

THE DEFECTIVE DETECTIVE

By Donald Payton

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Cast of Characters

(9 men, 15 women)

WINNIE: Bright and buoyant *(194 lines)*

JOLENE: Vivacious and intelligent *(135 lines)*

ANGELA: “Angelic” young woman *(80 lines)*

BOGEY: A.K.A “The Bogeyman” *(40 lines)*

THELMA: Matron of the Purple Grackle Inn *(117 lines)*

VELMA: Thelma’s sister *(88 lines)*

KLEW: Thelma and Velma’s nephew, the Purple Grackle Inn’s handyman *(29 lines)*

ELLIE: Klew’s sister, much older than what she looks and acts. *(29 lines)*

SABLE: The “grand dame” of the Purple Grackle Inn. Klew and Ellie’s mother. . *(13 lines)*

CELIA: Dresses like Delia, Flowery flocks. *(4 lines)*

DELIA: Dresses like Celia, Flowery flocks. *(4 lines)*

CHIP: Jolene’s boyfriend *(59 lines)*

PEARLY GATES: 127 years old, but hides her age well *(25 lines)*

LIBBY SAWYER: Self-assured TV news reporter *(33 lines)*

TV CAMERAMAN

NURSE CROCKETT: Emergency room nurse *(29 lines)*

MUGGSY: Crook *(84 lines)*

HUGSY: Crook *(52 lines)*

MUGSY: Crook *(24 lines)*

IMOGENE: Eyewitness(6 lines)

CHESTER: Owner of Chester's Tow, Go, Air and Repair Shop (12 lines)

W.W. KOM: Eyewitness (*rural farmer*)

DOT KOM: Eyewitness, W.W.'s wife

THE VOICE: Deep and booming (13 lines)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I, SCENE I: THE TV REPORT

ACT I, SCENE I, is acted before the curtain with a spotlight only.

ACT I, SCENE 11: HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA

The curtain opens just wide enough to see a portion of a waiting room in a hospital. A portable flat is used to form the back wall. A sign "Emergency" is centered on the wall.

ACT 1, SCENE 111: MUGGSY AND HUGSY

ACT I, SCENE III is acted before the curtain. Two spots are used. The left spot focuses on Muggsy. He uses a mobile cellular phone. The right spot focuses on Hugsy. She is seated at a small desk.

ACT I, SCENE IV: THE HOSPITAL ROOM

The curtain opens partially to reveal a hospital bed and two chairs.

ACT 1, SCENE V: HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA

ACT I, SCENE VI: HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA

ACT I, SCENE VII: MUGGSY AND HUGSY

ACT I, SCENE VIII: NEWS UPDATE

ACT I, SCENE IX: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

The curtain opens on the parlor of the once- popular Purple Grackle Inn, located in what was once a well-appointed Victorian home. The time is the present.

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ACT II, SCENE 1: NEWS UPDATE

ACT II, SCENE 11: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE III: MUGGSY AND HUGSY

ACT II, SCENE IV: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE V: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE VI: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE VII: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE VIII: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE IX: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE X: THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

ACT II, SCENE XI; THE HOSPITAL ROOM

ACT I, SCENE I

AT RISE: A spotlight comes up center, focusing on Libby Sawyer, a TV news reporter, who is standing in front of the curtain, facing the TV Cameraman. Libby continues flipping her hair for just the right look. Standing beside her is Imogene, whose eyes are focused on the camera. As the spotlight comes up, the Cameraman counts down the seconds.

CAMERAMAN: Three and two and one...(Points to Libby.) You're on.

LIBBY: (*Into the camera.*) This is Libby Sawyer, Channel Five News, live at the scene of what authorities surmise was a shootout between two alleged mob factions. According to eyewitnesses, a mini-van traveling east on West Ave collided with a black sedan, going north on South Street. Witnesses say prior to the collision there was gunfire, and at least three people, including a female bystander, were shot in the hail of bullets. (*She thrusts the microphone toward Imogene.*) With me live on five is...

IMOGENE: (*Into the microphone.*) Imogene Ivy. (*Libby starts to speak, but Imogene grabs her wrist and pulls the "mic" back to her mouth.*) Capital I, capital I.

LIBBY: Miss Ivy.

IMOGENE: Mrs. Ivy, Burley and me just had our 30th anniversary. Are we live?

LIBBY: Live on five, Mrs. Ivy.

IMOGENE: Hi Vern, hi Trellis. (*Waves.*) Hi Lorene and Bethel. Don't forget bridge tonight, eight o'clock sharp. (*Back to Libby.*) Bridge club tonight.

LIBBY: Could you tell our Channel Five viewers what you saw here just moments ago?

IMOGENE: Burley was just placin' our order, double cheeseburger, onions, mustard, pickles, and small French fries for him 'cause he says he's tryin' to cut back on c'lestoral and a tuna melt for me when all heck broke loose. Burley thought for sure they was makin' a movie and I said if they was- they sure was makin' a mess of it. Cars flying, people fleeing, tires screeching...then I saw this young lady lyin' face down on the sidewalk. If there was a breath of life in her, I couldn't tell it. Them alleged hoodlums-notice I said alleged- wasn't breathin' either. Everybody took off as soon as they heard the sirens (*Libby pulls the "mic" away, but Imogene pulls it back again.*)

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IMOGENE: There was another girl, too, with the girl that was hurt.
She was screamin' and runnin' and runnin' and screamin' and
I'm here to tell you it wasn't a pretty sight.

LIBBY: There you have it. Live on Five from the scene of what
may be this country's first-ever shootout. More as it develops
on Five at six.

(Spotlight fades to black.)

