

***MURDER ON THE BACK LOT,
THE FINAL SCENE***

A MURDER MYSTERY PLAY

By

Robert G. Borelli

The Play

NARRATOR

THE INVITATION READ:

**DEAR MR. BURNETT,
YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND A FINAL SHOOTING
PARTY FOR THE MOVIE CASABLANCA ON SATURDAY OCTOBER
25, 1942, 2.PM PACIFIC STANDARD TIME AT STUDIO 10, WARNER
BROTHERS, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA. YOUR SIGNIFICANT
CONTRIBUTION TO THIS PROJECT IS WELL RECOGNIZED AND IT
WOULD BE OUR PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU IN ATTENDANCE.**

YOURS TRULY,

**MIKE CUMMINS, VICE PRESIDENT PUBLICITY
WARNER BROTHERS STUDIOS**

MURRAY BURNETT IS JUST A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN MOST EVERYONE ELSE IN NEW YORK THESE DAYS, AS WAR DOMINATES ALL ASPECTS OF CITIZENS LIVES FROM NEWSPAPERS AND BILLBOARDS TO RADIO. WITH A NATION FACING EXTREME SACRIFICES, MURRAY KNOWS THAT HE WILL FEEL A SENSE OF GUILT SPENDING THE \$50,000.00 RECEIVED FROM SELLING HIS BOOK “EVERYBODY GOES TO RICK’S” TO WARNER BROTHER’S STUDIO. HE WONDERS IF HE SHOULD ATTEND THE PARTY. IN MURRAY’S MIND, SOME MAY CHARACTERIZE HIM AS A “WAR PROFITEER” FOR WRITING AN ANTI-WAR BOOK AND SELLING THE MOVIE RIGHTS FOR SIGNIFICANT PIECES OF SILVER.

WAR PROFITEER? A DREADED TERM IN A “PATRIOTS” VOCABULARY. MURRAY HOPES THAT THE MOVIE VERSION OF THE PLAY, WHICH THE PRODUCERS AT WARNER BROTHERS NAMED “CASABLANCA”, WILL REINFORCE THE ABSURDITY OF WAR AND PORTRAY IT FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS; AN OPPORTUNITY FOR POWERFUL MEN TO OBTAIN MORE POWER.

HE WAITED FOR AN INVITATION TO DO THE RE-WRITE FOR THE MOVIE SINCE HE WAS THE NATURAL CHOICE. WHEN THE CAST WAS ANNOUNCED, HE WAS THRILLED FOR HE KNEW; THEY WERE THE EXACT TYPES OF ACTORS HE ENVISIONED WHEN HE WROTE THE BOOK, ESPECIALLY HUMPHREY BOGART AS RICK. BOGIE HAS AN UNCONSTRAINED ARROGANCE FOR AUTHORITY AND WOULD CERTAINLY BE IN CHARACTER TO UTTER “I STICK MY NECK OUT FOR NOBODY”.

NARRATOR Cont.

YES! REWRITE WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE. BUT ALAS! NO INVITATION EVER CAME, UNTIL NOW, AN INVITATION TO BE ONLY A WITNESS, AT THE CLOSING CURTAIN OF "EVERYBODY GOES TO RICK'S".

***MURDER ON THE BACK LOT, THE FINAL
SCENE***

A MURDER MYSTERY PLAY

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NARRATOR:

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE: NOTE: EACH CAST CHARACTER COMES OUT WHEN THEIR NAME IS CALLED. AFTER TAKING THEIR APPLAUSE, THEY DESCRIBE THEIR CHARACTER THEN THEY GO BACK TO THEIR START STATIONS

JOAN ALISON: PLAYWRIGHT

MURRAY BURNETT: PLAYWRIGHT

MIKE CUMMINS: V.P. PUBLICITY, WARNER BOTHER'S STUDIO

MICHAEL CURTIZ: DIRECTOR: CASABLANCA

GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS: SET DESIGNER

INGRID BERGMAN: ACTRESS

CLAIRE KELLY: COSTUME DESIGNER

HUMPHREY BOGART: ACTOR

NARRATOR:

