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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.

MURDER IN BLACK AND WHITE

An Audience Participation MurderMystery

by

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CONTAINS TWO VERSIONS
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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 BLACK & WHITE Production Packet provide directions for designing your clue hunt. We send you our clue hunt, answer key, and flow chart to assist you. The object of the clue hunt is to find MRS. BLACK'S shopping list, which is included in the script. A master copy of this is provided 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 Production Packet.
4. The Solution Scene. Running time for this segment is about 7 minutes.

THE MINI-VERSION

of MURDER IN BLACK AND WHITE 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. Replace references to "the train" with whatever works for you.

1. Pre-Show. As in the Full Version, the characters circulate and set things up. In addition, we give them a

newspaper fragment that provides background on the plot and characters. It is included in the script and a master copy is included in the production materials.

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 copies of the shopping list and an eyewitness' account of SID'S death. Rather than a solution sheet, the audience casts ballots for who they think "dunit." Samples and/or master copies of all these materials will be sent as part of the BLACK & WHITE 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 BLACK & WHITE, 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.

INTRODUCTION

As the title implies, *color* plays a big part in BLACK & WHITE. For that reason, as well as a plot point, it's very important that you include a costume contest in your event, and that you publicize it beforehand. In other words, all promotion should include "prizes for the best costume using just black and white."

This script gives a complete description of the action, dialogue, characterization, improvisations, etc. that occur at the event. Substitute local references, places for the ones we used. Feel free to ADD anything you want - particularly the improvisational sections. You may even add additional characters as long as they remain peripheral to the plot, in order to "play fair." All of this, however, is contingent on informing us prior to production. When you decide to produce, the Production Manual will lead you step-by-step toward adapting your event - how to make it dinner theatre, how to design (or eliminate) the clue hunt, the timeframe, logistics and much, much more.

There are various ways you can work food into your event, whether it's a full dinner theatre, or a dessert, or snack stations, etc. The Production Manual describes these.

CAST OF CHARACTERS - BOTH VERSIONS

Note: Because so many of the characters are named Ann White (or pretending to be Ann White) the script refers to them by their occupations..

Ann White The Nun. Very friendly and excited to be out of the convent. She's still wearing her "nun duds" because she hasn't had a chance to buy some new clothes yet. She can make up a fictitious biography, keeping in mind that it should eliminate her as the heiress. Can be any age.

Ann White The Waitress. A downtoearth, heartofgold, tellsitlikeitis BROAD with big hair. Clad in black and white. Any age.

Ann White The "Personal Escort". Been downtown on the bus a few times. Worldweary and sophisticated. Dressed provocatively - in black and white. Any age.

Ann White The Kindergarten Teacher. Actually, she's Ann Black, wife of billionaire recluse, Melvin Black. Dressed conservatively, but NOT in black and white. Any other combination of light and dark colors will do. Any age.

Sidney Dupont The Butler for the Blacks and Ann's accomplice. Begins the evening in a tux, when greeting people. In the FULL VERSION he circulates later dressed in coveralls as a "handyman," although it's fairly obvious that he is not comfortable in this role. Any age. In the MINI VERSION he has no lines.

White The Cop. He's a regular guy. Laidback, not inclined to displays of anger or emotion, he is nevertheless the MAN.

Melvin Black The Billionaire. Over sixty. Cute as the proverbial button.

Mary Kate - is actually our stage manager.

Host/Hostess - referred to as Hostess in the script (this is what I usually do).

FULL VERSION PART ONE - PRELUDE TO MURDER

As the audience enters, they will be greeted by SID who has a clipboard. He's looking for the winners of the special prizes. He'll have some cheapo stuff to give out to regular audience members. When the ANN WHITES arrive, however, he'll give them the special bottles of wine. Except for KINDERGARTEN TEACHER, of course. As soon as all the actors are there, SID will put on coveralls over his tux, and an obvious disguise of some sort - a fake mustache, glasses with no glass, and a toupee or baseball cap. Each of the actors, except VICTIM, will put the wine in their purse or pocket. Only VICTIM will ever drink. All of the actors will chat with their teams, giving reasons why they're attending alone, and introducing themselves as simply "Ann." All within the context of the plot.

HOSTESS will be quite nervous and will circulate looking for medical people. Seems the cast is a little under the weather. She doesn't THINK it has anything with what they ate at her house before they came. She'll also be looking for anyone with any acting ability at all and will test to see how quickly they can learn lines. NOTE: we always have clue helpers at our events and we had them do some circulating, pretending to be very, very sick actors.

There will appear to be major problems with the lights, and stage manager MARY KATE will almost constantly be calling for maintenance. She'll complain about this SID guy who supposedly does all the electrical work at the location.

SID is seen checking light bulbs, outlets, etc. and carrying a timer the type used to automatically turn on lights at home.

For pre-show music, whether live or taped, use a medley of tunes which reflect the event the last one being That Old Black Magic. Following this, the HOSTESS comes onstage.

FULL VERSION PART TWO - THE PLAY

HOSTESS: Thank you, . . . Once again, ladies and gentlemen, it is time to match wits with Mysteries by Moushey in order to solve the puzzler that I like to call. . . MURDER IN BLACK AND WHITE. This evening's mystery, which I happen to think is one of our. . . *(the lights will go out)* one of my . . .hey...s'cuse me....what's with the lights....Mary Kate, . . .what is the problem?

MARY KATE: *(From offstage)*. I dunno. *(the lights come back)* Sid, Sid....Yo, Sid!! What's the problem?

SID: Yes, yes. . .all taken care of. . .no problem. . .A little difficulty with the OHM meter and the. . .um, kilowatt thing. . . *(he exits)*.

HOSTESS: The kilowatt THING? Sorry, folks. Anyway, ladies and gentlemen, I was just about to apologize for a short delay. We're not going to be able to start right on the button, because of. . .um . . . circumstances beyond my control. Several of my actors are experiencing some indigestion and really don't feel up to performing. So if you'll just wait patiently for a few minutes until the Pepto kicks in, we'll get started. *(Her cell phone rings. She "listens" and whispers into the phone, as she also speaks to the audience)*. Okay so here's what's happening. Seems that all the actors have indigestion and . . .What?? Ah, gee. . .not on the costumes. . .Well, I don't know what caused it. . .I feel fine. No, I did NOT eat the pea soup at my house. I make it, I don't eat it. Look here, I will have you know that I am famous for my pea soup. When I walk in a room with a steaming pot of pea soup, let me tell you, heads turn, heads turn. *(Pause)* No, I never saw The Exorcist. . *(She hangs up)*. Look, I'm gonna be real up front with you. I've got two dressing rooms full of sick actors. I'm afraid that I will have no choice but to cancel tonight's mystery. And it was a really neat one too.

...It was a courtroom drama, complete with jury and all that. And of course, we spared no expense on the set. *(She gestures to a row of chairs and a podium. As she says this, VICTIM takes a long swig from her bottle, maybe commenting to her neighbor. She puts the lid back on and returns the almost-empty bottle to her purse.)* See, even got a gavel. So, I'm really disappointed that we can't do a mystery tonight. Unless, haha, one of you happens to die. . . *(With that, the NUN stands, staggers dramatically into the aisle, clutching her throat hit by a spotlight, perhaps, and dies, clutching the empty wine bottle).* Is someone???. . . Thank God! I hate giving refunds. *(She rushes offstage, calling for a doctor or a cop or something).* I've always been afraid that something like this would happen! *(During the next few minutes, several things will happen. COP will take charge, "examine the body," and issue orders. HOSTESS will gesture for the body removal team to go into action. The body is removed).*

COP: *(rubbing his hands together).* I'm a cop, I'll take over. Oookay. Let's get going. A MURDER. OOOH. Yes!!