END OF SCENE

ACT I, SCENE II

Hospital Reception Area

(The curtain opens wide enough to show a portion of a waiting room in a hospital emergency waiting room. A portable flat is used to form the back wall. A sign is centered on the wall that says "Emergency." Nurse Crockett is seated at a small table, reading a chart. Jolene stands in front of Nurse Crockett. Jolene is pert, vivacious, and intelligent. Dressed comfortably, she carries a suitcase in one hand and a satchel or briefcase, in the other. Optional extras may be added in the waiting room: sittin', reading, etc.)

JOLENE: *(Clears her throat.)* Nurse. *(No response.)* Excuse me, nurse. I'm looking for the Emergency area. *(Insistently.)* Nurse.

NURSE: *(Doesn't look up.)* Yeah?

JOLENE: Is this the Emergency room?

NURSE: Whadaya what? *(She finally looks up.)*

JOLENE: I would like to know where Winnie Kolicky is. *(Pause.)*
They just brought her in. *(No response.)* By ambulance.

NURSE: *(Checks her chart.)* What's the name again?

JOLENE: Winnie Kolicky

NURSE: Nope. We don't have a Winnie Kolicky.

JOLENE: She was in a horrible accident, and they brought her here.

NURSE: Nope. Not here.

JOLENE: Could she be at another hospital in town?

NURSE: Not unless she's dog or cat.

JOLENE: We stopped for food, see, just as those two cars ran into each other. There was shooting and Winnie got shot.

NURSE: *(Looks at her chart.)* No Winnie Kolicky.

JOLENE: In college, we were in a drama class together, my boyfriend, Chip, was in law school and Winnie's boyfriend jilted her for some ditzzy freshman so we took off for New York and show biz and the next thing you know we're touring in the road production of *The Defective Detective*. And here we are... or here I am and I desperately need to find her. *(The nurse stares at her.)*

JOLENE: Today was our last day in Kansas City. Next week we open in Denver. The rest of the troupe went by bus. Winnie and I rented a car so we could see the countryside.

NURSE: Why?

JOLENE: The scenery.

NURSE: What scenery?

JOLENE: The fruited plains. The amber waves of grain.

NURSE: You sure your not lookin for the looney ward?

JOLENE: *(Insistent.)* I'm looking for my friend Winnie.

NURSE: Look, we've got emergencies we've got to take care of. You wanna stick around, that's fine. *(Points to a chair.)* Just park it, zip it, and wait.

JOLENE: Are you really a nurse?

NURSE: *(Dry.)* For twenty fun-filled years.

JOLENE: Then what happened to TLC? *(Nurse stares.)*

NURSE: No Winnie Kolicky. We have a Sluggsy Slick, Aldo Macarooni, and a Sammy Spade,

JOLENE: That's her.

NURSE: Who's her?

JOLENE: Sammy Spade. Winnie is Sammy. I'm her sidekick, Phyllis Marlowe. Our stage names in *The Defective Detective*.

NURSE: Maybe it's detox you want.

JOLENE: After the final curtain, we didn't change or anything. She had on the same hat, same coat, the business card that said "Sammy Spade, Private Eye," the wallet, everything. We just got in the car and left. What's her condition?

NURSE: *(Looks at the chart.)* Not good.

JOLENE: Like critical? Serious?

NURSE: Like ADOA.

JOLENE: You mean she was dead on arrival.

NURSE: Almost dead on arrival. She had a slight pulse. They're doin' what they can.

JOLENE: Is there someone I can talk to? A doctor?

NURSE: The coroner. Somebody will have to I.D. her.

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(Jolene gasps, puts her hand over her mouth as the curtain closes.)

**ACT I, SCENE III
MUGGSY AND HUGSY**

(Two spots come up, one at the far left of the stage, the other at the far right, both spots are in front of the curtain. The left spot focuses on Muggsy. He is making a phone call from a hand-held cellular phone. Muggsy is wearing a loud plaid sport coat and baggy trousers. A briefcase, identical to Jolene's, sits at his feet. Hugsy in a short skirt with too much makeup and too much costume jewelry is thumbing through a fashion magazine. She picks up the phone on the third or fourth ring, still engrossed in her magazine.)

HUGSY: Yeah?

MUGGSY: It's me.

HUGSY: Me who?

MUGGSY: Muggsy.

HUGSY: Muggsy who?

MUGGSY: *(Agitated.)* Muggsy Muldoon. Put me through.

MUGGSY: Maybe I will and maybe I won't.

MUGGSY: Look, get me Bugsy, is he there?

HUGSY: Maybe he is and maybe he ain't.

MUGGSY: He said to call after we made the smack.

HUGSY: The what?

MUGGSY: The hit. The score.

HUGSY: Bugsy said I'd hear from Sluggsy.

MUGGSY: Sluggsy is indisposed.

HUGSY: No can do.

MUGGSY: Get me Bugsy

HUGSY: How do I know you're not the FBI or the NFL or something? First, I have to ask you a few questions.

MUGGSY: Well?

HUGSY: Well what?

MUGGSY: Ask them. *(Pause.)* Hello? You there?

HUGSY: I'm looking for my list, Aha. The password.

MUGGSY: Look, sweet cakes. Right now, I'm in some fleabag hotel in Kansas off Interstate 70 and I wanna talk to Bugsy.

HUGSY: Not without the password.

MUGGSY: *(Sighs.)* It's pizza spelled backwards...azzip.

HUGSY: What kind.

MUGGSY: Mushroom. Anchovy.

HUGSY: Bugsy ain't here. He's in the Caribbean. There's a jet waiting for you at O'Hare. You and the loot.

MUGGSY: One other little tiny problem. The Macarooni's got Sluggsy bad.

HUGSY: How bad?

MUGGSY: Dead bad. And then there were these two chicks.

HUGSY: You shot two chickens.

MUGGSY: Dames. One of 'em got a pretty good look at me.

