

Shear Madness

by Paul Pörtner

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TIME: TODAY AT 3:50 PM

PLACE: THE SHEAR MADNESS HAIR STYLING SALON

CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

BARBARA DEMARCO - Hairstylist

MIKEY THOMAS – A customer (an undercover Police Detective)

TONY WHITCOMB - Hairstylist, Owner of the Shear Madness salon

EDDIE LAWRENCE - Antique Dealer

NICK O'BRIEN - A customer (an undercover Police Lieutenant)

MRS. SHUBERT - High Society Hair Client

Note: In the program character listing, the roles of Mikey Thomas and Nick O'Brien should not be identified as Police Officers.

Character Breakdown

BARBARA DEMARCO is the hairstylist who keeps Shear Madness running. She answers the phone, takes appointments, restocks shelves, cleans mirrors, sweeps floors, etc. She is a wise-cracking, gum-snapping, nail polishing hairdresser cum manicurist. Her electric blue outfit is flashy, her bra is push-up, her heels are high and she looks very dishy and well put together, though on the cheap side. She moves sassily and well. She is likeable, ambitious and street-wise and she can spot a bad dye job at 20 paces.

BARBARA is a friend of Isabel Czerny, the concert pianist who lives above the Shear Madness salon. She's been having an affair with EDDIE LAWRENCE. She works well with TONY and looks forward to working on her favorite customer, MRS. SHUBERT. But today something is on BARBARA'S mind and she seems in a hurry to get somewhere else. (Age range 30-45.)

MIKEY THOMAS is a preppy-looking, eager-beaver who's a capable and earnest undercover cop. He was upstairs talking to Isabel Czerny moments before she was murdered. He and NICK, his partner and superior, are staking out the building awaiting the arrival of EDDIE LAWRENCE when he realizes that he has enough time (if he hurries) to pop into the Shear Madness salon and get a quick trim on city dollars. He is not expecting to have his hair washed, conditioned, cut, moussed and styled by TONY.

MIKEY is bright, quick, affable, somewhat deferential, and very helpful at the same time being innocent, naive, and impressionable. He is a believable, ambitious young cop who supplies much of the credibility to the investigation.

In the warm-up, MIKEY must always be comedically amazed and bewildered by TONY. He is never hurt, injured or maimed by TONY. He never treats TONY negatively or with distaste.

The actor who plays MIKEY should bear in mind that when he first enters the shop he is not "staking out the salon", he's just there to get a haircut. MIKEY has never been in the salon before today. MIKEY must get his hair washed and blown dry at every performance. His hair may need to be cut to an appropriate style and length by a professional. Age range 23-30.

TONY WHITCOMB is the flamboyant, irrepressible proprietor of the Shear Madness salon. He is interested in everything and everyone. Today he is atwitter because he is cooking dinner for the board members of his little theatre group in order to con them into producing the musical he wants to do.

TONY is fun, devilish, interesting, passionate and a real character. He must not be jaded in any way. His "shoot from the hip" comedy must endear him to all. He must be able to do the physical comedy quickly, effortlessly and with great flair and must love "playing for an audience," creating merriment and mirth.

TONY thrills to the twists of his favorite TV shows, swaps recipes, shares gossip and dramatizes the happenings of his life. Shear Madness is his "salon" in the truest sense and TONY is the ringmaster.

TONY is not a terrible hair-stylist, it's just that everything and everyone else (especially his favorite customer, MRS. SHUBERT) distracts him from what he should be doing. TONY lives on the third floor of the building with his two cats. He rents the

apartment and salon space from Isabel Czerny, the victim of the murder. Age range 25-40.

EDDIE LAWRENCE is a well-dressed, nice-looking confidence man who covers a dangerous interior with a smooth, suave, and occasionally charming exterior. His appearance should make us believe that he is able to gain entry into Isabel Czerny's rarified world.

EDDIE has a relationship with BARBARA DEMARCO who may or may not be helping EDDIE to blackmail Isabel Czerny. He and BARBARA seem to have an intimate knowledge of each other. The actor playing EDDIE must walk a fine line between possessing definite danger and being able to execute the quick-thinking comedy of the piece.

We must admire EDDIE'S ability to scramble out of the position of "prime suspect". EDDIE has never been in the Shear Madness salon before today, although he has visited Isabel in her apartment upstairs on several occasions. Age range 30-55.

NICK O'BRIEN is a likeable, approachable, forceful cop. He is the heartbeat of SHEAR MADNESS and has to make many crucial decisions throughout the show. It is the most difficult and important character in the play. The role requires a bright, quick thinking, personable character actor who can also be an excellent straight man. It requires an actor who is not intimidated by a boisterous audience that is trying to help him solve the murder of Isabel Czerny. It requires a good looking, masculine actor with a solid voice and solid acting skills who can learn the dynamics that will keep the investigation on track.

NICK must be loaded with personality and appeal and have the confidence to "play dumb". He is a hardworking "gumshoe" detective who finds himself unexpectedly running the murder investigation. He is on the premises when the person he was supposed to be protecting from blackmail gets murdered!! He has an emotional, intellectual and urgent stake in solving this crime and his comedic frustration is frequently apparent. Age range: 30-45.

MRS. SHUBERT is an old-money socialite of impeccable breeding and manner. She wears classic clothes, classic jewelry and the famous Shubert Diamond. Her maiden name is socially prominent in the city where *SHEAR MADNESS* is set. She knows the names and places that an old-guard aristocrat would haunt. She moves with grace and style and speaks with cultured tones. She can really turn on the charm when needed. She arrives late for her appointment at the Shear Madness salon and is in a rush to catch her plane to Bermuda.

She comes to the salon because BARBARA does her hair perfectly. She also comes to the salon to be regaled by TONY and his flights of fantasy. Once the murder occurs, she is outraged that she is being kept under "house arrest". MRS. SHUBERT is NOT having an affair with anyone. She does have a new, young, attractive butler with whom she may be slightly flirtatious, but she is a monogamous old-line matron and she's shocked when anyone thinks otherwise. At her finest she's a real class act. The actress playing MRS. SHUBERT must have her hair cut to a specified classic length so that it is easy to wash and set onstage. Age range 45-75.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

Warm Up

Note: Securing the rights to the use of any and all music referenced below is the responsibility of the producer.

The Warm Up occurs approximately 13 minutes before the first line of dialogue is spoken. If show time is advertised as 8:00, then “Help Me Rhonda” should begin at 7:52 so that the first audible line of dialogue would be at 8:05. The Warm Up takes place while the audience is still entering the theatre and being seated. It introduces the audience to the atmosphere and characters of the play. Although the characters appear to talk naturally to each other in the Warm Up, none of the dialogue should be heard by the audience except for the yelps and screams of the comic moments.

A note about lighting: When the audience first enters the theater, the lighting on stage should be at about 70% of full performance level. 20 seconds before **BARBARA** enters, begin to fade up to 85%. Then at the end of the Warm Up, when **TONY** snaps the shampoo cape 3 times, the lights should go up full. During the Break, the lights can be reduced to 85% and returned to 100% when **NICK** comes back into the shop.

1. On music cue (“*Rhonda you look so fine...*”) **BARBARA** enters from supply closet with 8 towels. She puts them on the shelf next to sink. She crosses to her tray quickly checking the hairnet she will use on Mrs. Shubert, who she is expecting. **BARBARA** checks herself out in mirror over her station. **BARBARA** exits into closet. She must be off stage at the moment **MIKEY** enters.
2. On music cue (1st “*Help me Rhonda...*”) **MIKEY** enters from front door carrying schoolbooks and wearing a blazer. He has never been in the shop before. He looks around the empty shop for someone to cut his hair. He heads towards the swinging doors looking for the proprietor.
3. On music cue (4th “*Help me Rhonda...*”) **BARBARA** enters from closet with Windex and a roll of paper towels. She and **MIKEY** turn simultaneously and are startled to discover each other. She shuts closet door and puts Windex and towels on her station. **MIKEY** indicates he wants a quick trim and is pressed for time. **BARBARA** indicates she can’t cut **MIKEY**’s hair. She checks appointment book to see if **TONY** is available. He is. **BARBARA** tells **MIKEY** to put his books down on a seat in the waiting area DL, to hang up his blazer UR, and take a seat in the barber chair. **BARBARA** exits side door to go tell **TONY** he has a customer. (*She must be off by the beginning of the lyric “She was gonna be my wife...” so this all happens quickly.*)
4. **MIKEY** puts his books down on DL seat and crosses to hang up blazer, then goes to barber chair where he picks up preset copy of today’s paper, sits and begins to read.

5. On music cue (*"Rhonda you caught my eye..."*) **BARBARA** reenters from side door, crosses to **MIKEY** and tells him **TONY** will be right down. **BARBARA** crosses to her station and starts cleaning mirror.
6. On music cue (*"...get her outta my heart.----- Help me Rhonda."*) **TONY** enters, rushing through the swinging doors with an oven mitt and spoon in one hand and carrying a timer. **TONY** discovers **MIKEY** and crosses to welcome him, shaking **MIKEY'S** hand on the way to the desk. The mitt comes off in **MIKEY'S** hand and **TONY** recovers it from **MIKEY**, placing mitt on desk. **TONY** checks appointment book. **MIKEY** indicates he's pressed for time. **TONY** placates **MIKEY** and crosses to **BARBARA** with timer, asks her to watch it and tell him when it goes off because it involves what is cooking upstairs.
7. **TONY** sets timer on his station, gets a towel from his station, puts towel around **MIKEY'S** neck. **MIKEY** indicates he's short on time by raising his watch on his left wrist towards **TONY**. **TONY** uses **MIKEY'S** raised hand to hold the towel in place, surprising **MIKEY**. **TONY** gets shampoo cape (preset on seat at desk) and puts it on **MIKEY**. **TONY** turns the barber chair so **MIKEY** is facing mirror and discusses how he wants his hair cut. (If **MIKEY** is wearing glasses, **TONY** removes them and places them on his station.) Meanwhile **BARBARA** comes down to desk to throw away towels and waits by coffee station for **TONY** to take **MIKEY** to sink so she can clean **TONY'S** mirror.
8. **TONY** crosses to the sink and indicates that **MIKEY** should follow. **MIKEY** does so, folding the newspaper and leaving it on the barber chair. **BARBARA** crosses to **TONY'S** station to clean his mirror. **TONY** turns on water and holds nozzle high creating a waterfall effect. Momentarily uncertain of what to do, **MIKEY** kneels on shampoo chair to stick his head under the water. **TONY**, surprised and amused, tells **MIKEY** to turn around, sit and lean back. **MIKEY** does so and is startled by the chair falling back.
9. PHONE RINGS.
10. **TONY** wets **MIKEY'S** hair. **TONY**, with nozzle in hand, turns to check that **BARBARA** is getting the phone and accidentally squirts **MIKEY** in the face. **BARBARA** answers phone, leaving paper towels and Windex on **TONY'S** station. It is an appointment which she writes in the appointment book. She strikes Windex and towels into closet shutting door behind her. (*She must be off by the end of "Help Me Rhonda"*). **TONY** has begun to apply shampoo.
11. On music cue (*drum beat intro to "Devil with a Blue Dress"*) **TONY** vigorously shampoos **MIKEY'S** hair to the exact rhythm of the drum, gaining intensity to the final drum roll. As lyrics start, **TONY** rinses **MIKEY** as **BARBARA** enters from closet with nail enamel spray. She puts spray on tray, crosses to her station, picks up 2

WARM UP

red nail polishes and compares color to her shoes/belt. She then shakes the nail polishes vigorously in time with the music.

12. On music cue (*“high heel shoes and an alligator hat”*) **TONY** notices **BARBARA** shaking nail polish. He playfully picks up the beat and her motions and crosses to dance with her, temporarily abandoning **MIKEY**. **MIKEY** sits up and watches for a second in disbelief. He coughs politely but loudly enough to get **TONY’S** attention. **TONY** returns to **MIKEY**, apologizing. **TONY** carefully pours a long, measured stream of cream rinse into his hand without losing a drop. When his hand is full of cream rinse, he plops it onto **MIKEY’S** head. He smooths the cream rinse into **MIKEY’S** hair. The first pass through is all business. The second pass through is slightly sensual. On the third pass through, he gets caught up in the full sensuality of the moment and is drawn into **MIKEY’S** eyes for a nanosecond. He catches himself and gets back to business.
13. (*After TONY catches himself*) PHONE RINGS.
14. **BARBARA** answers phone. **TONY** tells **MIKEY** that the cream rinse needs to stay on his head for a few minutes. **BARBARA** tells **TONY** the call is for him. **TONY** tells her “I’m working” while carefully dabbing the excess conditioner from **MIKEY’S** forehead. **BARBARA** tells **TONY** it’s Tex. **TONY** then uses the same towel to quickly buff **MIKEY’S** forehead like a shoeshine and rushes to the phone. **MIKEY** sits up in disbelief, having been abandoned again. **TONY** takes the phone from **BARBARA** who goes back to her station. **MIKEY** waves to **TONY** to get his attention. **TONY** starts to sit and **MIKEY’S** wave becomes one of “no, no, no, don’t sit down!” **TONY** mistakes the gesture for a wave and waves back. **TONY** then sits to talk to Tex, turning completely away from **MIKEY**. **MIKEY** looks at **BARBARA** for help but she’s engaged with her nails. Thwarted, **MIKEY** lies back down in the chair.
15. **BARBARA** files nails while watching **MIKEY** in her mirror. Apprehensive about the time, **MIKEY** lifts his left arm to look at watch (*music cue: “early, early morning to the early, early night...”*). Realizing how late it is, he sits bolt upright, now determined to get **TONY’S** attention. He waves his hand at **TONY** to no avail. Meanwhile, **BARBARA** has watched this in her mirror. She looks at **TONY** and realizes he doesn’t see **MIKEY**. She drops her nail file on her station and crosses to **MIKEY** to rinse him. **MIKEY** turns from trying to get **TONY’S** attention to trying to get **BARBARA’S** attention timing it so that the moment he turns to **BARBARA**, she has reached him and with the palm of her hand, bops his head back into sink (*music cue: drum riff just after “at the House of Blue Light.”*). She rinses him. She lifts **MIKEY’S** head to rinse the back of his head, smothering his face in her chest (*music cue: guitar solo*). **MIKEY** begins to run out of breath and frantically tries to gesture to **BARBARA** (like a drowning man) to release him. By the time the guitar solo has ended, **BARBARA** releases **MIKEY** who flops back into the shampoo sink. **BARBARA** takes a towel, drapes it over **MIKEY’S** wet hair and eyes and dries his

WARM UP

head. She lifts the towel off his eyes and playfully says “Peek-a-boo” to **MIKEY**. She drops the towel back across **MIKEY’S** eyes and repeats the drying/“peek-a-boo” action exactly. Meanwhile, **TONY** has finished his call with Tex and returns to **MIKEY** watching **BARBARA** playing “peek-a-boo.” **TONY** takes over and lifts the towel for the third “peek-a-boo”, startling **MIKEY** who, expecting **BARBARA**, yelps loudly in surprise.

16. **TONY** takes **MIKEY** to barber chair. **TONY** picks up newspaper from barber chair where **MIKEY** has left it. **MIKEY** steps up onto the barber chair, turns forward, and lifts the towel from his eyes, focusing on **BARBARA**. **MIKEY** smiles a big “thank you” smile at **BARBARA**. **BARBARA**, drying her hands, smiles back warmly. **TONY**, seeing their attraction, disciplines **MIKEY** by slapping the newspaper in **MIKEY’S** stomach. **MIKEY** sits. **BARBARA** returns to her station and begins painting her nails. (If necessary, **BARBARA** should dry any water that may be on the shampoo chair or around the sink before returning to her station.)
17. **TONY** turns barber chair straight front and towel dries **MIKEY’S** hair from behind (*music cue “drum roll.”*) **TONY** throws towel into hamper. Time permitting, he dries hair again (*drum roll*) and carefully dries **MIKEY’S** ears by gently twisting his fingers in them (at the very end of this **TONY** allows himself to mischievously enjoy its momentary sensuality). **TONY** throws towel in hamper. As “Set Me Free” begins, **TONY**, facing the mirror, gets a comb from the Barbisol jar. He taps it on the lid, inspects it by holding it up to the light, taps and inspects it again, then runs it through his own hair. He immediately turns from mirror to **MIKEY** and using the same comb, runs the comb through **MIKEY’S** hair. **TONY** gets small scissors and cutting shears from his station. He puts small scissors in apron pocket and then begins cutting **MIKEY’S** hair with the cutting shears as **MIKEY** reads today’s paper. When **TONY** gets to the right side of **MIKEY’S** hair, he notices the article that **MIKEY** is reading (upper right corner of paper). He reads over **MIKEY’S** shoulder, getting more engaged in the article. **TONY** decides he needs to have the article and quickly and carefully cuts it out and puts it behind the tissue box leaving **MIKEY** surprised and bewildered. **TONY** goes back to cutting **MIKEY’S** hair. **BARBARA** finishes polishing her nails on one hand at her station, then sits in the styling chair to do other hand.
18. Music cue (“*you said when we broke up*”) **BARBARA** holds up hand and asks **TONY** “Hey Tony, what do you think of this color?” **TONY**, while still cutting the back of **MIKEY’S** hair, looks at **BARBARA**. On music cue (“*you still wanna be just friends*”) **TONY** accidentally cuts a big divot out of **MIKEY’S** hair (for the timing to work, the accidental cut should come right on the word “friends”). **TONY** turns back to **MIKEY** and realizes in horror what he’s done. He frantically tries to hide the damage first by trying to comb **MIKEY’S** hair over it, then by blowing on it, then by licking his fingers and smoothing the hair over the divot. Nothing works. **TONY** turns to **BARBARA** and simultaneously to the sung lyrics mouths “And there ain’t nuthin’ I can do about it.”

WARM UP

*****MUSIC FADES*****

STAGE MANAGER'S ANNOUNCEMENT *(to be read brightly):*

"Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the "Shear Madness Hair Styling Salon". Please remember that the taking of any kind of photographs or recordings is strictly prohibited. *(If drinks are served: This is your last call for drinks. Drinks will again be available about an hour after we begin).* There is no texting allowed in the salon so at this time we ask that all cell phones please be turned off and put away.

(In tonight's performance, the role of _____ will be played by _____.)

And now, sit back, relax and enjoy your appointment at Shear Madness."

19. **TONY** puts mousse on **MIKEY'S** head, creating two small horns. **MIKEY** looks up and catches **BARBARA** out of the corner of his eye. She's smiling, looking at the "horns" in amusement. **MIKEY** turns to look at her and, thinking she's flirting with him, smiles broadly back. **TONY** returns and turns **MIKEY'S** head forward. He smooths in the mousse. **TONY** styles **MIKEY'S** hair with brush and blow dryer. **BARBARA** sprays polished nails with spray enamel dryer (*TONY'S blow dryer must be on and BARBARA'S nails must be sprayed by end of "Set Me Free"*).
20. Music cue *(after intro "I Know Something about Love")* PHONE RINGS.
21. **BARBARA** answers phone. It's MRS. **SHUBERT** saying she knows she is late for her appointment, but she'll be right there. **BARBARA** hangs up. She looks at her watch and then up towards Isabel's apartment. She gets her purse from closet, tells **TONY** she'll be right back. **TONY** asks where she is going. **BARBARA** says she's going out for a cigarette. **TONY** tells **BARBARA** to hurry back because he has his goulash cooking. **BARBARA** exits through side door. **TONY** returns to blow drying **MIKEY'S** hair with his back to the front door.

STAGE MANAGER checks house for possible "hold" situation.

22. **EDDIE LAWRENCE** enters through front door carrying his briefcase. He surveys the scene, expecting to find **BARBARA**. He crosses to **TONY** whose back is to him. (Neither **TONY** nor **MIKEY** has seen **EDDIE** enter the shop). **EDDIE** crosses to **TONY** to ask where **BARBARA** is. He touches **TONY** on the shoulder to get his attention, scaring **TONY** who screams and jumps as does **MIKEY** and **EDDIE**. They eventually collect themselves. **EDDIE** asks for an appointment. **TONY** crosses to appointment book with blow dryer and brush, discovers the dryer cord is too short to reach the desk. **TONY** gently lofts the dryer and brush over the newspaper that **MIKEY** is reading and into **MIKEY'S** lap. **MIKEY** physically and vocally reacts to

WARM UP

the surprise (not pain) of the toss. He then scrambles to get the hot dryer out of his lap (also physically and vocally). He begins to dry his own hair with his right hand, holding the newspaper with his left hand, and leaving the brush in his lap as **TONY** tells **EDDIE** to hang up his suit jacket (or coat if he's wearing one) and have a seat.

23. **TONY** discovers **MIKEY** fooling with dryer and takes dryer from **MIKEY**. **TONY** looks around for brush and spots it in **MIKEY'S** lap. **TONY** innocently reaches into **MIKEY'S** lap to retrieve brush. **MIKEY**, mistaking **TONY'S** intentions, quickly reacts physically and vocally. **EDDIE**, having hung up his jacket, catches the moment, and reacts with wry amusement. **EDDIE** crosses to waiting area and sits, opening his briefcase on his lap.
24. **BARBARA** enters from side door looking at her cell phone, swiping left. She is startled and displeased to see **EDDIE**. She crosses to supply closet and opens the door. She turns to **EDDIE** and signals him to come to her. She hangs her purse in the closet. **EDDIE** casually crosses to closet. **BARBARA** and **EDDIE** whisper at closet doorway. **TONY** discovers them whispering and asks **EDDIE**, "Can I help you?"
25. **EDDIE**, closing the closet door, makes the excuse that he's looking for his jacket. **TONY** indicates where **EDDIE** hung it by the entrance and **EDDIE**, feigning forgetfulness, crosses to his jacket to get his Tic-Tacs. **TONY** goes back to blow drying **MIKEY**. **BARBARA** enters from closet, sets her phone down on her station, removes red stained hair-dyeing gloves from her rolling cart and throws them in the DS waste can. **BARBARA** turns and discovers **TONY** watching her quizzically as if to say "Oh, is this the new man in your life?" Meanwhile, **EDDIE** has been searching in his coat pocket for Tic-Tacs. **BARBARA** notices **EDDIE** and looks to see what he's doing. **TONY** sees **BARBARA** looking past him and turns to see what she's looking at. For a moment, both **BARBARA** and **TONY** are looking at **EDDIE** who surreptitiously pops Tic-Tacs into his mouth as if taking pills. **BARBARA** sits in her styling chair and reads this week's National Enquirer. **TONY** returns to finish up **MIKEY'S** hair. **EDDIE** returns to seating area (possibly covertly touching **BARBARA'S** neck on his way). **EDDIE** secretly puts Tic-Tacs into his briefcase, removes his day planner and cell phone. Using his closed briefcase as a desk, he begins checking his phone and making notes in his notebook. (*EDDIE and BARBARA must be seated before intro to "YMCA" begins.*)
26. Music cue (*intro to "YMCA"*) **TONY** returns dryer and brush to station. He goes into closet and returns with a water-spritzer bottle and sprays a mist in the air above **MIKEY'S** head in time to the music.
27. Music cue (*"Young man..."*) **NICK** enters from front door dressed as a construction worker. He's wearing sunglasses, yellow hard hat, and a local team jersey. He's carrying a lunchbox. **TONY** is immediately smitten. **TONY** talks to **NICK**, who asks him for an appointment. **TONY** explains he has **EDDIE** and **MIKEY** to deal with, gesturing with the spritzer and accidentally spraying **MIKEY** repeatedly in the face.

WARM UP

MIKEY vocally (*Hey! Hey!! Hey!!!*) calls **TONY'S** attention to the fact that he's being sprayed with water. **TONY** gets a towel and apologetically dabs **MIKEY'S** face with towel while asking **NICK** to hang up his stuff and check in with **BARBARA**. **NICK** hangs his stuff up and crosses, with lunchbox, to check in with **BARBARA**. **TONY** follows him throwing towel in hamper. On music cue (*1st YMCA*) **TONY** spells out the letters with his fingers. On 2nd "YMCA" **TONY** spells out the letters, with full armed abandon behind **NICK'S** back. **NICK** turns and catches **TONY** in the act. **TONY** pretends to be gesturing about something innocent. **NICK** crosses to seating area, removes **MIKEY'S** books, placing them on magazine caddy, and sits.

28. **TONY** removes small scissors from his apron and trims **MIKEY'S** left sideburn, then gently blows the cut hairs off his ear slowly getting closer and closer to his face. **MIKEY'S** eyes widen. Crossing behind barber chair, **TONY** trims **MIKEY'S** right sideburn and as he starts to blow, **MIKEY** turns his head toward **TONY** at the same pace until they find themselves almost touching nose to nose. **MIKEY** yelps in surprise and brushes his own ear clean.
29. PHONE RINGS.
30. **TONY** turns **MIKEY** US to face mirror and show him the haircut. He takes hand mirror from his station and holds it to the right of **MIKEY'S** head so he can see the back of the haircut. Then he moves to the left of **MIKEY** and does the same. Then **TONY** puts his hand over the spot he mis-cut on the back of **MIKEY'S** head and holds the mirror to show **MIKEY** the back of his head. **BARBARA** answers phone.

The phone call is brief— a cancellation.

*(OPTION: Occasionally and only in a true emergency, you may need to hold the start of the show. In this case, the STAGE MANAGER will tell **BARBARA** over the phone to inform **TONY** that we are holding and will call back when the show can continue. If that is the case, **TONY** must stall for time. Here is another comic bit that will extend the Warm Up:*

*After **BARBARA** alerts **TONY** that we are holding, **TONY** turns **MIKEY** back around facing front. **TONY** exits to supply closet to retrieve a handheld hairspray shield which he hands to **MIKEY**, instructing him to hold it over his face. **TONY** gets a can of hairspray and beginning on one side of **MIKEY'S** head, starts to spray **MIKEY'S** hair. **TONY** moves excruciatingly slowly and with intense focus from the side of **MIKEY'S** head, around the back to the other side, spraying a huge amount of hairspray onto his hair. When **TONY** finally reaches the other side of **MIKEY'S** head, he assesses the results. It's not good enough. **TONY** begins again to spray **MIKEY'S** head, this time in reverse. As a final fillip **TONY** sprays the top of **MIKEY'S** head to complete the job. **TONY** returns the hairspray to his station and takes the face shield from **MIKEY**, returning it to the supply closet. Then, **TONY** brushes **MIKEY'S** neck free of hairs. He offers **MIKEY** a piece of candy from his candy jar. **MIKEY** searches*

WARM UP

*for the piece he wants, finally getting one from the very bottom of the jar. **TONY** may then carefully trim **MIKEY'S** nose hairs and eyebrows. **BARBARA** reads, flirts with **NICK**, eyes **EDDIE** etc. until the 2nd call when the show continues as follows. Again, use this only in the event of an emergency.)*

31. **TONY** turns **MIKEY** to face seating area where he left his books and tells him to pay **BARBARA**. **MIKEY** crosses to seating area to get his books, still wearing shampoo cape and neck towel. **TONY** follows **MIKEY** to take off the cape and towel, stopping him just before he gets to his books. **TONY** quickly turns **MIKEY** around and they end up nose to nose, in a sudden and unexpected embrace. **TONY** removes the cape and takes a small step back from **MIKEY**. Then he whips off **MIKEY'S** neck towel. **TONY** drops cape on shampoo chair and cleans barber chair with towel.
32. Simultaneously, **MIKEY**, now flustered, backs into **EDDIE** who pokes him in the behind with a pen. **MIKEY** yelps. While **TONY** cleans barber chair, **MIKEY** quickly grabs his books, pays **BARBARA**, and dashes for the door. **TONY** waves to **MIKEY** who turns to him, gives a small shake of the head as if to say "No way, I'm never coming here again" and quickly darts out of the shop.
33. **BARBARA** puts money in moneybox, sits in styling chair and reads.
34. **TONY** shakes out the shampoo cape, snapping it three times.

*****HOUSE LIGHTS GO OUT. STAGE LIGHTS UP FULL*****

TONY drapes the cape on shampoo chair.

35. **TONY** crosses to his station, checks himself in mirror, turns off radio.

*****MUSIC STOPS*****

36. **TONY** crosses center, talking to his two new customers.

The Improvisation

(Note: local references are to the 2020 Washington DC area production and are for example only. Your job will be to write current new jokes appropriate for your location.)

TONY: Okay, who's next here now?

EDDIE &

NICK: *(Subtext: neither one of them wanting to get in the chair)* HE is.

TONY: Come on... somebody's gotta be next!

NICK: You just told me he is ...right here.

TONY: Oh yeah. That's right. You're next.

EDDIE: I'll go after this guy if you don't mind.

TONY: No, I don't mind at all. I thought you said you were in a hurry.

EDDIE: No, no, I've got some work to finish here. *(To NICK, making him go first)* Go ahead. Be my guest.

TONY: Well, you don't mind do you? *(If the barber chair has a head rest, TONY lifts it slowly.)*

NICK: *(Unable to avoid it, NICK crosses to the chair.)* No. No, I don't mind at all. I'd just as soon get out of this place.

TONY: Well, the sooner you get in, the sooner you get out. That's what I always say. *(As NICK sits, TONY turns the barber chair straight forward in such a way that he unexpectedly finds himself face to face with NICK. TONY steps back.)* So, how we doin'?

NICK: I'm doing great today. How're you doing?

TONY: Fabulous. *(Referring to NICK'S team shirt)* I just love your festive blouse.

NICK: This? This is my Washington Nationals jersey. You a Nats fan?

TONY: Oh, big fan. Go Nats! *(He shoots an imaginary basket.)* SWISH!

(OPT: depending on the season, NICK may be wearing a football team jersey, so the team reference and gesture would change accordingly, i.e. swinging a bat and saying "POW" and following the trajectory of the imaginary ball.)

Gorgeous day out there, isn't it?

(OPT: change the line to incorporate today's weather; or a comment on traffic, unusual conditions of the day, city-wide celebration, etc. This is a great opportunity to set the play in the here and now.)

NICK: Yeah, well, that's DC for you in the *(current season)*. But you know, you think it's nice here in the city, you ought to see what it's like out in the country where I live.

TONY: Oh, you live out in the country?

NICK: Yup, sure do.

TONY: No foolin'? Whereabouts?

NICK: Rockville.

TONY: You call Rockville the country? God! I call Rockville... *(reconsidering)* I never call Rockville.

NICK: Well, you should think about it. It's real easy to get to. *(He gives directions)* You just hop on Wisconsin Ave., follow it out... you'll pass through Bethesda, you're gonna want to...

TONY: Whoa! No! Hey! Don't bother giving me directions, 'cause I am NEVER going to Rockville. *(OPT: Alexa! ALEXA! Stop! 'Cause I ain't never goin' to Rockville.)* And besides, I'm just a city boy at heart. I don't follow directions too good. I get two blocks off of Dupont Circle, I am lost.

NICK: I can see why. *(TONY does a surprised but light-hearted take.)*

TONY: So, what do we want done with this hair?

NICK: Nothing with the hair. *(Thinking quickly)* Just give me a shave.

TONY: A shave?

NICK: Yeah.

TONY: You came in here for a shave?

NICK: You got it.

TONY: Oh God, I love it!

BARBARA: Hey, Tony, I never saw you give a shave before.

TONY: *(Turning the barber chair, parallel to the audience)* Don't worry, I remember how.

(On the word "how," TONY drops the back of the barber chair. NICK flops back into the chair. TONY crosses to BARBARA).

My last job was giving shaves at G.W. Hospital.

(NICK sits bolt upright. TONY crosses to NICK, grabbing 4 towels from his station along the way.)

That's just a little joke, that's all. You just lie down and relax. *(Indicating the footrest)* Put your tootsies up on the tootsie roll and think wonderful thoughts, because the next twenty minutes of your life are going to be a total fantasy. *(Leaving 3 towels on NICK'S chest, TONY crosses to the sink to wet a towel.)* I'm going to start you off with a nice hot towel.

(TONY puts the towel in the sink, turns on the water and raises the nozzle so we can see the water and focuses on NICK unaware of how hot the water is getting).

NICK: That's good. I like a hot towel. You know, that's the best part of a shave.

TONY: Isn't it? I could sit under a hot towel all day long and just relax. *(TONY reaches into the sink to wring the towel and scalds himself, shrieking...)* AGGGHHH!! Oh God. That's a little too hot! Watch it, mister, 'cause this is really mad hot! *(as he continues to wring the towel, trying not to scald himself further.)*

NICK: Don't you worry about it. I like it hot.

TONY: Yeah, well this is a little unusual. *(Folding the towel in half as he crosses above NICK)* I mean this is like McDonald's coffee hot. *(At NICK'S face.)* Now you just tell me if you can stand this. *(He gently touches NICK'S face with the towel.)* How's that?

NICK: That's good.

TONY: Oh God, you're so tough.

(TONY drops the hot towel on NICK'S face. NICK screams and physically reacts as TONY, hearing SHUBERT, goes into the closet to get her smock, closing the door behind him.)

SHUBERT: *(From off stage)* BARBARA! BARBARA, darling, I'm here!

(She enters carrying two shopping bags from an elegant local shop and clutch purse, wearing gloves, a hat, and depending on the weather, a pashmina or fur coat.)

BARBARA: Hi, Mrs. Shubert. How ya doing? (**BARBARA** crosses to her station to get her apron which is hanging there. She puts it on, tying it behind her.)

SHUBERT: I'm frenzied, just totally frenzied. *(She removes her pashmina or coat and drapes it across the railing.)*

BARBARA: Why?

SHUBERT: Have you SEEN the traffic on Key Bridge? All those tourists coming in and out at rush hour. Now THAT'S where they should build a wall. *(Crossing to BARBARA to hand her the packages and purse.)*

(In the New York production, we used "Have you seen the traffic on 9th Avenue during rush hour? All those people racing back to Jersey. Now THAT'S where they should build a wall.)

BARBARA: Where ya been?

SHUBERT: *(Crossing to BARBARA to hand her the packages and purse)* Oh here, there, everywhere: shopping, shopping, shopping! *(She removes her gloves revealing a red spot on the back of the right glove.)*

BARBARA: And you're late, late, late! (**BARBARA** crosses to dryer with purse and packages. She puts SHUBERT'S purse on the dryer chair and her packages next to the dryer.)

TONY: *(Coming out of the supply closet with SHUBERT'S smock, surprising her)* Hi, Mrs. Shubert! Hugs and kisses!

SHUBERT: Tony, darling! *(She turns to TONY as she hands her gloves to BARBARA. TONY and SHUBERT air kiss as BARBARA puts the gloves on SHUBERT'S purse. TONY puts the smock on her.)*

(Opt. TONY waves smock like a matador waving a cape to entice a bull calling (all at once with rising inflection) "Arriba! Arriba! Andalé! Andalé! Hija! Hija!" SHUBERT puts her fingers to her head as if they were horns, paws the ground with her foot and "charges" the smock. By the final "Hija!" she has put her arms through the sleeves. She turns to TONY, and with a flourish they both cry "OLÉ!")

(Taking a step L to BARBARA) Barbara, you've got to do something with my hair. It's an absolute disaster. (On the word "disaster" she removes her hat revealing her extremely messy hair.)

TONY: Oh, my God, Mrs. Shubert, you should have come here in an ambulance.
(OPT: Oh, my God, Mrs. Shubert, you look just like Donald Trump.)

SHUBERT: *(Handing her hat to TONY. He crosses with it to hat rack at entrance.)*
And I've got to get out of here in a hurry. *(Crossing to shampoo chair.)*
I'm on my way to Bermuda tonight. *(She sits.)*

BARBARA: Yeah? I'd love to go to Bermuda. *(She puts a towel around SHUBERT'S neck followed by the shampoo cape.)*

TONY: *(From where he has hung the hat, TONY takes a hanger and puts SHUBERT'S pashmina or coat on the hanger.)* Bermuda's nice. But you know where I want to go?

SHUBERT: Where?

TONY: Belize.

SHUBERT: Belize? Why?

TONY: That's where they film Naked and Afraid! *(Crossing to SHUBERT)*
Haven't you been watching? It's this fabulous reality show where they drop two people into the middle of nowhere and they have to survive... naked! *(TONY crosses to supply closet. Stops. Turns.)* I auditioned for that show once. Completely naked, of course. You know what they said? We're afraid. *(TONY exits into supply closet with SHUBERT'S pashmina or coat closing the door behind him.)*

SHUBERT: Tony, come out here, you naughty boy! You didn't tell me.

(TONY comes out of the supply closet.)

TONY: Tell you what?

SHUBERT: You've got new aprons.

TONY: Oh, you didn't see these yet, did you? *(TONY does a catwalk display to C as he says.)* Aren't they gorgeous? Barbara's got one just like it, too. *(BARBARA reluctantly joins him center.)* We're like twins. *(indicating his apron)* Tweedle Dee *(indicating BARBARA'S apron)* and Tweedle Double D. *(BARBARA reacts and returns to SHUBERT, easing her back into the*

sink and begins to wet her hair.) You know what I did? I went down to my tailor, Juan Gabriel, and I said, *(a la Spanish 101)* “Juan, necesito algo que es muy hermosa.” And he said, “Tony, I don’t speak Spanish.” So I said, “Juan, I need something fabulous for the shop. So, he says to me, “Tony, why don’t you scurry out and get your material first. So this is what I got. Isn’t it wonderful?”

(OPT: I went down to Nick the tailor and I said, “Nick, I need something fabulous for the shop. So, he says to me, “Tony, why don’t you scurry out and get your material first. So this is what I got. Isn’t it wonderful?)

SHUBERT: Wonderful.

TONY: Isn’t it?! And the most wonderful thing about it? *(TONY crosses to UC wall, holding apron against the wallpaper)* IT’S ALMOST A PERFECT MATCH TO THE WALLPAPER!!! So, I went down. I had one fitting and the next day, BANGO!... just like that... he had both aprons ready. Can you stand it?

BARBARA: Tony, you’re getting to be such a stereotype.

TONY: Barbara, I am not a stereotype. Thanks to the Supreme Court, I am now a prototype. *(TONY snaps his fingers and crosses to his station. He picks up the can of shaving cream.)*

NICK: *(Sitting up in barber chair)* Hey lady, what’s that I smell?

BARBARA: Oh. Tony’s got something on the stove upstairs.

TONY: *(Crossing to swinging doors)* You can’t smell that down here, can you?

BARBARA: He’s cookin’ for a real crowd tonight, Mrs. Shubert.

SHUBERT: What are you cooking, Tony?

TONY: *(Crossing to SHUBERT)* Tonight? Oh, tonight I’m making a fabulous new recipe. You would love it. I call it “Shear Madness Goulash.” It’s kind of like that recipe you gave me for Hungarian goulash but I add all my own little extras. It is out of this world. *(TONY returns to his station.)*

SHUBERT: Oh, what are your little extras?

TONY: *(Removing the towel from NICK’S face and crossing to drop it in hamper.)* Well, what I do is, I start out with double the caraway seeds. Then, right at the end, I add a little sour cream

(TONY starts to squirt a mound of shaving cream in his hand but because of his rapt attention to explaining the details of the recipe to SHUBERT, he is oblivious to the large quantity of shaving cream he is creating).

It kind of thickens it up and makes it more festive. It's like a Mardi-Gras in your mouth. *(TONY starts to cross back US to NICK).*

SHUBERT: Who's coming to dinner?

TONY: *(Turning back, his attention is once again riveted on SHUBERT, not aware of the amount of shaving cream in his hand, which by now is becoming a huge mound. Don't drag this out!)*

Tonight? Oh, tonight I've got the play selection committee from my little theater group coming over. I think you've heard of them before. They're called the Silver Spring Stage *(local amateur theater group)*. They're the ones I do all my theater work with.

(TONY sets the shaving cream can down. The second he does, BARBARA cuts in immediately— but only after the can has been set down. The reason for this is BARBARA is washing SHUBERT'S hair and cannot see what TONY is doing. The timing for TONY to be in place for the shaving cream plop relies on this happening exactly.)

BARBARA: Tony, how come you're making such a fuss over them?

TONY: Barbara, I told you.

(TONY, at NICK'S head and completely focused on BARBARA, and in a gesture of frustration, plops the huge mound of shaving cream on NICK'S face without realizing it and crosses to BARBARA.)

Tonight is a very important night. Tonight is the night we've got to decide what musical *(NICK spits out the shaving cream)* to put on next season. So, I figure what the hell, I'll get them all over here. I'll crack open a nice box of wine. I'll feed 'em a little goulash and then I'll con them into doing the musical I want to do.

SHUBERT: What musical do you want to do, Tony?

TONY: I am dying to do "Hello Dolly" so bad I can taste it.

SHUBERT: I love that show. I saw it on Broadway. Bette Midler was divine.

TONY: Wasn't she? The Divine Miss M! I almost wet my pants when I saw her.

*(Through all of this, **BARBARA** has been shampooing, rinsing, conditioning, and rinsing SHUBERT'S hair. **BARBARA** finishes and sits SHUBERT up in the chair. She uses a towel to dry SHUBERT'S hair.)*

But then I went on YouTube and saw Carol Channing and she was a revelation! I mean, when she stood on top of those stairs in that red dress and that blond hair. And that voice of hers! Don't you just love the way she used to sing when she went, "Wow, wow, wow fellas. Look at the old girl now, fellas. Dolly'll never go away again."

*(**TONY**, crosses up to above NICK, like Carol Channing leading the waiters. He extends his arms again fully and without begging for it, holds for applause. **BARBARA** finishes drying SHUBERT'S hair.)*

God, I just love her. *(He turns US to his station to get 3 fresh towels for NICK.)*

Here's a link to video of Carol Channing singing the moment in the finale: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVh9zjf0Tww> starting at 6:15 for the arm movement

SHUBERT: *(Still seated, she turns to BARBARA)* Barbara, HOW do you TAKE him?

BARBARA: With Xanax

*(**BARBARA** tosses the towel into the hamper and crosses to above the styling chair. **TONY** swaps out fresh towels for the towels covered in shaving cream on NICK'S chest. He crosses with the dirty towels and deposits them in the hamper by the sink.)*

SHUBERT: *(As she crosses to the styling chair.)* You know, they just don't write musicals like they used to. Give me the classics like "Oklahoma" or "Peter Pan." *(**BARBARA** begins to comb out SHUBERT'S hair and starts to put it in rollers.)*

TONY: *(As he rinses the shaving cream off his hands)* You saw "Peter Pan"? I love "Peter Pan"! It's my all-time favorite!! I mean the last time I saw "Peter Pan", my hands were raw for two weeks. *(He finishes rinsing his hands and grabs a towel to dry them.)*

SHUBERT: Why?

TONY: *(Crossing to SHUBERT)* Well, don't you remember the part when Tinkerbelle was dying? And Peter Pan comes rushing down to the edge of the stage and he says... "Okay, everybody who believes in fairies... CLAP!? Well, I just... *(**TONY** starts to clap enthusiastically.)* I believe! I

believe!

******Piano Music Starts******

(EVERYONE looks up simultaneously.)

TONY: Oh NO! *(He throws the towel on the floor below the barber chair).*

BARBARA: There she goes again, Tony.

TONY: Would you listen to this, Mrs. Shubert? *(He starts wiping the shaving cream off the floor.)*

*A note about cleaning the shaving cream: This is the first of a couple of places that Tony has the opportunity to clean the shaving cream from the floor and anywhere else it may happen to land (the barber chair, himself, Mrs. Shubert's smock, etc.) It's important to clean all the shaving cream off the floor, as it's slippery and dangerous. It's important to clean it from any unusual places as it will distract the audience and kill the laughs. **TONY** should "scoop" the large blobs of shaving cream from the floor first before wiping.*

SHUBERT: *(Listening)* Why that's lovely. Someone has exquisite taste in music.

BARBARA: Well, she ought to. That's Isabel Czerny playing.

SHUBERT: Not the Isabel Czerny?

BARBARA: Yeah. She lives upstairs. She's Tony's landlady. She owns the whole building.

SHUBERT: Good heavens! I thought she was dead.

BARBARA: Not yet. I think she'll go on forever.

SHUBERT: Isabel Czerny. Tony, how old is she?

TONY: *(TONY throws soiled towels into the hamper)* Isabel? Oh God, she's a day older than dirt, Mrs. Shubert, really. I mean, I think she reads the Bible to reminisce. That's how old she is. *(OPT: I mean, I think she was a waitress at the Last Supper. OPT: I mean, she used to babysit Bernie Sanders.)*

*(If NICK needs more clean towels, **TONY** can swap them out here, or he can wipe up any residual shaving cream. Crossing to hamper with soiled towels.)*

SHUBERT: That is absolutely gorgeous. What is that she's playing?

TONY: *(At the hamper, looking up)* The piano.

SHUBERT: I mean what PIECE?

