

The Observer

From the Files of Project Quantum Leap

**GUYS AND DOLLS
IN CONCERT**
HOLLYWOOD BOWL ORCHESTRA • KEVIN STITES, CONDUCTOR
RICHARD JAY-ALEXANDER, DIRECTOR
DONNA MCKECHNIE, CHOREOGRAPHER
CAST INCLUDES
SCOTT BAKULA • JESSICA BIEL • BEAU BRIDGES
ELLEN GREENE • BRIAN STOKES MITCHELL
KEN PAGE • RUTH WILLIAMSON
HOLLYWOOD BOWL PRESENTED BY LA PHIL



**Willie Garson,
"Quantum Con '94"**



**Willie Garson as "Mozzie"
in USA Network's Hit Series,
"White Collar"**



**Billie Mason
at the 1996
"Leapcon"
convention**



**and at
"I DO,
I DO"**



Issue 41

July 2010

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27th Annual William S. Paley Festival

Dubbed PaleyFest 2010, the casts and creators of some of television's hottest shows assembled at the Saban Theatre in Beverly Hills, California between February 24 and March 14. "For twenty-seven years, we have celebrated the best of television with the creative teams who make the breakthrough programs," said Pat Mitchell, the president and chief executive officer of The Paley Center for Media. "This interaction between the creative community and media enthusiasts has made this annual Festival a 'Must Be There' event."



Mike Royce, Andre Braugher, and Scott at PaleyFest 2010

Near the end of the two-week event, *Men of a Certain Age*, which had just garnered a 12-episode season renewal from TNT, presented a panel discussion on Friday, March 12 to an estimated 300 fans. Co-creator and executive producer Mike Royce previewed some of the new struggles each character will face in the show's sophomore season. Although Ray Romano was not present due to the death of his father, both Scott and Andre Braugher easily kept everyone amused with their banter while fielding questions from the audience.

The Observer No. 41, July 2010. Published semi-annually by Project Quantum Leap, an unofficial fan club. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** *The Observer* is available by single copy or as a three-issue subscription from our website www.projectquantumleap.com or by check payable to Project Quantum Leap to the mailing address below. Issues mailed within the USA are \$5 each and sent First Class; each issue to Canada/Mexico is \$5.50 and all other overseas addresses are \$7.50, sent by Air Mail. All funds must be in US Dollars. **DISCLAIMER:** *The Observer* is a non-profit, semi-annual journal published by and for fans of *Quantum Leap*, who are solely responsible for its content. The copyright in the series *Quantum Leap* and its components is owned by Universal City Studios, Inc., which reserves all rights therein. This publication does not intend to infringe upon said copyright, nor any copyright owned by Belisarius Productions, Universal Television, Universal Pictures, Universal City Studios, Inc. or National Broadcasting Company, Inc., none of which has any responsibility for this publication or for the fan club that publishes it. All other material © 2010 Project Quantum Leap and its respective writers, artists, and photographers. All rights in any contribution to this publication other than the right of first publication herein revert to the contributor following publication herein. Submissions and questions can be directed to our staff at www.projectquantumleap.com. Mailing address: P.O. Box 30784, Knoxville, TN 37930-0784.

According to Scott, the new season begins filming this month and will debut by the end of the year. We extend our heartiest congratulations to everyone who has worked so passionately to create *Men of a Certain Age* and make it an engaging, successful series, and to Andre on his Best Supporting Actor Emmy nomination for his role as Owen.

The New Adventures of Old Christine

Scott's recent appearance in the April 14 episode of *Old Christine*, titled "Revenge Makeover," is likely his last as Papa Jeff. Regrettably CBS announced the cancellation of *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, even though the show consistently came in second for its time slot and ranked around 40 each week. Regarding the cancellation, series creator and executive producer Kari Lizer ("How the Tess Was Won") told *TV Guide Magazine*, "We've suffered from a serious lack of support. I'm afraid they don't care much for the female-of-a-certain-age point of view." Initially it was thought that ABC might pick up the series, but that prospect seems unlikely at this point. Reruns of all five seasons of the series (88 episodes) will begin airing on Lifetime later this year.

Scott on *Chuck*

On a brighter note, Scott reprised his role as Stephen Bartowski, Chuck's father, on the NBC series *Chuck*, appearing in the final three episodes of the season, which aired on Monday, May 17 and 24. Fans of *Chuck* can not only look forward to another season, but series co-creator Chris Fedak recently stated, "When we cast Scott Bakula as Chuck's dad, it was like the perfect fusion of nerd, hero and just a wonderful actor.... I would love to have Scott Bakula back." Episodes of *Chuck* are available online and on DVD.

Troian Bellisario stars in *Pretty Little Liars*

The ABC Family Network has just ordered a full season for its newest hit, *Pretty Little Liars*, starring *QL* alumna Troian Bellisario ("Another Mother," and daughter of Don and Deborah). After numerous guest-star screen roles growing up, Troian recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Southern California School of Theater.



Photo credit: ABC Family Network

Pretty Little Liars is an hour-long ensemble mystery-drama, airing Tuesdays at 8pm EDT on ABC Family, and online.

CATCHING UP WITH WILLIE GARSON

e-mail interview March 2010

by Sharon Major

Willie Garson, one of our favorite *QL* alumni, is enjoying the fruits of being on USA Network's new hit, *White Collar*—a series that *TV Guide* calls one of this “summer’s guilty pleasures.” Although he co-starred on HBO’s recent, but short-lived, *John from Cincinnati*, and had a recurring role during all six seasons of HBO’s *Sex and the City* (with follow up appearances in both feature films), his popularity and recognition have soared since the debut of *White Collar* last December. With the premiere of the second season and the release of the DVD set for Season One on July 13, Willie is busy doing interviews, press parties and commuting, while trying to fit in family life, work and volunteer activities.

Jeff Eastin, creator and executive producer of *White Collar*, describes the show as an hour-long buddy dramedy about white collar crime, set in the financial hub of the United States, New York City. Eastin says that filming in the city gives the series authenticity, providing “absolutely brilliant production value.”

Since Willie hails from New Jersey and has filmed so many shows in New York, he feels he embodies what he calls “a safe, user-friendly New Yorker,” even though his home has been in Los Angeles for nearly 25 years. During on-set interviews last fall, Garson said, “There’s nothing that beats the energy of shooting a scene on the street in New York. Nothing better. I hate being in the studio [in NY], because personally..., if I’m going to shoot in a studio, why am I not shooting in Burbank, five miles from my house, so I can see my son every night?”

Willie also talked about his role as Mozzie. “It’s very different from anything else I’ve ever played. He’s an under-the-radar kind of guy...pretending to be other people and working scams behind the scenes...It’s that subversive guy in the background, the brains behind the brain.”

With over 130 roles currently listed at imdb.com, it is no surprise to hear him say, “I’m one of the few actors who enjoys doing TV more than I like making movies. I like that it’s a new script every week; I like that it is totally different.” Nevertheless, *White Collar* would keep him interested for quite a while, and he is willing to go along for the ride. “There are so many scams and so many places to shoot, and so many weird, different rules that can be broken that we can (be) here for seven years. I don’t have a problem with that.”

Fortunately, Willie was able to give us a personal update to his career and private life during an e-mail correspondence last spring. Our last interview with Willie (who guest starred in “Play It Again, Seymour” and “Lee Harvey Oswald”) was back in 2000. Rereading it was absolutely delightful and brought a smile to my face. I wonder why I waited so long to reconnect with him.



Willie during USA Network’s on-set interview
October 2009

Sharon: I was really disappointed that you weren’t among the guest stars at the *Quantum Leap* 20th Anniversary Convention in LA last March. Although you were missed, over 40 of your colleagues did attend, including Deborah Pratt, Scott and even Don Bellisario, and everyone had a fantastic time.

Of course the episode “Lee Harvey Oswald” came up, and once again Don was adamant that JFK was killed by a lone gunman. Even more recently, Deborah and Scott revealed that they had never been persuaded by the conspiracy theories. Although you were young when this “great debate” peaked, you played Oswald, not only on *QL*, but also in the feature film, *Ruby*. Perhaps you too have an opinion on the matter.

Willie: Having played Oswald a few times, it always seemed odd that he had acted alone, mostly for two reasons: a) the footage of Oswald being led through the police station, all beat up. He looks at the camera, they ask him what happened to his eye and he says simply “the police hit

me.” It’s a weird thing, but something struck me in that, as an actor, that there could have been nothing more surprising to this dumb idiotic ‘patsy.’ It made me feel as if he had been told, “Go up there, fire some shots, and we will meet you at the theater and have you out of the country before you know it.” It always made me feel as if he had been set up. And b) When we shot the film *Ruby*, I stood in that window in the book depository, trying to fire THAT Mannlicher rifle. Lemme just say it truly felt that there was NO WAY he could have done it from there, that angle, that rifle, the whole thing.

Sharon: When we last spoke, you had a regular “gig” of reading to school kids at a local elementary and you really wanted a family. And now you have a son! What wonderful news! I just saw the article in *People* magazine, and we’d love to hear more about the two of you.

Have you been reading books with him? If so, do the two of you have any particular favorites? Does Nathen seem to share your humorous bent?



Christa Renee for *People Magazine*

Willie and Nathen

Willie: Nathen is amazing, and we read all the time. He is OBSESSED with Roald Dahl, so right now we are reading *James and the Giant Peach* every night. Also, being 8, he loves *Where the Wild Things Are*. I can tell you where they are: in Nathen’s room, as he is a madman! He has the driest

sense of humor and pretends to be other people or in moods all the time. It’s basically a complete blast.

Sharon: I usually ask about the various causes and charities people support, so I’m guessing you might want to take the opportunity to promote adoption, along with The Alliance for Children’s Rights and the Westside Children’s Center. Are there other causes in which you are involved that you would like to mention?

Willie: My charities are many, but most have to do with kids. I mean, who wouldn’t want to give a kid the best chance possible to make a difference in the world? That said, I support The Alliance for Children’s Rights here in Los Angeles, which does all the legal work for adoptions for anyone for FREE (at a cost of about \$1000 per adoption). I also love the Westside Children’s Center, which acted as my training and social worker all through the process. They do amazing work and are another great non-profit.

I also work with the Aspen Youth Experience, who mentor at-risk inner city kids all the way through college, and the Barton Center for Diabetes and Camp Joslin in Massachusetts, where I volunteer as a camp counselor every year. These are all kids who have Diabetes, and they get to come to camp and *be* kids, all the while learning how to make healthy choices to manage their disease and lives.

I’ve built two houses with Habitat for Humanity, both in the New Orleans area. To see the faces of the actual family who will get the home, and building alongside them, is worth the time and energy alone, other than the great satisfaction and hands-on experience.

And I have always worked with AMFAR [The American Foundation for AIDS Research]. Their research and development in the care and treatment of HIV/AIDS-related issues have been phenomenal, but we are nowhere near done, and can make treatment better, more available—and dare we dream—a cure.

All of these are non-profits and could always use whatever help anyone feels comfortable with, and I urge anyone with an interest to please help out.

Sharon: So now tell me about *White Collar*. I read the interview you did on the *White Collar* set last October, which was wonderful in the variety of topics the panel covered. It sounds as if Neal and Mozzie have a unique relationship with a backstory that is being revealed in bits and pieces. (Any comparison to Sam and Al in *QL*?)

Willie: *White Collar* is a very special show, and yes, Neal and Mozzie have a long back history, having been through everything together, which I guess could be compared to Al and Sam in a way.

Sharon: By the way, what is up with the “season finale” in March? Didn’t they just call it a “season finale” in December? Are shows being pared down to the actual seasons of the year nowadays? Was the original order for only seven episodes, and they bought more once the show clicked with viewers?

Willie: We did 13 episodes plus a two-hour pilot; all they did was break up the season into two parts. The last thing they want to do is spend a fortune launching a new show, and then burn off new episodes over the holidays when viewership is down and holiday specials are on. That’s why they broke it up into two halves.

USA is amazingly smart about how to make great shows, and better yet, turn them into hits, so they are very careful about what they do and why they do it. We start shooting Season 2 around April 15th in NY, and should start airing new episodes by the end of summer.

Sharon: Of course everyone is looking forward to the *Sex and the City* movie on Memorial Day weekend! I know that you cannot reveal any plot points, but I saw that the gals were all costumed for an ’80s flashback. My first thought was whether Stanford is included in the flashback. Can you say? Would Stanford have been a “parachute pants” or an “acid-washed jeans” kind of guy back then?

Willie: Parachute pants for sure. That’s really all I can say, but was there a reason those ever went out of style?

Sharon: I know you like doing sci-fi/fantasy projects, and you’ve done many—set in the past, the present, and even in the future. Do you have a particular period that fascinates you, or that you enjoy being a part of, even if it is only on screen or stage?

Willie: Definitely the ’40s and ’50s—the suits, the elegance, the manners, the fun—that would definitely have been my era.

Sharon: Speaking of the stage, are you ever able to do theater work anymore?

Willie: I don’t have time to do theater now. The last show I did was at the Geffen Theater here in Los Angeles, but I would love to do one maybe during hiatus this year from *White Collar*.

Sharon: We would certainly like to follow your career more closely, and if you could let us know about your upcoming projects, we would certainly post it on our website www.projectquantumleap.com. I wasn’t able to spot a website of your own when I did a search, but let me know if there is one.

Willie: I don’t run a website but there are some out there. I find that IMDB and IMDB Pro are pretty reliable.

Sharon: Lastly, plenty of well-known actors have been recording audio books—both bestsellers and classics. There is a burgeoning market for performers rather than someone who can merely read a book aloud. Have you ever thought of pursuing this avenue? Do you have any time to read books for pleasure, or are you too busy fielding scripts and such?

Willie: I read for voiceover work all the time. It’s a tough field to crack, but I do get the odd commercial now and again. And I would LOVE to record some audiobook or scripted work. As for books, I commute to work on an airplane to New York from Los Angeles, so you do the math, I probably read about 6 books a week.

That should give you enough for now. Thanks for the interest—and now—back to my son!!

All the best,

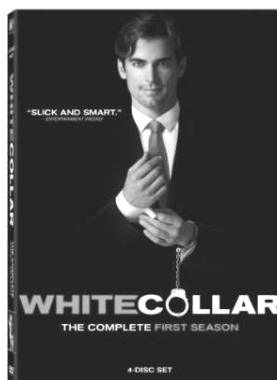
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Photo credit: USA Network

Mozzie and Neal (Matt Bomer) in this month’s second season premiere of White Collar

[Fans of the TV series *Chuck* may recall Matt Bomer played Bryce Larkin, Sarah’s colleague and Chuck’s rival]



Look for Season One of *White Collar* on both DVD and Blu-Ray now in stores, and be sure to catch new episodes on Tuesdays at 9pm EDT on USA Network; On Demand; and online at: usanetwork.com

[Please don’t miss our previous interviews with Willie in Issues #12 and #22 of *The Observer*.]

OUR DEAR BILLIE In Memoriam

Comments from just a few of Billie's friends as compiled by Maret Johnson



Photo by Sharon Major

My favorite photo of Beautiful Billie, taken in 2006

Billie helped me immeasurably when I took over as editor of *The Observer* in 1998, and she became our Graphic Coordinator the following year. I sometimes felt we were co-conspirators in this crazy undertaking, and I always felt we were dear friends, no matter how many miles laid between us. I now realize she had that effect on everyone she knew. Thus it is only fitting that we honor our dear friend and long-time contributor to Project Quantum Leap and *The Observer*, Billie Mason.

—Sharon Major

Billie Mason

Sept. 28, 1926 – Jan. 14, 2010

Milwaukie (Oregon) resident Billie Mason died Jan. 14, 2010 at the age of 83. She was born on Sept. 28, 1926 in Myrtle Creek to William and Leora (Jackson) Stewart. She was a talented pianist, violinist and artist. She was an astute business woman, and an excellent and tenacious accountant whose financial advice was often sought by family and friends. She had a very green thumb and was an avid gardener. She was a loyal member of the Quantum Leapers Fan club and often traveled to the club's conventions in Los Angeles and to other far-reaching activities. She was a member of the BakPak and counted its members among her many friends. She was a very loyal and giving friend. She was a very loving "mom" to her pets and was a generous supporter of many causes, including the Oregon Humane Society. She had a wicked sense of humor which was enjoyed by her many friends and family and will be greatly missed. She is survived by: Daughters, Jane Bachmeier and Mindy Bachmeier; Sons, Stevie Mason and Don Mason; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren, her beloved dog Mr. Bean and beloved cat Sammo Sammo.