But tell Buggy not to worry. I'm callin' from the hospital and the Nurse said she thought Aldo Macarooni and Sluggsy and th' girl were all DOA.

HUGSY: What about the other chick? Dame?

MUGGSY: She was yellin' and screamin' and grabbin' stuff. So I grabbed the loot and ran.

HUGSY: Did you count it?

MUGGSY: No, but there's at least fifty thousand big ones.

HUGSY: Count it.

MUGGSY: Now?

HUGSY: Now. (*Muggsy takes his foot off the case and opens it.*)

MUGGSY: I got it.

HUGSY: SO what do you see?

MUGGSY: (*Staring.*) Pennsylvania Avenue, Boardwalk, and Park place.

HUGSY: Monopoly? You got the chick's Monopoly game and if you got the chick's Monopoly game, what do you suppose she has?

MUGGSY: (*As it sinks in.*) Uh oh. Wonder how things are in the Caribbean?

(*Both spots fade to black.*)

ACT I, SCENE IV THE HOSPITAL ROOM

(*The curtain opens partially to reveal a hospital bed and two chairs. Optional painting on the portable back wall. She is still wearing the "Sammy Spade" costume- white shirt pulled loose at the collar, men's black slacks. A trench coat and a felt hat sit at the foot of the bed. Angela sits on a chair beside the bed dressed in white, she holds a handbook, The Angel's Handbook.*)

ANGELA: (*Calmly.*) Sammy? (*Louder.*) Sammy?

WINNIE: (*Stirs slightly.*) Huh?

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ANGELA: Can you hear me?

WINNIE: No.

ANGELA: Can you see me?

WINNIE: No. Where am I?

ANGELA: In the hospital. You were in an accident.

WINNIE: An accident? I don't remember. Are you a nurse?

ANGELA: No. My name is Angela. I am your guardian angel.

WINNIE: Why can't I see you?

ANGELA: Your eyes are closed.

WINNIE: Oh. What kind of accident?

ANGELA: You were an innocent bystander in the middle of a shootout.

WINNIE: Were you there?

ANGELA: They called me after it happened.

WINNIE: Like 911.

ANGELA: Something like that.

WINNIE: Where's my doctor?

ANGELA: Here. And machines and monitors. You're plugged into everything but CNN.

WINNIE: A shootout?

ANGELA: A shootout.

WINNIE: Like in the movies.

ANGELA: I wouldn't know about that. I haven't seen a movie since "Angels in the Outfield.)

WINNIE: If I'm in the hospital...(She stops.)

ANGELA: Not a good scene.

WINNIE: Hey, I've been in a lot of bad scenes. When I was in "Fiddler on the Roof" a critic said I was so bad that I should have played the fiddle. Not the Fiddler, the Fiddle.

ANGELA: Your exit is pending, Winnie.

WINNIE: (Pushes herself up on her elbows.) My final curtain?

ANGELA: So to speak, yes. The only question is whether you exit up (Points up.) or down (Points down.)

WINNIE: I don't get it.

ANGELA: You're on hold. It seems there's a computer glitch. Truth to tell, they can't find you.

WINNIE: I'm right here.

ANGELA: You're a lost soul. (She hands Winnie her billfold.) Is this your wallet? (Winnie nods.) Open it. (She does.) What does it say?

WINNIE: Sammy Spade.

ANGELA: (Hands her a business card.) This your card? (Winnie nods.) And?

WINNIE: Sammy Spade, Private Eye.

ANGELA: What about you hospital I.D.? On your wrist.

WINNIE: (*Squints.*) Sammy Spade.

ANGELA: The trouble is, Miss Spade, our records don't show a Sammy Spade. Now, then, never.

WINNIE: I-I-I- don't know who I am. I remember another name.

(*Puts her hand on her forehead.*) Everything's so fuzzy.

Winnie or something. Everything's so fuzzy.

ANGELA: If Only I wasn't so new at this angel business.

WINNIE: You're an angel?

ANGELA: Not a very good one. I told you that.

WINNIE: My memory's going. Angels have wings. You can't fool me.

ANGELA: Not until they graduate from flight school. (*Proudly.*)

Last week I had one successful landing out of seven. My takeoffs are fine, my landings stink. Look, Sammy, we have problems.

WINNIE: Like what?

ANGELA: This playbill, for instance, (*She reads from a playbill.*) Sammy Spade is the Defective Detective. Detective part, no problem. We've got detectives. The defective part is what has the panel all shook up. Problem number two, your book is blank.

WINNIE: What book?

ANGELA: Your book of life. You've got no credentials. Nothing, zip, zilch, zero. What have you contributed to society? What have you done for humanity? The poor, the homeless, the needy, the environment?

WINNIE: I can't remember.

ANGELA: Have you ever visited anyone in a nursing home?

WINNIE: No.

ANGELA: When was the last time you called your mother?

WINNIE: I don't remember. (*Suddenly, we hear a booming voice, amplified, perhaps over a loud speaker.*)

VOICE: (*Deep and booming.*) Miss Angela Abernathy.

ANGELA: (*Freezes.*) Uh oh.

VOICE: What's your 20, Angela?

ANGELA: Still in Kansas, sir.

VOICE: May I ask what's holding things up?

ANGELA: It's slightly complicated, sir.

VOICE: That doesn't surprise me, Angela.

ANGELA: I'm trying to land up a keeper, sir.

VOICE: Good. I'll be checking back with you. Over and out.

ANGELA: Yes, sir. Over and out.

WINNIE: (*Hand on her forehead.*) Things are fuzzy...and fading.

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ANGELA: Hold on. (*Holds up two fingers.*) How many fingers do you see?

WINNIE: Eleven

ANGELA: Hold my hand.

WINNIE: Someone's walking this way.

ANGELA: Tighter.