HOSTESS: You're really a cop?

COP: Yeah. Just call me "Sarge." Why do you sound so surprised?

HOSTESS: Oh, I'm not. . .it's just you don't seem to take it all real serious.

COP: What? *(Immediately gets deadserious).* Oh. The date - _____. The time _____. The town _____. My name's White. I'm a cop. Not a good cop, not a bad cop. Just. . .a cop. It's what I do. *(To HOSTESS)* That better? Look, lady. I'm just a regular Joe, not some cop like you've seen in the movies or on tv. I get up in the morning and put my pants on one leg at a time, choke down some cold java and hit the streets. Do I take it serious? *(Thinks).* Naa. . . Life's too short. It ain't my grandma's been hit, y'know. I just don't take the whole thing personal. *(A thought occurs).* Say, you're really into this aren't you?

HOSTESS: Well, yes, I mean. . .of course. . .

COP: Why don't you go and search the body?

HOSTESS: *(Visibly brightening).* Oh, okay. I'll be kinda like a deputy. Sure, sure. . .*(She starts to leave).*

COP: *(Pulling a pair of rubber gloves from his pocket).* Here. You'll need these.

HOSTESS: Wha. . .what for. . .*(realizes)* oh, no. . .*(she exits)*

COP: *(To audience)* I love doing that. Okay. First order of business. The victim's teammates. *(During this section WHITE will question VICTIM's teammates and elicit her story. This story will be designed to virtually eliminate her as either the heiress WHITE or the murderer BLACK. Also, they will only be able to identify her as "Ann," as she will not have given a last name).* Well, I gotta congratulate you all. You're holding up real well under all this stress. In fact, let's give them a hand, ladies and gentlemen. A great team. A great team. *(HOSTESS re-enters).*

HOSTESS: Okay, Sgt. Here's her purse. *(She gives it to him.)* **COP:**

Thanks. I'll take it from here.

HOSTESS: *(Disappointed).* Oh. *(She exits).*

COP: *(Examining each item in turn and places the items on the table).* Lipstick. Pink. Comb. Blue. Change purse with. . .change. Not a lot to go on. Hello. What's this? *(He has the invitation).* Mail. Not just a piece of mail. Looks like a handwritten invitation to the mystery tonight. Done in blue marker on beige *(or any pastel color)*, 100 lb., cardstock paper. *(He holds it up, then puts it back in the envelope).* And of course, the wine. *(Opens it, sniffs).* A 1991 Chablis with a brash bouquet, full body, short legs, and a pouty aftertaste. Not to mention a little extract of strychnine. The wine of choice for anybody not planning on dessert. *(Beginning his summary).* So here's what we've got. A poison victim

named Sister Ann, about *(He gives height and weight and all the salient points from the team's evidence. At the same time he puts all the items back in the purse)*. Based on the evidence I'd say the victim was lured here with the express purpose of murder. But why? Someone wanted the nun dead. . .What did she know?. . .What had she done? Like I said, not a lot to go on. Not that there ever is. But a last name would help. *(Idea occurs. He dumps purse again and pulls out invitation.)* White. Ann White. *(WAITRESS stands and screams)*

COP: Who is that? Who screamed?

WAITRESS: Well, hell, you'd scream too. My name is Ann White. Just like the nun got bumped off. And I got a free ticket for tonight. And the complimentary bottle of wine.

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Standing)*. Me too. I'm also Ann White. I should have known there was a catch. No such thing as a free lunch.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: *(Standing)*. I know. I'm one too. Ann White, I mean. Oh, dear.

COP: Whooooaaa! The plot thickens. Come on up here, ladies. *(All converge on the stage, babbling and adlibbing)*. You're all named Ann White? *(Adlib till they get onstage. They go onstage in this order: WAITRESS, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER, PERSONAL ESCORT)*.

WAITRESS: *(As she gives COP her wine bottle)*. Some guy gave it to me when I got here. Said it was a door prize. I didn't drink it 'ca use I don't drink that stuff. If I'm gonna go on a toot it's gonna be with the real stuff. A beer and a shot. Just think, boilermakers saved my life.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I threw mine away because I don't drink alcohol. And I wasn't planning on starting tonight. I'm not a prude about it, though. So I didn't want to insult the gentleman who gave it to me.

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Putting hers on the table)*. Here. I never touch the domestic brands. I intended to give it to my cat.

WAITRESS: Guess you'da had one dead li'l pussy cat. Hah!

COP: Ladies, ladies, just have a seat please. Anywhere. (*KINDERGARTEN TEACHER and PERSONAL ESCORT sit in the chairs*)
The Misses Ann White. Unless any of you are married? (*All shake heads*). Did any of you know the victim?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I don't think so. . . .the poor thing. I hope it wasn't painful.

WAITRESS: Well, she didn't look none to happy about it there at the end.

PERSONAL ESCORT: There's worse ways to go. At least it was quick.

WAITRESS: You got a point. I had a cousin who was run over by a combine.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: How awful!

WAITRESS: There wasn't a piece we could find that was any bigger'n a postage stamp.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, please. Must we?

WAITRESS: Ya gotta think 'bout dyin' every now and then so you can go for the gusto while you're here, I always say.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Yes, I'm sure you do.

COP: Hey, yoohoo, remember me? The guy in charge? So none of you knew the deceased?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I don't think so. Although her face was so distorted . . .it was horrible. . . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: She did look dreadful.

WAITRESS: I'm tellin ya, compared to my cousin she looked like Michelle Pfeifer (*pronounced P-fifer*).

COP: And do any of you know each other? Had you met before tonight?

WAITRESS: Nope. Unless one of you gals has been to the diner.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Which diner is that?

WAITRESS: The Finer Diner on Rte. 21. Home of The World's Best Corned Beef Hash. Just last month we placed third in the Navarre Jaycees Annual HashOff.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Did I miss that again? Sgt., rest assured I do not know either of these ladies. We travel in different circles.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I'm afraid I don't know you either. . . unless you've had a child in my class. . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: Hardly.

COP: Nothing in common but the name, huh? This is really, really interesting.

PERSONAL ESCORT: If this is your idea of interesting, Sgt., I do believe you should go off in quest of some kind of life. This entire situation is appalling. It is outrageous. It is beyond horrible. "Interesting" is not a word that comes to mind.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I must say I'm forced to agree with my namesake, Sgt. I find this all quite disturbing and upsetting. To think that someone's entire

objective was to kill total strangers. . .well, I just don't think it's very nice, that's all.

WAITRESS: Oh, wow, I get it!

COP: What?

WAITRESS: It's just like that Arnold Schwarzenegger movie. You know the one?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Who??

WAITRESS: C'mon, you know! Arnold Schwarzenegger is this robotmutant thing traveling back in time. . . ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, for pete's sake.. What was that movie?

PERSONAL ESCORT: I'm sure I don't know. I only watch films with subtitles.

WAITRESS: Oooh. Smell me. Anyway, Arnold is on this mission to go back in time to find and kill this woman because in the future she's gonna give birth to a son who's gonna grow up to become this brave rebel guy. Only he don't know anything about her 'cept her name and it's a real common one and there's like five of them. So instead of finding out which one, ol' Arnie just starts blasting away at all of 'em. *(She appeals to the audience for help. They'll give it).*

COP: "The Terminator." Good flick.

WAITRESS: THANK YOU. Damn, I couldn't think of the name of that movie. Woulda kept me up all night.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Don't you hate when you can't remember something? I always tell the boys and girls when they can't recall something to shut their eyes tight, real tight, squinchy tight, and hum. . .*(she demonstrates joined by WAITRESS)* **COP:** So, ladies, unless one of you is a future mother of a rebel leader. . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: I'll check my horoscope.

COP: And unless we are dealing with a homicidal maniac who had a bad experience with someone named "Ann White". . .