A SAD GOODBYE

(from *Coming Attractions*—January 2010)

Many of you may already know this - our dear friend Billie Mason died two weeks ago. She had been ill for a long time, although I hear she was still her spunky and feisty self until the very end. Billie was beloved among all Leapers who knew her. Although she had a sharp wit, she was also one of the kindest people in the world. Folks would always gather in her room when we got together. She did much good in this world, and we will ALL miss her tremendously!

—Margaret & Rosie Colchin

I'll miss you 'Mom,' but I hold dear all those long chats and fun times we had together. My chalk is in a safe place and I shall do my best to keep decorum intact for you. I'm so glad you 'adopted' me....it was a privilege to have known you. Sleep well, Dear One. Luv Ya,

—Ann Rawlins

Billie was my first real contact in the Scott Bakula fandom. She sent me pictures, videos and stories and was instrumental in getting me to travel from the UK to my first Scott event. She organised my ticket and my hotel room and looked after me when I was in LA. I never would have made the journey if she hadn't nagged me. She was a lovely lady and I loved her. She will be greatly missed but we will always remember her with great fondness.

—Pippa Parry

What can I tell you about the Billie I knew and loved? The last time I met her was in San Diego, in April 2008. We were there to see Scott Bakula in *Dancing in the Dark* at The Globe. Billie never ceased to amaze me with her wonderful humour and amazing stories. She was so modest about her achievements, and most of what I know of her, I found out from mutual friends. Anyway, we'd been sitting by the steps waiting for Scott to come over and talk to us, laughing and chatting. As he was approaching, Billie got me to help her up out of her wheelchair because she didn't want to talk with him sitting down. She would never give in to her being not well. She would never let weakness get the better of her. She was amazing. She stood with us and the first thing Scott did when he reached us, was give Billie a kiss on the cheek. Everyone who knew her, had so much respect for her. Billie loved my country, England, and we often chatted about her holidays here. I loved Billie and I will miss her very much! God bless you Billie and sing loud from the clouds!

—Maryse Worrallo

Billie was a very special person; caring, generous, brave through her illnesses, and good fun. Miss you lots, Billie. Luv 'n' hugs,

—Ann McCabe

I first met Billie on-line in 1994 and was blessed to receive my first hug from her June 1999. Her kind and generous nature has always made me feel that I have known her far longer. I am a better person for knowing Billie, and I told her this on many occasions. I can see her smiling response even now. I will sorely miss her teasing (with that mischievous glint in her eye), her smiles, laughter and caring heart. I will carry her in my heart always.

—Debbie Jones

Billie and I go back to 1991 at a VQT convention. She decided that I (then a very shy and slightly wary person) was someone she wanted to get to know and I was very fortunate she did, because over the years I came to know her as not only persistent but warm ... feisty ... brilliant ... loving ... a spitfire ... loyal ... a pioneer ... stubborn ... artistic ... caring ... so many things. Most of all, she was my dear, dear friend. She will be with me always. Luv ya,

—Karen Scheffler

Billie was one of a kind and could always make me laugh. Although we were friends online for many years, I was only fortunate to meet her in person just one time, when I traveled from Australia to join her and watch Scott Bakula on stage. Meeting her remains one of my treasured memories. I'll miss you, my little scallywag.

—Trudy Costagliola

Billie will be greatly missed, but her impact on all of us will carry on—a long, long time. I have so many fond memories of her, from Day One (when I was such a newbie and tentative about attending that first Hamilton thing...) to the many times all of us walked and talked and shared stories, and I just loved her. And she loved us! Scott appreciated her and loved her too, all of us could tell. She had a place of honor every time she was in the room.

I do have to say, her driving caused me to have my heart stuck in my throat a few times. Man, that woman could take on curves in the road like no one I've met before or since! I'll never forget wishing I had two seatbelts when she was driving!

No doubt about it, Billie was one fabulous and unique individual, and while we will miss her, her impact on us will last forever.

—Lin DeRight

We are all poorer for dear Billie's loss, but so much richer for having known her. Her memory will stay with us always.

—Anita Balestino

Such a sad way to start the year—for us that is. Billie was an inspiration to me because she found a way to do what she loved. She will be missed, and now she is part of that heavenly group of special friends, and still part of our earthly group. I'll always think of Billie and the San Diego Trip and the way Scott immediately went up to her and hugged her. Bless you Billie in your new home. Ciao,

—Teresa Patri

Billie was one of a kind and we were all blessed with knowing her!

—Helene Kaplan



Photo by Maret Johnson

Scott and Jay always made a special place for Billie at every event she attended, here in L.A. May 2006

BILLIE'S LEAP INTO HEAVEN

First of all, Billie's arrival at the gates of Heaven would be announced with the sirens in the background as she drove 90 miles an hour. Once they talked to her, the police would be charmed by her instantly and would even speak to St. Peter on her behalf so that she would be let into Heaven without hesitation. (Remember that she was a member of the Portland Head of Police Group and proudly had a sticker on her car.)

Her interview would take earthly years, since she would flirt with St. Peter until she was sitting at the Gate of Heaven with him. You can imagine her talking to everyone else headed there. The population of heaven will include all dogs, children, and anybody that had a pretty smile. They will feel the special atmosphere that we all felt when we entered her room at an event—to be immediately welcomed and at home.

Everyone's vision of heaven is their private one, but I feel that Billie will have a grand mansion there, where everybody will be welcome to stay and talk for as long as they want. All of her family and friends will gather there, laughter will be heard, and joy will brighten the house. It will become a haven for all that enter, they will feel the gentleness and love that Billie expressed constantly.

If they allow vehicles, we know that our Billie will have her plane flying the fastest it can go and will probably be doing loop-de-loops under the bridges. She will offer you a ride to any part of heaven, but do they have seatbelts in the cloud cars? I can see her cruise the clouds and winning most of the races as other cloud cars attempt to beat her. Of course, now she can walk without getting breathless, so we can picture her in her garden of beautiful flowers and fruit trees where anyone can pick the freshest fruit.

We cannot forget her squirrels, which she nicknamed her Pettries. They will have a feeding place, and she will make

sure that every squirrel will have the best nuts, personally unshelled by her. The birds will always have full feeding stations, and I am sure she will monitor them to make sure that the squirrels stay out of the bird feeders.

I am not forgetting the imp part of Billie. Yes, she would test the patience of her guardian angel, but she never did anything that would break her decorum, so we must believe that she is our guardian angel now. Heaven help us all and hang on for the ride of our lives.

I just realized that Billie was the spirit of heaven for each of us. She was our angel of love and kindness on earth, so we should look forward to hearing her call us each by name someday. I know that when Scott approaches those pearly gates, he will laugh because she will be there waiting for him. "Ohwhatshisname, you finally got here," she'll say as she gives him a welcoming hug.

Billie, we will miss you on earth, but know that you are with us each and every day now, encouraging us to be daring, challenge life, and always take time to smell the flowers, hug the children, and pet the animals. —Maret Johnson

I guess we all knew this day was close, but to read such sad news this morning was definitely not the birthday present I wanted. I loved Billie very much and we were very close for a long time. It was heartbreaking when I couldn't talk to her on the phone any more because of her breathing, or e-mail her because she was no longer on the computer.

Billie was my first real friend in *QL* fandom. I met her at the 1994, fan-run, Los Angeles *Quantum Leap* convention. She gave me a calendar of Scott photos that she had put together. I was still a stranger then, but it was this simple kindness that lead to many years of friendship.

Several years ago, I flew to Oregon to visit with Billie. We had a great time together - visiting Mt. St. Helen, driving along the Columbia River Gorge on the first paved road in the Pacific Northwest, and eating strawberries until our lips were red with juice. Billie even let me drive her car when I yelped about her speed!

During that visit, I took a photograph of Sammo (her cat) eying my Archer action figure on a window ledge. Sammo's head was turned with his nose pressed up to Archer. Billie was so impressed with the photograph, she asked me to enlarge it for her and then she had Scott autograph it. She said that when he saw the photo, he laughed and asked her about it.

Some of our conversations were of her early years. Billie was a pilot and flew a Steerman when it was unheard of for women to fly. I think this was even before Amelia Earhart. Billie said she had to quit flying because she couldn't get insurance, but she still owned the plane.

I saved several of Billie's e-mails, especially some of her stories. Here's one from November 2008:

[My physician] Dr. Seung told me that I was too old to be driving my car, to which I responded that I had never had an accident in my entire life time. And I have been driving since I was 12 years old. Dr. Seung asked me why I got a license to drive when I was 12. I told him we were living high up in the hills just outside of Medford, Oregon, and the distance to my school was 18 miles, but I had only certain streets that I could drive on in order to get to my school. He asked me if I only drove on those certain streets, and you can guess what I told him. LOL

Billie, here's to you, one very classy lady! —Jo Fox



**SCOTT BAKULA'S PERFORMANCE IN
GUYS AND DOLLS IN CONCERT at the HOLLYWOOD BOWL 2009**

By Anita Balestino

Muted amber light from a fading sun filtered through the fragrant green of eucalyptus leaves that canopied the steep entrance to the Hollywood Bowl. As a breeze-cooled dusk retreated before the unyielding advance of night, velvet-soft darkness enveloped the huge, natural amphitheater. Against that velvety backdrop, the lighted, concentric arches of the band shell glowed with phosphorescent dazzle, echoing and re-echoing the proscenium arch of the stage below to the power of ten. In front of the stage, terraced box seats nestled into the bowl's depression, while ranks of benches marched up the steep sides of the surrounding hills, emerging so organically from the slopes as to seem part of the substrata. Within an hour, a golden, luminous moon would hang, low and ripe, in the sky. Such was the setting for three stellar performances of **Guys and Dolls** on July 31, August 1 and 2, 2009. The show, featuring music and lyrics by Frank Loesser and a book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows that was based on short stories by Damon Runyon, has earned laurels as one of the greatest American musicals from Broadway's Golden Age.

Mounted after only ten very full days of rehearsal, but months of pre-performance planning, this production at the Hollywood Bowl was a true ensemble endeavor, as well as an unqualified ensemble triumph. The star-studded cast featured Jessica Biel (Sarah Brown), Scott Bakula (Nathan Detroit), Beau Bridges (Arvide Abernathy), Ellen Greene (Miss Adelaide), Ken Page (Nicely-Nicely Johnson), Brian Stokes Mitchell (Sky Masterson), and Ruth Williamson (Gen. Mathilde Cartwright). Richard J. Alexander (Associate Director / Executive Producer of Broadway's **Les Misérables** and Executive Producer of **Miss Saigon**) directed the show, with musical direction by Kevin Stites conducting the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and choreography by Donna McKechnie (Broadway's original "Cassie" in **A Chorus Line**). Other cast members included, Jody Ashworth (Lt. Brannigan), Jason Graae (Benny Southstreet), Bill Lewis (Harry the Horse), Herschel Sparber (Big Jule), Danny Stiles (Rusty Charlie), and Amir Talai (Angie the Ox / Joey Biltmore). In addition, a troupe of lovely and accomplished veteran performers [dancer/singer/actors] portrayed the irrepressible Hot Box Girls: Sandahl Bergman, Chelsea Field, Jane Lanier, Valerie Pettiford, Tracy Powell, and Kathryn Wright.

A Golden Musical

Finding enough superlatives to describe this production is a formidable task indeed. Each player, whether principal actor or supporting cast, animated his or her role with a thoroughly engaging, standout performance. Moreover, the energy and high spirits of each individual actor seemed reflected and enhanced by the other cast members, so that the whole grew exponentially to become much more than

the sum of its parts. This cast, quite obviously, had a rollicking good time performing together, and they swept the transported audience right along with them for the joy ride. Solo, duet or ensemble, they delivered one show-stopping musical number after another. Notable among this veritable profusion of sparkling performances were the following:

An opening that featured a Broadway street scene, complete with sightseers and autograph seekers, an inebriated vagrant, and a glamorous actress—characterized by Chelsea Field in a slinky, ivory satin gown and a short blonde wig, strutting across the stage with a confident, sexy saunter, her shoulders swinging in brazen opposition to her hips;

Ken Page, Jason Graae, and Danny Stiles, consulting their racing forms and instantly establishing the tone of the show with the storied, clever and contrapuntal, opening song, "Fugue for Tinhorns;"

Brian Stokes Mitchell's deep, rich, rumbling baritone and Jessica Biel's slivery, high soprano blending in the lovely duet, "I'll Know," which describes each character's ideal true love;

Ellen Greene's credulous, wide-eyed, Kewpie Doll demeanor, pondering her fourteen-year-long engagement as the cause of her chronic cold in "Adelaide's Lament;"

The Hot Box Girls in very short, green-checked dresses, white starched aprons with bright orange borders, and wide-brimmed straw hats, high stepping, swaying and sashaying (with an occasional demure bump and grind thrown in for good measure) to the countrified rhythms of "Bushel and a Peck," and (at one point) pulling large snowball-sized flowers from the bustline of their costumes and hurling them toward their onstage audience to embellish the sing-song lyrics, "He loves me. He loves me not;"



"I love you a bushel and a peck"

(Ellen Greene is center, with Chelsea Field on her left)

Ken Page and Jason Graae (the latter flouncing about the stage in exaggerated, hilarious impersonations of the female characters in the song) deploring the universal predicament of men controlled by their love for women in the lively and farcical “Guys and Dolls;”

Scott Bakula’s tender, lyrical and heartfelt, if reluctantly embarked-upon serenade to his long-suffering fiancée, “Everlovin’ Adelaide;”

[According to an interview Scott gave to *Broadway World*, this song, written for, but cut from the original show, was added to the movie version for Frank Sinatra. Jo Loesser gave special permission for Scott to sing the song in this Hollywood Bowl production, commenting, “I love Scott Bakula. Yes, he can have it.” The song has never been sung in any other professional stage production before.]

Jessica Biel stumbling and falling about the stage in a loose-limbed portrayal of tipsy glee as she simultaneously belts out “If I Were a Bell;”

Ellen Greene, ditzzy but earnest and gullible, trilling “Take Back Your Mink” with the Hot Box Girls singing backup and passing for cultured debutantes, who in the dance number that follows, shed fur stoles and hats, rip off ropes of pearls and rend long velvet gowns, stripping to their one-piece, black lace undergarments as they turn the song from a sedate waltz (though with voluptuous undertones) into a stylish, saucy, audacious romp; [All of the Hot Box Girls danced with extraordinary skill and flair. Still it was difficult to take one’s eyes off Chelsea. She moves with such assured, fluid grace – each supple movement or pose flowing seamlessly into the next with deceptive ease.]

Beau Bridges, as missionary Abernathy, warbling “More I Cannot Wish You” to his granddaughter, Miss Sarah (Biel), with visible gentleness and poignancy, while posturing in comical poses to reflect the situations he sings about;

Brian Stokes Mitchell’s intense, reverberating plea in “Luck Be a Lady,” backed up by Nathan Detroit and the chorus of Crap Shooters, singing a deep and driving, repetitive chant that urges him to roll the dice;

A chastened Scott Bakula, following his infuriated fiancée, Adelaide, around the passarel (the catwalk encircling orchestra-pit seating) as he sings an openhearted, contrite, but ultimately powerless apology in “Sue Me;”

Ken Page whipping Nathan and the assorted sinners at the Mission into a frenzy of jubilant repentance, while almost bringing down the house in his high-powered, soulful, “Sit Down, You’re Rockin’ the Boat;”

Jessica Biel and Ellen Greene, sitting on two stacks of bailed newspapers and hatching a scheme to outwit their errant, respective boyfriends in “Marry the Man Today (and Change His Ways Tomorrow);”

Lastly, the brilliant choreography featured in the two dance numbers, “Havana” and “The Crapshooters’ Dance:” “Havana” in the first act focuses on five couples (the men

in pleated pants, Panama hats, and unbuttoned tropical shirts or undershirts; the women in short, clingy, floral sundresses) and sets the scene for the Cuban nightclub where Sky Masterson takes Miss Sarah to dinner. The couples begin with a hot and rowdy mambo, but the manic rhythms soon devolve into a sexy, scintillating tango, wherein the men partner the women in dramatic, lissome stop-action poses that emphasize exquisite, sensual lines and extravagant leg extensions.

“The Crapshooters Dance” in Act II begins as male dancers tumble out of a huge cylinder representing a sewer. (Nathan was so desperate to find a location for his floating crap game that he had to settle on, literally and figuratively, the lowest of all venues.) Surging across the stage to an instrumental version of “Luck Be a Lady,” the men execute breathtaking, soaring leaps and muscular triple-turns, achieving almost inconceivable elevation and virtuosity, their bold, agile movements reflecting the thrill and daring of a high stakes wager.