WINNIE: A man. (*Bogey enters dressed in a trench coat, hat pulled low, white shirt and tie.*)

BOGEY: How you doin' sweetheart?

WINNIE: Who're you?

BOGEY: Sam Spade's uncle, kid.

ANGELA: Like a pig's eye he is. That's Bogey. Man of a thousand disguises. (*Opens The Angel's Handbook.*) Chapter Three, page 49, see between Ludwig and Lucifer. (*Reads.*) Bogey, a.k.a., The Bogeyman.

BOGEY: (*Looks over her shoulder.*) That's a lousy picture. I'm better looking than that.

ANGELA: What do you think you're doing here?

BOGEY: Hey, we got a vested interest in this, too.

ANGELA: Where you come from it's too hot for a vest. Don't let him trick you. He'll try anything. Trickery, treachery, half-truths.

BOGEY: Whadaya mean? I never ran for congress in my life.

ANGELA: (*Sits down beside Winnie again, ignoring Bogey.*)

Now according to my handbook-

BOGEY: You call that a handbook? Edges frayed, pages torn. It must be 1000 years old. Mine's hot off the press.

ANGELA: I'm sure it is. (*To Winnie.*) Now, why is Sammy called the Defective Detective?

WINNIE: Because she's never solved a mystery or nabbed a thief.

ANGELA: She's currently working on a case, right? That started when?

WINNIE: Ahh, 1955 or so, sometime back then.

BOGEY: Holy smokies, that's 59 years ago.

ANGELA: (*Glares at Bogey.*) That's not 59 years ago. It's (*Gives the correct number of years.*) Your math is as bad as your breath. (*Back to Winnie.*) So...the defective detective has been trying to solve this case for (*Enter the number of years.*) years?

WINNIE: She and her sidekick, Phyllis. Phyl. The niece of Philip Marlowe.

ANGELA: But they don't have any clues?

WINNIE: Oh, there's lots of clues. And evidence. And suspects.

ANGELA: Any eyewitnesses?

WINNIE: One. A grackle.

ANGELA: You mean a bird?

WINNIE: (*Nods.*) A bird.

ANGELA: This may be tougher than I thought, but it's your only chance.

WINNIE: What is?

ANGELA: To go to the scene of the crime and-solve it.

WINNIE: There's no other choice.

ANGELA: Sure. You can flip a coin, heads or tails?

BOGEY: Call tails.

ANGELA: Heads he wins.

WINNIE: So what do we do?

ANGELA: Not we. You. Meanwhile, I'll get back to the Board of Angels, explain the situation, we eliminate the word "defective" and go from there.

WINNIE: I'm afraid it'll never fly.

ANGELA: At this rate, I won't either.

BOGEY: Here we go.

WINNIE: So how do I get out of here?

BOGEY: I wouldn't try flying out the window just yet.

ANGELA: Put on your hat, put on your coat...

BOGEY: (*Sings.*) Leave your worries on the doorstep.

ANGELA: Walk out. We'll have a car waiting for you.

WINNIE: What kind of car?

ANGELA: (*Looks at her handbook.*) According to this, you have a choice. Either a Studebaker or a Hudson.

BOGEY: That book's older than I thought. They don't even make those cars anymore. Look, sweetheart. A classy dame like you otta drive in style. (*He dangles a set of keys in front of her.*)

ANGELA: What's that?

BOGEY: Keys to the hottest wheels in town. A '56 Edsel.

ANGELA: Don't listen to him. Your only concern is to remove the word "defective" from Sammy Spade, The Defective Detective. Remember, the streets of gold don't have potholes.

BOGEY: Probably not a lot of '56 Edsels, either.

ANGELA: I'm not saying it's going to be easy. The sweeter the apple, the higher the limb.

WINNIE: I'm ready. (*She dons her trench coat and hat.*)

ANGELA: Then go for it...Sammy.

BOGEY: Women.

WINNIE: You'll keep in touch?

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ANGELA: *(Hands on Winnie's shoulder.)* Don't worry, I'll be in touch.

ACT I, SCENE V HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA

AT RISE: *The curtain opens on the Emergency Reception Area. The sign "Emergency" hangs on the back portable flat. Jolene crosses to the Nurse, who is sitting at a table.*

JOLENE: Any word yet?

NURSE: About what?

JOLENE: My friend, Winnie or Sammy Spade.

NURSE: *(Picks up the phone.)* Anything more on Spade?

(Waits.) Oh, she did, huh? *(Hangs up.)* She checked out.

JOLENE: *(Anguished.)* She died?!

NURSE: No, she was released.

JOLENE: Released? But I though...*(Winnie enters left.)*

WINNIE: Phyl.

JOLENE: *(Turns.)* Winnie. *(They hug.)* Are you okay?

WINNIE: *(Holds up her arms.)* Tah dah!

JOLENE: You had me scared to death. They said you were DOA.

WINNIE: Do I look DOA?

JOLENE: You've never looked better in your life.

WINNIE: Then let's get otta here. You got our things?

JOLENE: Here...and in the car.

WINNIE: The car's already here?

JOLENE: We rented one, remember?

WINNIE: Cancel it. We got our own. *(Proudly.)* A 1956 Edsel.

JOLENE: We're going places now.

WINNIE: *(Picks up Jolene's bags.)* C'mon, Phyl. Time's a wastin'

JOLENE: *(Steps in front of her.)* And where do you think you're going?

WINNIE: Where else? The Purple Grackle Inn. We have a crime to solve. We're partners, remember? Sammy Spade and Phyl Marlowe. We solve the crime thus eliminating the word "Defective" from my title and the Board of Angels finds my book. C'mon.