TONY: Don't ask me. *(TONY crosses towards station).*

EDDIE: RACHMANINOFF! *(EDDIE says the name with a guttural "ch" sound.)*

TONY: Gesundheit.

(During the following lines, TONY gets a Kleenex, crosses to EDDIE with it, and drops it midair. EDDIE, flummoxed, grabs the Kleenex and puts it into his briefcase.)

All I know is that she's purposely trying to drive people out of this shop, and I, for one, am not going to stand for it. I said to Barbara last week, I said, "Barbara, the HELL with her. We don't need her. Call the cops on her." *(After giving the Kleenex to EDDIE, TONY crosses back C, continuing his conversation with SHUBERT.)*

SHUBERT: You didn't call the police on her!

TONY: Well, we dialed 911 but nobody answered.

BARBARA: Yeah, so we called Dunkin' Donuts? And the cops were all there.

TONY: But the weirdest thing happened. The minute those cops walked through that door... now, I don't know whether she saw them from upstairs or what...but just to spite me, she stops playing...

*****MUSIC STOPS*****

So there I am. Egg all over my face. I mean she's disturbing the peace and I'm the one who looks like an idiot...

(TONY and BARBARA ad-lib until NICK, sitting up, interrupts.)

NICK: HeyheyheyHEY!!! The music stopped. Remember me?

(NICK has wiped off the shaving cream from exactly half his face creating what looks like the Phantom's mask.)

TONY: *(Pointing at NICK and discovering)* Phantom of the Opera!

(NICK turns towards the audience to look behind him to see who TONY has pointed at... revealing to audience his Phantom mask.)

(TONY crosses to NICK and settles him back into the barber chair. He turns to his station to get the razor.)

SHUBERT: I can't believe she lives upstairs. You know, I remember Isabel Czerny in her prime. Adam and I (*"Mummy and I"*, with a younger *SHUBERT*) attended all of her concerts at Constitution Hall (*local reference*). I shall never forget it. She always wore electric blue. And when she walked out on that stage and sat at the piano, the whole audience was mesmerized. It was as if an angel...

TONY: *(TONY has begun to strop the razor; only stropping on his own lines).* Yeah, yeah, yeah, but you know, Mrs. Shubert, you're really talking about her back in her "hey-day." That's before she went booga-booga in the head.

SHUBERT: Oh, she had a nervous breakdown.

TONY: Breakdown?! My God, she had a meltdown!

SHUBERT: Tony!

TONY: *(Crossing to SHUBERT)* I never told you about Isabel Czerny's breakdown?

SHUBERT: No!

TONY: The most fabulous story in *(using a nickname for where the show is set, i.e. Kansas City: in The City of Fountains, or Boston: in the Athens of America)* and I never told you?!

SHUBERT: Tell me! Tell me!

TONY: *(TONY crosses to shampoo chair to gossip with SHUBERT.)* WELL, *(sits)* this all started about thirty years ago. *(SHUBERT leans in to talk to TONY)*

NICK: *(Sitting up)* I don't believe this!

TONY: Honest to God, it's true.

(Because SHUBERT is engaged with TONY, after the laugh BARBARA takes the opportunity to cross to hairdryer and mimes turning it on. EDDIE rises, with his briefcase, crosses to BARBARA at the hairdryer and

engages her in unheard conversation.)

(Beginning with NICK) She was going on this big ‘round the world tour. First there was to be a command performance in London. *(Now turning to include SHUBERT)* Then she was off to France to accompany... *(seeing EDDIE whispering to BARBARA.)* Can I help you?

EDDIE: *(Caught)* Yeah. I was looking for your men’s room.

BARBARA: *(Covering)* Through those doors. Up on the landing.

TONY: You can’t miss it.

EDDIE: *(at door)* I’ll try not to. *(EDDIE exits.)*

(BARBARA crosses back to SHUBERT and continues setting her hair. She turns the styling chair slightly, so SHUBERT is angled towards TONY.)

TONY: *(He crosses UC to recreate the scene)* So anyhow, there she was... Isabel Czerny at the Albert Hall in London. She comes walking out to the center of the stage. *(TONY crosses (as Isabel) DC to the shampoo chair)* She sits at the piano. *(TONY sits on the shampoo chair, turning sideways to “play” the imaginary piano.)* She starts playing through her first song. *(TONY mimes playing the piano)* Well, all of a sudden halfway through her first song, SNAPPO! Something just “went” in her head. And her hands started filling up with helium!

SHUBERT: Helium?

TONY: Yes! They started floating up in the air like this *(TONY demonstrates, raising his hands a little off the keys)* and she tried to get them back down on the keys of the piano but she couldn’t. SHE COULDN’T! ‘Cause they just had a mind of their own. And they kept on floating away and floating away *(TONY allows his hands to pull him up out of the chair, making a complete turn, as he crosses C where his arms are fully extended and his hands become locked over his head)* and finally they floated right up over her head and locked in position. Well, there was absolutely nothing she could do. All she did was... she took a bow... *(TONY bows, still in the locked position)* she walked off that stage *(TONY demonstrates Isabel walking off the stage DR with great dignity, arms fully extended and hands locked, and turn back to SHUBERT)*... and do you know, she never ever EVER played the piano professionally again!

SHUBERT: That is the saddest thing I’ve ever heard.

TONY: *(Seriously)* I know. *(Crossing back to SHUBERT)* I said to her one day, I

said, “Isabel, did you ever think about jacking up the piano? Then you could have played it up here like this.” (*As he says “jacking up the piano,” he mimes his hands on the keyboard jacking up to full extension*). But she didn’t think that was too funny. (*He crosses back to his station to continue with NICK’S shave.*)

BARBARA: (*Turning SHUBERT back facing forward.*) Tony, I don’t know what you’re gonna find to talk about after she’s gone.

TONY: Barbara, that woman is gonna outlive the two of us put together and you know it.

BARBARA: I mean when she goes on her concert tour.

SHUBERT: You mean she’s making a comeback?

BARBARA: Oh, yeah, Mrs. Shubert. Didn’t you read about it in the Style section of yesterday’s Post (*Local newspaper; celebrity TV show or popular website*)? She’s going everywhere: Italy... France... Europe.

TONY: (*Turning from station with razor and stropping*) Barbara, you don’t actually believe she’s making a comeback, do you? (*OPT: That was in the Washington Post. That’s fake news.*)

BARBARA: ‘Course I do. What do you think she’s doing all this practicing for?

TONY: You know, Mrs. Shubert, that’s just it. I wouldn’t mind it so much if she would just take one piece of music (*he gestures with his hands over NICK’S chest on each word: “one piece of music”*) and play it all the way through...

(*On the word “through” TONY sweeps his hands apart for emphasis, barely missing NICK’S face with the razor. NICK reacts physically and vocally*)

But she doesn’t do that. What she does is she practices all day. She goes diddle-iddle-iddle-um and then she stops.

(*During previous line, TONY, with razor still in hand, demonstrates Isabel playing the piano over NICK’S stomach. On the word “stops” he again sweeps across NICK’S face.*)

And then goes diddle-iddle-iddle-um and then she...

NICK: (*Sitting up, grabbing TONY’S hand before he finishes the gesture and pushes TONY away.*) Hey, that’s a razor you got there. Buddy, huh. Please!

Jesus, Mary, Margaret Mother of God!

(OPT. Local reference: i.e. Jesus, Mary, Margaret, Mother of Tom Brady!! Or Mother of Pete Buttigieg!!)

TONY: *(In response to NICK'S sudden outburst, TONY tries to calm him.)*
Hakuna... Matata. *(Settling NICK back in the barber chair.)* Now, you just sit back and relax, OK? Because you keep jumping around like that and one of us is going to get hurt Okay, take a deep breath and here we go.

(With a flourish, TONY prepares to shave NICK. Just as TONY brings the razor to NICK's face, in one continuous move...)

*****PIANO MUSIC STARTS *****

(At the very moment the razor has touched NICK'S face, TONY looks up to where we hear the music coming from, lifting the razor from NICK'S face. As he does so, he nicks NICK.)

NICK: Ow! You maniac. You cut me!

(General hubbub.)

BARBARA: Oh, my God, Tony! You cut him!

TONY: I cut him! Barbara, get me a styptic pencil, stat!

(BARBARA crosses into the supply closet, leaving the door open.)

NICK: I don't believe this!

TONY: *(Crossing with towel to C, slamming the closet door behind BARBARA)*
Don't worry about a thing. I'm a paramedic. *(TONY races to the sink shelves to get towel. As he wets it he says)* I've watched every episode of Gray's Anatomy on Hulu Plus *(or another comic reference).* *(Rushes back to NICK DR around to above barber chair with towel calling out)*

CODE BLUE! CODE BLUE!

(TONY administers chest compressions to NICK calling out)
CLEAR!! *(compression)* CLEAR!! *(compression.)*

(NICK flops in the chair on each compression like he's being shocked as BARBARA returns from closet with styptic pencil.)

BARBARA: *(Bringing TONY back to reality)* TONY! Here's the styptic pencil!

- TONY:** Ok, now, this is gonna sting... *(He touches NICK'S face with the styptic pencil.)*
- NICK:** OW!
- (TONY gets a preset blood-stained Kleenex for NICK and places it on his face, hiding the bloodstain from the view of the audience. He continues to get a series of Kleenex, one by one, and places them on the cut as he continues...)*
- TONY:** This is exactly what I'm talking about, Mrs. Shubert. This kind of thing happens every time she starts playing.
- SHUBERT:** Well, why don't you do something about it? Why don't you call a lawyer?
- TONY:** A lawyer? Barbara, tell her about the lawyer. *(TONY takes a towel, crosses to DRC and on his hands and knees wipes up any residual shaving cream that may be on the floor. If there isn't any, pretend there is.)*
- BARBARA:** He did, Mrs. Shubert. Get this. Tony drops fifteen hundred bucks on a lawyer and you know what he said? "Tony, if she's driving you nuts just bang on the pipe." *(She indicates the pipe.)*
- TONY:** Can you believe that? I mean, I'm on my hands and knees down here trying to run a shop. And this lawyer tells me to bang on my pipe.
- (OPT: "I'm on my hands and knees down here like a human miracle mop" or "like a human Roomba" or something comedically equivalent.)*
- SHUBERT:** Well, why don't you try it?
- TONY:** Because it won't do any good.
- SHUBERT:** Tony, if you've retained an attorney, you should at least do what he says. Go ahead. *(emphatically)* Bang on the pipe!
- TONY:** *(Crossing to his station and picking up the wooden handled brush)* Okay, I'll show you. This is going to do absolutely no good at all. Watch. Just watch this. *(TONY crosses to the pipe, bangs on it and yells)* HEY!!! SHUT UP YOU STUPID OLD BITCH! *(TONY bangs again and yells)* KNOCK IT OFF, WILL YA? See? See what I mean? *(Crossing back toward his station)* She's just trying to drive me crazy. I could bang on that pipe until the cows freeze over... *(TONY continues to adlib until stopped C by BARBARA).*

*****MUSIC STOPS*****

BARBARA: *(Crossing in a step)* TONY! *(Indicating the silence upstairs.)*

TONY: Oh my God, she stopped.

SHUBERT: There. You see?

TONY: No, this is the first time she's ever stopped when I banged on that pipe.

BARBARA: *(Crossing back to SHUBERT. She puts a hair net on SHUBERT)* She's gotten too smart for you, Tony.

TONY: As God is my witness, she is up to no good. You mark my words on that. *(To NICK)* How's everything over here?

NICK: It stings a little.

(TONY takes the wad of Kleenex off NICK'S face allowing the audience to see the blood on the bottom Kleenex. He looks at the cut, audibly spits on Kleenex, and uses it to wipe off blood. TONY crosses DS to drop Kleenex in trash can.)

*****TOILET FLUSHES UPSTAIRS*****

(Everyone looks up simultaneously)

TONY: My razor! Where is my razor? *(crossing to his station, searching.)* I had it right in my hand two seconds ago and now... Oh, here it is right in front of my face. *(Highly agitated)* I mean if it was a SNAKE it would have BIT ME!

BARBARA: Tony, will you please calm down!

TONY: *(Not calming down at all)* How am I supposed to calm down? That woman is driving me CRAZY!

(EDDIE enters hurriedly from upstairs with his briefcase with something unseen in his hand. He puts briefcase down where he had been sitting and puts what's in his hand into it, closes it and heads to the front door, as he signals to BARBARA to come to him.)

BARBARA: Well, why don't you just go up and talk to Isabel. *(She removes the shampoo cape and towel from around SHUBERT'S neck.)*

TONY: I have not talked to Isabel Czerny in four and a half weeks. I'm certainly

not going to start talking to her over this little fracas. (*pronounced "Fray-KAH"*)

BARBARA: (*Crossing with cape and towel to put them into the hamper.*) Well, you've got to do something about it.

TONY: Then why don't you talk to her? You're her new bestie.

(*When **TONY** turns to **SHUBERT**, **BARBARA** crosses to **EDDIE** who is putting his coat on at the front door to the shop. They exchange urgent, clandestine words.*)

God, Barbara's up and down the stairs with that woman every two seconds.

SHUBERT: I didn't know they were friends.

TONY: Barbara and Isabel? The two of them are as thick as thieves...

(***BARBARA** is at the door with **EDDIE**. He forces a kiss on her and leaves. **BARBARA** crosses quickly DR pretending nothing has happened.*)

*****PIANO MUSIC BEGINS ON KISS*****

TONY: (*Screaming*) AGGGGGH!!!! I have had it with her. Mister, you wait right here. (*He throws his towel onto **NICK'S** chest*). Barbara, you watch the shop. I'm gonna go shut that bitch up once and for all if it's the last thing I DO! (***TONY** exits through swinging doors.*) ISABEL!!!!!!

BARBARA: (*Chases after him, failing to stop him.*) TONY!

NICK: Lady, what is wrong with that guy?

BARBARA: (*She rolls the cart towards the supply closet, using the next two lines (or more if needed) to get supply closet door open.*)

I don't know! I don't know what's wrong with him. (*Stopping to talk to **NICK** directly*) You know, he's been that way ever since he found out that Groupon isn't a dating app. (***BARBARA** rolls the cart into the supply closet and closes door.*)

(*OPT: A very timely reference referring to something in the news that might fluster or delight Tony, i.e.*

"...ever since he found out Tik Tok isn't an app that tells time."

Or "He's been that way since Tom Brady left town.").

*****PHONE RINGS*****

SHUBERT: *(Rising and crossing to dryer)* I don't care about that, Barbara, I've got to get out of here.

(NICK dumps his cape and towels in hamper and crosses to mirror to clean himself of shaving cream. He picks up the wooden handled brush to brush his hair.)

BARBARA: *(Crossing to SHUBERT, lowering the hood on the dryer.)* All right, all right, Mrs. Shubert. I'll get you out as fast as I can. *(To NICK as she crosses to answer the phone)* Hey, mister, why don't you just sit down. Tony will be right back to finish your shave. *(She picks up phone to stop it from ringing and holds the phone against her, focusing on NICK .)*

NICK: Forget it, honey. If I wanted to take my life in my hands, I'd eat at Chipotle. *(OPT: or other appropriate reference, i.e. "If I wanted to suffer that much I'd watch another episode of The Bachelor")*.

BARBARA: *(Answering phone.)* Shear Madness.

NICK: *(To BARBARA)* Where'd that guy go?

BARBARA: *(On phone.)* Just a minute, I'll see.

NICK: *(Crossing to swinging doors where TONY has just exited)* Where'd he go?

BARBARA: *(Trying to get SHUBERT'S attention.)* Mrs. Shubert? *(No answer).* Mrs. Shubert!? *(No answer).* MRS. SHUBERT!

NICK: *(NICK has just reached the swinging doors and is looking out. On BARBARA'S final "MRS. SHUBERT" he turns back, and uses his brush to bang on dryer.)*

Hey, Lady! *(SHUBERT screams.)* You got a phone call here.

(Crossing to UC and stopping to survey this madhouse)

This place is nuts.

(NICK drops brush on TONY'S station and continues his cross toward front doors. He puts on his hard hat and if he's hung up a jacket, grabs that as well. His lunch box remains at DL seating area.)

SHUBERT: *(Rattled and crossing DS she asks BARBARA)* A call? For me? Who is it?

BARBARA: It's a man. I think it's your husband.

SHUBERT: *(sotto voce)* No! Tell him I'm not here.

BARBARA: *(On phone.)* Sorry, she says she's not here. *(Hangs up phone.)*

(After hearing this line, NICK exits front door. BARBARA crosses to front door to try to call after him.)

Hey mister!!!

(He's gone. BARBARA turns from doors to face DS)

I can't wait to read THAT Yelp review.

(BARBARA crosses to the swinging doors and listens for a moment. She looks at her watch and then at SHUBERT. She looks at the trash can by the desk, grabs scissors from her station, crosses through C to DR, throws scissors into the wastebasket, crosses to SHUBERT, wastebasket in hand, taps on the dryer hood.)

I'll be right back, Mrs. Shubert. I'm just going out with the trash. *(Exit).*

SHUBERT: Don't be too long, Barbara. I've got a plane to catch. I don't want to be late for my pat down. *(Gently patting herself down.)*

(SHUBERT looks at her watch and realizes she's late.)

Oh my God.

(She removes her cell phone from her purse to call her butler. She can't get a signal.)

(Muttering in disgust) T-Mobile.

(SHUBERT rises and listens at the doors. She crosses to the desk phone, takes a card out of her purse, and picks up the receiver to dial. She holds the card at a reasonable distance but can't read it. She extends her hand a little further. Still no luck. Finally, she fully extends her hand from her face and tries (unsuccessfully) to read it a third time. Resigned, she puts the receiver over one eye and reads the number. She leans back and dials the number she's read on the card. She puts the card back in her purse. She notices test bottles of perfume on the desk and picks one to smell. She sprays some on her wrist and smells it).

*****MUSIC STOPS*****

(She looks up. She replaces the perfume on desk.)

Beat. Beat.

(Startled by the person answering and not wanting to be overheard) Oh. Hello. It's me. I'm running a little late. (She listens, then she chuckles sensually) You were wonderful this afternoon! (Listening. Then urgently and sotto voce) No. Don't worry about that, it's already been done. Bye.

*(She hangs up the phone. She starts back to the dryer, stops, and smells her wrist. She returns to the desk. She picks up the perfume and puts it into her purse. She crosses back towards the dryers. As she does so, **EDDIE** bursts through the side door nearly barreling into **SHUBERT**. They both shriek.)*

*****PIANO MUSIC STARTS*****

Oh my God, you startled me! *(Crossing to dryer)* How dare you sneak up on a person like that...

EDDIE: *(Crossing to sink)* Sorry, lady, but I cut my finger.

SHUBERT: I'd like to help you, *(sitting in dryer chair, pulling the hood down)* but I can't stand the sight of blood.

*(By now **SHUBERT** is under the dryer and not able to hear **EDDIE**. She lifts and lowers the hood as indicated for each of her following lines.)*

EDDIE: *(At the sink, rinsing off his cut.)* Where is everybody?

SHUBERT: *(Lifting dryer hood)* What?

EDDIE: Where is everybody?

SHUBERT: *(Lowering dryer hood)* Well, Tony went racing out of here...

EDDIE: *(Crossing towards styling chair.)* Where's Barbara?

SHUBERT: *(Lifting dryer hood.)* What?

EDDIE: Where is Barbara?

SHUBERT: *(Lowering dryer hood.)* Barbara went out with the trash. And that other man...

EDDIE: (*Crossing to TONY'S station*) Where do they keep the band-aids?

SHUBERT: (*Lifting dryer hood.*) What!!?

EDDIE: (*Stepping toward SHUBERT, he's now in front of the supply closet, frustrated but not angry*) Where do they keep the band-aids?

SHUBERT: (*Lowering dryer hood.*) I don't know. Look in the supply closet. They keep everything in there.

EDDIE: (*Opening the door*) In here? (**EDDIE** exits into closet, closing door behind him.)

(*Just as the closet door closes, MIKEY bursts in from side door hot on EDDIE'S tail, crossing below styling chair, startling SHUBERT who gasps.*)

MIKEY: (*To C*) Hey Lady, where'd that guy go?

SHUBERT: (*Lifting dryer hood. Indicating the general direction of the closet, with exasperation*) Through that door.

(**MIKEY**, thinking she means the front door, runs out front door. Just as he is out the door, **SHUBERT** rises to try to catch him crossing towards front door.)

No, no, no, no...not that door, this door. Now I smell something. Something's burning. (**SHUBERT** knocks on closet door.) Sir! Sir! Could you come out here. I think there's something burning. (**SHUBERT** crosses toward coffee station.)

EDDIE: (**EDDIE**, opening closet door, pokes his head out) What?

SHUBERT: I said, I think there's something burning.

EDDIE: I don't smell anything. (**EDDIE** exits back into closet leaving the door open.)

SHUBERT: It's that hairdryer, that's what it is. (**SHUBERT** crosses back to the dryer slamming closed the supply closet door in the process.)

Good Lord, I don't know how to turn this thing off. The whole thing might explode. I'm getting out of here.

(**SHUBERT**, picks up her purse, crosses below styling and barber chairs towards front door as **TONY** races in on tiptoes from upstairs and, unseen

by **SHUBERT**, he crosses to closet door.)

I never should have come here in the first place... *(continuing ad lib)*.

TONY: *(TONY opens supply closet door and is startled by Eddie, yelping)*
AGGGGGH! Don't scare me like that. *(He slams door shut and backs away towards SHUBERT who, by now, is SR of TONY)*.

SHUBERT: *(SHUBERT touches TONY on the shoulder as he backs toward her. TONY shrieks again.)* Tony, what's the matter?

(EDDIE opens closet door and steps out.)

TONY: *(Breathless)* Oh, my God, Mrs. Shubert, the most horrible thing has happened.

SHUBERT: What?

TONY: I burned my goulash! That entire pot of goulash... *(EDDIE slams the closet door shut)*.

EDDIE: Forget about your goulash. I'm bleeding here. *(EDDIE shows TONY his bleeding finger)*

TONY: *(Seating EDDIE in the styling chair as he rushes to the sink for a towel.)*
Don't make me throw up on top of everything else. *(OPT: Don't make me hurl... Don't make me toss my cookies.)*

EDDIE: Get me a band-aid.

TONY: *(Crossing DC to sink to get towel to put on EDDIE'S lap)* Mrs. Shubert, get me a band-aid. They're right behind the Kleenex. *(He puts the towel on EDDIE'S lap beneath his bleeding hand.)*

(SHUBERT, at TONY'S station, gets a pre-set unwrapped band-aid from behind the Kleenex box and hands it to TONY and crosses DR.)

EDDIE: *(Simultaneously with the action)* And some antiseptic. It's a deep cut.

TONY: You don't need any antiseptic. This is a Hello Kitty Band-Aid, it's got all the antiseptic in the little Kitty pad. *(OPT: "This is a Disney's Frozen Band-Aid. It's got all the antiseptic right in the little pad." OPT: local drug store brand of Band-Aid that everybody knows.)*

EDDIE: *(TONY puts Band-Aid on EDDIE'S cut.)* Owwww! Careful! *(From off stage we hear BARBARA screaming. EVERYBODY momentarily freezes,*

alarmed by the sound of the screams, trying to identify where it's coming from.)

*(**EDDIE** rises, tosses the towel toward sink chair (underneath if possible) and secures the Band-Aid on his finger.)*

*(Trying to locate the sound, **TONY** takes a step towards the swinging doors.)*

*(Trying to locate the sound, **SHUBERT** takes a step towards the front door.)*

*As the screams from offstage get closer to the front door (from L to R), **EVERYBODY** ad libs their shock and horror to each other, wondering where the screams are coming from: "What is that? Is someone screaming?" By the last scream, they are focused on the front door.)*

(ALL OF THE ABOVE HAPPENS VERY QUICKLY)

BARBARA: *(**BARBARA** bursts through the front door on the third scream, struggling to catch her breath) Oh my God. Oh my God. Help! (gasping) Help! Upstairs! Upstairs! There's blood!*

TONY: Blood?

BARBARA: There's blood everywhere. Isabel! Isabel's dead!

EDDIE: What are you talking about?

BARBARA: Don't you hear what I'm saying? She's dead! Isabel's DEAD!

EDDIE: Dead?!

BARBARA: Eddie! *(**BARBARA** faints into **EDDIE'S** arms and onto the floor.)*

EDDIE: Barbara!

TONY &

SHUBERT: *(Quickly looking at each other and then stepping slightly towards **BARBARA**) She fainted!!*

*(**MIKEY** and **NICK** burst through the doors simultaneously with guns drawn. Note: **NICK** and **MIKEY** should NOT be wearing their guns when they first enter the shop. They both put them on just before bursting into the room.)*

MIKEY: Freeze. Stay right where you are!!!

(SHUBERT, EDDIE, AND TONY, facing MIKEY, scream and put hands up.)

NICK: Hold it! Don't move!!!

(SHUBERT, EDDIE, and TONY, now facing NICK, scream.)

(With nowhere else to turn, SHUBERT, EDDIE, and TONY turn C and put hands up screaming to...)

*****BLACKOUT*****

(After the lights go to black the PIANO MUSIC fades up and stops. There is a beat of silence to give the audience a welcome opportunity to applaud. The SIRENS fade in, reach a crescendo and fade out. The music and sirens should be separate cues)

During Blackout:

EDDIE turns off dryer and begins pacing from UL to DL.

BARBARA sits in styling chair.

TONY returns barber chair to an upright position, turns it front and sits.

SHUBERT crosses to front door and paces.

MIKEY crosses to desk and sits and uses his cell phone.

NICK exits through front door and crosses backstage to swinging doors.

ID SCENE

In the blackout 10 minutes pass during which the homicide squad has entered and gone upstairs. Uniformed police are stationed outside. Nobody has been told anything about the murder other than that they must stay put.

MIKEY is DR sitting at the desk on the phone.

SHUBERT is UR pacing by the front door.

TONY is in the barber chair.

BARBARA is in the styling chair.

EDDIE is pacing from UL to DL.

The following dialogue begins in the dark.

MIKEY: *(On phone, getting chewed out by his Captain, desperately trying to explain how Isabel Czerny has been found murdered while he and NICK were supposed to be protecting her. Trying to get a word in edgewise.) Uh huh... Yeah... No... He's upstairs with the victim...*

SHUBERT: *(slow burn.)* You have kept us here for ten minutes and I'm on my way to Bermuda tonight. *(continuing to ad lib with TONY).*

MIKEY: I don't know how it happened... *(continuing to ad lib on the phone under the following rising dialogue:)*

TONY: Mrs. Shubert, how can you talk about Bermuda at a time like this? I've got eight people coming over for dinner... *(continuing to ad lib with SHUBERT and BARBARA.)*

BARBARA: Tony! How can you think of food at a time like this? *(continuing to ad lib with TONY and SHUBERT.)*

MIKEY: Folks! I'm on the phone!! *(They all ignore him).*

EDDIE: *(To MIKEY)* Look, what's going on here? I've got a business to run. *(to BARBARA)* This would have to happen today... *(continuing to ad lib).*

(BARBARA, TONY, SHUBERT, EDDIE continue to ad lib reaching a cacophonous crescendo until NICK enters).

MIKEY: *(Yelling into the phone)* EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL!!!!
(hanging up phone when NICK enters.)

NICK: *(Enters from upstairs.)* All right folks. FOLKS!

(The Suspects quickly quiet themselves. NICK crosses below styling chair)

ID SCENE

to C).

I'm sorry about the delay, but nobody's going anywhere 'til I've had a chance to ask a few questions around here.

SHUBERT: (*Stepping in*) Just a moment. Who are you? And why are you asking questions?

NICK: Sorry Ma'am, this all happened a little fast. I'm Lieutenant Nick O'Brien. This is my partner Detective Mike Thomas (*MIKEY crosses to R of NICK*). D.C. Police.

SHUBERT: (*crossing DR to address TONY*) Police? Tony, what's going on here?

TONY: Don't look at me, Mrs. Shubert. I didn't know they were cops.

EDDIE: (*Crossing U above styling chair.*) Not so fast. Let's see some ID. (*Arriving L of NICK*)

NICK: (*NICK indicates his gun*) I got your ID right here pal.

EDDIE: (*Stopping for a nano-second. Seeing the gun, he instantly returns to seat DL while saying*) They're D.C. cops all right. (*Sits.*)

SHUBERT: Then who were all those other people who went racing through here and up the stairs?

NICK: That was the homicide squad, Ma'am.

SHUBERT: Homicide?

TONY: (*To NICK*) You mean it really is murder then?

NICK: Yes, Sir, I'm afraid so.

TONY: (*To SHUBERT*) She was like a mother to me...

(*As he exits, NICK indicates to MIKEY he should read the SUSPECTS their rights.*)

MIKEY: Okay, folks, listen up. (*Reading from his pad, as quickly as possible, without losing a single syllable.*) You have the right to remain silent. You can refuse to answer any questions. Anything you say or do may be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to a phone call. You have the right to talk to a lawyer and have him present while you're being questioned. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be appointed to

represent you before any questioning if you wish one.

(To the suspects generally) Do you understand each of these rights as I have explained them to you?

TONY: *(Raising his hand as if swearing an oath.)* So help me God!

MIKEY: *(To TONY)* Having these rights in mind, do you wish to talk to us now?

TONY: I don't know. I feel just like Joe Biden I've got so much to say but I'd probably just better keep my mouth shut. *(OPT: I feel just like Bernie Sanders. I've got so much to say but nobody cares.)*

ALL: *(General hubbub during which MIKEY fades L behind styling chair.)*

NICK: *(Returning with tape deck)* Okay! Okay, settle down. Now, I'm going to have to see some sort of identification from each of you. *(Crossing D from front door below barber chair and through C above styling chair to UL dryer chair. He stops C turning back, indicating SHUBERT)* A Medicaid card *(continuing UL to put tape deck on dryer chair)* Social Security card, Driver's License, anything will do.

TONY: How about a hairdressing license?

NICK: That'll be divine.

(TONY quickly removes the two hair dressing licenses from the wall and gives BARBARA hers, returning to barber chair. SHUBERT searches for card in purse DR. When TONY is back in his seat, NICK addresses EDDIE.)

Okay. Let's start with you. *(MIKEY crosses to US of NICK where he will write everybody's information into his pad.)* You're Edward Lawrence.

EDDIE: *(Rising)* That's correct.

NICK: Your occupation, Mr. Lawrence?

EDDIE: I'm an antique dealer.

NICK: Oh, really?

EDDIE: Well, used antiques.

NICK: Your business address?

EDDIE: *(Handing his business card to NICK who glances at it and hands it to MIKEY)* Pieces of Eight. 1664 Wisconsin Avenue. *(Local reference)*

SHUBERT: *(Crossing a step C to EDDIE)* Oh, we're practically neighbors.

NICK: And your home address?

EDDIE: 7403 New Hampshire Avenue.

SHUBERT: *(Another few steps in)* Foggy Bottom?

EDDIE: Langley Park.

SHUBERT: *(With disdain, turning instantly and crossing back to DR)* Oh God.

NICK: *(Crossing C below styling chair and above BARBARA)* Do you know anybody else in this shop, Mr. Lawrence?

EDDIE: No. Not really

NICK: *(Taking her license and reading her name)* Not even Miss DeMarco here?
(Handing the license to MIKEY.)

EDDIE: Well, we've met on occasion.

TONY: That's pretty obvious, isn't it?

NICK: *(From C, turning to TONY in barber chair.)* Why do you say that, Mr...

TONY: Whitcomb. I'm Anthony Whitcomb.

NICK: *(Gesturing to TONY'S license which is in his lap.)* Let's see it.

TONY: Let's see yours first. *(NICK grabs license from TONY'S lap and hands it to MIKEY. TONY reacts with surprise.)* Well, it is pretty obvious, isn't it? Like before, didn't the two of them seem awful anxious to have that private conversation?

EDDIE: We did not.

BARBARA: Mind your own business, Tony.

EDDIE: There's no law against being discreet.

NICK: Mikey, any law against being discreet?

MIKEY: Jesse Smollett doesn't think so. (*OPT: topical indiscreet celebrity*) (*MIKEY takes a step to EDDIE and hands the business card back to him*).

NICK: (*Crossing above barber chair to DL*) All right. Now then, Ma'am.

SHUBERT: (*Crossing away from NICK through C and above styling chair in an attempt to get her bags*) I'm very sorry, but I've got nothing to do with this, and I really can't be detained. I'm late enough as it is.

MIKEY: (*Stepping US to UL of styling chair to block her*) All we need is your name and address Ma'am.

SHUBERT: (*To MIKEY*) I'd love to cooperate, really, I would. (*Turning back to NICK and crossing to C.*) But I'm not sure I'm doing the right thing. (*Stationary from C*) I think I'll just stand on the Fifth Commandment. (*MIKEY crosses R to put licenses on TONY'S station.*)

NICK: You can stand on whatever you want to, Mrs. Schuman.

SHUBERT: ShuBERT.

NICK: And your first name is...?

SHUBERT: (*Stepping to NICK to hand him her card.*) Eleanor. Eleanor Corcoran (*locally prominent name, intending to impress*) Shubert. (*Handing NICK card*).

NICK: Lady, this is a Capitol One card.

SHUBERT: Yes. (*Snatching the card back*) And what's in your wallet? (*putting card back into her purse.*)

NICK: (*Seeing her ring*) Whoa! That's some rock on your finger, lady.

SHUBERT: Oh, thank you. It's the famous Shubert diamond. Of course, it comes with the Shubert curse.

NICK: What's the Shubert curse?

SHUBERT: MISTER Shubert. (*after the line, adjusting to C*)

NICK: (*Crossing from DR up to above styling chair*) And what is Mr. Shubert's first name?

SHUBERT: Adam. Adam Shubert?? (*Subtext: "Certainly you have heard of him."*)

NICK: *(Crossing to DL)* His occupation?

SHUBERT: He's with *(well-known local corporation.)*

NICK: What does he do?

SHUBERT: He's on the board. He doesn't "do" anything.

NICK: And your home address?

SHUBERT: 3301 Foxhall Road. Now, may I be on my way? *(Crossing from C below barber chair towards the front door.)*

MIKEY: *(MIKEY steps in to stop her as NICK crosses to above shampoo chair.)*
I'm sorry, Mrs. Shubert, but you have to stay.

SHUBERT: Why? I don't know anything.

NICK: Yeah, right! *(sits.)*

SHUBERT: *(Crossing to UC, addressing NICK)* I never really met this Czerny person. I am a law-abiding citizen. I came in here to have my hair done. I never moved from under that dryer.

EDDIE: *(rising)* That's a bold-faced lie right there.

SHUBERT: What do you mean?

EDDIE: *(crossing a step or two towards dryer)* She was nowhere near that dryer when I came back into the shop.

SHUBERT: Officer, I'm willing to cooperate, but I don't have to put up with this. This "gentleman" is calling me a liar, and I find that highly ironic considering he's concealing evidence about himself.

NICK: Evidence?

SHUBERT: Yes. *(crossing a step to NICK)* For instance, when he came down here, his hands...

EDDIE: *(crossing a step or two to NICK)* I came in, not down. In!!

SHUBERT: *(crossing another step to NICK)* Wherever he came from, his hands were covered with blood.

NICK: Blood!?

- EDDIE:** *(crossing another step to NICK)* I cut myself. It was an accident.
- SHUBERT:** *(crossing to the side of the shampoo chair to sink)* Then he came over to this sink and started washing up. *(She hits the sink for emphasis, ending the argument).*
- (Simultaneously, **SHUBERT** crosses DR and **EDDIE** crosses DL as...)*
- NICK:** *(Rising and crossing to C)* Thank you, but I'll ask the questions, Mrs. SHOE-BOX. *(**SHUBERT** does a take to him.)*
- EDDIE:** Big deal! I washed my hands! Just let me point out to you that the music started playing again after I got back from the men's room. *(Crossing UL to indicate swinging doors.)*
- TONY:** So?
- EDDIE:** So, I couldn't have killed her. Isabel Czerny was alive and well and playing the piano when I was in this room.
- NICK:** Not necessarily. You see, most of the music we've been hearing this afternoon may not have been Mrs. Czerny playing.
- TONY:** Who was it, then?
- NICK:** We're not sure. A cassette of pre-recorded music was found on the piano upstairs, and folks, that cassette was still running when the homicide squad arrived. *(**NICK** emphasizes the last words.)*
- BARBARA:** So what does that mean?
- MIKEY:** It means when the cops got here. *(**MIKEY** emphasizes the last words, parroting NICK.)*
- NICK:** *(Crossing D to L of sink)* It means that whoever killed Mrs. Czerny could have murdered her and then switched on the cassette to make it appear as though there was no interruption in her practicing. *(Turning back to face BARBARA and the other suspects.)* It means, Miss DeMarco, that whoever murdered Isabel Czerny is in this room, here, right now.
- (General outcry! **MIKEY** tries to quiet **TONY** and **SHUBERT** SR. while **BARBARA** and **EDDIE** object SL.)*
- (Crossing to C, trying to regain control)* Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey!!! *(**NICK** silences them with his whistle)* Well, it's pretty obvious I'm going to have

to talk to you all individualistically. Mr. Whitcomb, is there a room nearby where everyone could wait?

TONY: We could all wait in the supply closet.

NICK: *(Opening the supply closet door)* In here?

TONY: Yeah. There's plenty of room.

NICK: This is good. *(Pulling out BARBARA'S rolling cart, placing it L of styling chair and continuing DL)* Mike, confiscate their cell phones and get 'em all into the supply closet.

MIKEY: *(UC at supply closet, holding open a zip-lock bag to collect their phones.)*
This way please. Come on, come on. Let's go!

(General hubbub while everyone deposits their phones into a large sandwich bag and exits. TONY notices the sloppiness of the hamper and crosses to tidy it up. When everyone is in the closet and MIKEY has closed the door, TONY crosses towards the door.)

Whitcomb Interrogation

NICK: Except for you, Mr. Whitcomb. I want YOU.

TONY: *(Just as he reaches the door he turns quickly to NICK.)* Then go for it!

NICK: Sit down!!!!!!

(NICK crosses to above styling chair as TONY scrambles R above and around barber chair and sits. They size each other up. Laughter may ensue.)

(Getting serious and taking a step towards TONY) Tell me, Mr. Whitcomb, do you consider yourself a jealous sort of person?

TONY: Jealous? Jealous of what?

NICK: *(As he crosses to TONY, to L of barber chair)* Oh, I don't know. Jealous of Isabel's talent? Her success? Maybe even her money?

TONY: No, no. I've got enough money of my own.

NICK: *(Crossing above barber chair around to DR)* All right then, maybe you were jealous of her relationship with someone else.

TONY: Why are you so certain that jealousy courses through my veins?

NICK: Well, it's obvious you're a man of very deep passion, Mr. Whitcomb.

TONY: *(Flattered, TONY quickly mouths)* Thank you.

NICK: *(Crossing below barber chair to styling chair indicating the swinging doors)* I mean, you made no attempt to conceal that passion when you raced outta here a while ago. You were in a bit of a rage, wouldn't you say?

TONY: Rage? No. Oh God, no! I wouldn't call that a rage at all, really. No!

NICK: *(Crossing back towards TONY)* How would you describe your emotions?

TONY: How would I describe my emotions? I don't know. This has been a very difficult couple of weeks for me. You see, I'm a Capricorn, and right now my moon is in Uranus. And that is NOT a good place for my moon to be. *(NICK crossing to DR)*

(The joke ends here before going on. If the laugh on "Uranus" warrants,

TONY *can continue.*)

OPT:

TONY: *And right now, my Venus is rising.*

NICK: *Whitcomb!!!!*

TONY: *Especially in the morning.*

(end of OPT.)

NICK: Level with me. Have you ever attacked Mrs. Czerny before?

TONY: Attack her? Isabel? That's ludicrous.

NICK: But it's possible. In your frenzied state.

TONY: Hey, look... McGruff... *(or other comic sleuth)* let's get something straight... I'd never lay a hand on her. I couldn't.

NICK: You're sure?

TONY: I'm absolutely positive!!

NICK: *(Crossing C to styling chair.)* Did Barbara DeMarco know Isabel Czerny?

TONY: What?

NICK: *(Turning to TONY, making himself clear)* Did Barbara DeMarco know Isabel Czerny?

TONY: You mean like in the biblical sense?

NICK: I beg your pardon?

TONY: Never mind, you wouldn't understand that...

NICK: *(Crossing a step or two towards TONY)* Wait a minute! Are you trying to tell me that Barbara DeMarco and Isabel Czerny were involved in some kind of Lebanese relationship?

TONY: I think Miss DeMarco might be better qualified to answer that question, Lieutenant,

NICK: I'm asking you.

TONY: But why? It didn't concern me. It was a private relationship between Barbara and Isabel. (*Confidentially, not wanting to be overheard by the people in the closet*) You know Barbara can be a very private person when she wants to be.

NICK: Really? In what way?

TONY: Well, like, I didn't know about her and that guy (*indicating where EDDIE had been sitting*).

NICK: (*Taking a few steps DL toward that spot*) Edward Lawrence, you mean?

TONY: Well, whatever his name is. I certainly didn't know what his name was. I just figured he was another guy, came in off the street, wanted his hair cut... no appointment, naturally... but wait! Wait a minute! Now that all this has happened, he's got to be the guy that did it, right?

NICK: Why?

TONY: 'cause he's got beady eyes. He does!

TONY: All the worst criminals have beady eyes.

NICK: No they don't.

TONY: Yes they do! Think about it! John Wayne Gacy? Ted Bundy? Felicity Huffman? (*using the name of a celebrity who's had a recent run-in with the law.*) Hey, Isabel probably drove him to it. I mean she could drive Dora the Explorer to deport los niños! (*OPT: A mild mannered celebrity to do something violent. For many years we used "She could drive Mr. Rogers to violence."*)

NICK: Whitcomb, why would you make a crack like that about Mrs. Czerny?

TONY: Have you ever been driven crazy by a woman, Lieutenant? (*NICK scoffs*) No, I'm serious about this. (*TONY rises and crosses to NICK*) Have you ever been driven booga-booga, nutty-nut-nuts crazy in the head by a woman?

NICK: No.

TONY: Oh God, why am I asking you? You're from Rockville. You're half nuts to begin with. (*TONY crosses to his station.*)

NICK: (*Crossing to BARBARA'S station.*) You know, Whitcomb, she was

murdered with a pair of scissors.

TONY: I don't believe that.

NICK: It's true. Isabel Czerny was stabbed in the throat with an ordinary pair of haircutting shears just like these. (*brandishing the scissors from BARBARA'S station.*)

TONY: (*Crossing DR of barber chair and sits.*) Well, that really lets me off the hook, then, doesn't it?

NICK: (*Dropping scissors back on BARBARA'S station.*) Oh it does? Why?

TONY: Because if I murdered her, I'd never use shears. That would make me look too guilty.

NICK: (*Crossing to TONY*) Oh? What would you use?

TONY: A knife. Possibly a gun. Put her in a sombrero and take her to a Trump rally?

(*OPT. topical disaster. i.e.*

"Serve her a mad cow Happy Meal?"

"Dress her in a poodle skirt and send her to Michael Vick?").

If no topical disaster... "A knife. Possibly a gun. A candlestick in the conservatory?")

NICK: (*Crossing above barber chair to DL*) Unfortunately Whitcomb, in a crime of passion you don't always have a choice when it comes to murder weapons. It's usually what's convenient.

TONY: Well, you're supposed to be the expert. But, you know, I watch *Law and Order* and I think something else.

NICK: And what's that?

TONY: I think whoever killed Isabel Czerny wanted to make me look as guilty as hell, and that's why they left the scissors. (*TONY proves his point by punctuating this with the: "Law and Order" Chung Chung sound.*) (*Standing facing NICK DR*) Now look, could I just go please? I mean, I've told you everything I know.