Nathan Detroit

Truth be told, some fans no doubt felt a niggling sense of disappointment that Scott Bakula wasn’t cast as the romantic lead in this production. These are the roles we love to see him play, and the ones that he performs with such striking and honest depth of feeling. However fan misgivings aside, Scott was an absolute revelation as Nathan Detroit in a performance that was brash and funny, yet unexpectedly poignant and romantic too. Scott brought his character vibrantly to life, creating such a ceaselessly scheming, but utterly charming and lovable rascal that by the end of his first few scenes, one could not envision him as any other character.

Throughout nearly the entire show, Scott wore a very dark, double-breasted suit that featured glaringly wide, white pinstripes and the generous, full-cut trousers characteristic of the Fifties. Completing his ensemble was an ever-present grey felt fedora, always cocked at a rakish, defiant angle and often pulled low over his eyes. Scott also added his own special touches to complete the picture of his character: a pitch-perfect Bronx accent, sometimes fractured English, and a thin, pencil mustache (his own, not a prosthesis) that began precisely on either side of the cleft in his top lip and extended to the end of each side of his mouth. The mustache added the barest hint of something sinister but moreover a heap of dashing style to his features.

Nathan seems to be a study in contrasts. Sometimes he controls his henchmen with hard-bitten orders, even as he stoutly defends them from any external insult. Although he cavorts with a tough crowd of gamblers and criminals, he would much rather accommodate than confront, preferring to finesse a clever angle rather than resort to clearly distasteful violence in the face of trouble. His sometimes harassed demeanor reflects his often desperate efforts to find a secure location for his floating crap game, the shady entrepreneurial venture that either keeps him in the money

or sends him sliding down the slippery slope to insolvency. However that stressed manner evaporates and Nathan exudes cool, cocky self-assurance in the presence of the high rollers who are his *clients*. Adopting yet a different guise, he assumes an obliging, glibly cordial manner in his dealings with his nemesis, Lt. Brannigan. But that smooth cordiality never completely hides a sharp edge of sarcasm and disrespect for the cops. When it comes to his long-suffering fiancée, Nathan imbues all the small moments of their interactions with tender affection, sincere concern, genuine respect, and steadfast loyalty. And yet, he doesn't hesitate to deceive and dupe her, desert her on the eve of their elopement, or use her as a handy dodge to conceal from the cops his plans to run his crap game. Still, the audience never doubts for a moment that Nathan really loves Miss Adelaide, due in large part to Scott's adoring, authentic and complex portrayal. Yet the fact remains that Nathan seems to be eternally scrambling to outwit one or the other of his acquaintances: his accomplices, the police, the crap shooters, or his ever faithful fiancée.

Where Can I Have the Game?

Nathan enters from stage left and strides purposefully toward his assistants, the tall and portly Nicely Nicely Johnson and diminutive, Benny Southstreet. Unaware that Lt. Brannigan is standing some distance away from the pair, Nathan passes by the policeman without a look. With his fedora cocked at a dashing angle and pulled low over his eyes so that it half covers his face, Nathan has the furtive look of one who glides in and out of the shadows and keeps well below the radar of legitimate dealings. But upon approaching his cohorts, he hurriedly removes the hat and uses it to gesture insistently, as his words tumble out with haste and his tone grows urgent. "Fellas..." he says, "I'm havin' terrible trouble. Everybody's scared on account of that lousy Brannigan. And I can't..." Here Nicely makes a frantic gesture toward stage left and the unnoticed lieutenant, who inquires of "Mr. Detroit" if there is something wrong. At the sound of Brannigan's voice, Nathan turns abruptly, sees the cop standing there, and without missing a beat stretches both arms wide as if in welcome. His voice deepens markedly, and he adopts a richly resonant tone that manages to be obsequious, mocking and smug all at the same time. "Oh hello, Lieutenant," he almost croons, "I hope you do not think I was talking about you. There are other lousy Brannigans." The Lieutenant ignores Nathan's fractured attempt to deflect the insult, then comments that Detroit must be having trouble finding a place for his crap game. Nathan responds in a voice that sounds remarkably neutral – indeed almost too reasonable, "Well the heat is on, as you must know from the fact that you now have to live on your salary." But when he utters the words "your salary," Nathan's voice drops again, this time with audible sarcasm and heavy innuendo—clear indications that the lieutenant has, at one time or another, taken bribes to let Nathan run his game.

As Brannigan leaves the stage in a fit of pique, the boys press Nathan to confirm that he has found a place for the game. But with no reassurance to give them, he paces toward stage right and rubs his top lip worriedly with the back of his hand. Agitation in his movements and frustration in his voice, he insists that he has "tried all the usual places – the back of the cigar store, the funeral parlor..." Nathan and the boys then discuss the possibility of using the Biltmore Garage for the game. But Nathan turns and strides back toward his henchmen, then relates with a rising sense of apprehension, "Joey Biltmore might take a chance and let us use the place if I give him a thousand bucks." Benny echoes in disbelief, "A thousand bucks?" And Nathan replies, "In cash!" His emphasis is heavy and scathing as he jabs two fingers of one hand forcefully toward Benny's chest. Nathan turns sharply towards Nicely and protests with even more heated disdain, "He won't take my marker." From Nathan's opposite side, Benny then remarks that his boss's marker must not be any good. Rounding immediately on Benny, Nathan takes a hasty step forward and lowers his head to stand nose to nose with the unfortunate fellow. In a voice that grows deep and quiet with implied threat, he asks, "What d'ya mean?" Receiving no answer, Nathan begins to hold forth in a tone of obvious disbelief at Benny's ignorance, "A marker ain't just a piece of paper that says, 'I owe you a thousand dollars,' signed, 'Nathan Detroit.'" He squares his shoulders and faces the front, then pulls himself upright loftily, continuing with evident reverence for his subject, "A marker is like a pledge, which a guy cannot welch on it." After a respectful pause, he turns his head slightly to one side, stares out into the distance with a steadfast expression on his face and finishes, "It's like not salutin' the flag." Finally, Nathan addresses himself to Benny's cynical comment and proclaims with vigor, "My marker," emphasizing the word as he pushes a fist toward the ground in exasperation, "is as good as gold." He turns toward Benny once more and declares bitterly, "Only Joey Biltmore don't think so!" giving Benny a little backward push to coincide with his last two angrily accented words. Nathan then strolls a few paces toward stage left and ponders in a wistful voice, "It don't seem possible. Me widout a livelihood." He pauses for merely a beat, then adds a perfectly timed tag line, "Why I've been runnin' the crap game ever since I was a juvenile delinquent." Of course, the line elicits ready laughter from the audience. The boys urge Nathan to "*do something*" about this dire situation, but he extends both arms, palms turned upward in a gesture of futility, and responds with reluctant resignation, "What can I do? I'm broke." Proving his point, he explains that he couldn't even buy Adelaide a present today, and then asks if the boys know what today is. "It's mine and Adelaide's fourteenth anniversary," he proudly answers his own question. The boys comment in tandem, "Oh Yeah?" and Nathan promptly adds, as if it were the most unremarkable situation in the world, "Yeah. We've

been engaged fourteen yeahrs.” The audience laughs even louder at Scott’s deadpan delivery of this improbable bit of information.

Distressed that Nathan has turned his attention to his protracted engagement, Benny rushes over to his boss and implores him to concentrate on the game. But Nathan just remains standing quite nonchalantly at left-center stage with one hand slipped into his pants pocket. So with great fanfare, Benny and Nicely announce the names of some prominent high rollers who are in town and looking for action. As each player enters via the raised orchestra platform at the back of the stage, the boys take turns calling out, “**The Greek’s in town! Brandy Bottle Bates! Scranton Slim!**” Hand still casually stuffed into his pocket and adopting an attitude of cool composure, Nathan swivels around to look at the crapshooters as they appear, then turns back to his assistants and admits, “**I know. I could make a fortune.**” Finally moved to action, Nathan takes a wide, gliding side-step to bring him close to his two helpers and demands with genuine dismay, “**But where can I have the game?**” His voice rises with an emphatic note of alarm, as he reaches both hands out in front of him with the palms turned upward in agitated appeal and pumps them up and down to underscore his plea.

The Oldest Established...

Nicely intones, “**The Biltmore garage wants a grand,**” and Benny sings the antiphon, “**But we ain’t got a grand on hand.**” Now Nathan points at the pair and takes up the tune, singing in a blaring, strident tone, “**And they’ve now got a lock on the douah / Of the gym at public school eighty-fouah.**” He reaches his arms out with urgency as he sings, then briskly tilts his upper body backwards to give surprising power and punch to the last syllable of “**eighty-four.**” Nicely sings, “**There’s the stockroom behind McClosky’s bahr,**” and Benny objects, “**But Missus McClosky ain’t a good scout.**” Nathan crosses in front of the pair and strides toward stage right, singing, “**And things bein’ –how dey aaahr...**” In the short pause that follows, he stretches out one hand, palm down and fingers spread apart, and waggles it back and forth in a *comme ci, comme ca* gesture to show that things are quite precarious indeed. Coming to a stop at right center, he finishes, “**Da back of da po-lice station is out!**” He emphasizes the *long o* in the first syllable of the word “**police**” and sings a farcical, melodramatic, two-note plunge that makes the last word sound like “**ow-owt.**” As he stresses that last word, he drops his torso sharply forward from the waist and makes a curving, slicing gesture of finality with his outstretched arm. Scott’s delivery not only calls attention to the comedic content of lyrics that conjure up an image of gamblers shooting dice under the noses of cops *on the take*, but also highlights how dire and doomed the gamblers’ circumstances are now that the cops have decided to turn up the heat. Nicely resumes the verse, singing, “**So the Biltmore garage is the spot,**” and all three gamblers

respond, “**But the one thousand bucks we ain’t got.**” As Nathan begins this line, he paces back to Nicely and lays the back of his open hand insistently on the man’s ample chest. Resting his motionless hand there, Nathan shakes his head to emphasize the negative and accompany the lyrics, “**...we ain’t...**” as he also reaches out his opposite hand with the open palm turned up to indicate the empty state of their coffers. Finally, he thrusts his head forcefully toward Nicely, underscoring the heavily stressed, final note “**got**” and expressing his intense disgust at their predicament. At the same time, Benny approaches Nicely from his opposite side and reaches up to put his hand on top of the big man’s shoulder. The introduction ends as the three co-conspirators form a tableau of comically beset solidarity.

The chorus of crapshooters now begins to enter from stage right, looking for action and singing the praises of “**Good old reliable Nathan, Nathan, Nathan, Nathan Detroit.**” The minute he hears their refrain, Nathan immediately conceals any hint of his vexation. Head held high, shoulders squared, chest puffed out, he transforms into the cocky, confident, in-control operator of “**the oldest established permanent floating crap game in New York.**” He greets the high rollers with a firm handshake, a private word of welcome, or a genial nod of his head, after which he remembers to cock the brim of his fedora to just the right dapper angle. With his hand stuffed breezily into his pants pocket, his padded shoulder tilted to reflect just the right degree of swagger, he raises his other arm high and salutes a new group of players, who now enter from the opposite side of the stage. But just before Nathan signals that greeting, he takes Nicely by the arm and resolutely swings him around to face the first group, mutely directing his henchman to occupy them while Nathan himself engages the newcomers. As the arriving group of players sing, “**If you’re looking for action he’ll furnish the spot,**” Nathan keeps his eyes fixed on the gamblers, but walks slyly backward toward Benny with quick, smooth steps. Reaching his assistant, Nathan grabs the shorter man by the sides of both shoulders, firmly pushes him over to this group at stage left, and silently indicates that he should distract them. While the groups of players congregate about the stage, they sing, “**There are well-heeled shooters ev’rywhere.**” Nathan pauses at center stage with his back turned to the audience, one hand returned to his pocket and his feet spread wide in an outwardly imposing stance. But he betrays his agitation over not having secured a place for the game by rubbing the back of his other hand across his upper lip with a pensive air. As the chorus of players sings, “**There’s an awful lot of lettuce / For the fella who can get us there,**” Nathan pivots to face front and turns his head first to one side and then the other, as if greeting the two helpers who close ranks on either side of their boss. Singing in unison, Nicely, Nathan, and Benny deplore their plight, “**If we only had a lousy little grand we could be a millionaire.**” While he sings, Nathan keeps his arms low at his sides but turns both palms up to illustrate the necessity of that “**lousy little grand,**” and then pumps his

hands up and down with compelling urgency. The trio sustains the last note of their tag phrase, exactly and emphatically cutting off the note after four counts, just as Nathan drives both fists toward the floor in a spasm of frustration. Now the gamblers begin the second verse and sing, "In a hideout provided by Nathan, Nathan..." The object of their verse crosses in front of the assembled shooters toward stage right and turns to face them. As they continue singing, he slips one hand in his pocket and reaches the other arm up high, pointing two fingers toward the back left corner of the stage, then dropping those two fingers with solemn intent like a signal flag to acknowledge a particular gambler. Slowly lowering his hand, he reaches around behind him and rests his flexed arm at the small of his back. At the same time, he sinks into the corresponding hip, stretches out the opposite leg, and stomps his foot arrogantly on the stage, nodding his head once in agreement and owning the accolades that the gamblers intone, "It's the oldest established permanent floating crap game in New York." Nathan affects what he hopes is extreme nonchalance and begins to stroll back toward Nicely and Benny at center stage. But he stops in mid-stride, then peers cagily over each shoulder like a man pursued, as the shooters demand in resounding harmony, "Where's the action? Where's the game?" Having no definite response, Nathan and his henchmen stand close together and harmonize their desperation, "Gotta have the game or we'll die from shame." Nathan stresses the final consonant of that last word so forcefully that it sounds like, "shame-uh," and jabs his head forward sharply to give added emphasis to his point.



"It's the oldest established permanent floating crap game in New York."

Now Nathan and the entire ensemble remove their hats by the crease in the crown and hold them over their hearts, singing in slow, reverent harmony, "It's the oldest established permanent floating crap game in New York." Nathan stands with feet wide apart and shifts his weight lightly from one foot to the other as he draws himself upright. Then he leans back a bit with one shoulder held

lower than the other and calls up more power to add his voice to the gamblers' anthem. The players conclude by sending their voices first up and then down to resolve the last note with a five tone, hymn-like ornament. As Nathan joins in on that liturgical embellishment, he uses his fedora to sketch an expressive but nearly surreptitious sign of the cross, apparently calling down a blessing on his crap game and the hoped-for location in which to hold it. Sustaining that last solemn note, he stretches both arms out at a low angle, the hat still held in one hand. Then with a smooth but sharp, conspicuous movement, he places the hat back on his head precisely as the combined voices break off singing the final count of that last note. He stands motionless for several seconds and maintains the dashing pose, his fingers still gripping the crown of his hat while the audience applauds heartily.

In a deeply resonant, smooth and assured tone, Nathan calls out, "Gentlemen, Gentlemen, do not worry." Crossing to far stage left and stretching both arms out in front of him, he pledges, "Nathan Detroit's crap game will float again." Then with brisk efficiency, he snaps one arm out sideways in the opposite direction, indicating Nicely and Benny at stage right and adding, "My boys will let you know where it is." At this point, a departing Angie the Ox tells Nathan in a piercingly high voice that Sky Masterson is in town. With plenty of admiration and enthusiasm, Nathan states that Sky Masterson is "the highest player of them all." Benny questions whether this Masterson bets "higher than the Greek?" Nathan's even, unflappable tone suggests that he is again merely stating a manifestly obvious truth: "Higher than anybody;" adding incredulously, "Why do you think they call him 'Sky'?" To demonstrate, Nathan lifts one flexed arm in front of his chest and takes a gliding step to that same side. Then he straightens that arm and elevates it to a point sixty degrees in the air, at the same time angling his head and sloped shoulders to look way up to that lofty spot and remarking, "That's how high he bets." He nonchalantly strolls a couple of steps to the left, then stops, slips his hand into his pocket, and stares into the distance as if lost in memory. "I once saw him bet five thousand dollars on a cock-a-roach," Nathan muses. Gesturing excitedly with a forefinger, he crosses back to stand between Nicely and Benny at center stage and relates how Masterson got sick but wouldn't take penicillin "on account'a he bet ten C's that his temperature would go to 104." In disbelief Nicely asks, "Did it?" Nathan replies by jabbing that forefinger into Nicely's chest and commenting with obvious delight, "Did it? He's so lucky it went to 106!" He slaps Nicely on the shoulder good-naturedly and comments in a jovial tone of approval, "Good old Sky," then tucks his lower lip under his front teeth in a calculating grin.