WAITRESS: Hey, that coulda happened. . .

COP: . . .Unless either of those is the case, we've got to assume that just one of you was the intended victim. And probably the best way to determine that is to find out a little about all of you.

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Getting up to leave)* Are we under arrest?

COP: Why do you ask? Have you done something?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Of course not. It's just that I don't particularly wish to be interrogated in front of all of them.

WAITRESS: Got somethin' to hide, Toots?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, please. Spare me. Look, Sgt. I think I'll just toddle on home, if it's alright with you.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Oh my dear, aren't you frightened? There's someone out there who wants one or all of us dead.

PERSONAL ESCORT: I've got deadbolts on my doors. I'll be fine.

WAITRESS: Of all the chickensh. . .

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Tsk, tsk, Watch the language if you please, missy.

COP: 'Fraid I'm gonna have to insist, Miss White. See, it isn't alright with me. Not by a long shot.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Sgt. . . .

COP: Don't mistake the casual air, honey. I'm still a cop with a job to do. And if I say you stay, you stay. Capisce? (*PERSONAL ESCORT reluctantly sits*).

WAITRESS: Tell 'er, Sarge. Hot damn, I love a guy who takes charge.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Does that mean we're all going to have to answer questions? I do have to warn you, Sgt. that I am a rather private person.

COP: When it comes to murder, Ma'am, privacy goes out the window.

PERSONAL ESCORT: (*Looking at WAITRESS*) Along with good taste, I'm afraid.

WAITRESS: Bitch.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I think someone needs their little mouth washed out with soap.

WAITRESS: Hey, why don't you just bite. . .

COP: Ladies, ladies. Please. Let's get started. Who wants to go first?

WAITRESS: Hell, I'm game. What d'ya want to know? I'm Annie White, I'm , I was born and raised in Lubbock, Ohio, left school when I was 15 to support my sisters and brothers after our parents died in a freak cropdusting accident. And I work the 5am shift at the Finer Diner where it is well-known that I am one hell of a waitress.

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Laughs shortly)*. I'm sure you are, dear.

WAITRESS: Hey, don't you go dumpin' on waitresses, Miss SnottyNose. Waitressing is a noble profession. *(To KINDERGARTEN TEACHER)* You ever wait table, hon?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Matter of fact, I did. When I was putting myself through kindergarten college, I worked as a hostess at the local Bob Evans. It was very demanding. You had to make sure no one cut into line or lost their wraps, or took seats without permission. . .It was very difficult. I admire you.

WAITRESS: Thanks, babe, you're alright. Well, I don't have to deal with no wraps or nothing, but I'm on my feet for eight hours at a stretch, pouring coffee and slingin' chow to truckers and all. When I get home you can bet I plop down with a Colt 45 and listen to my dogs bark for an hour or two. But even if I had a college education. . . hell, even if I had a high school education, I'd still be a waitress.

PERSONAL ESCORT: If you had your doctorate you'd still be a waitress.

WAITRESS: I know that was a slam, but you know, you're right. 'Cause it's a rewarding job. Like when I see my regulars. . .lggy, and Wally, and Stinky and 'Fredo and them. . .Well, they're as close to me as family. And okay, so maybe waitressin' ain't exactly like findin' a cure for cancer or anything. . .*(Remembers)* But, hey, I had to give Stinky the Heimlich once. Got a piece of kielbasi stuck in the back of his. . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, please, must we hear the graphic details?

WAITRESS: Well, what I mean here is that I ain't ashamed of being a waitress. Like the cop said. . .it's what I do.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: You should be proud of everything you do. And what you are. That's what I tell the kindergarteners.

COP: So, Annie, how'd you wind up here tonight?

WAITRESS: Well, I stopped off at the trailer park office to pick up my mail on Monday and that's when I got the invitation. Sounded like fun. So I came. No one ever accused ol' Annie White of turning down a good time.

PERSONAL ESCORT: You would not believe how much restraint I am using.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: My invitation came last Friday. Oh, dear, and I even told the children about it. See, I wasn't going to attend but the little ones just talked me into it. And, I must admit, I do love curling up with a good mystery book.

WAITRESS: Betcha never figured you'd almost play the stiff, did'ya?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Oh, I didn't think I'd solve the mystery. But I did think maybe I'd have a chance for a costume prize. My, oh my, whatever am I going to tell the boys and girls on Monday?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Why don't you just take a day or two off? By then they'll probably have forgotten. You know kids.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Not my students. They remember everything every little thing I say. Just everything. *(Pause)* I really hate that. And so now I'm going to have to explain that not only did I NOT win the costume prize, but I came very close to. . .to. . .to. . . well, you know..

WAITRESS: Clapping the ol' erasers for the last time.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Well, yes. Graphically expressed, but true nonetheless.

COP: So, Miss White, can I ask you a few questions?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Certainly, young man, you CAN ask me a few questions. Whether or not you MAY is something else entirely.

COP: Huh?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: "May I ask you a question?" **COP:**

Uh, sure. . .shoot.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: No, no, no. I was correcting your grammar, Sgt. The correct form is not CAN I ask you a question, but MAY. . .

COP: MAY I ask you a question, Miss White?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Of course, Sgt. You MAY ask me a question. And I think next time we will remember the difference between "can" and "may," won't we?

COP: So, you're a teacher. . .

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: That's correct, Sgt. Kindergarten. Thirty years.

WAITRESS: How can you stand it? People bring little kids into the diner and I start to itch.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Sure that isn't your perfume?

WAITRESS: I got a couple of friends I'd like you to meet, honey. The Yamaha Sisters. You'd whistle through the space in your teeth by the time they were finished with you.

COP: Put a cork in it, both of you. *(To KINDERGARTEN TEACHER)* And you have no idea who sent you the invitation?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: No, I just thought it was. . .well. . .maybe an old student of mine. People tend to remember their kindergarten teachers.

WAITRESS: I thought it was one of the boys from the diner. Like a thanks-forsavingmycutelittlebutt present from Stinky.

PERSONAL ESCORT: There are any number of people who send me gifts, Sgt. And, quite frankly, I get lots of invitations. So this wasn't that unusual for me.

COP: Did any of you recognize the man who gave you the bottle of wine? *(They all shake their heads "no.")*

PERSONAL ESCORT: I hate to deal in cliches, but he was tall, dark, and handsome. *(Or a description befitting the actor playing SID)* And he was wearing a tux. And it wasn't rented.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: He was very polite. And rather. . .formal. And he had lovely manners. Quite the gentleman. I was rather impressed with him. Oh, my goodness, and to think what he tried to do!

WAITRESS: I don't know what the two of you are goin' on about. I thought he was a real dweeb. Acted like he had a garden rake stuck up his. . . well, you two can have him. I like guys that are guys and ain't afraid to act like guys. Like I used to have a real thing for Charles Bronson. Till he died anyway. But this guy. . .*(snort of derision)* A permanent resident of Dweebville. I'da thought he was gay, only he was checkin' out my hooters all the time I was talkin' to him.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, really! Just because he used deodorant and had a full complement of teeth.

WAITRESS: I didn't say nothing 'bout his teeth. *(To audience)*. Did I say anything about his teeth?

PERSONAL ESCORT: . . .Just because he behaved in a civilized manner does not mean he was. . .

WAITRESS: I'm tellin' you. He was a hooter man. I oughta know.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I hate to appear completely uninformed but. . .this hooter thing. I mean, what's a hooter? *(PERSONAL ESCORT whispers to her)*.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Oh, dear. Well, I'm quite sure the young man did NOT check out my hooters.

COP: That's good to know.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Although. . .well, maybe it was my imagination, but . . .well, I did notice him looking at my legs. . .

WAITRESS: You got yourself a decent set of pins, honey.

