

Betting on

BLOODSHED

A VEGAS MURDER MYSTERY



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By Will Murdock

Based on characters by Grace Anne Henley and Will Murdock

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The SUSPECTS

Female (6):

Gladys, an jaded, older, chain-smoking showgirl

Goldie, a ditsy, but kind young showgirl

Edna Hefflefinger, a tourist gambler from Missouri, married to Ed

Rhonda Priest, the Flamingo's security guard

Kevin's Mom, an overbearing, over-caring mother

Sister Mary Bertram, a nun with a secret

Male (6):

Kevin the Magnificent, a washed-up Vegas stage magician, highly dramatic

Dick Dickson, the new manager of the Flamingo Lounge and Casino

Ed Hefflefinger, a tourist gambler from Missouri, married to Edna

Ralphie, a young bartender at the Flamingo Lounge

Oscar Schniffenputz, a grouchy blackjack dealer

Kohl Spector, a hip new gothic magician

(The roles of Kohl Spector and Kevin the Magnificent can be played by female actors if needed. While Kohl Spector needs no alterations. The role of Kevin should become Mille the Magnificent. Pronouns can be changed accordingly.)

ACT 1

(Inside the Flamingo Lounge and Casino. Las Vegas, Nevada. Music begins. Lights rise on a small stage, revealing GLADYS and GOLDIE in matching sequined outfits. GOLDIE looks nervous. With every word, GLADYS throws in a well-rehearsed dramatic flourish of the arms.)

GLADYS

Mystery. Illusion.

(GLADYS takes a long drag from her cigarette.)

Sequins!

(She tosses her cigarette onto a table in the audience.)

Where else can you find all of these things in one place?

GOLDIE

(Stilted and stiff.)

Where else but the Flying Flamingo Lounge and Casino, here in fabulous Las Vegas?

(She waits for applause, and when it doesn't come, claps for herself. GLADYS looks disgusted.)

GLADYS

Hold onto your seats, ladies and gentlemen, and prepare to be amazed, amused, and otherwise astonished as we take you on a journey both befuddling and breathtaking.

GOLDIE

(GOLDIE reads parts of her lines from her hand.)

Flabbergasting and fearsome! Confounding and cap—

(She switches to her other hand.)

—tivating.

GLADYS

But don't take our word for it! No. Why trust us... when you can see for yourselves! Please put your hands together.

GOLDIE

(Shoving a stuffed rabbit into a top hat.)

And your rabbits away!

GLADYS

As we welcome to the stage—

GOLDIE

The wonderful! The whimsical!

GLADYS

(Mocking GOLDIE's excitement.)

The phenomenal. And prepubescent!

GOLDIE

The empirical impresario of magic!

GLADYS and GOLDIE

The king of cool...?

(They look at one another, skeptical.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

(Whispering loudly from backstage.)

Keep going!

GLADYS and GOLDIE

KEVIN, THE MAGNIFICENT!

(KEVIN burst from the curtain anticlimactically and shouts.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Tadaaaaa!

(He looks around anxiously and tries again.)

Tadaaaaaaaa!

(Once more.)

Tadaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

(Nothing.)

Danggit, Raul! Where's the smoke? I'm gonna do it again, and this time it better be magical!
You're ruining the illusion here! Let's take it back!

(He leaves the stage.)

GOLDIE

Where do you wanna take it back from?

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

(Poking his head through the curtain.)

The king of cool.

GLADYS

Oh, brother!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

(Shrieking!)

I-said-the-king-of-cool!

GLADYS and GOLDIE

The KING of cool.....

(Drumroll, again.)

KEVIN, THE MAGNIFICENT!

(KEVIN jumps out again. No smoke. He tries to cover the gap.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Tadaa-aaaaaaaaaaa-aaa-a!
Danggit, Raul!

GOLDIE

It's okay! I thought it looked great!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Well, that's because you're an idiot! These people didn't pay for great. They paid for magnificent. You hear that, Raul? They paid for magnifi—

(PSSSSSH! A burst of smoke erupts at his feet. He has a frozen, silent freak-out. His face starts turning red. His whole body shakes. He takes a deep breath to compose himself, and then yells up to the lightbooth.)

That was closer, Raul. Really that was much better, but you were STILL LATE! And that wasn't nearly enough smoke!

(The fog machine picks up again, and this time it doesn't stop.)

Not now, Raul. That's enough, Raul. Dangit, Raul, turn the dang thing off before the entire audience starts coughing even though the know perfectly well that this is just water vapor and isn't doing anything to their lungs. I'm looking at you, Table C!

(Someone coughs.)

I told you! Didn't I tell you, Raul! Now everything's ruined!

ED

Oop! 'Scuse me! Don't mind us, don't mind us. We're just squeezin' through.

EDNA

(Loud.)

Hey, y'all!

ED

Just running a little late. We don't wanna bother nobody.

EDNA

Is that prime rib? Oh, hey there big spender! Ed, these must be the high dollar tables!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Uhm... excuse me.