Nicely now suggests that Nathan borrow the money from Sky. But Nathan quickly disabuses the big man of that idea. "No. Not sky," he replies dismissively and contends in a conclusive but admiring tone, "With him that kind of money ain't lendin' money - It's bettin' money," at the same

time slapping the back of Nicely's shoulder again to punctuate his declaration. But suddenly Nathan turns to face Nicely with both arms outstretched, his voice lifting on a flash of inspiration and a note of hope as he suggests, **"So why don't I bet him?"** Nathan turns to Benny on his opposite side and asks, **"Why don't I bet him a thousand on something?"** The boldness of his proposal represses his voice and nearly impedes his breath. Instead of a reply, Nicely asks with awe and disbelief, **"You would bet with Sky Masterson?"** With that, Nathan turns quickly to his questioner, then jerks his head back and takes a backward step as if stung by the big man's doubt. On a deep note of forced bravado that nonetheless betrays just how wary he is of this particular wager, Nathan blusters, **"I ain't scahred!"** He turns back toward Benny now and explains in a haughty and eminently rational tone, **"I am perfectly willing to take the risk, providing I can figure out a bet on which there is no chance of losing."** Nathan slows the cadence of those last four words, meting out each one discretely and stressing it lightly like a staccato nugget of wisdom. At the same time, he taps Benny's forearm with the back of his hand, as if to bestow those canny nuggets on his assistant. With great enthusiasm, Nathan now returns to the subject of Sky Masterson. **"He likes crazy bets,"** Nathan recalls with appreciation, **"Like which lump of sugar will a fly sit on."** Illustrating his words, he stretches his arms out in front of him, his open hands held a few inches apart with palms facing each other, and then shifts them both to a different spot, bracketing those two lumps of sugar. But he continues right on with exuberance, **"Or - or how far can you kick a piece of cheesecake,"** as he takes several running steps to stage left, then draws one leg back and launches it forward in a pantomime of a driving kick. Still turned away from his partners, Nathan suddenly slaps his hands together by brushing one off the other with a glancing blow and exclaims, **"Cheesecake! Oooh!"** He then eagerly snaps his fingers, to signal a startling, light-bulb insight. At once he turns back toward his henchmen, points both index fingers in their direction and continues to gesture toward them decisively as he orders, **"Look - run into Mindy's restaurant and ask Mindy how many pieces of cheesecake he sold yesterday and also how many pieces of strudel."** Benny repeats Nathan's instructions, but then asks with an air of bewilderment, **"What do you want to know for?"** Meanwhile, Nathan takes a long step to the left and leans over in that direction to peer guardedly around Benny and Nicely toward stage right. **"Just find out!"** he orders, **"Now beat it! Here comes Adelaide."** Crossing to Benny, Nathan grabs the little man's arm and unceremoniously hauls him around toward the wings at stage left. Next he reaches to the right and grabs one of Nicely's shoulders to shove him in the same direction. Finally, Nathan hurries along behind the big man, pushing the backs of his shoulders and rushing both henchmen offstage. **"If she hears I am running the crap game, she will never set foot on me again,"** he declares, a woeful note of panic in his voice as he dispatches his underlings with that preposterous consequence.

Nathan's Doll, Adelaide

Adelaide, accompanied by three of the Hot Box Girls, enters from stage right and calls hello: **"Nathan, darling."** Nathan turns, removes his hat in a gallant greeting and eagerly walks toward her replying, **"Adelaide! Pigeon!"** As they approach to within a foot or so of each other, Nathan stops and leans forward slightly from the waist, purses his lips into an exaggerated pucker, and waits for her kiss. When their lips do meet, he kisses her with an audible **"Mm-Mmm,"** explicitly demonstrating that the touch of her lips on his is quite delectable. After returning Nathan's kiss, Adelaide crosses back to the girls and asks them to order lunch for her. The girls agree and leave the stage. Meanwhile Adelaide turns and hurries back to Nathan, telling him with trusting urgency that she has **"to get right back to the Hot Box in ten minutes."** When she is still a little distance away, Nathan stretches out a welcoming arm that beckons her to take shelter beneath it. **"You still rehearsing?"** he asks in an earnest, solicitous tone, as he puts his arm around her shoulders and tucks her in against his side protectively. While they walk together toward stage right, Adelaide reports that the **"slave driver, Charlie"** has been working them all day, but that she finally told him she was starving and needed to get something to eat. Listening to her grievances, Nathan leans over and looks into her face with sincere sympathy and concern. But then Adelaide dramatically quotes Charlie, who claimed that she just wanted **"to sneak out and meet that cheap bum, Nathan Detroit."** Abruptly Nathan stops walking and turns to face Adelaide. Greatly affronted, he steps back, sweeps his hat behind him, and leans toward her insistently. Then in a voice that grows gravely deeper with indignation, he demands **"So what did you say to him?"** and waits to hear Adelaide describe how she vigorously defended his reputation. **"I told him,"** she replies fiercely, very pleased with herself and leading Nathan to anticipate exactly that kind of response. But then she declares, **"I says, 'I'll meet whoever I want.'"** Preparing to hear himself vindicated, Nathan is in the process of taking in a deep breath. But Adelaide's reply makes him catch that breath in the middle of his inhalation, because he is completely dumbfounded by her non sequitur. He looks away from her and cocks his head to one side, trying in vain to follow her logic, then stares at the ground with a hint of a pout around his mouth and absorbs her unintentional insult. **"Oh,"** he manages at last, in a flat, deflated tone, but then continues kindly, **"Well, don't upset yourself."**

On a somewhat brighter note, Nathan tenderly asks, **"How's your cold?"** Adelaide replies that it's much better, but then changes direction entirely. **"Nathan,"** she cries out with bubbling high spirits, **"Happy Anniversary!"** and holds out a small box with a red bow. With no gift of his own to give her, he responds in a hesitant, rather clotted sounding voice, **"A present - uh - for me?"** Nevertheless, he takes the box from her, pulls off the lid eagerly, and looks inside. **"A belt,"** he comments with a good try at enthusiasm. But Adelaide hops up and down excitedly and pleads, **"Read**

the card!" Nathan holds the box and attached card out at arms length, opens the card, and recites, "**Sugar is sweet and so is jelly, so put this belt around your belly.**" He emphasizes the hackneyed meter of her little verse, giving it just a hint of a cheery, sing-song cadence. For her part, Adelaide bobs and sways blissfully along with the rhythm of his voice. Lowering the box and holding it in one hand, Nathan tilts his head to one side and looks at his buoyantly happy Adelaide with indulgent affection. "**Oh that is so sweet,**" he says, his inflection completely sincere but not at all syrupy, as he nods his head in a gentle show of appreciation. Now he replaces his hat and gently takes her elbow with his free hand. "**Look - uh - honey, - uh about your present,**" Nathan begins as he ushers her back toward center stage. Strolling with Adelaide in that direction, he continues, "**I was going to get you a diamond wrist watch, with a gold band, and two rubies on the side,**" His voice rises with each word of the description, building excitement and anticipation for this wondrous gift. But Adelaide turns to face him and stops his forward motion with her hands squarely on his chest. "**Nathan, you shouldn't have,**" she warns dramatically. Without missing a beat, he confesses, "**It's alright - I didn't.**" His tone flattens and deepens, conveying a comic sense of incompetence and already forecasting her disappointment. Nonetheless, Adelaide takes his arm lovingly with both hands, puts her head on his shoulder, and says, "**No, I kinda like it when you forget to give me presents,**" as Nathan looks down at her with devoted attention, obviously doting on her every word. But when she explains, "**It makes me feel like we're married,**" he looks away, chuckles awkwardly, and drops his head and torso slightly to one side in a little bow of embarrassment.

Nathan turns to face her once more, and any trace of uneasiness disappears. His voice and demeanor grow energized and confident, but also sympathetic as he tries to bolster her spirits. "**Don't you worry, honey,**" he consoles. The anniversary present still grasped in one hand, he uses the box to gesture toward himself and promises, "**One of these days, I'll be in the dough,**" laying upbeat emphasis on the word 'be' and making it sound like a pledge of assurance. Then he points the box resolutely toward Adelaide and continues, "**And you'll have more *mink* than a *mink*.**" Spinning this fantasy for Adelaide, Nathan's voice at first ascends with a pie-in-the-sky lilt, then falls with finality on the last 'mink,' as if he has issued the ultimate word on the subject and magically achieved his vision. Without hesitation, Adelaide reaches up to tenderly clutch both lapels of Nathan's coat and tells him that she "**can do without anything, just so long as you don't start running that crap game again.**" Immediately, Nathan takes a couple of faltering steps backward, as if startled by her unexpected reference to a thought that is the farthest thing from his mind. "**The crap game!**" he exclaims, forcing a counterfeit chuckle between those last two words to distinctly ridicule that idea. "**What an absurd thought!**" he declares, striving for levity and a sense that her allusion to the game is so

preposterous as to be laughable, but merely managing to send his voice into a nervously higher, strangled sounding register.

Just at that moment, Benny and Nicely return to stand at far stage left. "**Psst!**" Benny interjects with some urgency, "**Twelve hundred cheesecake and fifteen hundred strudel.**" Having just completed his avowal of innocence to Adelaide, Nathan holds up an index finger to her, mutely begging her indulgence for the interruption, steps behind her, and hurries over to his associates. "**Huh?**" he asks, clearly disconcerted by Benny's announcement. Nicely quickly clarifies that the numbers represent Mindy's total sales of cheesecake and strudel for yesterday. "**More strudel than cheesecake,**" Nathan exults, then pumps one fist triumphantly and adds, "**That's great!**" on an eager explosion of breath. Of course, Adelaide views this exchange from a distance and demands suspiciously, "**Nathan, what is this?**" Taking a few casual steps in her direction, Nathan practically croons his reply. "**Nothin', honey,**" he assures her in a buttery-smooth, cajoling, musical tone and shakes his head *no* to buttress his denial. Despite this transparent attempt to deceive her, he still manages to gild the endearment with genuine affection.

From the other side of the stage, Harry the Horse now calls out with another intrusion, "**Hey! Any news yet?**" Distracted yet still mindful of the demands of gallantry, Nathan crosses behind Adelaide and strides with purpose toward the gambler. "**Not yet, Harry,**" Nathan replies, then points meaningfully at him and adds, "**I'll let you know,**" in a tone that is at once breezily optimistic but weighted with import. When Harry responds with a clipped, "**Okay, Detroit,**" and quickly exits, Nathan returns to face Adelaide. She is considerably less than pleased and insists, "**What was that about?**" Seeming to run straight into her suspicions like a stone wall, Nathan stops short and then back-pedals a few steps. He's been holding the gift box in one hand, tucked into the crook of his arm. But now he stretches out the arm with the box toward stage right, releasing a finger to indicate the now absent Harry. "**Uh... his wife's havin' a baby,**" Nathan informs Adelaide matter-of-factly. But she persists in an incredulous tone that drips with ridicule, "**Why is he askin' you?**" Nathan nods his head once and informs her with apparent sympathy, "**He's nervous-**" Then he takes a long, skeptical glance toward the spot where Harry made his exit and scrunches up his features into an apprehensive wince. Pausing just a beat, Nathan adds with perfect timing, "**It's his first wife,**" attempting to deflect her suspicion and divert her attention with this outrageously funny comeback.

His diversionary story only partially successful, Nathan now walks back to stand before Adelaide once more. "**Look - um - Adelaide, I'm expecting a fella...**" he begins. His gentle, apologetic tone rises at the end of the phrase, giving it the uncertain sound of a question and implying that he hopes she will not be offended by his clear, though

considerate attempt to dismiss her. **"...And I know you're hungry,"** he continues with unmistakable empathy for her long day of rehearsal and missed lunch. Now he takes her elbow and hustles her insistently toward his henchmen at stage left. At the same time, he stretches out his other arm toward the pair, the gift box protruding at the end of his hand as he suggests oh-so altruistically, **"So - ah - boys, why don't you take Adelaide over to the drug store?"** Nathan stops and positions Adelaide directly in front of his assistants, explaining with much more decisive and commanding energy, **"You see, honey, you got a cold. It's across the street. And there's a lot of open manholes around."** He delivers this last statement on a deep note of warning, elongating the last syllable of **"around"** and letting it resonate with an ominous implication, as he tilts his head sharply sideways to give an added spur to his admonition. Then he gives Adelaide over to the Boys, steps back from the group, and once again secures her gift box back in the crook of his arm. As Nicely and Benny each hook an elbow around one of Adelaide's arms and literally haul her backward off stage, Nathan cocks his head to one side and watches her enforced departure with what can only be described as the most tender affection. **"Nathan, you're so thoughtful,"** she calls out to him, **"You're just the sweetest person. Goodbye."** Just as she disappears into the wings, Nathan raises a hand to shoulder height and barely curls, then straightens his fingers several times, sketching a minimal wave and returning her goodbye.

Nathan's Pal, Sky

Still cradling the gift box, Nathan uses his free hand to adjust the cocky slant of his hat, while he turns and walks a short way upstage and to the right. Abruptly he stops, moves a few steps to his downstage side, and leans over to detect something in the distance that catches his eye. Surprised by what he sees, Nathan fully stretches out an arm to indicate a man who enters from the back of the stage. **"Hey,"** Nathan calls out, with dawning and well-pleased recognition, **"Masterson!"** As the two men walk toward each other at center, Nathan gives out a hearty chuckle and declares with conspicuous bonhomie, **"Ha, ha. Glad to see ya, Sky!"** Wryly, Masterson responds, **"Nathan! You old promoter, you!"** The two friends share a hearty handshake, and Nathan asks, **"How are you?"** But with a deep rumble of affable enthusiasm, he promptly comments, **"You look great,"** vigorously accenting that last word and propelling it through jaws tightened with exuberance. Sky replies that he feels great and explains that he just returned from two weeks in Nevada, where he **"beat 'em for fifty G's at blackjack."** **"Fifty G's!"** Nathan echoes in utter awe as he flinches and starts back in amazement. Quickly, Nathan takes a step closer to Sky and meets his eyes with an earnest look that almost seems like supplication. **"Gonna be in town long?"** Nathan asks, his tone ingratiating, his posture subtly humble, and his stature somehow diminished. The audience can almost see into his thoughts as he envisions some of those **'fifty G's'**

flowing his way by means of his crap game. But Masterson swiftly squelches that illusion when he replies shortly, **"No. Flying to Havana tomorrow."** **"Havana?"** Nathan questions in disbelief, clearly baffled as to why his friend would want to go there. Sky explains, **"There's a lot of action down there,"** in the only language that has significance to a gambler and suggests, **"Why don't you come with me?"** But Nathan bolsters his emphatic refusal with a quick sideways jerk of his head and upper body. **"Nah,"** Nathan says, then scrunches up his features into a troubled grimace as he turns, takes a few steps away, and concludes in a rather distracted voice, **"I got a lot of things to do."**

After the briefest pause, Nathan turns back to his friend and begins, **"Uh, Meantime..."** the rising pitch of his voice signaling a complete change of topic. He takes a long side-step closer to Sky and leans his upper body toward the man persuasively. **"How about dropping over to Mindy's for a piece of Cheesecake?"** Nathan suggests with exaggerated enthusiasm in a comic effort to disguise his scheming intent. **"They sell a lot of cheesecake,"** he adds hopefully with barely a pause and gestures to the left with his thumb over his shoulder. At the same time he sidesteps encouragingly in that direction, quite obviously urging Sky to follow him, but at the same time keeping his eyes on the man to gauge his reaction. However Sky politely declines and dashes Nathans's hopes yet again. **"Tell me, how's Adelaide?"** Sky asks, trying to change the bent of the conversation. Nathan stands a little distance away toward stage left and looks off with longing in the direction of Mindy's and the cheesecake. **"Uh, fine, fine. Still dancing at the Hot Box,"** he replies, his tone distracted and disinterested as he puzzles out how to lure the other gambler into this trumped-up bet. But Masterson sticks with the topic of Adelaide, **"I suppose one of these days you'll be getting married."** Nathan turns and lowers his head to stare at the ground, then answers on a flat, fatalistic, almost brooding note, **"Eh... we all gotta go some time."** However, Sky protests that guys like him and Nathan can fight that inexorable pull toward marriage, never forgetting that a doll **"must always take second place to Aces back-to-back."** Nathan turns toward the other man and nods his head briskly a couple of times to signal his accord with this sage advice. Then he stretches out an arm to Masterson, gesturing toward him with the anniversary present still clutched in that hand, and concurs, **"Yeah ... yeah."** But Nathan agrees in such a tepid, preoccupied way that it's obvious he is just trying to humor his friend.

