

THE LAST LAUGH

A Dark Comedy

By

Michael G Wilmot

Characters

Randy (M) A children's party clown
Norma (F) Randy's wife, co-owner of Fuji Gardens Restaurant
Phyllis (F) Friend of Norma and Randy, co-owner of Fuji Gardens

Setting

An apartment in a three floor walk up
The stage has a living room set with a half wall dividing the living room and the kitchen. The living room is furnished in ordinary living room furniture
There is a couch and two end tables with a phone on one of the tables. There is a TV, but the screen is not visible to the audience. There is a hall leading to the bedrooms stage right and the door to the exterior hall is in the upstage left living room wall.
There is a door to a closet on the stage left wall. There is a large salami, some celery stalks and a loaf of bread on the kitchen counter. These should be visible to the audience.

ACT I

1am Sunday, Randy and Norma's apartment

ACT II

Scene 1

11am Sunday, the apartment

Scene 2

9am Monday, the apartment

Scene 3

Fuji Gardens Restaurant, 15 minutes later

Scene 4

15 minutes later, the restaurant

Scene 5

10 minutes later, the restaurant

Act One

It's one o'clock Sunday morning. The living area is illuminated only by the flickering glow of the television set. The kitchen area is in darkness. The end of a television newscast is heard.

TV V/O: "In other news, the vote on the proposed tax hike has effectively split Peytonville city council delaying their decision until their next meeting a week from Monday. And this just in, the Peytonville Pouncer has struck again, the body of another victim was found just one hour ago. As with the other three victims this year, the Pouncer left his calling card in the victim's shirt pocket, a business card simply reading "You're Welcome". The latest victim, Anthony Scarpetti, known to police as "Big Tony" was recently acquitted of drug trafficking charges when all witnesses mysteriously disappeared. Police have no leads in the murder of Big Tony or any of the other killings attributed to the Peytonville Pouncer. We'll bring you the latest developments on our six am newscast. And that's the news. Coming up next, an encore broadcast of yesterday evenings Peytonville All Stars baseball game."

SFX from TV set: a sports crowd cheering

Game Anncr: (on TV) "Ladies and gentlemen, the National Anthem"

As the National Anthem (instrumental version) plays, lights slowly up on the kitchen to reveal RANDY in a clown costume including mask standing at the kitchen counter. (Randy can wear clown make-up instead of the mask if so desired) One hand is behind his back. As the Anthem continues to be heard from the television set, he slowly, menacingly, reveals the hand behind his back

is holding a large knife. He holds the knife up, looks at it for a short time, entranced by it. His gaze shifts to the salami on the counter. He raises the knife.... then starts to cut slices from the salami. He accidentally cuts his finger and exclaims. (The actor can adlib a short exclamation) (if wearing a mask he moves the mask to the top of his head)He looks at his bloody finger in horror. He unsteadily enters the living room, holding his finger out in front of him as if trying to distance himself from it. He staggers around, stops and reluctantly looks at his bleeding finger. It's obvious he is becoming woozy.

RANDY: Ooooooh Boy!

He faints downstage, dropping the knife to the floor.

NORMA: *(offstage)* What's going on out there?

NORMA enters from the hallway stage right. She is wearing a bathrobe

Randy, if you're going to roll in at one o'clock in the morning at least do it quietly..

She turns off the TV and sees Randy on the floor

What the...?

She rushes to him and shakes him but he doesn't respond.

NORMA: Randy... Randy!! Oh my God!

She rushes to the phone, picks it up and is about to call 911 when

she sees the knife on the floor, picks it up and looks at, then notices Randy's bloody finger.

Oh, I see.

She puts the knife on the coffee table and puts down the phone

Randy, wake up! If you think I'm going to drag you into the bedroom, think again!

She shakes him again

Randy... Randy, wake up!

Randy doesn't respond so Norma gets a glass of water from the kitchen and tosses it in his face.

RANDY: Uhh ... what! what! What happened?

NORMA: Don't give me that, you cut yourself didn't you? You cut yourself and you fainted.

RANDY: No, no I didn't. I'm tired and I kinda fell down.

NORMA: You "kinda fell down"? No, you saw your own blood and as usual you fainted, don't try and fool me. You almost gave me the heart attack I thought you had. Now sit here and don't look at your finger.

She guides him to sit on the couch then goes to the kitchen and gets a band-aid. She returns to the couch to apply it to his finger.

NORMA: What were you doing with the knife anyway?

RANDY: I was making a sandwich.

NORMA: What have I told you about that?

RANDY: It's late... I'm hungry.

NORMA: You couldn't have a nice safe pudding cup?

RANDY: I don't want a pudding cup.

NORMA: How long have you been home?

RANDY: I don't know, about ten minutes.

NORMA: *(indicating the clown suit)* You're not wearing that to bed, we've already talked about that.

RANDY: *(ignoring the comment)* I called you for a ride home an hour ago, where were you?

NORMA: Phyllis and I had a couple of drinks after work.

RANDY: That's the last thing she needs.

NORMA: You'd drink too if you were her.

RANDY: It's been over a year now, she needs a new girlfriend.

NORMA: It's not just losing Brenda, it's other things too.

RANDY: I worry about her. She's been really temperamental since Brenda died.

NORMA: She's a professional chef, she's supposed to be temperamental.

RANDY: Her husband murdered her girlfriend, I think that's enough reason by itself. We need to spend more time with her.

NORMA: Glad you mentioned that, we're both invited to her place for dinner tomorrow evening.

RANDY: We? You two never invite me for dinner.

NORMA: Sometimes we do but you always say no.

RANDY: I don't like Japanese food.

NORMA: You've never even tried it.

RANDY: It's all barnacles and raw fish.

NORMA: Don't be an idiot.

RANDY: Just once she can't make a nice prime rib?

NORMA: She's a trained Japanese chef, what do you expect her to make.

RANDY: Something edible.

NORMA: Do you want to come or not, we're trying out a new dish for the restaurant. Come on honey, I'd love it if you came.

RANDY: Not if we're eating that crazy poison puffer fish.

NORMA: It's not poison when it's prepared correctly. She trained a long time to do that and she knows what she's doing, believe me. Besides, she's not serving that tomorrow.

RANDY: Can't she just throw a steak on her fancy hibachi?

NORMA: No.

RANDY: Great, all she can cook is that weird tiny food.

NORMA: Don't you dare call it that tomorrow night! People pay top dollar for that at the restaurant.

RANDY: Then she should sell it to those people. Tell her to come here and I'll make lasagna. She loves my lasagna.

NORMA: I've already told her you're coming, it's about time you tried the food I earn my living with.

RANDY: Fine!

NORMA: If you quit complaining you may actually enjoy it.

RANDY: What I *do* enjoy is a good old salami on rye with deli mustard and I happen to have one half made. You want one?

NORMA: No, not this time of night!

RANDY: Are you sure?

NORMA: Yes I'm sure, and you don't want one either.

RANDY: I don't?

NORMA: No you don't.