EDNA

Oh, listen honey, in our family, if you burp you burp, you don't have to excuse yourself.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Madame, I did. Not. Belch. I'm in the middle of a show.

EDNA

Well by all means, don't mind us! You just keep right ahead going, and we'll just settle in right here.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Silently.

EDNA

Oh, yes sir!

ED

You won't hear a peep out of us.

(KEVIN clears her throat.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Please ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, for my first act of perilous prestidigitation, I require complete silence. My lovely assistant—

(GLADYS gives him the stink eye.)

My wonderful assistant—

GLADYS

Eh.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

My intelligent, beautiful, and chronically underappreciated assistant...?

GLADYS

Yeah, all right.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

(Echoing himself.)

Will now step into the Sparkling Box of Doom! Doom. Doom. Doom...

GOLDIE

(Holding up an "Ooh!" sign to the audience.)

Ooooh!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

And once inside, will face certain death as I run these ancient Sumerian swords into the box.

GOLDIE

(Holding up an "Ahh!" sign to the audience.)

Ahhhhh!

(GLADYS steps into the box and grabs the door.)

GLADYS

Don't miss me too much!

(She slams the door shut.)

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

I will now place the first sword through the box...

(He lines up the sword carefully, then just as he is about to shove it in.)

ED

Pssst!

(KEVIN stops and looks around. He prepares again. He moves to plunge the sword in.)

EDNA

Psssssssssst!

(KEVIN looks around again. He laughs nervously.)

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

One mustn't rush these things.

(Last time. He draws the sword back.)

ED and EDNA

Pssssssssssssssssssssstttt!!!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

What—what is that?!? Who is doing making that noise?

(ED and EDNA slowly and simultaneously raise their hands.)

Yes?

ED

We were just wonderin'... do you know where we can get some food?

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Some...

(KEVIN'S face twitches.)

Food? Ha! Ha! Hahahahahahaha!

(KEVIN'S laugh slowly becomes manic.)

EDNA

Yeah! It looks like just about everybody in here's done eatin' and we haven't even gotten our drinks yet.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

You mean to tell me, you interrupted *my show* to ask for drinks.

ED

We have vouchers!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

You have... vouchers?

(RALPHIE walks over from the bar and takes their vouchers.)

RALPHIE

They have vouchers! Go figure...

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Ralphie. Thank goodness! Can you help these two, so that *I* can get on with all the...

RALPHIE

Magnificence?

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

(Shrieking.)

Just get them their drinks!

RALPHIE

Sure thing! But first I'm gonna need you folks to sign these.

ED

Shoot yeah!

EDNA

Here you go. I circled that apostrophe and added a comma, I hope you don't mind. I was an English teacher, and I just can't stand incorrect punctuation!

(KEVIN touches the sword to his forehead and breathes out.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Ohmmmmmm.....

GOLDIE

Excuse me, Mister Kevin the Magnificent, sir?

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

What is it?!?! Can't you see I'm recentering.

GOLDIE

I just thought I should tell you the Sparkling Box of Doom! Doom. Doom. Doom. Is on fire!

(Smoke is pouring out of the sword holes on the side of the Sparkling Box of Doom.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

What?!?

(KEVIN snatches the door open. Smoke pours out around Gladys' feet. She has a cigarette in each hand.)

Gladys! How many times have I told you can't smoke in Sparkling Box of Doom! Doom. Doom. Doom.

GLADYS

Sorry!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Besides smoking's not good for your health.

GLADYS

Well neither are you, but I haven't quit you *or* this lousy job, have I? Mama didn't raise a quitter.

(GLADYS lights another cigarette. KEVIN shuts the door.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Fine! Now I will say the magic words. Hummanam, hummanam, mochha hummanam. Sebrum, secum recompordia! Rrrrrrrrr-rah....

(He turns and whispers loudly.)

You good?

GLADYS

Yeah.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Okay!

(He turns back to the audience.)

Now, for the first sword.

GOLDIE

Ooooooh!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

On the count of three. One... TWO.... THR—

KEVIN'S MOM

(Bustling into the theater.)

Kevin! Kevin? There you are sweetie!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Mom! What is it? I'm in the middle of a show!

KEVIN'S MOM

Well, Kevin-cakes! You left your snack at the house, and I just had to bring it to you. You know how your sugar gets without your three o'clock PB and J.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Fine! Just leave it with Raul. I'll eat it after the show!

KEVIN'S MOM

Mm-mm-mn. Somebody needs a bite right now.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Not now, mother.

KEVIN'S MOM

Yes, now. I'm not leaving here until you take a bite of this sandwich.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

No!

KEVIN'S MOM

Yes.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

NO!

KEVIN'S MOM

YES!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Nooooooooooooo!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Now, Kevin....

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Mooooooooomm!

KEVIN'S MOM

Open up!

(KEVIN opens his mouth and takes a small bite from the sandwich, chewing it quickly.)