JOLENE: Not before you tell me what's going on. And only if we take the car I rented and only if I drive. *(A car agent, carrying a clipboard, enters left. The agent is Bogey in disguise. He is dressed in a crimson sweatshirt bearing the words "Red Hot Car Rentals" and a bright red baseball hat.)*

WINNE: Okay. You drive.

JOLENE: Yipe

BOGEY: Somebody here waitin' for a car?

WINNIE: Don't move. Don't say a word. Don't panic.

BOGEY: Just sign here and you're on your way. Full tank of gas. Unlimited mileage.

WINNIE: *(To Jolene.)* You got our stuff? *(Jolene nods.)*

BOGEY: *(Still reading from the clipboard.)* Tires aired.

WINNIE: *(Talks from the side of her mouth.)* Here's what we do.

(Winnie bends over and picks up the rest of the bags, slowly moves backwards towards the exit.) We remain calm, collected, like nothing's wrong. We move to the door, like this...*(Suddenly, she turns around and runs for the exit.)* and run like crazy. *(She exits.)*

JOLENE: Winnie, wait for me. *(She follows her out.)*

BOGEY: Women.

CURTAIN or BLACKOUT

ACT I, SCENE VI HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA

AT RISE: *Curtain opens. Libby Sawyer is standing next to Nurse Crockett. Libby is sporting a different suit, chic as ever. The cameraman is counting down:*

CAMERAMAN: Two and one and-*(He points to Libby.)*

LIBBY: This is Libby Sawyer, Channel 5 News, live from the hospital trauma center where we're still following the bizarre events that began unfolding earlier today. *(Turning.)* With me is...

NURSE: Nurse Clara Crockett

LIBBY: Who, I understand, was an eyewitness to the latest series of events that took place here at the hospital. Can you confirm for our Channel 5 viewers that the female bystander, presumed dead on arrival, was not dead on arrival?

NURSE: That I can confirm.

LIBBY: And you can confirm the identity of the alleged bystander?

NURSE: Well, her female companion, who was either Phyllis, Phyl, or Jolene, called her Winnie, but truth be told, the only identification we found on her was a business card and a tag that read "Sammy Spade." Take your pick.

LIBBY: Are you suggesting that the hospital doesn't know her

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identity.

NURSE: All I know is that they left the hospital in a rented car.

LIBBY: Headed to...?

NURSE: East, Sammy and Phyl were headed east to a...ah...

LIBBY: Anything else you can tell our viewers?

NURSE: Yeah. After today, I'm out of here. Back to where I came from. Where life is quieter and more simple.

LIBBY: Back to the country, huh?

NURSE: Naw, East LA.

CURTAIN or BLACKOUT

ACT I, SCENE VII MUGGSY AND HUGSY

AT RISE: Spotlights come up on Muggsy, left, and Hugsy, right. Muggsy is dialing the phone. Hugsy, is sitting at his/her desk, filing her fingernails. Hugsy's phone rings. She answers.

HUGSY: *(Cradling the phone.)* Yeah?

MUGGSY: It's Muggsy.

HUGSY: So?

MUGGSY: You hear from Bugsy?

HUGSY: We talked. Make that he talked, I listened. Not a happy camper.

MUGGSY: On a scale of one to ten, how mad?

HUGSY: Eleven.

MUGGSY: Did you cancel the jet to the Caribbean?

HUGSY: No, it left to go pick up Bugsy.

MUGGSY: He's coming home?

HUGSY: How'd you guess? He wants to know if you caught the dames with the stash of money.

MUGGSY: Not yet, but I'm eyeballin' 'em as we speak. They're as good as dead. Both of them.

HUGSY: BOTH OF THEM? I thought there was only one.

MUGGSY: Two, countin' the one they thought was DOA. She sure looks AOK to me.

HUGSY: She's out of the hospital gone on the lam?

MUGGSY: Not to worry. They're in a rental car goin' east. Only right now they're sittin' in a diner, happy as clams.

HUGSY: Where's the car?

MUGGSY: Out front.

HUGSY: Can you see what's on their plates?

MUGGSY: Yeah. One of 'ems havin' meat loaf, the other Mexican.

HUGSY: I mean th' numbers.

MUGGSY: The meat loaf's number one and the Mexican combination is the special of the day.

HUGSY: On the license plates, dummy.

MUGGSY: Not to worry, I'm stickin' to 'em like glue.

HUGSY: Funny, Buggy said the same thing about you, but I don't think he said "glue," exactly.

MUGGSY: What did he say... exactly?

HUGSY: As I recall, I think it had something to do with wet cement. *(Muggsy's eyes open wide, Hugsy hangs up and starts filing her nails again.)*

(Fade to black.)

ACT I, SCENE VIII NEWS UPDATE

AT RISE: *The spot comes up on Libby Sawyer, who is standing center stage in front of the curtain facing the Cameraman. Libby is still fashionably attired, although she's changed again since we last saw her. She's talking to Chester, a young man dressed in coveralls, heavy work shoes, and a greasy ball cap. He holds a mechanic's wrench.*

CAMERAMAN: One and two and- *(He points to Libby.)*

LIBBY: Libby Sawyer again, Channel Five News, reporting live at-

CHESTER: Chester's Tow and Go, Air and Repair Service.

LIBBY: And you are...*(She holds out a microphone.)*

CHESTER: Chester Ware.

LIBBY: *(Pulls the microphone back.)* Where we're still following a story that began yesterday with a shootout on West Avenue and South Street and still trailing two women who are being sought for questioning by local and federal authorities. *(She turns to Chester.)* Mr. Ware?

CHESTER: You can call me Chester.

LIBBY: Can you confirm that you assisted the two young ladies mentioned previously in their getaway?

CHESTER: I ain't sure they was tryin' to get away from anything-'cept maybe Mr. Boggs' Angus bull when they ran

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through a fence and hit th' Patty Pig Barbeque sign.

LIBBY: And they called you for help?