Randy picks up the knife and points it at Norma

RANDY: Don't tell me what I can or can't eat Norma, I'm a grown man!

NORMA: Stop waving that thing around!

Norma snatches the knife out of his hand and puts it back on an end table.

NORMA: Eat that sandwich and you'll be up all night complaining of heartburn! And why didn't you change before you came home?

RANDY: I couldn't.

NORMA: Don't tell me you didn't have a change room again. You need a proper change room at every job, kids don't need to walk in on a half naked clown, there's no therapy for that kind of trauma. Tomorrow, we put a change room in your contract. Now sit down, I'll make you a sandwich.

RANDY: I thought it would give me heartburn?

NORMA: The way you make it, yes, the way I make it, no.

RANDY: So no salami, no deli mustard?

NORMA: Lettuce or cucumber.

RANDY: What goes with the lettuce?

NORMA: Nothing. It's after midnight, your stomach will thank me.

RANDY: My stomach doesn't even know who you are, I've never mentioned you. I want salami.

NORMA: Well you can't have salami. Lettuce or cucumber.

RANDY: No. No lettuce... no cucumber. What kind of a man eats a salad sandwich? What kind of man can't control his own midnight snack? I'll tell what kind of man, a man who doesn't command respect, *that's* what kind of a man! Nobody's going to look at me and say "There goes Randy, the salad sandwich eater!" If I wrap lettuce

in bread, I might as well put a big sign on my back that says "I am not a man, my wife made me eat this!" No way, you're not doing that to me, I'll put what the hell I want in my sandwich and they can laugh out the other side of their smarmy, wise ass faces! They're gonna rue the day they messed with me! So don't you try to feed me salad sandwiches!

NORMA: (pause) Where the hell did *that* come from?

RANDY: Why can't I have salami!?

NORMA: Because you'll wake up in two hours thinking you're having a heart attack.

RANDY: Fine, I won't have anything and I'll wake up in two hours dead from starvation.

NORMA: What is wrong with you?

RANDY: (pause) They stole my clothes.

NORMA: Who did?

RANDY: The kids.

NORMA: You let kids at a sleep over party steal your clothes?

RANDY: Those "kids" turned out to be university students. Some stupid frat party. They told me it was a sleep over for six year olds because they knew I wouldn't come if I knew the truth.

NORMA: The devious little twerps. Why a clown?

RANDY: They called it "ironic".

NORMA: But steal your clothes... why would they do that?

RANDY: Because they're assholes, Norma. They had me making obscene balloon animals. I thought if I did what they wanted everything would be fine, so what did I do? I swallowed my dignity and went along with their little games only to be chased out of the building with a fire extinguisher. You try running in clown shoes, it was the funniest thing I did all night.

NORMA: Did they at least pay you?

RANDY: With twenty dollar bills folded into paper airplanes and tossed off the balcony. I lost one when it landed in the parking lot dumpster. I have my limits.

NORMA: We're going back there right now.

RANDY: Oh sure, the clown's wife drags him back to retrieve his pants. How's that going to look? Besides, they tossed them down the garbage chute, I'll go back in the morning when the super opens the utility room.

NORMA: People have no respect for clowns anymore.

RANDY: There's a beautiful history behind this... Emmett Kelly and all the great circus clowns. Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, Red Skelton, they were all clowns.

NORMA: I know dear, but you're not Buster Keaton, you're not Emmett Kelly. You're Daffy Dumpling. People will have to grow to respect you.

RANDY: When? It's been ten years Norma! Why did I quit the Insurance Agency, what the hell was I thinking?

NORMA: Well I quit law school didn't I?

RANDY: Because you couldn't stand seeing smart lawyers getting criminals off on technicalities. Why did I quit? I wanted to be a clown.

NORMA: What difference does the reason make?

RANDY: You quit to follow your conscience.

NORMA: And you quit to follow your heart.

RANDY: Sure, I followed my heart, but it's not going anywhere and it's getting laughed at.

NORMA: Life has a way of working out.

RANDY: For you it did, you and Phyllis have the restaurant. What do I have? A clown suit and a lifetime supply of skinny balloons! I should have stayed at the Agency.

NORMA: Then you'd be a sad miserable person working in an office every day.

RANDY: Give me a job! Give me a job at Fuji Gardens.

NORMA: Then you'd be a sad, miserable person working in a Japanese restaurant every day. I didn't marry you to make you miserable.

A pause while Randy and Norma look at each other. Randy obviously wants to say something

NORMA: *(holding up the knife)* Don't say it!

RANDY: Come on, we all get along great!

NORMA: You can't, there aren't any openings.

Norma puts the knife back on the table

RANDY: Phyllis's husband used to be the maitre d' and you didn't replace him. I'll do what he did!

NORMA: After what he did, do you really want to be associated in any way with that man? Really?

RANDY: I won't do *exactly* what he did...

NORMA: You mean you won't murder Phyllis's new lover then disappear out of the country with *your* new lover?

RANDY: Wait a minute, *new* lover? Phyllis has a new girlfriend?

NORMA: I didn't say that... did I?

RANDY: So she has a new boyfriend.

NORMA: Why would she have a new boyfriend?

RANDY: Well, her gate does swing both ways...

NORMA: That fascinates you, doesn't it?

RANDY: I wouldn't say "fascinates"...

NORMA: Does it turn you on?

RANDY: I can't say it turns me off...

NORMA: So... Phyllis's new boyfriend, is that the job you want to apply for?

RANDY: Would I have to resign my current position?

NORMA: Not necessarily.

RANDY: Now, you're just teasing me.

NORMA: I love both of you... she loves both of us..

RANDY: Maybe I should start taking my vitamins...

NORMA: Now you're teasing *me*.

RANDY: So we just have to figure out who is teasing whom.

NORMA: Maybe we'll never know...

RANDY: Oh I get it... nice distraction technique. Let's get back to you giving me a real job at the restaurant.

NORMA: It's to distract you from trying to fill a nonexistent opening.

RANDY: Come on, you guys own the place, you can make an opening!

NORMA: You are not working at the restaurant, end of story. Phyllis loves you, I love you, but we don't want to work with you. Besides, that's not what you really want and you know it.

RANDY: I know, I know. But it gets harder every day to put up with all the assholes. I just want to be taken seriously, is that too much to ask?

NORMA: What we want rarely comes easily. Randy... you know this is your true calling, making children laugh is what you were born to do, so you'll prove the assholes wrong. You'll win Randy, you will.

RANDY: It's all I've ever wanted to do. Seeing the children laugh makes the whole world seem right.

NORMA: Then don't let anyone take that away from you, make it work. You owe it to yourself.

RANDY: You're right. I was born to do this. I love this.

NORMA: Well?

RANDY: I'm not going to let anybody ruin this for me. It's time for Plan B.

NORMA: You have a Plan B? What was Plan A?

RANDY: You giving me a job at the restaurant.

NORMA: Luckily, you have a Plan B.