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Fine. Happy now. Nom, nom, nom. Now could you please get off my stage? I've got these bozos eating out of my hand.

KEVIN'S MOM

That's nice, sweetie, I'll see you when I get home. I love you.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

(Garbled.)

I love you, too.

KEVIN'S MOM

To the moon and back!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

(Mortified.)

And twice around the sun...

KEVIN'S MOM

See you when you get home!

GOLDIE

Awwww!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Stop it! Gross! One-two-three!

(He stabs the first sword into the Sparkling Box of Doom. Doom. Doom.)

GLADYS

Ow!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Did I get you?!?!

GLADYS

Nah, I'm just messing with you!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Don't do that!

GOLDIE

(Trying to lead the audience.)

Ooooooh!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

(To AUDIENCE.)

Ta-da! Now for the second sword. Yahhhh!

(He pushes the sword in quickly. GLADYS screams. KEVIN rips open the door.)

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Are you okay?!?

GLADYS

(Still smoking.)

I'm fine, and you?

GOLDIE

(To AUDIENCE.)

Ahhhh....

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Would you stop?!?!?

DICK

(From the back of the Lounge.)

No! Would YOU stop?

(KEVIN barrels dramatically into the audience to confront his heckler face to face!)

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Excuse me, sir, I am in the middle of whirlwind, world-class performance? Who in the actual *heck* do you think you are?!?

DICK

Your new boss.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT
(Immediately shrinking.)

So nice to meet you, I've heard great things.

DICK

I wish I could say the same. Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry to interrupt... whatever this is... but as far as I can tell, I was sparing you from untold boredom. My name is Dick Dickson and as the new manager of the Flying Flamingo Lounge and Casino, I would like to offer you all drink vouchers in exchange for your patience. The Flamingo has high standards for its entertainment, and as far as I can tell, those standards are not being met.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Hey!

DICK

Is for horses! And this show was for the birds.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

You can't do this, I was just mesmerizing them with my...

DICK

Parlor tricks! I saw. And unfortunately for you... we're looking for a something a little fresher.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

(To Dick)

Dude, I've got a sword!

DICK

Yes, and no discernable talent. Under my leadership, this casino is only going to host top-shelf, cutting edge performances that leave audiences with their chins on the ground and their butts in seats. That, my friend, is not you.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Oh, I see what this is! You're trying to replace me with Kohl Specter, ghost magician, aren't you?!?

(Loud thunder and lightning claps. Rock Music plays. A woman screams. KOHL is standing on the stage when the lights come back on.)

KOHL

Sup?

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Nuthin's up, *Kohl!* Wassup with you?

(KOHL shrugs.)

Oh, that's all you have to say for yourself? Why don't you get off my stage and go buy some more eyeliner you psuedo-magical vampire junkhead!

DICK

Don't listen to him, Kohl. I'll call you later about the contract.

KOHL

(Shrugging.)

Whatever...

(KOHL walks into the Sparkling Box of Doom and shuts the door. KEVIN runs on stage.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

That's not an exit you idiot, that's a box! This is seriously who you want to replace me with? Are you kidding me? Come on, dude, GET OUT!

(He swings open the door and KOHL is gone.)

Cheese and crackers! How does he do that?!?!

DICK

Ladies and Gentlemen, can we get a round of applause for Kohl Specter, ghost magician?

(OSCAR and RALPHIE clap awkwardly and KEVIN melts.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Stop! Stop! This is my show and MY STAGE! You just can't waltz in here and take it from me! You listen to me, Dick! When I first started here, this place was always empty, but now look at it. Week after week I sell *thousands* of tickets—

GLADYS

Weeeell....

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Hundreds of tickets—

GLADYS

Mmmm...

(DICK pulls out a small notepad and begins jotting something down in it.)

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

TENS OF TICKETS! This place would be nothing without me, you hear? Nothing! What are you writing in there?!?

DICK

Just a few thoughts. Nothing you should concern yourself with... anymore.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

You can't do this to me!

DICK

I can. And I have. You're fired, Kevin. And you aren't that magnificent.

(KEVIN gasps dramatically.)

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

You... monster! You'll pay for this, you hear me? You'll pay for this! And one day... when I'm once again the reigning king of magic in this town, you'll just be a little pile of dirt, and someone will say, do you remember that one guy... what was his name? Peepeehead? Whatever happened to him? But no one will remember. I'm leaving now and I'm taking my magnificence with me... but make no mistake about it. I will be back and I WILL have my revenge. Kevin out!

(GLADYS saunters up to DICK, still smoking.)

GLADYS

Finally. I thought he would never leave. The little twit.

DICK

That little twit isn't the only one leaving.

GLADYS

Come again, Dick.

DICK

Never you fear, though, little lady. You aren't leaving here empty handed. The Flying Flamingo Lounge and Resort acknowledges your fifty years of service as a showgirl, and would like to present you with this gift certificate for a fried shrimp dinner for two as well as a monogrammed bathrobe with our sincerest hopes that after so many years, you might decide... to show a little less.