COP: If you don't mind, ladies, can I work in a question here? Did any one of you recognize him? *(All shake their heads and adlib answers to the negative.. The lights flicker again. COP yells for HOSTESS who yells for MARY KATE who yells for SID. But the lights come back up).*

COP: Does anyone remember where I was before the trip to Hooterville?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: You were asking me about teaching, Sgt. And I told you how I'd taught kindergarten for thirty years. It's my life. *(To WAITRESS)* Remember how proud you said you were of being a waitress? That's how I feel about teaching. It's what I do. Oh, of course, there are times. Usually by the end of Craft Day, I could cheerfully back over any number of the little tikes. The fumes from the paper mache' makes them hyper, I think. But do you know that some of my former students are elected officials, and doctors, and successful business men and women, and lawyers. . .

COP: So you can't imagine why anyone. . .?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: No, I'm just not the sort of person who makes enemies. Although, I did steal a bulletin board idea from Mavis Putnam and she was none too happy with me. The Birthday Bug. Each little segment of the insect's body was a month and I'd write in the boys' and girls' names on the spots and. . .

WAITRESS: People don't kill over bulletin boards, honey.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: They do at my school. Don't let anyone kid you, Miss White. When it comes to bulletin boards, teachers play hardball.

WAITRESS: That still wouldn't be reason enough to bump you off. And while I ain't exactly a saint (*PERSONAL ESCORT snorts with derision*) I can't think why anyone would want to do me in neither. (*To PERSONAL ESCORT*) Her, I can understand.

COP: Well, Miss, how about it? What do you know about all this?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, really. Sgt., I've already told you the little I know. We all have. There's nothing more to connect any of us to the murder of that poor, dead nun besides having the same name. What is the point of keeping us all here? We can simply tell you how we can be reached. Here's my card.

COP: (*reading*) Butterfly Enterprises, Inc. - for the Busy Executive. Ann White, Professional Personal Escort. So tell us, Ann, in plain English. Just exactly what do you do?

WAITRESS: Ah, c'mon, sarge. You know what she does. Geez, you are really somethin'! I can't believe you were sitting there acting like Kathy Lee and all the time you're just a cheap, twobit. . . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: Never that, sweetie. Many things but not cheap.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I'm lost again, I'm afraid. It's not nice to have conversations when one person is totally left out.

WAITRESS: She says she's a "Personal Escort ." Down at the diner, me'n the boys have a few other names for it.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Does this have anything to do with hooters?

WAITRESS: Yeah!

PERSONAL ESCORT: It has very little to do with that! Or sex. I'm a good listener, that's all. Most of what I do is listening. For every appointment, at least 75% of the time I've got my clothes on and I'm listening to some poor guy's story about his rotten day.

WAITRESS: And the rest of the time you're doing a little horizontal huddling.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Oh my.

PERSONAL ESCORT: But look at it this way. How many men would have left their wives long ago if it weren't for me? I provide an outlet and they can go home happy. I believe I've actually saved a number of marriages.

WAITRESS: HA! You and Dr. Phil.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: How does one embark on a . . .career. . .as an escort.

PERSONAL ESCORT: I didn't take Call Girl 101 in college if that's what you mean. It just happened, that's all.

WAITRESS: Yeah, I know, I've been there. In the back seat of a Chevy. Only I did it for love, not money.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Okay, so I do it for love and money. Outside of that I'm not that different than you. Think about it. I've got my regulars" too. They tell me what they want which, believe it or not is mostly to be with someone and I oblige. And they feel a whole lot better going out the door than they did going in. I care about that. And I care about them. I do. Just as much as you care about Smelly.

WAITRESS: That's Stinky.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Whatever. I care, I really do.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Well, I know I couldn't do it. But *(at a loss for words)* it's what you do.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Yes, that's a very good way of putting it. It's what I do.

WAITRESS: Well, hell, honey, I guess I never thought about it like that, but we are kinda alike in the way we're both dedicated career women. Just trying to get ahead and make it, eh, honey? And I bet you probably make some pretty decent tips, too, doncha?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, yes.

WAITRESS: Well, this just puts a whole new slant on things. Look, lady, I'm sorry, for gettin' in your face back there and all.

PERSONAL ESCORT: And I'm sorry I took such a snooty attitude with you. After all, we Ann Whites have to stick together.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Isn't this nicer than fighting?

COP: Before you join hands and start singing "Kumbaya" may I remind all of you that there is still a murderer at large. And that, evidently, all of you were marked for murder.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Oh, my, my, that does sound scary.

PERSONAL ESCORT: I'd know the guy if I saw him again. But, then again, I do notice men more than the average girl. . .

WAITRESS: You know what I say? Let's get 'im first. I'll bet the bastard's just sittin' out there, laughing his ass off. Let's turn up the house lights and look for

him. C'mon. . .what's his name? Sid. SID, SID. . .Can you turn up all them lights, please. *(Instead of the house lights, there is another brief blackout, followed by the the stage lights returning. Everyone yells for SID and he starts to slink off, only to be caught by MARY KATE and dragged toward the stage.)*

COP: Come on up here, Sid. I'd kinda like to meet you. *(SID comes onstage, attempting to hide his face, etc. COP who reaches up and removes SID'S fake moustache, hat, whatever. He pulls open SID's coveralls to reveal the tux underneath).*

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Mercy! It's him.

PERSONAL ESCORT: That's him. That's the one. . .

WAITRESS: That's the sonuvabitch. Watch him! He could have a gun or something.

COP: Ladies, I'm going to ask you to wait offstage while I question our friend, Sid, here.

WAITRESS: Well, okay, but I want a crack at him later. My knee is just itchin' to come in contact with a certain portion of his. . .

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Please, dear, come along. *(They exit)*

SID: I haven't done anything! And I'm not saying anything until I speak to legal counsel.

COP: Sure, keep it to yourself. Your type always does.

SID: What do you mean "my type"? I'm not a "type".

COP: Sure you are. You're the loser type, Sid.

SID:

Loser? I'm not a loser. . .I'm just. . .

COP: What is a loser, Sid? A chump? The fall guy? This wasn't your idea, was it? But you'll take the rap for it. Whoever put you up to it will someone manage to wiggle out of it. But Sid. . .may I call you Sid?

SID: Actually, I prefer Sidney.

COP: Sidney. A good, strong, honest name. Sidney Carton. A Tale of Two Cities.

SID: I loved that book. And the movie.

COP: "Tis a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done."

SID: "And tis a far, far better rest I go to than I have ever known". . . *(breaks down)* Oh, Sgt. I was led astray by an evil companion.

COP: I thought it might be something like that, Sidney. Why don't you tell me all about it?

SID: Well, first of all, I'm not really an electrician or a handyman or anything like that. I'm just useless at those kind of things. I'm a butler. A very good butler. It's what I do.

COP: Go on.

SID: I work for Melvin Black. Maybe you've heard of him. He's a gahgillionaire and very eccentric. Dresses like a bum half the time, and doesn't like to spend a nickel if he doesn't have to. Doesn't have any friends or family. That is, except for HER.

SID:

COP: Her?

Mrs. Black. Oh, sgt., she made me do it! You don't know how she can get! Oh, I don't want to go to jail!

COP: Get a hold of yourself, man! What did she make you do?

SID: See, he never knew what she was like. She was an actress. She played the loving wife and Mr. Black. . .Mr. Black, he believed her. He didn't know how evil she was. . .And then, last week, Mr. Black fell and hit his head. Oh, they said it was an accident, they did, but I wonder, I really do. And Mr. Black. . .he's been in a coma ever since. Hooked up to life support. At home. And so, Mrs. Black became very worried and wanted to make sure that he was leaving all his money to her. So. . .so she wanted me sneak into Mr.