Nathan now takes a big, energetic step toward Sky. **"Tell me,"** Nathan says, his voice and his demeanor more animated, **"You hungry yet?"** But before the other gambler can answer, Nathan is already stepping tentatively sideways to the left and pointing with his thumb over his shoulder in that direction again. **"Maybe we could go over to Mindy's for a piece of cheesecake or strudel or somethin'?"** he suggests with enthusiasm. His voice rises hopefully and hangs suspended on the last word in an attempt to pique

the other man's interest. At the same time, he sweeps an upturned hand out to the left encouragingly, trying to prod Sky to move in that direction. But rather than take the proffered bait, Masterson declines again. He says that he prefers to get the late racing results and begins to walk briskly away. "Oh," Nathan responds, dropping his head and his voice in a crestfallen, visibly deflated manner. But he soon recovers and follows behind Sky doggedly, holding out one arm in appeal and nodding his head with vigorous assurance. "But you will admit," Nathan insists with suddenly renewed animation, "that Mindy has the greatest cheesecake in the country," his emphatic tone inviting nothing but foregone agreement from his friend. Sky stops, turns back to Nathan, and admits that he is "quite partial to Mindy's cheesecake." Nathan nods his head again in assent and chuckles companionably at the same time. "Yeah, Who ain't?" he concurs and makes an inward semi-circle with his free arm, as if to include the entire world in their shared partiality to Mindy's cheesecake. Now Nathan takes a chummy, confidential step closer to Sky and changes tack slightly. "And yet, there are some people who like Mindy's strudel," Nathan contends and tries to slyly insert the opposing term of his wager into the conversation.



"The cheesecake or the strudel?"

In a bid to strike a spontaneous air and an impromptu tone, Nathan lays out the proposition very casually. "Offhand..." he begins and makes a subtle beckoning gesture with the fingers of an upturned hand to openly invite the other man's opinion, "...which do you think he sells more of, the cheesecake or the strudel?" Loosely clutching the gift from Adelaide under his arm, he casually stuffs his free hand in his pocket, draws his features into a musing frown, and lifts his shoulders in what he hopes is a convincingly impartial shrug. Although Sky protests that he hasn't given the matter much thought, he nonetheless guesses that Mindy sells more cheesecake than strudel. Well satisfied with his friend's pick, Nathan gives one concise nod of his head, then immediately seizes his opportunity. "For how much?"

he asks in a suddenly terse, assertive tone. When Sky responds with a surprised "Huh?" Nathan again insists, "For how much?" and gives the phrase the audacious tenor of a dare. Sky seems quite taken aback by Nathan's uncharacteristic daring and says so: "Why, Nathan, I never knew you to be a betting man. You always take your percentage off the top." Nathan merely makes a quick sideways tilt of his upper body, as if to shrug off the comment with a little show of fatalistic indifference. "Well, for old time's sake," he says, taking a long step closer to Sky and leaning toward him confidentially, "I thought I'd give you a little action." Now Nathan points to his friend and boldly states, "I will bet you one thousand bucks..." He strides away to the right with a cocky swagger, incongruously still holding the beribboned box in the crook of his arm like some kind of talisman, and continues, "...that yesterday Mindy sold more strudel than cheesecake." Highlighting those two options, Nathan brings a downturned hand across his body to indicate the first choice, then swings the now-upturned hand out to the opposite side to suggest the other. Finally, he turns toward Sky with an expectant look and waits for a propitious response.

However, instead of yielding to Nathan's gambit, Sky makes a proposal of his own: "Nathan let me tell you a little story." Nathan responds with a questioning, "Oh?" that sounds dubious, disappointed and suspicious all at the same time. Nonetheless, Sky proceeds to give quite a detailed account of wise advice his father gave him on the subject of betting against someone who claims he can make a playing card squirt cider in your ear. During the long narration of this parable, Nathan crosses to Sky and cocks his head in the man's direction to diligently catch his every word. Watching his friend attentively, Nathan even sidles closer and peers over Sky's shoulder, seeming to look intently at the imaginary deck of cards the man holds. As Sky concludes his tale with the cautionary words, "you're going to wind up with an earful of cider," Nathan jerks his head back and takes one backward step, as if he could feel the shock of cold liquid in his own ear. But the look of vague distaste on his face is instantly supplanted by a calculating scowl that betrays his anxiety over his unraveling ploy. "Now Nathan," Sky continues in a tone of authority as he crosses to Nathan's other side, "I do not claim that you have been clocking Mindy's cheesecakes—" Those words abruptly snap Nathan out of his scheming thoughts. His head bobs forward twice and his mouth drops open in shock and guilty dismay as he turns to face Masterson. "You don't think that..." Nathan sputters. He forces a deep chuckle into his protest to show how ludicrous is the implied charge and opens his mouth to form his next word, "I," without actually being able to utter the sound. As he speaks, he pulls his free hand from his pocket and first holds it out to the other man in appeal, then brings it into his chest to designate himself as the very model of heartfelt innocence. But Nathan's attempted disavowal is an overt sham, and Sky cuts him off in mid-

protest. Masterson offers to bet the same thousand dollars that Nathan can't identify the color of the necktie he is wearing, and then summarily claps a hand across Nathan's chest to obscure his tie. Caught flat-footed, Nathan can only stare at Sky with glazed-over eyes and slack jawed chagrin, the ever-present gift box securely nestled in the crook of one arm. Mouth still agape, Nathan drops his head to steal a glance at his necktie, but his chin comes into jarring contact with Sky's obstructing hand and bounces back to its former height. As Nathan's eyes rebound to the other man's face, they widen with a sudden spark of comprehension and panic. He makes a wry, disgruntled grimace and declines in a thoroughly defeated and frustrated tone, "No bet!" Nathan steps back to dislodge his friend's hand, but not before Sky gives him an affectionate tap on the chest in commiseration. Finally, Nathan drops his head and takes a good look at his tie, then throws out one hand in exasperation and raises his head abruptly, an appalled look of inevitability disclosing that the color of his tie is not just predictable but banal. "Blue," he blurts out with great annoyance, then adds in a bitter tone that is also sharp with sarcasm, "What a crazy color." With that he stuffs his free hand back in his pocket, turns his back, and strides behind the other man toward stage right.

Benny and Nicely now enter from stage left. Benny proceeds to call out in a loud and grating voice, "Nathan, we took Adelaide to the drug store..." Visibly aggravated, Nathan throws out his free hand dismissively toward them, but avoids any eye contact with the pair and barely inclines his head in their direction. "Don't bother me," he snaps with sharp irritation. But his Boys seem unfazed by their boss's ill humor and exchange friendly greetings with Sky, before Nicely repeats that they took Adelaide to the drug store as instructed. In a most annoying and nagging falsetto that is meant to imitate Adelaide, Nicely informs Nathan that the lady says, "For you to be sure to pick her up after the show at the Hot Box and *Don't be late.*" While listening to this parody, Nathan reluctantly tilts his head toward Nicely without ever looking directly at the man, resisting even a slight acknowledgement, and adopting an attitude that reflects beleaguered forbearance and grudging consent to an irksome but necessary duty. Thus Nathan answers with a robotic, "Yes, dear," nodding his head woodenly, half smiling/half wincing in pained resignation. Immediately, he raises his free hand, then forcefully throws it out to the side and down, as if to erase his unfortunate gaffe. At almost the same instant, he tries to amend the slip up, hurriedly adding with a twisted scowl of visible annoyance at himself, "I mean, yes." Then he flatly turns his back to the three other men and walks a few steps further away, hoping perhaps to distance himself from his regrettable reply and to forestall any disparaging comments. But it would seem that Nathan attempts those evasive tactics in vain, since Sky immediately pounces on the blunder and echoes loudly in mock alarm, "Yes, dear!" Continuing to rib his friend good-naturedly, Sky adds, "That is husband talk if I ever heard it." But then his tone grows serious, and he

warns, "Nathan, you are trapped. In Adelaide you have the kind of girl that is most difficult to unload."

As Masterson begins his warning, Nathan turns partially back toward him but meets his dire admonition with a blank stare. Throwing both arms abruptly out to the side, one palm turned upward in a gesture that denotes irrelevance, the other hand still cradling the gift box, Nathan gives an extravagant shrug that graphically expresses how pointless he considers the other man's warning to be. "I don't want to unload her," Nathan objects. Then he maintains with unadorned but earnest sincerity, "I love Adelaide," like he is making a simple statement of irrefutable fact. Now Nathan stretches out his free arm toward the other man compellingly and walks to him with renewed confidence and vigor as he expounds on his previous objection, "And a guy without a doll... Well, I mean if a guy does not have a doll, who would holler at him?" Nathan accompanies this last phrase with a single, descriptive, backward wave of his hand. Then facing the other man directly and standing tall with his feet planted firmly a few inches apart, he adds with unshakable conviction, "A doll is a *necessity*," and jabs an emphatic forefinger toward the other man in time with his sharply accented last word. With that Nathan raises his chin, well content that he has carried his point. And Sky does soften his stance a bit in response, amending that he is not "putting the rap on dolls," but claiming that "a guy should have them when he wants them, and they are easy to find." At once, Nathan manifests quite palpable indignation. "Not dolls like Adelaide," he insists without hesitation and with no need for posturing. His even, unflappable tone suggests that he is again merely stating a patently obvious truth. But all the same, he raises his chin still higher to signify the conspicuous air of pride he takes in *his doll*. In response, Sky gives his unsolicited opinion that "figuring weight for age, all dolls are the same." Nathan takes a hasty, oversize, confrontational step toward the other man, leans his torso even closer, and replies contentiously, "Yeah?" tossing the single word into the gambler's face. Quickly, Sky affirms, "Yeah!" But just as quickly Nathan responds in a taunting inflection, "Then how come you ain't got one?" his tone slyly goading the other man to remedy that particular deficiency. Affecting a cocky swagger, Nathan now crosses in front of Sky toward stage left and puts a sharper edge to his gibe. "How come you're going to Havana, tomorrow, alone?" Nathan inquires and underlines the word "alone" with heavy emphasis, an ominous tone, and a sharp forward jab of his head. Then he swivels around abruptly to face the other man again and waits for his reply with an uplifted chin and an expectant expression. Coolly, Sky points out that he prefers "to travel light," but declares that if he did want female company for his trip, "There is a large assortment available." However, Nathan takes immediate issue with that conclusion. Drawing himself upright, he tilts his torso backward at the waist, juts his hips forward, and rocks both heels off the ground in an audacious display of boundless confidence as he contends, "Not real high-class dolls." He allows himself a

scornful, little chuckle when he says the word “dolls” to pointedly ridicule the other man’s assumption. Both his body language and his inflection bear the stark implication of a challenge. And Sky quickly takes the bait, insisting, “Any doll! You name her!”

Nathan instantly seizes his opportunity. His entire demeanor somehow projecting a scheming, wily air, he takes a wide sidestep and a couple of smaller steps closer to his intended target. “Any doll? And I name her?” he echoes cunningly, “Will you bet on that?” At this point, the mission band enters from left, playing “Follow the Fold” and marching in single file. Both Nathan and Sky turn to look at them briefly, while Sky agrees, “Yeah.” As the band crosses before him at center stage, Nathan raises his voice to shout over the music and cagily outlines the terms of the bet, “Will you bet a thousand dollars that if I name a doll, you will take her to Havana tomorrow?” Sky agrees with gusto, saying, “You got a bet.” The two gamblers shake hands just as Miss Sarah passes them, straggling after the band and swatting frantically at some annoyance with her hanky. Nathan keeps a firm grip on the other man’s hand and, palming the ever-present gift box with his other hand, points dramatically to the distracted missionary. “I - name - her,” Nathan intones deliberately in a dark, portentous voice. Sky looks toward Sarah as she follows the band to the other side of the stage. “Her?” he asks in disbelief, then glances back at Nathan for a reply. Nathan makes one positive nod of affirmation and can’t help but bare a shrewd, victorious smile, as Masterson points to his ear and cries out in evident frustration, “Cider!” Nathan—his mouth now wide-open in a triumphant, gloating, *gotcha* grin—carefully watches the other gambler’s reaction. Fixing him with that jubilant, cocksure expression, Nathan takes several long, elated, backward steps before he turns and exits the stage just as the lights wink out.

A Pivotal Phone Call

In the scene that follows, Sky and Sarah meet at the Save-A-Soul Mission. As the last notes of their lyrical duet fade, brilliant arc lights illuminate two figures at opposite extremes of the front of the stage. Nathan stands at left, next to a payphone. He appears in shirt sleeves and the wide, pleated, garishly pin-striped pants of his suit. The blue striped tie that figured so prominently in his previous scene with Sky and dark blue suspenders stand out from the background of his soft, grey-blue shirt. Those braces and the waistband of his pants make a stunning frame for his broad shoulders and narrow waist. Unaccountably, the grey felt fedora still tops off Nathan’s casual look. The man on the other side of the stage, wearing coveralls and a snap brim cap, stands next to a shop phone.

In a crude, grating voice the man says, “This is Joey Biltmore. Whadda ya want?” When Nathan answers, his tone instantly conveys the pressing nature of the call,

“Yeah, Joey, it’s Nathan. I’m calling about the – ah – you know.”



“Yeah, Joey, it’s Nathan.
I’m calling about the – ah – you know.”

Nathan’s voice grows more quiet and intense, his manner, more secretive as he approaches the reason for his call. Ultimately he avoids mentioning that reason by name and instead makes a vague but insistent reference to it, substituting, “you know,” as an inadequate alias. However, Joey fails to comprehend the reference and boorishly demands, “The what?” So Nathan clarifies in an emphatically accented stage whisper, “The crap game.” But Joey still doesn’t make the connection and asks again with some annoyance, “The what?” “The crap game,” Nathan insists more distinctly and more urgently, straining to produce an even louder whisper. But Joey, still oblivious to the reason for Nathan’s call, briefly breaks off the conversation to attend to business and says, “Hold on a second.” On the other side of the stage and at the other end of the line, Nathan stands with feet planted apart, stuffs his hand in his pocket, and shifts his weight from one foot to the other restlessly, waiting for Joey to return. When he hears Joey shout, “That’ll be eighty dollars,” at earsplitting volume, Nathan reacts instantly and instinctively. He jerks the receiver away from his ear, thrusts his head sideways in the opposite direction, and twists his face into a painful wince of irritation and disgust at the coarse bellow that blares over the phone. Just then, Joey returns to pick up the thread of their conversation. “What are you talkin’ about, Nathan?” he demands. This time Nathan answers in an equally blaring and clearly aggravated tone, “The crap game!” he shouts. Together with that bellow, he leans forward from the waist, pulls his hand from his pocket, palm turned up and stiff fingers splayed apart, and shakes it in frustration at the receiver, trying urgently to make Joey understand. “Don’t say that on the phone,” Joey scolds with maddening audacity,

"...suppose the cops are listening." At the sound of Joey's reprimand, Nathan purses his lips into a brief grimace of compunction for the slip up, fleetingly brushes his upper lip with the back of a forefinger, as if to erase the words he just spoke, and simultaneously turns around to glance behind him with a hint of apprehension in case any coppers might be within earshot.

But recovering his composure, Nathan at last spells out the real intent of his phone call. "Look Joey," he begins, "Is it okay if I use your place tomorrow night?" While he makes his earnest request, Nathan extends his free hand, presses the thumb and forefinger together precisely, the other three fingers jutting straight out like an underscore, and makes several, short, jabbing motions to punctuate his proposal. Then he closes his hand into a loose fist and pulls it tentatively back into his waist, while he tucks his lower lip under his teeth, waiting expectantly for what he hopes will be Joey's agreement. But Joey quickly stipulates, "If I get a thousand bucks." Just as quickly, Nathan assures him, "I'll have it tomorrow." Nathan's inflection is clipped, crisp, and confident as he throws open his fist, palm turned up in a brisk, scooping motion that is meant to signify *of course, by all means*. At once, he brings his fist back to rest near his waist again and tucks in his bottom lip, his demeanor now one of coiled energy and brash assurance. But Joey—not that easily swayed—parries, "Then call me tomorrow." Here Nathan changes tactics and opts for a tougher stance. He tilts his head to one side to admonish the man on the other end of the receiver and intones, "Look, Joey..." slowing his words and drawing them out with a deceptively melodic yet distinctly chiding sound. "If you're going to take that attitude, I'll have the game someplace else," Nathan finishes firmly and with a touch of rueful menace in his voice. "So have it someplace else," Joey replies, unfazed. In a spasm of desperation and anger, Nathan throws his upper body forward from the waist to glare into the receiver, shakes an upturned hand with fingers tensed into the semblance of a claw at the offending instrument, and shouts furiously, "Where else can I have it?" His thundering voice sounds raspy, impassioned, importunate and clotted with frustration. But after the briefest pause, he uncurls his body, relaxes his posture, and softens his tone. "Look Joey," he begins again, this time on a clearly conciliatory note, as he slips his hand casually back in his pocket. "The dough is guaranteed," he vows, making himself taller, shifting his weight from side to side, then slightly extending one foot in a loose, easy-going stance that projects the very essence of cool confidence. But after that, Nathan adds a tag line that reveals a crack in his self-possessed façade. He stands with feet planted shoulder-width apart and draws himself upright, hoping to embody the upstanding honesty he wants to project to Joey. "Would I lie to you?" he asks and stretches out the end of the question, as he sends it rising in pitch to give it just the telltale hint of a whining plea. "Yes!" Joey answers, quickly and categorically.