GLADYS

I'm not sure I understand... Dick.

DICK

Come closer, so I can talk right into your hearing aid. YOU. ARE. FIRED. GLADYS.

GLADYS

You. Must. Be. Kidding. Dick.

DICK

(Writing in his notebook.)

Sadly, no. Ralpie, can you show Miss Moon the door?

GLADYS

I'll show myself out! I've been walking these halls for nearly fifty-one years. I could tell you things to fill hundreds of those notebooks. Fifty one years and then—Poof!—out on my backside. And why? Because of some little boy who wants to show how big and bad he is. Mark my words, Dick. You'll regret this. I'm the best showgirl that's ever lived, baby. And you... well I've got stretchmarks older than you.

DICK

Yes, I can see that.

(GLADYS gasps.)

GLADYS

You devil! You'll live to regret this, Dick! Mark my words.

(She exits dramatically to her dressing room. ED stands, slamming his hands into his table.)

ED

Wait-a-durn minute, here! You mean to tell me, you're cancelling the show?

EDNA

Yeah! Haven't you done enough already?

DICK

You two again!

ED

Dang, right, us two! First you take away our winning jackpot and now you're taking away our show.

DICK

Sir, I've already told you, I did not take away your jackpot. You did not win the jackpot. There was a malfunction with your machine that the casino is remedying.

EDNA

Malfunction my foot! It said in big gold letters—JACK. POT.

DICK

And I've already explained that the false win was triggered by a computer error.

ED

Well I think I'm having an error computing, because to me, when the big siren goes off and money starts pouring out, it seems like that's a pretty good sign that you've won the big pot. But then here you come and hijack our jackpot.

EDNA

Yeah, you jacked our pot!

ED

And all you give us in return are vouchers for a chicken dinner and a show, and now you're telling me there's no show?

DICK

It appears that way.

ED

Well, I'm sorry, but that dog just won't hunt.

DICK

If I knew what that meant, I'm sure I'd be concerned, but as it stands, I'm not. So all I can offer you is a ten percent off coupon for the remaining nights of your stay.

EDNA

We prepaid!

(DICK snatches back the ten-percent-off voucher.)

DICK

Then I'll be keeping this.

ED

Well, I never!

EDNA

Come on, Ed! Let's go pack up and fly outta this Flamingo before this dingus tries to take our fanny packs, too.

ED

Yeah, we don't want him *jackin' our packs*.

EDNA

And I'm taking this chicken, too! Mm-hmm. I've got a Ziplock.

(She pulls a Ziplock bag out of her fanny pack.)

Ooh, boy, you're gonna regret this. I brought an extra suitcase just for all the free stuff y'all give out. By the time I'm done with this place...oooh-whee! There won't be a mini shampoo in sight.

ED

You better believe it, too. She can wipe a hotel room like a dang crime scene. We haven't bought toilet paper in years.

EDNA

Mmmhmm. You haven't seen the last of us, Mr. Dickson. You better sleep with one eye open! One. Eye. Open.

ED

Yeah! We wouldn't want *you* getting stuffed in that suitcase. Might make it hard to breathe.

EDNA

Come on, Ed!

ED

Right behind you, sugar!

DICK

Richie, I need a drink.

(RALPHIE stops wiping glasses and looks around over his shoulder.)

RALPHIE

Are you talking to me?

DICK

Yes, Richie, who else would I be talking to?

RALPHIE

My name is Ralphie.

DICK

I don't care who you are. You're fired if there's not a Gin and Tonic in my hand in ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two—

(RALPHIE hands him the drink, which he finishes in one long gulp. DICK starts to walk away.)

That was awful.

RALPHIE

You're welcome.

(DICK stops in his tracks. And turns back to RALPHIE.)

DICK

You just made the notebook.

(DICK jots in his notebook. RALPHIE goes to GOLDIE and they speak in hushed tones.)

Strike one.

(He turns to the blackjack table.)

And you're Oliver, right?

OSCAR

Oscar, actually.

DICK

Right, right. Oslo, my friend. Let's download.

OSCAR

Excuse me.

DICK

Like information. From a computer.

OSCAR

(Genuinely confused.)

I'm sorry... I'm... human.

DICK

You see—that's the problem. It seems that your drawer has come up short this week.

OSCAR

That's not possible. I haven't come up short in all my years on the job.

DICK

Perhaps. Or perhaps the people who checked behind you weren't as thorough as I am.

OSCAR

Yeah, there's something different all right.

DICK

Now I'm not saying you stole the money, but if you did, that's obviously a fireable offense. And of course I'd prosecute as well, so I sure hope you're right. I don't think you'd look good in orange.

OSCAR

How much is it that you think you are missing?

DICK

Two dollars.

OSCAR

Are you kidding me?

DICK

Do you think something's funny?

(He holds up his notebook.)

OSCAR

No, sir.

DICK

Good. When the tables close, bring today's drawer to my office, and we'll review the video tapes from last night to see what we need to do with you.