Black's office and find his will. . .

COP: And did you?

SID: Yes. I don't know why I did it. But you don't know, you just don't know. . .she's got ways, that's all there is to it. WAYS. But, anyway, I found the will. But I only had a chance to glance at it because someone was coming. But I saw enough. . .

COP: And what did it say? Was Mrs. Black going to inherit the entire fortune?

SID: No. Just half. He was leaving half to her and half to . . .How was it worded? Oh, yes. Quote: "To be divided equally between Ann Black and Ann White, in gratitude for everything they have done for me." End of quote. Well, Mrs. Black was livid. She doesn't like sharing, not one little bit. She figured the only way to get all of it was to be the sole surviving heir. And the only way to do that was by. . .er.. eliminating Ann White. And she started plotting how to do exactly that. But there was an immediate snag. "Ann White" is a pretty common name. There was more than one "Ann White" and we I mean she didn't know which one to kill. . .

COP: So, you figured out a way to make sure. Kill ALL the Ann Whites.

SID: Yes. . . But it wasn't me! I swear it! It was all HER idea. SHE planned it all. SHE bought everything. SHE sent the invitations. SHE poisoned the wine. All I did was greet people and find the Ann Whites and. . .

COP: So you're just an innocent victim of her plotting, eh, Sid? You just went along for the ride? What'd ya think, Sid, they'd get sick and move out of town? YOU handed out that wine. YOU knew it was poisoned. YOU gave it to all of them anyway. It was only dumb luck that the nun died. You're as guilty as hell. You're

going to a far, far better rest you know. To the room they call the Electric Lounge.

SID: *(Sobbing)* Stop saying that! I didn't mean it, I didn't mean to kill anyone!!

COP: You're gonna fry for this, Sid. *(Sid groans)*. Unless. . .

SID: Unless what? I'll cooperate. I'll do anything. . .Oh, why did I let her talk me into this?? She made me. You don't know, Sgt!
Controlling people. Plotting. Planning. It's what she does.

COP: If you're willing to testify against Mrs. Black and. . .

SID: Testify? Against her? I don't know, Sgt. . . .

COP: A halfway decent lawyer could probably get you off with a few years. Maybe less. But you've gotta tell the truth.

SID: I don't know.

COP: C'mon, Sid, we'll arrest her. She'll be taken into custody.

SID: She can't hurt me? Well, really, I guess she can't. I mean if she's in jail, what can she do? *(Blackout. The next section takes place in the dark).*

COP: Damn! What's with the lights?

SID: I'm afraid I'm responsible, Sgt. I arranged this. With a timer. You see, Mrs. Black wanted a backup plan. In case we missed one of the Ann Whites. That's why I got the job here. I set the timer so there'd be a blackout and she'd have a chance to shoot any Ann Whites that didn't get poisoned.

COP: How long will the lights be out?

SID: They should come back on in a minute or so. But Sgt., you've got to give

me your word that I won't have to face Mrs. Black until she's in custody. I couldn't stand it.

COP: You know, Sidney, I gotta admit you've made me really curious. I'm looking forward to meeting Mrs. Black.

SID: *(Puzzled)* But..but. . .Sgt. You already have.

COP: I have? When?

SID: Up here. Onstage. She's one of the. . .

COP: *(Excitedly)* She's one of MY Ann Whites? Which one?

SID: She's the. . . *(A shot, fired from off stage, out of view of the audience, is heard. There is screaming and confusion, during which the WAITRESS, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER AND PERSONAL ESCORT return to the room. HOSTESS greets them and is ad-libbing what SID said and there is general confusion and shouting as all call for lights, etc. The lights finally come back up*

and reveal SID, on the ground, blood dripping from his mouth, dragging himself over to COP. Just as he reaches him, COP leans down and we can see that SID is telling him something).

PERSONAL ESCORT: Is he?

WAITRESS: Want me to try the Heimlich? Hey, it worked on Stinky.

COP: It's a little late for that, Annie. He's dead.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: What did he say to you, Sgt? We saw him try to tell you something. . .

COP: He said, "killer blonde," I think. His mouth was filled with blood.

PERSONAL ESCORT: "Killer blonde?"

(NOTE: if any of the actors are blonde, you'll need to insert a line to the effect of not being a natural blonde).

HOSTESS: (Entering from where the shot was fired). Here's the gun, Sarge. *(He takes it and puts it in his pocket).*

WAITRESS: I'll betcha it was that Mary Kate. I don't trust no girl who sits around just pushin' buttons. Ain't feminine somehow.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: *(Confidentially to COP)* That *(HOSTESS's name)* seems to have an abnormal interest in murder. Perhaps you should have a chat with her, Sgt.

COP: Nah. She's always above suspicion in these things.

PERSONAL ESCORT: It seems to me all you would have to do is check the gun for fingerprints.

COP: And that we'll do. Although with premeditated murder you rarely find

any. It only takes a second or two to wipe a gun clean. And *(HOSTESS name)* probably smudged 'em all anyway. It's what she does.

HOSTESS: You want to hear my theory on the case?

COP: Maybe later. For now can you get the body offstage? *(He gives her another pair of rubber gloves).*

HOSTESS: Oh, sure. . .They never call me with clues. But stiff removal. . .hey, that's my specialty. *(She calls for the team who comes and takes SID's body offstage).*

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Well, I'm afraid this is the final straw, Sgt. It's one thing to help the police in a simple straightforward murder, but two. . .well, that, I'm afraid is overkill. . .if you'll pardon the expression. I do not know about you ladies, but it is way past my bedtime and I have a full day of grading papers and lesson plans ahead of me. . .

WAITRESS: Teach has a point. . .I got the breakfast shift tomorrow and 5 o'clock rolls around pretty damn fast. . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: Tomorrow is Saturday, Sgt. Always a busy day for me.

COP: It's amazing how the three of you are in such a rush. Not surprising considering one of you is a murderer. *(Adlib "That's ridiculous! Of all the stupid! Etc.,etc).* Sid claimed he was set up. By Mrs. Ann Black. And just before he was killed he said it was. . . one of you.

PERSONAL ESCORT: He also said one of us is an heiress.

WAITRESS: To Melvin Black whoever the hell he is. Either of you guys know any eccentric bahgillionaires?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Oh, my, I don't think so. Wouldn't that be nice, though. I could certainly use the money. I'd invest in some really good audiovisual equipment.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Yeah, me too.

WAITRESS: Me, I'd take a vacation.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Now that would be nice. I love Williamsburg. I could take my class.

PERSONAL ESCORT: It's the Bahamas for me. Sundrenched beaches.

WAITRESS: I'd spend about a month in Memphis at Graceland.

COP: Well, one of you is going to be spending their next vacation up the river at the Big House. One of you is an heiress, alright. But one of you is also a murderer. And, another thing. . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Interrupting)* Hey, Sgt., I just thought of something. How did you know that Sid the handyman was in disguise?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: That's right! We didn't recognize him.

WAITRESS: Yeah!

COP: Okay, okay. *(He reaches in his pocket and pulls out the invitation and another small bottle of wine).* Y'see, he met me at the door, too. And I'm trained to observe these things. . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: You got an invitation too?

COP: Yeah, and the poisoned wine. . .

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: But that must mean. . .

WAITRESS: You are. . .I mean your name is. . .

COP: Yeah, yeah. My name is Ann. Ann White. Hey, I'm one of nine boys. Mom always wanted a girl. . .

WAITRESS: You musta had to fight your way through school. . .

COP: I didn't mind so much. My brother Nancy had a tough time, though.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: So it's possible that you might be the heiress, er, I mean HEIR to Mr. Black's gahgillions?

WAITRESS: Do you know the dude?

COP: Not as far as I know. But I'm guessing one of us knows him. But by another name. (*HOSTESS enters*).