CHESTER: Well, I do operate a towing service, which they appeared to be in need of at th' time.

LIBBY: And...

CHESTER: I towed 'em in, fixed 'em up, and had 'em on their way.

LIBBY: Can you confirm their P.O.D?

CHESTER: Their what?

LIBBY: Their point of destination.

CHESTER: They mentioned a place called the Purple something or other.

LIBBY: Did they say what state?

CHESTER: It started with an "m."

LIBBY: Missouri, Minnesota?

CHESTER: Not Montana. I'd remember that because of Helena. She's my girlfriend. I towed her in, musta been six months ago, when her radiator boiled over. *(Grins.)* She's still here. Waitin' for parts. *(Winks at the camera.)* Which...if things don't work out between us, I'll probably have to order.

LIBBY: This is Libby Sawyer, reporting live from...

CHESTER: Chester's Tow, Go, Air and Repair and startin' tomorrow, Helena's gummy buns. *(Grins again.)* Right now, she's out in the kitchen kneadin dough. Course, we all need a little dough now and then.

(Spot fades to black.)

ACT I, SCENE IX THE PURPLE GRACKLE INN

AT RISE: *The curtain opens on the parlor of the once-popular Purple Grackle Inn, located in what was once a fashionable and well-appointed Victorian home. The parlor, like the Eary family who resides here, appears to have seen better days. There is a sofa up right, a flattop desk, once used for registration, up left with an old phone and bell on it and assorted furniture throughout. A portable chalkboard stands next to the desk displaying the words "Purple Grackle Inn."*

A framed painting of a purple bird, the infamous Purple Grackle hangs on the back wall, center. OPTIONAL: At the director's discretion, you could create a Purple Grackle from clay or carved wood (Like a duck decoy.) And have it sit on a table. Add blinking eyes for an eerie special effect.

As the curtain opens, Winnie and Jolene enter right, carrying suitcases and the satchel or briefcase. Winnie still wears her trench coat and hat.

WINNIE: Finally. *(Drops the bags.)* The Purple Grackle.

JOLENE: Yes, I see it. *(Shudders.)*

WINNIE: It's everything I imagined it would be.

JOLENE: You can say that again.

WINNIE: *(Enthusiastically.)* Don't you just love it?

JOLENE: Yeah. I've always had a thing for cobwebs, spiders, and bats.

WINNIE: Just look at the family heirlooms. *(Jolene picks up one of the knickknacks.)* No, no, don't touch. Fingerprints.

JOLENE: Yeah, yeah. Look, whatever happened here happened years ago. The fingerprints are gone. The telltale evidence is gone. And tomorrow I'm gone.

WINNIE: You can't walk out on me.

JOLENE: I'm not walking. I'm driving.

WINNIE: You're my sidekick. We're here to solve a murder.

JOLENE: The mystery is how we got into this mess in the first place. All I know is you were rushed to the hospital Winnie Kolicky and came out Sammy Spade.

WINNIE: I told you. There's a logical explanation.

JOLENE: What you told me is not logical.

WINNIE: They have no records I exist. Now, or, ever.

JOLENE: No more details, no more Angela, no more Bogey. I'm outta here. *(She picks up her bag and starts to exit right.)*

WINNIE: But Phyl.

JOLENE: And no more Phyl. Phyl Marlowe is a fictitious character in a play based on a murder that may or may not have occurred. *(Tries to remain calm.)* I'm Jolene Kohlmeyer, who, at this moment, is broke, out of a job, out of luck, and out of here. O-U-T out. Goodbye, defective detective. *(Gives Winnie a farewell salute.)* Goodbye, Purple Grackle. *(She gives it a salute, too.)* And goodbye- *(Thelma enters left.)*

JOLENE: *(Sees Thelma.)* Whoever you are.

THELMA: How nice. Company. *(She picks up the bell on the desk and tinkles it.)* Velma, we have guests.

VELMA: *(Calls from offstage.)* Who is it, Thelma?

THELMA: *(Beaming.)* Two nice young ladies. I see you have suitcases. We haven't had guests in years.

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VELMA: Ask them if they'd like some ginger cookies.

THELMA: Of course, they'd like ginger cookies. *(To Winnie.)*

Nobody bakes ginger cookies like Velma.

JOLENE: Look, we're dead tired from the long drive and-

THELMA: *(Interrupts Jolene.)* Then you need some hot tea.

(Calls to Velma.) Put the kettle on, Velma.

VELMA: *(Calls from offstage.)* Tea and cookies coming up.

WINNIE: I'm Samantha Spade and this is Phyllis Marlowe.

THELMA: Spade and Marlowe, huh?

WINNIE: I'm Sammy. She's Phyl. *(Jolene collapses on the sofa.)*

THELMA: I'm Thelma. *(Sound of hammering offstage.)*

THELMA: *(Calls offstage.)* Klew.

KLEW: *(Offstage, left.)* I'm almost finished.

THELMA: With what, dear?

KLEW: *(From offstage.)* Boarding up the back windows.

THELMA: It'll wait.

KLEW: It might, but Hurricane Humpertink won't.

THELMA: Not Humpertink, dear. Englebert. *(To Winnie and Jolene.)* Klew thinks Hurricane Englebert is due to hit either tonight or early tomorrow.

WINNIE: I didn't think you had hurricanes in the Midwest.

THELMA: We don't. But you know Klew. Actually, I guess you don't. But you will. *(Velma enters left, pushing a teacart, laden with cookies, spoons, cups, cream, sugar, the works. She looks and dresses a lot like Thelma.)*

VELMA: *(As she enters.)* Two for tea, tea for two, and ginger cookies just for you.

THELMA: They're hot, hot, hot, and good.

VELMA: I'm Velma.