OSCAR

All right.

DICK

And don't take this personally, Orpheus... I just think you're bad at your job.

(DICK barrels towards his office, but stops when he sees a nun, SISTER MARY BERTRAM, looking around the room, handing pamphlets out to the other customers.)

DICK

Excuse me. Are you lost?

SISTER

Well I once was, but now I'm found.

DICK

No, I mean... this isn't the type of place one typically finds a... nun.

SISTER

I should think not. What with all the gambling and alcohol and lustfulness! But that's exactly the reason I'm here. I'm Sister Mary Bertram, sir, and what better place is there to share the glory of our Lord? This place is just absolutely wicked!

DICK

Yes, and I'd like to keep it that way.

SISTER

Excuse me?

DICK

You've got to get out. And I mean now!

SISTER

What on earth for?

DICK

Listen sister, it's not personal. But my job is to keep people around here having a good time, and when they look at you... well you make them sad. They feel bad about themselves. And when they feel bad about what they are doing, they stop doing it. And if they stop doing it—they stop spending money. And if they stop spending money... well, we've just got to get you out of here before that happens.

SISTER

Never you fear, sir. I do not plan to stay long. I am simply meeting someone here. I shall be on my way momentarily.

DICK

No, you'll be on your way now! Ralphie call security.

SISTER

You can't be serious.

DICK

You think I buy that cockamamie story? Who on earth would you know in a place like this?!?
Today, Ralphie. Let's get her out of here today!

(RALPHIE reluctantly picks up the phone.)

SISTER

No need, young man! I'll leave! But let me just remind you of one thing before I go.

(To DICK.)

You might be able to kick me out. But my boss...

(She whispers menacingly.)

He's everywhere.

(DICK writes in his notebook.)

DICK

Noted.

OSCAR

Sister, before you go, how 'bout a game?

SISTER

Perhaps some other time.

OSCAR

I'm going to hold you to that.

DICK

Really?!?

OSCAR

What? That's too good a story to pass up! A nun walks into a casino...

(DICK huffs and turns to leave, but GOLDIE cuts him off.)

GOLDIE

Excuse me. Mr. Dick?

DICK

Yes. What?

GOLDIE

Well... I was just wondering. If the show is cancelled. Does that mean I don't have a job anymore?

DICK

What? With your looks? Of course not, doll. I've got a special job in mind just for you.

GOLDIE

Really?

DICK

Yeah. Sure. Why not? Why don't you swing by my office in a bit and we'll hammer out some of the details?

GOLDIE

Well... all right. If you really think that's necessary.

DICK

Only if you don't want to end up in my wittle bookie-wookie, sweetums. And trust me. No one one wants to end up in there. And tell you what... stay in your costume. That way we can get a real glimpse of your skill set.

(He leaves. RALPHIE storms over. He looks around to make sure they have some privacy.)

RALPHIE

I'm gonna kill him!

GOLDIE

Ralphie. Ralphie, stop!

RALPHIE

I'm not going to let him talk to you like that.

GOLDIE

Believe me—I've heard worse.

RALPHIE

Well at least let me go with you to his office...

GOLDIE

Why? So that he can find out that we're dating and fire us? I don't think so. You know the rules.

RALPHIE

I can't just leave you alone with him.

GOLDIE

Ralphie. Look. It's really sweet what you're doing, but I can take care of myself. Okay?

RALPHIE

But what if he—?

GOLDIE

I know how to handle guys like him.

RALPHIE

Okay. But if he even lays a finger on you—

GOLDIE

He won't.

RALPHIE

But if he does...

GOLDIE

If he does, I'll handle it. Trust me. I've got a few tricks up my sleeve. And some pepper spray in my bra.

RALPHIE

You're magnificent.

GOLDIE

I know.

(GOLDIE leaves.)

OSCAR

Watch yourself, there Ralphie. If you're not careful. You're gonna end up with a wife.

RALPHIE

You really think so?

OSCAR

It's all over your face. I've seen that look before.

RALPHIE

Love?

OSCAR

Stupidity.

RALPHIE

Hey!

OSCAR

One minute, you're a perfectly sane guy walking around on two feet and the next thing. Bam! A woman's knocked you flat on your butt.

RALPHIE

As it so happens, I *want* her to be my wife. I've got a ring and everything.

OSCAR

Where's that nun, I'm gonna ask her to pray for you!

RALPHIE

I'm serious! I've been saving for months. I was gonna propose at the end of the show, but now... I don't know what I'm gonna do. Raul and I had this whole elaborate thing planned out with confetti and everything.

OSCAR

You mean to tell me Kevin agreed to that?

RALPHIE

Are you kidding? It was gonna surprise him as much as anybody. But I didn't care. All I cared about was seeing Goldie's face when I gave her this.

(He shows him the ring.)

What do you think?

OSCAR

I think you should have kept saving.

RALPHIE

I'm serious.