DESPITE THE MISGIVINGS, MURRAY DECIDES TO TAKE THE TRIP TO LOS ANGELES. DURING THE CAB RIDE FROM THE TRAIN STATION, MURRAY PASSES AN ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE AND SEES MEN LINED UP AROUND THE CORNER WAITING TO VOLUNTEER FOR MILITARY SERVICE. HE THINKS THAT THIS IS SHEER MADNESS AND DECIDES THAT AT ANY COST HE WILL ENSURE THAT THE MOVIE SCRIPT REFLECTS HIS ORIGINAL INTENT AND HELPS STOP THIS WAR LUNACY.

AT THE GATE OF THE STUDIO A GUIDE WELCOMES MURRAY TO WARNER BROTHERS AND LEADS HIM TO A BUS FILLED WITH ABOUT 20 OTHER GUESTS FOR THE PARTY. THE BUS DEPARTS AND ARRIVES AT THE BACK LOT OF STUDIO 10. UPON DEPARTING THE BUS, MURRAY RECOGNIZES JOAN ALISON, HIS PARTNER IN WRITING THE BOOK.

JOAN ALISON

MURRAY, HOW LOVELY IT IS TO SEE YOU. I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE THE PARTY.

MURRAY BURNETT:

JOAN, IT'S LOVELY TO SEE YOU AS WELL. I HAVE TO BE HERE. I JUST KNOW THEY CHANGED OUR BOOK. YOU KNOW NO, ONE EVER CALLED ME FOR A RE-WRITE. DID THEY CALL YOU?

JOAN ALLISON:

WHY YES, AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH HOWIE KOCH WRITING MOSTLY FLASH BACK SCENES. HAL WALLIS HIRED ME. AS YOU KNOW, I AM DATING GEORGE HOPKINS, THE SET DIRECTOR.

MURRAY BURNETT:

HAL WALLIS? I SAW HIM IN NEW YORK A FEW MONTHS AGO. HE DIDN'T TELL ME YOU WERE WORKING FOR HIM. WHAT FLASH BACK SCENES? THE BOOK DIDN'T HAVE FLASH BACKS.

JOAN ALLISON:

AH! JUST SOME ROMANTIC FLASH BACKS TO ADD A LITTLE TENDERNESS TO THE STORY. AND I AM ALSO REWRITING THE ENDING. OH! HOW DOES "GATHER UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS" SOUND? I KNOW GEORGE JUST LOVES IT.

MURRAY BURNETT:

THIS IS JUST TERRIBLE. THE MOVIE IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE TENDER. IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABSURD. WAR IS ABSURD AND I DON'T LIKE YOU REWRITING THE ENDING. OUR BOOK IS ANTI WAR, NOT A TENDER ROMANTIC NOVEL. AND I DON'T CARE WHAT GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS LIKES.

NARRATOR:

THE PASSENGERS ARE LED TO AN AREA BEHIND SEVERAL CAMERAS. A MIST IS IN FRONT OF THE GROUP AND THEY COULD SEE AN OUTLINE OF AN AIRPLANE PARKED ON A RUNWAY. SUDDENLY OUT OF THE MIST A MAN APPEARS.

MIKE CUMMINS

HELLO! AND WELCOME TO THE FINAL SHOOTING PARTY OF CASABLANCA. MY NAME IS MIKE CUMMINS, NO I'M NOT RELATED TO BOB. I AM VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLICITY FOR WARNER BROTHERS STUDIO. THE CAST AND CREW WANT TO EXTEND THEIR WARMEST WELCOME TO YOU. WE ARE ON THE BACK LOT OF STUDIO 10 AT WARNER BROTHERS. THE SETTING IS THE AIRPORT IN CASABLANCA MOROCCO, A COUNTRY NOW CONTROLLED BY THE FRENCH VICHY GOVERNMENT AND THEIR NAZI MASTERS. TO LEAD UP TO WHY WE ARE AT THE AIRPORT, I MUST SET THE STAGE TO GIVE MEANING TO THE SCENE.