NICK: Yeah, go on, get out of here. (*TONY begins to cross DS of barber chair to closet*) But don't you get lost, because I may need you later. (*NICK turns to look at the appointment book on desk.*)

- TONY:** *(Stopping C)* Don't worry, if you need me, just whistle. (*TONY continues towards supply closet, then stops at the door and turns back to NICK, vamping, a la Lauren Bacall*) You do know how to whistle, don't you? Just put your lips together and...
- NICK:** Whitcomb!!!! (*He waits for silence*). Get back in the closet. (*TONY begins to exit and suddenly realizes the double meaning of NICK'S line! In comic outrage, he flounces out, quickly closing the door behind him.*)
- (Whenever the closet door is open SHUBERT can be heard chattering incessantly [ad-lib]).*
- NICK:** *(calling MIKEY out of closet, stepping U to R of barber chair)* Mikey!
- MIKEY:** *(popping head out of closet)* Yo!
- NICK:** Come out here for a minute.
- (Simultaneously at the exact moment the closet door opens, we hear SHUBERT mid-sentence.)*
- SHUBERT:** *(chewing MIKEY out)* ...can't keep us here, young man. I know my constipational rights! (*MIKEY slams door shut*).
- NICK:** *(at UR of barber chair)* What is going on in there?
- MIKEY:** *(at UL of barber chair)* That Mrs. Shubert is on a tirade, Nick. First, she was accusing us of ignoring her and now she says we're both suffering from *(referring to the notes in his pad)* Attention Deficit Disorder.
- NICK:** Huh?
- MIKEY:** What?
- NICK:** Mikey, are Lawrence and DeMarco talking to each other?
- MIKEY:** Nick, there is no conversation in there. And if there were, I couldn't hear. Mrs. Shubert hasn't come up for air. Yatta-ta-yatta-ta-yatta-ta... (*MIKEY gets carried away in his enthusiasm*).
- NICK:** *(Calming him)* Mikey. MIKEY! Get me Lawrence next, will you? *(crossing DR)*.
- MIKEY:** Okay. (*MIKEY opens closet door and calls for EDDIE as he exits*) Mr. Lawrence!

SHUBERT: *(We hear **SHUBERT** chattering on about something trivial in her rarified world i.e. "I, for one, have always been a fan of social distancing." We hear her mid-sentence the second the door opens and stops the second the door closes.)*

Lawrence Interrogation

(EDDIE enters from closet and closes door behind him, stepping to UC)

NICK: *(From DR)* Well, well, well. Eddie Lawrence.

EDDIE: That's me, O'Reilly.

NICK: O'Brien!

EDDIE: Oh really?

NICK: Before we get started Mr. Lawrence, I just want to remind you that anything you say can and will be held against you.

EDDIE: Ok. Boobies.

NICK: Mr. Lawrence, can you tell me why you're here today?

EDDIE: I'd say I was here to get my hair cut. What would you say?

NICK: I'd say you were dodging my question. *(OPT. for bald Eddies "I'd say that was wishful thinking.")* Did you know Isabel Czerny?

EDDIE: *(crossing around L of styling chair)* I had some business dealings with her.

NICK: Is it true you had an appointment with her this afternoon?

EDDIE: Yes, I had an appointment with her this afternoon.

NICK: But you just said you were here to get your hair cut.

EDDIE: I wanted to get my hair cut before my appointment. *(sits)*

NICK: May I ask what this appointment was about?

EDDIE: *(swiveling chair slightly towards NICK)* You may.

NICK: What was this appointment about, Lawrence?

EDDIE: She wanted to sell me something.

NICK: What?

EDDIE: As a matter of fact, her piano.

NICK: Her piano? You didn't find that unusual?

EDDIE: No.

NICK: Oh, come on pal, you want us to believe a concert pianist, on the verge of a comeback, wanted to sell her piano?

EDDIE: Comeback? How do you know that?

NICK: The same way I know you got a record, Lawrence. *(As he begins to enumerate the crimes, EDDIE crosses from styling chair to DL as NICK crosses to C.)* Receiving stolen property, passing phony checks, driving in the H.O.V. lane with two inflatable dummies... *(or other local/topical joke.)*

EDDIE: *(Turning to NICK)* You're a fast worker.

NICK: No, I'm just a cop. No more, no less. *(Crossing to DR)*

EDDIE: There is no less. *(NICK turns back to EDDIE.) (PAUSE, smugly)* Boom.

NICK: Did Mrs. Czerny know that you and Barbara DeMarco were "friends"?

EDDIE: *(Crossing U to above R of styling chair)* Well, she should have. Barbara and I met at Mrs. Czerny's.

NICK: Oh really? When was that?

EDDIE: About a year ago... maybe more. I forget.

NICK: *(Crossing UR of barber chair to UL of barber chair)* Wait a minute. What were you doing at Mrs. Czerny's in the first place?

EDDIE: Actually, I saw an ad in the "Georgetownner." Mrs. Czerny wanted to sell a chest of drawers. Queen Anne. So I got in touch with her. I have a lot of buyers interested in that period.

NICK: And you bought that chest?

EDDIE: *(Crossing to sit in styling chair)* Yes, I did.

NICK: And the contents?

EDDIE: Yes. And now I'm back... was back... for the piano.

NICK: *(Crossing a step down to lean against the arm of the barber chair.)* How

LAWRENCE INTERROGATION

does Barbara DeMarco fit into this little deal here?

EDDIE: What makes you think Miss DeMarco fits into this at all?

NICK: *(Tapping downstage temple)* I've got ESPN.

EDDIE: Really? I've got ESPN Two.

(OPT: instead of ESPN joke).

NICK: *(tapping downstage temple)* I'm psychotic.

EDDIE: Actually, I was hoping that Barbara could influence Isabel into selling me the piano at the price I was offering.

NICK: In other words, you're telling me that Barbara DeMarco has a good head for business.

EDDIE: Don't let her fool you, Lieutenant. Barbara DeMarco is one smart cookie.

NICK: *(Standing)* Did you know that Mrs. Czerny was afraid of you?

EDDIE: Afraid of me?

NICK: She certainly was. She thought you threatened her. *(Crossing U above and around barber chair to R of barber chair)* She was under the impression that you were gonna try to blackmail her.

EDDIE: Blackmail?! Forget about what she thought. She was nuts, weird. I mean she was so crazy she even took Viagra.

NICK: She took Viagra? Why?

EDDIE: She heard it helped old pianists perform better. And hey, it must have worked. I hear one of her concerts lasted over four hours.

NICK: Ok, when you picked up that chest did you find anything unusual in it?

EDDIE: There was a lot of junk in it.

NICK: What kind of junk?

EDDIE: All kinds of junk. Newspaper clippings. Old musical scores. Hundreds of photographs of Isabel with famous people and the musical groups she

LAWRENCE INTERROGATION

performed with. Isabel with the National Symphony. Isabel with the London Philharmonic. Isabel with the Spice Girls.

NICK: (*Crossing to C*) Wait a minute. Are you trying to tell me that Isabel Czerny played with the Spice Girls?

EDDIE: Yeah. She was Old Spice.

NICK: Ok, Lawrence. Let me tell you what I want. What I really, really want. I want to know did you find any letters in that chest?

EDDIE: Letters?

NICK: Yeah, letters.

EDDIE: Yes, I did find some letters. As a matter of fact, that's another reason I was here today. I was going to return them to her this afternoon.

NICK: Great. Then you've got the letters with you?

EDDIE: Yes.

NICK: May I see them, please?

EDDIE: Sure. (*Taking them from his jacket pocket*) But remember, Lieutenant, they're my property.

NICK: Really? Now I would think that they're the property of the person they're addressed to... Miss Barbara DeMarco. (*NICK knows the letters are addressed to Barbara without looking at them*).

EDDIE: (*handing over the letters*) So Isabel wrote letters to Barbara. Where does the blackmail come in?

NICK: (*Crossing above styling chair to DL, reading.*) Dearest Barbara, my magic-fingered angel of delight...

EDDIE: Come on, you couldn't blackmail Taylor Swift with what's in those letters.

NICK: (*Blowing his stack*) HEY!!! NO CRACKS ABOUT TAYLOR SWIFT!!!! (*OPT: Justin Bieber or some other pop idol that NICK, surprisingly, cares about.*)

EDDIE: All right, relax. Calm down... Shake it off (*if you use Taylor Swift.*)

NICK: Hey!

LAWRENCE INTERROGATION

- EDDIE:** So Isabel may have written letters to Barbara. This is 2020, Lieutenant. Who cares?
- NICK:** But Isabel Czerny was old school. And her fans were from another generation. I think she would have done anything to keep you from exposing the contents of these letters.
- EDDIE:** (*Crossing to confront NICK*) Then she had good reason to murder me if you surmise correctly. Which you don't! (*Crossing through C to TONY'S station. He looks at himself in the mirror.*)
- NICK:** (*NICK puts the letters in his back pocket and crosses UL of styling chair to C*) All right, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe you weren't after Isabel Czerny's money. Maybe you were after Barbara DeMarco's money.
- EDDIE:** (*Crossing DR a few steps*) Barbara's broke.
- NICK:** Not anymore.
- EDDIE:** (*stopping*) What do you mean?
- NICK:** Oh, come on, Lawrence, you are aware, aren't you, that Barbara DeMarco is the sole beneficiary of Mrs. Czerny's will?
- EDDIE:** No, I wasn't. I didn't know anything about a will.
- NICK:** So now that Isabel's dead, Barbara DeMarco is sitting very pretty.
- EDDIE:** May I ask how you know all this? (*Crossing UR above barber chair towards NICK who is C.*)
- NICK:** You may. (*stopping EDDIE.*) Boom. (*Imitating EDDIE'S gesture from earlier*). You see, Mr. Lawrence, Isabel Czerny had an appointment with her lawyer tomorrow morning. Well, I called (*the name of some well-known injury attorney who advertises a lot*) myself. And he told me that Isabel Czerny was very interested in changing the terms of her will.
- EDDIE:** So where do I fit in?
- NICK:** So, maybe you knew of her intentions.
- EDDIE:** Right. (*Turning from NICK and crossing to DR sarcastically dramatizing NICK'S theory*) So I wait here until a couple of undercover cops arrive, and then I rush upstairs and plunge a pair of scissors into Isabel Czerny's throat, and then Barbara and I ride off into the sunset in a silver Rolls

LAWRENCE INTERROGATION

Royce. Is that it? You'll have to come up with something better than that, Lieutenant. *(after the line, he crosses towards the closet door).*

NICK: Maybe I will, but I'm not finished with you yet.

EDDIE: I think you are. Next? (**EDDIE** exits into closet, **SHUBERT** ad-libs.)

NICK: *(Crossing to desk to compare the handwriting on the letters to the handwriting in the appointment book)* Mikey!

MIKEY: *(Opening closet door)* Yo!

NICK: Send out Miss DeMarco.

MIKEY: *(Stepping out and calling)* Miss DeMarco! *(After a second or two)* Miss DeMarco!

(MIKEY exits as BARBARA enters and crosses to C. SHUBERT has ad-libbed throughout.)

Demarco Interrogation

*****PHONE RINGS*****

NICK: O'Brien, here. *(He listens.)* Oh really? Well, that's excellent. *(Pause)*
Thank you very much. *(Turning to DEMARCO)* Good news, Demarco!

BARBARA: You found the killer?

NICK: No. I just saved a bunch of money on my car insurance by switching to Geiko.

(Note: write a new joke as the opportunity arises or cut the phone call entirely.)

BARBARA: Look. You got any questions you want to ask me? *(If the phone call is cut, BARBARA says after being ignored for a second or two, "Ok, I'm here. You got any questions you want to ask me?")*

NICK: I need to clear something up, Demarco. How was it you came to discover Mrs. Czerny's body?

BARBARA: I don't remember that.

NICK: You don't remember finding a bloody corpse?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: Well do you remember going upstairs?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: Then I suppose you don't remember coming back here, screaming and fainting.

BARBARA: *(Putting an end to this line of questioning.)* I'm telling you I don't remember any of that. *(Crossing U to above styling chair to her cart where her nail polish remover is. She takes a cotton ball and begins to vigorously remove the polish from one hand.)*

NICK: *(Crossing above barber chair to URC)* All right, what was your relationship to the deceased?

BARBARA: We were friends. Close friends.

NICK: Nothing more?

DEMARCO INTERROGATION

BARBARA: I knew it! (*Crossing to NICK*) Tony's been out here shooting off his mouth about me and Isabel, right? Well, don't believe a word he says. Tony Whitcomb is a genital liar. (*Having made her point, she returns to her cart and continues to remove polish*).

NICK: (*Crossing to sit on or lean against the L arm of the barber chair*.) When did you meet Isabel Czerny?

BARBARA: About a year and a half ago. When I first started working here.

NICK: Oh? What did you do before you worked here?

BARBARA: Before I worked here? I was with the F.B.I.

NICK: You were with the F.B.I.?

BARBARA: Yeah. Frederick's Beauty Institute?

(*OPT:*

BARBARA: *Before I worked here? I was with FEMA.*

NICK: *You were with FEMA?*

BARBARA: *Yeah. Fort Edward Makeup Academy?*

Or:

BARBARA: *Before I worked here? I was with the CIA.*

NICK: *You were with the CIA?*

BARBARA: *Yeah. Cosmetology Institute of America?*

Or (in Canada):

BARBARA: *Before I worked here? I was with the RCMP.*

NICK: *You were with the RCMP?*

BARBARA: *Yeah. The Royal College of Manicures and Pedicures?*

NICK: And as soon as you started working here you became close friends with the Isabel Czerny?

BARBARA: (*Crossing to NICK*) No, not right away. At first I felt kinda weird around

her. She could be really strange. You never really knew where you stood with Isabel.

NICK: But she “liked” you, didn’t she?

BARBARA: *(Getting his drift and not backing down.)* Yeah. Isabel was very nice to me. *(Crosses to sink trash can and throws away used cotton ball.)*

NICK: And when did you meet Eddie Lawrence?

BARBARA: *(At the trash can, facing out, worried about how **EDDIE** might have answered)* About three or four months ago. *(Crossing UL back to her cart).*

NICK: Where did you meet him?

BARBARA: At Isabel’s.

NICK: What kind of piano did Isabel Czerny own?

BARBARA: It was black. White keys? Three legs?

NICK: Do you know what make it was?

BARBARA: Yes, I do.

NICK: *(Getting frustrated)* Well, what was it?

BARBARA: *(Proving she knows)* It was a STEINBERG.

NICK: You mean a Steinbeck.

BARBARA: Yeah, you’re right.

NICK: How much was it worth?

BARBARA: A thousand dollars.

NICK: A thousand dollars?

BARBARA: Yeah. She told me it was a grand.

NICK: *(Sitting in the barber chair)* Eddie Lawrence led me to believe you were an expert on the subject.

BARBARA: What?

- NICK:** In fact, he told me you were helping Isabel sell her piano.
- BARBARA:** Isabel would never sell her piano. She just told Eddie that so he'd go up and visit her.
- NICK:** Why did she want Eddie Lawrence up there at all?
- BARBARA:** It's not rocket surgery, Lieutenant. (*Crossing to NICK*) She was a lonely old lady. She loved it when he'd go up there. She'd get all dolled up, drag out her scrapbooks, talk about the past.
- NICK:** So, of course, you were present every time Eddie Lawrence met with Mrs. Czerny?
- BARBARA:** I guess so.
- NICK:** You certainly don't think there was ever any romance between those two...?
- BARBARA:** No!
- NICK:** Was there ever any romance between Mr. Lawrence and you?
- BARBARA:** (*Exasperated*) You know, you're awfully interested in my love life, O'Brien. Everything okay at home? (*Crossing back to her cart to cap the nail polish remover.*)
- NICK:** (*Stung, crossing R out of barber chair to UR of barber chair*) I just want to know if you believe in love, Miss DeMarco.
- BARBARA:** (*Crossing to toss cotton ball into sink trash can*) I believe in love, I just can't live on it. (*Getting a towel and quickly rinsing her hands.*)
- NICK:** (*Crossing from UR to C*) But you can live on money?
- BARBARA:** That I'd like to try.
- NICK:** (*Crossing from C to UL of styling chair and cart*) Well, you'd have more money if you owned your own shop.
- BARBARA:** (*Crossing DR, drying her hands*) But I don't have the money to start my own shop.
- NICK:** (*Crossing DL*) Maybe that's why you wanted Isabel dead!

DEMARCO INTERROGATION

BARBARA: (*STOPS! Turning to NICK*) What?

(*On the following lines, NICK and BARBARA step towards each other until they find themselves facing off just above the shampoo chair by "...you ain't too upset."*)

NICK: So you could ditch Tony Whitcomb and start your own business.

BARBARA: I don't know what you're talking about!

NICK: You were the sole beneficiary in her will.

BARBARA: I didn't even know she made a will.

NICK: She was leaving you every penny of her money.

BARBARA: Money? We were friends! That's all.

NICK: Well, for someone who just lost a friend, you ain't too upset.

BARBARA: WELL, MAYBE I'M NOT A VERY EMOTIONAL PERSON!!!
(*BARBARA loses control, violently throwing towel into shampoo chair. Crosses to R of barber chair.*)

NICK: (*Picking up towel and weighing its significance, tossing it into hamper as he says*) Thank you, Miss DeMarco. I'm through with you for the moment. (*Crosses DL*) Mikey!

MIKEY: (*Opening door and popping head out. SHUBERT ad-libs simultaneously.*) Yo!

NICK: Send in Mrs. Shubert.

MIKEY: Good! (*Shuts door and ad-lib stops.*)

BARBARA: Look, I'm sorry I wasn't more helpful, Lieutenant.

NICK: Oh, you've been more helpful than you think, Miss DeMarco.

BARBARA: Well, I hope you get your man. (*Crossing to closet.*)

NICK: And I hope you get yours.

(*BARBARA stops to look at NICK as SHUBERT flings the door open.*)

DEMARCO INTERROGATION

Shubert Interrogation

SHUBERT: *(Crossing to C)* Well, you're finally getting around to me.

*(As **BARBARA** exits into closet, **MIKEY** follows **SHUBERT** out and closes closet door. He steps R to front of TONY'S station.)*

NICK: Yes, Ma'am, we're saving the best for last.

SHUBERT: This is all very tragic, really it is, but I've got to be going. I cannot afford to have the Shubert name dragged through the mud. *(Crosses UC towards front door.)*

MIKEY: *(steps in to stop her, cutting her off.)* Mrs. Shubert, there was a murder committed here today.

SHUBERT: *(To MIKEY)* I know. *(To NICK)* And isn't it a crime? *(Crossing a step back to C)* But couldn't we discuss this matter at a more convenient time? Perhaps we could all get together one day for lunch.

NICK: I'll be as brief as possible, Ma'am.

SHUBERT: But I didn't even know this poor Czerny creature, Major.

NICK: And yet, a little while ago, you claimed to be a great fan of hers.

SHUBERT: Yes, well, I'm a great fan of the cello as well, but I don't know Yo Ma Ma.

NICK: Did your husband know her? *(Taking the pad out of his pocket.)*

SHUBERT: Well, of course he knew her. Everybody knew her. *(NICK begins to write).* But Adam didn't really "know" her.

MIKEY: We could call him to confirm that?

SHUBERT: Yes, you could. *(MIKEY crosses to desk and takes his cell phone out)* **SHUBERT** steps toward MIKEY and stops him with... Only, he's in France this week.

NICK: Oh, really? Where's he staying?

SHUBERT: At the Paris Hilton, I would imagine.

MIKEY: The Paris Hilton?

SHUBERT: Well, it's a little run down but it's so easy to get in. *(Crossing D around*

barber chair and up towards front door to leave. She stops when the phone rings.)

OPT:

SHUBERT: *Only he's in Abu Dhabi this week.*

NICK: *Oh really? Where's he staying?*

SHUBERT: *At the W, I would imagine.*

MIKEY: *The Abu Dhabi W?*

SHUBERT: *Yes, I believe Adam is in the Ali Baba Bungalow at the Abu Dhabi W.*

*****PHONE RINGS*****

(MIKEY answers phone. It's the lab. He writes down information on a piece of paper from his pad.)

NICK: *So you're not sure where he's staying?*

SHUBERT: *No, I haven't spoken to him for a few days.*

NICK: *And yet when he called this shop a little while ago, (he crosses through C to above the barber chair) you refused to take his call.*

SHUBERT: *(Feeling the pursuit, she escapes DR below barber chair and styling chair to UL to retrieve her shopping bags.)* Yes, well, I don't appreciate people tracking me down.

NICK: *(Following her to below styling chair.)* But how did he know to call you here? Does he keep a record of your hair appointments?

SHUBERT: *(Stops. Turns to him)* Certainly not.

NICK: *Then how did he know you were here?*

SHUBERT: *(Crossing to face off with NICK)* I imagine he called home first. Frederick must have told him where I was.

NICK: *(frustrated)* Who's "Frederick"?

SHUBERT: MY BUTLER!

NICK &

MIKEY: *(Looking at each other and vocally mocking SHUBERT'S snooty tone)*

SHUBERT INTERROGATION

and gesture without actually saying the words “my butler.”)

*(**MIKEY** holds up lab report. **NICK** crosses R to him and they confer).*

SHUBERT: *(Crossing R to DC)* Would you mind telling me what is so important about all this? Are you going to drag me off in handcuffs for failure to accept a phone call from my husband?

NICK: You know we’re not going to do that. Just take a seat right over there, if you would, Mrs. Sheep Dip. *(**SHUBERT** crosses DL, doing a take on “Sheep Dip” and continues, sitting in waiting area.)* Okay Mikey, get’m all out of the closet.

The Reconstruction

MIKEY: Okay, everyone. Come on.

(MIKEY quickly opens closet door on word "Okay". TONY, BARBARA and EDDIE have been eavesdropping, pressed against the door to hear. TONY falls into the room holding a styrofoam cup to his ear. The others follow (without cups). Caught, the SUSPECTS immediately stand up and look for seats. The cup remains on TONY'S ear.)

Let's have a seat, everyone. Come on. Let's go. Let's go.

(General hubbub as everyone finds a seat:

BARBARA sits in the barber chair.

EDDIE sits in the styling chair.

TONY sits in the shampoo chair.

MIKEY, having closed the closet door, joins NICK UC. They both look at TONY.

TONY realizes he still has the cup on his ear. He removes the cup from his ear and throws it in the trash can next to the sink.)

NICK: All right, now then *(reporting the information on the slip of paper MIKEY has handed him.)* The initial report from the lab concludes that Isabel Czerny was indeed murdered to death. And that murder occurred sometime between four and four-thirty this afternoon. Cause of death: repeated stab wounds to the throat. The murder weapon has been established as a pair of hair cutting shears which are now at the lab. *(NICK hands the paper back to MIKEY who puts it in his pocket and crosses to UR of the barber chair.)* Now look folks, I want to remind you all again that you are free to consult a lawyer if you wish.

(General hubbub.)

EDDIE: *(Cutting through the clamor, rising.)* What for? Are you gonna charge one of us?

NICK: No, I'm not charging anybody... yet. But somebody in this room killed Isabel Czerny.

(General hub bub)

EDDIE: *(Cutting through the clamor)* Hold on! *(Crossing UL to swinging doors)* Now look, anybody could have come in that side door back there, gone up the stairs, and killed her.

RECONSTRUCTION

NICK: *(Remaining C)* They could have Lawrence, but they didn't. You see, Detective Thomas and myself had this place staked out long before either one of us came into the shop. Absolutely no one but you four suspects entered or left this building. *(The **SUSPECTS** look at each wondering who could have done it.)* So, what we've got to do now is, we've got to reconstruct everything that went on in this shop- say, from the time Mrs. Shubert came in until the time Mrs. Czerny's corpse was discovered upstairs. May I have some lights please?

*****HOUSE LIGHTS SNAP UP *****

(Note: you may have to dim the stage lights slightly to equalize the lighting between the house and the stage allowing the actors to see the audience.)

NICK: *(To audience.)* Ladies and Gentlemen, this is where YOU come in.

*(The **ENSEMBLE** turns to discover the **WITNESSES** and gasps in shock.)*

SHUBERT: *(Realizing she is in curlers)* Oh my God! *(crosses UL to packages, removing a scarf, and crosses to mirror at BARBARA's station to tie it over her curlers.)*

*(**SUSPECTS** continue to look directly at newly discovered **WITNESSES**, eyeball to eyeball, until NICK'S "... need your help" at which point all focus returns to and remains on NICK for the rest of the speech.)*

NICK: Now, you all witnessed what went on in this shop a little while ago, and during this reconstruction, I'm going to need your help. I want you to watch and listen very carefully to every detail. *(Taking a step DR to focus on the **WITNESSES** on that side)* Pay close attention to who moved where and who said what to who. Pay particular attention to who left the shop, and the order in which they left. *(Taking a few steps to DL to focus on the **WITNESSES** on the other side.)* The slightest change on the part of any of the suspects could be crucial. If you observe anything that did not happen before, I want you to raise your hand. *(Returning C)* Now, if I don't see your hand give me a shout, a whistle. Get my attention to it. I will stop the action immediately. *(If a **WITNESS** laughs, **NICK** looks at him/her and adds)* I'm serious lady (mister), I mean it.

SHUBERT: *(Crossing down to L of styling chair)* In other words, Lieutenant, you want us to tell you what went on in here, step by step, just before Barbara fainted?

NICK: No, it's a little more than that, Mrs. Shubert. I want you to "act out" everything that happened. *(Crossing DR)* This ought to be a real ball for you, Mr. Whitcomb.

RECONSTRUCTION

TONY: *(Rising and crossing to C)* Listen, the work I do with the Silver Spring Stage I take very seriously. I mean just last season I was in our production of *The Full Monty*. And everybody said that my part stood out. *(Innocently surprised and comedically outraged by the WITNESSES' laughter)* It was a very hard part. *(fades up to closet door).*

NICK: Mikey, you were already out of here by the time Mrs. Shubert came in, and I was sitting right there getting a shave. So, you sit in that chair and be me.

MIKEY: Right. *(He gestures for BARBARA to vacate the barber chair and sits. BARBARA stands L of barber chair).*

NOTE: MIKEY will take notes of the important information that is uncovered during the Reconstruction but his primary function is to keep a keen eye on the events unfolding as the suspects relate what they said and did leading to the discovery of Isabel's body. When MIKEY focuses on the events, it will help the WITNESSES focus as well. Avoid the tendency to have MIKEY'S face in the pad all the time.

NICK: Okay, Lawrence, where were you?

EDDIE: *(From UL, with subtext "I couldn't have done it because...")* I was right over there.

NICK: Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: *(With subtext "I couldn't have done it because...")* I was in the supply closet getting shaving cream. *(Crossing to NICK DR)* I was getting ready to shave you. Remember?

NICK: I'll never forget it. *(TONY crosses around barber chair back to closet door.)* Miss DeMarco?

BARBARA: *(With subtext "I couldn't have done it because...")* I was waiting for Mrs. Shubert to come in.

SHUBERT: *(With subtext "I couldn't have done it because...")* And I wasn't even here yet.

NICK: Fine. I want you to take those positions right now, please. *(he claps as he crosses from DL to DR.)*

TONY: *(Picking up on NICK's clap.)*

TONY crosses from UC down around styling chair and back to UC as other SUSPECTS take their places:

SHUBERT picks up her bags and crosses from UL to UR to her place inside the front door.

BARBARA crosses to styling chair and sits.

EDDIE crosses DL to seat and sits.)

Places! Places everybody! Places! (From C) Oh God, this is more exciting than finding out who gets picked on The Bachelor.

(During the Winter Olympics TONY got a lot of mileage out of "the two-man luge". This is also an opportunity for a group joke. "Oh God, this is more exciting than being elected Homecoming Queen at Glenville High.")

NICK: Whitcomb! (**TONY** scrambles into the supply closet, peeking out from behind the door.) (To the audience) Now remember, we're going to reconstruct everything that went on in this shop in the exact order that it happened. (crossing to UL) Mrs. Shubert, you may now enter the shop just as you did before.

SHUBERT: Well, there was nothing unusual about it. All I did was, (crossing DR with packages) I came into the shop (crossing C to BARBARA, who has gotten up from the styling chair. **SHUBERT** hands BARBARA packages but not her purse) and gave my purse and packages to Barbara.

BARBARA: That's right. But you were late! (**BARBARA** places packages by dryer where they were before.)

SHUBERT: Oh, only a few minutes late, Barbara.

TONY: (Coming out of the supply closet, closing the door behind him crossing DC) And I came out of the supply closet and put your smock on. (They both mark the moment saying "Olé!" **TONY** fades UC.)

SHUBERT: (Crossing to sit in shampoo chair. **BARBARA** follows.) And that's when Barbara took me to the shampoo sink and started washing my hair.

NICK: (To the witnesses) Is that right? Is that what happened?

(There are any number of things the Witnesses may respond with (or not) each of which **NICK** will deal with, seriously investigating the input and moving on. For example:)

WITNESS: She was wearing a hat! (or "She was wearing a jacket." "She was wearing gloves." Etc.)

NICK: Mrs. Shubert was wearing a hat? *(Pointing at the witness who spoke up so the suspects know who NICK'S talking to.)* Mrs. Shubert. Where's that hat now?

SHUBERT: *(To WITNESS)* I took it off and gave it to Tony.

TONY: *(To WITNESS)* And I hung it up on the hat rack.

BARBARA: *(To WITNESS)* Yeah, we always take the hats off before the shampoo. It's shop policy.

NICK: *(To the WITNESS who was bold enough to speak first.)* Very good, ma'am (sir). *(To the rest of the WITNESSES)* This is exactly the kind of detail I'm looking for. All right, let's continue *(crossing up to dryer to watch the action.)*

(OPT: On a quiet night, the WITNESSES may not respond. NICK can review:

NICK: Ok, so Mrs. Shubert comes in and hands her purse and packages to Barbara. Good. What happened next?)

TONY: Ok, while Barbara was washing Mrs. Shubert's hair, *(crossing to above barber chair)* that's when I was getting my razor and shaving cream ready because I was getting ready to shave the Lieutenant, right over here. Remember? We were talking about going to Belize *(or whatever they were talking about.)*

BARBARA: And I finished Mrs. Shubert's shampoo and *(crossing to above styling chair. SHUBERT follows and sits.)* I brought her over here to the setting chair and I started setting her hair, just like I always do.

SHUBERT: Oh wait, wait! When we got here, that's when the music started.

(General hubbub about the music playing at that point. NICK starts the cassette player. The sound of the music stops the hubbub as the SUSPECTS hear Isabel playing again.)

TONY: *(Crossing C, amazed)* That's it. That's the music she was playing.

BARBARA: But it didn't play too long. It only played a little while. And then the music stopped.

NICK: The music stopped?

BARBARA: Yeah, because that's when you told Tony to start shaving you again.

(TONY crosses back to his station.)

NICK: That's right. The music did stop. *(He turns off the cassette.)*

SHUBERT: Yes, and when the music stopped, Tony was telling us about Isabel's breakdown, and isn't that when he left? *(Indicates EDDIE)*

NICK: Lawrence is that you?

EDDIE: Right. That's when I remembered my car out on 'P' Street *(to WITNESSES as he crosses DR and U to front door)* and I went out to feed the meter so I wouldn't get a ticket.

(If there are no meters on the street where you've set the salon, Eddie might have to say he went out to his car to move it because he doesn't have a resident sticker or parked in a "No Parking" space or in a "Handicapped" space ("I went out to move my car. I remembered I'd parked in a handicapped space and while I was sitting here, it dawned on me, 'Hey! I'm not handicapped.'" So, I raced to move it."))

WITNESS: Noooo!!!

NICK: He didn't go out that way? Where did he go? *(Looking for the response from the last row of the house, dead center.)*

WITNESS: He went to the bathroom.

NICK: The bathroom?

TONY: *(Rushing DC to kneel on shampoo chair. Going ballistic, solving the crime!)* THE BATHROOM! THE BATHROOM! THE BATHROOM! That's right, that's right! You're right, he did. He went to the bathroom. I remember that because I was sitting here and he was talking to Barbara...

EDDIE: *(Crossing to TONY trying to stop him)* All right. ALL RIGHT!!! I made a mistake. *(To WITNESS, smiling)* Very good, Lady (Sir). Very, very good. *(He drops the smile and glowers as he turns away from the WITNESS.)*

TONY: *(To the WITNESSES in another area)* Wait a minute, tell me if I'm wrong. When he went to the bathroom, didn't he take his briefcase with him?

NICK: *(To WITNESSES)* He took his briefcase?

WITNESSES: YEESSSS!!

EDDIE: Big deal! I took my briefcase. That's not a crime, is it?

RECONSTRUCTION

TONY: Hold it! Hold everything!! *(To EDDIE)* Taking your briefcase to the men's room may not be a crime, but know what?

NICK: What?

TONY: *(To NICK)* It sounds pretty kinky to me.

EDDIE: There were several things in my briefcase that I needed up there.

TONY: Like what? What did you need out of your briefcase in the bathroom?

EDDIE: My toothbrush, for one.

TONY: *(A la "Family Feud")* Survey says??... EHHHHHH! *(as he creates an "X" with his crossed arms. Then a second one toward EDDIE)* EHHHHHH!

NICK: *(Crossing to C above TONY.)* All right, zip it! *(To EDDIE.)* So, you went to the men's room.

EDDIE: I'm in the men's room. *(Crossing DL with the intent to go to the swinging doors)*

NICK: *(Crossing U towards front door)* What happened next?

EDDIE: *(Turning to NICK)* You want me to act that out too?

NICK: *(Crossing to C)* Don't be a wise guy. Just sit down over there. *(EDDIE sits in DL seat. NICK, crossing to front door)* Okay, what happened down here in the shop while Lawrence was in the men's room?

TONY: *(crossing through C to above barber chair)* Nothing. I was still shaving you over here...

BARBARA: Nothing?! My God, Tony, that's when the music started again and you cut him.

TONY: I didn't cut him, I just nicked him.

NICK: You cut me, Samurai! *(OPT: "Zorro" or a recent movie character who is associated with cutting.)*

BARBARA: Well, it was bad enough to draw blood.

TONY: A tiny bit of blood. I asked you to get a styptic pencil. *(Crossing DC to*

sink then around R to above barber chair.) Then I dashed over to the sink and got a wet towel and started NPR.

BARBARA: Tony, that's when you said how Isabel was driving you crazy.

SHUBERT: Yes. Because Barbara was telling me about the lawyer and how he said if you didn't like the music you should bang on the pipe.

TONY: Yeah, so I did. I got this brush. I walked over here (*crossing D through C to pipe UL*) and I said, "Hey, you wanna knock it off," (**TONY** raps the pipe lightly with the brush and speaks matter of factly) and then I came back over to here... (*crossing back towards station, he's stopped C by WITNESSES response.*)

WITNESSES: Noooooo!

NICK: (*Crossing from front door to DR*) No way, Mr. Whitcomb! Your language was a little stronger than that. What did he call her? (*Looking for the response from as far R as possible.*)

WITNESS: Bitch!

NICK: That's right, Lady (Sir), he called her a bitch. (*Crossing back UR to front door.*)

TONY: (*playing horrified at the very idea*) I doubt I would use language like that.

NICK: Well, that may be so, Mr. Whitcomb, but I want you to say exactly what this lady (gentleman) says you said.

TONY: Lady (Gentleman)? With a mouth like that?

NICK: Bang on the pipe!

TONY: You mean, I gotta do this again?

NICK: (*To WITNESSES*) What do you think?

WITNESS: Yessssss!

TONY: Take two. (*He crosses to the pipe and tries to get away with a lighter tap than he did originally.*)

(*OPT if the WITNESSES say...*)

WITNESS: Higher! Harder!

TONY: *That's what they all say, honey!*

NICK: *Hit the pipe!*

(End OPT)

TONY: *(He raps higher and harder. Then, to the WITNESS who said "Bitch" in the first place) Bitch! And that's when the music stopped.*

NICK: That's right, the music did stop. Where were you when the music stopped, Miss DeMarco?

BARBARA: I was still doing Mrs. Shubert's hair.

NICK: Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: *(Crossing back to above R of barber chair) I went back to shaving you.*

NICK: Mr. Lawrence?

EDDIE: I'm in the bathroom.

TONY: *(To MIKEY) With his briefcase.*

NICK: *(Crossing to C) Okay, let's get this straight. The music did stop when Whitcomb banged on the pipe. Lawrence is in the bathroom. (To WITNESSES) What happened right after the music stopped?*

WITNESS: The toilet flushed! *(All eyes on WITNESS who said it.)*

NICK: The toilet flushed?

EDDIE: *(Standing, to WITNESS who said it) I confess, I'm guilty. I flushed the toilet.*

NICK: *(To WITNESS) You know, it's amazing what some people remember! (To EDDIE) So, what happened when the toilet flushed?*

EDDIE: What happened when the toilet flushed?

TONY: It goes around and around... *(using his brush, TONY takes a step D and demonstrates the counter-clockwise swirl of the water in the toilet bowl.)*

NICK: *(Turning to TONY) Hey!*

TONY: *(Scrambling to desk chair) It does! (New idea!) Unless you're below the equator. Then it goes around and around... (using his brush, TONY demonstrates the clockwise swirl of the water in the toilet bowl.)*

NICK: Sit down! *(Turning back to EDDIE.)*

TONY: It's true! It's called the Coriolis effect. You can google it. *(Addressing a man in the front row near the desk.)* Sir, do you have a smart phone?

WITNESS: Yes.

TONY: *(Flirting)* Are you on Tinder? (OPT: Are you on Christian Mingle?)

OPT:

TONY: *Sir, do you have a smart phone?*

WITNESS: No.

TONY: *You don't have a smart phone? Are you Amish?*

END OPT

NICK: Knock it off! *(carefully rephrasing)* What did you do after you came back from the bathroom?

(If WITNESSES do not respond with "The toilet flushed!", TONY, referring to EDDIE, says, "Isn't that's when he came back downstairs?" SHUBERT agrees. The dialogue continues as follows.)

EDDIE: Right.

(Recalling what he did, EDDIE indicates coming in through the swinging doors. He glances at the spot where he put the toothpaste into his briefcase, decides not to mention it, and crosses DR to DL and U to front door.)

That's when I came back into the shop and that's when I remembered my car and went out to move it.

NICK: *(If WITNESSES don't respond immediately)* So, he comes downstairs and right away he's outta here?

WITNESS: He put something in his briefcase.

NICK: He put something in his briefcase? Where did this happen?

WITNESS: *(Pointing to spot where EDDIE stopped)* There.

NICK: Right here? *(To EDDIE)* What did you put in your briefcase, Lawrence?

EDDIE: That was my toothpaste. I brushed my teeth up there.

NICK: *(to WITNESS who said "He put something in his briefcase")* Is that what he put in his briefcase? Was it toothpaste?

WITNESS: No.

NICK: Did you see what it was?

WITNESS: No. *(I couldn't see it.)*

NICK: *(Asking a witness right next to the stage where EDDIE stopped.)* What about you. Did you see what it was?

WITNESS: No.

NICK: What, you're not sitting close enough? Lawrence, where is that briefcase now?

EDDIE: It's out in my car.

NICK: Mikey, make a note to check that briefcase. *(Retracing EDDIE'S movements)* So, he comes down from the men's room, puts "something" in his briefcase, we're not sure what, and zip, he's outta here? *(crossing from DL to C)*

WITNESS: He kissed Barbara.

NICK: He kissed DeMarco? *(crossing UC to BARBARA)*

BARBARA: No he didn't.

WITNESS: Yes he did.

BARBARA: NO HE DIDN'T!!!

NICK: I'm sorry Miss DeMarco, but that's what she (he) says.

BARBARA: *(Crossing to DL of sink toward the WITNESS, "threateningly")* That's what who says? Look cupcake *(bozo)*, a guy kisses me, I'm gonna remember it. *(Returning L to above styling chair stopping when TONY speaks.)*

TONY: *(Crossing C with his brush) God Barbara, I don't know how you remember. She's been out with half the guys in D.C. (continuing through C to his station.)*

BARBARA: Yeah? And you've been out with the other half!

(TONY slams brush down on station and charges DR to DC. BARBARA crosses to C and they face off but are instantly stopped by NICK. TONY crosses to desk chair and sits. BARBARA crosses U by swinging doors.)

NICK: So, that's when you left, Lawrence?

EDDIE: Yeah, I'm gone.

NICK: You got all that, Mikey?

MIKEY: *(reading) "She's been out with half the guys and he's been out with the other half." (OPT: (reading) "A guy kisses me, I'm gonna remember it.")*

OPT: Quite often the witnesses will mistakenly believe that this is when EDDIE came back into the shop with a bloody finger. In actuality, this happens later, but it is logical that they might think it happened here. EDDIE has two similar fast entrances through the door leading to both Isabel's apartment and the street. Generally, the witnesses will call out "His finger was bleeding." when EDDIE claims that this was when he remembered his car (see above). If this comes loud and clear and by "selective hearing" cannot be ignored in favor of something that's actually "correct", NICK can handle it in the following way:

WITNESS: *His finger was bleeding!*

NICK: *Wait a minute! Hold it! Lawrence came back from the bathroom and his finger was bleeding? Lawrence, did you come back from the bathroom with a cut finger?*

EDDIE: *I did cut my finger. She/He's right. But that happened later. When I was out at my car.*

NICK: *(To the WITNESS) Is that right? Was it later?*

WITNESS: *NO! It was now! (or Yes, it was later.)*

NICK: *Ok, Mikey. Make a note. At some point Lawrence came back into the shop with a cut finger. (Back to witnesses) Ok, folks, let me know exactly when this happens.*

NICK: All right. Lawrence is out of here. What happened here in this shop after Lawrence left?

TONY: I REMEMBER!! I REMEMBER!! (*Crossing to L MIKEY*) I remember this as if it were yesterday. (*Continuing above barber chair to NICK C*) That's when the music started again, because that's when I said, "Mister, you wait right here. I said, "Barbara" she was standing over there at the time, "you watch the shop. I'm going upstairs to ask Isabel to please be quiet." (*crossing below styling chair to swinging doors UL*) And I went out these doors...

WITNESS: Nooooooo!
.....

TONY: (*Crossing back to UC*) (*OPT: Mimicking WITNESS.*) Yessss!
.....

NICK: (*Following TONY, stopping DL*) Not like that, Whitcomb. When you went racing out of this room, you were in a blind rage!

TONY: I was in no blind rage. I might possibly have been mildly agitato, but I...

MIKEY: Agi-WHAT!?

TONY: Agitato. (*Helping Mikey spell it.*) A... G... I... T... A... T... O. It's Italian. From the Japanese (*bowing*) AHHH gi tato. (*NICK, crossing UL to UC, seats TONY in shampoo chair.*)

NICK: All right, Lawrence is outta here. Whitcomb is outta here. That leaves remaining in the shop just the three of us. What happened next?

BARBARA: Well, you oughta remember. As soon as Tony stormed out, I put Mrs. Shubert under the dryer, (*BARBARA directs SHUBERT to dryer chair where SHUBERT remains standing*) and that's when I saw you go out. Because I came over here (*crossing through C towards desk*), picked up the trash (*crossing DL to UL*), told Mrs. Shubert I'd be right back, and I went out with the trash.

WITNESS: She threw scissors in the trash!

NICK: She put scissors in the trash? Miss Demarco! What about these scissors?!

BARBARA: (*Crossing D to WITNESS*) Oh, I know what you're thinking but it's not how it looks. I tossed those scissors away because the tip was broken. Honest. They were never any good. I got them at K-Mart.

(*OPT: to a WITNESS who is vocally challenging BARBARA: "same place you got that tie [top]"*)

Wait a minute, I forgot something! Before I went out, there was a call for Mrs. Shubert. (*BARBARA crosses to desk*) I remember now, it was kind of a weird call. She didn't take the call. I thought it was her husband because it was some guy asking for "Pookie" Shubert...

NICK: Wait a minute. Who's "Pookie" Shubert?

SHUBERT: (*Crossing a step or two DL*) That's me. That's the name I use when I Twitter. (*Starting to cross back to dryer.*)

MIKEY: Mrs. Shubert. I think what you "do" is Tweet.

SHUBERT: (*Turning back to MIKEY*) And I think what you do is tewwific.

(*OPT: "That's what they used to call me at {the name of posh local school or a school group in attendance.}"*).

BARBARA: So, I said she wasn't here and, I picked up the trashcan and I went out with the trash. (*Crossing through C to UL towards swinging doors.*)

NICK: With a pair of scissors.

BARBARA: Broken scissors.

NICK: Got that, Mikey?

MIKEY: Got it.

NICK: (*From C*) Now, we're all out of the shop except you, Mrs. Shubert. What did you do in this shop all by yourself?

SHUBERT: Nothing! I just sat under the dryer and dried my hair...

WITNESS: No! She made a phone call!

NICK: A phone call? What's this about a phone call, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: (*To WITNESS*) Oh yes, you're right. Of course. I forgot. I did make a phone call. (*Crossing to phone*) I realized I was running late so I called my butler to let him know I was detained.

WITNESS: Nooooo!

NICK: (*To WITNESSES*) She didn't call her butler? Who did she call?

WITNESS: Her lover!!! (*“Her main squeeze.” “Her boyfriend.” “It was a booty call!” Etc.*)

NICK: (*To WITNESSES*) Her lover? What did she say that made you think it was her lover?

WITNESS: She said he was wonderful this afternoon!

NICK: She told some guy he was wonderful this afternoon?

BARBARA: (*Explosive laugh, stepping D*) Ha! God, Mrs. Shubert, no wonder your hair was a mess! (*Crossing to DL and sits*).