OSCAR

So am I! Oohhooohoo! All this talk about marriage is making me nervous. Can you watch my table while I go grab a cigar?

RALPHIE

Dick will have a stroke if he comes back.

OSCAR

I don't care what he does. He can stroke, choke, or anything in between for all I care. I've gotta go and there's nobody at the table anyway. Now man up, and do as I say.

RALPHIE

Fine. Whatever.

OSCAR

Atta boy.

(OSCAR heads out.)

RALPHIE

It's nearly an eighth of a carat.

OSCAR

It's an eighth a'somethin'!

RALPHIE

Hey, Raul? You still up there?

(The lights blink twice. RALPHIE makes his way up to the stage.)

Did you hear all that?

(Twice again.)

Do you think I'm going to embarrass myself if I try to give Goldie this ring?

(A pause... then one blink.)

RALPHIE

No! It's too late. You hesitated. God! How could I be so stupid.

(He kicks the Sparkling Box of Doom, and hurts his toe, grabbing it as he jumping up and down.)

Ow! Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow! Why me, Raul, why me?

(GOLDIE screams a blood curdling scream offstage. RALPHIE drops his injured foot as GOLDIE runs in.)

RALPHIE

What is it? Are you okay?

GOLDIE

It's Dick!

RALPHIE

Did he hurt you?

GOLDIE

No! He—! He's!

RALPHIE

He's what?

GOLDIE

He's choking! He needs help!

(DICK ploughs out of the door behind GOLDIE, making strangled choking noises and grabbing RALPHIE by the shoulders. He drags RALPHIE over to the Roulette table. He points to his throat and then slaps at the chips.)

RALPHIE

You're choking on a poker chip? And you need help. You need me to help! Got it! Okay! I've got this. I'm going to do the Heimlich, alright? Now are you comfortable if I touch you around the waist?

(Dick flails angrily.)

What?! Some people are ticklish!

(Dick flails again.)

Okay, okay! One-two-three! Again! One-two-three! One-two-THREE! I've gotta try something else. Promise you won't fire me?

(Dick holds out his hand for a pinkie promise.)

Alright.

(RALPHIE backs up and runs into a full speed headbutt. DICK folds over him and spits out the poker chip. It flies into the audience. DICK pants and leans against the blackjack table. GOLDIE runs to RALPHIE.)

GOLDIE

I can't believe that worked!

RALPHIE

I know—I'm a hero!

GOLDIE

That's so hot!

(They both squeal and jump up and down.)

DICK

As... grateful... as... I am... to be alive..... Don't think I don't... see.... What's going on... here.

(They quickly break their embrace and slide away from each other.)

RALPHIE and GOLDIE

What do you mean? What are you talking about? Nothing's going on here.

DICK

Nice try. You two are dating.

RALPHIE and GOLDIE

Dating! You can't be serious! We aren't dating. You're dating!

DICK

Just stop!

RALPHIE and GOLDIE

Stop what? Are you okay Dick? Maybe you're hallucinating.

DICK

I'm not hallucinating! I know what I saw! Besides I feel fine! I feel great! I feel.....

(DICK screws up his face—confused. He reaches for the table, but it is too late. He goes down and takes the rack of chips with him. They crash and scatter everywhere.)

RALPHIE

Uh-oh!

(GLADYS returns from the dressing room wearing a fur coat and carrying a suitcase. OSCAR runs back in.)

GLADYS

What on earth was all that racket?

OSCAR

And why are my chips all over the floor?

RALPHIE

Dick fainted. Somebody call 9-1-1.

GLADYS

I will!

(She pulls out her phone and takes her time.)

Now, let's see.... Nine..... One..... Onnnnnnnnnne.

GOLDIE

Gladys!

RALPHIE

Hurry!

GLADYS

Oh, calm down. I dialed it! See?

(Someone on the other end answers.)

Yes, hello. This is Gladys Moon. We need emergency medical services at the Flying Flamingo Lounge as soon as possible. Someone collapsed.

OSCAR

(Checking his pulse.)

He didn't collapse. He's dead.

RALPHIE

What?

GOLDIE

(Simultaneously.)

Oh, no!

GLADYS

(Gruffly.)

He's dead. Take your time.

(She hangs up.)

Wha-aat? They're busy folks.

GOLDIE

This is terrible!

OSCAR

I'll say. Who's gonna clean all this up?

(EDNA and ED storm into the lounge.)

EDNA

Come on, Ed! Let's blow this joint.

ED

Coming, Edna! Oooh! I love it when you get steamed.

EDNA

If any of you see that new manager of yours, please tell him that Ed and Edna Hefflefinger said he can go straight to—

(She almost runs over his body.)

Oh, that poor man. Bless his heart, may he rest in peace.

ED

(Not catching on.)

Rest in peace? I'd sooner see him dead than say anything nice about that two-faced, yellow-bellied, low-life, son of a—

(Ed finally sees the body.)

Sweet, sweet generous angel. Amen. Hallelu!

GLADYS

Oh, come off it! We all hated him.