MOST OF THE EVENTS TAKE PLACE IN RICK'S CAFÉ, A GATHERING PLACE FOR THE RESISTANCE AND THE GERMANS. RICK IS NEITHER PATRIOT NOR COLLABORATOR. IN HIS OWN WORDS "I STICK MY NECK OUT FOR NOBODY".

A MAN NAMED LASZLO, A FRENCH RESISTANCE LEADER, AND HIS WIFE ILSA SHOW UP AT RICK'S FOR THEIR RENDEZVOUS WITH A FELLOW RESISTANCE MEMBER TO OBTAIN DOCUMENTS OF TRANSIT. ILSA IMMEDIATELY SEES THAT RICK IS NO OTHER THAN HER FORMER LOVER THAT SHE JILTED AT A PARIS RAIL STATION. THE GERMANS AND THEIR FRENCH COLLABORATORS DISCOVER LASZLO IS AT RICK'S AND A GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE ENSUES ENDING FINALLY AT THE AIRPORT.

THIS SPECIAL EVENT CAN ONLY BE CHARACTERIZED AS HISTORIC, DUE TO THE STATE OF WAR WE ARE IN WITH GERMANY AND HER AXIS PARTNERS. BUT AS IN ANY SIGNIFICANT CONFLICT, EMOTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PORTRAY THESE EMOTIONS, GIVE THE DRAMA MEANING BEYOND LOVE, HOPE OR GLORY. THE REAL INTERPRETATION OF THIS SCRIPT IS, IN ESSENCE, MAN'S CONFRONTATION WITH HIS OWN MIND. THE MOVIE IS ADAPTED FROM A BOOK WRITTEN BY MURRAY BURNETT AND JOAN ALISON WHO HONOR US WITH THEIR PRESENCE HERE TODAY.

I AM GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU TO COOPERATE AND GIVE US YOUR COMPLETE SILENCE AS WE SHOOT THIS FINAL SCENE. THANK YOU!

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

O.K. EVERYONE TO ACTION, START THE ROLLING.

NARRATOR:

THE CAMERAS START FOCUSING ON THE AIRPLANE AS THE FIRST ENGINE STARTS TO TURN SEEKING ITS PROPER SPEED.

MICHAEL CURTIZ (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

CUT! CUT! CUT! LOOK AT THE DUMB AIR-O-PLANE . IT DOES NOT LOOK REAL. WHERE IS THE SET DESIGNER?

GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS:

HERE I AM! WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE AIR-O-PLANE?

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

IT LOOKS STUPID, JUST LIKE YOU. NOT PROPORTIONATE JUST LIKE YOU. AIR-O-PLANE MECHANICS ARE ALMOST AS BIG AS THE PLANE. I TELL YOU IN EUROPE WE GET THESE THINGS DONE RIGHT.

GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS:

I CAN'T TAKE THIS! ALL YOU HAVE DONE THROUGHOUT THIS WHOLE MOVIE IS CRITICIZED MY SET DESIGN. WHAT DO YOU WANT A BIGGER AIR-O-PLANE? OR SHOULD I CUT THE LEGS OFF THE MECHANICS.

INGRID BERGMAN:

CAN WE PLEASE GET ON WITH THIS SCENE? I HAVE OTHER COMMITMENTS THAT I MUST ATTEND. THIS WHOLE MOVIE HAS BEEN AN ORDEAL. AND NOW WE ARE AIRING OUR UNSANITARY LAUNDRY IN FRONT OF THESE INVITED GUESTS.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

UNSANITARY LAUNDRY? MAYBE IF HAD EUROPEAN ACTORS INSTEAD OF DUMB, AMERICANS ON SET, WE WOULD NOT HAVE DIRTY LAUNDRY.