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, who was so wonderful this afternoon?

SHUBERT: My butler.

NICK: Why?

SHUBERT: He polished all my silver.

TONY: Well, Hi Ho Silver! (*Still seated, spinning the towel in the air like a lasso.*)

NICK: Whitcomb! So, she allegedly called her butler. (*To the WITNESSES*) Did she do anything else while she was on the phone?

WITNESS: She stole perfume!

NICK: She stole perfume?

TONY: (*Rising*) She did WHAT!!!!????! She stole perfume out of this shop? (*Crossing towards SHUBERT*) Mrs. Shubert, what is this (*if a man*) ruggedly attractive individual trying to tell me? (*OPT: Nancy Drew, Hermione Granger, The Hardy Boys, Dick Tracy, Jessica Fletcher etc.*)

SHUBERT: Tony, darling, I was sampling some of your “cologne”, and I must have inadvertently put it in my purse.

TONY: Well, let me inadvertently put it down on your bill. (*TONY crosses to sit at desk and SHUBERT crosses DL towards dryer*).

NICK: So, you pinched some perfume “Pookie”? Got that Mikey?

MIKEY: (*Quickly reading his notes*) Pookie pinched some perfume and popped it in her purse.

(OPT. The SHUBERT beat begins with her call to her butler and ends with her stealing perfume. The rest of the SHUBERT phone call may not come until the Questions and Answers— or not at all. However, if the witnesses bring up other evidence regarding the phone call it may be dealt with now. Note: evidence may come in any order. Example:)

WITNESS: She didn't call home.

NICK: How do you know she didn't call home?

WITNESS: She didn't know the number.

NICK: What makes you think she didn't know the number?

WITNESS: She used a card for the phone number.

NICK: She used a card? Mrs. Shubert, why do you need a card to call your own home?

SHUBERT: *(To WITNESS)* It's an unlisted number. *(WITNESSES laugh. SHUBERT tries to clarify her answer to all the WITNESSES.)* Oh, no, we have to change the number so frequently because the wrong class of people *(indicating the WITNESS who brought it up)* learn it, and I can never remember the new one so I just keep it with me on a card in my purse. *(Crossing back to the dryer).*

NICK: Ok, Mikey, make a note. She used a card to make the call.

(At this point the WITNESSES may call out:)

WITNESS: Let's see it!

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, may I see that card please?

(SHUBERT produces the card.)

NICK: *(examining the card)* You're right, it's an ordinary card. It's got her name, Eleanor Corcoran Shubert, her address, 3301 Fox Hall Road, and her phone number is printed right here on the bottom.

SHUBERT: It's not printed, it's engraved. *(This line is only used in ACT I where we know we won't make the phone call to her home.)*

NICK: *(Handing the card to MIKEY)* Well, we'll take good care of it. Mikey, hold on to this card. We gotta call it later.

NICK will indeed call the number IF (and only if) it is asked about again in the Questions and Answers. The phone call is NEVER made in Act I.

(WITNESSES may continue)

WITNESS: It's not the same card. Check her purse for other cards.

NICK: You got any other cards in your purse, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Oh, how clever of you. I have these. *(She produces a clear plastic holder filled with dozens of credit cards that unfolds almost to the floor.)*

NICK: *(looking in SHUBERT'S purse)* There are no other cards in here.

(When the phone call business is completed, NICK will continue.)

NICK: Then what did you do?

SHUBERT: *(accusingly indicating EDDIE)* That's when that gentleman came rushing back into the shop. *(She crosses UL to dryer.)*

NICK: That you, Lawrence?

EDDIE: Yeah. *(Crossing from front entrance to R of sink)* I came back into the shop and walked over to the sink...

WITNESS: Other door...He came through that door!

NICK: He came through the side door?

EDDIE: Big deal! I came through the side door. So what?

NICK: *(Crossing D to L of sink)* It is a big deal, Lawrence. When you left here, you left through the front door. What are you doing coming back through the side door?

EDDIE: I can explain that. You see, I went out to my car to put a quarter in the meter, and while I was out there I accidentally cut myself ... *(EDDIE takes a breath to finish the story and also leaving a slight space for the WITNESS to ask "How?").*

(OPT: if the WITNESS does not ask "How", skip down to

EDDIE: *I saw all the blood, and I panicked. Since this was...)*

WITNESS: How?

RECONSTRUCTION

NICK: Yeah Lawrence how did you cut your finger? (*Indicating EDDIE should answer that WITNESS*)

EDDIE: (*To that WITNESS*) I punched out a little orphan girl, her glasses broke, and I sliced my finger.

NICK: Answer the lady (gentleman).

EDDIE: I don't like her (his) attitude.

NICK: I don't care. Answer her (his) question.

EDDIE: All right, I'm sorry, OK. (*Fake smile*) I went out to my car. I put my briefcase in my car. I walked around to get into my car and I saw a broken bottle under my front tire. Since this city hasn't been cleaned up since the inauguration, I thought I'll make America great again, I'll pick it up myself (*or other recent topical event, i.e. the Cherry Blossom Festival, the Bean Bash, etc.*), so I bent down to pick it up, tripped on the curb and sliced myself on the bottle.

NICK: Where is that bottle now?

EDDIE: (*To WITNESS*) I threw it under her (his) tire?

NICK: Lawrence, where is the bottle?

EDDIE: Probably right where I left it, on the curb next to the meter.

OPT:

WITNESS: Go get it.

NICK: Mikey make a note. We'll take a look for that bottle later.

NICK: Then what happened?

EDDIE: I saw all the blood, and I panicked. So, I came running down the alley (*or the name of the side street*), in the side door, and straight over here to the sink to wash the blood off.

NICK: (*Crossing through C to front door*) So, you washed off your cut. Then what did you do?

- EDDIE:** *(Crossing UC to supply closet)* That's when I asked "Afternoon Delight" here *(or "Pookie" if they haven't brought up "You were wonderful this afternoon")* if she knew where they kept the band aids.
- SHUBERT:** And I told him to look in the supply closet.
- EDDIE:** So I went in here looking for a band-aid. *(opens supply closet and goes in, leaving the door open.)*
- TONY:** Wait a minute. He's hiding in the supply closet? *(Crossing U above barber chair and across to UL, slamming the closet door on EDDIE'S face as he goes. EDDIE opens the door immediately.)* That's when I came back into the shop. I remember that because I came down the stairs... I walked over to the supply closet... and I bumped into him. It gave me the scare of my life. Oh my God, I thought I was gonna have a myocardy-B infarction *(TONY clasps his chest.) (OPT: I thought I was going to have a heart attack.)*
- OPT: (If the man who said "other door" was very vocal.)*
- EDDIE:** *Wait a minute, hold it. This guy over here is jumping all over me because I came through the side door. Whitcomb came through the same door.*
- TONY:** *So, let him jump all over me!*
- NICK:** *(Crossing DR to desk)* Now just a minute, Whitcomb. When you left this shop you charged outta here like a maniac. You said you were going to shut Mrs. Czerny up once and for all if it was the last thing you did. Now I want to know exactly what happened when you got up to her apartment.
- TONY:** I never got there.
- NICK:** What do you mean, you never got there?
- TONY:** No, I never got there. You see, what happened to me was, an emergency came up along the way that I didn't even tell you about.
- NICK:** What emergency? *(TONY crosses to swinging doors)*
- TONY:** Honest to God, the minute I got out these doors here, I began to smell this really weird burning smell.
- (OPT:*

WITNESSES: *His goulash.*

TONY: *You could smell that down here?)*

Well, I got panic stricken. I thought to myself, “Don’t tell me the whole building’s on fire.” (*crossing DL a step to explain*) Naturally, I was a little concerned about my two cats, little Bill and Hillary, (*the cats’ names can be updated to reflect current events.*) up in my third floor apartment. (*Crossing below styling chair to C, re-enacting his movements rushing upstairs*) So, I went lickety-split up those two flights of stairs. I threw open the door. The room was filled with smoke. I couldn’t see a thing. The only thing I could vaguely make out through the smoke and the haze was the feline figure of little Hillary gasping on the rug (*he locates Hillary at NICK’S feet*). So, I ran over to her (**TONY** *grasps NICK by both shoulders as if NICK is Hillary*) and said “Run, Hillary, run!!” And she said, “Never again!!” (**TONY** *smacks NICK’S shoulders*) So we went racing into the kitchen... (*Crossing UR to C with NICK following*)

NICK: Whitcomb!

TONY: And there was my old gray cat Bill... chasing (his) tail just like he always does... (**TONY** *with his towel in his right hand to indicate a tail chases it, bent at the waist, turning with his left foot planted and in a counter clockwise direction*) And he was going around and around and around...

NICK: (*Trying to stop TONY*) Whitcomb! Whitcomb!! Enough with the cats!

(**NICK** *stops TONY in the middle of his third turn by placing his hand on TONY’s lower back. TONY continues his spin and rises at the same time. His right arm, with towel, wraps around NICK’s shoulders. They find themselves in an accidental embrace. TONY seizes the opportunity and impulsively plants a quick kiss on NICK’S lips. NICK and TONY break apart, keeping their eyes on each other. General hubbub ensues as other actors break character in shock, surprise and unsuccessfully suppressed hilarity. Eventually, NICK can’t hold it in and turns away. TONY scampers between SHUBERT and BARBARA.*)

(*To the laughing WITNESSES*) THAT’S NOT FUNNY!

(**TONY** *shares glee with BARBARA and SHUBERT*)

(*To TONY, trying to get on with the investigation*) What happens next?

TONY: (*Ad libbing*) Dinner and a movie? (*OPT: Netflix and chill?*) (*General hubbub as actors break character and laugh but try hard not to.*)

RECONSTRUCTION

NICK: Get back to your stew.

TONY: *(Trying to get back on track)* So anyhow, that's when I realized my goulash was burning. *(crossing to sink)* I took the goulash off the stove and carried it over to the sink. Oh God, I think I'm in love.

NICK: WHITCOMB!!

TONY: I poured it down the disposal. Then I took out my Lemon Fresh Joy, I washed out the pot, and I put the pot on the drain board.

(OPT. If a WITNESS objects to his use of the sink, TONY says, "Not this sink. The sink in my apartment. This is what we call a visual aid. (To NICK) And you're looking to these people for help?")

And that's when I realized I still had a customer down here *(indicating NICK)*. *(Crossing UR to swinging doors)* So I came tear-assing down the stairs *(Crossing C)* and that's when I bumped into Osama bin Lawrence *(some villain who reminds the audience of EDDIE)* hiding out in my supply closet.

EDDIE: Yeah. He was screaming about his goulash, and I asked him for a band-aid.

TONY: So I sat him down over here *(directing EDDIE to styling chair)* and Mrs. Shubert got him a band-aid.

SHUBERT: Yes. *(Crossing DL to DR to above desk)* And Colonel, Colonel, Colonel... that's when Barbara came screaming into the room.

TONY: Yes! Yes! Barbara! This is when you came in and fainted.

BARBARA: *(Rises)* They were telling me about this in the supply closet, but I don't know what they're talking about. I don't remember screaming and fainting.

TONY: Lieutenant, this happened just a second before you got here. *(Crossing to BARBARA and taking her by the hand)* Barbara, you come with me.

BARBARA: *(As TONY pulls her below barber chair toward the front door to reenact the scene)* Tony, I'm not in the mood for any of your stories.

NICK: *(Counters above barber chair to C)* Whitcomb what are you doing?

TONY: *(From inside the front door)* Lieutenant, you told us to act this out. Well,

Barbara can't remember, and this happened just before you cops got here. So, I'll be Barbara. Here. Hold my brain. *(He hands off imaginary brain to BARBARA)* This is exactly what happened. *(TONY goes out the front door, popping his head back in)* First we heard... *(from outside he screams.)*

NICK: Whitcomb!

TONY: *(Popping his head back in)* Then we heard... *(TONY disappears again and screams louder.)*

NICK: Whitcomb!

TONY: *(Popping his head back in again)* Then we heard... *(TONY disappears out the front door again and this time comes screaming into shop).*

NICK: WHITCOMB!!!.

TONY: Honest to God, she sounded just like Elizabeth Warren when she got her DNA results (i.e. a topical reference or a reference to an actress in a horror movie.) And she came racing into the shop *(TONY, crossing above barber chair to C, retraces BARBARA'S steps into the shop using his hands to indicate BARBARA'S bouncing boobs. BARBARA winding up R of TONY)* and she said... *(Looking to SHUBERT for help.)*

SHUBERT: Yes! Yes! And she was screaming, "Help!"

TONY: "Help!"

SHUBERT: "Upstairs!"

TONY: "Upstairs!"

SHUBERT: "Blood!"

TONY: "Blood!"

TONY & SHUBERT: "She's dead! Isabel's dead!"

TONY: And then right at the end, remember, Mrs. Shubert, she looked him right in the eyes and she said...

TONY & SHUBERT: "EDDIE!"

TONY: And you fainted right on the floor *(or, right in his arms).* *(TONY swings*

BARBARA by her left hand to the place where she fainted.)

BARBARA: I don't remember any of this.

TONY: *(Crossing DL to BARBARA)* Barbara, you fainted. You know how I know you fainted?

BARBARA: How?

TONY: 'Cause I was looking at your eyes and they were going around and around and around in your head *(TONY uses his fingers to indicate BARBARA'S rolling eyes as he does a demonstrative hip bump at the same time)* and I thought to myself, "thank God she doesn't wear contacts." *(To the WITNESSES who have laughed)* No! This is a true story. I have a friend and he wears contacts and he fainted once, and his eyes went around and around and around in his head *(TONY again demonstrates with fingers and hips)* and you know what happened? He swallowed his contacts.

NICK: WHITCOMB! *(Sitting TONY in shampoo chair).*

TONY: *(Turning to WITNESSES)* Really! And for a brief moment he could read his own mind.

NICK: All right. All right!! That's it. Knock it off!!! You're driving me crazy. I've got to take a break. I think we all do. Now, during this break, I'm placing these suspects here under police protective custody. *(General hubbub.)* Mikey, you're in charge.

MIKEY: *(Rising to a posture of proud authority)* 10WD40, Nick.

NICK: I also heard a lot of chatter. I assume a lot of you have questions on your mind, so what I'm gonna do is this: during this break, I'm gonna be right outside those doors back there where you came in *(describing where he will be in the lobby)*, right outside the shop. You can come up to me... ask me any questions you want... maybe even talk over a few theories. You might also want to bring up any evidence that you think might help in solving this case. And then, when we come back into the shop, you witnesses will have an opportunity to directly question these suspects yourselves, personally. *(Each SUSPECT turns to look at WITNESSES, especially one who may have harassed him/her during the Reconstruction.)* So have your questions ready! Think about it. *(All focus on NICK)*

*****MUSIC (EURYTHMICS SWEET DREAMS) SNEAKS IN *****

RECONSTRUCTION

And on behalf of the D.C. Police Department and the National Shrine Bowling Team (*OPT: Similarly incongruous reference or group name, i.e. (in Milwaukee) "Saint Amelia's Serbian Church Friday Night Fish Fry"*) I want to thank you folks for being some of the most incredible witnesses I've ever met. I'll see you outside those doors in a couple of minutes

*****MUSIC UP FULL (*when lyrics begin*)*****

*As **NICK** exits, **SUSPECTS** hold for a second until audience applauds (or not) and rush the front door with reasons why they have to leave. **MIKEY** heads them off, standing in front of front door. He ad-libs that they cannot leave the shop and they should go about their business. **SUSPECTS** disperse and go about their various tasks.*

END OF ACT I

PERFORMING THE RECONSTRUCTION:

The Reconstruction and the Qs and As are the parts of the play that make it different than any other play. Here are some important points which will help make the Reconstruction work well.

(1) LISTEN!! *It is the job of the entire ensemble to listen to what the WITNESSES have to say. Often, they are saying something other than what you are used to hearing. You must be aware of what your character saw and what your character knows. Your character must have a feeling for who could be guilty. How does the input from the audience change that feeling??*

Listening to how the input affects and implicates each suspect is what the Reconstruction is all about. You want to get every laugh and have as much fun as possible, but that should always be supported by the high-stakes reality of the murder investigation. The more you play the stakes, the bigger your laughs will be.

(2) FOCUS!! *Make sure you know where the focus is and why it needs to be there. When you are focused onstage you tend to discourage input. When you are focused towards the WITNESSES, you tend to encourage input. The SUSPECTS should focus on NICK, the WITNESS that NICK has picked out, or the SUSPECT responding to the input. Sometimes, with the rare unruly audience, you may need to "get the wagons in a circle" when you want everyone to focus onstage - sometimes even putting your back to the WITNESSES to quiet them. Almost all the input from the WITNESSES will be filtered to the suspects through NICK.*

(3) PLAY THE BACK!! *Get the WITNESSES in the back rows involved right from the top! It is crucial that the first five or six pieces of input come from the WITNESSES farthest away from the stage. The first piece of input (usually "The BATHROOM!!") should ideally come from the farthest extreme, dead center. The reason this is so important is because it establishes the size of the energy that this part of the show requires. Although NICK will repeat just about every piece of input, it is more spontaneous and makes for a more unified theatrical event with bigger, clearer comic energy when the questions come loud and clear from the back so everyone can hear them. It also helps to unify the audience because the input from the WITNESS washes over everyone in front of him but few people behind him. If all the early input comes from the front rows, the WITNESSES behind them will not feel a part of the game. They'll sit back and watch, but not actively participate. Naturally, NICK will always hear all the cues he wants from the front rows, but he should look beyond them. He can use the technique of "feigned deafness" or "selective hearing" to ignore the front rows and elicit the same responses from the*

back. The SUSPECTS should focus on NICK or the back row as they, too, will hear the proper input from the front rows. Under no circumstances should the suspects try to direct NICK'S attention to anyone they're hearing. NICK absolutely runs this part of the investigation and the WITNESSES must believe in his authority. All input is delivered to the SUSPECT through NICK.

(4) MOVE THE PARTICIPATION AROUND THE THEATER!!

Make everyone in the audience feel special, important and contributing. Use body language and eye contact to stop participation from one area and encourage participation from another. If the first piece of input comes from back center, then NICK should look for the next piece of input from far left or far right. If it comes from far left, then the next piece should come from far right. NICK is the key but the whole company must support NICK with their focus. NICK can use "feigned deafness" or "selective hearing" to effectively ignore input he doesn't want. There are just so many pieces of information that the WITNESSES can give. It is a "Shear Madness" cardinal sin to take more than one piece of information from the same witness. Let everyone have a chance, not just one enthusiastic witness. With rare exception, every piece of input from the WITNESSES will be filtered through NICK.

(5) REVIEW!! *If the Reconstruction gets too far down the wrong track, NICK can summarize the events at certain road marks. (i.e.):*

- (a) NICK: Okay, so Mrs. Shubert walked in the front door, she had a red spot on her glove (indicating WITNESS who saw it), possibly blood. She took off her pashmina which is now in the closet and gave her packages to Barbara. What happened next?*
- (b) NICK: Okay, so Lawrence is out of here, allegedly feeding his meter. Whitcomb is out of here in a blind rage. DeMarco is out of here with a pair of scissors that she claims are broken, and I've rejoined Mikey in the stake-out car. So that means everyone is out of the shop except for you, Mrs. Shubert. What did you do here in the shop all by yourself?*
- (c) NICK: Alright then, to summarize: Whitcomb is shaving me, or trying to. DeMarco is setting Mrs. Shubert's hair over here. Lawrence at that point comes through these doors - puts something in his briefcase - this lady thinks it was a roll of toilet paper- and then, zip, he's out of here?*

All the characters can use REVIEW as an aid to the WITNESSES understanding what's going on. Sometimes it's necessary to reset the scene, i.e.:

PERFORMING THE RECONSTRUCTION

TONY: *Well, as I was saying, when Mrs. Shubert came in, I was still in the supply closet getting my shaving cream. I heard her talking to Barbara, I came out of the supply closet, put her in her smock and THAT'S when she gave me her hat, which I put up on the coatrack.*

BARBARA: *No, Lieutenant, the music started when Tony was telling us about Peter Pan because, remember, I was here doing Mrs. Shubert's hair and you were lying in the barber chair.*

(6) ONLY ANSWER THE QUESTION ASKED. NICK should limit his investigation of any evidence the WITNESSES may point out to what they have asked and not add anything additional. For example, the WITNESSES may point out that SHUBERT was wearing gloves. NICK can ask SHUBERT to produce the gloves which she will (without showing the blood stain.) But unless the WITNESSES point out the blood stain, NICK will not "discover" it himself. There are, however, things that NICK observed himself, such as TONY'S and BARBARA'S aprons. If a Witness asks "Where's Barbara's apron" NICK can logically say, "Yeah, they were both wearing aprons."

(7) SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND!! NICK has full control of the Reconstruction. He selects where the input is coming from and who's going to give it. The way NICK achieves this control is to look to the area from where he wants the response. He then feigns deafness to all other areas (as long as it is believable) until he gets the input that he wants and from where he wants it. If he can't get it from where he wants it, he can go to another spot providing he has tried the first spot. But note, NICK should never "create" input that hasn't come from the WITNESSES. If they miss something, they miss it. Move on. Chances are it'll come up in the Qs and As.

NICK should be wary of taking individually raised hands. The WITNESS with a raised hand usually wants to tell you about that one piece of evidence they're burning to reveal. It will almost invariably be something that didn't happen at that moment in the Improvisation and NICK will then have to deal with it out of order. The WITNESSES as a whole are almost always right but the individual WITNESS is frequently wrong.

(8) USE THE WHISTLE!! NICK gets great results from blowing the whistle when things get out of hand. But he must demand (and wait for) silence before continuing. A whistle is a cop's best friend, but only use it when you need to.

(9) TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!! The biggest mistake that NICK can make as an actor is to laugh at or to demean the input. When he insults the

WITNESSES or their ideas, he is undermining the basic format of the show. For instance, make the clue, "She was wearing a red hat" be as important as the clue "Where are their aprons?" It's only because we know that the hat doesn't matter and that SHUBERT is always exonerated that we discount the clue. If NICK really wants to solve the crime, he'll investigate the hat with the same fervor that he investigates the aprons.

***(10) KEEP ON TRACK!!** Solve the crime! After the jokes and the laughs, NICK must always get back to the importance of the crime and the importance (and newness!) of the input. NICK may be stymied by some input he hasn't heard before. He should deal with it, complete it, and then try to move back to the Reconstruction as scripted.*

***(11) YOU MAY SKIP BACKWARD BUT NOT FORWARD.** NICK stresses (in his "HELP" speech to the audience) the need for keeping things in "the exact order in which they occurred". NICK, himself, should have a crystal-clear knowledge of the order of event. If a WITNESS brings up something that happened but has been skipped in the Reconstruction, NICK may go back and deal with it. But if a WITNESS brings up something that hasn't yet happened in the Improv, he should reinforce to the WITNESS that the order of events is crucial and ask him/her to remind him when that piece of information actually happens in the Reconstruction.*

For example:

*Let's say we are at the point in the Reconstruction where **EDDIE** is talking about his trip to the car with his briefcase. If a witness is pointing at **SHUBERT** and shouts out, "She was wearing gloves!" NICK, upon finishing **EDDIE's** briefcase story may go back in time and say:*

NICK: Now about Mrs. Shubert. You're saying she was wearing gloves?

WITNESS: YES!!

NICK: At what point?

WITNESS: When she first came into the shop.

NICK: (Knowing that this happened earlier, Nick will investigate) And where are these gloves now?

*However, if while **EDDIE** is talking about his trip to the car with his briefcase, someone yells out (pointing at SHUBERT) "She made a phone call!" NICK would say:*

NICK: Mrs. Shubert made a phone call? I don't remember that. Did it happen right now?

WITNESS: No.

NICK: When did it happen?

WITNESS: When nobody was in the room.

NICK: (Knowing that this happened later, NICK will NOT investigate now)
Well great! Hold that thought and remind me when we get to that point.
 (Returning to EDDIE.)

(12) USE MIKEY PROPERLY!! MIKEY is a very important support system for NICK. Throughout the Reconstruction he watches intently, quickly jots down notes where appropriate and helps maintain the focus of the Reconstruction. If NICK needs assistance or gets lost, he should be able to turn to MIKEY and ask, "So Mikey, where are we??", at which point MIKEY can recap, review and clarify.

MIKEY is in total support of NICK. He does not instigate input nor does he field questions.

If any onstage evidence is brought up (i.e. any physical evidence that MIKEY doesn't have to go off stage to retrieve such as SHUBERT's gloves, BARBARA's red stained gloves or TONY's towel), NICK can investigate the evidence and have MIKEY take the evidence out to a homicide cop who sends it to the lab. MIKEY should re-enter almost immediately.

If, however, the WITNESSES request offstage evidence (TONY's apron, the scissors BARBARA threw in the trash, EDDIE's briefcase, etc.) MIKEY would not be sent offstage to retrieve it. NICK would say, "That's an excellent point – we've got to find Whitcomb's apron. Mikey, make a note, we've got to look for that apron! So, Mrs. Shubert comes into the shop and hands her purse and packages to Barbara. Then what happened?"

Then, in Act II, if it asked about by a WITNESS, NICK can truly play, "The aprons! Oh God, we've been so busy we forgot to look for that apron. Where's your apron, Whitcomb?"

(13) DRAMATIZE!! NICK must find the input, translate the input and dramatize the input to a size and importance in keeping with the high stakes of the murder investigation. NICK should never (or very, very rarely) dilute or diffuse the input. He should deftly and seriously plug it in to the suspect.

(14) LET THEIR PERCEPTIONS CONTINUE TO PERCOLATE.

None of the SUSPECTS' responses that come up in the Reconstruction and later in the Questions and Answers, are black and white. Everything leaves the WITNESSES with uncertainty. Try as the SUSPECTS might to prove their innocence, nothing is answered so definitively that the WITNESSES can eliminate that SUSPECT from possible guilt.

Note: things that are left out of the Reconstruction will likely come up in the Qs and As.

BREAK

(In the Shop)

NOTE: During the break the shop remains active and all suspects remain in the shop for the entire break (except in the RARE emergency.) This is a break for the witnesses, not the suspects. The energy and tension remain the same as in Act I. So do the relationships (i.e. SHUBERT would not talk to EDDIE but would talk freely to TONY and BARBARA).

SUSPECTS should not answer questions posed by individual WITNESSES that the audience as a whole should hear. If pressed, SUSPECTS can ask MIKEY if they may answer the question. MIKEY may write it down, gather more information about the circumstances and encourage the asker to bring the question up in the following Question and Answer period or to go out to the lobby and tell NICK. This allows MIKEY to deflect having to answer the question or deal with evidence himself (i.e. Why were the cops staking out the salon before the murder?)

*****PHONE RINGS*****

Midway into the Break, PHONE RINGS. **TONY** answers. It is the Lab at Police Headquarters asking for MIKEY. **TONY** ad-libs (*"Blue blazer? Red bowtie? Yeah, I think he's here. Hold on."*) **MIKEY** takes the phone from **TONY** and writes down new information from the lab.

MIKEY will generally watch the shop making sure no WITNESSES enter the shop, touch, or remove any evidence (particularly the bloody gloves in the DS waste basket), harass SUSPECTS, etc. He may be asked questions which he may write down and encourage the asker to bring up during the following Question and Answer period or to go out and tell NICK in the lobby.

TONY generally cleans shop and while doing so almost immediately engages the WITNESSES in conversation. He may tell WITNESSES that he's afraid the funeral parlor will call and ask him to do Isabel's hair. "What's the worst thing about doing a dead person's hair? No tip. But the good thing is, you only have to do the front." He may also ask for recipes to replace the goulash. He may comment on hairstyles and write appointments into book. He may read his own and WITNESSES horoscopes.

TONY may pass out candy to the WITNESSES. **TONY** should clean his station and return any items to the supply closet that he may have brought out earlier. He should arrange his scissors to where he wants them for his ending if he's voted the murderer.

EDDIE engages the WITNESSES in conversation, hands out extra business cards, pilfers candy from TONY'S station, etc. At some point

BREAK

EDDIE needs to covertly write a note to **BARBARA** on a receipt at the desk. He then visibly but “surreptitiously” passes the note to **BARBARA**. The note should say: “Barbara, good news. The doctor says it’s only a rash. Eddie”

BARBARA reads the note, rolls her eyes and puts the note into her bra (with a corner sticking out). She puts **SHUBERT** under the hairdryer, gets her a magazine, maybe some coffee.

SHUBERT may engage **WITNESSES** in conversation.

BARBARA then gets supplies ready to unroll and set **SHUBERT’S** hair. **BARBARA** cleans her station (checking that the scissors are where they need to be for the **EDDIE** or **BARBARA** endings). She also clears everything off of the top shelf of the unit next to the sink (in case we need a place to open the briefcase in the question and answer period.)

BARBARA engages the **WITNESSES** in conversation. **BARBARA** generally avoids **EDDIE** except when **EDDIE** passes her a note which she reads and covertly sticks in her bra.

When **SHUBERT’S** hair is dry or when the song “FAME” starts, whichever is first, **BARBARA** takes **SHUBERT** to the styling chair and removes curlers. **BARBARA** then combs out and sets **SHUBERT’S** hair. She may fake trim it, blow dry it, hair spray it, etc. When finished with **SHUBERT’S** hair, **SHUBERT** should look great. Sometimes **BARBARA** will finish **SHUBERT’S** hair while she is faced upstage and when she’s done, ask the **WITNESSES**, “Do you want to see it?” She then removes the smock and turns styling chair around revealing **SHUBERT’S** well-styled hair. **SHUBERT** does a “TA DA!” gesture. **BARBARA** hangs up **SHUBERT’S** smock and puts rolling tray into closet while **SHUBERT**, if necessary, puts the final touches on her hair at the mirror and puts her earrings back on (which she has put in the pocket of the smock.) **BARBARA** needs to be finished with her tasks before the beginning of the Announcement.

(In the Lobby)

NICK should wait backstage a couple of minutes to let a group form in the Lobby. Then he bursts on the scene, perhaps blowing his whistle, and starting with a leading question such as: “O.K.- all right, who saw anything that I missed?”

NICK must be committed to keep the investigation moving forward. He should gather clues, field questions (without answering them), discuss motives, glean undiscovered evidence, encourage, cajole and listen and respond to theories. Again, it is important not to answer a question which

BREAK

everyone should hear. If pressed **NICK** can encourage the asker to bring it up when they all return to the shop “because I’m sure everyone wants to hear that, not just you drinkers.”

NICK should take peoples’ names down and call on them to ask their questions if other WITNESSES seem reluctant to volunteer, later in the Qs and As. (I.e. *(looking in pad)* “Where’s the lady that was asking about Lawrence’s cut?” If he doesn’t get a response, he can get more specific: “Where’s Lisa? Lisa, what was that question you had about Lawrence’s cut?”)

On music cue (*with about 5 minutes before the end of the Break*) the **STAGE MANAGER** will join group to tell **NICK** he has a phone call (I.e. “There’s a woman on the phone. She says she’s your mother.”)

SM: *Officer, you have a phone call.*

NICK: *I can’t take it now, I’m working.*

SM: *It’s your mother. She wants to know if you’re coming for dinner Sunday.*

NICK: *(To WITNESSES) Oh, I better take this.*

NICK blows his whistle and tells Lobby crowd the investigation will continue in a couple of minutes inside. **NICK** exits to backstage.

BREAK

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT (Washington, D. C.)

NOTE: All references should be made current and localized. The local radio personality should read this with the deference reserved for a famous world leader.

TONY, BARBARA, EDDIE, SHUBERT AND MIKEY quiet WITNESSES and listen intently.

BARBARA seated DL.

EDDIE seated DR at desk.

MIKEY standing near front door .

TONY above barber chair.

SHUBERT standing in front of dryer.

This is *(Local Well-Known Radio Personality)* with a *(WWWW FM)* entertainment update on the death of Isabel Czerny. Isabel Czerny, the renowned concert pianist, has been found brutally stabbed to death in her posh apartment above the Shear Madness hair styling salon in fashionable Georgetown. Washington police already on the scene are detaining several suspects including wealthy socialite Eleanor Corcoran Shubert who recently won a public battle with alcoholism

(SHUBERT, aghast, takes a step towards TONY saying "Tony!", placing herself to the left of BARBARA'S station. TONY, misunderstanding her intention, crosses to her and takes the Barbicide bottle from BARBARA's station and moves it to his station as if to say, "You don't need to drink any of this now.")

and has become one of this city's leading campaigners against substance abuse. *(SHUBERT crosses to styling chair.)* She recently received a "Just Say No" citation from Hollywood celebrity Charlie Sheen. *(TONY crosses to shampoo chair and sits.)* Isabel Czerny, born Isabel Fairfax, first appeared at Constitution Hall in 1977. Her dazzling beauty and spellbinding personality captivated the concert world for over two decades. At the height of her career she suffered an anxiety attack while playing Rachmaninoff at London's Albert Hall *(TONY mimics the position of Isabel's hands locked above her head with the same gesture he used when he told the story to SHUBERT earlier)* and ran screaming from the stage. She never appeared professionally again. Critics hailed her as a genius of her time, but a stormy marriage to Hungarian Freedom Fighter Vasily Czerny and a hinted romance with well-known humanitarian Don Imus spiced her life but dimmed her talent. She was recently seen on *Dancing With the Stars* but was immediately voted off after performance of The Chicken Dance. *(or other local reference i.e. She recently appeared as a celebrity sausage turner at the Gilroy Garlic Festival).* Music lovers will remember her aborted comeback attempt as the keyboard player for Snoop Dogg, formerly known as Snoop Doggie Dogg. No one who ever saw her will ever forget this vibrant, electric woman who turned her piano music into magic. Isabel Czerny dead in Georgetown.

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT

This is *(Name of Well Know Local Radio Personality)* with an entertainment update from *(ID of station.)*

******Music as new song on radio starts******

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT

Act II

NICK enters from front door. General hubbub as MIKEY and SUSPECTS rush to meet him, each of the SUSPECTS demanding to be released for a specific reason.

*****MUSIC FADES OUT*****

NICK: No, no, no NO!! Two words: Nobody's goin' anywhere. So just grab your seats and sit down.

TONY crosses to desk chair.

BARBARA sits in barber chair.

EDDIE sits in styling chair.

SHUBERT crosses to dryer and stands.

MIKEY crosses to above barber chair.

NICK crosses to C).

(To WITNESSES) Okay folks, I'd like to welcome you all back. And, I'd like to thank you all very much for your extremely interesting questions and theories. (NICK does a small "take" as if to indicate that some of the questions and theories were really dumb.) I'll get to those in a minute. But before I do, my partner, Detective Thomas, just told me that during the break he received a very important phone call from the lab with some information that I think he should share with all of us. Detective Thomas? (fading UC).

MIKEY: *(Crossing to DC) Sure thing. Folks, during the break I did get a call from the lab and Dr. Roger Mitchell, the D.C. Medical Examiner (local, authentic ME) has released the following information. First, he wanted me to make it perfectly clear that Isabel Czerny was dead BEFORE the ambulance crew touched her.*

(MIKEY should glance at his notes periodically but deliver the information directly to the WITNESSES)

Death to Isabel Czerny was instantaneous.

Death resulted from multiple stab wounds to the right... no, excuse me... the left side of the throat, and the wounds were inflicted on a downward angle.

Now, the murder weapon has been identified as a pair of six-inch hairdressing shears which are now incarcerated at the lab.

However, there were no discernible fingerprints on the murder weapon.

Also, there were no liftable prints on the cassette recorder or on the cassette tape that were found upstairs. *(He looks up from his pad and addresses the WITNESSES.)*

Now, I see we have some younger witnesses here today so let me explain.

A cassette... *(he thinks for a second)* is like Spotify for old people. Now, all of the blood in Mrs. Czerny's apartment was of her own blood type, but that doesn't necessarily mean that all the blood was Mrs. Czerny's.

And at this time, there is nothing new to report on the time of death. The T.O.D. still stands as having occurred sometime this afternoon between four and four-thirty. *(starting to cross back towards front door.)*

NICK: *(Stepping D)* Thanks, Mikey.

MIKEY: *(Back to C)* Oh, one more thing, Nick. Folks, just a few minutes ago we sent a squad up to the third floor, up to Mr. Whitcomb's apartment, and they found the pot.

TONY: *(Crossing to MIKEY C)* They found what?!

MIKEY: *(Points to the sink.)* The pot.

TONY: Oh, that pot... *(TONY crosses back to desk chair. NICK and MIKEY do a "take"; both walk slowly towards TONY writing him up in their pads)*
Hey! I've got glaucoma.

(Hovering over TONY, NICK, sternly clears his throat and with two fingers, points at his eyes and then at TONY in an "I'm watching you" gesture. MIKEY sternly clears his throat exactly as NICK has and with four fingers (if he's wearing glasses, of course) and points at his own eyes and then at TONY'S.)

NICK: Thank you, Detective Thomas. All right, now, I'll take hands only for any questions.

About the Questions and Answers

The entire ensemble, led by **NICK**, must take the questions seriously. The **WITNESSES** are really doing their job. They are gathering information that they think the cops have overlooked.

NICK must treat the questions and the **WITNESSES** as if the clues are really important and that each clue and each question will (finally) solve this case.

Just like in the Reconstruction, some of the questions are brand new, others are ones that **NICK** simply forgot or didn't have the time to get around to. Whichever, **NICK** must treat each question as helpful.

Again, **NICK** must translate and dramatize the questions. He should take the **WITNESSES** ideas and energy and relate it to the crime. He should rephrase the question that the **WITNESS** asks so that all the **WITNESSES** can hear exactly what's being investigated even (at times) going so far as to ask, "Did everybody hear this?" and repeating the question.

NICK should not fiddle around and joke with the **WITNESSES** nor should he "over handle" the question. It will ruin the spontaneity of the question/answer dynamic. Also, it is inappropriate to the business at hand. This part of the show should star the **WITNESSES**. **NICK** should make the **WITNESSES** look good, look smart, look clever. It will encourage participation. Only when something totally off the wall happens can **NICK** afford to use "put down" humor.

SUSPECTS have to make sure that all the questions— whether posed to them or not— sound new and fresh and important. Remember, at this point (before the Vote) each **SUSPECT** is truly innocent and must really try to scramble away from guilt. Each **SUSPECT** (like **NICK**) should be acutely aware of how each question may implicate them and/or another suspect.

If **MIKEY** has been sent off stage, he should re-enter at an appropriate and NOT step on a laugh (when there is one.) So, if **MIKEY** is looking for **TONY'S** apron from upstairs in his apartment, it would take some time to go up two flights of stairs, find the apron and bring it back down. Alternatively, if **MIKEY** is taking evidence out to "Connolly" to have it sent down to the lab, it takes much less time so **MIKEY** would logically re-enter sooner, especially if he's needed onstage. In any case, **MIKEY** can always safely re-enter when **NICK** asks, "Ok, next question."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

One of the most exciting and creative parts of “Shear Madness” is the opportunity for the WITNESSES to ask questions of the suspects. During this time **NICK** acts as a translator, a conduit, a mediator and a master of ceremonies. It is his responsibility to guide and control the WITNESSES. The WITNESSES are **NICK**’S deputies and they attempt to unearth the clues, suggest motives, and support and/or contradict the statements of the SUSPECTS. When the WITNESSES provide input, **NICK** should get the WITNESS to explain how it might relate to the crime, for example:

WITNESS: Have Eddie write his name.
 NICK: How does that relate to the crime?
 WITNESS: I want to see if he’s right-handed or left-handed.
 NICK: What difference does it make whether he’s right-handed or left-handed?
 WITNESS: Because the stab wounds were on the left side of her throat.
 NICK: OH! I see what you’re getting at. The stab wounds were on the left side of the throat so it would have to be a left-handed person!

Or:

WITNESS: Can you hear what’s going on in the shop when you’re in the closet?
 NICK: Why do you ask that?
 WITNESS: Because Eddie knew the murder weapon and the only person you told was Tony when you were interrogating him.

The general rule is that all questions go through **NICK**. He repeats the question so that all the WITNESSES hear it and he also helps the WITNESS to create a question that makes sense to the investigation. He eventually gives a scripted cue the SUSPECT, unless it’s a Question we haven’t heard before. If a WITNESS asks a question not in the script, **NICK** should NOT deflect or ignore it, but rather, deliver it to the SUSPECT and let them improvise an honest response (which might be, simply, “I don’t know.”)

The **SUSPECTS** use the Questions and Answers as a way to finally prove their innocence to a group of accusing WITNESSES. The stakes are high, the questions are important, and the murderer will be flushed out.

ALL **SUSPECTS** should know and understand as many of the questions as possible. Remember that a thorough understanding of the crime and an honest response are the best defense. They are the truest, strongest expressions of innocence.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This section of the play takes enormous concentration, first for NICK, who must translate the questions intelligently and often deliver specific cues to the SUSPECT, and then for the individual SUSPECTS, who must answer the question that has been asked, whatever it might be.

The following are examples of the questions that are most frequently asked by the witnesses with answers that have worked the best to date. Of course, you never know what form or in what order these questions will come.

In these scripted answers, resist the impulse to ad lib. These responses are the results of 40 years of experience and honing. With unscripted questions, of course, the actors will have the opportunity to ad lib.

SAMPLE QUESTION PERIOD

QUESTION # 1: WHAT WERE YOU GUYS DOING HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

This question is asked of MIKEY and NICK in several forms, some of which are as follows:

- 1) How come you had the shop staked out?
- 2) How did you know there was going to be a murder here?
- 3) Why were you here before anything happened?
- 4) Are you cops psychic?

NICK has to eventually translate the question to:

“Oh, you mean why did we have the place under surveillance?”

*(Note: this question reflects that the WITNESSES suspect the cops and **NICK** realizes the implication, and must try to clear up any misunderstanding, because even he knows how fishy this looks.)*

EXAMPLE:

WITNESS: How did you guys know there was going to be a murder?

NICK: *(Incorporating the salient part of the question in his response so that all the witnesses can hear it.)* Well, we didn’t know there was going to be a murder. What makes you think we did?

WITNESS: Well, why were you here, then?

NICK: *(Getting what the witness is driving at)* Oh! You want to know why we had this place staked out! Ok, I can explain that.

From the translation, the dialogue should continue:

NICK: *(Beginning his response to the individual who asks and then opens it up to include all the WITNESSES.)* You see, the reason we had this building staked out was we got a phone call at the Second District *(or wherever)* at eleven o’clock this morning from the late Mrs. Czerny. She was alive at the time. Mrs. Czerny informed us at that time that she had an appointment at four-thirty this afternoon with Mr. Lawrence here. Now, Mrs. Czerny felt that she was going to be blackmailed at that appointment, so Mikey and myself arrived on the scene at three o’clock.

MIKEY: 2:58, Nick.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

NICK: 2:58. Whiz kid.

MIKEY: Hey. I didn't go to Phoenix University Online for nothing.

NICK: Anyway, Mrs. Czerny informed us at that time that this blackmail...

EDDIE: Alleged blackmail.

NICK: Alleged blackmail... dealt with these letters (*removing the letters from his back pocket*) which I took from Mr. Lawrence when I interrogated him. Now as you may remember, these are the letters that were written by the late Mrs. Czerny to Miss DeMarco here.

BARBARA: What?

NICK: They were written to you, Ma'am.

BARBARA: (*Crossing to NICK*) What are you talking about?

NICK: (*Showing her the letters*) Well, this is you, isn't it? Barbara DeMarco, P.O. Box 143, Scaggsville?

BARBARA: (*OPT if WITNESSES laugh: "Hey. There's nothing funny about Scaggsville?" Or, "What are you? The queen of (some equally dumpy town)?" In Boston, Barbara is from Revere. She responded with "What are you, the queen of Chelsea?"*)

Hey, I never saw these letters. I never got them.

NICK: DeMarco, they've got your name and address all over them!

BARBARA: Wait a minute, look at these! (*taking the letters from NICK, examining them front and back*) These letters don't have any stamps! They don't have any postmarks... you can't prove I got these letters. (*She smacks them back into NICK'S stomach and walks to DL.*)

NICK: Hey, lady, I'm a cop not a mailman.

BARBARA: Yeah? Well think about it. It might be a step up (*sits*).

NICK: (*Directing the conclusion back to the witness who originally asked the question*) Anyway, that's why we were here. Possible blackmail.

(*This is the end of the first Question. It's a relatively long one and MIKEY is still on stage so the phone should ring.*)

*****PHONE RINGS*****

*(This phone call sets up The Exoneration of SHUBERT a bit later. it will usually come after the first long or two short questions. **NICK** helps by not committing to a question once the phone rings. **MIKEY** must be on stage and the phone should ring right after the conclusion of the question allowing us to get the updated information about the time of death on stage so **NICK** can then choose when to go to the Exoneration.)*

NICK: Mikey... *(indicates **MIKEY** should answer phone, but **TONY**, at desk, picks it up before **MIKEY** can get to it.)*

TONY: Shear Madness, we curl up and dye for you.