HOSTESS: Um, Sgt.?

COP: What is it, _____?

HOSTESS: We've just received word that clues to all of this are hidden around the _____. An anonymous caller said that we can figure out who the murderer is and everything if we find Mrs. Black's list.

COP: A list?

HOSTESS: Right. Why don't you take the ladies for some private interrogation while I organize a search parties.

COP: Alright. Go for it. Ladies. . .(*He gestures them offstage*).

FULL VERSION PART THREE - THE CLUE HUNT

The Production Manual gives complete instructions for designing and staging a clue hunt, if one is being used. The physical evidence in this case the shopping list from Ann Black - can simply be distributed. Or it can be torn into pieces which can be put together, jigsaw-puzzle style. The Production Manual describes other methods you might use.

Regardless how the clue hunt is done, at the end, each team will end up with the physical evidence - Mrs. Black's list.

From the desk of ANN BLACK

SHOPPING LIST

Pkg. white invitations.

Black felttip marker

Four small bottles wine.

Box rat poison

Small pistol and ammo

During the clue hunt, all the suspects and Sgt. White are available for questioning. At every opportunity they will show their invitations, which, of course, are written in blue on a pastel-colored invitation card.

THE VERY BRIEF SOLUTION SCENE IS NOT INCLUDED IN REVIEW SCRIPTS. FOR "MURDER IN BLACK AND WHITE" THE SOLUTION SCENE IS THE SAME FOR THE FULL AND MINI VERSIONS.

IF YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE THE ENTIRE ACTING COPY BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ABOUT PRODUCING, PLEASE CONTACT US:

330-678-3893

mysteriesbymoushey@gmail.com

KEEP READING TO REVIEW THE MINI-VERSION, FOLLOWED BY THE APPENDIX.

MURDER IN BLACK AND WHITE

MINI-MYSTERY VERSION

An AudienceParticipation MurderMystery

by

Eileen Moushey

NOTE: Even if your group chooses to perform the Mini-Version of BLACK & WHITE the Full Version is full of fun lines and "bits" you can use. Also, you will see references to "the train" in the script. Simply change these to reflect your venue. Substitute the name of another room.

MINI-VERSION

PART ONE - PRELUDE TO MURDER

See the FULL VERSION PART ONE - PRELUDE TO MURDER for the description of circulating and interaction with the audience. Also, for the Mini Version, there is no business with the lights as Sid never appears as the handyman.

In addition to that, we used a newspaper page to give background on the story and provide context. See center of script. A "clean copy", suitable for photocopying is sent with production materials. Replace references to the train with whatever works for your event.

MINI-VERSION

PART TWO - THE PLAY

HOSTESS: Thank you, . Once again, ladies and gentlemen, it is time to match wits with Mysteries by Moushey in order to solve

the puzzler that I like to call. . . MURDER IN BLACK AND WHITE. Anyway, ladies and gentlemen, I was just about to apologize for a short delay. We're not going to be able to start right on the button, because of. . .um . . . Look, I'm gonna be real up front with you. I've got two dressing rooms full of sick actors. I'm afraid that I will have no choice but to cancel tonight's mystery. And it was a really neat one too. . .It was a courtroom drama, complete with jury and all that. And of course, we spared no expense on the set. *(She gestures to a row of chairs and a podium. As she says this, VICTIM takes a long swig from her bottle, maybe commenting to her neighbor).* See, even got a gavel. So, I'm really disappointed that we can't do a mystery tonight. Unless, haha, one of you happens to die. . . *(With that, the NUN stands, staggers dramatically into the aisle, clutching her throat hit by a spotlight, perhaps, and dies, clutching the empty wine bottle).* Is someone???. . . Thank God! I hate giving refunds. *(She rushes offstage, calling for a doctor or a cop or something).* I've always been afraid that something like this would happen! *(During the next few minutes, several things will happen. COP will take charge, "examine the body," and issue orders. Ad-libbing between the COP and the HOSTESS will ensue as the body is removed..*

COP: *(rubbing his hands together).* Oookay. Let's get going. A MURDER. OOOH. Yes!!

HOSTESS: You're really a cop?

COP: Yeah. Why do you sound so surprised? Hey, if you want to help, why don't you get the victim's purse for me? *(HOSTESS goes into audience and does so.)*

The date - _____. The time _____. The town _____. I'm a cop. Not a good cop, not a bad cop. Just. . .a cop. It's what I do. *(To HOSTESS)* That better? Look, lady. I'm just a regular Joe, not some cop like you've seen in the movies or on tv. I get up in the morning and put my pants on one leg at a time, choke down some cold java and hit the streets. Do I take it serious? *(Thinks).* Naa. . . Life's too short. It ain't my grandma's been hit, y'know. I just don't take the whole thing personal.

HOSTESS: Okay, Sgt. Here's her purse. *(She gives it to him.)* **COP:**

Thanks. I'll take it from here.

COP: *(Examining each item in turn and places the items on the table).* Lipstick. Pink. Comb. Blue. Change purse with. . .change. Not a lot to go on. Hello. What's this? *(He has the invitation).* Mail. Not just a piece of mail. Looks like a handwritten invitation to the mystery tonight. Done in blue marker on beige *(or pastel)* 100 lb., cardstock paper. *(He holds it up, then puts it back in the envelope).* And of course, the wine. *(Opens it, sniffs).* A 1991 Chablis with a brash bouquet, full body, short legs, and a pouty aftertaste. Not to mention a little extract of strychnine. The wine of choice for anybody not planning on dessert. *(Beginning his summary).* So here's what we've got. A poison victim named Ann, about *(He gives height and weight of NUN. At the same time he puts all the items back in the purse).* Based on the evidence I'd say the victim was lured here with the express purpose of murder. But why? Someone wanted

Ann dead. . .What did she know?. . .What had she done? Like I said, not a lot to go on. Not that there ever is. But a last name would help. (*Idea occurs. He dumps purse again and pulls out invitation*). White. Ann White. (*WAITRESS stands and screams*) **COP:** Who is that? Who screamed?

WAITRESS: Well, hell, you'd scream too. My name is Ann White. Just like the nun that got bumped off. And I got a free ticket for tonight. And the complimentary bottle of wine.

PERSONAL ESCORT: (*Standing*). Me too. I'm also Ann White. I should have known there was a catch. No such thing as a free lunch.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: (*Standing*). I know. I'm one too. Ann White, I mean. Oh, dear.

COP: Whoooooaa! The plot thickens. Come on up here, ladies. (*All converge*

on the stage, babbling and adlibbing). You're all named Ann White? (*Adlib till they get onstage. They go onstage in this order: WAITRESS, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER, PERSONAL ESCORT*).

WAITRESS: (*As she gives COP her wine bottle*). Some guy gave it to me when I got here. Said it was a door prize. I didn't drink it 'cause I don't drink that stuff. If I'm gonna go on a toot it's gonna be with the real stuff. A beer and a shot. Just think, boilermakers saved my life.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I threw mine away because I don't drink alcohol. And I wasn't planning on starting tonight. I'm not a prude about it, though. So I didn't want to insult the gentleman who gave it to me.

PERSONAL ESCORT: (*Putting hers on the table*). Here. I never touch the domestic brands. I intended to give it to my cat.

COP: Ladies, ladies, just have a seat please. Anywhere. (*KINDERGARTEN TEACHER and PERSONAL ESCORT sit in the chairs*) The Misses Ann White. Unless any of you are married? (*All shake heads*). Did any of you know the victim?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I don't think so. . .the poor thing. I hope it wasn't painful.

WAITRESS: Well, she didn't look none to happy about it there at the end.

PERSONAL ESCORT: There's worse ways to go. At least it was quick.