INGRID BERGMAN:

MR. CURTIZ, I AM A EUROPEAN ACTRESS AND A VERY GOOD ONE. AND SIR! YOU ARE A TYRANT WHO SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN EUROPE? I TELL YOU MY HUSBAND IS A TRUE EUROPEAN. HE IS A RENOWNED BRAIN SURGEON. HE SHOULD BE DIRECTING THIS FILM. HE IS SENSITIVE TO AN EVERYONE'S EMOTIONS AND WOULD BE LOVED BY EVERYONE ON THE SET.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

YOUR HUSBAND, DEAR LADY, IS RUBBISH,. AMERICANS KNOW HE BIG COLLABORATOR! AND YOU KNOW HE ONLY SENSITIVE TO YOUNG PRETTY GIRL EMOTIONS. EVERYBODY IN FILM INDUSTRY KNOW HIM. HE SHOULD GET ACADEMY AWARD FOR HIS WORK WITH PRETTY LADIES DOING COUCH SURGERY.

INGRID BERGMAN: GETTING EMOTIONAL

THAT'S NOT TRUE, IT'S NOT TRUE. YOU ARE A LIAR. MY HUSBAND IS A GENTLEMAN. NOT AT ALL LIKE YOU. YOU SIR ARE A LASCIVIOUS PIG, THAT OUGHT TO HAVE AN APPLE PLACED IN HIS MOUTH AND SHOT. **STEPPING OUT IN FRONT OF THE AUDIENCE IGRID SAYS "FOLKS HOW'S THAT FOR A LINE? I THINK I SHOULD GET AN ACADEMY AWARD JUST FOR PRONOUNCING LASCIVIOUS."** IGRID RETURNS BACK TO THE CAST.

MIKE CUMMINS: LOOKING AT AUDIENCE

GUESTS, PLEASE UNDERSTAND THE FRUSTRATION GOING ON HERE. THE SCHEDULE IS GRUELING. WARNER BROTHERS IS PUTTING OUT A PICTURE A WEEK. THE WAR DEPARTMENT IS STEALING OUR BEST MOVIE PEOPLE FOR PROPAGANDA FILMS. ONCE WE GET THIS AIRPLANE PROBLEM SOLVED, THE SCENE SHOULD NOT TAKE LONGER THAN 4 HOURS. PLEASE BE PATIENT WHILE WE WORK OUT SOME OF THESE AIRPLANE DETAILS.

MURRAY BURNETT:

MIKE, WHY DON'T THEY USE MIDGETS? YOU CAN GET THE PROPORTIONS RIGHT.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

I HEAR THAT! BRILLIANT IDEA! WHO THIS MAN IS?

MURRAY BURNETT:

I'M MURRAY BURNETT. I CO-WROTE THE BOOK THE MOVIE IS BASED ON.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

HOPKINS! GO FIND MIDGETS. YOU, MY FRIEND COME SIT WITH ME. ENDING OF MOVIE JUST GOT WRITTEN. DUMB WRITERS DIDN'T KNOW IF LOVE STORY OR PATRIOTIC WAR STORY.

MURRAY BURNETT: GETTING EMOTIONAL

IT'S NEITHER! IT IS AN ANTI-WAR MOVIE. YOU HEAR ME, IT'S AN ANTI-WAR MOVIE. NOT A LOVE STORY, NOT A PATRIOT STORY. IT'S AN ANTI WAR STORY. I KNEW YOU IDIOTS WOULD SCREW THIS UP, I JUST KNEW IT. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE RE-WRITE. THIS NEVER WOULD HAVE HAPPENED. YOU JUST DON'T GET IT. WAR AGAINST GERMANY IS IDIOTIC. I'VE BEEN THERE I KNOW THESE PEOPLE. CHANGE THE MOVIE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE. SHOW THE WORLD HOW ABSURD WAR IS.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

I THINK YOU GO BACK AND SIT WHERE YOU BEEN. I DON'T NEED NOTHER STUPID AMERICAN GIVE ME ADVISE. MOVIE NOT ANTI-WAR. FOR WAR, AGAINST HITLER LOVING GERMANS. WHERE IS CUSTUME LADY? LOOK AT CLOTHES. THE WEATHER IS RAIN AND FOG. ILSA HAS NO RAINCOAT, BOGART AND LASZLO RAIN COATS. CAN THIS BE RIGHT?

