

CALLBACK #6
CIOFFI, GRADY, CARMEN

JOHNNY

Heads up, I'm tripping the silk drop!

(A drop reveals a stranger – DARYL GRADY – in smart coat and hat.)

CIOFFI

Excuse me, Lieutenant Frank Cioffi, Homicide. Mind telling me who you are and how you got in here?

GRADY

(flashing credentials)

Oh, as a member of the press, I'm exempt from your quarantine, Lieutenant. Daryl Grady of the Boston Globe.

CIOFFI

After the review you gave *Robbin' Hood*, I can't imagine why you'd show your face here of all places.

GRADY

I'm as mystified as you. The show's producers called and asked me to pay a visit.

(CARMEN and SIDNEY have entered)

CARMEN

That's right. Carmen Bernstein, Mr. Grady. You have our thanks for coming by, if not for your review.

GRADY

Listen, I tried my level best to say something good about your production. I praised the choreography, and that young woman who played the schoolmarm, Niki, um—

CIOFFI

Harris.

GRADY

Well I'm afraid it's all history now. My condolences on the loss of your star and your show.

SIDNEY

When you interviewed me last week, I told you we're going to Broadway no matter what you wrote about us.

CARMEN

We're keeping *Robbin' Hood* open, and once we've ironed out the kinks, we're asking you to review it again, with Georgia Hendricks in the lead.

GRADY

Georgia Hendricks? Your lyricist? She hasn't been in a show for years. That's some story – and yes, there is a precedent for reappraising a show with a new lead – all right, tell you what, I'll re-review your show. Tomorrow night.

OSCAR

Tomorrow?

GRADY

It's the best I can do. And to be fair, keep in mind not many shows can survive *two* bad reviews from the Globe in one week.

SIDNEY

Carmen, go tell the cast we've got 24 hours to hold a week of rehearsals. If we fail, you'll live to regret it.

CARMEN

Sidney, I guess the reason you're such a lowlife is because they built you so close to the ground.

(She and OSCAR EXIT as NIKI enters.)

NIKI

Oh, good day, Lieutenant.

CIOFFI

You've just made it one, Miss Harris.

SIDNEY

That dress goes very nicely with your eyes, Niki.

CIOFFI

Thank you.

NIKI

And I can't believe it. Mr. Daryl Grady. Am I allowed to offer my thanks for the kind words you wrote?

(She offers her hand; GRADY doesn't take it.)

GRADY

Please don't misunderstand, Miss Harris, but I try not to fraternize with the artists I review. But ~~let me say you *did* stand out in what was otherwise an abundantly misguided production.~~

CIOFFI

Mr. Grady, I thought your review of "Robbin' Hood" was needlessly cruel and way off the mark.

GRADY

Well I'm not sure you know how to judge acting, Lieutenant.

CIOFFI

Of course, you're the expert. However, I regret to inform you that I'm now placing you under arrest for the crime of murder.

(ALL react in shock.)

GRADY

What? Have you lost your mind?

CIOFFI

Any statement you make may be taken down in writing and used against you in a court of law.

GRADY

This is insane! What are you saying?

CIOFFI

I'm saying my best lines from Agatha Christie's "Murder at the Vicarage." I played Chief Inspector Slack for the Natick Town Players two summers ago.

(mock-surprised)

Oh. Did you think I was saying that for real? Gosh, I'm not sure you know how to judge acting, Mr. Grady.

(beat)

You can go now.

SIDNEY

Come on, Grady, I'll walk you to the door.

(SIDNEY, GRADY exit; O'FARRELL follows.)

NIKI

Swell acting, Lieutenant. And not just on a community theater level. I mean college.

CIOFFI

Oh, well, thank you.

NIKI

And how is your investigation coming along, if I may ask?

CIOFFI

I've been going over the show's financial records, and you know, you were right: everyone here is working for the same Equity minimum – not just newcomers like you and Bambi, but your stars as well – look, this is no place to talk, let's you and me get out of here for a little while –

NIKI

You won't let me leave.

CIOFFI

Damn.

(BELLING, CARMEN, OSCAR enter.)

BELLING

Lieutenant, you must clear the stage immediately, I've just been informed I have less time to reinvent this show than Moses had to cross the Red Sea. And he had God on his side.

(BOBBY and GEORGIA enter.)