JUDGE: Oh, yeah...together, let them speak now or forever hold their peas. (Pause) Then...

FANNY: (From the audience. Standing and wailing.) NOOOOOOOO.....

(There is general ad-libbing as FANNY makes her way to the stage, crying and moaning and whining. The reaction onstage is "who is that" to "is that Fanny?")

FANNY: (As she comes onstage) I'm sorry, Mr. Bruce, Miss Sylvia. I couldn't help it. But when a person's very soul is being ripped out and stomped on and crushed under the high heels - high heel - of an uncaring girl who knows nothing about REAL, TRUE love, it is hard to remain silent. Mr. Bruce, I know that we promised to keep our love a secret, a tremendous secret. A secret that could only live and thrive and flourish in the darkness of our heart of hearts.but surely, Mr. Bruce, you can't expect me to keep the vows we made to one another in the face of this threat. For ours is a passion both magnificent and terrible that, if left unchecked, will devour us both! Oh, Mr. Bruce, did you think I could stand by and watch you throw yourself away? When my lips are still bruised by your kisses, and my arms still ache from the tightness of your embrace, my breasts still heave...

JUDGE: I wish she hadn't said that...(He exits, running)

FANNY:my thighs still quiver with desire,.....my nose still twitches from the smell of your manliness...

TINA: Were you engaged to her, too, Bruce?

BRUCE: Of course not! She's our maid! She means nothing to me.

FANNY: I can't help it! I love you, Mr. Bruce. I've always loved you, I always will love you! And you love me, too.

know you do. You told me so!

BRUCE: Did not!

FANNY: Did too! (They engage in a "did not" "did too" exchange until BRUCE halts it.)

BRUCE: I did not! I most certainly did not.

FANNY: Yes, you did! Remember. It was the night our passion could no longer be contained. In the pantry.

BRUCE: Oh, THAT. (Pause) Oops.

FANNY: Alright, so it was only once. And maybe it was all over in about two minutes. But from that moment on, I knew that someday we'd be together again, forever. Oh, Mr. Bruce, don't go through with this. (She falls to the floor and clutches his legs, wailing.)

BRUCE: Stop that! Stop that! Fanny, you get up at once. Fanny, Fanny, look here, c'mon, get up, get up....up, up, up. (He "whistles" and then helps her to her feet.) I'm sorry if some how I led you on. And don't think I won't be a gentleman about it. (He reaches in his pocket and presses a bill in her hand.) Look, here's a nice, new twenty dollar bill. Why don't you go out and buy yourself something nice?

FANNY: (Crying louder) Oh, Mr. Bruce!!!

FANNY: (She throws down the money - which BRUCE quickly retrieves - and she pulls a gun.) I don't want your filthy money. I want you. And if I can't have you....

KAROLINE: Oh, for Pete's sake, this is just too melodramatic. (She crosses to FANNY, takes the gun, and slaps her.) Have some pride, girl. I was in love with the bastard, too, and ya don't see me totin' pistols.

DENNY: (To KAROLINE) I'll take that. I'm a policeman.

TINA: They call him "Photocop".

JUDGE: Well, are we ready to begin again?

ALL: "YES" or "NO."

JUDGE: (Very quickly.) So, if there is anyone here who know why these two should not be joined in holy matrimony, let them speak now or forever hold their peas. (Pause. A groan is heard. All react.)

JUDGE: Then, by the power vested in me....(Another, louder groan is heard. All react again.) By the power vested in me by the state of _____, I now declare you man and wife.

(With that, a man enters, staggering, groaning, which is not surprising as he has a large knife protruding from his chest. In one pocket of his jacket he has a crumpled piece of paper and a tiny digital camera. In one hand he clutching (unseen) the locket. All in the wedding "party" react to his entrance, scream, and recoil as he struggles to the stage and then dies, dramatically, before them.)

DENNY: He's dead. Looks like he's been stabbed. (He bends over the dead man's body and takes his wrist as if to get a pulse.)

TINA: This is awful! Denny, should we call an ambulance or a priest or somebody?

DENNY: It's a little late for that, Teeny.

JACKIE: You know, years from now we're gonna laugh about all this.

BRUCE: (To DENNY who is taking pictures.) Would you be so good as to tell me just what you are doing? And tell me I did not hear you, just now, refer to my wife as "Teeny." TINA: It's an old nick-name, okay, Broo-boy?

DENNY: I'm taking pictures of the body so we can get it out of here. Whoa, what's this?

TINA: But that's....that'sthat's my mother's locket. (DENNY wraps it in his handkerchief and pockets it.) Remember, I told you I couldn't find it? It's been missing for days. I looked everywhere.

DENNY: Have you ever seen the guy before tonight, Teeny? (She shakes her head "no." He starts checking the dead man's pockets, finds the camera and the crumpled piece of paper. He opens the paper.) Hmm, a digital camera. Hey, (Hostess name) you think maybe you could print these out. (She takes it from him.) And maybe this will. . .ah . . . His name is Richard Starkey and he's a private eye.

SYLVIA: Uh-oh. (Others look at her.) Oh, alright. I hired him. Yes, if that's Richard Starkey, I did hire him to find out about the girl. It's my job. I'm a Mummy!

BRUCE: Oh, my dear, wonderful, misguided Mummy! (DENNY AND/OR JACKIE cover up the body.)

TINA: Oh, Denny, what am I gonna do?