RANDY: Yep, I'm going to show those idiots who stole my clothes they screwed with the wrong clown.

NORMA: Sounds ominous.

RANDY: Ominous is just the beginning.

He picks up the knife

They're going to come face to face with one ugly, pissed off clown.

NORMA: *(taking the knife from him)* I don't suppose you have a Plan C.

RANDY: I have to do something!

NORMA: Who says?

RANDY: I do! I'm finished being pushed around.

NORMA: Let it go hon, you'll feel better in the morning.

RANDY: No, this isn't over. They don't know who they messed with.

NORMA: Do you have their names?

RANDY: No.

NORMA: So they don't know who you are and you don't know who *they* are. Sounds like a good start.

RANDY: That doesn't matter, I know the apartment number. Now, they're on my list.

NORMA: Your what?

RANDY: My list. For the last couple of years I've been keeping a list.

NORMA: What kind of a list?

RANDY: An enemies list!

NORMA: Who are you, Richard Nixon in a clown suit?

RANDY: I can't just sit back and take it anymore, this has been building for a long time and now this volcano of revenge is about to erupt.

NORMA: Oh for crying out loud Randy...

RANDY: Dignity Norma, dignity! For a man to have dignity, a man needs respect!

NORMA: I respect you.

RANDY: Really? What do you say when people ask what I do for a living? Huh?... what?

NORMA: (pause) Early years entertainer.

RANDY: I rest my case.

NORMA: I'm not embarrassed by it, it's just that some people hear the word "clown" and don't respect the artistry. But the kids Randy, the kids love you.

RANDY: I know, I know. Why do you think I've put up with it for so long?

NORMA: Because you're a sweet and caring man who loves to make children laugh.

RANDY: The kids laugh *with* me but the grown-ups laugh *at* me.

NORMA: Pay no attention to them.

RANDY: Well I have been paying attention and everyone on that list is going to pay.

NORMA: Is this my sweet and caring man talking?

RANDY: This is your man who's going to start standing up for himself talking.

NORMA: And just how do you plan on doing that?

RANDY: (pause) You've heard of the Peytonville Pouncer?

NORMA: Uhhh, of course. Why?

RANDY: Bingo!

NORMA: Bingo? What the hell does that mean?

RANDY: I mean... "Bingo"!

NORMA: I still have no idea what you're talking about.

RANDY: I mean "Bingo!" as in "the light bulb goes on", as in "inspiration strikes"!

NORMA: You're inspired by the Peytonville Pouncer!?

RANDY: Exactly! If he can do it, so can I!

NORMA: *(incredulous)* No you can't!!

RANDY: I don't want to be just a copy cat...

NORMA: What on earth are you thinking?!

RANDY: The Pouncer is standing up for what's right! Have you noticed, every single person he's taken out has been a criminal who's guilty as sin but had a smart lawyer and got off on a technicality.

NORMA: Really...

RANDY: And by standing up for what's right he's standing up for all of us, including himself.

NORMA: So that's what this is really all about, you just want to stand up for yourself.

RANDY: Yes!

NORMA: You don't want to be the next Pouncer...

RANDY: Well of course, there can only be one "Peytonville Pouncer".

NORMA: What a dumb name! Some idiot at the TV station dreamed that up and it stuck. I could think of a dozen better names. Ok. *(she gathers her thoughts)* You just want to stand up for yourself, that's not all together bad, so let's be rational and figure out the best way to do it. Let me see the list.

RANDY: No.

NORMA: Why not, am I on it?

RANDY: Of course not!

NORMA: Then why can't I see it.

RANDY: Legal reasons. You'll be an accessory after the fact. Or before the fact. Or during the fact... I don't know!

NORMA: That's ridiculous!

RANDY: It's my list!

NORMA: Maybe I want to put somebody on the list too.

RANDY: Start your own list!

NORMA: If I have to start my own list, you're going right on top.

RANDY: OK, fine.

NORMA: *(pause)* So where's the list.

RANDY: It's hidden.

NORMA: Well go get it.

Randy gets a jam jar from the kitchen, unscrews the lid and takes out the list.

NORMA: You hid it from me in a jam jar?

RANDY: You don't like strawberry.

NORMA: Give it to me.

RANDY: No, if you don't see it you'll have plausible deniability.

NORMA: Do you even know what that means?

RANDY: That's not important. Now, who do you want on the list?

NORMA: I don't know... Roberta Feenster.

RANDY: The lady in 2B?

NORMA: Right. She took my laundry out before it was dry and left it on top of the dryer. I think she stole the rest of my time.

RANDY: I'm not putting her on the list because of that!

NORMA: Why not?

RANDY: You need a good reason and taking your laundry out of the dryer too soon isn't a good reason. These...

He waves the list at Norma

These are good reasons!

Norma takes the opportunity to snatch the list out of his hands

NORMA: Give me that! Let's just take a look at these "good reasons".

RANDY: It's a preliminary list...

NORMA: *(reading)* Bobby Baron from 1C who ran over your foot with his mobility scooter.

RANDY: Those things are a menace.

NORMA: Carol Strombo from 3A with the incontinent dog.

RANDY: She should be on the list twice.

NORMA: And what about this one. Jack Holiday from 2C who's always humming "The Impossible Dream" when you pass him in the hall ... he deserves to be on the list?

Randy takes the list from Norma and picks up a pencil from the end table and erases a name.

RANDY: Fine, I'll make him a "maybe". I'll put Roberta Feenster in his place.

NORMA: Forget it, I don't want to put a name on your list.

RANDY: Why not?

NORMA: Because I was trying to make a point. Besides, the list doesn't make any sense, they're all just petty grievances, they have nothing to do with your career.

RANDY: Really? You think Carol Strombo would let her dog crap outside the door of a corporate lawyer? And whose dream do you think is the impossible one Holiday keeps humming about!

NORMA: He's on the list because he hums at you?? Don't you think that maybe you should... wait a minute, I can't believe I'm seriously discussing this. You've got some stupid list and now you're going to... what?... post their pictures in the laundry room?

RANDY: Alright fine, I'll take them all off the list. I have bigger fish to fry.

NORMA: Forget your fish-fry and come to bed.

RANDY: No. They took my pants. They took my shirt. I had to take a cab home dressed like this! You know what the cabbie said? "Hey! I charge extra if there's more than twenty of you!"

Norma stifles a laugh

Oh yeah, go ahead and laugh but they'll be sorry!

NORMA: I'm pretty sure somebody'll be sorry.

RANDY: Heads are gonna roll!

NORMA: Listen honey, you're all worked up right now, we can talk about you standing up for yourself in the morning but first, get some sleep.

RANDY: Sleep? Sleep is the last thing I need right now, my mind is churning! This isn't just some flash in the pan notion, in fact, from now on I have a new name to match my new mission.

NORMA: You're standing up for yourself by changing your name?

RANDY: It's a lot more than that!

NORMA: I thought you were happy with "Daffy Dumpling, the Carefree Clown".

RANDY: Yeah, well Daffy Dumpling's not so Carefree anymore.