*(**MIKEY** grabs the phone from **TONY'S** hand. **TONY**, surprised, crosses and sits in barber chair (if **BARBARA** has vacated, or stands UR if she has not), and **NICK** continues with other questions. **MIKEY** writes down important information from the lab but does not reveal the contents of the phone call until he is called upon by **NICK**. When he has concluded the call, **MIKEY** crosses UR. If **BARBARA** has not vacated the barber chair, **TONY** will return to the desk chair when **MIKEY** finishes.)*

QUESTION # 2: HOW DID LAWRENCE KNOW THE MURDER WEAPON?

NICK fields this question that may come in one of the following ways:

- 1) Did Mikey tell the people in the closet what the murder weapon was?
- 2) Were the suspects allowed to talk to each other in the closet?
- 3) Can you hear what's going on in the shop from inside the closet?

EXAMPLE:

WITNESS: Is the supply closet soundproof?

NICK: Mikey, when you were in the supply closet could you hear us out here?

MIKEY: No, Nick.

NICK: *(Leading the WITNESS to the scripted question)* Why do you ask that?

WITNESS: Because Lawrence knew the murder weapon before you told him.

NICK: You're right! He knew about the scissors, he knew she got it in the throat, and he knew it before I said a word to him. That's a good question.
(Crossing to EDDIE but stopping and turning back toward the WITNESS)
 That's an excellent question. Are you from Rockville?

WITNESS: No.

NICK: Where are you from?

WITNESS: *(Wherever he's from.)*

NICK: I'm sorry?

WITNESS: *(Repeats louder)*

NICK: No, I heard you I'm just sorry. *(Continuing cross to EDDIE)* Lawrence, how did you know that Mrs. Czerny got it in the throat with a pair of scissors?

EDDIE: That's easy. Everyone knew that because Whitcomb came back into the closet and told us.

NICK: Now hold on a minute. I interrogated you first, Mr. Whitcomb, right?

TONY: That's right.

NICK: And during that interrogation, that's right, I did. I told you how the murder was committed.

TONY: *(To WITNESS)* Yeah, that's right. He said she got it in the throat with a pair of hair dressing shears.

NICK: Then you went back in the closet and Lawrence, you came right out.

MIKEY: No no, Nick. That's when I came out, remember? I told you about Mrs. Shubert *(miming the yakety-yak hand gesture)*.

*(If MIKEY is out of the shop collecting evidence EDDIE says:
"No, your partner came out of the closet before I did.")*

NICK: Oh, that's right. You told me about Mrs. Shubert and the yakety-yak... But that was only a minute, maybe two... *(Getting serious)* Wait a minute. Whitcomb! Did you divulge the information that I revealed to you about the murder weapon?

TONY: *(Tense, to NICK)* Is that a crime?

NICK: No.

TONY: Then I did it. *(continuing if there's a laugh)* I must have had a fluotomy.

NICK: A what?

TONY: A fluotomy. It just flew outa me.

NICK: *(Looks at the WITNESS who asked the question as if to say "There's your answer. Do you believe it?")*

QUESTION # 3: WHERE ARE THE SCISSORS BARBARA THREW AWAY?

This is a frequently asked question because it involves important physical evidence. The question may be asked in many forms, such as:

- 1) Did you find the trash Barbara threw out?
- 2) Do the scissors at the lab have a broken tip?
- 3) What happened to the scissors that Barbara put in the trash?
- 4) Where is the dumpster?

EXAMPLE:

WITNESS: Did the scissors at the lab have a broken tip?

NICK: I don't know. Mikey, did the scissors at the lab have a broken tip?

MIKEY: (Looking in his pad) The lab just said it was a pair of six-inch hair dressing shears. I'm sure they would have mentioned it if they had broken tip.

NICK: (Back to the WITNESS who asked the question) Why do you ask?

WITNESS: Because Barbara said the scissors she threw out were broken.

NICK: Oh, the scissors that Barbara put in the trash. I forgot to look for them. Where did you dump the trash, Miss DeMarco?

BARBARA: I didn't dump the trash. I never intended to dump the trash. I just used the trash as an excuse to get out of here. I left it right in the back hall.

NICK: Then it should still be there. *(He exits through swinging doors to look for the trash.)*

BARBARA: Yeah. *(Crossing to C and calling after him)* It's a white plastic trash can just like the other ones here in the shop...

NICK: *(From off stage)* White trash?

BARBARA: Yeah.

NICK: *(Re-entering with the trash can looking for the scissors)* This it, Demarco?

BARBARA: Yeah, that's it.

NICK: I don't see any scissors.

BARBARA: *(Panicking slightly)* What do you mean? They gotta be there. *(She rummages in trash can and finds scissors.)* Here. Here they are. *(She vindicates herself by holding the scissors by the closed blades, covering the broken tip, shows them to the WITNESSES and goes to toss them back into the trash can.)*

WITNESS: *(Possibly)* Are they broken?

NICK: Yeah, DeMarco, are they broken?

(BARBARA opens scissors and shows them to the WITNESS who asked, then to the other WITNESSES, finally returning to the WITNESS who asked and snaps them shut as if 'performing a vasectomy' on him. Tossing the scissors back into the trash can.)

BARBARA: *(Crossing DL)* Satisfied now, crime stopper? *(sits.)*

QUESTION # 4: WHICH OF THE SUSPECTS ARE RIGHT-HANDED OR LEFT-HANDED?

Some forms of this question are:

- 1) Who's right-handed? or Who's left-handed?
- 2) What side of the neck was she stabbed on?
- 3) Which way was the body lying when you found it?
- 4) Was there any sign of a struggle?

NICK, through ad-lib, translates the question as follows:

WITNESS: Are any of the suspects left-handed?

NICK: Why do you ask that?

WITNESS: Because the wounds were on the left side of the throat.

NICK: Oh, I see what you mean. Since the stab wounds were on the left side of the throat, it would have to be a left-handed person!

WITNESS: No right-handed, right-handed.

NICK: Or a right-handed person. This is good, we're narrowing it down!
(Demonstrating stabbing with each hand) If Mrs. Czerny was attacked from the front, it would have to be a right-handed person. However, if she was attacked from behind it would probably be a left-handed person. OK, I'll ask each of the suspects who's right and who's left handed, but remember that at this time we still don't know whether Mrs. Czerny got it in the front... or whether she got it in the rear. But I'll ask. DeMarco, which are you?

BARBARA: *(She hasn't been listening)* Front, preferably.

NICK: Are you right or left-handed?

BARBARA: *(Realizing her mistake)* Oh! I'm right-handed. *(or whichever hand the actor playing BARBARA happens to be.)*

NICK: Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Right-handed. *(or whichever hand the actor playing SHUBERT happens to be.)*

NICK: Mr. Lawrence?

EDDIE: I'm left-handed. *(or whichever hand the actor playing EDDIE happens to*

be.)

NICK: Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: I'm ambidextrous.

*Should the WITNESS ask the question and provide the front/rear information, **NICK** would then give up the "This is good. We're narrowing this down" joke and proceed as follows:*

WITNESS: What was the position of the body when she was found?

NICK: Mikey, in what position was the body found?

MIKEY: (Making a horizontal gesture with both hands, parallel to the floor) Lying down.

NICK: Why do you ask?

WITNESS: I'm trying to figure out if the murderer was a left-handed or right-handed person.

NICK: Oh!! I see what you mean. If Mrs. Czerny was attacked from behind, it would have to be a left-handed person! However, if she was attacked from the front, it would likely be a right-handed person. Ok. I'll ask everyone in the shop if they're right or left-handed, but you have to remember, at this point in time, we don't know if Mrs. Czerny got it in the front or if she got it in the rear. But I'll ask. Miss DeMarco, which are you?

Continuing as scripted above.

QUESTION # 5: WHERE ARE MRS. SHUBERT'S GLOVES?

NICK: What gloves?

*This is a question that most frequently comes up early in the reconstruction. **NICK** must make the decision as to whether the **WITNESS** is asking about the red spot on **SHUBERT**'s gloves, or whether they are simply saying that **SHUBERT** was wearing gloves and that might account for the lack of fingerprints on the murder weapon and on the tape cassette.*

*If the **WITNESS** just points out that **SHUBERT** was wearing gloves:*

WITNESS: Mrs. Shubert was wearing gloves when she came in.

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, you were wearing gloves when you came into the shop?

SHUBERT: *(To the **WITNESS**)* Darling, I always wear gloves while I'm shopping. It's proper. And ever since the corona virus, I wear them even when I'm not shopping. You should too.

NICK: *(To **WITNESS**.)* What's your point?

WITNESS: You said that there were no prints on the murder weapon.

NICK: That's an excellent point! Mrs. Shubert, where are these gloves now?

SHUBERT: They're in my purse.

NICK: May we see them please?

SHUBERT: Well, if you must. *(She opens purse and produces gloves without showing the red stain. She shows them to the **WITNESS** who asked and returns them to her purse.)*

NICK: OK, Mikey, make a note. Mrs. Shubert was wearing a pair of gloves when she came into the shop.

*The question might be about the spot on the gloves. If this is the case, **NICK** must ascertain if the **WITNESSES** believe that it was a blood spot.*

WITNESS: Mrs. Shubert had a spot on her glove when she came in.

SHUBERT: Oh, darling, you must be mistaken.

NICK: What kind of spot?

WITNESS: It was red.

NICK: You mean, like blood? Mrs. Shubert, where are your gloves?

SHUBERT: In my purse.

NICK: May we see them, please? (*SHUBERT hands NICK the gloves.*)
(*NICK shows the spot to the WITNESS.*) You're absolutely right! (*To SHUBERT accusingly*) What is this, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Oh, that? Oh, no darling. I had a Manhattan cocktail at lunch and I dropped my cherry. (*OPT: Oh, no darling. I had a cocktail at lunch. And it must have spilled. That's Bloody Mary, not bloody Isabel.*)

NICK: Mikey, get these down to the lab.

(MIKEY whips out a bag. If this is the first piece of evidence that needs to be bagged, he pulls out a Dunkin' Donuts bag, putting his hand in to open it. When he pulls his hand out, he licks his finger and bags the evidence. MIKEY exits, returning momentarily.)

QUESTION # 6: WHERE ARE THE APRONS?

Both BARBARA and TONY were wearing aprons before the murder. TONY actually reappears from upstairs without his apron. BARBARA takes hers off and puts it in the supply closet when everyone is crammed in the closet during the interrogations. If the WITNESSES ask for both aprons, handle BARBARA'S first. Then handle TONY'S. If the WITNESSES ask only for one of the apron, produce only the apron asked about.

(If they've asked for both aprons)

NICK: That's absolutely right. They both had aprons on before. What did you do with your apron, DeMarco?

BARBARA: I took it off when you had us all crammed in the closet. It got stuffy in there. Your partner should remember—he was there.

MIKEY: Yeah, Nick. She told me she was hot, so I helped her get it off.

(NICK gets BARBARA'S apron out of closet checks both sides and pats the pocket in front to show there is nothing there. Not seeing anything amiss, he re-hangs it in closet.)

NICK: Okay, where's your apron. Whitcomb?

TONY: Here's a little kitchen hack you can use in your own home. Don't ever, ever turn on your disposal unless that little black rubber thing is real tight in the bottom. *(If any of the WITNESSES laugh in recognition, add: No! Really!)* 'Cause see what happened to me was, I was in such a hurry to get that goulash down the disposal, I must have flicked on that switch and that little black rubber thing wasn't in place. So all this water and goulash came spitting up all over the front of my apron.

NICK: So?

TONY: So, I took it off.

NICK: Well, where is it?

TONY: It's in my hamper.

NICK: Well, where's your hamper?

TONY: It's in my bathroom. Where's yours? The breakfast nook?

NICK: Mikey, take a run upstairs, up to Mr. Whitcomb's apartment. Look in his hamper for his apron. *(Calling after MIKEY as he rushes out)* Mikey! It's

almost a perfect match to the wallpaper.

(If the WITNESS only asks for TONY's apron, NICK would respond:

NICK: That's right! He was making a big deal about his apron! Where's your apron, Whitcomb?

TONY: Ok, here's a little kitchen hack you can use in your own home. *(See above).*

QUESTION # 7: EDDIE PASSED BARBARA A NOTE.

Note: This question can come up with a WITNESS either bringing up the note or not. If the note comes up, NICK will always deal with the relationship question first and then deal with the note. If the WITNESS asks about the relationship without mentioning the note, then Nick deals only with the relationship— Question #31.)

NICK: He passed her a note? When?

WITNESS: While you were off stage.

NICK: While I was out of the shop? During the break? Where is this note now?

WITNESS: It's in her bra.

NICK: I'll get it.

EDDIE &

BARBARA: *(Ad-lib objections...)* It has nothing to do with this, Lieutenant. It's personal.

NICK: Let me see the note, Miss Demarco.

BARBARA: I'm telling you, it's got nothing to do with this.

NICK: Demarco! Give me the note or I'm going in!

BARBARA finally and reluctantly hands the note to NICK. NICK now leads into a question about their relationship. The relationship question can stand alone if he is asked by a WITNESS:

- 1) What is the relationship between Lawrence and DeMarco?
- 2) Why were they talking secretly before he went to the bathroom?
- 3) When Eddie first came into the shop, Barbara seemed surprised to see him.

(Continuing because the note was asked for)

NICK: *(Translating.)* You know, this doesn't surprise me at all. There's definitely something going on between these two. I mean, first they were whispering, then they were smooching, now they're passing notes. Come on, what exactly is going on here?

BARBARA: Nothing's going on! I told you, we met at Isabel's a couple of times. He took me out to dinner. Once. We went to the Red Lobster. *(or name of local seafood joint.)*

EDDIE: Yeah, I remember that. I got the crabs.

BARBARA: *(After laugh subsides, tops him with:)* Yeah, and I got the shrimp!

NICK now deals with the note and picks a WITNESS in the front row to read the note.

NICK: Sir/Ma'am. Would you do us all a favor? Would you stand up, turn around and read this note in a nice loud voice so everyone can hear?

WITNESS: *(reading)* Barbara. Good news. The doctor said it's only a rash. *(WITNESS tries to return the note)*

NICK: That's ok, sir. You can keep it.

(Q #6 CONT.)

NICK: Ok, next question...

MIKEY: *(After an appropriate time and at the conclusion of a question, bursting through the swinging doors to DL. He has the apron folded so that the red stain can't be seen by the WITNESSES.)* This your apron, Whitcomb?

TONY: Yes, it is.

MIKEY: Look at this, Nick. *(MIKEY reveals goulash on the apron showing it first to NICK and then to everyone.)*

NICK: What is that? Blood?

TONY: Hey, wait! No! That's not blood. That's goulash! *(taking apron from MIKEY)*

NICK: It's red.

TONY: Of course, it's red. That's because of my extra ingredients: Red wine. Tomato paste. Tons of extra paprika. Here, taste it. *(wafting apron out towards WITNESSES.)* Tell him it's goulash!

NICK: *(Crossing D)* Whitcomb!

TONY: *(Now positioned between NICK and MIKEY)* Well you try it.

NICK: I don't want to try it...you try it.

TONY: I'm not gonna try it...let's give it to Mikey, he likes everything.

(MIKEY grabs apron from TONY with a look like he's heard that 1,000 times before and rushes it out to be taken to the lab.)

NOTE: *In this sample Question and Answer period, now would be the time for NICK to exonerate SHUBERT. Because MIKEY is briefly going off stage to have Connolly send evidence to lab,*

NICK: *Mikey, take that out to Connolly and have him send it to the lab and get back here right away. I want to ask you something.*

Otherwise if MIKEY is on stage, NICK would proceed as follows:

EXONERATION OF MRS. SHUBERT

(Do not wait too long— about 1/2 to 3/4 of the way through the Question & Answer period— to exonerate SHUBERT because once she is exonerated, the WITNESSES will want to know more about her. NICK is totally responsible for this decision, although in the past, sometimes MIKEY has had to jump in without being asked because NICK becomes too involved with a myriad of other tasks and forgets.)

NICK: I'll get to your questions in just a minute, but first, Mikey, what was that phone call you got a few minutes ago?

MIKEY: *(Crossing DC)* Oh! Folks, I just got an I.U.D. from the lab. *(The WITNESSES laugh and MIKEY explains)* I. U. D.: Important Up Date. And thanks to spectrographic analysis of the tissue from Mrs. Czerny's throat, they've been able to narrow down the time of death to a fifteen-minute interval between four-fifteen and four-thirty. Now, you see, the interesting thing about this is that I observed Mrs. Shubert entering the shop through the front door at four-o-five. So, what we need to know from you, Mrs. Shubert, is once you entered the shop, did you at any time thereafter, for any reason whatsoever, leave this room right here?

SHUBERT: No. I never left.

OPT: *If WITNESS says, "She went into the supply closet."*

NICK: *You're right. She did. But that was after the body was discovered.*

NICK: Wait a minute here. Mikey, you say that the time of death is between four-fifteen and four-thirty, right? And Mrs. Shubert came in at four-o-five ... *(NICK writes the figures on his pad. He ponders the arithmetic.)*

MIKEY: *(helpfully)* ...carry the one...

NICK: That's ten minutes before the time of death... meaning that Mrs. Czerny was alive and well when Mrs. Shubert came in here. You witnesses say she never left... *(OPT: If we have called SHUBERT'S home (Question 11) "the phone call to her butler checked out.")* Mrs. Shubert, it's absolutely clear in my mind that you can be ruled out as a chief suspect in the murder of Isabel Czerny.

SHUBERT: Wonderful! *(Crossing to pick up her packages)* I have got places to go and people to see. *(Crossing DS to front door. If WITNESSES are quiet enough she may add: I'd like to say what a pleasure it was meeting you all.*

VOTE

(Crosses a step or two) *I'd like to say that.* (Continuing towards front door).

MIKEY: *(Stepping in to head her off)* Mrs. Shubert, you've got nowhere to go.

SHUBERT: Why not?

MIKEY: Because you'll still be needed as a material witness.

NICK: And secondly, Mrs. Shubert, collusion has not been ruled out.

SHUBERT: Collusion? Tony!

TONY: Don't worry, I've got collusion insurance.

If you haven't mentioned a school group in attendance in Question 1, this is a good place to mention them.

NICK: *Excellent detective work, Mikey.*

MIKEY: *Thanks Nick. That's because I got my education at (name of school). (If the group responds) Go Tigers! (the mascot of the school mentioned.)*

(In DC we often have several school groups in attendance and the dialogue continues as follows:)

NICK: *You went there? I went to (name of school).*

TONY: *Oh, who cares where you went to school?*

NICK: *Why? Where'd you go?*

TONY: *I went to (name of school).*

BARBARA: *I was a cheerleader at (name of school).*

SHUBERT: *I was named Debutante of the Year at (name of school).*

EDDIE: *Yeah? Well I got kicked out of (name of school.) (In response to reaction) You got kicked out. too?*

NICK: *(Putting an end to all this) ALL RIGHT! The reunion is over.*

QUESTION # 9: HOW DID BARBARA DISCOVER THE BODY?

*Note: If the first Question to **BARBARA** requires her to leave the barber chair (and most of them do), she will conclude the Question by crossing to the DL seating area and sitting. In this Sample Question Period, she has already moved from the barber chair and is now DL. Adjust the blocking accordingly.*

WITNESS: If Barbara went out with the trash, how did she end up in Isabel's apartment?

NICK: You're right. DeMarco, what were you doing up at Isabel's if you went out to dump the trash?

BARBARA: *(Rising and crossing D)* Oh, no! Wait. I can explain that. *(She begins at the beginning.)* See, what happened was, I went out with the trash.

TONY: So what else is new?

BARBARA: I went out with the trash because I was worried about Isabel. I just used the trash as an excuse to get out of the shop, *(crossing to L of sink if she isn't already DL)* because I didn't want to alarm Mrs. Shubert. I mean, you all saw how Tony left here. *(She's done with her explanation. Crossing toward DL seating area.)*

TONY: What are you talking about?

BARBARA: You were crazy. I didn't know what you were gonna do. *(To WITNESSES)* He and Isabel fought with each other all the time.

TONY: *(Rising and crossing to R of sink)* We did not! Don't tell them that!

BARBARA: *(Crossing to just L of the sink)* Oh come on, Tony. *(To WITNESSES)* Last week the two of them had such a big fight, Isabel shut off the water in the shop right in the middle of business hours. *(Again, she's done with her explanation. Crossing toward DL seating area and sits.)*

TONY: Can you believe that? I could have killed her that day!

(BARBARA turns back and points at TONY indicating "see?" NICK makes a note.)

No, don't write that down!

(TONY crosses to NICK C, grabs pen from NICK and runs above barber

chair to the other side of the barber chair. NICK takes up the chase. They circle once ending with NICK C and TONY R.)

NICK: Give me that pen, Whitcomb. Give it to me.

OPT:

TONY: Tackle me!

NICK: WHITCOMB!

TONY: (Tosses pen to **NICK**, who catches it.) *Fabulous hands, Lieutenant.* (Sits in barber chair. Then, to WITNESSES) *Lips ain't bad, either.*

(If NICK misses it, TONY says mockingly, "Fabulous hands, Lieutenant. Lips ain't bad, though.")

OPT:

TONY: (putting his hands behind his back) *I don't have it.*

MIKEY: *It's behind his back, Nick!!*

TONY: (Shooting Mikey a dirty look, he tosses the pen to **NICK**, who catches it.) *Fabulous hands, Lieutenant.* (Sits in barber chair. Then, to WITNESSES) *Lips ain't bad, either.*

QUESTION # 12: DO LAWRENCE AND MRS. CZERNY HAVE THE SAME BLOOD TYPE?

Usually asked by the WITNESSES as:

- 1) What's Lawrence's blood type?
- 2) What's everybody's blood type?
- 3) What was Mrs. Czerny's blood type?

NICK: Why do you ask about blood type?

WITNESS: *(Appropriate response.)*

NICK: Oh, because earlier Mikey said that all of the blood found in Mrs. Czerny's apartment was of the same blood type. I see what you're getting at. Mikey, do we have Mrs. Czerny's blood type?

MIKEY: *(Looking in his pad)* Yeah it's... uh...

NICK: No wait... don't tell me. Lawrence, what's your blood type?

EDDIE: O-positive.

OPT:

NICK: *You're sure?*

EDDIE: *Oh, positive.*

NICK: Mikey, what was Mrs. Czerny's blood type? (***MIKEY** doesn't answer.*)
Mikey??

MIKEY: You told me not to tell you.

NICK: You can tell me now.

MIKEY: Mrs. Czerny's blood type was O-positive. It's the same, folks.

TONY: You know, that's the most common blood type there is. O-positive.

NICK: Oh, really? What's yours?

TONY: "W".

NOTE: It doesn't mean anything. Just say it. It's funny and always gets a laugh.

QUESTION # 36: HOW TALL WAS THE VICTIM?

NICK: Why do you ask?

WITNESS: Well, if the stab wounds were at a downward angle, it would mean that it would have to have been someone taller than she was.

NICK: Mikey, what are the specs on Mrs. Czerny.

MIKEY: *(Looking it up quickly in his notebook.)* She was 5' 7", and 130 lbs.

NICK: But bear in mind that if she was 5' 7", her neck is going to be lower than her head. Like about 5'5"... and don't forget, if Mrs. Czerny was seated at the piano at the time of her murder even Tom Cruise could have done it.

The Vote

(After NICK has led the WITNESSES through the Question & Answer period, and after SHUBERT has been exonerated, and after several of the important pieces of physical evidence and motive have been discussed, NICK may go to the vote.)

This should not appear to be a “Kangaroo Court”. It is a serious step in NICK’S master scheme of exposing the murderer. The SUSPECTS respond to this move as if being judged by a jury. Even TONY’S retort is based on a desire to discount a vote.)

NICK: You know, I just got an idea. I want to try something. This has been working really well. But I want to take it a step further. I want to get everyone involved. So, based on how these suspects have answered your questions, and remembering how we reconstructed the events leading to the discovery of the victim’s body, what I’d like you to do now is... I’d like you to VOTE for the person that you feel is the chief suspect in the murder of Isabel Czerny.

(They all rush to NICK. General hubbub.)

NICK: You heard me. VOTE! V - O - A - T, Vote!

TONY sits in barber chair.

EDDIE sits in desk chair.

BARBARA sits in styling chair.

SHUBERT stands at dryers.

(NICK crossing DC) Now, the suspects you will be voting for are *(crossing below barber chair and pointing at EDDIE)* Mr. Edward Lawrence, *(crossing to C, indicating BARBARA)* Miss Barbara DeMarco and Mr. Anthony Whitcomb *(indicating TONY)*. Mrs. Shubert has been ruled out as a chief suspect due to the time of death, although I’m not ruling her out as an accessorizer. *(SHUBERT touches her earrings and sits in dryer chair.)*

But right now, I’m looking for the person you feel actually committed the crime. Now, you have one vote and one vote only and I want you to signify that vote by raising your hand, *(OPT: that way we can be sure the Russians can’t hack it.)* Mikey, you count all of the votes on that side of the shop *(indicating from center of sink to L)* and I’ll take this side of the shop *(indicating from center of sink to R)*.

(Crossing toward EDDIE) Okay, all of you who feel that the person who murdered Isabel Czerny is Mr. Edward Lawrence, please raise your hand. Mr. Lawrence.

VOTE

(NICK and MIKEY count votes. They circle around below the two chairs and meet UC. NICK shows MIKEY his count which MIKEY writes down and adds to his.)

(Crossing toward BARBARA) And all of you who feel that the person who murdered Isabel Czerny is Miss Barbara DeMarco, please raise your hand. Miss DeMarco

(NICK and MIKEY count votes. They circle around below the two chairs and meet UC. NICK shows MIKEY his count which MIKEY writes down and adds to his.)

(Crossing toward TONY) And all of you who feel that the person who murdered Isabel Czerny is Mr. Anthony Whitcomb, please raise your hand. Mr. Whitcomb.

(NICK and MIKEY count votes. They circle around below the two chairs and meet UC. NICK shows MIKEY his count which MIKEY writes down and adds to his. MIKEY circles in his pad the suspect who received the most votes so NICK can see it. In the event of a tie vote between EDDIE and BARBARA, TONY says: "I release my delegates." at which point NICK will hold a run-off VOTE between BARBARA and EDDIE.)

TONY: *(Rising and surveying the voting WITNESSES, finding the perfect one) Wait just one minute, Lieutenant. I know this guy! (Gesturing to a comically appropriate male WITNESSES with his hand raised.) Yes, I do. I just didn't recognize him with his clothes on! (NICK and MIKEY scoot TONY UL to dryer but he returns to ask the WITNESS's companion...) Honey, are you with him? You are one very lucky lady!*

OPT:

TONY: *(Pointing at an older lady, shocked that she's voting for him) MOM!*

Or:

As TONY crosses DL to UL... he can gesture with his right hand pointing with his forefinger and with his thumb extended. Then he brings that hand up to his forehead to make the "L" for "Loser" symbol.

NICK: *WHITCOMB!! (TONY scrambles UL to dryer, standing next to SHUBERT) Ladies and Gentleman, I'd like to thank you once again for your cooperation in this case. There will be no further questions. I'll take over from here. (Crossing UC with his back to the audience.)*

NOTE: Once NICK goes to the vote, no more questions are taken with the exception of

VOTE

the Question about the police being suspects.

EXAMPLE:

*(This can be used at any point in the vote where the WITNESSES vocally accuse **MIKEY** and/or **NICK**.)*

WITNESS: *What about you cops? (or, "What about Mikey, he was out of the shop.")*

NICK: *Whoa, whoa, whoa... what are you telling me? You don't trust the DC police?*

WITNESSES: *Nooooooooo!!!*

NICK; *Let me tell you something, buddy. The DC cops are the best cops money can buy.*

(IF THE WITNESSES CONTINUE WITH OBJECTIONS)

NICK: *OK, let's settle this once and for all. Mikey, did you do it?*

MIKEY: *No.*

NICK: *Neither did I. (**NICK** immediately continues with the vote from where he left off.)*

***** HOUSE LIGHTS OUT/STAGE LIGHTS UP FULL *****

VOTE

LAWRENCE ENDING

(NICK C with his back to the voted murderer.

MIKEY UR near entrance.

EDDIE sitting at desk chair.

BARBARA sitting in styling chair.

TONY and SHUBERT at dryers.)

NICK: *(Facing BARBARA)* Shall we proceed, *(wheeling on EDDIE)* Mr. Lawrence?

EDDIE: Why me?

NICK: The witnesses voted you the chief suspect.

EDDIE: Well, they would, wouldn't they?

NICK: Why do you say that?

EDDIE: *(Crossing UL above barber chair to URC, facing off with NICK)* Because that's the way you and Jughead here *(or other similar reference about MIKEY)* have been steering this investigation all along, isn't it? I'm the bad guy, right?

NICK: Well, you got a record.

EDDIE: I got a record? Big deal! This is DC *(name of city where show is being performed)*. You can't get elected in this town without a record! So, how about a little evidence? *(Crossing to sit in barber chair.)*

(OPT: from "I'm the bad guy, right?"

NICK: *You don't like the way we do things?*

EDDIE: *Oh, come on! This is D.C. The only city in the world where the same people make the laws, break the laws, and enforce the laws. So, how about a little evidence? (Crossing to sit in barber chair.)*

End OPT.)

NICK: All right. Point 1: you had an appointment with Mrs. Czerny this afternoon. She was murdered at almost the exact time you were supposed to be up there.

LAWRENCE ENDING

- EDDIE:** But I wasn't up there, I was down here.
- NICK:** Which brings me to point B. (*Crossing above barber chair to DR*) During the reconstruction, you did all you could to confuse us about your exact comings and goings. You made a big deal about the music playing while you were down here, when, in fact, you could have quite easily rushed upstairs (*crossing to C indicating swinging doors*), murdered Mrs. Czerny and then switched on the tape recorder. Then, as a follow-up, you sent Barbara upstairs to discover the body and implicate her.
- EDDIE:** You don't know what you're talking about. I couldn't have turned the tape recorder on. If you remember correctly, the music started playing again after I came back from the men's room.
- NICK:** That's because you left enough blank tape on that cassette to provide you with that flimsy little alibi.
- EDDIE:** And that's all you've got on me?
- NICK:** No, not really. No. You weren't just involved in a shady deal with Mrs. Czerny upstairs. You were also involved in a plot of another kind with Miss DeMarco here. Now, that plot was aimed at getting Isabel to stick to her original will. And if that had gone according to plan, you and Barbara would have been right in clover.
- EDDIE:** A little thin for a murder conviction, don't you think?
- NICK:** Maybe, but it's enough to book you on.
- EDDIE:** I doubt it.
- NICK:** Too bad the witnesses voted you the chief suspect.
- EDDIE:** You're not going to listen to those bubble brains, are you? They probably think the Redskins are going to the Superbowl. (*OPT. timely/local joke i.e. "The witnesses? What do they know? They probably voted for Tom Steyer"*).
- MIKEY:** (*Throwing his pad to the floor and pulling out his gun, aiming it at EDDIE*) THAT'S IT LAWRENCE!... (*ad libs his love of the team*).
- SUSPECTS:** (*Shriek and dive for cover.*)
- NICK:** (*Shielding the SUSPECTS*) MIKEY! MIKEY! (*NICK calms him and MIKEY re-holsters his gun.*)

LAWRENCE ENDING

OPT:

NICK: *MIKEY! MIKEY! MIKEY!! You gotta calm down.*

MIKEY: *(Holstering his gun) Sorry, Nick. I'm just not myself when I'm hungry.*

NICK: *(Reaching for a Snickers bar on TONY'S station) Here. Have a Snickers.*

MIKEY: *(Unwrapping it and taking a bite) Thanks. (He eats).*

NICK: *Better now?*

MIKEY: *Better.*

(END OPT.)

NICK: But you know, Lawrence, the witnesses could be wrong. I must admit that I was a little surprised by their vote.

EDDIE: Oh, really?

NICK: Yeah. I thought that they would have voted for Miss DeMarco, here.

BARBARA: Me? You can't be serious.

NICK: Well, let's take a look at where you stand.

BARBARA: Yeah, let's. *(Rising and crossing DL)*

NICK: You say you discovered the body.

BARBARA: No, that's what you keep telling me.

NICK: And everyone saw you come racing in here screaming and then supposedly faint.

BARBARA: I told you I can't remember that.

NICK: *(Crossing to shampoo chair) Classic reaction of a killer, Miss DeMarco! (he sits.)*

BARBARA: *(Crossing L above styling chair to UC)* How are you supposed to react when you see a friend lying in a pool of blood?

NICK: How should I know? But you, and you alone, stood to gain from Mrs. Czerny's death. She was murdered before she could change her will.

LAWRENCE ENDING

BARBARA: But I didn't know anything about that will.

NICK: Also, there were certain aspects of your "relationship" with Mrs. Czerny that you had good reason to conceal. (*SHUBERT rises at dryer*).

BARBARA: (*Crossing D a step*) We were friends! Can't you get that through your head?

SHUBERT: (*Crossing to C, L of BARBARA*) Don't let him upset you, Barbara. You don't have to answer any of these questions.

NICK: And, Miss DeMarco, during the reconstruction, you tried to cover up those kisses between Lawrence and you. You tried to make us believe they never took place.

SHUBERT: (*Crossing D toward NICK*) That is nothing but evidence! (*Crossing below styling chair and back UL to dryer*).

NICK: Exactly! And I have enough evidence to charge you, DeMarco.

BARBARA: Charge me? (*Turning to TONY UL and crossing towards him for support*) Look, I've got this thing about blood. All I got to do is look at it and I get sick.

NICK: Maybe, but the fact remains...

BARBARA: (*Turning above styling chair to NICK*) YOU GOT NO FACTS! I'm the last person in the world who would want to harm Isabel. (*Crossing D a few steps L of styling chair*) As for the will, I didn't know that I was mentioned in it. Anyway, now that all this has happened, I couldn't take a penny of her money (*crossing below styling chair to UC*).

NICK: You're willing to give up that money?

BARBARA: (*Turning to NICK*) Of course.

NICK: I don't think that an innocent person would do that.

BARBARA: You don't seem to realize, Lieutenant, I didn't want anything from Isabel. I honestly liked her.

MIKEY: We know how much you liked her.

BARBARA: Oh, I know what you thought.

(OPT: “I know what you thought, Harry Potter;” “I know what you thought, Boy Wonder” or “Why don’t you take a day off, Ferris Bueller?” or “I know what you thought, forty-year old virgin.” **MIKEY:** Hey! I am not forty.”)

(Crossing UL to TONY) Can’t I be friends with another woman without the cops reading something into it?

EDDIE: (Rising, crossing to UC) Look, you’ve got to understand the psychology of a woman like Isabel. She was a celebrity. She was in love with power. She liked to get people into her clutches, to dominate them...

TONY: (Crossing DL across to DR) “The psychology of a woman!” Would you listen to Dr. Phil, here! He hardly even knew her.

EDDIE: Sit down. (**TONY** sits in chair at desk. **EDDIE** fades UC)

NICK: But Miss DeMarco was tougher than Tony here. So, you decided to fight back, right?

BARBARA: (Crosses to UL of styling chair) Oh, come on. You make it sound worse than it was. The thing is, Isabel wanted to run everybody’s life ’cause she didn’t have anything better to do. (Crossing to NICK, winding up in front of her chair.) She was always nagging me about where I was going, what I was doing, who my friends were. I mean, she could drive you crazy. And, okay, okay, we may have fought about it a few times, but you don’t murder someone just because...

NICK: (Cutting her off) Somebody did!

BARBARA: Well I didn’t! (sits.)

EDDIE: (Crossing a step to C) So, Barbara might have done it, so what? Edward Scissorhands (OPT: *Sweeney Todd*) here could have done it just as well. They both had the opportunity.

NICK: And the motive.

EDDIE: But I don’t think that any of us did it. Sane people don’t go around jabbing scissors into other people’s throats.

NICK: That’s the theory.

EDDIE: Well, as long as were talking about theories instead of facts, let me give you one for free, Lieutenant. If you ask me, Isabel Czerny committed suicide. (OPT. If a witness has previously mentioned suicide, Eddie will

say “If you ask me, I agree with that witness (not breaking the 4th Wall). I think Isabel Czerny did commit suicide.”)

SHUBERT: Oh, really! *(General derisive reaction from everyone).*

EDDIE: I mean it. She was a sick woman, she was nuts. *(Stepping in, indicating TONY)* The only thing that still gave her a thrill was playing games with other people’s feelings. Now Barbara here she liked. At first. But then she gets jealous. She accuses me of coming between them. So, Isabel tried to get back at me. She tried to make it look like I was going to blackmail her.

NICK: Really?

EDDIE: Of course. Think, Lieutenant, think! What does she do? First, she plants those phony letters in the chest. Then she calls me up and asks me to return them. *(As he works out the theory point by point, crossing L above and around styling chair and winding up DL by the end of this speech.)* Then she calls you cops, tells you to come around and stake out the place. Then she calls her lawyer and tells him that she wants to change her will. *(Now DL near the seat)* And then, when we’re all neatly arranged in her final “concerto of revenge”, what does she do???

NICK: *(Rises and crosses L to EDDIE)* She picks up a pair of scissors and jabs herself in the throat?

EDDIE: Yes!

NICK: Repeatedly?

EDDIE: *(Deflated.)* Oh. *(Crosses to seat DL and sits.)*

OPT:

(If the WITNESSES have suggested suicide during the Q & A, it will go as follows:

NICK: *(Rises and crosses L to EDDIE)* She picks up a pair of scissors and repeatedly jabs herself in the throat?

EDDIE: Yes!

NICK: *And then she wipes off all the prints?*

EDDIE: *(Deflated.)* Oh. *(Crosses to seat DL and sits.)*

End OPT.

NICK: *(Crossing from DL towards DR)* I don't buy a word of that story, and neither do you.

BARBARA: I don't know, it could have happened that way.

NICK: *(Crossing to C, R of styling chair.)* Honey, I've had it with you trying to help out your little boyfriend here. You better start helping yourself, Miss DeMarco. You're in deep trouble. Now, I've got to know exactly what happened when you got up to her apartment.

BARBARA: I told you, I can't remember.

NICK: *(Exploding)* WELL, YOU BETTER START REMEMBERING!!!
(Frustrated) Okay, let's take it one step at a time. You went out of here with the trash, right? Did you see anyone?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: *(Building)* Did you hear anything?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: *(Building)* But you went up to her apartment?

BARBARA: I guess so.

NICK: So, how did you get in?

BARBARA: I don't remember!

NICK: Do you have a key?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: Then how did you get IN?

(The previous beats build to a point of exasperation culminating in NICK slapping the back of the chair that BARBARA is sitting in, causing BARBARA to blurt out...)

BARBARA: The door was open!... *(Slowly BARBARA'S memory is unlocked.)* The door was open.

NICK: *(Quietly encouraging her)* So?

BARBARA: So, I called out, "Isabel, it's Barbara. Is everything all right?"

LAWRENCE ENDING

NICK: And then?

BARBARA: Then I heard this horrible sort of noise. Like a groan. And then silence. (*BARBARA rises.*) So, I pushed the door open and I walked inside. (*Other SUSPECTS look at each other.*) I looked in the kitchen (*indicating L*) but she wasn't there. So, I went into the living room (*a few steps DR*) ... and there she was... (*BARBARA, recoiling from the scene, backs into NICK'S arms.*) lying on the carpet... face down... in a pool of blood.

NICK: (*NICK turns BARBARA to face him.*) Keep going. What happened next?

BARBARA: Footsteps!! I heard footsteps behind me on the stairs.

TONY: That was probably me! (*TONY raises his hand. EVERYONE quickly look at TONY. He quickly lowers his hand*) Probably not.

BARBARA: So, I shut the door behind me and the footsteps faded away. Oh God! Now it hits me! (*Crossing DL to EDDIE*) You're right! She wanted me to go into that room. She wanted me to find her lying there. (*To NICK*) She wanted you cops to think I killed her.

NICK: Because you did, didn't you, DeMarco?

BARBARA: No! No! I couldn't have done it. (*sits in styling chair.*)

EDDIE: (*Rising*) It's like I told you, Lieutenant...

TONY: (*Rising and crossing C*) You know, you seem awfully anxious to push the Lieutenant this way and that way. (*Crossing back towards desk.*)

NICK: Don't worry, Mr. Whitcomb. I don't switch all that easily.

TONY: (*Crossing to barber chair*) Well, it's obvious, isn't it? He did it.

EDDIE: Do I have to take this from that?

TONY: Yes, you do!

NICK: Sit down, Lawrence.

TONY: Yeah, sit down!

NICK: (*Turning to TONY.*) Hey!

TONY: (*Directing this to EDDIE*) Hey!

LAWRENCE ENDING

NICK: (To **TONY**) YOU!

TONY: (Directing this to **EDDIE**) YOU!! GET OFF OF MY CLOUD!! (Sits in barber chair).

OPT:

TONY: I DON'T LIKE YOUR GIRLFRIEND.

(**EDDIE** sits)

NICK: (From C) That's it! I've had it up to here with you clowns. Whitcomb, I'm going upstairs to your apartment to place a call to headquarters. When I come back down, you'll all be free to go.

ALL: Good. Great. Wonderful. (General hubbub.)

NICK: With one exception.

EDDIE: (Rising) What exception?

NICK: I'm going to arrest one of you for the murder of Isabel Czerny. Mikey, watch the front door.

(Begins to cross L below styling chair to swinging doors. **MIKEY** turns and intently stares at the front door. **NICK** sees him and stops, exasperated)

From the outside! (**MIKEY** and **NICK** exit.)

(ALTERNATIVE EXIT: After saying "Mikey, guard the front door," **NICK** exits mistakenly into closet instead of side door; **MIKEY** starts to front door; stopping when he realizes **NICK** has gone into the supply closet. **NICK** re-enters and says, "It's all clear in there Mikey." and both exit.)

SUSPECTS hold in place until front door has closed completely behind **MIKEY**.

TONY, worried, scurries to the front door.

SHUBERT goes to the swinging doors and listens then crosses C.

EDDIE goes to **BARBARA** and they begin arguing (quietly, urgently, and audibly).

Following dialogue should be in energized stage whisper. This is the first time the **SUSPECTS** have been left alone since the murder investigation began. The cops may be right outside the door and could come back at any moment.

LAWRENCE ENDING

Creating the impression that they're all involved in collusion.

TONY: *(To BARBARA and EDDIE, thwacking the towel against the wall)*
SEPARATE!

EDDIE crosses to swinging doors, listening.

SHUBERT: *(To TONY) I don't like this. (After a beat, to BARBARA) I don't like this at all. (After a beat, to EDDIE) This has gone too far. (Beat, deciding, crossing above barber chair to DL) I think I better call my husband.*

TONY: *(Crossing to L side of barber chair, intensely, sotto voce.)* No! Don't use that phone! He's using it upstairs.

BARBARA: This is just an extension. He'll hear you.

SHUBERT: *(Crossing to TONY)* Why did this have to happen to me?

EDDIE: *(Crossing to C)* It's happening to all of us.

SHUBERT: Yes, I know, "Eddie". It's just that I have so much more at stake than any of you. *(Crossing back to phone)* I've got to call Adam. I want to speak to him.

TONY: *(Rising and screams)* I SAID DON'T USE THAT PHONE!

(End stage whisper but still aware the police may be right outside.)

SHUBERT: I WANT MY HUSBAND!

EDDIE: *(Crossing to shampoo chair and sitting)* Oh, now she wants her husband.

SHUBERT: Charming friends you have, Barbara. *(Crossing to UC with the intention to get her packages at the dryer).*

BARBARA: You can say that again.

SHUBERT: *(Stopping C, repeating with same inflection only louder.)* Charming friends you have, Barbara. *(Completing her cross above styling chair to packages UL)*

EDDIE: What's that supposed to mean?

TONY: *(Exasperated)* It means Barbara's friends are charming.

LAWRENCE ENDING

BARBARA: (*Crossing DL*) Never mind! The cops know too much already.

SHUBERT: (*Crossing D to BARBARA, and with her right hand grabs **BARBARA'S** right arm and turns her.*) Are you trying to cover up something, Barbara? Is there something you haven't told the police?

BARBARA: Will you please stop interfering, Mrs. Shubert. (*pulling her arm from **SHUBERT'S** grasp, crossing to styling chair and sitting*) You haven't even begun to understand yet, have you?