COP: So none of you knew the deceased?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I don't think so. Although her face was so distorted . . .it was horrible. . . .

WAITRESS: Compared to my cousin who got run over by a combine, she looked

like Michelle Pfeifer (*pronounced P-fifer*).

COP: And do any of you know each other? Had you met before tonight?

WAITRESS: Nope. Unless one of you gals has been to the Finer Diner on Rte. 21.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Sgt. White, rest assured I do not know either of these ladies. We travel in different circles.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I'm afraid I don't know you either. . . unless you've had a child in my class. . .

PERSONAL ESCORT: Hardly.

COP: Nothing in common but the name, huh? This is really, really interesting.

WAITRESS: Oh, wow, I get it. It's just like that Arnold Schwarzenegger movie. The Terminator. You know the one - Arnie's this robot guy from the future. And his mission is to to bump off this woman, only she has a real common name. So he starts blasting away at all the broads with that name. Just like that.

COP: Righttttt. Could be, though I don't think Arnie's involved. But I think maybe we've got to assume that just one of you was the intended victim.

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Getting up to leave)* Are we under arrest? Because I don't particularly wish to be interrogated in front of all of them.

WAITRESS: Got somethin' to hide, Toots?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, please. Spare me. Look, Sgt. I think I'll just toddle on home, if it's alright with you.

COP: 'Fraid I'm gonna have to insist, Miss White. See, it isn't alright with me. Not by a long shot. Don't mistake the casual air, honey. I'm still a cop with a

job to do. And if I say you stay, you stay. Capiisce? *(PERSONAL ESCORT reluctantly sits).*

WAITRESS: Tell 'er, Sarge. Hot damn, I love a guy who takes charge.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Does that mean we're going to have to answer questions? I do have to warn you, Sgt. that I am a rather private person.

COP: When it comes to murder, Ma'am, privacy goes out the window.

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Looking at WAITRESS)* Along with good taste, I'm afraid.

WAITRESS: Bitch.

COP: Ladies, ladies. Please. Tell us about yourselves. Who wants to go first?

WAITRESS: Hell, I'm game. What d'ya want to know? I'm Annie White, I'm , I was born and raised in Lubbock, Ohio, left school when I was 15 to support my sisters and brothers after our parents died in a freak cropdusting accident. And I work the 5am shift at the Finer Diner where it is generally acknowledged that I am one hell of a waitress.

PERSONAL ESCORT: *(Laughs shortly).* I'm sure you are, dear.

WAITRESS: Hey, don't you go dumpin' on waitresses, Miss SnottyNose. Waitressing is a noble profession. I'm on my feet for eight hours at a stretch, pouring coffee and slingin' chow to truckers and all. When I get home you can bet I plop down with a Colt 45 and listen to my dogs bark for an hour or two. But even if I had a college education. . . hell, even if I had a high school education, I'd still be a waitress.

PERSONAL ESCORT: If you had your doctorate you'd still be a waitress.

WAITRESS: I know that was a slam, but you know, you're right. 'Cause it's a

rewarding job. Like when I see my regulars. . . Iggy, and Wally, and Stinky and 'Fredo and them. . . Well, they're as close to me as family. And okay, so maybe waitressin' ain't exactly like findin' a cure for cancer or anything. . . *(Remembers)* But, hey, I had to give Stinky the Heimlich once. Got a piece of kielbasi stuck in the back of his. . . Well, what I mean here is that I ain't ashamed of being a waitress. Like the cop said. . . it's what I do.

COP: So, Annie, how'd you wind up here tonight?

WAITRESS: Well, I stopped off at the trailer park office to pick up my mail on Monday and that's when I got the invitation. Sounded like fun. So I came. No one ever accused ol' Annie White of turning down a good time.

PERSONAL ESCORT: You would not believe how much restraint I am using.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: My invitation came last Friday. Oh, dear, and I even told the children about it. See, I wasn't going to attend but the little ones just talked me into it. And, I must admit, I do love curling up with a good mystery book. Oh, I didn't think I'd solve the mystery. But I did think maybe I'd have a chance for a costume prize. My, oh my, whatever am I going to tell the children on Monday?

COP: So, Miss White, you're a teacher?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: That's correct, Sgt. Kindergarten. Thirty years.

WAITRESS: How can you stand it? People bring little kids into the diner and I start to itch.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Sure that isn't your perfume?

WAITRESS: I got a couple of friends I'd like you to meet, honey. The Yamaha Sisters. You'd whistle through the space in your teeth by the time they were finished with you.

COP: Put a cork in it, both of you. *(To KINDERGARTEN TEACHER)* And you have no idea who sent you the invitation?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: No, I just thought it was. . .well. . .maybe an old student of mine. People tend to remember their kindergarten teachers.

WAITRESS: I thought it was one of the boys from the diner. Like a thanks-forsavingmycutelittlebutt present from Stinky.

COP: Did any of you recognize the man who gave you the bottle of wine? *(They all shake their heads "no.")*

PERSONAL ESCORT: I hate to deal in cliches, but he was tall, dark, and handsome. *(Or a description befitting the actor playing SID)*

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: He was very polite and he had lovely manners. Oh, my goodness, and to think what he tried to do!

WAITRESS: I don't know what the two of you are goin' on about. I thought he was a real dweeb. Acted like he had a garden rake stuck up his. . . I'da thought he was gay, only he was checkin' out my hooters all the time I was talkin' to him.

PERSONAL ESCORT: . . .Just because he behaved in a civilized manner does not mean he was. . .

WAITRESS: I'm tellin' you. He was a hooter man. I oughta know.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I hate to appear completely uninformed but. . .this hooter thing. I mean, what's a hooter? *(PERSONAL ESCORT whispers to her)*. Oh, dear. Anyway, You were asking me about teaching, Sgt. And I told you how I'd taught kindergarten for thirty years. It's my life. *(To WAITRESS)* Remember how proud you said you were of being a waitress? That's how I feel about teaching. It's what I do. Oh, of course, there are times. Usually by the end of Craft Day, I could cheerfully back over any number of the little tikes. The

fumes from the paper mache' makes them hyper, I think. But do you know that some of my former students are elected officials, and doctors, and successful business men and women, and lawyers. . .

COP: So you can't imagine why anyone. . .?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: No, I'm just not the sort of person who makes enemies.

WAITRESS: Hey, I ain't exactly a saint (*PERSONAL ESCORT snorts with derision*) I can't think why anyone would want to do me in neither. (*To PERSONAL ESCORT*) Her, I can understand.

COP: Well, Miss, how about it? What do you know about all this?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, really. Sgt., I've already told you the little I know. We all have. There's nothing more to connect any of us to the murder of that poor, dead nun besides having the same name. What is the point of keeping us all here? We can simply tell you how we can be reached. Here's my card.

COP: (*reading*) Butterfly Enterprises, Inc. - for the Busy Executive. Ann White, Professional Personal Escort. So tell us, Ann, in plain English. Just exactly what do you do?

WAITRESS: Ah, c'mon, sarge. You know what she does. Geez, you are really somethin'! I can't believe you were sitting there acting like Kathy Lee and all the time you're just a cheap, twobit.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Never that, sweetie. Many things but not cheap.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: I'm lost again, I'm afraid. It's not nice to have conversations when one person is totally left out.

WAITRESS: She says she's a "Personal Escort ." Down at the diner, me'n the boys have a few other names for it.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Does this have anything to do with hooters?

WAITRESS: Yeah!

PERSONAL ESCORT: It has very little to do with that! Or sex. I'm a good listener, that's all. Most of what I do is listening. For every appointment, at least 75% of the time I've got my clothes on and I'm listening to some poor guy's story about his rotten day.

WAITRESS: And the rest of the time you're doing a little horizontal huddling.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Oh my.