WINNIE: Sammy and Phyl, with a "y." *(Jolene looks at the ceiling again, shrugs helplessly.)*

VELMA: Thelma and I sort of run the place, I guess, at least we used to. With our nephew Klew. Some folks consider him a little 'centric.

WINNIE: Don't you mean eccentric?

VELMA: Not ex. He still is.

THELMA: Dig in. *(To Jolene.)* c'mon. *(Jolene rises.)* *(Jolene takes a cookie, as there's more pounding.)*

VELMA: Klew.

KLEW: *(From offstage.)* Aye, aye, matey. *(Klew enters right wearing a raincoat, rain hat, and boots.)*

KLEW: *That otta hold it. Unless Englebert is upgraded to a three or four.*

VELMA: *Maybe it'll go around us.*

THELMA: *And hit Pascagoula, like the last one.*

VELMA: *Klew monitors the weather forecasts.*

THELMA: *On his short wave radio.*

VELMA: *From Pepsi Cola.*

THELMA: *(Corrects her.)* Pensacola, dear.

VELMA: They all taste the same to me. Except the diet ones.

(She makes a face.)

KLEW: Looks a lot like it did that time in Barbados, just before the big one hit. Maybe I should drive one more nail.

THELMA: First dear, would you see if the teakettle's boiling.

KLEW: Sure. Aye, aye, maties. *(HE exits left.)*

VELMA: He used to be a sea captain.

THELMA: Keeps his fleet of two rowboats and a tug on Lake Eary.

WINNIE: Lake Erie?

THELMA: *(Spells it.)* E-A-R-Y. That's our family name.

VELMA: It's been Lake Eary since way before Webb and Eb.

THELMA: Our great uncles.

VELMA: They were "eary" all right, to say the least. But not all that great.

THELMA: That's when the Eary family tragedy began, you know, with Webb and Eb.

VELMA: And the Purple Grackle.

THELMA: They were twins, you know, Webb and Eb. Not the grackle.

VELMA: Twins. Like Eb's boys, Cabel and Gabel.

THELMA: And Webb's girls, Delia and Celia.

VELMA: Twins run in the Eary family.

THELMA: Even Ellie and Kay, sweet girls. *(Ellie enters left. She looks, acts, and dresses like a fifteen year old.)*

VELMA: Speaking of Ellie...look who's here.

ELLIE: Hello, aunties.

THELMA: You look so nice today, Ellie.

VELMA: So pretty. How is your sister, Kay?

ELLIE: She might come down for supper. First, she wants me to tell her the story again. About Cabel and Gabel. Tell it all to me again, would you?

THELMA: We have guests, dear.

WINNIE: Oh, that's fine. I'm sure Phyl would like to hear it.

(Jolene rolls her eyes.)

VELMA: Anyway, you've probably already heard about it on TV.

THELMA: It's been on "Unsolved Mysteries" at least ten times.

VELMA: Our guests always ask about it.

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THELMA: Back when we had guests. *(They sigh together.)*

VELMA: I hear there's even a play about it.

JOLENE: Yeah...so I'm told.

VELMA: It's never been solved, you know. Not even to this day.

THELMA: Poor, poor Sable.

VELMA: She married Cabel.

THELMA: Some say it was Gabel.

VELMA: Sable is Ellie's mother, you know.

ELLIE: And Kay's. Don't forget Kay.

THELMA: Oh, we never forget Kay. *(Klew enters with a tray of cups.)*

KLEW: The tea's ready. *(Thelma takes a cup from the tray.)*

THELMA: *(To Ellie.)* Why don't you just run along and play with Kay, dear.

ELLIE: *(Stomps off stage.)* I'll make the story end like I want-happy ever after. *(Exits.)*

THELMA: Such a sweet, sweet child.

VELMA: But a little 'centric. *(Sable glides in with an air of authority.)*

THELMA: Why don't you take the girls' things to their room, Klew?

KLEW: Aye, aye. *(He picks up their bags and starts left, turns.)* What room?

THELMA: Oh my. We haven't had guests for years. We'll just leave it up to you. *(He exits. Thelma notices Sable.)*

THELMA: Sable. We didn't hear you come in.

SABLE:

I'm expecting a phone call. Mr. Brewster, from Rotary, about the new library. I do hope President Truman makes the dedicatory address. *(She turns, exits.)*

THELMA: Sable lives mostly in the past.

VELMA: Mostly way, way past the past.

THELMA: Sable was married to Cabel, you know.

VELMA: Cabel and Gabel were identical twins, like most of the Eary's. Identical in looks, but different as night and day.

THELMA: Only thing they had in common was a big crush on Sable, who spurned Gabel and married Cabel. Gabel took off the day of the wedding and wasn't heard from for years.

VELMA: Suddenly, he showed up at the reunion, when Kay and Ellie were just starting school.

THELMA: The brothers had words and ended up in a fight on

Dead Man's Bluff.

VELMA: Only one brother came back. Cabel.

THELMA: Or was it Gabel?

VELMA: If it was Gabel, he was a changed man.

THELMA: Ate broccoli and stopped rootin' for the Cubs, even when they played the Dodgers.

VELMA: Cabel was never heard from again.

THELMA: Some folks say he's swimmin' with the fishies in Eary Lake.

WINNIE: You mean murdered?

THELMA: Ahhh, that's the mystery.

VELMA: There weren't any eyewitnesses except maybe the Purple Grackle, but enough of that. You two came here for a nice weekend.

THELMA: It's been years since we've had guests here at the Purple Grackle Inn.

VELMA: 'Cept for Uncle Webb, who still visits occasionally.

THELMA: On dark and stormy nights.

WINNIE: So what you're saying is...the Inn is closed.

THELMA: Oh, we're not closed.

WINNIE: It's still a bed and breakfast?

THELMA: 'Cept for a couple of minor details, yes.