SHUBERT: Understand? Understand what? (*in frustration, crossing to swinging doors to listen.*)

EDDIE: That's enough. We've got nothing to be afraid of.

BARBARA: Speak for yourself.

EDDIE: I will, and I'm sticking to my suicide theory. (***TONY** reacts derisively, simultaneously unlocking the barber chair where he is sitting.*) Isabel Czerny was capable of anything.

BARBARA: Even of jamming a pair of scissors into her own throat?

EDDIE: Yes, if it would land us all in the shit.

SHUBERT: (*Crossing to UL of styling chair.*) Mr. Lawrence, I will not stand for any more of your vulgarity. I am reporting you to the police for insulting behavior. (*Crossing UR towards front door.*)

EDDIE: (*Rising, crossing towards SHUBERT, stopping her*) WONDERFUL!! Why don't you make it indecent exposure while you're at it. (***EDDIE**, facing upstage, quickly mimes opening his jacket and "exposing" himself to SHUBERT.*)

: ***SHUBERT** screams, crossing above barber chair to DL, sits at desk. **EDDIE** fades UC.)*

TONY: You know, Mrs. Shubert, I think the two of us are just a little "de trop" here. What with poor Isabel lying dead upstairs on that gorgeous oriental rug...

EDDIE: "Poor Isabel" is probably lying on a slab in the morgue by now. Just where you always wanted her, Whitcomb.

TONY: What are you trying to say?

EDDIE: I was on to you ages ago. Isabel told me all about you. (***EDDIE** begins*

LAWRENCE ENDING

*turning **TONY** in the barber chair.)*

TONY: Shut up!

EDDIE: All about you and your long love affair!

TONY: *(**EDDIE** stabilizes the barber chair. **TONY** jumps out of the barber chair and crosses to shampoo chair and sits.)* Shut up! Shut up!

*(**EDDIE** relocks the barber chair and remains C.)*

BARBARA: Oh, leave him alone. You're no better than he is. *(Crossing DL)*

EDDIE: What's your problem?

BARBARA: *(Turning to **EDDIE**)* Take a good look at yourself, why don't you?

EDDIE: Shut up, Barbara.

BARBARA: You had me fooled for a while, *(crossing UL)* but you couldn't get what you wanted from her, could you?

EDDIE: I never wanted anything from her.

BARBARA: The big blackmail scheme fizzled out.

EDDIE: *(Overlapping with **BARBARA**'S "Blackmail", crossing above styling chair to her, grabbing her arm)* Blackmail? Barbara, watch what you're saying.

*(**TONY** remains in shampoo chair, engrossed in the unfolding drama)*

BARBARA: *(Pulling her arm free and crossing below styling chair to C)* I never thought much of you as a man, but even as a crook you can't do it right.

EDDIE: *(Crossing to L of styling chair)* You were never looking for a man in the first place.

BARBARA: What is that supposed to mean?

EDDIE: You think I'd ever touch you again?

BARBARA: You think I'd ever let you touch me again?

EDDIE: Look, I can do a lot better than a cheap slut like you.

LAWRENCE ENDING

SHUBERT: Mr. Lawrence, I will not stand here and have you insult this girl.

TONY: She's had it coming to her for years.

BARBARA: *(Taking a step C toward TONY)* Shut up Tony.

EDDIE: *(Crossing above styling chair from UL to front door UR)* I'll deal with you later.

*(NOTE: The following scene must be played with white hot fury until BARBARA holds the scissors up to EDDIE. **BARBARA'S** relentless attack leading to **EDDIE'S** breakdown)*

BARBARA: Quit pretending, Eddie. Don't think the cops aren't on to you by now.

SHUBERT: What do you mean?

BARBARA: He actually thought that ridiculous plot with the letters was going to work.

EDDIE: And you didn't?

BARBARA: If I thought so, would I have told Isabel? *(Crossing DL)*

EDDIE: *(Crossing to R of barber chair towards **SHUBERT**, who, intimidated, sits at desk chair)* Oh, you see what she's trying to do, don't you? She's trying to make look like she's in the clear.

BARBARA: God, I'll bet it was a real shocker to you when the cops showed up.

EDDIE: What?

BARBARA: *(Crossing to C)* I had to do it, Eddie. Even a big dope like me could see that if you got caught, I'd be involved up to my neck. But I never thought you'd have the guts to kill her. *(Crossing DL)*

EDDIE: *(Crossing above barber chair to C)* Come on! Do you think that I'd be crazy enough to murder someone upstairs with two undercover cops sitting right down here?

TONY: *(Rising)* Oh, get off it. You didn't know they were cops. You were just as surprised as the rest of us.

EDDIE: *(Stepping D threateningly to **TONY**)* I don't care about that! *(**TONY** sits).* *(**EDDIE** crossing below barber chair and UR to front door, stopping momentarily to speak to **BARBARA**)* I'll get you later.

LAWRENCE ENDING

BARBARA: *(Crossing C, vocally stopping him)* I DON'T THINK SO, EDDIE. You should have stopped counting on my support a long time ago. *(To SHUBERT)* He had it all worked out. He'd charm me, get a hold over me, and then murder Isabel before she could change her will and live off of my money!

EDDIE: Why are you saying this?

BARBARA: It took a while, but I finally figured out what you really are.

EDDIE: And what am I? Really?

BARBARA: *(Spitting it out)* Ridiculous. Stupid and ridiculous. *(Crossing DL)*

EDDIE: Shut up, Barbara.

BARBARA: *(Simultaneously with EDDIE and relentlessly, BARBARA crosses UL)* You think you're such a big wheeler-dealer, and you're a nobody.

EDDIE: *(Crossing C toward her, overlapping.)* You want to shut your slutty little mouth?

BARBARA: *(Crossing in to L of her station)* Isabel and I used to spend hours together, laughing behind your back...

EDDIE: *(R of BARBARA'S station. Losing control)* Barbara, I said SHUT UP!!!

BARBARA: *(With fire)* Why? What are you going to do? Jab a pair of scissors into my throat, too? Here, use mine.

(BARBARA picks up a pair of scissors from her station and holds them out to EDDIE defiantly. Their eyes lock for a moment. EDDIE suddenly grabs for the scissors, but BARBARA quickly jerks them out of reach while backing away around the styling chair R.)

Oh! You want to play! Come on, Eddie, let's see what you're made of.

(She holds the scissors up again as she continues to back away from EDDIE around the chair. EDDIE makes a second lunge for the scissors but again BARBARA jerks them from his reach. BARBARA, still backing away to C, with the scissors again held out to EDDIE, looks away from him momentarily to address TONY at the shampoo sink chair.)

He thinks he's such a big deal.

(In the moment that BARBARA has looked away, EDDIE grabs her right

LAWRENCE ENDING

wrist with his left hand while removing the scissors with his right hand. He raises the scissors over his head to attack BARBARA. BARBARA recoils against the L arm of the barber chair. Simultaneously SHUBERT and TONY rise. All three scream. TONY quickly sits. EDDIE suddenly realizes what he's about to do and drops the scissors.)

EDDIE: *(Looking up towards Isabel's apartment) You bitch!*

(He staggers UL to the corner, turning his back on the others. They slowly and covertly reach for scissors keeping their eyes glued on EDDIE. EDDIE turns on them suddenly. They snap to original positions a la the playground game Red Light/Green Light.)

(When the laugh is over, slowly, clearly enunciating) I didn't mean to kill her.

I only wanted to scare her a little. I was just going to show her the letters. I knew she couldn't take all the publicity, what with the tour and all. What would her fans think? People like Mrs. Shubert? *(taking a step towards SHUBERT who sits)* She wasn't going to miss that money. And I needed it. To set myself up. To make myself respectable. *(Laughing at the irony)* But you... you told her. You went behind my back and you warned her. *(turning away from BARBARA)* I shouldn't have killed Isabel, *(turning back to BARBARA)* I should have killed you!

(EDDIE lunges toward BARBARA as if to strangle her. NICK bursts in from swinging doors blowing whistle, MIKEY bursts in from front door with his gun drawn.) EDDIE makes a break for the front door. BARBARA picks up dropped scissors and scurries DL.) (NOTE: This all happens at once).

MIKEY: *(At the door with his gun pointed directly at EDDIE, a la Clint Eastwood) Go ahead, Lawrence. Make my day.*

(NICK slaps the cuffs on EDDIE and pushes him a step D to R of barber chair. Then, when EDDIE is in position...)

EDDIE: She wasn't afraid of me. I went up there and she wasn't afraid of me. She was laughing at me. And the music was playing.

NICK: So, you took a pair of scissors...

EDDIE: What? No!

MIKEY: And you stabbed her in the throat?

LAWRENCE ENDING

EDDIE: No!! I just wanted to shut her up. It was self-defense. She was laughing at me.

BARBARA: You killed her because she was laughing at you?

EDDIE: No, I just wanted to shut her up. How was I to know the cops were here?

NICK: Get him outta here, Mikey.

MIKEY: *(Crossing to EDDIE)* We'll talk about it down at the station, Lawrence.

(MIKEY nudges EDDIE toward the front door. Just before exiting, EDDIE stops and turns to BARBARA.)

EDDIE: Hold it! Hold it! Hold it! *(Nobly)* Wait for me, Barbara.

MIKEY: Move! *(MIKEY shoves EDDIE out the front doors. They exit.)*

BARBARA, TONY and SHUBERT cross to form a line down stage with their backs to the audience. BARBARA (L), TONY (C) and SHUBERT (R)).

NICK: *(Beginning to follow MIKEY out but stopping just before exiting and directly addressing the WITNESSES)* Oh folks, before you go, there's one thing you should know. Now tonight you decided and voted on Eddie Lawrence as the guilty party and so it turned out. But tomorrow night, you or your friends might decide that the guilty party is Miss DeMarco...

(BARBARA poses with scissors threateningly and then, turning to face R, hands the scissors to TONY who has turned to face her. She remains facing R.)

Mr. Whitcomb...

(TONY poses with scissors threateningly and then, turning to face R, hands them on to SHUBERT who has turned to face him.)

Or even Mrs. Shubert...

(SHUBERT, starting to turn R, facing forward, stops, drops the scissors into her purse, closes it, and smiles slyly and continues to turn, facing R.)

And whichever way you vote...

(BARBARA, TONY and SHUBERT turn their heads to face front as if in a mug shot.)

LAWRENCE ENDING

THAT'S the way we'll play it. (*ALL smile at audience.*) Good night.

END OF ACT II

OPTIONAL CURTAIN SPEECH:

*After the actors come out for their bows, either **NICK** or **TONY** steps forward and signals to the booth to take out the music. When the music is out, he says:*

Ladies and Gentlemen we want to thank you for being here tonight and for being a wonderful audience!

EDDIE: (*Ad libbing*) Yeah, and thanks for your vote.

If you had a good time tonight, we hope you'll tell your friends, your neighbors... your hairdresser! If you didn't have a good time, zip it.

And when you talk about the show, and we hope you talk about it a lot, we ask that you keep our secrets so that we can have as much fun with your friends as we did with you tonight!

Good night!

NICK/TONY *steps back into line as the music comes in again. Company bow and all exit.*

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT UPDATE:

(House lights up and as the audience begins to file out, we hear this announcement. Bring it in loud to cut through the exit chatter as the audience leaves.)

This just in. We have an update on the murder of Isabel Czerny. Local antiques dealer Edward Lawrence has been arrested and is now in police custody. A (name of town) police spokesperson reports that as many as 350 eyewitnesses may be called to testify at the trial.

DEMARCO ENDING

(NICK C with his back to the voted murderer.

MIKEY UR near entrance.

EDDIE sitting at desk chair.

BARBARA sitting in styling chair.

TONY and SHUBERT at dryers.)

NICK: *(Looking at EDDIE)* Shall we proceed, *(Wheeling on BARBARA)* Miss DeMarco?

BARBARA: Me?

NICK: The witnesses voted you the chief suspect.

BARBARA: You're not going to believe those bubble brains, are you? They probably think the Redskins are going to the Superbowl. *(OPT. timely/local joke i.e. "The witnesses? What do they know? They probably voted for Tom Steyer")*.

NICK: Well, let's take a look at where you stand.

BARBARA: Yeah, let's. *(Crossing DL)*

NICK: You say you discovered the body.

BARBARA: No, that's what you keep telling me.

NICK: And everyone saw you come racing in here screaming and then supposedly faint.

BARBARA: I told you I can't remember that.

NICK: *(Crossing to shampoo chair)* Classic reaction of a killer, Miss DeMarco! *(he sits.)*

BARBARA: *(Crossing L above styling chair to UC)* How are you supposed to react when you see a friend lying in a pool of blood?

NICK: How should I know? But you, and you alone, stood to gain from Mrs. Czerny's death. She was murdered before she could change her will.

LAWRENCE ENDING

BARBARA: But I didn't know anything about that will.

NICK: Also, there were certain aspects of your "relationship" with Mrs. Czerny that you had good reason to conceal. (*SHUBERT rises at dryer*).

BARBARA: (*Crossing D a step*) We were friends! Can't you get that through your head?

SHUBERT: (*Crossing to C, L of BARBARA*) Don't let him upset you, Barbara. You don't have to answer any of these questions.

NICK: And, Miss DeMarco, during the reconstruction, you tried to cover up those kisses between Lawrence and you. You tried to make us believe they never took place.

SHUBERT: (*Crossing D toward NICK*) That is nothing but evidence! (*Crossing below styling chair and back UL to dryer*).

NICK: Exactly! And I have enough evidence to charge you, DeMarco.

BARBARA: Charge me? (*Turning to TONY UL and crossing toward him for support*) Look, I've got this thing about blood. All I got to do is look at it and I get sick.

NICK: Maybe, but the fact remains...

BARBARA: (*Turning above styling chair to NICK*) YOU GOT NO FACTS! I'm the last person in the world who would want to harm Isabel. (*Crossing D a few steps L of styling chair*) As for the will, I didn't know that I was mentioned in it. Anyway, now that all this has happened, I couldn't take a penny of her money (*crossing below styling chair to UC*).

NICK: You're willing to give up that money?

BARBARA: (*Turning to NICK*) Of course.

NICK: I don't think that an innocent person would do that.

BARBARA: You don't seem to realize, Lieutenant, I didn't want anything from Isabel. I honestly liked her.

MIKEY: We know how much you liked her.

BARBARA: Oh, I know what you thought.

(OPT: *I know what you thought, Harry Potter*"; "Oh, I know what you

thought, Boy Wonder”, “Why don’t you take a day off, Ferris Bueller?” or “I know what you thought, forty-year old virgin.” ”MIKEY: Hey! I am not forty.”)

(Crossing UL to TONY) Can’t I be friends with another woman without the cops reading something into it?

EDDIE: *(Rising, crossing to UC)* Look, you’ve got to understand the psychology of a woman like Isabel. She was a celebrity. She was in love with power. She liked to get people into her clutches, to dominate them...

TONY: *(Crossing DL across to DR)* “The psychology of woman!” Would you listen to Dr. Phil, here! He hardly even knew her.

EDDIE: Sit down. *(TONY sits at desk chair. EDDIE fades UC).*

NICK: But Miss DeMarco was tougher than Tony here. So, you decided to fight back, right?

BARBARA: *(Crosses to UL of styling chair)* Oh, come on. You make it sound worse than it was. The thing is, Isabel wanted to run everybody’s life ’cause she didn’t have anything better to do. *(Crossing to NICK, winding up in front of her chair.)* She was always nagging me about where I was going, what I was doing, who my friends were. I mean, she could drive you crazy. And, okay, okay, we may have fought about it a few times, but you don’t murder someone just because...

NICK: Somebody did!

BARBARA: Well I didn’t! *(sits.)*

EDDIE: *(Crossing a step to C)* So, Barbara might have done it, so what? Edward Scissorhands *(OPT: Sweeney Todd)* here could have done it just as well. They both had the opportunity.

NICK: And the motive.

EDDIE: But I don’t think that any of us did it. Sane people don’t go around jabbing scissors into other people’s throats.

NICK: That’s the theory.

EDDIE: Well, as long as were talking about theories instead of facts, let me give you one for free, Lieutenant. If you ask me, Isabel Czerny committed suicide. *(OPT. If a witness has previously mentioned suicide, Eddie will say “If you ask me, I agree with that witness (not breaking the 4th Wall). I*

think Isabel Czerny did commit suicide.”)

SHUBERT: Oh, really! *(General derisive reaction from everyone except BARBARA who, of course, would like us to believe it could have been suicide.)*

EDDIE: I mean it. She was a sick woman, she was nuts. *(Indicating TONY)* The only thing that still gave her a thrill was playing games with other people’s feelings. Now Barbara here she liked. At first. But then she gets jealous. She accuses me of coming between them. So, Isabel tried to get back at me. She tried to make it look like I was going to blackmail her.

NICK: Really?

EDDIE: Of course. Think, Lieutenant, think! What does she do? First, she plants those phony letters in the chest. Then she calls me up and asks me to return them. *(As he works out the theory point by point, crossing around L above styling chair and winding up DL by the end of this speech.)* Then she calls you cops, tells you to come around and stake out the place. Then she calls her lawyer and tells him that she wants to change her will. *(Now DL near the seat)* And then, when we’re all neatly arranged in her final “concerto of revenge”, what does she do???

NICK: *(Rises and crosses L to EDDIE)* She picks up a pair of scissors and jabs herself in the throat?

EDDIE: Yes!

NICK: Repeatedly?

EDDIE: *(Deflated.)* Oh. *(Crosses to seat DL and sits.)*

OPT: *(If the WITNESSES have suggested suicide during the Q & A, it will go as follows:*

NICK: *(Rises and crosses L to EDDIE)* She picks up a pair of scissors and repeatedly jabs herself in the throat?

EDDIE: Yes!

NICK: And then she wipes off all the prints?

EDDIE: *(Deflated.)* Oh. *(Crosses to seat DL and sits.)*

END OPT.

NICK: *(Crossing from DL towards DR)* I don't buy a word of that story, and neither do you.

BARBARA: I don't know, it could have happened that way.

NICK: *(Crossing to C, R of styling chair.)* Honey, I've had it with you trying to help out your little boyfriend here. You better start helping yourself, Miss DeMarco. You're in deep trouble. Now, I've got to know exactly what happened when you got up to her apartment.

BARBARA: I told you, I can't remember.

NICK: *(Exploding)* WELL, YOU BETTER START REMEMBERING!!!
(Frustrated) Okay, let's take it one step at a time. You went out of here with the trash, right? Did you see anyone?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: *(Building)* Did you hear anything?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: *(Building)* But you went up to her apartment?

BARBARA: I guess so.

NICK: So, how did you get in?

BARBARA: I don't remember!

NICK: Do you have a key?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: Then how did you get IN?

(The previous beats build to a point of exasperation culminating in NICK slapping the back of the chair that BARBARA is sitting in, causing BARBARA to blurt out...)

BARBARA: The door was open!... *(Slowly BARBARA'S memory is unlocked.)* The door was open.

NICK: *(Quietly encouraging her)* So?

BARBARA: So, I called out, "Isabel, it's Barbara. Is everything all right?"

DEMARCO ENDING

NICK: And then?

BARBARA: Then I heard this horrible sort of noise. Like a groan. And then silence. (*BARBARA rises.*) So, I pushed the door open and I walked inside. (*Other SUSPECTS look at each other.*) I looked in the kitchen (*indicating L*) but she wasn't there. So, I went into the living room (*a few steps DR*) ... and there she was... (*BARBARA, recoiling from the scene, backs into NICK'S arms.*) lying on the carpet... face down... in a pool of blood.

NICK: (*NICK turns BARBARA to face him.*) Keep going. What happened next?

BARBARA: Footsteps!! I heard footsteps behind me on the stairs.

TONY: That was probably me! (*TONY raises his hand. EVERYONE quickly looks at TONY. He quickly lowers his hand*) Probably not.

BARBARA: So, I shut the door behind me and the footsteps faded away. Oh God! Now it hits me! (*Crossing DL to EDDIE*) You're right! She wanted me to go into that room. She wanted me to find her lying there. (*To NICK*) She wanted you cops to think I killed her.

NICK: Because you did, didn't you, DeMarco?

BARBARA: No! No! I couldn't have done it. (*sits in styling chair.*)

EDDIE: (*Rising*) It's like I told you, Lieutenant...

TONY: (*Rising and crossing C*) You know, you seem awfully anxious to push the Lieutenant this way and that way. (*Crossing back towards desk.*)

NICK: Don't worry, Mr. Whitcomb. I don't switch all that easily.

TONY: (*Crossing to barber chair*) Well, it's obvious, isn't it? He did it.

EDDIE: Do I have to take this from that?

TONY: Yes, you do!

NICK: Sit down, Lawrence.

TONY: Yeah, sit down!

NICK: (*Turning to TONY.*) Hey!

TONY: (*Directing this to EDDIE*) Hey!

DEMARCO ENDING

NICK: (To **TONY**) YOU!

TONY: (Directing this to **EDDIE**) YOU!! GET OFF OF MY CLOUD!!

(OPT: "I DON'T LIKE YOUR GIRLFRIEND.")

(**EDDIE** sits)

NICK: (From C) That's it! I've had it up to here with you clowns. Whitcomb, I'm going upstairs to your apartment to place a call to headquarters. When I come back down, you'll all be free to go.

ALL: Good. Great. Wonderful. (General hubbub.)

NICK: With one exception.

EDDIE: (Rising) What exception?

NICK: I'm going to arrest one of you for the murder of Isabel Czerny. Mikey, watch the front door.

(Begins to cross L below styling chair to swinging doors. **MIKEY** turns and intently stares at the front door. **NICK** sees him and stops, exasperated)

From the outside! (**MIKEY** and **NICK** exit.)

(ALTERNATIVE EXIT: After saying "Mikey, guard the front door," **NICK** exits mistakenly into closet instead of side door; **MIKEY** starts to front door; stopping when he realizes **NICK** has gone into the supply closet. **NICK** re-enters and says, "It's all clear in there Mikey." and both exit.)

SUSPECTS hold in place until front door has closed completely behind **MIKEY**.

TONY, worried, scurries to the front door.

SHUBERT goes to the swinging doors and listens. She crosses C. Meanwhile **EDDIE** goes to **BARBARA** and they begin arguing (quietly, urgently, and audibly).

Following dialogue should be in energized stage whisper. This is the first time the **SUSPECTS** have been left alone since the murder investigation began. The cops may be right outside the door and could come back at any moment.

Creating the impression that they're all involved in collusion.

DEMARCO ENDING

TONY: *(To BARBARA and EDDIE, thwacking the towel against the wall)*
SEPARATE!

EDDIE crosses to swinging doors, listening.

SHUBERT: *(To TONY) I don't like this. (After a beat, to BARBARA) I don't like this at all. (After a beat, to EDDIE) This has gone too far. (Beat, deciding, crossing above barber chair to DL) I think I better call my husband.*

TONY: *(Crossing to L side of barber chair, intensely, sotto voce.)* No! Don't use that phone! He's using it upstairs.

BARBARA: This is just an extension. He'll hear you.

SHUBERT: *(Crossing to TONY)* Why did this have to happen to me?

EDDIE: *(Crossing to C)* It's happening to all of us.

SHUBERT: Yes, I know, "Eddie". It's just that I have so much more at stake than any of you. *(Crossing back to phone)* I've got to call Adam. I want to speak to him.

TONY: *(Rising and screaming)* I SAID DON'T USE THAT PHONE!

(End stage whisper but still aware the police may be right outside.)

SHUBERT: I WANT MY HUSBAND!

EDDIE: *(Crossing to shampoo chair and sitting)* Oh, now she wants her husband.

SHUBERT: Charming friends you have, Barbara. *(Crossing to C with the intention to get her packages at the dryer).*

BARBARA: You can say that again.

SHUBERT: *(Stopping C, repeating with same inflection only louder.)* Charming friends you have, Barbara. *(Completing her cross above styling chair to packages UL)*

EDDIE: What's that supposed to mean?

TONY: *(Exasperated)* It means Barbara's friends are charming.

BARBARA: *(Crossing DL)* Never mind! The cops know too much already.

SHUBERT: *(Crossing D to BARBARA, and with her right hand, grabs BARBARA'S*

DEMARCO ENDING

right arm and turns her.) Are you trying to cover up something, Barbara? Is there something you haven't told the police?

BARBARA: Will you please stop interfering, Mrs. Shubert. *(pulling her arm from SHUBERT'S grasp, crossing to styling chair and sitting)* You haven't even begun to understand yet, have you?

SHUBERT: Understand? Understand what? *(in frustration, crossing to swinging doors to listen.)*

EDDIE: That's enough. We've got nothing to be afraid of.

BARBARA: Speak for yourself.

EDDIE: I will, and I'm sticking to my suicide theory. *(TONY reacts derisively, simultaneously unlocking the barber chair where he is sitting.)* Isabel Czerny was capable of anything.

BARBARA: Even of jamming a pair of scissors into her own throat?

EDDIE: Yes, if it would land us all in the shit.

SHUBERT: *(Crossing to UL of styling chair.)* Mr. Lawrence, I will not stand for any more of your vulgarity. I am reporting you to the police for insulting behavior. *(Crossing UR toward front door.)*

EDDIE: *(Rising, crossing toward SHUBERT, stopping her)* WONDERFUL!! Why don't you make it indecent exposure while you're at it. *(EDDIE, facing upstage, quickly mimes opening his jacket and "exposing" himself to SHUBERT.)*

: *SHUBERT screams, crossing above barber chair to DL, sits at desk. EDDIE fades UC.)*

TONY: You know, Mrs. Shubert, I think the two of us are just a little "de trop" here. What with poor Isabel lying dead upstairs on that gorgeous oriental rug...

EDDIE: "Poor Isabel" is probably lying on a slab in the morgue by now. Just where you always wanted her, Whitcomb.

TONY: What are you trying to say?

EDDIE: I was on to you ages ago. Isabel told me all about you. *(EDDIE begins turning TONY in the barber chair.)*

TONY: Shut up!

DEMARCO ENDING

EDDIE: All about you and your long love affair!

TONY: (*EDDIE stabilizes the barber chair. TONY jumps out of the barber chair crossing to UC.*) Shut up! Shut up!

BARBARA: Oh, leave him alone. You're no better than he is. (*Crossing DL*)

EDDIE: (*Relocking barber chair, crossing C*) What's your problem?

BARBARA: (*Turning to EDDIE*) Take a good look at yourself, why don't you?

EDDIE: Shut up, Barbara.

BARBARA: (*Crossing UL*) You had me fooled for a while, but you couldn't get what you wanted from her, could you?

EDDIE: I never wanted anything from her.

BARBARA: The big blackmail scheme fizzled out.

(*TONY crosses from UC to above barber chair becoming engrossed in the unfolding drama.*)

EDDIE: (*Crossing to BARBARA, grabbing her arm*) Blackmail? Barbara, watch what you're saying.

BARBARA: (*Pulling her arm free and crossing below styling chair to C*) I never thought much of you as a man, but even as a crook you can't do it right.

EDDIE: (*Countering DL*) You were never looking for a man in the first place.

BARBARA: (*Attacking EDDIE.*) What is that supposed to mean?

EDDIE: (*Holding her by the wrists. They tussle.*) You think I'd ever touch you again?

BARBARA: You think I'd ever let you touch me again?

EDDIE: Look, I can do a lot better than a cheap slut like you. (*He throws her off, she stumbles back to C.*)

SHUBERT: (*Rising*) Mr. Lawrence, I will not stand here and have you insult this girl.

TONY: She's had it coming to her for years.

DEMARCO ENDING

BARBARA: Shut up, Tony. Shut up! Shut up!

TONY: No, I will not shut up. You have had it coming to you and now you're going to get it!

BARBARA: *(Crossing no further than the DL edge of the barber chair footrest.)* You see, Mrs. Shubert? They're both out to get me.

SHUBERT: *(Slowing things down and crossing towards BARBARA)* We're all a little tense, Barbara. Why don't you sit down here and... *(indicating shampoo chair, SHUBERT touches BARBARA'S elbow to guide her).*

BARBARA: *(Stiffening but not moving)* Get away from me.

SHUBERT: But, Barbara, you're overwrought. *(SHUBERT places her hands on both of BARBARA arms.)*

BARBARA: I said, get away from me, you pig!

(BARBARA deflects SHUBERT's hands, turns and crosses to her station, her back to the audience. Her hand is on a pair of scissors she will use to attack EDDIE in a second.)

SHUBERT: *(Recoiling, turns and crosses to TONY, R of barber chair. TONY crosses to R of barber chair to comfort SHUBERT)* BARBARA!! How dare you talk to me that way.

TONY: *(Overlapping)* Barbara, she's our best customer. What are you doing?

(TONY and SHUBERT continue to ad lib until BARBARA attacks EDDIE)

EDDIE: *(Crossing to BARBARA and putting his hand on her arm)* Come on, Barbara, calm down.

BARBARA: *(Elbowing EDDIE away)* Don't touch me! *(EDDIE turns and crosses DL away from BARBARA. BARBARA, scissors in hand, turns to attack EDDIE from behind to LC.)*

I said don't touch me!

(TONY and SHUBERT scream alerting EDDIE who scrambles to safety, DL. TONY crosses R to above barber chair. SHUBERT winds up at desk chair. BARBARA freezes in mid-stab, suddenly realizing what she's about to do. She drops the scissors and lets out a primal scream.)

DEMARCO ENDING

Isabel! Damn you, damn you, damn you Isabel! (*Crossing UL*).

(*Turning, BARBARA pleads for understanding from TONY.*)

Tony, do you think it was any different for me than it was for you?

(*Crossing to TONY C*) When I first met Isabel, she was so kind, so understanding. “Let me take care of you, Barbara. Trust me.”

(*BARBARA turns and takes a step D towards SHUBERT.*)

Then the little games started. Ugly little games. (*SHUBERT sits*) Talking about them to me, and about me to them. And I was always caught in the middle. She’d work things out for days just to score some tiny advantage over me. She had to win, see. She just had to.

(*Lost in the memory, BARBARA gazes out.*)

Well, I took it as long as I could, because I knew she couldn’t last forever. “She can’t last forever,” I told myself. And she was leaving me all that money. Then last night — just like that! — she told me she wasn’t leaving me a penny. I wasn’t trying to please her anymore. I’d tried so hard to be her friend, and I didn’t please her anymore? I couldn’t believe I was hearing that. What was I to do?

(*Just a step C to EDDIE, ferociously*) And a lot of help you turned out to be, you and your stupid blackmail.

(*BARBARA turns forward and continues as a hand with a gun, pointing at BARBARA, appears at the front door. It is MIKEY. He enters.*)

So, I had to take things into my own hands. (*NICK silently enters from swinging doors.*) I had to.

I went up to have it out with her. And there she was, sitting at the piano. Laughing at me. She said she never intended to leave me any money. Who did I think I was, a stupid little hair-dresser. And she was laughing at me, Mrs. Shubert, laughing, laughing, laughing...

NICK: So, you took a pair of scissors... (*NICK has quietly crossed to behind BARBARA and gently touches BARBARA on the shoulder on her third “laughing” as he says the word “scissors”.*)

BARBARA: NO!!! (*She makes a dash for the door but sees MIKEY with the gun drawn and stops. Simultaneously, NICK counters U a step or two. BARBARA, turning back, to R of barber chair with NICK slightly U of*

her; L of barber chair) Yes. I didn't mean to go through with it though. But she kept egging me on. "Go ahead, Barbara. Show me how important you are, how vicious you are." And she was laughing at me... laughing. I just had to shut her up, didn't I? She sort of dared me to. And all the time she was laughing, and coughing, and spluttering, but I couldn't help myself. I just kept jabbing away... and jabbing away... and jabbing away...
(BARBARA breaks down and quietly sobs.)

MIKEY: Miss DeMarco... *(gently but firmly holding her by the shoulders, turning her, consoling her)* It's going to be all right.

BARBARA: It is all right, isn't it?

MIKEY: *(Leading her out)* There's a car waiting outside.

(BARBARA and MIKEY start to cross to the front door, BARBARA first.)

BARBARA: Car?

MIKEY: It's just a short ride.

BARBARA: *(She stops and turns to others.)* She made me do it, she made me!
(BARBARA exits with MIKEY right behind her.)

(ALL hold their place, watching her go.)

TONY: Well that's it. *(Tossing towel into hamper.)* She is never working here again!!

(In the laugh, EDDIE picks up scissors. EDDIE, TONY and SHUBERT cross to form a line down stage with their backs to the audience. EDDIE (L), TONY (C) and SHUBERT (R)).

NICK: *(NICK begins to follow MIKEY out but stops just before exiting and directly addresses the WITNESSES.)*

Oh folks, before you go, there's one thing you should know. Now tonight you decided and voted on Barbara DeMarco as the guilty party, and so it turned out. But tomorrow night, you or your friends might decide that the guilty party is Mr. Lawrence...

(EDDIE poses with scissors threateningly and then, facing R, hands the scissors to TONY who has turned to face EDDIE. He remains facing R.)

Mr. Whitcomb...

(TONY poses with scissors threateningly and then, turning to face R, hands them on to SHUBERT who has turned to face him.)

Or even Mrs. Shubert...

(SHUBERT, starting to turn R, facing forward, stops, drops the scissors into her purse, closes it, and smiles slyly and continues to turn, facing R.)

And whichever way you vote...

(EDDIE, TONY and SHUBERT turn their heads to face front as if in a mug shot.)

THAT'S the way we'll play it. *(ALL smile at audience.)* Good night.

END OF ACT II

OPTIONAL CURTAIN SPEECH:

After the actors come out for their bows, either NICK or TONY steps forward and signals to the booth to take out the music. When the music is out, he says:

Ladies and Gentlemen we want to thank you for being here tonight and for being a wonderful audience!

BARBARA: *(Ad libbing)* Yeah, and thanks for your vote.

If you had a good time tonight, we hope you'll tell your friends, your neighbors... your hairdresser! If you didn't have a good time, zip it.

And when you talk about the show, and we hope you talk about it a lot, we ask that you keep our secrets so that we can have as much fun with your friends as we did with you tonight!

Good night!

NICK/TONY *steps back into line as the music comes in again. Company bow and all exit.*

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT UPDATE:

(House lights up and as the audience begins to file out, we hear this announcement. Bring it in loud to cut through the exit chatter as the audience leaves.)

This just in. We have an update on the murder of Isabel Czerny. Local hair dresser Barbara Demarco has been arrested and is now in police custody. A *(name of town)*

police spokesperson reports that as many as 350 (*number of seats*) eyewitnesses may be called to testify at the trial.

WHITCOMB ENDING

(NICK C with his back to the voted murderer.

MIKEY UR near entrance.

EDDIE sitting at desk chair.

BARBARA sitting in styling chair.

TONY and SHUBERT at dryers.)

NICK: Shall we proceed, Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: Me?

NICK: The witnesses voted you the chief suspect.

TONY: *(Crossing a step D to L of styling chair)* Big deal! They probably think the Redskins are going to the Super Bowl.

(OPT. timely/local joke i.e. "The witnesses? What do they know? They probably voted for Tom Steyer").

(Crossing below styling chair to sit in barber chair). Fortunately, you're going to need a little evidence before you can make an arrest.

NICK: Who said anything about an arrest? I merely said that the witnesses regard you as the chief suspect.

TONY: Yes, but why?

NICK: Well, to begin with, your relationship with Isabel Czerny was a bit rocky. You started out the best of friends and ended up hating her guts.

TONY: Nonsense. We may have had the occasional tiff, but it was never...

NICK: The occasional tiff? Mr. Whitcomb, we all witnessed your behavior. You felt yourself to be tormented and humiliated by her. I mean, lately all she had to do was put her fingers on the keys of the piano to drive you into an uncontrollable rage.

TONY: You exaggerate.

NICK: You wanted to take her to court for practicing the piano.

TONY: Practicing! She was goading me beyond endurance!

NICK: Exactly. *(Crossing D below styling chair to UL at swinging doors)* So, you dropped everything you were doing— shaving me— and you rushed

WHITCOMB ENDING

upstairs to confront her.

TONY: But she wasn't even playing.

NICK: You saw that when you got there?

TONY: For the millionth time, I never got there. You're the one who told us it was a recording.

NICK: But for you, this only confirmed that she was purposely torturing you—ruining your business.

TONY: And you consider these shreds of evidence a case against me? That's a laugh.

NICK: No, what really points to you, Mr. Whitcomb, is the silly amateurish way the murder was committed. *(Secretly taking a pair of scissors from BARBARA'S station and crossing to TONY)* Because only a hopeless amateur like yourself would rush upstairs and commit a murder with a pair of scissors... like these! *(NICK thrusts the scissors in front of TONY.)*

TONY: Lieutenant, would you take a look at this face? Is this the face of a murderer? No no no no no. *(NICK crosses to BARBARA'S station to replace the scissors)* I couldn't hurt a fly and you know it. *(NICK slaps the scissors onto BARBARA'S station. TONY crosses to NICK)* Now, I'll admit to you that Isabel used to lead me around quite a bit, but that's only because she knew how I felt about her. I mean, she could make me miserable in ways you couldn't even begin to imagine. *(NICK and MIKEY begin to step in, putting the squeeze on TONY)* But I would never, ever, ever lay a hand on her. I couldn't.

NICK: You know, Whitcomb, it usually is life's little puppy dogs who end up committing murder.

TONY: But I didn't kill her, I told you. I never even got to her. *(Escaping, crossing D below styling chair to UL, continuing out the swinging doors as he says)* See, what happened was, the minute I got out these doors I began to smell my goulash burning. *(He's out).*

NICK: *(with MIKEY, they cross a few steps R)* His goulash again. *(Realizing he's left and might be escaping, they start towards swinging doors.)*

TONY: *(Re-entering immediately and crossing to C, between NICK and BARBARA)* Well, that put out of my mind any thoughts I might have had about having a fight with Isabel. I had to take care of my goulash, didn't I? As it was, it was too late. It was burned. It was ruined. It was beyond

WHITCOMB ENDING

salvation. And I know why, too. *(Turning to demonstrate to BARBARA)*
Because all those extra caraway seeds went right to the bottom of the pot...

NICK: *(Shouting)* WHAT HAPPENED NEXT??!!!

TONY: Next? I remembered I had a customer and I came back down here.
(Scrambling, crossing D below barber chair to above desk, R).

MIKEY: Yeah, but you were a little late, Whitcomb. The Lieutenant had already left.

TONY: Well, how was I supposed to know that, Jimmy Olsen? *(or other appropriate reference, i.e. Harry Potter.)* *(TONY waits here until EDDIE vacates the desk chair.)*

XXXX NOTE: THIS IS A CHANGE FROM OTHER ENDINGS.

NICK: Calm down, Mr. Whitcomb. It's true. A lot of the evidence does point at you. But I think even more of the evidence points at Mr. Lawrence here.

EDDIE: Me? Why me?

NICK: Well, you got a record.

EDDIE: *(Crossing R above barber chair to URC)* And just because of that you think you can pin this murder rap on me? Come on, Lieutenant. This is DC *(name of city where the show is being performed)*. You can't get elected in this town without a record! So, how about a little evidence?

OPT:

EDDIE: *(Crossing R above barber chair to URC)* And just because of that you think you can pin this murder rap on me? Come on, Lieutenant! This is D.C., the only city in the world where the same people make the laws, break the laws, and enforce the laws. *(Crossing to sit in barber chair. TONY, in agreement, sits in desk chair.)* So, how about a little evidence.

End OPT.

NICK: All right. Point 1: you had an appointment with Mrs. Czerny this afternoon. She was murdered at almost the exact time you were supposed to be up there.

EDDIE: But I wasn't up there, I was down here.

WHITCOMB ENDING

NICK: Which brings me to point B. (*Crossing above barber chair to DR*) During the reconstruction, you did all you could to confuse us about your exact comings and goings. You made a big deal about the music playing while you were down here, when, in fact, you could have quite easily rushed upstairs, (*crossing to C, indicating swinging doors*) murdered Mrs. Czerny and then switched on the tape recorder. Then, as a follow-up, you sent Barbara upstairs to discover the body and implicate her.

EDDIE: You don't know what you're talking about. I couldn't have turned the tape recorder on. If you remember correctly, the music started playing again after I came back from the men's room.

NICK: That's because you left enough blank tape on that cassette to provide you with that flimsy little alibi. (*NICK sits in shampoo chair*).

XXXX NOTE: THIS IS A CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS ENDINGS.

EDDIE: (*Crossing to C*) So, I might have done it, so what? Edward Scissorhands here could have done it just as well. We both had the opportunity.

NICK: And the motive.

EDDIE: But I don't think that any of us did it. Sane people don't go around jabbing scissors into other people's throats.

NICK: That's the theory.

EDDIE: Well, as long as we were talking about theories instead of facts, let me give you one for free, Lieutenant. If you ask me, Isabel Czerny committed suicide. (*OPT. If a witness has previously mentioned suicide, Eddie will say "If you ask me, I agree with that witness (not breaking the 4th Wall). I think Isabel Czerny did commit suicide."*)

SHUBERT: Oh, really! (*General derisive reaction from everyone except TONY who, of course, would like us to believe it could have been suicide.*)

EDDIE: I mean it. She was a sick woman, she was nuts. (*Indicating TONY*) The only thing that still gave her a thrill was playing games with other people's feelings. Now Barbara here she liked. At first. But then she gets jealous. She accuses me of coming between them. So, Isabel tried to get back at me. She tried to make it look like I was going to blackmail her.

NICK: Really?

EDDIE: Of course. Think, Lieutenant, think! What does she do? First, she plants those phony letters in the chest. Then she calls me up and asks me to

return them. *(As he works out the theory point by point, crossing L above styling chair and winding up DL by the end of this speech.)* Then she calls you cops, tells you to come around and stake out the place. Then she calls her lawyer and tells him that she wants to change her will. *(Now DL near the seat)* And then, when we're all neatly arranged in her final "concerto of revenge", what does she do???

NICK: *(Rises and crosses L to EDDIE)* She picks up a pair of scissors and jabs herself in the throat?

EDDIE: Yes!

NICK: Repeatedly?

EDDIE: *(Deflated.)* Oh. *(Crosses to seat DL and sits.)*

(If the WITNESSES have suggested suicide during the Q & A, it will go as follows:

NICK: *(Rises and crosses L to EDDIE)* She picks up a pair of scissors and repeatedly jabs herself in the throat?

EDDIE: Yes!

NICK: And then she wipes off all the prints?

EDDIE: *(Deflated.)* Oh. *(Crosses to seat DL and sits.)*

NICK: *(Crossing from DL towards DR)* I don't buy a word of that story, and neither do you.

BARBARA: I don't know, it could have happened that way.

NICK: *(Crossing to C, R of styling chair.)* Honey, I've had it with you trying to help out your little boyfriend here. You better start helping yourself, Miss DeMarco. You're in deep trouble. Now, I've got to know exactly what happened when you got up to her apartment.

BARBARA: I told you, I can't remember.

NICK: *(Exploding)* WELL, YOU BETTER START REMEMBERING!!!
(Frustrated) Okay, let's take it one step at a time. You went out of here with the trash, right? Did you see anyone?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: *(Building)* Did you hear anything?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: *(Building)* But you went up to her apartment?

BARBARA: I guess so.

NICK: So, how did you get in?

BARBARA: I don't remember!

NICK: Do you have a key?

BARBARA: No.

NICK: Then how did you get IN?

(The previous beats build to a point of exasperation culminating in NICK slapping the back of the chair that BARBARA is sitting in, causing BARBARA to blurt out...)

BARBARA: The door was open!... *(Slowly BARBARA'S memory is unlocked.)* The door was open.

NICK: *(Quietly encouraging her)* So?

BARBARA: So, I called out, "Isabel, it's Barbara. Is everything all right?"

NICK: And then?

BARBARA: Then I heard this horrible sort of noise. Like a groan. And then silence. *(rises.)* So, I pushed the door open and I walked inside. *(Other SUSPECTS look at each other.)* I looked in the kitchen *(indicating L)* but she wasn't there. So, I went into the living room *(a few steps DR)* ... and there she was... *(BARBARA, recoiling from the scene, backs into NICK'S arms.)* lying on the carpet... face down... in a pool of blood.

NICK: *(NICK turns BARBARA to face him.)* Keep going. What happened next?

BARBARA: Footsteps!! I heard footsteps behind me on the stairs.

TONY: That was probably me! *(TONY raises his hand. EVERYBODY quickly looks at TONY. He quickly lowers his hand)* Probably not.

BARBARA: So, I shut the door behind me and the footsteps faded away. Oh God! Now it hits me! *(Crossing DL to EDDIE)* You're right! She wanted me to go

WHITCOMB ENDING

into that room. She wanted me to find her lying there. *(To NICK)* She wanted you cops to think I killed her.

NICK: Because you did, didn't you, DeMarco?