BRUCE: Hey, sweetie. I'm here. Bruce is here. You don't need to turn to the Kodak Kid for help. I'm with you all the way, baby. We'll get you the best lawyer that your.....our money can buy. Why, there's all kinds of defenses we can use - self-defense, insanity, extenuating circumstances, Twinkies,.....

DENNY: How about "not guilty"? Look, Bruce, maybe I should spell out a little more clearly just who I am. I'm a cop. But I wasn't always a cop. I was a kid. A kid who got in a whole lot of trouble. Drugs. Gangs. Stealing. You name it, I did it. Then one day I met up with someone who changed my life - and it wasn't a minister, it wasn't a teacher. It wasn't even a cop. It was a clown. A clown named Boffo. No one ever saw him out of his make-up, but that didn't matter. Even in a fake red nose and big shoes, Boffo was more real and human and honest than anyone I'd ever met. Sure, people laughed at him. He didn't care. He knew that being true to yourself is more important than impressing shoppers at the mall. And Boffo may have just disappeared without a trace one day, but his memory and lessons live on through me. And that's why I don't judge a man by the size of his shoes, or the color of his nose. And I believe that someone is innocent until proven guilty.

JUDGE: Tha' was beautiful.

JACKIE: Hey, where's (Hostess Name) She may not be much of a wedding organizer, but I here she knows all about mysteries. , where are you, sweetie? (All join in calling for the HOSTESS.)

HOSTESS: I'm here, Jackie. WELCOME TO WEDDING FROM HELL. IN A FEW MOMENTS, MY CLUE HELPERS WILL BE PASSING OUT CLIPBOARDS. ON THIS CLIPBOARD WILL BE THE PICTURES TAKEN BY RICHARD STARKEY AS WELL AS HIS REPORT. IN ORDER TO DISCOVER WHO KILLED RICHARD STARKEY, YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO QUESTION THE SUSPECTS. KEEP IN MIND, DURING THIS INTERROGATION, THAT THE SUSPECTS WILL DO THEIR BEST NOT TO LIE. BUT, OF COURSE, ONE OR MORE HAS THINGS TO HIDE AND WILL DO THEIR BEST NOT TO BE TRAPPED BY YOUR QUESTIONS. IT WOULD BE A SHORT MYSTERY INDEED, IF GUILTY PARTIES JUST CAME RIGHT OUT AND ADMITTED THEIR GUILT UPON BEING QUESTIONED! FINALLY, ON YOUR CLIPBOARD IS A BALLOT. WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE BALLOT AND THE NAME OF WHO YOU THINK "DUNIT". CAST THIS BALLOT WHEN DIRECTED. WE'LL DRAW FROM THE BALLOT BOX AND THE FIRST CORRECT ONES DRAWN WILL RECEIVE PRIZES. THAT'S ABOUT IT, HAPPY DETECTING !

NOTE: Remember you can substitute the Full Version Clue Hunt when doing the Mini-Version.

THE MINI-VERSION

PART THREE - CIRCULATING/IMPROV

Audience members will be given clipboards. On each is:

1. A copy of the crumpled handwritten note from Starkey

Followed BM to hotel, enter room. 5 min. BM leaving with woman fitting TF descrip. Broke into room, took pix. Heard elevator so left. May have been seen. Will call.

2. The 3 photos. Copies of these will be sent with the WEDDING scripts. You have permission to photocopy additional if needed.

- A smudged mirror. In front of it is a dresser with a wig stand.

- The knife/murder weapon and the locket.

- Nail polish and rabbit's foot.

3. Ballots. Copies of these will be sent with the WEDDING Production Package.

Also during the circulating/improv section:

FANNY will clean and polish all glass and mirrors.

DENNY can show the locket. He should hold the locket up so that it is obvious to all that it is still clasped.

KAROLINE will expose the run in her stocking and bemoan her ruined hosiery.

At the end of this section (a pre-determined time) audience members will cast their ballots in a ballot box placed in a central location.

THE VERY BRIEF SOLUTION SCENE IS NOT INCLUDED IN REVIEW SCRIPTS. IF YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE THE ENTIRE ACTING COPY BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ABOUT PRODUCING, PLEASE CONTACT US: 330-678-3893 info@mysteriesbymoushey.com

APPENDIX

PROPS/COSTUMES

Bloodied shirt, knife effect - Richard Starkey.

Tina's locket

Flasks and a liquor bottle for the Judge

Clown costume for Judge/Boffo. Nose, wig, bow tie, gloves, clown shoes. Two clown noses for Tina and Denny.

Gun for Fanny

Camera/flash for Denny (Or use disposable! Fits with the baaaad wedding theme!)

Tricks for Jackie

Glass cleaner and rag for Fannie

INCLUDED in the PRODUCTION PACKET, which is sent electronically.

Clue Packets with Answer key and flow chart

Blank flow chart to help in making your own clue hunt.

Printed copy of ballots to reproduce (alternative to Clue Hunt)

Richard Starkey's report

25 (per performance) printed sheets with 3 photographs

Sample newspaper clipping for mini-version

Sample program

Sample promotional flyer

* Production Manual

OPTIONAL

Everything in the Production Packet can be sent in printed format for a small fee, including the Production Manual (which is the same for all our shows)

CD with music for various shows, includes a baaaad version of the Wedding March.

Wedding March.

Bruce & Tuna Wedding cocktail-size napkins. Silver Ink on black.