Deliberately undaunted by Joey's churlish reply, Nathan flexes his knees and leans slightly forward to direct what he believes to be a compelling assurance directly into the mouthpiece of the phone. "I'm getting it from Sky Masterson," he pledges, invoking the renowned gambler's name like some sort of endorsement. But Joey's mistrust remains undiminished. "How do you know?" he presses skeptically. Nathan responds with swaggering self-confidence, "It's a bet – I can't lose." Hand stuffed breezily into his pocket, he leans his torso slightly back and tilts his hips slightly forward in a small-scale reprise of the display he affected for Masterson earlier when he was laying out terms for their wager. "I bet him he could not take a doll to Havana," Nathan declares with obvious relish. Once again, Joey is unimpressed and argues, "Why couldn't he?" But Nathan counters without a moment's hesitation and with unshakable certainty, "She ain't the kind of doll who goes to Havana." Joey, revealing an exasperatingly literal bent of mind, inquires, "Where does she go?" But Nathan, still flaunting that smug, cocksure attitude, shakes his head to indicate the negative and replies with devious delight, "She don't go no place." He barks out a short, sharp, crafty cackle, "Ha!" and gloats, "That's why I know I'm gonna win." As Nathan waits for what he is sure will be Joey's eager appreciation for this master stroke, his hand remains nonchalantly in his pocket, the corresponding shoulder slopes down at an impudent angle, and a slick, suave grin splits his features with a kind of nefarious yet charming glee. But as usual, Joey is neither impressed nor convinced. "Don't be so sure," the man warns, "It ain't a horse. It's a doll." At that, Nathan's grin disappears and his brows knit together in a heavy scowl. He cocks his head to one side and seems to cast a riveting glare at the man on the other end of the receiver at his ear. "Look, Joey," Nathan begins again, but this time his tone sounds deep, stern and intimidating. However Joey cuts Nathan off before he can articulate any threat. "Nathan," Joey interrupts with stubborn determination, "There will be no crap game here tomorrow night unless I get my dough in advance."

Nathan, his plans thwarted and his patience frayed at the other man's continued refusal, swivels briefly around toward the back of the stage, as if to utterly repudiate Joey's demands. But immediately facing front again, he contorts his mouth in a wry grimace of discontent, pulls his hand from his pocket, and rubs his upper lip several times distractedly with his knuckle. But frustrated as Nathan is, he isn't willing to take *no* for an answer. In a much more genial, smooth, even placating way, he implores, "Joey, you've known me a long time," while twice tipping the fully spread fingers of his free hand toward the receiver, as if to tap into a more intimate connection with the man at the other end. As usual, Joey's suspicion is not mollified in the least, and he counters with caustic disdain, "That's why I want it in advance." But Nathan brushes aside the insult

and tries to win some small advantage, proposing a less-than-satisfactory concession: “Can I at least tell the guys that the game is gonna be at your place tomorrow night?” In his mind, this is an eminently reasonable request, and he punctuates it with two rhythmic, outward swipes of his upturned palm in a wordless gesture of compromise. Weary and nearly defeated by the mulishly obstinate Joey, Nathan drops his arm and lets it hang slack at his side. True to his nature, Joey once more refuses to comply, protesting, “Not ‘til I get my dough.” Finally furious and exasperated, Nathan leans forward and shouts into the mouthpiece in a harsh, bitter voice that erupts with scorn, “You’ll get the dough. Good bye!” Without waiting to hear Joey’s equally scathing “Goodbye,” Nathan deposits the receiver back in its cradle. Just before the lights fade and the scene ends, he delivers a parting curse to the now disconnected Joey. “I hope you get stabbed by a Studebaker,” Nathan roars resentfully, then touches the tips of all five fingers to the body of the pay phone with sober intent, as if to assure that the malediction hits its mark. This whole scene is funny; that last line is funny; Scott’s delivery and accompanying actions are all funny, but never cartoonish nor played for the cheap laugh at the expense of an honest portrayal. The audience can see Nathan’s frustration building and literally feel the pressure—indeed, the desperation—to find a secure place to hold his crap game. With that last oath, he steps behind the phone and leaves the stage.

A Daunting Proposal

As Adelaide and the Hot Box Girls finish their performance of “Bushel and a Peck,” Nathan sits at a front, ringside table at the nightclub and applauds them heartily. Their floorshow over, the girls file right past Nathan and exit the stage. The lights dim all the way down; the orchestra plays, “Home, Sweet Home” very softly to signal that the club is closing. Now Nathan rises from his table and quickly walks to the apron of the stage. He proceeds to set up the dressing room scenery: lifting a folding screen from the floor and positioning it at an angle behind the row of tables; removing inverted chairs from atop dressing tables and placing them underneath; all the while, singing softly to himself, reprising the Girls’ closing number, “I love you a bushel and a peck...” But he concludes the line by improvising through clenched teeth—and with a good deal of repressed heat: “...That lousy Joey Biltmore, I could choke him... ..” His words trail away into a stifled, vehement mumble, just as Adelaide enters from the left. With joyful excitement, she calls out his name, and Nathan immediately turns to face her. Sweeping off his hat in a fluid arc, he greets her with audible affection and genuine pleasure at her approach. “Hello, pie-face,” he responds, then leans forward and puckers his lips to welcome her with a quick kiss. Adelaide returns Nathan’s kiss and asks, “How are you, handsome?” “Fine,” he replies genially but without elaboration. These two may have been engaged for fourteen years, but it’s clear that they still delight in each other’s company.

When Adelaide steps in front of Nathan to sit down behind the outline of a mirror at the center dressing table, he looks over her shoulder at the text she is holding, and asks with genuine interest, “What have you got there?” She replies that it’s a book, and Nathan repeats her answer with hearty admiration, “A book!” He places one hand on the back of her chair, the other on top of the table, and leans over her protectively. Looking down at the book, he comments with affectionate approval and more than a little pride, “You’re always reading books. You’re becoming a regular bookie.” Adelaide giggles at his little gaffe, then tells him that the doctor gave her the book when she went to see him about her cold. “How is your cold?” Nathan asks with sincere concern, as he removes his hand from the table top, positions it on his thigh, and tilts his upper body forward to study her more closely, assessing her health for himself. Adelaide allows that her cold is “the same,” then begins a detailed account of her conversation with the doctor, studding her rambling sentence with numerous *ands*, while barely stopping for breath between thoughts. She tells of asking the doctor if her cold might be due to dancing with “hardly any clothes on.” At the same time, she elevates one leg straight into the air, her foot coming to a stop almost directly under Nathan’s nose. In response to her wordless request, Nathan first places his hat back on his head, then frowns slightly and stares at her booted foot with focused concentration, as if puzzled by the intricacies of her footwear.

But settling on a course of action, he carefully removes her short, high-heeled boot, first wiggling it back and forth, then tugging on it gently to free her foot. At this point in her story, Adelaide concludes that the doctor gave her the book to read because her cold “might be due to psychology.” At that, Nathan tilts his head sideways, looks down at her warily, and makes an uneasy wince. “You haven’t got that, have you?” he asks, his tone and manner



skeptical, apprehensive and quite funny. Giggling at Nathan’s worried reaction, Adelaide explains, “This is the psychology that tells you why girls do certain kinds of things.” Then she stretches her opposite leg up into the air, in order for Nathan to perform the small, intimate service of removing her other boot.

Despite Nathan's gallantry, the recent bet concerning Miss Sarah and the dilemma of finding a place for his crap game are never far from his mind. Nathan raises his head alertly, perceiving a useful connection between his bet and Adelaide's definition of psychology. He adopts a thoughtful, calculating expression and says shrewdly, "Oh," the intonation of the word sliding upward to reveal the scheming bent of his thoughts. Then he paces a few steps to the left and repeatedly makes sharp jabs toward the floor with his index finger, outlining the details of his question as he asks, "Would it tell you what kind of a doll would go for a certain kind of a guy, which you wouldn't think that she would do so?" Now Adelaide seems a bit disoriented by the sudden shift in direction of Nathan's question and asks, "What do you mean?" Nathan pivots back toward Adelaide, makes a dismissive, throw-away gesture with his hand, and hurriedly tries to conceal the real objective of his question. "I'm just *for instance*," he says a bit too casually. Pacing back to the other side of her dressing table, he slips one hand into his pocket, gestures toward her with the index finger of his other hand in a rather philosophical manner, and postulates with assumed detachment, "There are certain types of dolls that you would almost bet that they wouldn't go for certain types of guys." In response, Adelaide now seems to lecture him, countering in a most reasonable tone, "Nathan, no matter how terrible a fellow seems..." Meanwhile, Nathan pulls a chair from beneath the adjacent dressing table and sits one hip nonchalantly on the table top with his back to both the audience and the outline of the mirror. He places a forearm across his raised knee and leans toward Adelaide courteously, nodding his head in almost mechanical agreement as she continues, "...you can never be sure that some girl won't go for him." Finally she adds in a quiet, subdued voice, "Take us." At that, Nathan abruptly drops one lifted shoulder and snaps his head up in surprise, searching her face for the intent behind her two-word addendum and making the moment all the more funny. Then he turns his face aside, presenting his profile to the audience, and looks into the near distance with brooding eyes. "Yeah," he responds in a hesitant, dubious tone with slow but dawning awareness that he may have just been insulted. Of course the audience laughs uproariously at Nathan's somewhat obtuse chagrin.

After a moment, Adelaide rises from her chair and walks around behind Nathan, who still sits atop the dressing table next to hers. Standing close behind him, she puts a hand on each of his shoulders, then uses one fist to brush her knuckles up and down his back to soothe him. In an equally calming tone of voice, Adelaide tells him that she will soon get a raise. She continues on a soft note of hope, "So with what I'll be making, I wondered what you would think, maybe we could finally get married." But Nathan, clearly alarmed by the very word, much less Adelaide's proposal, hops off the table and away from her caress with startled dispatch, as if he had been scorched by a fire beneath his seat. Trying to hide his hasty escape beneath a suave, exceedingly nonchalant demeanor, he slips his

hand out of his pocket, situates it alongside his ribs in an urbane, commanding pose, and strolls a few steps away to left. As he walks, he comments in a tone that he intends to make imposing, but one that actually comes out sounding rather strangled, "Oh well, we're gonna - get married, soonah or latah, heh." Unconsciously he inserts a hesitant but telltale pause before he utters "get married," as if he has a great deal of trouble making himself pronounce those words. Stopping with his back turned to Adelaide, he adds an uncomfortable and audibly feeble, little laugh at the end of the sentence in a halfhearted attempt to disguise just how vacillating his comment actually is.

Nathan's ambiguity seems to have the unwanted effect of causing Adelaide to sneeze, just before she steps behind the folding screen to change. At the sound of her sneeze, Nathan starts up in surprise and quickly turns around to face her, concern for her health evident on his face. But then she proceeds to tell him that she's beginning to worry about her mother. "Your mothah? What about your mothah?" he asks dubiously. Pacing slowly back toward Adelaide, he closely watches her face over the top edge of the screen, then pauses with his hand on the back of her empty chair to hear her response. What he hears astounds him. For Adelaide reveals, "My mother, back in Rhode Island, she thinks we're married already." With a thoroughly bewildered chuckle, Nathan stammers, "Wuh-huh..." He pauses for a moment in consternation, then continues as his voice rises on an incredulous note, "Why would she think a thing like that?" While he questions Adelaide, Nathan turns slightly away from the dressing screen and faces front. He stuffs both hands in his pockets and shifts his weight uneasily from one foot to the other. But he goes stock still and turns his head back to stare at Adelaide with a look of astonishment at the high pitch of near-hysteria in her voice when she pleads, "I couldn't be engaged for fourteen years, could I? People don't do that in Rhode Island. They all get married." In the ensuing silence, Nathan turns his head away and drops his eyes to stare ruefully at the floor. "They do, huh?" he responds in a soft, deflated tone, then turns his head even farther away from her toward the opposite side of the stage. But it seems that Adelaide has more to confess. "Then after about two years..." she begins haltingly. Nathan lifts his head sharply, turns to look at her again, and asks with palpable foreboding, "What after about two yeahrs?" Adelaide answers in a shy voice that nonetheless sounds quite pleased and self-satisfied, "We had a baby." Hands still stuffed into his pockets, Nathan leans just his upper body forward sharply and stares at her in open-mouthed shock. He takes a long, sideways step toward Adelaide, who remains behind the folding screen, and begins with exasperation, "You told your..." Suddenly he halts both movement and speech. After a moment, he pivots abruptly and paces several agitated steps away in the opposite direction, while he brushes his upper lip with the back of his knuckles as if to forestall an irate comment. When he stops walking, he turns only partially around and faces the front instead of directly facing Adelaide. He

reaches a long arm out sideways toward her and shakes his hand insistently in her direction, demanding, “**What type of baby was it?**” Nathan waits for her answer with his outstretched arm still hanging in mid-air. “**It was a boy,**” Adelaide informs him with effervescent excitement, “**I named it after you.**” Obviously flattered and much mollified by this fictional news, Nathan lifts his outstretched arm still higher and lets it drop to his side like a shrug that conveys *of course*. At the same time, he inclines his head graciously in her direction and says, “**Thank you,**” with just a hint of smug satisfaction in his voice. His actions seem to denote the suitability, indeed, the inevitability of his son becoming his namesake, even in the realm of imagination. After walking a few more steps away to left, he comes to a stop, rocks slightly forward on the balls of his feet, and stuffs his hand back in his pocket. He nods his head and smiles to himself contentedly, seeming to stand a little taller and puff his chest out a little further, even as Adelaide responds happily, “**You’re welcome.**”

Now standing some distance away with his back to Adelaide and the folding screen, Nathan gazes pensively into the distance and asks in a preoccupied voice, “**And – uh – where is this Nathan Jr. supposed to be?**” Adelaide, in the process of removing her costume and laying it across the top of the screen, replies, “**He’s in boarding school. I wrote Mother he won the football game last Saturday.**” Hearing those tidings, Nathan nods his head briefly, then narrows his eyes in a calculating, far-away stare. “**I wish I had bet on it,**” he adds, his tone quiet and rueful, as his dire need of that thousand dollars intrudes on his thoughts despite this current crisis. However, it would seem that Adelaide has yet more disturbing news for him. “**But Nathan,**” she calls timidly. Nathan, still lost in thought, turns partially back toward her and responds with a distracted, “**Hmm?**” “**That’s not all, Nathan,**” she goes on, sounding rather sheepish. Nathan takes in a fortifying breath, then lifts and circles his head away to the opposite direction in a fluid, expressive gesture of disgust. “**Don’t tell me he has a little sistah,**” he cautions her, drawing out the words with a deep note of warning in his voice, as he pulls his hands from his pockets and walks a few wary steps back in her direction. He waits for a response that Adelaide does not seem willing to offer, then takes a long, exasperated step closer to the screen. “**Just gimme the grand total,**” he says harshly, reaching out his arm and waving at her in frustration. For an answer, Adelaide merely extends one hand out from behind the screen, spreads out all her fingers, and barely voices the word “**Five.**” Nathan reacts to this whispered response as if he’s been slapped, jerking his head backward and wincing in pain. Then he pivots abruptly on his heel and walks in the opposite direction again, while his eyebrows draw upward miserably and his face takes on an anxious, wounded expression. But after only a few steps, he reverses direction once more, turns back to face her, and calls out in a sharply reproving tone, “**Adelaide!**” Walking a little closer to the screen, he holds both arms outstretched to her, shakes them once in insistent appeal, and demands, “**How could you do such a**

thing to a nice old broad like your mothah?” As he emphasizes the words “**nice old broad,**” he throws both arms backward over his shoulder to indicate Adelaide’s mother off in the distance of Rhode Island. Now Nathan moves even closer to the screen, stretches both arms out to Adelaide again in great agitation, and pleads, “**And what am I supposed to tell her I did with five kids...**” Answering his own question, he fretfully whirls back in the opposite direction, as he stretches one arm out that same way and suggests with comical, if frantic irony, “**...traded them to the Phillies or somethin’?**” Nearly distraught now, he paces a little way farther to left and asks with a rising note of near-panic in his voice, “**Wh-wh-what are we gonna do?**”