NORMA: But apparently, still just as Daffy.

RANDY: Think what you want, but starting tonight, I'm Kosto Klovni.

NORMA: What?

RANDY: Kosto Klovni

NORMA: What a stupid name.

RANDY: It's not a stupid name, it's all about perception and image. I decided that if I ever went to Plan B I'd call myself the "Revenge Clown", but I went with Kosto Klovni instead. Do you know why?

NORMA: I give up. Why?

RANDY: Its Finnish.

NORMA: You translated "Revenge Clown" into Finnish?

RANDY: Loosely.

NORMA: Why Finnish?

RANDY: Because it sounds more frightening.

NORMA: Since when was anybody ever frightened by Finland?

RANDY: Oh yeah?

If wearing a mask, RANDY pulls it back over his face and holds the knife in a threatening manner

RANDY: I'm Kosto Klovni (*louder*) Kosto Klovni!

NORMA: All I can think of is that little mermaid sitting on the rock.

If wearing a mask, RANDY moves it back up on his head

RANDY: That's Denmark.

NORMA: Close enough. Look, if you have to have a new name, why not stick with "Revenge Clown", everybody understands that. You're probably not even pronouncing "Costco Glovebox" right.

RANDY: Kosto Klovni!

NORMA: Whatever.

RANDY: Think about it, the media came up with "Peytonville Pouncer" and it's a dumb name.

NORMA: No kidding.

RANDY: You can't leave it to the media, they have no imagination. I had to come up with a name that'll sound truly frightening when I claim victims.

NORMA: So now you're "claiming victims". What happened to just standing up for yourself?

RANDY: I'll be standing up for myself by claiming victims.

NORMA: Oh boy...

RANDY: Let's just say, hypothetically, that I did claim a victim. Can't you just hear the news report... "Kosto Klovni has claimed another victim!"

NORMA: It sounds like the victim was claimed by a Scandinavian virus. Besides, it'll only frighten Finnish people.

RANDY: I have nothing against the Finns.

NORMA: Who does?

RANDY: Nobody, and I'm sure they'll understand. Besides, my mind is made up. From now on I'm Kosto Klovni. Except for tomorrow, I have another party.

NORMA: Real kids this time?

RANDY: Yep. Apparently somebody's turning five and his parents think it's a big deal. But I don't feel like doing it. Maybe I won't.

NORMA: Since when did Daffy Dumpling disappoint little children?

RANDY: Since Daffy Dumpling found bigger fish to fry.

NORMA: You've still got little fish to fry. You're a professional Randy, you've never backed out of an obligation. Who's going to turn that little boy's frown upside down?

RANDY: Who says he's frowning? Who ever saw a five year who frowned all the time, it's not natural. If I were five years old again nothing could wipe the grin off my face.

NORMA: This doesn't sound like the Daffy Dumpling I know, the Daffy Dumpling children love... Come on Randy...

Norma sings Randy's Daffy Dumpling theme song. It has a perky child-like tune

"Who's the Daffiest clown in town? Who turns frowns upside down? It's Daffy Dumpling your new best friend! It's Daffy Dumpling..."

RANDY: *(interrupting)* Ok Ok!!! *(he reconsiders)* You're right, I can't let the little guy down, it'd break his heart. I'll do it, but that's the last one!

NORMA: The last one? So let me get this straight, you want to quit making children laugh.

RANDY: No!

NORMA: That's what you just said.

RANDY: Is it?

NORMA: Pretty much.

RANDY: Oh. *(pause)* But I can't quit, can I! How would I explain the clown suit? Owning a clown suit for no good reason is pretty weird, especially if somebody is running around claiming victims while dressed in a clown suit!

NORMA: Good point, but I think we need to clarify something here.

RANDY: Daffy Dumpling by day, Kosto Klovni by night.

NORMA: No, just how do you define "claiming victims"?

RANDY: I'm gonna take them out.

NORMA: On a date?

RANDY: I mean I'm gonna take them out, you know, put them on ice.

NORMA: "Put them on ice"? You can't even work the ice cube tray!

RANDY: Those things are poorly designed!

NORMA: "Putting someone on ice" is a little different than "standing up for yourself".

RANDY: Let's not get bogged down with semantics. I've told you too much already, for your own protection I won't divulge anything else.

NORMA: You can't be serious.

RANDY: Take a good look at me. Have I ever looked more serious?

NORMA: So... you want to kill people who make fun of you.

RANDY: Don't say it like that!

NORMA: *(pause)* Wow.

RANDY: I know this is a lot to wrap your mind around and it must seem like I've gone right off the deep end but...

NORMA: *(interrupting)* Randy, I know you're upset with what happened tonight, who wouldn't be? But, when you really stop and think, it's not worth bothering about and it's certainly not worth getting in trouble with the police over. This whole nonsense about "Costly Closets" is just that...

RANDY: Kosto Klovni!

NORMA: Whatever! The point is, it's nonsense. Come on, you'll feel better after a good night's sleep.

RANDY: You don't understand. I've reached the breaking point.

NORMA: Then give them a seltzer shot down the pants or a cream pie in the face, that's what you're good at.

RANDY: So that's it? You think that's the sum total of the manly forces I can muster to stand up for myself?

NORMA: I didn't say that!

RANDY: Maybe I can slip a whoopee cushion under their butts too

Randy makes a long farting sound

That'll teach 'em, maybe they'll die of embarrassment.

NORMA: Randy...

RANDY: You've never been happy with me being a clown, admit it. "Early years entertainer"... what's that? Too embarrassed to tell people that I'm a clown?

NORMA: But it's what you do, you entertain children in their early years, there's nothing wrong with that.

RANDY: It's a euphemism Norma, a euphemism! You've always been ashamed of me. You should try walking a mile in my shoes.

A pause as they both look down at Randy's oversized clown shoes.

NORMA: Randy, it's not a euphemism and I am *not* ashamed of you! But... I will admit I do have trouble telling people that my husband's professional name is "Daffy Dumpling".

RANDY: Ha!! I knew it!

NORMA: But it's not a big deal! Honey listen... I love you and I'm proud of you. I love what you do, the kids love what you do. Don't let a few idiots spoil all that.

RANDY: It's too late Norma. There comes a time when a man has to stand up and fight back. My balloon animals are about to get a whole lot more sinister.

NORMA: So from now on you plan on roaming the streets at night using sinister balloon animals to "claim victims".

RANDY: Of course not that's ridiculous, but I was thinking maybe a sinister balloon animal could be my calling card. After I claim a victim I could leave one at the scene of the... you know

NORMA: The crime?

RANDY: No, the. . .um... I have to come up with a good name for it.

NORMA: The foolishness?

RANDY: No.

NORMA: The idiocy?

RANDY: No! Will you be serious?

(he thinks for a few seconds)

"Avengement"! That's it! The "Avengement"!

NORMA: Is that even a word?

RANDY: Who cares! Whenever there's an "Avengement", I'll leave a sinister balloon animal at the scene, Kosto Klovni's calling card.