XXXX NOTE: THIS IS A CHANGE FROM OTHER ENDINGS.

BARBARA: No! No, I couldn't have done it. You don't seem to realize, I honestly liked Isabel.

MIKEY: We know how much you liked her.

BARBARA: Oh, I know what you thought, Howdy Doody. *(Harry Potter, Other appropriate reference.)*

NICK: *(From C)* That's it! I've had it up to here with you clowns. Whitcomb, I'm going upstairs to your apartment to place a call to headquarters. When I come back down you'll all be free to go.

ALL: Good. Great. Wonderful. *(General hubbub.)*

NICK: With one exception.

EDDIE: *(Rising)* What exception?

NICK: I'm going to arrest one of you for the murder of Isabel Czerny.

(TONY rises at desk chair.)

Mikey, watch the front door.

(Begins to cross L below styling chair to swinging doors. MIKEY turns and intently stares at the front door. NICK sees him and stops, exasperated)

From the outside! *(MIKEY and NICK exit.)*

(ALTERNATIVE EXIT: After saying "Mikey, guard the front door," NICK exits mistakenly into closet instead of side door; MIKEY starts to front door; stopping when he realizes NICK has gone into the supply closet. NICK re-enters and says, "It's all clear in there Mikey." and both exit.)

SUSPECTS hold in place until front door has closed completely behind MIKEY.

TONY worried, scurries to the front door.

SHUBERT goes to the swinging doors and listens. She crosses C.

WHITCOMB ENDING

Meanwhile **EDDIE** goes to **BARBARA** and they begin arguing (quietly, urgently, and audibly).

Following dialogue should be in energized stage whisper. This is the first time the **SUSPECTS** have been left alone since the murder investigation began. The cops may be right outside the door and could come back at any moment.

Creating the impression that they're all involved in collusion.

TONY: (To **BARBARA** and **EDDIE**, thwacking the towel against the wall)
SEPARATE!

EDDIE crosses to swinging doors, listening.

SHUBERT: (To **TONY**) I don't like this. (After a beat, to **BARBARA**) I don't like this at all. (After a beat, to **EDDIE**) This has gone too far. (Beat, deciding, crossing above barber chair to **DL**) I think I better call my husband.

TONY: (Crossing to **L** side of barber chair, intensely, sotto voce.) No! Don't use that phone! He's using it upstairs.

BARBARA: This is just an extension. He'll hear you.

SHUBERT: (Crossing to **TONY**) Why did this have to happen to me?

EDDIE: (Crossing to **C**) It's happening to all of us.

SHUBERT: Yes, I know, "Eddie". It's just that I have so much more at stake than any of you. (Crossing back to phone) I've got to call Adam. I want to speak to him.

TONY: (Rising and screams) I SAID DON'T USE THAT PHONE!

(End stage whisper but still aware the police may be right outside.)

SHUBERT: I WANT MY HUSBAND!

EDDIE: (Crossing to shampoo chair and sitting) Oh, now she wants her husband.

SHUBERT: Charming friends you have, Barbara. (Crossing to **UC** with the intention to get her packages at the dryer).

BARBARA: You can say that again.

SHUBERT: (Stopping **UC**, repeating with same inflection only louder.) Charming friends you have, Barbara. (Completing her cross above styling chair to

WHITCOMB ENDING

packages UL).

EDDIE: What's that supposed to mean?

TONY: (*Exasperated*) It means Barbara's friends are charming.

BARBARA: (*Crossing DL*) Never mind! The cops know too much already.

SHUBERT: (*Crossing D to BARBARA, and with her right hand, grabbing BARBARA'S right arm and turning her.*) Are you trying to cover up something, Barbara? Is there something you haven't told the police?

BARBARA: Will you please stop interfering, Mrs. Shubert. (*pulling her arm from SHUBERT'S grasp, crossing to styling chair and sitting*) You haven't even begun to understand yet, have you?

SHUBERT: Understand? Understand what? (*in frustration, crossing to swinging doors to listen.*)

EDDIE: That's enough. We've got nothing to be afraid of.

BARBARA: Speak for yourself.

EDDIE: I will, and I'm sticking to my suicide theory. (*TONY reacts derisively, simultaneously unlocking the barber chair where he is sitting.*) Isabel Czerny was capable of anything.

BARBARA: Even of jamming a pair of scissors into her own throat?

EDDIE: Yes, if it would land us all in the shit.

SHUBERT: (*Crossing to UL of styling chair.*) Mr. Lawrence, I will not stand for any more of your vulgarity. I am reporting you to the police for insulting behavior. (*Crossing UR towards front door.*)

EDDIE: (*Rising, crossing towards SHUBERT, stopping her*) WONDERFUL!! Why don't you make it indecent exposure while you're at it.

(*EDDIE, facing upstage, quickly mimes opening his jacket and "exposing" himself to SHUBERT. SHUBERT screams, crossing above barber chair to DL, sits at desk. EDDIE fades UC.*)

XXXX: NOTE: THIS IS A CHANGE FROM OTHER ENDINGS.

BARBARA: (*Crossing DL*) Knock it off, Eddie.

EDDIE: What's your problem?

WHITCOMB ENDING

BARBARA: (*Turning to EDDIE*) Take a good look at yourself, why don't you?

EDDIE: Shut up, Barbara.

BARBARA: You had me fooled for a while, (*crossing UL*) but you couldn't get what you wanted from her, could you?

EDDIE: I never wanted anything from her.

BARBARA: The big blackmail scheme fizzled out.

EDDIE: (*Overlapping with BARBARA'S "Blackmail", crossing above styling chair to her, grabbing her arm*) Blackmail? Barbara, watch what you're saying.

BARBARA: (*Pulling her arm free and crossing below styling chair to C*) I never thought much of you as a man, but even as a crook you can't do it right.

EDDIE: (*Crossing to L of styling chair*) You were never looking for a man in the first place.

BARBARA: What is that supposed to mean?

EDDIE: You think I'd ever touch you again?

BARBARA: You think I'd ever let you touch me again?

EDDIE: Look, I can do a lot better than a cheap slut like you.

SHUBERT: Mr. Lawrence, I will not stand here and have you insult this girl.

TONY: She's had it coming to her for years.

BARBARA: Shut up Tony. (*Crossing to DL and sits*)

XXXX: NOTE: THIS IS A CHANGE FROM OTHER ENDINGS.

TONY: You know, Mrs. Shubert, I think that the two of us are just a little "de trop" here. What with poor Isabel lying dead upstairs on that gorgeous oriental rug...

EDDIE: Poor Isabel is probably lying on a slab in the morgue by now. Just where you always wanted her, Whitcomb.

TONY: What are you trying to say?

WHITCOMB ENDING

- EDDIE:** I was on to you ages ago. Isabel told me all about you. (*EDDIE begins turning TONY in the barber chair.*)
- TONY:** Shut up!
- EDDIE:** All about you and your long love affair!
- (*EDDIE stabilizes the barber chair. TONY jumps out of the barber chair to UC. EDDIE and BARBARA laugh.*)
- TONY:** Shut up! Shut up! How dare you talk about Isabel like that. You hardly even knew her.
- EDDIE:** Oh, I knew her.
- TONY:** You have no idea of the depth of our relationship. Why for years I was her inspiration.
- (*BARBARA bursts out laughing. TONY crosses through C to below styling chair.*)
- Go ahead and laugh, Barbara. You were nothing to Isabel but a plaything.
- BARBARA:** You're crazy.
- TONY:** No, I'm not. I know how you were trying to worm your way into Isabel's affections. And I know why, too. Because you wanted to take my shop away from me, didn't you Barbara? You knew if you got close enough to Isabel she'd give you this place.
- BARBARA:** That's a joke.
- TONY:** Oh it is, is it? Well the big joke is this. (*Turning back to SHUBERT, crossing to DC just above shampoo chair.*) At one time I actually trusted her. (*Turning back to BARBARA.*) I was going to make you my partner. I was going to give you half interest in the shop.
- EDDIE:** (*Crossing D from UC to TONY*) Knock it off, Whitcomb. Do you think she wanted you as a partner? She thinks you're pathetic. We all do.
- (*EDDIE pushes TONY into the sink chair. TONY rushes at him, swatting him with his towel. EDDIE darts away to UR laughing. TONY stops UL of barber chair.*)
- TONY:** (*From UL of barber chair*) Shut up! Shut up! Go ahead, both of you. Gang up on me. You always have. (*Turning to SHUBERT and crossing to her*)

WHITCOMB ENDING

Everyone always has. (*TONY kneels at her feet.*) They just don't understand me, Mrs. Shubert.

SHUBERT: What is it? What's the matter, Tony?

TONY: I've tried so hard, Mrs. Shubert. I've tried so hard to keep this place going.

SHUBERT: Of course you have.

TONY: It took all of my time. It took all of my money. I couldn't just stand back and watch it all go down the drain.

BARBARA: (*Laughing and crossing above styling chair to C*) Hold the tears, Tony. Save 'em for court. (*OPT: Save 'em for Judge Judy. Joe Brown, etc.*)

TONY: (*Rising and crossing UL in front of his station*) Shut up! Shut up! You're beginning to sound just like her!

(*BARBARA, still laughing, crosses through C back toward DL.*)

She thought that I'd keep taking it, but she never got to know the real me. And neither did you, you dirty little... (*TONY grabs scissors from his station and goes after her.*)

(*BARBARA screams, running to DL.*)

NICK bursts in from swinging doors UL, blowing whistle.

Simultaneously, MIKEY bursts in from front door UR, gun drawn, continuing to C.

TONY drops scissors in front of styling chair.)

What's the matter? I was only trying to show...

NICK: How you did it, Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: (*TONY sinks into styling chair.*) It's going to be all right, isn't it?

NICK: I'm afraid not, Mr. Whitcomb.

(*MIKEY holsters gun*)

TONY: I tried not to mind the way she treated me. I really tried. The trouble is, she went too far. There's just so much a person can take. So, I ran upstairs. I opened the door. I ran into the living room. And there she was, sitting on the sofa reading a book. Not even playing the piano. The tape recorder was running. Full volume.

WHITCOMB ENDING

I said, “Stop! Stop torturing me. I can’t take it anymore. I can’t run my shop!!”

And she said to me, “You won’t have to run your shop anymore, Tony. I’ve decided to rent the space to someone I can get along with. I’m going to rent the space to Barbara.”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. It was like as nightmare. I wanted to run but I couldn’t. I wanted to yell but I couldn’t. And then this... this... power came over me, and I thought, “I’ll show you, you sarcastic old bitch. I’ll show you. I’ll make you feel some of what I’ve been feeling all these years if it’s the last thing... the last thing... the last thing that I do...”
(**TONY** dissolves into quiet sobs.)

NICK: Mr. Whitcomb, are you well enough to get up?

MIKEY: The car’s right outside.

(**MIKEY** crosses in and with his left hand reaches out to **TONY’S** left shoulder to help him from the chair. **TONY** leaps up to R of **MIKEY** and turns on him.)

TONY: Don’t touch me. Don’t touch me. I hate being touched. I will not let you touch me.

(**TONY** draws himself up to his full height and crosses below barber chair to exit. **MIKEY** follows through C. Just as **TONY** reaches the front door, **EDDIE** purposefully reaches behind **TONY** and touches him on his right shoulder (closest to **MIKEY**.) **TONY** jumps, screams and glares at **MIKEY** who gestures “Hey, it wasn’t me.” **TONY** turns and makes a grand exit.)

(Simultaneously, after **TONY** has exited, **BARBARA** (L), **EDDIE** (C), and **SHUBERT** (R) take places downstage in a line with their backs to the **WITNESSES**. As **BARBARA** gets into place, she picks up the scissors that **TONY** has dropped.)

NICK: (**NICK** begins to follow **MIKEY** out but stops just before exiting, directly addressing the **WITNESSES**.)

Oh folks, before you go, there’s one thing you should know. Now tonight you decided and voted on Tony Whitcomb as the guilty party, and so it turned out. But tomorrow night, you or your friends might decide that the guilty party is Miss DeMarco...

(**BARBARA** poses with scissors threateningly and then, turning to face R,

WHITCOMB ENDING

*hands them over to **EDDIE**.)*

Mr. Lawrence...

*(**EDDIE** poses with scissors threateningly and then, turning to face R, hands them on to **SHUBERT** who has turned to face him.)*

Or even Mrs. Shubert...

*(**SHUBERT**, starting to turn R, facing forward, stops, drops the scissors into her purse, closes it, and smiles slyly and continues to turn, facing R.)*

And whichever way you vote...

*(**BARBARA**, **EDDIE** and **SHUBERT** turn their heads to face front as if in a mug shot.)*

THAT'S the way we'll play it. (***ALL** smile at audience.*) Good night.

END OF ACT II

OPTIONAL CURTAIN SPEECH:

*After the actors come out for their bows, either **NICK** or **TONY** steps forward and signals to the booth to take out the music. When the music is out, he says:*

Ladies and Gentlemen we want to thank you for being here tonight and for being a wonderful audience!

TONY: *(Ad libbing)* Yeah, and thanks for your vote.

If you had a good time tonight, we hope you'll tell your friends, your neighbors... your hairdresser! If you didn't have a good time, zip it.

And when you talk about the show, and we hope you talk about it a lot, we ask that you keep our secrets so that we can have as much fun with your friends as we did with you tonight!

Good night!

NICK/TONY *steps back into line as the music comes in again. Company bow and all exit.*

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT UPDATE:

(House lights up and as the audience begins to file out, we hear this announcement. Bring it in loud to cut through the exit chatter as the audience leaves.)

This just in. We have an update on the murder of Isabel Czerny. Local salon owner Anthony Whitcomb has been arrested and is now in police custody. A *(name of town)* police spokesperson reports that as many as 350 *(number of seats)* eyewitnesses may be called to testify at the trial.

Questions and Answers

Some questions are brief, not huge on bits, and not necessarily leading to any of the “biggies” but EVERY SINGLE QUESTION must be considered with equal importance and with the sense that, in that WITNESS’ mind, this may be THE one that solves the crime.

QUESTION # 1: WHAT WERE YOU GUYS DOING HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

This question is asked of MIKEY and NICK in several forms, some of which are as follows:

- 1) How come you had the shop staked out?
- 2) How did you know there was going to be a murder here?
- 3) Why were you here before anything happened?
- 4) Are you cops psychic?

NICK has to eventually translate the question to:

“Oh, you mean why did we have the place under surveillance?”

*(Note: this question reflects that the WITNESSES suspect the cops and **NICK** realizes the implication, and must try to clear up any misunderstanding, because even he knows how fishy this looks.)*

EXAMPLE:

WITNESS: How did you guys know there was going to be a murder?

NICK: *(Incorporating the salient part of the question in his response so that all the witnesses can hear it.)* Well, we didn’t know there was going to be a murder. What makes you think we did?

WITNESS: Well, why were you here, then?

NICK: *(Getting what the witness is driving at)* Oh! You want to know why we had this place staked out! Ok, I can explain that.

From the translation, the dialogue should continue:

NICK: *(Beginning his response to the individual who asks and then opens it up to include all the WITNESSES.)* You see, the reason we had this building staked out was we got a phone call at the Second District *(or wherever)* at eleven o’clock this morning from the late Mrs. Czerny. She was alive at the time. Mrs. Czerny informed us at that time that she had an appointment at four-thirty this afternoon with Mr. Lawrence here. Now,

Mrs. Czerny felt that she was going to be blackmailed at that appointment, so Mikey and myself arrived on the scene at three o'clock.

MIKEY: 2:58, Nick.

NICK: 2:58. Whiz kid.

MIKEY: Hey. I didn't go to Phoenix University Online for nothing.

NICK: Anyway, Mrs. Czerny informed us at that time that this blackmail...

EDDIE: Alleged blackmail.

NICK: Alleged blackmail... dealt with these letters (*removing the letters from his back pocket*) which I took from Mr. Lawrence when I interrogated him. Now as you may remember, these are the letters that were written by the late Mrs. Czerny to Miss DeMarco here.

BARBARA: What?

NICK: They were written to you, Ma'am.

BARBARA: (*Crossing to NICK*) What are you talking about?

NICK: (*Showing her the letters*) Well, this is you, isn't it? Barbara DeMarco, P.O. Box 143, Scaggsville?

BARBARA: (*OPT if WITNESSES laugh: "Hey. There's nothing funny about Scaggsville?" Or, "What are you? The queen of (some equally dumpy town)?" In Boston, Barbara is from Revere. She responded with "What are you, the queen of Chelsea?"*)

Hey, I never saw these letters. I never got them.

NICK: DeMarco, they've got your name and address all over them!

BARBARA: Wait a minute, look at these! (*taking the letters from NICK, examining them front and back*) These letters don't have any stamps! They don't have any postmarks... you can't prove I got these letters. (*She smacks them back into NICK'S stomach and walks to DL.*)

NICK: Hey, lady, I'm a cop not a mailman.

BARBARA: Yeah? Well think about it. It might be a step up (*sits*).

NICK: (*Directing the conclusion back to the witness who originally asked the*

question) Anyway, that's why we were here. Possible blackmail.

QUESTION # 2: HOW DID LAWRENCE KNOW THE MURDER WEAPON?

NICK fields this question that may come in one of the following ways:

- 1) Did Mikey tell the people in the closet what the murder weapon was?
- 2) Were the suspects allowed to talk to each other in the closet?
- 3) Can you hear what's going on in the shop from inside the closet?

EXAMPLE:

WITNESS: Is the supply closet soundproof?

NICK: Mikey, when you were in the supply closet could you hear us out here?

MIKEY: No, Nick.

NICK: *(Leading the WITNESS to the scripted question)* Why do you ask that?

WITNESS: Because Lawrence knew the murder weapon before you told him.

NICK: You're right! He knew about the scissors, he knew she got it in the throat, and he knew it before I said a word to him. That's a good question.
(Crossing to EDDIE but stopping and turning back toward the WITNESS)
That's an excellent question. Are you from Rockville?

WITNESS: No.

NICK: Where are you from?

WITNESS: *(Wherever he's from.)*

NICK: I'm sorry?

WITNESS: *(Repeats louder)*

NICK: No, I heard you I'm just sorry. *(Continuing cross to EDDIE)* Lawrence, how did you know that Mrs. Czerny got it in the throat with a pair of scissors?

EDDIE: That's easy. Everyone knew that because Whitcomb came back into the closet and told us.

NICK: Now hold on a minute. I interrogated you first, Mr. Whitcomb, right?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- TONY:** That's right.
- NICK:** And during that interrogation, that's right, I did. I told you how the murder was committed.
- TONY:** *(To WITNESS)* Yeah, that's right. He said she got it in the throat with a pair of hair dressing shears.
- NICK:** Then you went back in the closet and Lawrence, you came right out.
- MIKEY:** No no, Nick. That's when I came out, remember? I told you about Mrs. Shubert *(miming the yakety-yak hand gesture)*.
- (If MIKEY is out of the shop collecting evidence EDDIE says:*
"No, your partner came out of the closet before I did.")
- NICK:** Oh, that's right. You told me about Mrs. Shubert and the yakety-yak... But that was only a minute, maybe two... *(Getting serious)* Wait a minute. Whitcomb! Did you divulge the information that I revealed to you about the murder weapon?
- TONY:** *(Tense, to NICK)* Is that a crime?
- NICK:** No.
- TONY:** Then I did it. *(continuing if there's a laugh)* I must have had a fluotomy.
- NICK:** A what?
- TONY:** A fluotomy. It just flew outa me.
- NICK:** *(Looks at the WITNESS who asked the question as if to say "There's your answer. Do you believe it?")*

QUESTION # 3: WHERE ARE THE SCISSORS BARBARA THREW AWAY?

This is a frequently asked question because it involves important physical evidence. The question may be asked in many forms, such as:

- 1) Did you find the trash Barbara threw out?
- 2) Do the scissors at the lab have a broken tip?
- 3) What happened to the scissors that Barbara put in the trash?
- 4) Where is the dumpster?

EXAMPLE:

WITNESS: Did the scissors at the lab have a broken tip?

NICK: I don't know. Mikey, did the scissors at the lab have a broken tip?

MIKEY: (Looking in his pad) The lab just said it was a pair of six-inch hair dressing shears. I'm sure they would have mentioned it if they had broken tip.

NICK: (Back to the WITNESS who asked the question) Why do you ask?

WITNESS: Because Barbara said the scissors she threw out were broken.

NICK: Oh, the scissors that Barbara put in the trash. I forgot to look for them. Where did you dump the trash, Miss DeMarco?

BARBARA: I didn't dump the trash. I never intended to dump the trash. I just used the trash as an excuse to get out of here. I left it right in the back hall.

NICK: Then it should still be there. *(He exits through swinging doors to look for the trash.)*

BARBARA: Yeah. *(Crossing to C and calling after him)* It's a white plastic trash can just like the other ones here in the shop...

NICK: *(From off stage)* White trash?

BARBARA: Yeah.

NICK: *(Re-entering with the trash can looking for the scissors)* This it, Demarco?

BARBARA: Yeah, that's it.

NICK: I don't see any scissors.

BARBARA: *(Panicking slightly)* What do you mean? They gotta be there. *(She rummages in trash can and finds scissors.)* Here. Here they are. *(She vindicates herself by holding the scissors by the closed blades, covering the broken tip, shows them to the WITNESSES and goes to toss them back into the trash can.)*

WITNESS: *(Possibly)* Are they broken?

NICK: Yeah, DeMarco, are they broken?

(BARBARA opens scissors and shows them to the WITNESS who asked, then to the other WITNESSES, finally returning to the WITNESS who asked and snaps them shut as if 'performing a vasectomy' on him. Tossing the scissors back into the trash can.)

BARBARA: *(Crossing DL)* Satisfied now, crime stopper? *(sits.)*

QUESTION # 4: WHICH OF THE SUSPECTS ARE RIGHT-HANDED OR LEFT-HANDED?

Some forms of this question are:

- 1) Who's right-handed? or Who's left-handed?
- 2) What side of the neck was she stabbed on?
- 3) Which way was the body lying when you found it?
- 4) Was there any sign of a struggle?

NICK, through ad-lib, translates the question as follows:

WITNESS: Are any of the suspects left-handed?

NICK: Why do you ask that?

WITNESS: Because the wounds were on the left side of the throat.

NICK: Oh, I see what you mean. Since the stab wounds were on the left side of the throat, it would have to be a left-handed person!

WITNESS: No right-handed, right-handed.

NICK: Or a right-handed person. This is good, we're narrowing it down!
(Demonstrating stabbing with each hand) If Mrs. Czerny was attacked from the front, it would have to be a right-handed person. However, if she was attacked from behind it would probably be a left-handed person. OK, I'll ask each of the suspects who's right and who's left handed, but remember that at this time we still don't know whether Mrs. Czerny got it in the front... or whether she got it in the rear. But I'll ask. DeMarco, which are you?

BARBARA: *(She hasn't been listening)* Front, preferably.

NICK: Are you right or left-handed?

BARBARA: *(Realizing her mistake)* Oh! I'm right-handed. *(or whichever hand the actor playing BARBARA happens to be.)*

NICK: Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Right-handed. *(or whichever hand the actor playing SHUBERT happens to be.)*

NICK: Mr. Lawrence?

EDDIE: I'm left-handed. *(or whichever hand the actor playing EDDIE happens to be.)*

NICK: Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: I'm ambidextrous.

Should the WITNESS ask the question and provide the front/rear information, NICK would then give up the "This is good. We're narrowing this down" joke and proceed as follows:

WITNESS: What was the position of the body when she was found?

NICK: Mikey, in what position was the body found?

MIKEY: *(Making a horizontal gesture with both hands, parallel to the floor)* Lying down.

NICK: Why do you ask?

WITNESS: I'm trying to figure out if the murderer was a left-handed or right-handed person.

NICK: Oh!! I see what you mean. If Mrs. Czerny was attacked from behind, it would have to be a left-handed person! However, if she was attacked from the front, it would likely be a right-handed person. Ok. I'll ask everyone in the shop if they're right or left-handed, but you have to remember, at this point in time, we don't know if Mrs. Czerny got it in the front or if she got it in the rear. But I'll ask. Miss DeMarco, which are you?

Continuing as scripted above.

QUESTION # 5: WHERE ARE MRS. SHUBERT'S GLOVES?

NICK: What gloves?

This is a question that most frequently comes up early in the reconstruction. NICK must

*make the decision as to whether the WITNESS is asking about the red spot on **SHUBERT**'s gloves, or whether they are simply saying that **SHUBERT** was wearing gloves and that might account for the lack of fingerprints on the murder weapon and on the tape cassette.*

*If the WITNESS just points out that **SHUBERT** was wearing gloves:*

WITNESS: Mrs. Shubert was wearing gloves when she came in.

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, you were wearing gloves when you came into the shop?

SHUBERT: *(To the WITNESS)* Darling, I always wear gloves while I'm shopping. It's proper. And ever since the corona virus, I wear them even when I'm not shopping. You should too.

NICK: *(To WITNESS.)* What's your point?

WITNESS: You said that there were no prints on the murder weapon.

NICK: That's an excellent point! Mrs. Shubert, where are these gloves now?

SHUBERT: They're in my purse.

NICK: May we see them please?

SHUBERT: Well, if you must. *(She opens purse and produces gloves without showing the red stain. She shows them to the WITNESS who asked and returns them to her purse.)*

NICK: OK, Mikey, make a note. Mrs. Shubert was wearing a pair of gloves when she came into the shop.

*The question might be about the spot on the gloves. If this is the case, **NICK** must ascertain if the WITNESSES believe that it was a blood spot.*

WITNESS: Mrs. Shubert had a spot on her glove when she came in.

SHUBERT: Oh, darling, you must be mistaken.

NICK: What kind of spot?

WITNESS: It was red.

NICK: You mean, like blood? Mrs. Shubert, where are your gloves?

SHUBERT: In my purse.

NICK: May we see them, please? (*SHUBERT hands NICK the gloves.*) (*NICK shows the spot to the WITNESS.*) You're absolutely right! (*To SHUBERT accusingly*) What is this, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Oh, that? Oh, no darling. I had a Manhattan cocktail at lunch and I dropped my cherry. (*OPT: Oh, no darling. I had a cocktail at lunch. And it must have spilled. That's Bloody Mary, not bloody Isabel.*)

NICK: Mikey, get these down to the lab.

(MIKEY whips out a bag. If this is the first piece of evidence that needs to be bagged, he pulls out a Dunkin' Donuts bag, putting his hand in to open it. When he pulls his hand out, he licks his finger and bags the evidence. MIKEY exits, returning momentarily.)

QUESTION # 6: WHERE ARE THE APRONS?

Both BARBARA and TONY were wearing aprons before the murder. TONY actually reappears from upstairs without his apron. BARBARA takes hers off and puts it in the supply closet when everyone is crammed in the closet during the interrogations. If the WITNESSES ask for both aprons, handle BARBARA'S first. Then handle TONY'S. If the WITNESSES ask only for one of the apron, produce only the apron asked about.

(If they've asked for both aprons)

NICK: That's absolutely right. They both had aprons on before. What did you do with your apron, DeMarco?

BARBARA: I took it off when you had us all crammed in the closet. It got stuffy in there. Your partner should remember—he was there.

MIKEY: Yeah, Nick. She told me she was hot, so I helped her get it off.

(NICK gets BARBARA'S apron out of closet checks both sides and pats the pocket in front to show there is nothing there. Not seeing anything amiss, he re-hangs it in closet.)

NICK: Okay, where's your apron. Whitcomb?

TONY: Here's a little kitchen hack you can use in your own home. Don't ever, ever turn on your disposal unless that little black rubber thing is real tight in the bottom. (*If any of the WITNESSES laugh in recognition, add: No! Really!*) 'Cause see what happened to me was, I was in such a hurry to get that goulash down the disposal, I must have flicked on that switch and that

little black rubber thing wasn't in place. So all this water and goulash came spitting up all over the front of my apron.

NICK: So?

TONY: So, I took it off.

NICK: Well, where is it?

TONY: It's in my hamper.

NICK: Well, where's your hamper?

TONY: It's in my bathroom. Where's yours? The breakfast nook?

NICK: Mikey, take a run upstairs, up to Mr. Whitcomb's apartment. Look in his hamper for his apron. *(Calling after MIKEY as he rushes out)* Mikey! It's almost a perfect match to the wallpaper.

(If the WITNESS only asks for TONY's apron, NICK would respond:

NICK: That's right! He was making a big deal about his apron! Where's your apron, Whitcomb?

TONY: Ok, here's a little kitchen hack you can use in your own home. *(See above).*

QUESTION # 7: EDDIE PASSED BARBARA A NOTE.

Note: This question can come up with a WITNESS either bringing up the note or not. If the note comes up, NICK will always deal with the relationship question first and then deal with the note. If the WITNESS asks about the relationship without mentioning the note, then Nick deals only with the relationship— Question #31.)

NICK: He passed her a note? When?

WITNESS: While you were off stage.

NICK: While I was out of the shop? During the break? Where is this note now?

WITNESS: It's in her bra.

NICK: I'll get it.

EDDIE &

BARBARA: *(Ad-lib objections...)* It has nothing to do with this, Lieutenant. It's

personal.

NICK: Let me see the note, Miss Demarco.

BARBARA: I'm telling you, it's got nothing to do with this.

NICK: Demarco! Give me the note or I'm going in!

***BARBARA** finally and reluctantly hands the note to **NICK**. **NICK** now leads into a question about their relationship. The relationship question can stand alone if he is asked by a **WITNESS**:*

- 1) What is the relationship between Lawrence and DeMarco?
- 2) Why were they talking secretly before he went to the bathroom?
- 3) When Eddie first came into the shop, Barbara seemed surprised to see him.

(Continuing because the note was asked for)

NICK: *(Translating.)* You know, this doesn't surprise me at all. There's definitely something going on between these two. I mean, first they were whispering, then they were smooching, now they're passing notes. Come on, what exactly is going on here?

BARBARA: Nothing's going on! I told you, we met at Isabel's a couple of times. He took me out to dinner. Once. We went to the Red Lobster. *(or name of local seafood joint.)*

EDDIE: Yeah, I remember that. I got the crabs.

BARBARA: *(After laugh subsides, tops him with:)* Yeah, and I got the shrimp!

***NICK** now deals with the note and picks a **WITNESS** in the front row to read the note.*

NICK: Sir/Ma'am. Would you do us all a favor? Would you stand up, turn around and read this note in a nice loud voice so everyone can hear?

WITNESS: *(reading)* Barbara. Good news. The doctor said it's only a rash. *(WITNESS tries to return the note)*

NICK: That's ok, sir. You can keep it.

QUESTION # 8: HOW DID LAWRENCE CUT HIS FINGER?

*This question very often comes up in the Reconstruction, when there is a lot more energy between the **SUSPECTS** and the **WITNESSES**. When this question comes up in the **Qs** and*

*As, without that group energy, **NICK** must supply the necessary dramatic tension when he delivers the question to **EDDIE**.*

WITNESS: How did Lawrence cut his finger?

NICK: Yeah, Lawrence, how did you cut your finger?

EDDIE: I punched out a little orphan girl, her glasses broke, I sliced my finger.

NICK: Answer the lady! (Gentleman.)

EDDIE: I don't like her (his) attitude.

NICK: I don't care. Answer the question! How did you cut your finger?

EDDIE: All right, I'm sorry. Okay? (*Big fake smile*) I went out to put my briefcase in my car. And while I was out there, I noticed a broken bottle under my front tire. And since this city hasn't been cleaned up properly since Earth Day (*or appropriate reference, i.e. the Inauguration, the Cherry Blossom Festival, the Bean Bash, etc.*), I figured I'd pick it up myself. When I bent over, I tripped on the curb and sliced my finger on the bottle.

NICK: And where is that bottle now?

EDDIE: I threw it under her (his) tire!

WITNESS: (*Laugh*)

NICK: Lawrence. Where's the bottle?

EDDIE: Probably right where I put it- on the curb next to my car.

OPT (About 10% of the time):

WITNESS: Go get it.

EDDIE: (*Rising and crossing D toward witness, brandishing his keys*) YOU go get it.

NICK: Lawrence, give me those.

End OPT.

NICK: (*If this is the first mention of Lawrence's car*) Mikey, run out to Lawrence's car and look for a broken bottle on the curb. Lawrence, what kinda car you driving?

EDDIE: It's a bright red Volkswagen Beetle.

MIKEY: *(Punching NICK's arm)* RED ONE!!

If this is not the first mention of Lawrence's car, NICK simply instructs MIKEY to retrieve the bottle. After the next Question, MIKEY returns with broken bottle... gingerly holding it with his pen through the neck.

MIKEY: I found the bottle, Nick.

EDDIE: See? There it is.

MIKEY: *(Crossing to WITNESS in front row.)* Ma'am would you tell us what's inside this bottle.

WITNESS: *(often)* A pencil.

MIKEY: Would you confirm there's a red viscous substance on the edge of this bottle that could be blood.

WITNESS: Yes.

NICK: Mikey, take that out to Connolly and have it sent down to the lab.

(MIKEY whips out a bag— if this is the first piece of evidence that needs to be bagged, he pulls out a Dunkin' Donuts bag, putting his hand in to open the bag. When he pulls his hand out, he licks his finger and bags evidence. He exits, returning at the top of the next question.)

QUESTION # 9: HOW DID BARBARA DISCOVER THE BODY?

Note: After the first Question to BARBARA in which she leaves the barber chair, she will conclude the Question by crossing to the DL seating area and sitting. So, when this question is asked, she may be starting from either the barber chair or the DL seating area. Adjust the blocking accordingly.

WITNESS: If Barbara went out with the trash, how did she end up in Isabel's apartment?

NICK: You're right. DeMarco, what were you doing up at Isabel's if you went out to dump the trash?

BARBARA: *(Rising and crossing D)* Oh, no! Wait. I can explain that. *(She begins at the beginning.)* See, what happened was, I went out with the trash.

TONY: So what else is new?

BARBARA: I went out with the trash because I was worried about Isabel. I just used the trash as an excuse to get out of the shop, (*crossing to L of sink if she isn't already DL*) because I didn't want to alarm Mrs. Shubert. I mean, you all saw how Tony left here. (*She's done with her explanation. Crossing toward DL seating area.*)

TONY: What are you talking about?

BARBARA: You were crazy. I didn't know what you were gonna do. (*To WITNESSES*) He and Isabel fought with each other all the time.

TONY: (*Rising and crossing to R of sink*) We did not! Don't tell them that!

BARBARA: (*Crossing to just L of the sink*) Oh come on, Tony. (*To WITNESSES*) Last week the two of them had such a big fight, Isabel shut off the water in the shop right in the middle of business hours. (*Again, she's done with her explanation. Crossing toward DL seating area and sits.*)

TONY: Can you believe that? I could have killed her that day!

(**BARBARA** turns back and points at **TONY** indicating "see?" **NICK** makes a note.)

No, don't write that down!

(**TONY** crosses to **NICK** C, grabs pen from **NICK** and runs above barber chair to the other side of the barber chair. **NICK** takes up the chase. They circle once ending with **NICK** C and **TONY** R.)

NICK: Give me that pen, Whitcomb. Give it to me.

OPT:

TONY: Tackle me!

NICK: WHITCOMB!

TONY: (*Tosses pen to NICK, who catches it.*) Fabulous hands, Lieutenant. (*Sits in barber chair. Then, to WITNESSES*) Lips ain't bad, either.

(*If NICK misses it, TONY says mockingly, "Fabulous hands, Lieutenant. Lips ain't bad, though."*)

QUESTION # 10: WHERE'S LAWRENCE'S BRIEFCASE?

This question is often prompted by a WITNESS looking for physical evidence. It may come out of a desire to see the Tic-Tacs, the toothbrush, the notebook, or whatever it was that EDDIE mysteriously tossed in his briefcase earlier.

*If when **EDDIE** explains that he brushed his teeth in the men's room, someone yells out, "Let's see the wet toothbrush," you can be sure that the person has seen the show before. Therefore, **MIKEY** would NOT wet the toothbrush before returning with the briefcase. The magic is, of course, when the WITNESSES believe they've caught us in something we hadn't thought of.*

*The actor playing **MIKEY** has to make a quick decision whether the question is an honest one from a first-time WITNESS, or whether it is a "plant" (i.e. someone who has seen the show before and is trying to impress their date.)*

Normally, the dialogue transpires thus:

WITNESS: What happened to the briefcase?

NICK: You know, we've been so busy, I almost forgot about the briefcase. Lawrence, where is your briefcase?

EDDIE: I told you before, it's out in my car. It's right outside.

NICK: *(Holding for a second to give them a chance to say "Go get it" but if not...)* Give me your keys.

OPT:

WITNESS: Go get it.

EDDIE: *(Rising quickly and crossing aggressively towards WITNESS brandishing his keys)* You go get it!

NICK: Give me those. Mikey, do me a favor- take a run out to Lawrence's car. See if you can find that briefcase.

(If this is the first mention of EDDIE'S car...)

NICK: What kind of car you driving?

EDDIE: It's a bright red Volkswagen Beetle

MIKEY: *(Punching **NICK'S** arm)* RED ONE!

OPT:

NICK: *Where'd you park your car, Lawrence?*

EDDIE: *I don't know. It's a Smart Car. It parks itself.*

NICK: *Lawrence, where's your car?*

EDDIE: *Well, if you've been staking out the place, you should know.*

MIKEY: *We got this, Nick.*

END OPT.

(MIKEY exits to retrieve EDDIE'S briefcase. He wets the toothbrush and waits. At the conclusion of the next question— or two, if they're short— MIKEY returns with the briefcase.)

MIKEY: *Here's your briefcase, Lawrence!*

(He hands briefcase to EDDIE and crosses a step U. EDDIE places briefcase on the top shelf next to the sink and opens it to show NICK the contents.)

(Returning to EDDIE) Oh, and your keys.

(Handing EDDIE his keys and crossing a step U.)

(Returning to EDDIE) And a little present from the city.

(He gives a parking ticket to EDDIE. MIKEY and NICK slap hands in a comic, choreographed "high five". EDDIE drops ticket into trash can. MIKEY crosses to UL.)

NICK: *(Crossing to R of sink) Okay, let's see what you've got in there.*

EDDIE: *(To WITNESSES) What do you want to see?*

NICK: *Everything!*

EDDIE: *(Going through the contents of the briefcase and holding each item up together) I got my Tic-Tacs, my toothpaste, my toothbrush...Tic-Tacs, toothpaste, toothbrush.*

OPT: (if asked)

WITNESS: *Is it wet?*

EDDIE: *Is it wet?*

NICK: (amazed, as are the SUSPECTS, as if this question has never been asked before and confident that it's *not* wet) *Yeah, Lawrence, is the toothbrush wet?*

(He demonstrates by holding the toothbrush up and rubbing his thumb across the bristles, causing a spray...sometimes over the top of the head of a WITNESS in front row, or asks a witness in the front row, "Honey, you wanna tell this guy back there if this is wet?"')

(If WITNESS does not ask "Is it wet?" **TONY** may insert "*You know, you have an incredible program of oral hygiene.*" And we move on.)\

END OPT.

NICK: What else you got in there?

EDDIE: I got my notebook and pen...

WITNESS: *(Possibly)* What was he writing?

NICK: What's in your notebook?

EDDIE: Notes!

NICK: Give me that! *(To WITNESSES)* What's today's date? *(WITNESSES give the date. NICK flips to the proper page in the notebook. EDDIE should make sure he has written these things accurately in the notebook.)* Oh yeah, here we are... 9:00am - breakfast at Bob's Big Boy, bring coupons. 11 o'clock pick up piano bench on Howard St. 1:30- Lunch with Herman Leppel *(comedic local figure that EDDIE might have lunch with, i.e. a prominent used-car salesman)*. What's this right here!!! 4:30 stab Isabel to death in her apartment!!! *(SUSPECTS gasp.) (To WITNESSES)* Just kidding, it doesn't say that.

What else have you got in there? HOLD IT! BINGO!!! *(He reaches into briefcase and pulls out a bingo card.)* I love this game. *(Handing it off to MIKEY)*

NICK: What else you got in there?

EDDIE: *(Continuing. He holds up the Bermuda brochure and holds it against the back of the open briefcase as he continues searching). I've got some travel brochures, some gallery guides... an antique magazine, that's about it. (Putting magazines back into the briefcase).*

WITNESS: Bermuda!

NICK: Bermuda? What about Bermuda?

WITNESS: Mrs. Shubert said she was going to Bermuda.

NICK: That's right! Wait a minute. *(crossing UC to above styling chair)* Mrs. Shubert, are you going to Bermuda with Eddie Lawrence?

SHUBERT: *(Crossing D a step or two, answering WITNESS)* Oh darling, I wouldn't be caught dead in Bermuda with a man from Langley Park.

(OPT. ...with a man who drives a Volkswagen Beetle.)

*(She turns to cross back UL but is stopped when **EDDIE** says...)*

EDDIE: Oh, I don't know lady, we might get along real well. I love antiques. *(**SHUBERT** hauls off with her pocketbook as if to deck **EDDIE**. **NICK** crosses D to keep them apart. **EDDIE** recoils with briefcase C where **MIKEY** confiscates briefcase and places it in the corner by **TONY's** station.)*

OPT:

EDDIE: *Oh, I don't know lady, we could fly Southwest. Bags fly free.*

Or

EDDIE: *Well lady, if you're traveling alone, watch it. They've got rules, now, about unattended bags.*

QUESTION # 11: WHY DON'T YOU CALL MRS. SHUBERT'S HOME AND SEE IF SHE REALLY CALLED HER BUTLER LIKE SHE SAID?

This is the most fun question in the show.

If done properly with the right WITNESS, and at the right time, no question in the play shows off the magic of Shear Madness like the phone call.

*The WITNESS should appear to be a first-time audience member. **NICK**'S biggest tasks here are to get the WITNESS on stage, to 'feed' him or her the proper questions, and to listen (from across the stage so the WITNESS will respond loudly) to his or her responses.*

***NICK** must use this as an instance of important evidence being unearthed directly by a zealous crime-stopping citizen.*

There are several times in the show where this question may arise: during the Reconstruction, during the Break or, it may first come up in the Questions and Answers.

*If a witness suggests calling the number in the Reconstruction, **NICK** will instruct **MIKEY** to hold on to SHUBERT'S card for further investigation later. **NICK** will call the number **only** if it is suggested by a witness in the Questions and Answers.*

*If a WITNESS brings up the card or suggests calling the number on the card in the Break, **NICK** and/or **MIKEY** should strongly encourage the WITNESS to bring that question up when everyone returns to the shop.*

*Depending on how the information comes up, **NICK** will have to translate it appropriately.*

WITNESS: She used a card for the phone number.

NICK: What do you mean, "a card"?

WITNESS: She read the number she was calling off a card in her purse.

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, why do you need a card to call your own home?

SHUBERT: *(To the WITNESS who asked) It's an unlisted number. (WITNESSES laugh. **SHUBERT** tries to clarify her answer to all the WITNESSES.)* Oh, no, you see, we have to change the number so frequently because the wrong class of people *(indicating the WITNESS who brought it up)* learn it, and I can never remember the new one so I just keep it with me on a card in my purse.

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, may I see that card please?

SHUBERT produces the card.

NICK: *(examining the card)* You're right, it's an ordinary card. It's got her name, Eleanor Corcoran Shubert, her address, 3301 Fox Hall Road, and her phone number is printed right here on the bottom *(handing the card to MIKEY.)*

WITNESS: Call the number.

NICK: Good idea. Mikey why don't you...no wait a minute... *(To WITNESS)* Why don't you call it. *(If they object.)* Oh, now you don't want to get involved, huh?

(Encouraging the WITNESS to come into the shop to make the phone call, i.e. "With everything that's going on with the police these days, we could use some witness corroboration.") Just come right up over here.

(While the WITNESS makes his/her way to the stage NICK crosses DL, SHUBERT counters above styling chair to UC)

(To the Witness) What's your name?

WITNESS: MaryAnn

NICK: So, MaryAnn, what we're going to do here is, we're going to call the number on the card and see if it really is Mrs. Shubert's home, we'll ask to talk to... uh... *(gesturing for help from SHUBERT)*

SHUBERT: Frederick.

NICK: Frederick. And we'll ask Frederick if Mrs. Shubert called home today sometime between... *(gesturing to MIKEY for help)*

MIKEY: 4 and 4:30.

NICK: Between 4 and 4:30.

Meanwhile, MIKEY assists WITNESS onto the stage. MIKEY pushes the desk chair under the desk so the WITNESS will remain standing. MIKEY holds the card so WITNESS can read it and makes sure the WITNESS dials the number correctly. If WITNESS dials incorrectly, MIKEY will depress receiver and have WITNESS redial correctly. MIKEY, if necessary, turns the WITNESS to face forward.)