CLAIRE KELLY:

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ME, MICHAEL? THE CUSTUMES ARE CORRECT FOR THE TIME OF YEAR IN MOROCCO, ESPECIALLY ON THE COAST. OBVIOUSLY YOU DON'T REMEMBER "OUR GET IN THE MOOD TRIP TO NORTH AFRICA" LAST YEAR. AND BESIDES, ILSA WOULD LOOK TERRIBLE IN A RAINCOAT.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

AH! YES I DO REMEMBER. I APOLOGIZE FOR CRITICISM. DIRECTOR IS DIFFICULT JOB. SPECIALLY WHEN WORKING WITH DUMB PEOPLE.

NARRATOR:

THE SET DESIGNER RETURNS WITH THE MIDGETS.

GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS

YOUR MIDGETS ARE HERE. I HAD TO BORROW THEM FROM MGM. YOU'RE LUCKY I HAVE CONTACTS AT MGM. THEY HAVE NOTHING BUT THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR ME OVER THERE. WHILE HERE, MR. DIRECTOR, YOU HAVE TREATED ME AND MY STAFF AS IDIOTS. YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF ART. I, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE BEEN NOMINATED FOR TWO ACADEMY AWARDS FOR MY SET DESIGNS AT MGM.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

AND YOU NEVER WON. AND I SEE TO IT THAT YOU WON'T WIN ON THIS ONE. YOU'RE FIRED, GET OFF SET, IT'S A LOUSY LOOKING SET ANYWAY.

GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS

YOU CAN'T FIRE ME, I WORK FOR HAL WALLIS. WHY DON'T YOU QUIT BEFORE SOME ONE FIRES YOU, OR FIRES AT YOU!

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

YOU'RE NOT THE MAN TO FIRE AT ANYONE! YOU KNOW BOGART WOULD. BOGIE LIKE LONE RANGER NEEDS NO HAL WALLIS TO FIGHT BATTLES.

BOGART

HEY! HOW ABOUT LEAVING ME OUT OF THIS LITTLE DISPUTE. I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO THIS EVENING SO LET'S GET ROLLING.

CLAIRE KELLY

YEAH, LET'S GET ROLLING MICHAEL. YOU AND I ALSO HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO THIS EVENING, AND IT DEFINITELY DOES INVOLVE SOME ROLLING.

BOGART

HEY! COSTUME LADY, I THOUGHT YOU AND I HAD SOMETHING GOING THIS EVENING? LATER ABOUT THAT SUBJECT. COULD SOMEONE GET ME MORE LUCKYS AND HEY, BRING SOME SCOTCH, I'M GETTING THIRSTY. **STEPPING OUT IN FRONT OF THE AUDIENCE, BOGART SAYS "FOLKS I KNOW NOW THAT I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THAT PART IN GONE WITH THE WIND. I CAN SAY "FRANKLY SCARLET, I DON'T GIVE A DAMN" BETTER THEN CLARK GABLE COULD. "HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU KID OR PLAY IT AGAIN SAM" ARE NOT ACADEMY WINNER LINES. AUDIENCE AGREE? BOGIE RETURNS BACK TO THE CAST**

GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS

MR. DIRECTOR, YOUR MIDGETS ARE IN PLACE. WE'RE SET TO ROLL.

NARRATOR:

THE ACTORS GET IN PLACE FOR THE FINAL SCENE. THE AIRPLANE LOOKS PERFECT.