NORMA: Have you put much thought into how you're going to make a balloon animal look sinister?

RANDY: *(pause)* No, not really.

NORMA: Have you put much thought into this at all?

RANDY: I've done enough thinking, it's time for action.

NORMA: So describe this "action" for me.

RANDY: Kosto Klovni is going to take out the trash!

NORMA: In that case, he can start by taking out ours.

RANDY: Don't trifle with me Norma! This is serious business, I'm at a life altering crossroads here.

NORMA: And we've got a week's worth of trash crammed under the kitchen sink.

RANDY: Alright, alright, I'll take it out later, just give me a chance to wrap my mind around this.

NORMA: Forget it, come to bed. You can wrap what's left of your mind around it in the morning.

RANDY: I can't sleep. I've got a creative rage brewing here. (pause) Greatness is being forged in the crucible of my suffering!

NORMA: You've been waiting for a chance to use that, haven't you?

RANDY: Kinda. I came up with it on the cab ride home, I think it sounds biblical.

NORMA: It sounds like you're losing your mind, that's what it sounds like. What's going on honey? This isn't your first bad experience and you've never come home wanting to be a garbage man.

RANDY: Taking out the trash is not the same as being a garbage man!

NORMA: Sure sounds like it to me.

RANDY: I'll be taking out the trash in a metaphorical sense. The human trash, the people who make lives miserable for the rest of us.

NORMA: The rest of us?

RANDY: Good people! People who respect other people.

NORMA: (pause) People.

RANDY: That's right!

NORMA: People who need people.

RANDY: Yes.

NORMA: You mean, the luckiest people in the world.

RANDY: Oh shut up! If you're not going to take this seriously, then I'm not going to bother telling you any more about it. I'm going to leave this world a better place.

NORMA: Then join the Red Cross, sing "We Are the World", I don't care, just forget about taking out the garbage.

RANDY: Trash!

NORMA: Trash, garbage it doesn't matter, it's all going land you in hot water.

RANDY: What it's going to do is reclaim my dignity. This is one clown whose gonna stand up and say "You're not going to laugh at me anymore!"

NORMA: Are you sure that's what you want?

RANDY: Yes!

NORMA: Really?

RANDY: Yes! And I'm going to win back your respect.

NORMA: Oh baby, you have my respect, you've always had my respect.

RANDY: Not in my mind I don't. I know you say you respect me, but I have to feel like I've earned it.

NORMA: So you plan on earning my respect by killing people.

RANDY: Is that what I said?

NORMA: Not in so many words, but that's my understanding of your master plan.

RANDY: Well... we'll leave that open to interpretation for now, but that's a very likely and somewhat possible end point. That could very well be the result of an Avengement if... you know... it's possibly taken to it's logical conclusion. Perhaps.

NORMA: I see...

RANDY: But if I do take people out, it'll only be people who deserve it.

NORMA: Oh Randy come on, this is nuts!

RANDY: Is it nuts to feel like a failure? Is it nuts to be fed up with being laughed at? Is it nuts to feel like your own wife can't respect you?

NORMA: *(pause)* I can't talk you out of this, can I.

RANDY: I love you for trying baby, but no.

NORMA: So... who'll decide who deserves to be "taken out" and who doesn't?

RANDY: I will.

NORMA: You'll be judge, jury and executioner.

RANDY: Well...udge, jury and potential taker outer.

NORMA: *(pause)* That's a lot to take on. Are you sure you can do it alone?

RANDY: Why... what are you suggesting?

NORMA: If you can beat 'em, join 'em. We could *both* be judge, jury and.. the other thing.

RANDY: Do you mean that?

NORMA: Absolutely

RANDY: You're not just trying to shut me up.

NORMA: When has that ever worked.

RANDY: Oh my god, I can't believe it. I was hoping you'd be with me on this, but I didn't know how to...

NORMA: *(interrupting)* The hardest part is going to be deciding who on your list is deserving of the... what did you call it?

RANDY: Avengement.

NORMA: Avengement. Right. And I think we should both have to agree on who gets "taken out".

RANDY: Yes, that's brilliant! Like the nuclear failsafe system! This is amazing! We'll make a great team baby, you can be my sidekick!

NORMA: One step at a time, OK?

RANDY: I'll find you a great Finnish name!

NORMA: We'll jump off that bridge when we get to it. Give me the list.

RANDY: This is really coming together!

Randy hands her the list. Norma reads it.

NORMA: Right away I can see what our number one problem is, not one person on this list deserves to be trash. Look at this one... Beulah Benson, the sleepwalker from 2A. A sleepwalker??

RANDY: And she doesn't bother you? It's like "The Shining" with her wandering up and down the halls all night.

NORMA: So what, most of the time you're asleep.

RANDY: But I know she's out there.

NORMA: Beulah Benson the sleepwalker... really?

RANDY: Like I said, it's just a preliminary list.

NORMA: I know. I'm just saying that if the Revenge Clown...

RANDY: Kosto Klovni.

NORMA: ...if Kosto Klovni is really going to take out the garbage... oh I'm sorry, "trash", he's going to have to find somebody a little more deserving than (*consults the list*) The guy next door who plays his tuba every night at ten o'clock.

RANDY: It's a tuba! It sounds like a hippo in heat!

NORMA: Are you a horny hippo?

RANDY: No.

NORMA: Then why should it bother you?

RANDY: Fine, he's off the list.

NORMA: We have to adjust the criteria. These people are just minor annoyances, they don't deserve to be "taken out".

RANDY: I know, I know, I've been brainstorming the list, most of those won't even be on the next draft, but believe me there are people who have mocked me, insulted me, made me feel worthless, and they *will* be taken care of.

NORMA: So it's justice you want.

RANDY: Yes.

NORMA: A selfish justice, or justice for society as a whole?

RANDY: Does it matter?

NORMA: If you want me by your side... yes.

RANDY: Then I guess... the second one

NORMA: Good, then forget the list. And another thing, you need to widen your scope. If you only take out the trash in your own building, won't that be a little suspicious? I mean, it shouldn't be too hard to find a guy in a clown suit in a three floor walkup.

RANDY: Why is this getting so difficult all of a sudden?

NORMA: That's why you have me honey. Now, what you need is a really meaty target.

RANDY: A meaty target?

NORMA: Right! What you should be doing is thinking about eliminating people who are a stain on society as a whole. What we need to find is a hit man.

Norma puts the list back in the jam jar, puts on the lid and leaves it on an end table.

RANDY: You mean, we stay in a managerial role and delegate?

NORMA: No, the hit man is the stain! Think about it... a hit man kills people for money, it's purely a business

transaction, the epitome of amoral behavior. What could be worse than that?

RANDY: I'm not sure if I want to get mixed up with cold blooded killers.

NORMA: And that's exactly why they deserve to be on the list, not somebody who plays the tuba or walks in her sleep.