EDNA

Now listen here, I *will not* talk ill of the dead! It's not right.

GLADYS

Hey, hey, hey! I hated him when he was alive, too. I— am an equal opportunity hater.

OSCAR

You can say that again.

GLADYS

I am nothing if not consistent.

OSCAR

Consistently talking.

GLADYS

Oh, you're one to talk about that!

OSCAR

See? There she goes.

GLADYS

I'll go right up side your head!

(GLADYS and OSCAR start squabbling about who talks the most.)

RALPHIE

Guys! GUYS! GUYYYYYSSSS!!!! A man is dead here. Let's be a little respectful.

GOLDIE

Yeah... Maybe we should take a moment of silence.

EDNA

That might be nice.

ED

Fine by me.

(They all close their eyes in the silence. KEVIN slams open a door dramatically.)

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

All right, Dick! I'm not one to toss out ultimatums, but here we go! This is your last chance. Either you come to me on bended knee or I'm outta here! No? Nothing? Well fine! But if you haven't come begging by the time I count to ten, then I'm gone forever! One— two—! Where ya at Dick? Three—Four—five—

RALPHIE

Kevin.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Six.

RALPHIE and GOLDIE

Kevin.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Seven.

ALL

KEVIN!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Excuse me! I'm counting!

ALL

He's dead!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Eight-nine-ten. WHAaAaAT?!?!?

(A breath.)

HOW? WHEN? WHY? WHICH? WHAT? NO-HO-HOOOOOOO! He was like a father to me.

GLADYS

Eh.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

A shepherd for my creative genius!

GLADYS

Mmm.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

He thought I had potential?

GLADYS

Nope.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Tolerated me?

GLADYS

Kevin!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Fine! He loathed me and I loathed him, but there was still time! There was so much time!

GLADYS

Ten drama points, Kevin. You win.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Don't mock my grief, Gladys.

GLADYS

Oh, Kevin. It's not your *grief* I'm mocking.

EDNA

Would you two please cut it out? A man is dead here! We've got to do something.

RALPHIE

We've already called for a paramedic. But it could be a while.

ED

Well it just doesn't seem right leaving him all sprawled out like this. We should at least cover him up.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Oh! I've got just the thing. I got it in Mongolia. It's called a Vanishing cloak. Here!

ED

Let's hope he doesn't vanish.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

(Mortally wounded.)

Sir, only a person, such as myself, highly trained in the magical arts could possibly activate the powers of the vanishing cloak.

GLADYS

You hold it in front of you and then you jump into a trap door.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Gladys!

GLADYS

An idiot could do it!

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

How dare you simplify the complexities of such a wondrous feat. Even I, as skilled as I am, have never perfectly executed the vanishing act.

GLADYS

Like I said... an idiot could do it.

KEVIN THEMAGNIFICENT

Oh, just cover him up all ready!

GOLDIE

Wait! Look. He's foaming at the mouth.

GLADYS

Rabies?

RALPHIE

Or..... poison.

EDNA

Poison? What are you trying to say. That he was—he was—?

ED

Murdered.

EDNA

Oh, Ed. Don't even say it.

OSCAR

He wasn't murdered, his heart just gave out.

GLADYS

Heart? What heart? He didn't have one.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

I either need my inhaler or my magic bunny. Either way, I'm not coping well.

GLADYS

Oh, come on! This is ridiculous. There is absolutely no evidence that this was a murder.

RALPHIE

Except for this.

(RALPHIE holds up a poker chip.)

EDNA

That's just a dag-blurned poker chip. They're laying around everywhere in case you haven't noticed.

RALPHIE

This isn't just any poker chip. It's got a skull and crossbones on it.

OSCAR

That doesn't mean anything. Poker chips have all sorts a stuff on them nowadays.

RALPHIE

On the back, somebody scratched the words: Die, Dick!

ED

Maybe it's a brand name!

(He thinks a second.)

No! No, you can't argue with that...

GOLDIE

That means... Someone in this room is a Murderer.

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

Duhn, Duhn, DUHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

(Everyone looks at KEVIN.)

What? Everyone wanted to!

SISTER

Excuse me. I don't mean to cause any trouble. But may I use your bathroom?

GLADYS

Sister, I think you're in the wrong place.

SISTER

Any place can be the right place, if your intentions are true.

GLADYS

And what, pray tell, are your intentions?

SISTER

To use your restrooms, if you are so kind as to let me.

OSCAR

Go ahead, sister. They're right this way.

SISTER

Thank you, sir. Oh, goodness. What happened?

ED

Dick kicked the bucket.

SISTER

Oh, how very, very sad. I'll say a prayer for him from the toilet, because I really must go!

KEVINTHEMAGNIFICENT

You guys, if there's a murderer on the loose. I need to know, because... I'm highly allergic and I need to keep my distance.

ALL

Shut up, Kevin!

(RHONDA bursts loudly through the doors and runs into the room. She runs a circle around the audience, looping through tables. She is looking for trouble, but can't seem to locate it. She stops on the stage, panting.)