WITNESS: *(Dials phone.)*

NICK: Is it ringing?

WITNESS: Yes.

STAGE

MANAGER: Shubert residence. Annette speaking. *(or Randolph if the stage manager is a male).*

NOTE: WITNESS will often say something to Annette such as, "We're calling from the police..." Or "This is Mary Ann. We're involved in a murder investigation..."

NICK: Who you talking to?

WITNESS: Annette.

NICK: Who's Annette, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: The upstairs maid. *(If the STAGE MANAGER is a man the voice could be that of the chauffeur.)*

NICK: Tell her we want to speak to Frederick.

WITNESS: Can we speak to Frederick?

SM: I'm sorry, he's resting.

NICK: What did she say?

WITNESS: He's resting.

NICK: Ask her why Frederick is resting.

WITNESS: Why is Frederick resting?

SM: He's all petered out.

NICK: What did she say?

WITNESS: He's all petered out.

NICK: And why is Frederick so 'petered out'?

WITNESS: Why is Frederick so petered out?

SM: He's been polishing Madame's silver all day.

WITNESS: He's been polishing silver.

*NOTE: The WITNESS will often try to hang up here. **MIKEY** be on guard!*

NICK: Ask Annette if Mrs. Shubert called home sometime between four and four-thirty this afternoon.

WITNESS: Annette? Did Mrs. Shubert call home between four and four-thirty this afternoon?

SM: Yes, she did. And Frederick took the call.

WITNESS: She did, and Frederick took the call.

NICK: How is she so sure it was between four and four-thirty?

WITNESS: How are you sure it was between four and four-thirty?

SM: Because we were watching *(it must be a half hour show that is on at that time and day.)*

WITNESS: They were watching *(name of show).*

NICK: Is that right Mikey?

MIKEY: Yeah, Nick, *(repeating the name of the show.)* Four to four-thirty. I TIVO that. *(He hands **SHUBERT** back her card.)*

NICK: Okay, that confirms that Mrs. Shubert did call home today between four and four-thirty. Thank you very much. *(Crossing above styling chair back to UC.)*

SHUBERT: *(If **SHUBERT** has explained why she needed a card to call her own home, crossing with the card to the trash can by the sink, eyeballing the WITNESS who dialed the number as they make their way back to their seat)*

You realize, of course, now we'll have to change the number all over again.

*(If the "unlisted number" hasn't come up, simply, "You realize, of course, now we'll have to change the number." **SHUBERT** rips up card and drops pieces into trashcan.)*

*(Sometimes the WITNESS will incorrectly say that the calling card that **NICK** had **SHUBERT** produce is not the same one she used when she made the call. This often*

happens in the Reconstruction if the card has been produced then.)

WITNESS: It's not the same card. Check her purse for other cards.

NICK: You got any other cards in your purse, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Oh, how clever of you. I have these. *(She produces a huge clear plastic holder filled with credit cards that unfolds almost to the floor.)*

QUESTION # 12: DO LAWRENCE AND MRS. CZERNY HAVE THE SAME BLOOD TYPE?

Usually asked by the WITNESSES as:

- 1) What's Lawrence's blood type?
- 2) What's everybody's blood type?
- 3) What was Mrs. Czerny's blood type?

NICK: Why do you ask about blood type?

WITNESS: *(Appropriate response.)*

NICK: Oh, because earlier Mikey said that all of the blood found in Mrs. Czerny's apartment was of the same blood type. I see what you're getting at. Mikey, do we have Mrs. Czerny's blood type?

MIKEY: *(Looking in his pad)* Yeah it's... uh...

NICK: No wait... don't tell me. Lawrence, what's your blood type?

EDDIE: O-positive.

OPT:

NICK: *You're sure?*

EDDIE: *Oh, positive.*

NICK: Mikey, what was Mrs. Czerny's blood type? *(MIKEY doesn't answer.)*
Mikey??

MIKEY: You told me not to tell you.

NICK: You can tell me now.

MIKEY: Mrs. Czerny's blood type was O-positive. It's the same, folks.

TONY: You know, that's the most common blood type there is. O-positive.

NICK: Oh, really? What's yours?

TONY: "W".

NOTE: It doesn't mean anything. Just say it. It's funny and always gets a laugh.

QUESTION # 13: HOW DID LAWRENCE GET PAST YOU INTO THE SIDE DOOR?

The question is fielded by Nick as any one of the following:

- 1) I thought you said you were watching the outside?
- 2) I thought you said you guys had the place staked out?
- 3) How did Lawrence get in the side door?

WITNESS: How come you didn't see Lawrence when he came in the side door?

NICK: We did. At least my partner Mikey did. See, we weren't detaining anyone.

(This would end the question unless a WITNESS asks for further information.)

Mikey, you got a rundown on Lawrence's movements?

MIKEY: *(Stepping D from UL)* Sure thing, Nick. *(He whips out his notes)* I observed Mr. Lawrence leave the shop through the front door at exactly four nineteen p.m. He walked to his car, which is parked on 'P' street. I saw him put a briefcase in the car. Now, at that time a hop on/hop off open top double decker bus *(or appropriate, well-known, local comic vehicle)* pulled up next to the stakeout car and obscured my vision. So, I got out and proceeded on foot. I observed Mr. Lawrence running back towards the shop holding himself. *(If WITNESSES laugh, MIKEY innocently explains "His finger")* He re-entered the shop through the side door at four twenty-six p.m. I followed him in and asked Mrs. Shubert where he went. I thought she indicated the front door and I ran out the front door in pursuit. At that time, I rejoined my partner. That's when we heard the screams and observed Miss Demarco running into the shop through the front door. So, we rushed in with our weapons drawn.

(Sometimes, at NICK'S sole discretion, this question can be shortened to:)

NICK: Mikey, did you see Lawrence cut himself?

MIKEY: No. I didn't actually see him cut himself. I did see him go out to his car and put his briefcase in the car, and later I saw him running down the alley holding himself - his finger.

QUESTION # 14: WHAT DID MRS. SHUBERT MEAN WHEN SHE SAID IT WAS ALREADY DONE?

NICK: When did she say that?

WITNESS: When she was talking on the phone.

NICK: When she was on the phone she said something was done? (*crossing U* What was already done, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: (*To NICK*) Oh, you mean when I was talking to Frederick? (*To WITNESS*) Oh, you poor dear, that must have sounded suspicious. That had to do with my husband's watch. You see, before I left home this morning, I told Frederick that I would pick up Adam's - my husband's - watch. It was being repaired at Cartier's (*or appropriate store*). So when I called Frederick to tell him I was running a little late, he asked me if I had picked up Mr. Shubert's watch, and I said, "Don't worry about that, it's already been done," meaning that I had picked up the watch.

(Sometimes the WITNESS will think Mrs. Shubert said something like "She said 'I did it.' Or 'The deed is done.' " In this case, SHUBERT would alter the line to "So when I called Frederick to tell him I was running a little late, he asked me if I had picked up Mr. Shubert's watch, and I believe what I said was, "Don't worry about that, it's already been done," meaning that I had picked up the watch.")

WITNESS: (*calling out*) Where's the watch?

NICK: (*To the WITNESS*) Hey! Hey! Hey! I'll handle this investigation. (*Beat. And then to Mrs. SHUBERT*) Where's the watch?

SHUBERT: It's in my purse.

NICK: May we see it please? (*pointing out the WITNESS who asked.*)

SHUBERT: I'll look for it.

(She opens her purse and produces the watch, dangling it by the repair tag. She looks right at the accusing WITNESS.)

Oh, ye of little faith.

(She drops the watch back in her purse and returns to position.)

QUESTION # 15: EDDIE SAID HE KNEW BARBARA A YEAR AND A HALF AND BARBARA SAID IT WAS ONLY THREE OR FOUR MONTHS. WHY?

NICK: Oh yeah, you're right. When I was interrogating them, Lawrence said he knew Demarco for a year and a half and Demarco said she knew Lawrence only three or four months. What about this discrepancy, Miss Demarco?

BARBARA: *(To NICK)* We've only known each other three or four months. *(To WITNESS)* Honey, you know how men are... they always think it's longer than it is.

QUESTION # 16: HOW MANY APRONS DID WHITCOMB HAVE MADE?

TONY: Just two. One for Barbara and one for me.

(This question nearly always leads to Question #6 so NICK should follow up with "Why do you ask?")

QUESTION # 17: HOW MANY SCISSORS ARE IN THE SHOP?

As with the aprons, ask BARBARA first.

NICK: Miss DeMarco, how many scissors do you have?

BARBARA: I had three pair. Two pair are on my station. The other pair are the broken ones I threw out.

NICK: Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: *(Crossing to his station and getting scissors)* I also have three pair. These are my six-inch cutting shears. I use these for cutting. These are three-inch trimming shears. I use these for trimming. And these are my thinning shears, or as I like to call them, my Mike Pence shears *(or appropriate person)*.

NICK: Why do you call them that?

TONY: Because they're dull and pointless.

QUESTION # 18: IN WHAT POSITION WAS THE BODY FOUND?

NICK: Mikey, in what position was the body found?

MIKEY: *(Making a horizontal gesture with both hands, parallel to the floor)* Lying down.

NICK: Why do you ask?

Normally NICK'S prompt might lead to whether she was sitting at the piano and then to the right/left-handed question (see Q # 4) or whether there was a sign of a struggle which might be about if Isabel knew her attacker, etc.)

QUESTION # 19: WHY DID BARBARA PUT ON NAIL POLISH AND THEN REMOVE IT RIGHT AWAY?

NICK: I noticed that she was taking that polish off when I interrogated her. You mean that she had just put it on? Miss DeMarco, why did you take off your nail polish when you had just put it on?

BARBARA: I was trying out a new color but I didn't like it...I thought it made me look cheap.

(OPT:

BARBARA: *I'm going to a party tonight and I wanted my nails to look good.*

NICK: *What kind of party are you going to?*

BARBARA: *Tupperware.)*

QUESTION # 20: WHAT IS THE LAYOUT OF THE PREMISES?

(This is important for the WITNESSES to understand. In fact, it was originally part of the Reconstruction and was explained at every performance.)

This question may come in many forms, such as:

- 1) How was Lawrence able get into the shop through the swinging doors?
- 2) Is there a way out of the closet other than through the door we see?
- 3) Why didn't Lawrence go to the bathroom to wash off his cut?
- 4) Did any of the suspects see any of the other suspects in the hallway?
- 5) Where is Mrs. Czerny's apartment in relation to the bathroom?
- 6) Did Miss DeMarco smell the burning goulash on her way to Isabel's?

(If NICK deems it appropriate, or if the WITNESSES seem confused about the layout of the shop and the apartments, he can ask for a description of the building. This can happen during the Reconstruction or during the Question & Answer period.)

NICK: Something just occurred to me. You witnesses are not familiar with the premises. I think it would help if we all have a clear idea of the layout of the building. Mr. Whitcomb, could you give us a description of the building as briefly as possible?

TONY: This building here?

NICK: Yes.

TONY: I'd be happy to. This building was built in 1883, the same year of the tragic Brooklyn Bridge stampede. *(OPT: the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act was passed or whatever.)*

NICK: Whitcomb! Just give me a floor plan of the building.

TONY: Oh, I can do that, too. "A Floor Plan of The Building," by Tony Whitcomb. *(TONY crosses to front door.)* This is the front door of the shop. We're right at 3229 "P" St. You come walking into the shop *(TONY does so)* and this is the main salon. This is where Barbara and I work all of our magic. *(To MIKEY)* In your case a miracle. *(Crossing to supply closet and opening the door)* This is my supply closet where I keep my SUPPLIES!! *(a la SURPRISE!!)* and my poster of *(hunky local sports figure)*. *(TONY crosses to swinging doors)* This is the side entrance to the shop. You go through these doors and out the door on the right, that goes out to the sidewalk. That's the residence entrance to the building. Or, you could go up the stairs to the first landing - that's where the bathroom is - then you go up the rest of that flight of stairs, and there's Isabel's apartment, right above us here, on the second floor. And you know, that's probably going to be up for rent soon, in case anyone's...

NICK: WHITCOMB!

TONY: Then you go up another flight of stairs, up to the third floor, and that's where I live with my two cats, *(names of cats)*. *(TONY curtsies and returns to his seat.)*

NICK: Thank you for your help, Mr. Whitcomb.

QUESTION # 21: WHEN WAS MRS. SHUBERT'S APPOINTMENT?

(Many times, people want to know why SHUBERT was late. It is important for TONY

and **BARBARA** to know that her appointment is usually in the morning. The on-stage appointment book should reflect that history. Today is different from all other days in that she wanted to have her hair done before she left for her plane. Otherwise, she would have heard Isabel Czerny's practicing during her previous appointments.

Some WITNESSES believe that **SHUBERT** went upstairs through the side entrance and murdered Isabel before she came into the shop. This is an understandable suspicion on the part of the WITNESSES, but it is not valid after the questions about the layout of the shop and about the surveillance have been answered.)

WITNESS: What time was Mrs. Shubert's appointment?

SHUBERT: I believe that it was for three-thirty.

BARBARA: Yes, it was.

TONY: Yup, three-thirty. It's right here in the book.

WITNESS: So why were you late?

NICK: Yeah, Mrs. Shubert, why were you late?

SHUBERT: Oh darling, it's been the most dreadful day. First of all, on my way here we had a little fender-bender and the limousine was disabled and I had to take an Uber. It was just awful.

NICK: Well, an accident can be unpleasant, Mrs. Shubert.

SHUBERT: Not the accident, darling. The Uber.

QUESTION # 22: WHY DID BARBARA GO UP TO ISABEL'S THROUGH THE SIDE DOOR AND COME SCREAMING BACK IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

NICK: Yeah, Demarco. Why'd you go out one door and come back in the other?

BARBARA: (To **NICK**) Remember when I said I can't remember that?

NICK: Yeah.

BARBARA: (To **WITNESS**) I can't remember that. No really, I think I have ambrosia.

QUESTION # 23: BARBARA THREW AWAY BLOODY GLOVES. WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

NICK: Miss DeMarco threw away gloves? Where?

WITNESS *(Indicating waste can by sink)* There.

NICK: *(Looking into trash can)* Mikey. Get an evidence bag. *(Gingerly pulling BARBARA'S red stained gloves from the trash can)* What is this, Demarco? Blood?

BARBARA: No that's not blood, it's hair dye. I gave a dye job this morning. *(If the WITNESS is a female)* Honey, you know all about hair dye. *(WITNESSES laugh. BARBARA explains.)* No really. It's Clairol number 407, Cranberry Cocktail. I used to use it on my own hair, but I prefer the more natural look. *(OPT: "I thought it made me look cheap" if it hasn't been used in the nail-polish question.)*

NICK: Mikey. Evidence bag. *(If this is the first piece of evidence to be taken to the lab, MIKEY whips out a Dunkin' Donuts bag and does the bit. Otherwise, he uses a plastic bag.)* Send these down to the lab.

(MIKEY exits.)

These questions are brief, not huge on bits, and not necessarily leading to any of the "biggies" but EVERY SINGLE QUESTION must be considered with equal importance and with the sense that, in that WITNESS' mind, this may be THE one that solves the crime.

QUESTION # 24: WHY DID MRS. SHUBERT NEED A CARD TO CALL HOME?

(This often comes up in the Reconstruction.)

This question may come up as follows:

1. Mrs. Shubert didn't really call home.
2. Mrs. Shubert used a card to make that phone call.

WITNESS: Mrs. Shubert didn't really call her own home.

NICK: What makes you think that?

WITNESS: Because she had to look at a card to get the phone number.

NICK: She used a card to call her own home? Mrs. Shubert, why would you need a card to call your own home?

SHUBERT: *(To the WITNESS who asked.)* It's an unlisted number. *(WITNESSES laugh. SHUBERT explains to everyone)* No, no, you see, we have to change the number so frequently because, well, the wrong class of people learn it *(indicating the WITNESS who asked the question)*, and I can never remember the new one so I just keep it with me, on a card in my purse.

Often this is when the WITNESSES demand that the police call the SHUBERT residence for verification.

QUESTION # 25: WAS MRS. CZERNY PLAYING THE PIANO WHEN SHE WAS MURDERED?

NICK: Why do you ask?

WITNESS: Because Mikey said the wounds were on the left side of the throat and if she was playing the piano, whoever killed her would have to be left-handed.

NICK: You're right, if Mrs. Czerny was attacked from behind, it would probably be a left-handed person. However, if she was attacked from the front, it would have to be a right-handed person.

(At Nick's discretion he may or may not continue) Ok, I can ask everyone in the shop if they're right or left-handed, but you gotta bear in mind, at this point in time we simply don't know if Mrs. Czerny got it in the front or if she got it in the rear. But I'll ask.

(See Question # 4.) (Then button the question with "At this point we really can't determine if she was playing the piano at the moment when she was murdered.")

QUESTION # 26: WHERE WERE THE SCISSORS FOUND?

NICK: Mikey, where were the scissors found?

MIKEY: In her throat.

NICK: Why do you ask?

(This will probably lead to any of the other questions regarding the scissors.)

QUESTION # 27: DID THE SCISSORS AT THE LAB HAVE A BROKEN TIP?

NICK: Mikey, did the scissors at the lab have a broken tip?

MIKEY: They didn't say anything about that Nick and I'm sure they would have told me if they did.

QUESTION # 28: HOW DID BARBARA'S SCISSORS GET BROKEN?

NICK: Yeah, Demarco. How'd you break those scissors?

BARBARA: I was screwing a nut in the closet and the tip snapped off. *(She mimes the action of using a screwdriver.)* No, I learned my lesson. Always use the right tool for the job.

QUESTION # 29: WHERE WAS (MIKE) (NICK) WHEN HE WASN'T IN THE SHOP?

NICK: If I wasn't in here, I was out at the stakeout car.

(This might lead to either Question #1 or Question #13.)

QUESTION # 30: WHO WAS WATCHING THE SHOP WHEN BOTH COPS WERE IN THE SALON?

NICK: Well, Mikey and I were only in here together for a few minutes. Five at the most. So, what I did was, I grabbed a meter maid *(looks in pad for name and names her)* before I came into the shop and asked her to keep an eye on both doors. Nobody came in or out except these four suspects.

QUESTION # 31: WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMARCO AND LAWRENCE?

NICK: You're right. There's definitely something going on between these two. I mean, first they were whispering, then they were smooching. Then they were lying about it. Come on, what exactly is going on here?

BARBARA: *(Rising and crossing a step or two to NICK)* Nothing's going on! I told you, we met at Isabel's a couple of times. *(To WITNESS)* He took me out to dinner. Once. We went to the Red Lobster. *(Crossing to DL seat).*

EDDIE: Yeah, I remember that. I got the crabs.

BARBARA: *(Waits for laugh to die and then tops him with)* Yeah, and I got the shrimp! *(Sits).*

QUESTION # 32: HOW DID LAWRENCE GET PAST YOU THROUGH THE SIDE DOOR?

NICK: Well, we did have the place staked out but we weren't detaining anyone.

(This question may lead to Question #1: "Why were the cops staking out the place?" or Question #13: "What were Eddie's movements?").

QUESTION # 33: WHERE'S TONY'S RAZOR?

TONY: *(Crossing to his station)* It's right here. See? I left it here before I went upstairs. Look, it even has some shaving cream still on it. But, I really wouldn't worry about my razor. I mean she wasn't shaved to death.

QUESTION # 34: IS LAWRENCE'S FINGER REALLY CUT?

WITNESS: Is he really cut?

NICK: Do you have any objection to removing that bandaid, Lawrence?

EDDIE: *(As he removes the band-aid, to WITNESS)* You really want to see this?

TONY: Just knock it off and give him (her) the finger!

EDDIE: *(Exposing the cut to a squeamish WITNESS.)* You wanna tell him (her) if it's cut?!

WITNESS

or **NICK:** It's cut all right.

EDDIE: Happy Elvira (*Dracula*)?

Sometimes, if things are slow, or if NICK feels adventurous, he might say, "What made you ask that question?" so that it will lead the WITNESSES on to questions of blood-type, right or left handedness, or the missing scissors.

QUESTION # 35: WHAT'S IN THE LETTERS?

When a WITNESS asks about the letters, NICK can decide whether or not it is appropriate for the letters to be read by the person who is questioning him about it. This is an excellent way to have a cooperative WITNESS share information about the crime with fellow WITNESSES. All three letters can be identical. The WITNESS will only read one.

"April 13

*My Magic Fingered Barbara,
 Oh, how you seek to please,
 My little kitten on the keys.
 I tingle from your gentle touch,
 Your playful footwork means so much.
 The hours flee I'm never bored,
 I've found in you my long-lost chord.
 I yearn for the day when we shall become as one.
 Eternally, Isabel"*

OPT:

WITNESS: *What's in the letters?*

NICK: *You want to know what the letters say? I don't know.... They were highly personal letters and I'm sure Isabel Czerny would not want them divulged to the public.*

WITNESS: *Read one of them.*

NICK: *What the heck she's dead right? (To a WITNESS in the front row who looks like they can see and read English) Sir/Ma'am. Would you stand up and read one of these letters in a nice clear voice so all the witnesses can hear you.*

WITNESS: *(Reads letter.)*

TONY: *(When the WITNESS finishes reading the letter aloud) Gross me out! Does it really say that?!*

NICK: What about this, DeMarco?

BARBARA: What's wrong with that? She was teaching me how to play the piano.

NICK: What's this, "I yearn for the day when we shall become as one?"

BARBARA: You know, you got a dirty mind. We were going to play a duet.

TONY: Oh, is that what they're calling it nowadays?

(In an emergency, if pressed for time, NICK may decide NOT to have a letter read:

WITNESS: Read one!

NICK: I don't know... These are extremely personal letters of a very famous celebrity. I really don't think that Mrs. Czerny would want them revealed. However, I have heard that they have been purchased by TMZ and will be broadcast early next week.

QUESTION # 36: HOW TALL WAS THE VICTIM?

NICK: Why do you ask?

WITNESS: Well, if the stab wounds were at a downward angle, it would mean that it would have to have been someone taller than she was.

NICK: Mikey, what are the specs on Mrs. Czerny.

MIKEY: *(Looking it up quickly in his notebook.)* She was 5' 7", and 130 lbs.

NICK: But bear in mind that if she was 5' 7", her neck is going to be lower than her head. Like about 5'5" ... and don't forget, if Mrs. Czerny was seated at the piano at the time of her murder even Tom Cruise could have done it.

QUESTION # 37: WHAT'S IN NICK'S LUNCHBOX?

NICK: My lunch. *(He opens it.)* You want to see my lunch? Ok. Let's see what the little lady packed. I got some Twinkies. I got Fritos, I got Barbecue Chips. Some Vienna sausages. I got a Mallow cup. Some pork rinds... and a Slim Fast.

QUESTION # 38: EVERYONE (INCLUDING NICK) HAD SOMETHING TO WIPE OFF FINGERPRINTS WITH.

TONY explains that his mitt was for his goulash.

BARBARA explains the gloves were for a dye job.

SHUBERT explains she wears her gloves for shopping (OPT: "I started wearing white gloves again last year after the corona virus.").

EDDIE explains the tissue in his briefcase was given to him by **TONY**.

NICK explains his gloves were part of his construction worker disguise (OPT: "Remember that construction worker that came into the shop earlier? That was ME!")

QUESTION # 39: IS LAWRENCE POPPING PILLS.

WITNESS: Lawrence was taking pills. *(Sometimes the WITNESS says “drugs” and NICK will try to work it to “pills” (i.e. “What kind of drugs?”))*

NICK: Mr. Lawrence was taking pills? When was this?!

WITNESS: When he first came into the shop.

NICK: Lawrence, what kind of pills are you popping?

EDDIE: Those weren’t pills, those were Tic-Tacs!

NICK: Where are those Tic-Tacs now?

EDDIE: *(Pointing to his stomach)* Right about here.

NICK: Lawrence, where are the Tic Tacs?

EDDIE: They’re in my briefcase.

NICK: Where’s your briefcase?

EDDIE: I told you before. It’s in my car. It’s right outside.

(See Question #10. Note: when the briefcase is opened for examination, EDDIE will first produce the piece of evidence in question, in this case, the Tic-Tacs and show them to the WITNESS who asked about the pills.)

QUESTION # 40: WHAT’S ON THE TAPE?

(Again, an excellent clue. The WITNESS thinks that if you can rewind the tape you can establish certain time elements which would help pinpoint who was out of the room when Isabel Czerny was murdered.)

WITNESS: What about the tape recording? Couldn’t you rewind the tape and see who was out of the room when it started to play?

NICK: You know, the unusual thing about this cassette is that it’s a ninety-minute tape: forty-five on each side. It starts out with a long section of blank tape, then there’s some of that piano music, then more blank tape, then music, then blank, then music and so on throughout the tape. Now, when the squad arrived the tape recorder was still running, and Mrs. Czerny has one of those auto-reverse players, so we have no way of knowing when the tape started. So, we really don’t know whether Mrs. Czerny was playing live or whether it was... *(hoping that the WITNESS are old enough to remember the commercial and say: “Memorex”. If the WITNESSES don’t*

say Memorex, NICK completes the sentence) ...the tape.

QUESTION # 41: WHO IS MRS. SHUBERT GOING TO BERMUDA WITH?

(WITNESSES frequently want to pair up SHUBERT with some accomplice, usually either EDDIE or Frederick.)

NICK: Good point! Who were you going to Bermuda with, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: *(Crossing a few steps towards the WITNESS)* Darling, the truth of the matter is, I'm going alone. You see, my husband has been encouraging me for years to visit the Bermuda Triangle. *(Crossing back UL. If the WITNESSES laugh, surprised, she explains)* No, really. He said I could stay as long as I wanted.

QUESTION # 42: WHY DID YOU WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE HAD LEFT THE ROOM TO MAKE YOUR PHONE CALL?

SHUBERT: I didn't wait at all. The minute that I looked at my watch and realized that I was running so late, I dashed over to the phone to call Frederick.

QUESTION # 43: WHY WAS SHE TALKING SO SECRETIVELY TO HER BUTLER?

SHUBERT: Isn't that how you talk to your butler? *(OPT: It's so hard to keep good help.)*

If WITNESS says:

WITNESS: I don't have a butler.

SHUBERT: You don't have a butler? Oh, darling, how do you eat?

QUESTION # 44: HOW DID LAWRENCE KNOW THAT THE MUSIC WAS RACHMANINOFF?

EDDIE: I'm sophisticated. No really. Everybody knew that. It's what she was famous for. In fact, that's the music she was playing when she went crazy.

QUESTION # 45: HOW DID LAWRENCE'S BRIEFCASE GET OUT TO THE CAR?

EDDIE: I said "Briefcase, go to the car." How do you think it got there? I took it

there myself. I dropped it off when I went out to put a quarter in the meter because I didn't want to take it up to my meeting with Isabel.

QUESTION # 46: WAS THE GOULASH REALLY BURNED? WHERE'S THE POT?

NICK: Where did you say you put that pot, Mr. Whitcomb?

TONY: I washed it out and put it on the drain board. Right next to the sink.

NICK: Mikey, take a run up to Whitcomb's apartment. See if you can find that pot.

(When the pot comes back in after the conclusion of an intervening question or two.)

MIKEY: Here's the pot, Nick, but there's no indication of anything having been burned.

TONY: That's because I use Lemon Fresh Joy! It lifts the grease.

OPT:

TONY: *That's because I use Dawn Dishwashing Soap. It's not just good for ducks.*

NICK: Mikey, send this down to the lab.

QUESTION #47: DID MRS. SHUBERT KNOW MRS. CZERNY?

SHUBERT: No, not personally. I knew of her, of course. And we may have met years ago at some social function. I really don't remember. She would have.

QUESTION # 48: WHAT'S IN MRS. SHUBERT'S PACKAGES?

(Over the years, various answers have been given to this question. There have been black panties and bra, ties with special notes for Frederick, and murder-mystery novels and games. The response which seems to work best is:)

NICK: What's in the bag, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Oh, I'd show you darling, except you really couldn't afford it.

If the WITNESSES continue to insist, NICK can wrap it up by saying "Well, I think we'd need to get a warrant to look in her packages." And move on.

OPT:

SHUBERT: *Actually, it's a new bathing costume. I thought the one I wore last year was a bit too revealing. So, I wanted to get something a little more modest. (She pulls out a hanger with a tiny bikini top and thong bottom.)*

QUESTION # 49: WHY WAS LAWRENCE SO SECRETIVE ABOUT THE TIC-TACS?

EDDIE: I didn't have enough for everyone.

QUESTION # 50: HOW'D YOU LIKE THE KISS?

NICK: I gotta tell ya, it wasn't the worst kiss I've ever had. Ok, next question.

QUESTION # 51: WHY DID MRS. SHUBERT HAVE A MANHATTAN COCKTAIL IF SHE'S A RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC?

(This will only come up if the bloodstain on SHUBERT'S glove has come up and after the announcement in the break.)

NICK: What makes you think she's a recovering alcoholic?

WITNESS: It said so on the radio during the break.

NICK: Really? And she said the stain on her glove was cherry juice from a cocktail. *(Or Bloody Mary, if that joke is used.)* Mrs. Shubert, why were you having a Manhattan cocktail if you're a recovering alcoholic?

SHUBERT: Darling, I'm a member of the Fox Hall Road chapter of A. A. Our motto is "Every OTHER day at a time."

QUESTION # 52: HOW DID NICK KNOW THE LETTERS WERE ADDRESSED TO DEMARCO?

NICK: Because Mrs. Czerny told us.

(This will most likely lead to Question #1: "What were the cops doing here in the first place?")

QUESTION # 53: WHAT WERE EDDIE AND BARBARA WHISPERING ABOUT?

NICK: When was this?

WITNESS: When Eddie first came into the shop he was whispering to Barbara at the supply closet.

NICK: Yeah, I noticed that myself. What were you two whispering about?

EDDIE: I was asking her where the bathroom was.

NICK: Ok, well what were you whispering about over there? (*Indicating the front door.*)

EDDIE: I said, "You were right. The bathroom was right where you said it was."

Sometimes:

WITNESS: Just before he kissed her when he left.

NICK: You mean they had some intercourse on the stairs before he kissed her?

BARBARA: Believe me, honey. There was no intercourse before that kiss.

QUESTION # 54: WHAT TIME WAS ON THE PARKING TICKET?

(This will only come up if the briefcase has come in and MIKEY has given EDDIE the parking ticket.)

NICK: (*Fishing ticket out of the trash*) 5:03pm. Why do you ask?

WITNESS: I wanted to see if Lawrence really put a quarter in his meter or not.

(This might lead to Question #13: EDDIE'S movements.)

QUESTION # 55: HOW MUCH IS ISABEL'S INHERITANCE?

NICK: How much was she worth? I don't know. She was from a very wealthy family and of course made plenty of money on her own. So, I'd say a lot. Why do you ask?

(The WITNESSES may be interested in any of the suspects' motives.)

QUESTION # 56: WHY WAS LAWRENCE PUTTING A QUARTER IN THE METER ON A SUNDAY?

EDDIE: Oh, is today Sunday? I totally forgot.

WITNESS: *(If they ask)* Then why did he get a ticket?

MIKEY: Oh, is today Sunday? I totally forgot.

QUESTION # 57: HOW OLD WAS MRS. CZERNY?

NICK: She was old.

TONY: Real old. Let's put it this way, her Social Security number was 1.

QUESTION # 58: WHY DIDN'T MRS. SHUBERT WANT HER HUSBAND TO KNOW SHE WAS AT THE HAIRDRESSERS?

NICK: Yeah, she refused to take the call from her husband. How come, Mrs. Shubert?

SHUBERT: Oh, darling, I just didn't want to disillusion him. He thinks my beauty is natural.

QUESTION # 59: WHY DON'T YOU *69 THE PHONE (OR HIT REDIAL) AND SEE WHO MRS. SHUBERT CALLED?

*Note: *69 will only tell you the number of the last incoming call (which, in any case, is the Lab). Redial (although there is no redial button on the phone) would get the Station House—which MIKEY has called to report the murder after the blackout.*

QUESTION # 60: IS THAT ISABEL'S TAPE RECORDER?

NICK: No. I had this in the trunk of the stake out car. This is police issue tape recorder number 6149. Mrs. Czerny had one of those big, old-fashioned tape systems upstairs. This is, however, the actual cassette tape that we found playing when we entered her apartment. *(This may lead to a question about what's on the tape.)*

QUESTION # 61: WHY DIDN'T MRS. SHUBERT KNOW ISABEL CZERNY LIVED UPSTAIRS?

NICK: Yeah, if you come to the salon all the time, why didn't you know Isabel lived upstairs?

SHUBERT: I don't know. I never heard her play before.

TONY: Oh, I know. Mrs. Shubert usually comes in in the morning. Isabel never even gets out of bed before noon.

QUESTION #62: CAN YOU BE A D.C. COP AND LIVE IN ROCKVILLE?

(This question will only come up if there's a residency law in the town in which the show is playing.)

NICK: Oh, you're talking about that residency thing. Well, don't you worry about that. I have a legal residence at the Mark Twain Motel, 345 South 14th Street. I share it with three other cops and five firemen.

TONY: What's that address again?

QUESTION #63: WHY DID LAWRENCE LET NICK GO FIRST?

NICK: Yeah, you're right. Lawrence came in here before me and, yet, he didn't want to go first. What's that all about, Lawrence?

EDDIE: I'm a nice guy. No really. My appointment with Isabel was for 4:30 and I realized I didn't have enough time for a haircut. So, I let him go first. That left me with some time to kill... before my appointment with Isabel.

QUESTION #64: WHY DID LAWRENCE WANT TO TAKE HIS BRIEFCASE OUT TO THE CAR BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH ISABEL?

EDDIE: I didn't want it to appear like a business meeting. I wanted it to just be what it was— a meeting between two friends.

QUESTION #65: WHEN EDDIE CAME INTO THE SHOP, BARBARA SEEMED SURPRISED/ANNOYED TO SEE HIM.

BARBARA: I told Eddie a million times not to come into the shop. Tony just carries on about my love life. And it's none of his business.

QUESTION #66: WHERE DID BARBARA GO WHEN SHE LEFT WITH HER PURSE?

NICK: Miss Demarco went out with her purse? When was this?

WITNESS: Before you came in.

NICK: Miss Demarco, where did you go with your purse?

BARBARA: I just went out for a break. I wanted to get a breath of fresh air.

NICK: Yeah, I saw her out there and she was breathing.

QUESTION #67: WHAT'S IN BARBARA'S PURSE?

(At least a pack of cigarettes, a wallet, keys, other items).

QUESTION #68: THAT'S NOT THE SAME BRIEFCASE.

It's not uncommon for the WITNESSES to believe EDDIE has switched his briefcase.

NICK: That's not the same briefcase? Mikey, is this the briefcase you saw Lawrence put in his car?

MIKEY: Yes, that's the one.

NICK: Were there any other briefcases in the car?

MIKEY: No, Nick. Just that one.

NICK: Then this must be the briefcase.

EDDIE: *(Settling it)* It's my briefcase.

QUESTION #69: IT'S NOT THE SAME CARD!

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, do you have any other cards in your purse?

SHUBERT: Oh, how clever of you, darling. I have these. *(She produces a huge clear plastic holder filled with credit cards that unfolds almost to the floor.)*

WITNESS: *(Insisting)* NO!! She used another card.

SHUBERT: *(Opens her purse to NICK.)*

NICK: *(Looking in her purse)* Sir/Ma'am, I'm afraid that appears to be the only card she has.

QUESTION #70: HOW LONG HAVE NICK AND MIKEY BEEN PARTNERS?

(This is something NICK and MIKEY should agree upon in rehearsal.)

NICK: About six months.

MIKEY: *(As if it's their anniversary.)* Six months tomorrow, Nick.

QUESTION #71: HOW LONG HAS MRS. SHUBERT BEEN COMING INTO THE SHOP?

NICK: Mrs. Shubert, how long have you been coming to this hair salon?

SHUBERT: I don't really remember. I'd say about year. I started coming here whenever Barbara started working here.

(This question is probably asked by a WITNESS who wants to know why Mrs. SHUBERT didn't know that Isabel Czerny lived upstairs: Question #61.)

QUESTION #72: HOW MUCH DOES TONY PAY IN RENT?

(Whatever amount is set should be significantly lower than what the shop is worth, giving TONY a possible motive if Isabel threatened to raise the rent or throw him out.)

QUESTION #73: BARBARA SPRAYED SOMETHING ON HER FINGERS.

(This question comes up because of the issue of no fingerprints.)

NICK: When did she do that?

WITNESS: At the beginning of the play.

NICK: What play? Oh, you mean before I came into the shop?

WITNESS: Yes.

NICK: How does that relate to the crime?

WITNESS: Because there were no fingerprints.

NICK: Demarco, what exactly were you spraying on your hands?

BARBARA: It was nail dryer. I'd just done my nails.

OPT: (If it hasn't been said)

BARBARA: I'm going to a party tonight and I wanted my nails to look good.

***NICK:** What kinda party are you goin' to?*

***BARBARA:** Tupperware.*

END OPT.

NICK: Where is this nail dryer?

BARBARA: It's in my cart in the supply closet.

NICK: *(Going in to retrieve the can. To the WITNESS) Is this it? Well, it says here "Nail Enamel Dryer." (He returns the can to cart and closes the door.)*

HELPFUL “AD LIBS”

If there is an accusation from out-of-the-blue (“Lawrence put a pair of red handled scissors in his briefcase.”) Nick can poll the WITNESSES.

NICK: Did anybody else see Lawrence put a pair of red handled scissors in his briefcase?

(If only a few hands go up)

NICK: Sir, I’m afraid you’re in the minority.

Or:

NICK: It doesn’t mean you’re wrong. It just means... you’re alone.

If a question is vague or incomplete Nick can help.

NICK: I see. But how does this relate to the crime?

If a question refers to offstage physical evidence in the Reconstruction (briefcase, apron etc.) Nick can satisfy the WITNESS by saying:

NICK: Excellent point! Mikey take a note to look for that apron.

With rowdy school groups NICK can use his whistle more frequently and can even stop the Reconstruction to say “Folks, I appreciate your enthusiasm. I want to solve this case as much as you do. But I need to hear what these suspects have to say. So, if you see me or my partner put our hand up like this (he demonstrates) we need you to get completely quiet.” Or “Ok folks, from now on, I’m going to take hands only”.

If a WITNESS says they have 2 or more questions...

NICK: Let’s just take one at a time...it’s been a hard day and I’ve got a lot of people who want to ask questions. *(OPT. take your best shot.)*

If a WITNESS stands...

NICK: That’s OK sir you can sit down, I know what it’s like. I went to Catholic school too.

With a rowdy group...

NICK: Remember hands and hands only. Because if we don’t have hands, we’re gonna have confusion and then we’ll have chaos and that leads Communism. So please, hands only.

When one section of the audience has not been participating...

NICK: Any questions from over here? I don’t want to seem like I’m ignoring you. *(after a pause, when no hand goes up) ... and I’m not. (going back to the rest of the house.)* Ok. Next question.

SHUBERT NOTES

*When a group yells or shouts continually at **SHUBERT**:*

SHUBERT: I can't even think if you are all going to shout at me.

When a child picks on her:

SHUBERT: What a clever child you are. Now I know why Adam and I never had any children.

or

SHUBERT: Shouldn't you be at home doing homework? (*or ...at military school? ...at boarding school? ...away at camp?*)

When a WITNESS is repeatedly on her case:

SHUBERT: What an empty life you must lead.

When the WITNESS is a woman:

SHUBERT: Colonel, I know that woman. She tried to get into my club and I had her blackballed.

To a WITNESS who insists she was talking to her lover when she said "It's already been done."

SHUBERT: Darling, if he was my lover, he would have known if it was done.

In the BREAK to a WITNESS who approaches her with children:

SHUBERT: Oh darling, are those your children? (*Parent proudly beams.*) Adam and I have Pekinese.

EDDIE NOTES:

To a WITNESS who refers to him as “Eddie”

EDDIE: Eddie? Do I know you? It’s “Mister Lawrence.”

To a young WITNESS:

EDDIE: Hey kid, how old are you? (*WITNESS responds “14”.*) You wanna see 15?

QUESTIONS INDEX

- 1: What were you guys doing here in the first place? (173)
- 2: How did Lawrence know the murder weapon? (176)
- 3: Where are the scissors Barbara threw away? (177)
- 4: Which of the suspects are right-handed or left-handed? (179)
- 5: Where are Mrs. Shubert's gloves? (180)
- 6: Where are the aprons? (182)
- 7: Eddie passed Barbara a note. (183)
- 8: How did Lawrence cut his finger? (184)
- 9: How did Barbara discover the body? (186)
- 10: Where's Lawrence's briefcase? (188)
- 11: Why don't you call Mrs. Shubert's home and see if she really called her butler like she said? (192)
- 12: Do Lawrence and Mrs. Czerny have the same blood type? (196)
- 13: How did Lawrence get past you into the side door? (197)
- 14: What did Mrs. Shubert mean when she said it was already done? (198)
- 15: Eddie said he knew Barbara a year and a half and Barbara said it was only three or four months. Why? (199)
- 16: How many aprons did Whitcomb have made? (199)
- 17: How many scissors are in the shop? (199)
- 18: In what position was the body found? (200)
- 19: Why did Barbara put on nail polish and then remove it right away? (200)
- 20: What is the layout of the premises? (200)
- 21: When was Mrs. Shubert's appointment? (202)

- 22: Why did Barbara go up to Isabel's through the side door and come screaming back in through the front door? (202)
- 23: Barbara threw away bloody gloves. What happened to them? (203)
- 24: Why did Mrs. Shubert need a card to call home? (203)
- 25: Was Mrs. Czerny playing the piano when she was murdered? (204)
- 26: Where were the scissors found? (204)
- 27: Did the scissors at the lab have a broken tip? (205)
- 28: How did Barbara's scissors get broken? (205)
- 29: Where was (Mike) (Nick) when he wasn't in the shop? (205)
- 30: Who was watching the shop when both cops were in the salon? (205)
- 31: What's the relationship between Demarco and Lawrence? (205)
- 32: How did Lawrence get past you through the side door? (206)
- 33: Where's Tony's razor? (206)
- 34: Is Lawrence's finger really cut? (206)
- 35: What's in the letters? (206)
- 36: How tall was the victim? (208)
- 37: What's in Nick's lunchbox? (208)
- 38: Everyone (including Nick) had something to wipe off fingerprints with. (208)
- 39: Is Lawrence popping pills. (209)
- 40: What's on the tape? (209)
- 41: Who is Mrs. Shubert going to Bermuda with? (210)
- 42: Why did you wait until everyone had left the room to make your phone call? (210)
- 43: Why was she talking so secretively to her butler? (210)
- 44: How did Lawrence know that the music was Rachmaninoff? (210)

- 45: How did Lawrence's briefcase get out to the car? (211)
- 46: Was the goulash really burned? Where's the pot? (211)
- 47: Did Mrs. Shubert know Mrs. Czerny? (211)
- 48: What's in Mrs. Shubert's packages? (211)
- 49: Why was Lawrence so secretive about the Tic-Tacs? (212)
- 50: How'd you like the kiss? (212)
- 51: Why did Mrs. Shubert have a Manhattan if she's a recovering alcoholic? (212)
- 52: How did Nick know the letters were addressed to Demarco? (212)
- 53: What were Eddie and Barbara whispering about? (213)
- 54: What time was on the parking ticket? (213)
- 55: How much is Isabel's inheritance? (213)
- 56: Why was Lawrence putting a quarter in the meter on a Sunday? (214)
- 57: How old was Mrs. Czerny? (214)
- 58: Why didn't Mrs. Shubert want her husband to know she was at the salon? (214)
- 59: Why don't you *69 the phone (or hit redial) and see who Mrs. Shubert called? (214)
- 60: Is that Isabel's tape recorder? (214)
- 61: Why didn't Mrs. Shubert know Isabel Czerny lived upstairs? (215)
- 62: Can you be a D.C. cop and live in Rockville (215)
- 63: Why did Lawrence let Nick go first? (215)
- 64: Why did Lawrence want to take his briefcase out to the car before his meeting with Isabel? (215)
- 65: When Eddie came into the shop, Barbara seemed surprised/annoyed to see him. (215)
- 66: Where did Barbara go when she left with her purse during the Warm Up? (216)
- 67: What's in Barbara's purse? (216)

- 68: That's not the same briefcase. (216)
- 69: It's not the same card. (216)
- 70: How long have Nick and Mikey been partners? (217)
- 71: How long has Mrs. Shubert been coming into the shop? (217)
- 72: How much does Tony pay in rent? (217)
- 73: Barbara sprayed something on her fingers. (217)