RANDY: But I have nothing against hit men, nobody has ever tried to kill me. Wait... what about Bobby Baron and his mobility scooter? He only ran over my foot, but maybe he was actually trying to run me down and murder me!

NORMA: This will only work if you stop making choices based solely on personal feelings, trust me.

RANDY: Trust what, your wealth of personal experience?

NORMA: No. I mean trust that I know something about people. Do I not own a restaurant, do I not deal with people every day?

RANDY: But have you ever wanted to... you know... "whack" somebody?

NORMA: Have you ever had a table of eight run out on their bill?

RANDY: That's it! We could start with people who dine and dash!

NORMA: And bad tippers too? Or do we just rough those up a little?

RANDY: And your plan is better?

NORMA: Yes! We fill out that list the worst of the worst. Starting with people who murder for money.

RANDY: Really? I have to hit a hit man?

NORMA: In for a dime, in for a dollar.

RANDY: Maybe we shouldn't risk the whole dollar.

NORMA: Are you committed to Plan B or not?

RANDY: But wouldn't that make me a hit man too?

RANDY: No, it would be an "Avengement". In fact, you'd be saving the lives of his future hits.

RANDY: I like that! But still, I'm supposed to whack a guy that whacks guys for a living.

NORMA: Don't say whacked, say deleted.

RANDY: Why?

NORMA: It sounds colder.

RANDY: Ok, but what if I'm the one who gets... what is it?

NORMA: Deleted.

RANDY: Right. What if he deletes me?

NORMA: Just relax, you're jumping too far ahead and besides, you'll be the one with the element of surprise, you'll be in control.

RANDY: That's right. I've got to think positively... I will not be the one who winds up takin' the taxi!

NORMA: (pause) I'm afraid to ask.

RANDY: "Takin' the taxi"! I made it up. I was in the cab when it came to me. Do you like it?

NORMA: Like it? I don't even understand it!

RANDY: It could be my catch phrase, every good vigilante needs one. "You're takin' the taxi!" Think about it, a catch phrase, a calling card, a slick name... I'll have the whole package!

NORMA: Have you considered franchising?

RANDY: You're not taking me seriously.

NORMA: I'm sorry, I'm sorry! OK, let's talk about your catch phrase. "You're takin' the taxi" sounds too contrived. A good catch phrase has to evolve, it can't be forced. Do you think Arnie put a lot of thought into "hasta la vista baby"? No! It just popped into his head. The first time you delete somebody, your

catch phrase will be the first thing that organically occurs to you. Like... "say hello to my little friend"

RANDY: That's been taken.

NORMA: I know that, it was just an example.

RANDY: So I wait for the catch phrase to materialize in my head.

NORMA: Exactly, just stay organic.

RANDY: I have no idea how to do that.

NORMA: Easy, you do nothing and wait until something happens all by itself.

RANDY: I can do that.

NORMA: Good. So, these "avengements" as you call them... obviously you've never carried one out before.

RANDY: Of course not.

NORMA: So you need to practice.

RANDY: Good idea! *(pause)* How?

NORMA: A dry run.

RANDY: Alright, a dry run! Let's do it, let's go! *(pause)* What do we do?

NORMA: We set up the scene. To start, we'll keep it simple, we won't bother yet with cover, concealment, angle of attack or escape options...

RANDY: What, what and what?

NORMA: Nothing, never mind. Let's say you've identified your target and you're in position. What's next?

RANDY: I haven't exactly thought that far yet.

NORMA: Well what did you plan on doing, killing them with a dirty look?

RANDY: You're right, you're right, I have to settle on a method.

NORMA: Pick one.

RANDY: Wow, I don't know. What are my choices?

NORMA: Let's see. What do you think of... a hammer?

RANDY: Too messy.

NORMA: A gun?

RANDY: Too loud.

NORMA: A plastic bag over the head?

RANDY: Too slow.

NORMA: A garrote?

RANDY: Too cliché.

NORMA: A car bomb?

RANDY: Too complicated.

NORMA: Then I guess that leaves the old standby.

RANDY: Which is?

NORMA: The knife. Silent, swift and deadly.

RANDY: Can't I just run them over with my car?

NORMA: And your insurance?

RANDY: Too expensive.

NORMA: Then the knife it is. *(pause)* Are you ready for this? Remember, it's better to make a mistake during the dry run than during the Avengement, so don't be afraid to stay loose, to experiment, to learn.

RANDY: I'm ready, what do I do?

*Norma picks up a piece of celery
from the kitchen counter*

NORMA: Here. Stab me with this piece of celery.

RANDY: Are you sure?

NORMA: What's the worst that could happen, I lose weight?

RANDY: Alright.

*Randy positions himself to stab
Norma*

NORMA: Now remember. You're takin' out the trash!

RANDY: Don't look at me! I can't stab you if you're looking at me.

NORMA: Ok, fine

Norma turns her back to Randy

RANDY: I can't stab you in the back!

NORMA: Fine!

She turns to face him

RANDY: Now you're looking at me again.

NORMA: What other options do you have?

RANDY: A blindfold?

NORMA: I'll look off to the side. I'll pretend I just heard a noise.

RANDY: What kind of a noise?

NORMA: It doesn't matter what kind of a noise! I'll look off to the side and while I'm distracted you stab me.

RANDY: *(examining the celery)* Which is the pointy end?

NORMA: It doesn't matter! Just stab me!

RANDY: Overhand or underhand?

NORMA: I don't care! Now just do it will you!

She looks off to the side. There is a pause while Randy stands, holding the celery in a threatening manner but doing nothing. Finally Norma speaks

NORMA: Will you please stab me!

RANDY: Well, you're expecting it now aren't you.

NORMA: If I were a real hit man, I'd have deleted you, come up with a new catch phrase and been down at the pub having a cold beer by now!

RANDY: I'm new to this alright? I'm not used to stabbing people with groceries.

NORMA: Do you want to do this or not?

RANDY: Alright. *(he gets into position)* Are you ready.

NORMA: No.

RANDY: Good!

Randy stabs Norma with the celery.

NORMA: Aaarrgghh!!

She staggers around in an exaggerated hammy death scene then collapses on the floor. There is a pause.

RANDY: Are you OK?

Norma sits up, stares at Randy for a second

NORMA: That's it?

RANDY: What?

NORMA: That's your catch phrase?... "Are you OK"?

RANDY: It's the first thing that popped into my head.

NORMA: It's the dumbest catch phrase I've ever heard. "Are you ok???"

RANDY: But...

NORMA: There's no compassion in a catch phrase! It has to be ice cold.

RANDY: Ice cold. Got it!

NORMA: Let's try again. I think you need new celery.

Randy gets a fresh piece of celery and they both take their positions

NORMA: Are you ready? (Randy nods) All right, now take out the trash!

Randy raises the celery to stab Norma but just as he does, Norma lets out a long blood curdling yell. Randy reacts by recoiling, dropping the celery and is clearly frightened.

RANDY: What??!! What the hell was that???

NORMA: Do you really think a hit man is just going to stand there and let you stab him? You have to be ready for anything!