OSCAR

Who are you?

RHONDA

Rhonda Priest.

(She pants.)

Security guard.

(She pants some more.)

I hear we've got a nun on the run.

RALPHIE

That was like... half an hour ago.

RHONDA

Well never fear, Rhonda Priest is here! Now what'd I miss?

RALPHIE

Uh. Pretty much everything.

RHONDA

Aw, shoot. Don't worry. Not matter how cold a trail might go, Rhonda Priest is bound to follow. Now tell me about this nun. Was she more of the "Hills are alive" variety or the flying kind... you know with the...

(She mimes a big floppy cornette.)

GOLDIE

It doesn't matter. She—

RHONDA

Ah! So it was a she! That's very good to know.

(She jots that down in a notebook.)

Fe-male. Nun. Got it. Only a seasoned professional would have caught a detail like that.

ED

I was impressed.

RHONDA

See? See? He was impressed.

(Turning bad-cop.)

And who are you?

ED

Muh name's Ed.

RHONDA

Ed was impressed. But Ed isn't head of admissions at the FBI academy, is he? *Is he?* Are you?

ED

Not that I know of.

RHONDA

Not that he knows of. But tell me this, would you consider writing a letter of recommendation for me, because I've been trying to find the right person, and I've just got a good feeling about you.

ED

I don't see why not.

RHONDA

He doesn't see why not! See people, now we're getting somewhere! Hold onto your seats, when you're rolling with Rhonda Priest!

RALPHIE

But you're not listening. We don't need you to find the nun.

(SISTER walks back in from the restroom.)

RHONDA

Too late! I got her!

(Rhonda emits a shrill warcry.)

R-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-rahhhhhhhhhhh! Where's my mace? Where's my taser? Where's my gun? I don't have a gun. But I do have... Ziptiesssss!

(She pulls out a handful of zipties and holds them out like a weapon.)

Freeze punk!

SISTER

(Screaming.)

Aaaghhhh!

RALPHIE

Rhonda listen! The whole thing with the nun is over. You missed it.

RHONDA

Oh! Okay. Well that's just that, I guess. You shoulda seen your face, sister! I was all like: Freeze. And you were all like: Aaaagh! And he was like: no. But you were like: Dohhhh!

(Pointing to EDNA.)

And this one right here made the stupidest face. Look she's still doing it. Well maybe that's just how she looks. No offense.

EDNA

None taken.

RHONDA

Well I guess I'll be on my—

(She trips and falls onto DICK. She looks at him and screams. She jumps up and shakes all the heebie jeebies off her body, squealing the entire time. Then she quickly gains her composure, and leans against the nearest chair.)

Y'aaaaaaaallllllllll. Ain't nobody tell me there was a dead body!

RALPHIE

We tried! You were a little preoccupied.

RHONDA

Dag flabbit! I didn't even bring my gloves. Does anyone in the vicinity have any high-grade surgical gloves size XL? Rhonda Priest has big hands, okay?!?!

GLADYS

Sorry. Fresh out.

RHONDA

I could squeeze into a Large!

(GLADYS scoffs.)

EDNA

I've got a Ziploc.

RHONDA

That'll work. When working on the fly, keep your eye on the prize. Nothing slows down, Rhonda Priest.

GOLDIE

Then why'd it take you so long to get here?

RHONDA

I was... otherwise detained.

RALPHIE

You were on the toilet, weren't you?

RHONDA

Rhonda Priest does not flush and tell.

OSCAR

I think that says all we need to know.

(RHONDA uses the ziplock to open DICK's blazer and check for wounds.)

RHONDA

I don't see any visible wounds.

RALPHIE

We think he was poisoned.

RHONDA

Poisoned! But that would make this a... MURDER!

Betting on
BLOODSHED
A BILOXI MURDER MYSTERY

Betting on Bloodshed

90 Minutes, Intended for Audiences 13 & Up

When the vile new manager of the Flying Flamingo Lounge and Casino is mysteriously murdered by a poisoned poker chip—the colorful guests and employees of the Flamingo must band together to find out who the true killer is—if only to save themselves.

But who truly committed the crime? Well, that's up to you to find out! Help the youthful, observant bartender Ralphie as he investigates everyone.

Was it Gladys, the older-than-dirt showgirl? Or her up-and-coming replacement Goldie? Or perhaps Kevin the Magnificent, who, let's face it, is not so magnificent?

But we can't forget the bumbling security guard Rhonda Priest. Or Oscar, the crotchety old blackjack dealer. Then there's Ed and Edna—the king and queen of getting things for free. And let's not forget the not-so-nunly nun who falls into the thick of it. And then of course, there's Kevin's edgy new competition, Kohl Spector, or worse, Kevin's Mom!

They all had motive—and they all had opportunity. The only question left is... who dunnit?

With four wild and crazy endings, Betting on Bloodshed is sure to keep your audience guessing until the perpetrator is behind bars.