MICHAEL CURTIZ: (IN HEAVY GERMAN ACCENT)

ALL RIGHT CREW, WE READY TO SHOOT! NOW ALL KNOW HOW I WANT SCENE SHOT. NEED EMOTIONS, SO LOOK AT ME NOT ACTOR YOU TALKING TO. THE CAMERA DO CORRECTING. I BE LOOKING RIGHT IN YOUR FACE. WATCH MY EXPRESSIONS FOR DIRECTION. NOWWW ACTION!

NARRATOR: (THE MOVIE)

CAPTAIN LOUIS RENAULT (FRENCH POLICE CAPTAIN) ARRIVES AT RICK'S CAFÉ TO ARREST LASZLO AND ILSA ONLY TO FIND RICK HAS DRAWN A GUN, NOT ON LASZLO, BUT ON HIM.

BOGART: (THE MOVIE)

CAPTAIN! YOU'RE TAKING US IN YOUR CAR TO THE AIRPORT. CALL THEM TO INFORM THEM WE WILL BE COMING. IT WILL SOUND MORE OFFICIAL IF THEY HEAR YOUR VOICE.

NARRATOR: (THE MOVIE)

PRETENDING TO CALL THE AIRPORT RENAULT CALLS MAJOR STRASSER, A GERMAN OFFICER, TO TIP HIM OFF OF THE ESCAPE. AT THE AIRPORT, STILL WITH THE GUN POINTED AT CAPTAIN LOUIS RENAULT.

BOGART: (THE MOVIE)

ALL RIGHT LOUIE, WRITE "MR. & MRS. VICTOR LASZLO" ON THE LETTERS OF TRANSIT. I WILL BE STAYING BEHIND TO MAKE SURE THEY GET AWAY SAFELY.

INGRID BERGMAN: (THE MOVIE)

RICK! I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU. IT'S MY HUSBAND THAT NEEDS TO ESCAPE. HE IS SO IMPORTANT TO THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. RICK! I LOVE YOU, I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU.

BOGART: (THE MOVIE);

GO, YOU MUST GO. IN THIS CRAZY WORLD THE LIVES OF THREE PEOPLE DON'T AMOUNT TO A HILL OF BEANS. GO WITH YOUR HUSBAND OR YOU WILL ALWAYS REGRET IT.

NARRATOR: (THE MOVIE)

LASZLO AND ILSA BOARD THE PLANE. THE CAPTAIN TELLS RICK THAT HE WILL BE ARRESTED FOR THIS. AS MAJOR STRASSER ARRIVES HE IS INFORMED THAT HIS PREY IS ON THE PLANE HEADING DOWN THE RUNWAY. THE MAJOR TRIES TO CONTACT THE TOWER. RICK POINTS HIS GUN AT THE MAJOR.

BOGART: (THE MOVIE)

STOP! DON'T MAKE THE CALL MAJOR! I'M TELLING YOU TO HANG UP! HANG UP.

NARRATOR: (THE MOVIE)

THE MAJOR DRAWS HIS GUN AND BOTH MEN FIRE. MAJOR STRASSER IS KILLED. AS THE POLICE ARRIVE CAPTAIN RENAULT LOOKS AT RICK AND THEN SLOWLY TURNS TO HIS MEN AND TELLS THEM TO "ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS". AS THE PLANE LEAVES CAPTAIN RENAULT THROWS HIS LOT IN WITH RICK, AND AS THEY WALK ACROSS THE FOG STREWN RUNWAY.

BOGART: (THE MOVIE)

LOUIS, I THINK THIS COULD BE THE START OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP.

NARRATOR: (THE MOVIE)

RICK AND LOUIS DISAPPEAR IN TO THE FOG. THE CAMERA KEEPS ROLLING AND ROLLING. A MINUTE GOES BY, THEN ANOTHER.

CLAIRE KELLY

FOR GOD'S SAKE WASN'T THAT THE END OF THE SCENE?

INGRID BERGMAN

CUT! CUT! STOP ROLLING! WHAT'S WRONG, MR. DIRECTOR DON'T YOU WANT THIS AGONY TO END? MICHAEL! I'M TALKING TO YOU. MICHAEL? WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?