RANDY: You've could've warned me!

NORMA: What's the point in that?

RANDY: Ok, Ok! Let's try again.

They take their positions. Randy raises the celery in a threatening manner. There is a two second pause then they both simultaneously let out bloodcurdling screams lasting about three seconds, then he stabs her with the celery. She does another exaggerated death scene and falls down. Randy just stands looking at Norma for a couple of seconds.

NORMA: (in a stage whisper) Catch phrase... your catch phrase!!

RANDY: Oh... oh yeah...

He throws the piece of celery on her

Take *that* to the checkout!

Norma gets up

NORMA: Well, I guess "take that to the checkout" would be a good catch phrase if you plan on stabbing everybody with fresh produce.

RANDY: Doesn't work?

NORMA: No.

RANDY: How about "Welcome to stabby time!"

NORMA: Nope

RANDY: "You're done like dinner!"

NORMA: Nope

RANDY: "Transaction denied!"

NORMA: Nope

RANDY: "You got the point!"

NORMA: Nope

RANDY: I kinda like that one...

NORMA: Forget it, let's worry about the catch phrase later. Maybe what we should do is concentrate on finding your first victim. We need a hit man.

RANDY: I don't think I know any hit men.

NORMA: Leave that to me, but first I need a reason to contact the hit man. I have to come up with somebody I want to have murdered. *(pause)* You.

RANDY: Me!??

NORMA: Of course, it's the classic situation. My secret lover and I want you out of the way so we can run away together and live in a beautiful two bedroom beach house with an ocean-view patio in Playas del Coco Costa Rica because they don't have an extradition treaty with Canada.

RANDY: (pause) You came up with that pretty quickly.

NORMA: That's just something off the top of my head. This whole thing has to be airtight or the hit man will be suspicious.

RANDY: What if he gets suspicious?

NORMA: Then you won't have to worry about coming up with a catch phrase.

RANDY: I don't feel good, this is freaking me out.

NORMA: Freaking out is not allowed.

RANDY: But now we're talking about mixing it up with people who know what they're doing. I was OK with tuba players and song hummers but now it's real criminals.

NORMA: Oh you poor thing, that's too much too soon? Fine. Carol Strombo's dog crapped in the hallway again today. Go take care of her.

RANDY: What?

NORMA: An Avengement... Carol Strombo.

RANDY: When?

NORMA: Now.

RANDY: Right now?

NORMA: Right now.

RANDY: It's past one o'clock in the morning.

NORMA: Perfect! Clowns aren't funny after midnight.

RANDY: I can't just go out right now and... you know!

NORMA: But you're takin' out the trash!

RANDY: Tentatively! I'm tentatively takin' out the trash!

NORMA: I knew it, I knew you wouldn't do it.

RANDY: Who said I wouldn't do it?

NORMA: You just did. You're all big talk, what with your list and your calling cards and your catch phrases but when the rubber hits the road, you can't really do it can you?

RANDY: Oh I can do it alright!

NORMA: But you're not doing it are you?

RANDY: Let me see the list again.

NORMA: Forget the list, it's time for action!

RANDY: You want me to do it?

NORMA: Do you want to do it?

RANDY: You know I want to do it!

NORMA: Then what are you waiting for?

RANDY: I'm not!

NORMA: Yes you are.

RANDY: No I'm not!

NORMA: Then do it!

RANDY: Fine! I'm doing it!

NORMA: You're really doing it?

RANDY: Yes! That's the last time Strombo's dog craps in our hallway!

NORMA: But...

Randy puts the mask over his face (if wearing one) and storms out, slamming the door behind him.

NORMA: *(as Randy is closing the door)* No, Randy wait!

Norma sees the knife which Randy has left behind and she is relieved. She picks it up and hides it somewhere. A few seconds

pass as Norma waits then we hear a loud, bloodcurdling female scream, a couple of seconds of silence then we hear Randy exclaim loudly, from outside the door

RANDY: Ewww, that's gross!

Randy enters, quickly closing the door behind him.

NORMA: Who screamed? What happened?

RANDY: I did it!

NORMA: *(glancing to where she hid the knife)* Really?

RANDY: Yes! I did it and it felt good! Kosto Klovni has claimed his first victim. I was swift and merciless now let's go to bed.

NORMA: How did you do it?

RANDY: You don't want to know!

NORMA: Yes I do! What was it like, lots of blood?

RANDY: Oh yeah, all sorts of it.

NORMA: It must have been spurting, spurting, spurting!

Randy seems to lose his balance a bit and leans against something

Did she struggle much?

RANDY: She had no chance against me, I strike silently. I'm like a cobra.

NORMA: Can I go look?

RANDY: No, no , better stay here, it's pretty gruesome. Besides, it's best if you're not involved.

NORMA: And the catch phrase, how did that feel?

RANDY: What?

NORMA: Your new catch phrase, the first thing that organically popped into your head. You know, "Ewww, that's gross!"

RANDY: Are you sure that's what I said?

NORMA: Yep. "Ewww that's gross"

RANDY: It all hinges on your interpretation.

NORMA: So you weren't saying it because you saw something gross.

RANDY: No, no of course not!

NORMA: But still, there was lots of blood.

RANDY: Oh yeah.

*Randy gets a little woozy again
but manages to control it.*

NORMA: And you didn't faint when you saw blood?

RANDY: That only happened once!

NORMA: No, it happens every time!

RANDY: Well not this time.

NORMA: Ok. But still, didn't you get any on you?

RANDY: I avoided it, I'm agile, I'm like a cat.

NORMA: I thought you were like a cobra?

RANDY: I'm like both, I'm like a four legged cobra!

NORMA: So you're like a fur covered snake.

RANDY: Yes!... I mean.. No!... I mean...

NORMA: So if I go out that door I'll see blood?

RANDY: Yes!

Randy is getting woozy again

NORMA: Lots of blood?

RANDY: Yes.

NORMA: Fresh blood...

RANDY: Yes... Ooooooh boy...

Randy faints. Norma looks down on him for a couple of seconds.

NORMA: Big surprise.

Norma gets a glass of water from the kitchen and throws it in Randy's face, Randy comes to.

RANDY: What... What!!!??

NORMA: You didn't do anything did you?

RANDY: Why do you think that?

Norma picks up the celery

NORMA: Because you forgot your celery!!!

RANDY: Alright alright, I didn't do anything!!

NORMA: Then what was all the screaming?

RANDY: Beulah Benson was sleep walking again. She woke up when she stepped in the big pile of crap from Carol Strombo's dog. That's when she screamed.

NORMA: And that's when you said "Ewww that's gross"

RANDY: Pretty much.

NORMA: So, you didn't do anything did you, and you know why? Because you don't really want to. This is all just a big front you're putting on because those university assholes embarrassed you tonight.

RANDY: I just need time to get used to Plan B that's all! I know this whole thing was my idea but now all of a sudden I'm supposed to go after a cold blooded murderer! I'm not ready to take care of anybody tonight, so why don't we just go to bed and talk about it later.