PERSONAL ESCORT: I'm not that different than you. I've got my "regulars" too. And, believe it or not, I care about them. I do. Just as much as you care about Smelly.

WAITRESS: That's Stinky.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Whatever. I care, I really do.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Well, I know I couldn't do it. But (*at a loss for words*) it's what you do.

PERSONAL ESCORT: Yes, that's a very good way of putting it. It's what I do.

WAITRESS: Well, hell, honey, I guess I never thought about it like that, but we are kinda alike in the way we're both dedicated career women. Just trying to get ahead and make it, eh, honey? And I bet you probably make some pretty decent tips, too, doncha?

PERSONAL ESCORT: Oh, yes.

WAITRESS: Well, this just puts a whole new slant on things. Look, lady, I'm sorry, if I was gettin' on your case back there and all.

PERSONAL ESCORT: And I'm sorry I took such a snooty attitude with you. After all, we Ann Whites have to stick together.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Isn't this nicer than fighting?

COP: Okay, ladies, I think it's time we take a little break. I have some questions for you and then I'm sure this group will have some as well. *(They start to exit. HOSTESS stops COP.)*

HOSTESS: Um, before you go, Sgt. . . . I kinda wanted to ask you something. Why are YOU here tonight? I'd have thought you'd avoid these murder mystery things.

COP: Okay, okay. *(He reaches in his pocket and pulls out the invitation and another small bottle of wine).* Y'see, Sid met me at the door, too.

HOSTESS: You got an invitation and the poisoned wine? And. . . but that must mean. . . You are. . . I mean your name is. . .

COP: Yeah, yeah. My name is Ann. Ann White. Hey, I'm one of nine boys. And Mom always wanted a girl. . .

HOSTESS: You musta had to fight your way through school. . .

COP: I didn't mind so much. My brother Nancy had a tough time, though. *(He starts to exit as HOSTESS' cell phone rings.)*

HOSTESS: *(Answers it.)* Yeah. What?? Hey, Sgt. It's some guy - says he's the one who passed out the poisoned wine.

COP: Wha. . . Hang on a minute. Mary Kate, is there any way to tape this call?

MARY KATE: You're kidding, right?

HOSTESS: Hey, I can take shorthand! Really.

COP: Okay, okay, I want you to get all this, okay? *(They then share the phone as HOSTESS scribbles furiously in her notebook. HOSTESS can have the actual transcript in her notebook so COP just has to read it.)* Yeah, I'm here. Go ahead. *(Pause)* The bahg illionaire? *(To audience)* He says he's a butler. Works for Mel Black, the bahgillionaire. *(Pause)* Mrs. Black? You think she caused his accident? Why? *(Pause)* Out of gratitude, eh? *(To audience)* Mel Black was leaving half his money to Mrs. Black and the other half to Ann White. *(Pause)*

That would be a problem. *(Pause)* And you passed it out tonight. *(Pause)* Yep, it's what she does. You know, I'm really looking forward to a meeting Mrs. Black. *(Pause)* WHAT? I've already met. . .? Wait a minute, Sid. Where are you now?

(Pause) The train! Look, you have to. . . Get out of there now, Sid, NOW! I just sent them. . . *(Pause, then sound of shot.)* Sid, Sid!

(To HOSTESS) I think I heard a shot. Sid, are you there? (To HOSTESS) Did you get that?

HOSTESS: I'm not sure.

COP: Okay, I have to find the ladies. Pronto. _____, why don't you tell these folks what to expect. Oh, and get a transcript of that call typed up. (*He exits.*)

HOSTESS: Welcome to MURDER IN BLACK & WHITE. Tonight you will have the opportunity to find out who is behind the crimes you have witnessed. In a few moments we will be boarding the train. At your seats you will find a clipboard. Attached to the clipboard are several things:

- the full transcript of the phone call between Sid the Black's Butler and Sgt. Ann White. (A printed copy is sent with Production Materials.)

- any other physical evidence that Sgt. White may find.

- a page to use to take notes while interrogating the suspects. Keep in mind, during this interrogation, the characters will do their best not to lie. But, of course, one or more have 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. On this you need to write your name and then check off the Ann White you think is guilty. Remember, you write YOUR name on the ballot. After the train trip is over, and you disembark, you will cast those ballots. Cast your ballot for the suspect you think is guilty. Prize winners will be drawn from the correct solutions. That's about it - Happy Detecting and ALL ABOARD!

MINI-VERSION

PART THREE - CIRCULATING/IMPROV

There is no clue hunt. If you wish, you may have the audience members visit the scene of the crime, or file past SID'S "corpse." They will also be given clipboards with:

1. The telephone call transcript
2. A report (supposedly done by COP) with the body outline of "Sid," and the spots where the gun and the shopping list were found. If you include a visit to the scene of the crime this is not absolutely necessary. Either way, do include a printed copy of the shopping list in what you give to the audience:

From the desk of ANN BLACK - Shopping List

- Pkg. white invitations.
- Black felttip marker - Four small bottles wine. - Box rat poison
- Small pistol and bullets

He also notes that it's important to find the real intended victim. Who is the real ANN WHITE, heir to half of MEL BLACK'S fortune?

3. A sheet of paper with characters' names/occupations with room to take notes.
4. Ballots. (The production materials include various ways to do the voting as well as ballots to photocopy.)

Copies of all printed materials will be sent with the BLACK & WHITE Production Package.

Talking Points While Circulating

NOTE: It is very important that ALL the suspects carry and show their invitations and the bottles of wine (though, obviously KINDERGARTEN TEACHER will not have the wine.) Also, if any of your actors are blonde, they should say that they change their hair color frequently.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER - shows the invitation and says she threw the bottle of wine away because she doesn't drink alcohol. Will mention her hope to win the costume contest. If it's pointed out that she's not wearing black and white, she'll change the subject to the kids in her class and her famous bulletin boards. In talking about bulletin boards, she'll talk about "her" upcoming appearance

in the magazine. She thinks maybe she COULD be the real intended victim and muses what she would do with her inheritance. But she doesn't know a MEL BLACK.

PERSONAL ESCORT - will say that she thinks the COP is out to pin it on her because of her "profession". She also defends what she does. She thought Sid was a real gentlemen. She thinks that SHE'S probably the one named in MEL BLACK'S will as many of her clients don't give their real names.

WAITRESS - elaborates on her Heimlich story, and talks about her regulars. She tells about the Finer Diner and winning the annual Hash-Off. She sure is hoping that she's the ANN WHITE in MEL BLACK'S will, because she could use some clothes that aren't part of the Jaclyn Smith collection.

HOSTESS -

MINI-VERSION PART FOUR - THE SOLUTION SCENE

See Full Version. Solution scene is the same for both versions.

APPENDIX - PROPS & TECH REQUIREMENTS

Four small airplane-size bottles of wine

Five invitations written in blue on pink card stock.

Chairs

Small table

Gavel

A timer device (Full Version)

2 pairs rubber gloves (Full Version)

Purse (VICTIM) with: lipstick, comb, change purse/change. Wine & invitation list

2 stage guns or starter pistols

Blood capsule (SID)

Something for body removal - We've used a stretcher, a hotel luggage rolling rack, a wheelchair, a furniture dollie, and we've simply dragged offstage. If you can get local paramedics to come in with a real gurney, etc., it's a nice realistic touch. Different colored file folders

Business card for Personal Escort

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Clue Packets with Answer key and flow chart

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

Transcript of entire phone call (both parties).

Sample 1/2 page promotional flyer

Page for note-taking and Mrs. Black's list (if not using Clue Hunt)

Printed copy of ballots to reproduce (alternative to Full Solution page)

Production Manual

OPTIONAL

Any of the items listed above can be sent in printed format for a small fee. Production Manual is the same for all shows.