NARRATOR:

CLAIRE KELLY WALKS OVER TO MICHAEL WHO IS SITTING IN HIS DIRECTOR CHAIR. SHE SHAKES HIM. MICHAEL FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

CLAIRE KELLY

OH, MY GOD HE'S BLEEDING. OH! NO! I THINK HE'S DEAD.

MIKE CUMMINS: (PUTTING HIS FINGER ON MICHAEL'S NECK.)

HE'S DEAD! LOOKS LIKE A BULLET HOLE GOT HIM RIGHT THROUGH HIS HEART. ALL RIGHT EVERYONE. STAND BACK. WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE?

BOGART:

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED HERE. I MUST HAVE SHOT HIM. I WAS DOING EXACTLY WHAT HE TOLD ME. I WAS LOOKING RIGHT AT HIM WHEN I FIRED THE PROP PISTOL. THERE WAS ONLY TWO SHOTS. MAJOR STRASSER'S AND MINE. SO IT HAD TO BE ME SINCE I WAS THE ONE FACING MICHAEL. HERE TAKE THE PISTOL.

NARRATOR

MIKE CUMMINS TAKES BOGIE'S PISTOL AND EXAMS IT.

MIKE CUMMINS

THIS PISTOL HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH. IT APPEARS THAT THE FIRST CHAMBER IS EMPTY AND THE ALL THE REST OF THE CHAMBERS HAVE BLANKS. IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE DELIBERATELY REPLACED THE FIRST BLANK CARTAGE WITH A REAL BULLET OR LEFT IT EMPTY SO THERE WOULD BE NO SOUND. NO ONE IS TO LEAVE THIS SET, ESPECIALLY, THE CAST AND CREW. I'M CALLING THE POLICE. AND BOGIE, YOU'RE NOT OUT OF "USUAL SET OF SUSPECTS", AS YET.

BOGART:

OH! BOY! HERE'S LOOKING AT ME KID!

NARRATOR: LOOKING AT THE AUDIENCE

WELL AUDIENCE, WE SEEM TO HAVE A MURDER HERE. DID BOGIE SHOOT THE DIRECTOR OR DID HE JUST FIRE AN EMPTY CHAMBER AND SOMEONE ELSE SHOT THE DIRECTOR. WE ARE GOING TO ASK YOU TO GUESS WHO DID IT? AND YES AND WHY DID THEY DO IT. HMMM! YOU GOT SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT. BUT BEFORE WE GET TO THAT, I WANT TO INTRODUCE OUR MARVELOUS CAST.

THE CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

JOAN ALISON:	PLAYWRIGHT
MURRAY BURNETT:	PLAYWRIGHT
MIKE CUMMINS:	VICE PRESIDENT PUBLICITY
MICHAEL CURTIZ:	DIRECTOR CASABLANCA
GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS:	SET DESIGNER
INGRID BERGMAN:	ACTRESS
CLAIRE KELLY:	COSTUME DESIGNER
HUMPHREY BOGART:	ACTOR

**NOTE TO NARRATOR: THE CAST CAN BREAK THEIR SEAL AFTER
THEY AND THE AUDIENCE HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO GUESS**

THE PLAY PAUSES HERE

AFTER AUDIENCE PICKS, CONTINUE FROM HERE

NARRATOR:

HOPE YOU ALL HAVE PICKED THE MURDERER AND THE MOTIVE. AND NOW THE PLAY RESUMES.

MIKE CUMMINS:

BEFORE THE POLICE GET HERE, I WANT SOME ANSWERS FROM YOU BOGIE. DIDN'T YOU FIRE THE GUN IN REHEARSAL? AND WERE THERE BLANKS IN IT?