NORMA: I thought you couldn't sleep because something was being forged in your crucible of suffering.

RANDY: It is! But I've decided I need some sleep.

NORMA: That's probably a good idea.

RANDY: In the morning, I'll get my clothes back.

NORMA: That's the first sane thing you've said all night.

RANDY: Let's go to bed.

NORMA: Honey this is best, in the morning you'll feel differently about this whole "Crisco Cloverleaf" thing.

RANDY: Kosto Klovni!

NORMA: Whatever! What time do you have to be at the kid's party?

RANDY: Not till noon. *(pause)* I'm serious about this Norma.

NORMA: Really?

RANDY: Yes. Really. What happened just now made me realize how difficult it's going to be and how I need to prepare myself. We're going to make the world a better place Norma, you and me.

NORMA: We'll talk about it in the morning.

RANDY: We're going to do this, aren't we. I mean, now that you're with me I know I can do it. Even if you decide to back out, and I wouldn't blame you, you've given me the courage to do this. You're my strength baby. Now go on to bed and I'll clean up the kitchen.

NORMA: No, no it's OK.. you go ahead, I'll take care of the kitchen.

RANDY: OK, don't be long. You and me, right?

NORMA: Right.

*Randy exits down the hallway.
Norma busies herself cleaning up
the kitchen until she is sure
Randy is in the bedroom. She*

*checks down the hallway then
picks up the phone and makes a
call.*

NORMA: Hello Phyllis? ... Yes, I know it's late, sorry did I wake you? Didn't think so. Anyway... What? Never mind what I'm wearing! Listen to me... I need you to come over. No, not right now! Randy is leaving for a job around eleven, come over then before we open up... I can't talk about it now, I'll explain when you get here. We have a big problem that could complicate everything... the playing field may be getting a little crowded.

LIGHTS DOWN

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

Act 2 Scene 1

Sunday morning around 11. Randy is dressed in casual attire and is on the phone. A garment bag containing his clown costume is across the back of the couch. The

jam jar containing "the list" is on the table beside the phone. His clown shoes are on the floor beside the couch

RANDY: Will you please stop laughing and listen to me? Daffy Dumpling is not my real name... yes, my clothes went down your garbage chute last night... Why would I do that to my own clothes?! ... Oh I'm serious all right! Don't you dare laugh... OK, that's it...

Randy pick up the jam jar and opens it and takes out the list while holding the phone to his ear with his shoulder

How do you spell your name?

Randy writes on the list, Norma enters from bedroom hallway. She is dressed smartly but casually

NORMA: Randy, It's almost eleven thought you were leaving.

RANDY: (to Norma) In a minute.

NORMA: Who are you talking to?

RANDY: The super from the building last night.. (he consults the list) a Mr. Dover. Ben, Ben Dover (pause as the penny drops) Oh crap. (into the phone) What? Yes, I left without my clothes... No I was not naked and... because those idiots on the fourth floor hired me! ...Yes, that was me... well I'm sorry if I frightened your wife and... No! I had nothing to do with any stripper!

NORMA: What??

RANDY: (to Norma) It must have been after I left. (into the phone) Look, I just want my clothes back. Good! I'll be there in twenty minutes!

Randy hangs up the phone

NORMA: He didn't believe you?

RANDY: Not without raking me over the coals. Apparently I made his wife pee herself. Anyway, I can get my clothes back and while I'm there I'll do a little reconnaissance, I remember the asshole's apartment number.

NORMA: Don't do anything stupid! In fact, don't do anything at all, they're not on the list, remember.

RANDY: That was the whole idea of the list, to get back at people like those guys last night.

NORMA: Remember what we talked about? Adjust your criteria. We're talking about taking out the trash and they're just litter. We can live with a little bit of litter.

RANDY: This seemed like a much better idea before I told you about it.

There's a knock on the door

NORMA: Can you get that, it's probably Phyllis.

RANDY: What's she doing here, don't you open at noon?

NORMA: Yes and she's giving me a ride.

RANDY: It's only three blocks away!

NORMA: Will you please get the door!

Randy opens the door, Phyllis enters carrying a small gym bag. She is disheveled and apparently hasn't slept much. It's obvious Randy and Phyllis have a good relationship and like each other.

RANDY: Morning Phyl, you look like hell.

PHYLLIS: You still here?

RANDY: Didn't want to miss your covergirl entrance, did I.

PHYLLIS: Love you too baby.

Phyllis kisses Randy on the cheek

NORMA: If you want to make it to the party by noon, you'd better get moving.

*Norma gives Randy a quick kiss
goodbye*

RANDY: *(to Phyllis)* Love to stay gorgeous, but showbiz awaits!

Randy picks up his garment bag

NORMA: Don't forget the trash!

RANDY: It's not trash, it's garbage!

*Randy gets a full green garbage
bag from under the sink*

PHYLLIS: There's a difference?

NORMA: Don't ask.

PHYLLIS: *(picking up his clown shoes)* Don't forget your Birkenstocks.

She hands him the clown shoes

RANDY: Thank you, and don't you forget the prime rib tonight! *(Randy gives Phyllis a peck on the cheek)*
Love you!

*Randy leaves. Phyllis watches him
walk down the hallway*

PHYLLIS: *(calls down the hall to Randy)* Hey Randy, nice ass!

RANDY: *(from the hallway)* You too!

Phyllis closes the door.

PHYLLIS: *(smiling, turns to Norma)* But not as nice as yours.

Norma and Phyllis hug.

NORMA: Hey hon, how are you feeling?

PHYLLIS: Kinda rough. What was that just now about prime rib?

NORMA: I told him about dinner at your place tonight and he's worried you'll feed him that "weird Japanese food" he's so afraid of. You know, the food that's been paying the rent here the last few years.

Phyllis flops on the couch

PHYLLIS: He'll get what I feed him and be happy for it. Got any aspirin, ibuprofen, shot of Sake?

NORMA: Aspirin, that's all you're getting.

Norma goes to the kitchen and returns with a bottle of water and aspirin

PHYLLIS: We'll compromise. I'll take the aspirin with Sake.

NORMA: Nice try. Here, this oughta fix you up.

Norma gives her the water and aspirin and gently but briefly strokes the side of Phyllis' head. Phyllis responds with a smile and touches her hand and meets Norma's eyes.

PHYLLIS: *(indicating the gym bag)* Oh, by the way, you left this at the restaurant the other night. I don't mind you changing there, just don't leave this laying around, anybody could find it.

NORMA: Oh, sorry. No, that's not a good idea is it.

Norma takes the bag and puts it in the closet, stage left

PHYLLIS: So what's the big problem you couldn't talk about on the phone that meant I had to drag myself over here with Riverdance doing a double time encore in my head.

NORMA: It's best not to discuss certain things with other people around.

PHYLLIS: Agreed.

NORMA: It's Randy.

PHYLLIS: *(suddenly attentive)* Oh my God, he hasn't found out yet has he?