At once, Adelaide seizes her opportunity. Emerging from behind the screen at last, she pulls on her robe, follows behind Nathan, and responds in suddenly forceful terms, “**We could get married.**” As he hears her insistent proposal, Nathan again nervously swipes the back of his knuckles across his top lip, the unconscious gesture a revealing sign of his distaste for that extreme proposition. Quickly he rounds on her and gives hesitant voice to his objection. “**But m-marriage...**” he stutters, holding his arms out to her, then dropping them low and close to his body, his hands upturned to bracket that daunting word and to plead for prudence and constraint. With a preliminary chuckle that demonstrates how ludicrous her suggestion is, he warns, “**...It – it, huh-huh, ain’t somethin’ you just jump into like it was a kettle of fish.**” When he stresses the words “**jump into,**” he throws one hand away from his body to illustrate just such a rash action. He then crosses behind Adelaide and stands on the other side of her dressing table to clinch his argument. It is clear that Nathan now strives to sound eminently reasonable, in marked opposition to his earlier panicked state. But truth be told, he gives every indication of being unwillingly backed into a corner and trying mightily to squirm out of the tight spot. All the same he concludes with forceful insistence, “**We – ain’t – ready.**” He emphasizes each discrete word by smiting the air in front of him three times with the backs of his hands, the rigid fingers of each hand extended and touching each other precisely. To match the dire, conclusive tone of his last word, he lets his hands fall bleakly to the back of the empty chair in front of him and leans his weight on his arms, as if spent from his effort to persuade Adelaide. But she is most certainly not persuaded. Seated once more behind her dressing table, she responds with quiet composure, “**I’m ready, Nathan.**”

To prove her point, Adelaide reaches beneath the table to retrieve a box and places it on the tabletop. “**Nathan!**” she cries out with growing excitement, “**What do you think I got in this box?**” as she thumps the box like a bongo, keeping time with the rhythm of her question. Nathan still stands at the adjacent table, resting both hands on the back of the chair and leaning over it gloomily. Using the back of the chair for leverage, he tilts his upper body steeply to one side and peers over Adelaide’s shoulder at the top of the box. The label makes him twist his mouth into an ironic

grimace and turn his head completely in the opposite direction. In a flat, dull voice, he quotes, "**Sally's Wedding Shop**," then quickly adds with derision that is somehow noticeably gentle, "I can't guess." However, Adelaide seems completely unfazed by his cynical tone and announces reverently, "It's a wedding veil." At this disclosure, Nathan, who still inclines over the back of the empty chair and keeps his face pointedly averted from the offending box, allows himself a brief grimace and barely nods his head sideways in a small futile shrug that concedes the predestined nature of the box's contents. He remains motionless in his resistant posture, except to drum his fingers inconspicuously on the back of the chair, as Adelaide reveals that she has had the veil for three years but won't show it to him, "because it's bad luck." With hardly a pause to mark her dizzying about-face, Adelaide asks with childlike eagerness, "Would you like to see it?" Now at last, Nathan turns his head back to regard her. He extends the look for a long, meaningful moment, as his expression mellows into a mixture of wry mystification, tender amusement, and such intimate knowledge of her that he could have predicted she would ask this exact question – bad luck or no. Needless to say, Nathan's complex facial expression greatly enhances the hilarity of Adelaide's incongruous line.

Despite the fact that Nathan now turns his face away from her again, then hangs his head low over the back of the chair and shakes it faintly from side to side in dismay, Adelaide continues to blissfully spin her wedding plans. "So you see, Nathan darling," she tells him, "I got the veil. All we need now is our license and our blood test." Her last words unquestionably snap Nathan out of his doldrums. He lifts his head sharply and pulls himself upright, though he still faces the front and rests one hand lightly on the back of the chair for support. Then he turns to stand opposite Adelaide and asks brusquely, "Our what?" "Blood test," she repeats, "It's a law." Learning that unwelcome information, Nathan turns his back to her again and grumbles to himself, "What a city." He drops his opposite hand to the back of the chair, shifts his weight from one foot to the other, and leans lightly on that hand, before he thumps one foot pointedly on the floor in pronounced indignation. At the same time, he complains in a bitter and deeply outraged growl, "First they close my crap game, then they open my veins." The mere mention of his crap game causes Adelaide to jump up from her chair, grab Nathan's sleeve, and spin him around to face her. "You're not planning to run your crap game again?" she implores. In response to her worried plea, he takes a stumbling, slightly off-balance step backward, as if he had run bodily into the wall of her suspicion. "Adelaide," he exclaims, his tone astounded, offended and wholly guiltless. Then he continues to scold her with wounded, measured words. "How can you say such a thing?" he asks and nods his head several times in her direction, matching the deliberate cadence of his voice and accenting his reprimand. Nathan reaches out to her now and takes both of her hands in his, then gently nudges her

back a bit so that he can step in front of her and sit down in the chair she just left. At almost the same moment that he sits down, he slips one arm around Adelaide's waist and draws her persuasively onto his lap. "Why do you think I give up the crap game?" he asks with more energy and much more resolve in a clear attempt to regain control of the conversation.



"Why do you think I give up the crap game?"

Looking steadfastly into her eyes, he asserts with an air of quiet but wholehearted honesty, "It's because I love you..." He trumpets his profession of love in an inflated and grandiose tone: "...and I want us two to be the *happiest* married couple that there is in this world." To accentuate the word "happiest," he employs a lyrical inflection, a single fervent shake of his head, and a flourish of his outstretched hand.

Then clasping both of his hands together, he encircles Adelaide's waist and securely fastens his embrace. Even though Nathan's avowals of devotion are based on an outright lie (in fact, rather than give up his crap game, he has been continually scheming to find some place to hold it), it is no stretch of the imagination to believe that he genuinely does love Adelaide and wants very much to make her happy. For a moment, it seems that Adelaide believes him too. With a squeal of pleasure she throws her arms around his neck and kisses him happily. For his part, Nathan furrows his lips into an enthusiastic pucker to receive her kiss. Then looking lovingly into her eyes again, he compresses his mouth into a beaming, self-satisfied grin that nonetheless displays a hint of cunning, as he hums out a sustained, rumbling chuckle of pleasure and contentment, "Mmm-hmm-hmm-hmm." How Scott Bakula, this adept and gifted actor, could color his portrayal of Nathan Detroit with both sincerity and cunning at almost this same moment is a wonder and a mystery. But that is what he most certainly did.

Nevertheless, something in that chuckle or tight-lipped grin must have raised suspicions with Adelaide, because suddenly her elation disappears and her mood becomes deflated. Removing her arms from around his neck and slapping him dispiritedly on the shoulder, she gets down

from his lap, walks a few steps away, and says, “Well... I don’t know. I don’t believe you.” Nathan looks up into her face, his expression shocked and troubled, and repeats her words in a rising, incredulous tone. “You don’t believe me?” he implores, then lays the backs of his hands on his knees and turns his palms up in bewildered entreaty. When Adelaide returns a petulant “No” to his question, Nathan replies with disarmingly earnest simplicity: “But it’s true.” He lifts his upturned hands very slightly to accent the word “true,” then lets them fall back to his knees in a small, helpless gesture. After a tense moment in which Adelaide makes no response at all, Nathan springs to his feet and walks several steps closer to her. “Adelaide,” he pleads, “Look at me,” as he lets his arms hang motionless before him and searches her face for some crack in her resistance. But finding none, he grows agitated. He leans forward and reaches both arms out to her, gesturing toward her anxiously. “Look,” he says in a tense and worried voice that urgently tries to distract her, “You’re gonna get yourself all upset, alright?” He grabs her arm in one hand and at the same time reaches behind her to take hold of her other arm. Hurrying her over to her chair, then gently pressing her down into the seat, he urges, “So wait. Come here. Sit down.” He hunches over to bring his face to the same level as hers and places his outspread hands gingerly on the back of the chair near her shoulders, scrupulous not to touch her yet and take the risk of upsetting her fragile state. “Just think about it, okay?” he coaxes and draws out the words in a honeyed and cajoling—but somehow strident and scheming—voice. Bending down a little further now, he risks taking hold of her shoulders, bracing a hand on either side. He turns his head to look closely into her face and assures her with just a hint of condescension, “You’ll feel better tomorrow.” He moves his face still closer to hers and tries but fails to capture her eyes. Even so, he coaxes, “Now cheer up, Bubbie.” Without waiting for her response, Nathan lays his cheek right alongside hers and shifts his gaze to look at her reflection in the mirror. Gently tweaking her cheek with his thumb and forefinger as he stares at her image in the glass, he tries to humor her in a deeply melodious, crooning murmur, “C’mon let me see that little smile.” With no pause at all and certainly with no responding smile from Adelaide, Nathan pats both of her shoulders and adds in a hasty, perfunctory way, “That’s my girl.” With that, he quickly rises from his crouch and glances at her downcast face uncertainly. Shifting his focus from Adelaide’s glum reflection and looking off toward stage left with a hint of relief, he realizes his escape route is close at hand. After a hasty, tentative glance back at the lady, he literally runs offstage as if being pursued. “I’ll ...uh ...I’ll see you tomorrow,” he promises, the last three words coming out all in a rush as he beats a hasty retreat, his voice rising sharply and leaving a hollow echo after he exits the stage. While Nathan is truly alarmed at Adelaide’s dejection and solicitous for her welfare, he is undeniably anxious to make a headlong exit and avoid any further discussion of his crap game—and more importantly—marriage.

The Red Carnation Trap - or - Nathan (Unwillingly) Names the Day

The lights come up on a scene that depicts a street off-Broadway. Crapshooters drift in from both sides of the stage and mill about, each player sporting a fresh, red carnation in his lapel. Suddenly Benny, in his customary bustling and officious way, rushes in from the right and fretfully asks if everyone has their red carnations. “Remember,” he warns, “No one will be let into the game without they got their red carnations.” Speaking for his fellow gamblers, Harry the Horse agrees to those terms, although he demands impatiently, “But where’s the game?” Just then, Nathan enters from the left, his movements markedly low-key, even stealthy. He stops after just a few steps and leans into one hip, then slightly extends his opposite leg in a debonair pose and slips one hand into the pocket of his trousers. To all appearances, he looks cool, relaxed and in control. When Benny sees his boss, he dashes to his side and calls out, “Nathan, is it all set? Can I tell the guys that it’s at the Biltmore Garage?” Nathan remains facing the front, but glances guardedly over his opposite shoulder before he responds, unintentionally exposing the tension he tries to conceal. Although he still does not directly face Benny, Nathan leans toward him almost furtively and answers, “Not yet. I got to stall ‘em for a while.” He takes a cautious step closer to the little man, turns his head only partially in his direction, and continues urgently, “Joey wants his money first,” placing a strong and critical accent on the word “first.” As Nathan turns his head to look over his shoulder again and then warily rotates his upper body in the same direction, Joey complains with rising anxiety, “But it’s eleven o’clock. They won’t stick around much longer.” Abruptly, Nathan whirls around to face the smaller man, leans forward in agitation, and gestures toward himself with an open hand in front of his chest. “So sue me,” he says, frustration and annoyance finally spilling over into his tone and agitated gestures. Now he pulls himself upright and shakes both hands directly at Benny as he explains, “Look, I left Nicely at my hotel to wait for the money. It’ll be there.” Nathan emphasizes “be there,” with a strong, assured inflection and accompanies the words with two vigorous, rhythmic pumps of his hands that land right under the smaller man’s nose. Having given his guarantee, Nathan holds Benny’s eyes with an unwavering look and drops his hands conclusively, one hand falling to his side, the other coming to rest with the palm flat against the double-breasted front of his suit jacket. Meanwhile, the aforementioned Nicely has entered from left. Holding up a sandwich from which he has taken a huge bite, the portly fellow strolls in to stand behind Nathan and interjects offhandedly, “It hasn’t come yet.” Nathan, clearly startled by the unexpected voice at his ear, turns around quickly to face his assistant, tilts his head to one side, and regards the man with a questioning, more than slightly suspicious look. “I told you to wait for it,” Nathan says, his tone a definite reprimand. Nicely replies with a self-pitying whine, “I had to get some groceries. I felt a little faint.” With that,

Nathan straightens his head and fixes his assistant with a hard stare. Slipping one hand in his pocket, he advances several slow, threatening steps directly at the portly fellow and orders imperiously, **"Get back to the hotel and wait for the money from Sky and don't come back here without it..."** When Nathan comes to a stop in front of his henchman, he plants his feet resolutely together and continues to stare at the man with daunting severity. He then laces his words with menace and finality: **"...even if you starve to death."** In the face of Nathan's onslaught, Nicely backs up warily, then stammers, **"O-okay, Nathan,"** before he leaves the stage at left.

From the opposite side of the stage, Harry steps forward and demands brusquely, **"Where's the game, Detroit?"** Nathan immediately turns to face his questioner, and any trace of his former agitation disappears. His voice now sounding conspicuously hale, hearty and almost too congenial, he calls out, **"Hey, Harry the Horse! How are you, Harry?"** As Nathan strides toward the other gambler, he removes his hand from his pocket and stretches his other arm out to offer a warm, welcoming handshake. **"How's everything in Brooklyn?"** he inquires, taking the man's hand in a firm, vigorous grip and looking into his eyes with tenacious resolve. The cocky angle of his up-tilted chin, the air of bravado in his unyieldingly upright stance make it seem as if Nathan is defying an unspoken challenge from the other man, rather than simply greeting him. Harry now puts words, albeit deliberately gracious ones, to the challenge. **"I hope, Detroit,"** he says, referring again to the still unsettled site for the crap game, **"you will not spoil our evening, inasmuch as I happen to be entertaining a very prominent guest tonight."** As Harry voices this veiled threat, Nathan takes a step backward and shifts his weight restlessly from side to side. He gives an elaborate shrug of one shoulder, making the edgy movement seem as if he is merely adjusting the drape of his jacket. But apart from that, he listens to the other man's implied warning with seeming composure. Harry then introduces his guest, **"Big Jule from Chicago,"** and indicates an inordinately tall and burly gambler, who stands a little distance behind him and to his right. Nathan takes a wide step to the downstage side, tilts up his head, and peers beyond Harry to take in the massive figure of this guest. Everything about Nathan's bearing bespeaks amazement and a healthy dose of alarm at the ominous size of this gambler from Chicago. But Nathan recovers himself quickly and walks confidently toward the huge man with a genial outstretched hand. **"Why, how do you do, Big Jule?"** he blusters with what he hopes is placating warmth. However, Nathan's proffered hand hangs in the air unacknowledged for several awkward seconds. Then he drops his hand heavily to his side, disguising any frustration at Jule's rudeness in a flowery greeting, **"Welcome to our fair city..."** Now Nathan turns toward Harry again and continues in an even, instructional tone, **"...in which, as you know, the heat is on."** He reaches out his flexed arms with the palms turned down in a gesture that urges temperance and appeals to the gamblers, **"But just be patient and you'll get a little**

action." On the word **"action,"** he jabs the air energetically with both hands, underlining the word as his voice drops to a deep tone of resolve and conviction. Then Nathan turns back to Big Jule again, draws himself prominently upright, tilts up his chin to meet the huge man's eyes, and places the palm of one hand flat against his midsection in a stance that exudes control and confidence.

Motionless in that assertive position, Nathan hears Harry speak from directly behind him. **"Shall we stick around or shall we blow?"** Harry asks, addressing Big Jule. At last the heretofore silent Big Jule speaks in a gruff and brutish voice that entirely corresponds with his threatening physique. Pointing at Nathan with an outstretched arm, he says, **"I came here to shoot crap,"** and then demands with more force and menace, **"Let's shoot crap."** While Nathan listens to Jule's ultimatum, he continues to confront the man's glowering stare, but drops the hand in front of his waist to his side, squares his shoulders, and shifts his weight briefly from one foot to the other as if he is preparing to absorb a blow instead of a response. No sooner does Jule finish making his demand, than Nathan jumps into the breach with a transparently deferential assurance. **"Sure, sure,"** Nathan pledges, distinctly drawing out the words in a soothing, pacifying hum and embellishing them with a mellow but clearly forced, conciliatory chuckle. At the same time he makes a deep, affirmative nod of his head and holds up his hands with the palms turned outward, pressing them toward Big Jule twice to keep time with his double pledge, but moreover to plead for restraint.