BOGART:

YEAH! I FIRED IT AND RIGHT AT THE MAJOR, SEVERAL TIMES. WE SHOT THE ENDING SCENE OVER AND OVER AGAIN. WE TRIED DIFFERENT ENDINGS AND THE DIRECTOR SETTLED ON THE LAST MINUTE REWRITE THAT HAD ME SHOOTING THE MAJOR. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ENDING WE WERE GOING TO SHOOT UNTIL I CAME HERE TONIGHT. THE GUN WAS GIVEN TO ME RIGHT BEFORE THE SCENE.

MIKE CUMMINS:

WELL! YOU COULD HAVE SWITCHED THE BLANK CARTAGE WITH A REAL BULLET AND NOBODY WOULD HAVE NOTICED.

BOGART:

HEY! WAIT A MINUTE PAL! I JUST TOLD YOU, I DIDN'T KNOW WHICH ENDING WE WERE GOING TO SHOOT UNTIL I GOT HERE. AND IF YOU KEEP POINTING FINGERS AT ME I'LL DECK YOU.

JOAN ALLISON:

LET'S TRY TO KEEP CALM. SOMEONE HAS TO MAKE A DECISION ON WHAT TO DO. WE NEED TO KNOW IF THERE IS A MURDERER HERE.

I SAY WE LET GEORGE EXAMINE THE PISTOL, AFTER ALL, HE IS THE EXPERT ON THE SET.

MURRAY BURNETT:

WAIT A MINUTE! DON'T LET GEORGE TOUCH THAT PISTOL. I'LL TELL YOU WHO THE MURDERER IS. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WRITE MURDER MYSTERY PLAYS TO FIGURE OUT WHO KILLED MICHAEL CURTIZ. THERE ARE ONLY TWO PEOPLE THAT HAD TO KNOW WHAT SCENE WAS TO BE SHOT TONIGHT AND WHAT PROPS WERE TO BE USED. THAT WAS THE SET DESIGNER, GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS, AND THE REWRITE PERSON, JOAN ALISON. AND IT JUST SO HAPPENS THEY ARE DATING.

GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS:

ARE YOU CRAZY, I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MURDER. IF THE BULLET WAS SWITCHED, IT WAS BY SOMEONE ELSE!

MIKE CUMMINS:

GEORGE, MURRAY IS RIGHT. THIS IS A CLOSED SET AND ONLY YOU HAD ACCESS TO THE PROPS. I'M SURE A SIMPLE BALLISTIC TEST OF THE PROP PISTOL WILL SHOW THAT THERE WASN'T ANYTHING IN THE FIRST CHAMBER AND WHEN BOGIE FIRED NOTHING HAPPENED. WE ALL HEARD YOU THREATEN MICHAEL WHEN HE TOLD YOU HE WANTED YOU FIRED AND THAT HE WOULD BLOCK ANY ATTEMPT TO GET YOU AN OSCAR. I THINK YOUR EXACT WORDS WERE "YOU CAN'T FIRE ME, I WORK FOR HAL WALLIS. WHY DON'T YOU QUIT! BEFORE SOME ONE FIRES YOU, OR FIRES AT YOU." HAVING YOUR GIRLFRIEND REWRITE THE ENDING GAVE YOU THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SET THE SCENE TO SHOOT MICHAEL.

BOGIE! THINK YOU CAN HOLD THIS GUY TO THE COPS GET HERE?

BOGART:

I'M SURE I CAN. YOU'RE A BUM GEORGE; IMAGINE TRYING TO MAKE ME TAKE THE RAP. YOU OUGHT TO KNOW, I'M JUST A LOVABLE PUSSY CAT THAT WOULDN'T HARM A SOUL.

NARRATOR:

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT. GEORGE JAMES HOPKINS THE MURDERER. WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT? HE SEEMED TO BE SUCH A LIKEABLE GUY. OH WELL! IT'S OFF TO THE BIG MOVIE HOUSE WITH THE HIGH WALLS FOR HIM. THE CAST AND I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR COMING AND WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE PLAY. NOW, ONE MORE TIME, LET'S HEAR IT FOR OUR WONDERFUL CAST.

Character's Personal Note Page