JOLENE: Like no beds-

WINNIE: And no breakfast.

KLEW: I'll bring a couple of rollaways. (*Grins.*) That is, if they ain't rolled away.

JOLENE: Never mind. (*She picks up the bags as He exits.*) I just remembered. I have an engagement.

VELMA: Oh my, if you're engaged, you can't keep the young man waiting.

THELMA: You could call him on the phone.

VELMA: Unfortunately, it doesn't work. And you can't leave without supper.

JOLENE: (*Protests.*) It's all right, I-

THELMA: (*Interrupts Jolene.*) We insist. While Ellie fixes supper, you could watch TV.

VELMA: Except it doesn't work either.

THELMA: What fun. (*As she exits left.*) Just like it used to be.

JOLENE: (*Aside, to Winnie.*) Look, I'll get the car.

WINNIE: But Phyl.

JOLENE: I'm out of here...and so are you if you know what's good for you. I'll get the car, stop in front, and you make a run for it. (*She exits right.*)

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THELMA: It's so exciting. People. Activity. *(Bounces out left as Angela quietly enters right. Winnie picks up her suitcase and turns.)*

ANGELA: Going somewhere, Sammy?

WINNIE: Well, I, we, that is...*(She swallows hard.)*

ANGELA: We're delighted you're finally here. I assume you're getting settled in.

WINNIE: I...I- *(They watch as Klew rolls in a rollaway bed. He unfolds it, suddenly he whacks an invisible "bug" on the bed.)*

KLEW: Got him. *(He exits again.)*

ANGELA: And how is the case coming? *(Winnie stares at her.)*
The case? The mystery?

WINNIE: Oh. Well. I'm...up to my elbows.

ANGELA: Yes, I can tell. *(Klew rolls in another cot, as Bogey saunters in right.)*

ANGELA: And hows your friend? What's her name? Phyl?
(Klew unfolds the second bed. This time he watches an invisible insect fly from the padding around the bed. He hold up his hands, leans forward, and slaps his hands together.)

WINNIE: Phyl? Oh, she went to get the car. *(Klew scoops up whatever it was off the bed to the floor, starts left, then comes back, stomps it, and then exits left.)*

ANGELA: Flying the coop, huh?

BOGEY: So what's the big deal?

ANGELA: Not you again.

BOGEY: Take my advice, kid. Make a run for it. While you still can. *(Jolene enters, scared.)*

JOLENE: It's gone.

WINNIE: What's gone?

JOLENE: The car.

BOGEY: Classy joint like this, maybe they got valet parking.

JOLENE: It just disappeared.

ANGELA: What seems to be the problem?

WINNIE: The car disappeared.

JOLENE: That's what I just said. *(She sits on one of the beds.)*
How can we leave if we don't have a car?

ANGELA: We? Are we planning to go somewhere?

BOGEY: You askin' me or her?

ANGELA: I'm not talking to you, buster.

WINNIE: I'm not talking to you either.

JOLENE: You're not talking to me? Why? *(She rises.) (Bogey walks around the room, looking at the pictures.)*

WINNIE: (*Apologetically.*) Not you. Him.

JOLENE: Him who?

WINNIE: Remember me telling you about Angela? And Bogey?
(*Jolene stares at her, wide-eyed.*) They're here?

JOLENE: Now? (*Winnie nods.*) In this room? (*She nods again.*)
Oh sure. (*She sits on one of the beds.*) I assume she's
brushing her halo, or whatever angels do.

BOGEY: Hey, I think I like her. (*He sits down next to Jolene.*)

JOLENE: Or perhaps she's preening her feathers?

WINNIE: I told you she doesn't have wings yet. She's in flight
school.

JOLENE: And old what's his face? What's he doing right now?

WINNIE: He's sitting next to you. (*Jolene pats the bed, actually
patting Bogey's knee. He smiles wickedly.*) And grinning.

JOLENE: Why?

WINNIE: You're patting his knee. (*Jolene gasps, stands up
right. As she does, there's thunder and a flash of light
outside the window. The lights flicker and go out.*)

JOLENE: What happened? (*More thunder and lightning.
Everybody freezes.*)

JOLENE: Where are you?

WINNIE: Over here. Don't panic.

JOLENE: I'm not panicking. Hold out your hand.

WINNIE: I've got you.

JOLENE: I didn't know you're wearing gloves.

WINNIE: I'm not. (*Jolene and Winnie scream. Suddenly, we
hear a bone-chilling laugh. NOTE: If the Grackle's eyes
blink, now is the time.*)

WINNIE: It's the grackle.

GRACKLE'S VOICE: Who knows what evil lurks in the house of
Eary. Who knows what secrets lie in the Lake of Eary.
(*Laughs hideously.*) The grackle knows. (*Laughs again.*)
The answer lies in the spell of the grackle. (*The grackle
laughs again then all is quiet and dark.*)

WINNIE: Angela? Bogey? (*No answer.*) She's gone. (*A faint
light gets brighter and brighter.*)

JOLENE: Look, it's a light. (*Thelma enters left, followed by
Velma, carrying a lantern or flashlight.*)

THELMA: Wouldn't you know it. (*Winnie and Jolene cling
together in the middle of the room. Angela and Bogey are
gone.*)

VELMA: Just when supper's ready, the lights go out.

THELMA: We'll eat by flashlight.

VELMA: What fun.

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THELMA: What's with you two? You look like you've seen a ghost.

WINNIE: The grackle talks.

THELMA: Oh really.

VELMA: What did he say? (*Klew sticks his head in the door, left.*)

KLEW: Soup's on.

THELMA: Goody.

VELMA: Come along.

THELMA: You're right, Velma. (*She herds everybody out left.*)
What fun.

(*Curtain.*)

END OF ACT I

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