Suddenly, Harry moves even closer to Nathan's back, grabs him by the shoulders, and spins him in the opposite direction. Nathan, caught off guard and decidedly off balance, has no choice but to whirl on one foot and face the other way. He submits passively, as Harry now puts an arm around his shoulder and leads him a couple of leisurely steps to left before coming to a stop. All the while, Harry warns, **"If there is no crap game here tonight, I am sure that Big Jule will be considerably displeased."** At that, Nathan rotates his head over his right shoulder and looks behind him, staring narrowly at the aforesaid Big Jule and twisting his mouth into a quick, cynical grimace of irritation and distaste. Harry continues in a tone of some significance that the big man does not like to be displeased, and then invites Nathan to verify this information with, **"...those citizens who at one time or another have displeased him."** Here Nathan turns his head slowly to the right again and takes a longer look at the huge man, an obvious quality of trepidation in the cautious movement. The sullen, crooked grimace takes hold of Nathan's expression again and remains for a longer moment, but is then replaced by a scowl of real dismay. He turns his attention to Harry again, who is now relating that it is indeed, **"...hard to find such citizens in view of the fact that they are no longer around and about."** With that last phrase, Harry abruptly places his hat over his heart, seemingly out

of respect for the departed, and drives home the point that it would be extremely inadvisable to upset Big Jule.

Nathan now faces Harry directly and addresses him in a tone that goes deep and flat with disappointment that the other man could so gravely doubt him. "Harry," Nathan says, "I hope you do not think that I would be so rude as to displease a fine gentleman like Big Jule." With his formal words and forthright tone, Nathan strives to convey unwavering candor and sincerity to Harry and Big Jule. Yet something subtle in Nathan's delivery still manages to betray his pressing need to conclude the arrangements for the crap game, which will allow him to make good on his assurances. Nonetheless, he turns and strides confidently toward the oversize gambler, calling out on a rising note of jovial self-assurance, "Big Jule," then pointing a finger briskly in the man's direction and announcing, "believe me when I tell you..." As he completes that phrase, Nathan comes to a stop in front of Big Jule. Poking him sharply in the chest twice with his upstage hand, Nathan simultaneously turns his body toward Harry, as though for validation, and begins, "...that when Nathan Detroit..." But as Nathan feels something metallic and bulky beneath the big man's coat, he falters visibly and the confident note in his voice ends up sounding a tad sickly. Still turned pointedly away from Big Jule, Nathan gently pats the bulge beneath the left side of the man's coat two more times with the palm of his hand. Then forming a bridge over that bulge with the tips of his fingers, Nathan uses a tentative, recoiling touch to gingerly trace the outline, first, of what appears to be the barrel and then the butt of a pistol. At the same time, he tries to continue, "...that when Nathan Det..." But what Nathan feels beneath the big man's jacket stops him cold. After a wavering false start, he turns back toward Big Jule and uses his free hand to jerk open the flap of the man's jacket, exposing the gruesome looking gun to everyone's view. Almost immediately and in rapid succession, Nathan flips the jacket back into place over the pistol, spins determinedly away from Big Jule, then snatches his other hand away from the outline of the weapon and into the air, as if he were recoiling from a poisonous snake. His hand still lifted rigidly in the air, Nathan walks a few steps away from the big man and at last deliberately curls his fingers down into a loose fist, trying to erase the feel of that pistol from his touch. Once more he attempts to finish his pledge, nodding his head emphatically, forcing vigor and bravado into his tone, and vowing, "When Nathan Detroit makes a prom..." This time, however, it is the most unwelcome Lieutenant Brannigan who interrupts Nathan's attempted guarantee.

"Well, well, well," Brannigan boorishly interjects from stage right, his tone dripping with undisguised sarcasm. Nathan, caught unawares in mid-sentence, at first turns to his right to locate the source of this intrusion. But as soon as he realizes that his nemesis, Brannigan, made the outcry, Nathan abruptly drops his raised fist to his side and turns sharply away to face front in an attitude of steely determination. Slipping his opposite hand into his pocket, he leans lightly into one hip and extends the other leg out

in a pointedly nonchalant pose, then looks straight ahead, fixes his eyes on the near distance, and assumes a shuttered, evasive expression. Nathan maintains this resolutely remote façade while the cop comments acidly that this "interesting gathering" of red carnation bedecked gamblers must surely represent "the cream of society." Now Brannigan caustically announces the name of each assembled gambler in turn, like he was calling out the roster of a line-up: "Angie the Ox... Society Max... Rusty Charlie... Liver Lips Louie." The policeman adds another name to the list, "Harry the Horse, all the way from Brooklyn," in response to which Harry stamps and blows with great disdain, looking every bit like the animal that gives him his nickname. As the cop carries on this attempted intimidation, Nathan drops his head very low to conceal his eyes and shakes it slowly from side to side in disbelief and derision, while he screws up the side of his mouth in an eloquent, scornful smirk.

Now Brannigan hurries over to Big Jule, who happens to be standing right next to Nathan, and says, "Pardon me," in a forceful but excessively polite tone. Remarking that he is "very bad with names," but seems to recognize the big man's face, Brannigan asks the visiting gambler to tell him where he is from. When Nathan hears the cop's probing tone of voice suddenly issue so much closer to his ear, he raises his head just far enough so that his eyes stay nearly hidden by the brim of his hat. He cocks his head attentively to the right, but still pointedly avoids looking at his archenemy, as his shoulders lift, then fall gently in a disgusted, disparaging sigh. Unmoving in this aloof and guarded stance, Nathan listens warily while Big Jule replies that he hails from, "East Cicero, Illinois." The huge gambler responds to Brannigan's further inquiry about his line of work by scornfully stating, "I'm a Scout Master," to which the cop replies with an angry shout, "Well, don't ever help my mother across the street." Changing tone abruptly, Brannigan pokes his nose close to the carnation in the big man's lapel and makes a blatantly audible sniffing noise, remarking, "Mmm...lovely." Although Nathan still does not deign to look in the direction of that crude sound, he derisively twists up one side of his mouth again and chews on the inside of his cheek, then turns his head very slightly away to the left with subtle but obvious contempt for the repulsive detective. Brannigan glances down the row of lapels, each adorned with a red carnation, and sarcastically remarks, "This looks like the male chorus from 'Blossom Time,'" crossing in front of Nathan and coming to stand uncomfortably close to his left shoulder. Nathan raises his head and draws himself upright, shifting his weight obstinately from side to side. He stares straight ahead and adopts a resolutely shrouded, withdrawn expression, making his body a bulwark against the cop's unwanted attention. He remains impassive and motionless, even as Brannigan leans still closer over Nathan's shoulder and speaks a question directly into the left side of his face. "What's the occasion?" Brannigan demands. At last, Nathan spares a momentary glance over his shoulder in the cop's direction but never actually makes eye contact.

Then looking straight ahead once more, he restores that remote, evasive expression to his face and tries to find an answer, stumbling noticeably: “Well, we... uh...”

From farther left, Benny Southstreet tries to bridge the gap and comes to Nathan’s rescue, rushing over to stand on the other side of the policeman and announcing in an exuberant voice, “It’s a party.” At the sound of Benny’s excessively buoyant declaration, Nathan does a surprised double take and fixes his diminutive henchman with a dubious stare. Brannigan, however, advances suspiciously on the little man and demands, “Indeed? What kind of party?” Finally Nathan turns around toward Brannigan and watches the pair with concern. At this point, Adelaide appears at far right and bids goodbye to some friends offstage. Hearing her voice, Benny makes a headlong dash in her direction and shouts, “It’s a bachelor dinner. Nathan is gettin’ married.” Nathan, who has turned the other way to follow Benny’s precipitous sprint to the right, takes a wide step downstage and stares in open-mouthed shock at Benny and, beyond him, Adelaide. At the same moment, Nathan abruptly pulls his hand from his pocket and drops it despondently to his side, dragging that shoulder down with it in a gesture of stunned disbelief. Buffeted on all sides, Nathan now whirls in the opposite direction and with no less astonishment gazes at Harry, who also chimes in with a robust cheer, “It’s a bachelor dinner. Nathan’s getting’ married.” This startling but joyous announcement gives rise to simultaneous reactions. Adelaide squeals with delight and runs a few mincing steps to arrive at the right edge of group, as Benny replies heartily, “Yes, sir!” He turns to face the line of gamblers behind him, raises his arms to energetically lead them in song, and intones with vigor: “For he’s a jolly good fellow.” The gamblers promptly add their voices for subsequent refrains. While the men sing their congratulations, Nathan appears dazed. In utter confusion, he looks first to one side and then the other, leans his torso back in a clear display of reluctance, and takes a few shuffling steps backward to distance himself from his cohorts’ song. He precisely, almost delicately places his palm flat against his side at the level of his jacket pocket, as if to steady himself and keep from literally flying apart at the seams. His chest rises and falls with several shallow breaths, before he puffs out his cheeks and exhales deeply to release his apprehension. At this point, Big Jule steps downstage, takes a solo on the ending line, and botches the lyrics: “Which nobody cannot deny.” Completing his splintered phrase, the big man slaps Nathan forcefully on the back, causing not only Nathan’s hand to fly out from its place at his side, but causing Nathan himself to stumble off balance for several steps as he lurches forward from the force of the blow.

Almost before Nathan has a chance to recover his balance, Adelaide runs to him and throws her arms around his neck, trilling, “Nathan darling, I’m so thrilled. Why didn’t you tell me?” Nathan initially responds by lifting a rather listless arm to her waist and tepidly returning her embrace. After just a beat, he answers, “It was a surprise,” in a

clotted, faltering, bewildered tone that unwittingly betrays the scrupulous truth of his statement: The impending nuptials were a complete surprise to him as well. Adelaide goes on to say, “But when I saw you standing here with all these fine gentlemen, I never dreamed it was a bachelor dinner.” Still standing with one hand at her waist, Nathan listens to her gush and scratches his ear with his other hand in an automatic but thoroughly perplexed and flustered gesture, before he drops both hands to his sides. But then Adelaide innocently adds, “I thought it was a...” At that, Nathan nearly jumps out of his shoes with alarm. He grabs Adelaide around the shoulders, holds her firmly against his side to restrain her, and interrupts her with a suddenly all-too-focused exclamation, “Oh, no, no, no.” Then he pivots her around to face Brannigan, nods his head emphatically and insists, “It’s a bachelor dinner.” Here Benny steps up behind Nathan and reiterates, “It’s a bachelor dinner,” and with much-too-joyous intensity, Nathan immediately repeats, “Yes sir! A bachelor dinner.” Nathan keeps his eyes fixed on Brannigan all the while and nods his head affirmatively several more times, while still trying to hold onto Adelaide for dear life and stifle any more inconvenient comments she might make. But the lady slips out of his grasp. Turning to Big Jule, she prattles on with a quiet tone of awe in her voice, “Just think after fourteen years I’m finally going to become Mrs. Nathan Detroit.” Nathan removes his wary eyes from Brannigan and turns to face the front. Smoothing the flat of his hand over one side of his jacket, he shifts his weight uncomfortably from side to side and greets Adelaide’s wistful comment with a sickly little smile, before he slips his hand into the pocket of his trousers again.

Brannigan moves even closer to Nathan and asks in a distinctly threatening tone, “Tell me, Nathan. When is the happy day?” From his other side, Adelaide edges closer to him and pleads, “When will it be, Nathan?” Sandwiched between Brannigan close over one shoulder and Adelaide pressing near the other, Nathan really does find himself between the proverbial rock and a hard place. “Well, ah...” he tries to answer, a pained expression on his face and a rather glazed look in his eyes, as his tongue darts out to moisten suddenly dry lips. In the middle of Nathan’s stammering attempt to find a reply, Brannigan again presses him to name the date, reaching out to indicate the assembly of gamblers and exhorting, “Detroit, these good fellows are nice enough to give you a bachelor dinner. You should at least tell them the wedding date.” While Brannigan is speaking, Nathan turns to look at him briefly, but then drops his head so that his own ear is almost level with the cop’s mouth. To all appearances Nathan is listening closely to the detective’s advice, but in reality he is desperately trying to rack his brain for an escape tactic. Finally the cop finishes his counsel. Nathan drops his head in a way that could be construed as a nod of agreement—if the nod weren’t so nebulous and didn’t so seamlessly meld into his physical escape from between his two questioners. Ducking his head smoothly, Nathan turns to his right and crosses beyond Adelaide to the other side of Big Jule.

One hand still stuffed in his pocket, he moves in what he hopes is a casual manner and tries to hedge, “Well, we need time for a...a license and our blood test.” With the upturned palm of his free hand, he makes two outward arcing, gesticulations that underline the words “license” and “blood test,” revealing just how unnerved he is. Yet after he manages to concoct this evasion, he cannot prevent a rather smug tone from invading his last word, nor a self-satisfied smile from overtaking his face. With his back turned partially away from his two inquisitors and with more than a hint of relief at having avoided, for the moment, such a dangerous trap, he briefly lifts the brim of his hat and resettles it back on his brow. Then in quick succession but with the same sense of having dodged a bullet, he rubs one side of his nose with his knuckle and lightly tweaks his nostrils with a thumb and forefinger.

But alas, Nathan’s relief is very short lived. While he is still setting himself to rights, Adelaide muses ardently, “Gee, wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could be married tomorrow night, right after the show at the Hot Box.” Nathan turns to face her by slow degrees. Tilting his head to one side, he raises his eyebrows exceedingly high and half closes his eyes in an expression that implores caution. At the same time, he lifts his open hands with the palms facing out toward Adelaide, then presses them several times in her direction and makes a few short, quick, patting motions that signify *slow down; hold on; stop*. Leaning toward her with urgency, Nathan moves both hands in an elaborate, outward arc that ends with his upturned palms held out to her insistently and pleads, “But Adelaide, we need time for our license...” He phrases this warning in measured, explicit tones as if he were speaking to a child. But before he can finish his admonition, Brannigan interrupts and offers tersely, “You could elope.” Right away, Nathan takes a step to the downstage side and leans farther forward to peer around Adelaide and stare at the meddling cop. At the same moment, he asks, “What?” his tone curt and clipped but steeped in dumbfounded disbelief, implying that he doesn’t quite trust the evidence of his own ears. So Brannigan proposes, “You can drive down to Maryland...what’s the name of that town?” From behind Nathan, Benny now suggests helpfully, “Pimlico?” Without missing a beat, Nathan drops his hands sharply to his sides in a mocking gesture. He turns the opposite way to face Benny and fixes him with a disdainful, deadpan stare

that serves as a silent reprimand for even suggesting the name of Maryland’s legendary racetrack. Finally Nathan gives the little man a single, disapproving shake of his head, before he turns back to Brannigan again. The detective at last comes up with the name of the town he was trying to remember. “No, no... Elkton, Nathan,” the policeman counters, then elaborates with an attitude of smug satisfaction at having successfully sprung his trap, “They’ll marry you right away. They don’t ask for a blood test.” Nathan faces the cop from several feet away and receives this unsolicited news with some concern. “Ain’t that unhealthy?” Nathan asks, trying to sound conscientious but coming off dubious, dismayed and a little woeful. His arms hang limp at his sides. Although his posture is upright, his body appears somehow diminished, as if the air has been let out of him. His tone betrays a forlorn but desperate hope that someone may yet throw him a lifeline. Alas, that is not to be. For at this point, Harry chimes in eagerly, “Nathan, that’s a great idea ... elope.” Harry even offers to lend the couple his “getaway car,” but then thinks better of using those words within earshot of the cop and amends, “my Buick.” All the while Nathan stands completely motionless, stunned at how quickly the situation has turned against him. To add the final straw, Adelaide toddles up to him, throws both arms around his neck, and implores, “Oh, Nathan, let’s do it.” For a moment, Nathan doesn’t respond at all, instead taking a few narrow, shuffling, reluctant steps backward. When he finally answers, his first word sounds thick and constricted. “Well...” he begins tentatively and pauses for another long moment. Then with a sudden, spring-like bounce, he raises both arms up and out to the sides, his palms turned up in a signal of surrender. “What the hell,” he finishes in a tone that manages to sound fatalistic and resigned, yet amiable and good-natured all at the same time. Cheers break out from the group of gamblers, as Adelaide briefly hugs Nathan’s shoulder and Benny gives him a hearty pat on the back.

What’s to become of our favorite schemer Nathan and his sweet, trusting Adelaide? Will they marry, or won’t they? The best is yet to come in our next issue as we present the conclusion of Scott’s performance in **Guys and Dolls**.

Photo credits: Craig T. Mathew/Mathew Imaging



The scenery was cartoonish, using painted flats for the cityscape and cars near wings, newsstand center, and Hot Box upstage center