

# **SAN JUAN'S DIRTY LAUNDRY**

**Also Known As  
Will Her Knickers Ever Get Clean?**

**By  
Gary McCarver**

**A Full-Length Melodrama  
Including Music & Staging Resources**

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The New Home for the Great American Melodrama  
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## **A sample “Commercial” for pre-show advertisements**

Are you up for some melodramatic excitement? Then welcome back to the small western town of San Juan Capistrano for the almost true retelling of a story about lost love, a villainous railroad tycoon, a brave woman and how Orange County became Orange County back in 1889.

Mark Twain once said ... “Truth is stranger than fiction ... because fiction is obliged to stick with possibilities ... the truth isn’t”. Of course, I’m talking about the story of the lady that tried to stop the train from coming through San Juan Capistrano ... with a clothes line. (chuckle) What? You’ve never heard the story of San Juan’s Dirty Laundry? Well, we just can’t have any of that.

So, if you want to get the inside scoop on this page in history ... be sure to mark your calendars and invite your friends for an evening of mystery, frivolity and authentic old time melodramatic music.

We also promise an ample supply of twists and turns, schemers and scoundrels, mayhem and misdirection. If you want to discover some of the answers that have been left out of history books, purchase tickets online for “San Juan’s Dirty Laundry”. We’ll be looking for you.

**Information on the Authentic Old Time Music in this  
Melodrama** Sheet music, sample tracks, and many other great  
old time Melodramas as well as Cue-Card graphics can be  
found online at: **[www.HeroAndVillain.com](http://www.HeroAndVillain.com)**

## THE CAST

**THE NARRATOR** – The play begins in 1939 with the very old Narrator re-telling the story of his life in San Juan Capistrano 50 years earlier. Sure, it's a familiar “flashback” ploy, but you will appreciate it by play's end

**PAIGE TURNER – CUE-CARD MAVEN** – For those that don't come to Melodramas often enough ... Paige reminds the audience with cues to say “Boo” and “Hiss” for the villain or shout out “Shameless Plug” when local merchants are mentioned in the course of the production.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – A good-natured fast-talking heroic type. His family owns the Meddlesome Inn. For the last 2 years he's traveled the world as a reporter for the Santa Ana Standard newspaper. Now he's returning to San Juan to woo his true love.

**THE HONORABLE JUDGE EAGAN** – As focused a man as any you've ever met. The only thing more important than getting “Orange County” established is his feelings for Molly.

**MODESTA VILLA** – A recently widowed dark-eyed beauty. She was left to raise her daughter Rosa alone when her husband was hit by the train. He left her with a home next to the train tracks and a mortgage. As you'd guess ... Modesta holds trains in contempt.

**ROSA VILLA** – Rosa is Modesta's nearly grown daughter who is only staying at home until making sure her mother has recovered from the loss of her father. Rosa helps with the washing business.

**OUR PIANO PLAYER – TRUDY LITE** – Bringing our melodramatic antics to life, our resident musician tinkles out the tunes you'd expect ... while teaching piano lessons at the Inn.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – “Mother” is the strong willed and highly opinionated owner of the Meddlesome Inn. Times have been tough, so she does just about everything at the Inn except for the laundry which Modesta and her daughter do.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – “Molly” is a breathtaking beauty who runs a little haberdashery in San Juan Capistrano. She has a room in the Meddlesome Inn. Life is going along well until she finds her old beau coming back to town which unsettles everything.

**THE VILLAINOUS “PROFESSOR” TIBERIUS MACK** – Despicable, reprehensible and rotten to the core railroad tycoon. He is seldom found without his tall black top hat or his two “Assistants”, one on each arm. Not a drop of “blue blood” in this cad ... he won his title in a crooked card game.

**MAY WHEE and SCANTILLY CLAD** – These flirtatious “Assistants” to THE PROFESSOR go where he goes ... “gussying up” San Juan Capistrano in the process. There’s more than meets the eye to these two ... but not much more.

**DAN DRUFF – THE TOWN BARBER & PART TIME SHERIFF** – Dan gets pulled into the action when not providing melodramatic sound effects. Dan has the manners and grace of a Clydesdale, so beware.

## **WALK-ON PARTS & EXTRAS**

**LILLY O’LAUNDRY, ELLIE GANT & DEE SEMBER** – Optional washer women that help MODESTA and ROSA sing the *Lavé La Ropa* song. These Extras can also double as Walk-On Travelers if they want more stage time.

**ASSORTED TRAVELERS** – These optional characters join the fun on stage from time to time prologue. The advantage of a Melodrama is that you can invite the audience or your friends to stop by for one night and join in the fun on stage ... some theaters even charge extra for it.

# SONG LIST

**1. Back To Capistrano**

Words by Ray Sherwood & Gary McCarver

Music by Bert L. Rule

**2. Portrait Of My Dreams**

Words by Arthur Freed & Gary McCarver

Music by Oliver G. Wallace

**3. Look For The Silver Lining**

Words by Bud De Sylva & Gary McCarver

Music by Jerome Kern

**4. Lavé La Ropa (Washing the Clothes)**

Words by Gary McCarver

Music by Victoria Yradier

**5. Only One Love**

Lyrics by George Cohan & Gary McCarver

Music by George Cohan

**6. All Alone**

Words by W. Dillon & Gary McCarver

Music by Harry Von Tilzer

**7. Back In Old Bombay**

Words by Walter Donovan, Ballard MacDonald & Gary McCarver

Music by Harry Carroll

**8. Goodbye Dear Heart**

Words by Maceo Pinkard & Gary McCarver

Music by Maceo Pinkard

**9. Portrait of My Dreams – Reprise**

**10. Curtain Call Song– ‘Till You Visit Again**

Words by Jack Drislane & Gary McCarver

Music by Chris Smith

# PROLOGUE

**The Place:** A dimly lit view of San Juan Capistrano  
**The Date:** March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1939  
**The Time:** It is early in the evening

**(LIGHT COMES UP on PAIGE TURNER as she enters)**

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card and saying)*  
**CUE-CARD – SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO 1939 (EXITS)**

**(A LIGHT COMES UP on THE NARRATOR as PAIGE TURNER exits. THE NARRATOR walks in front of the old Meddlesome Inn to bring the audience back to Old San Juan)**

**THE NARRATOR –** *(walking over to the chair)*  
*(ASIDE to the audience - as if talking to an old friend)*

Everyone gets nostalgic for a time they didn't live through. It was always a better world, grander, more interesting, more exciting. Actually, it was none of that. Mark Twain once wrote ... "Truth is stranger than fiction ... because fiction is obliged to stick with possibilities ... the truth isn't". Of course, I'm talking about the story of the lady that tried to stop the train from coming through San Juan Capistrano ... with a clothes line. *(chuckle)* I suspect that's why you're here. To see where all those shenanigans took place many years ago.

What? You've never heard the story of San Juan's Dirty Laundry? Well, we just can't have any of that. But this time let me tell you the truth that very few have heard. The papers proving what I am about to tell you "disappeared" when my house nearly burned down some years ago, so you'll just have to take my word for it that everything you hear is the honest truth. Well as honest as I can make it. The lady with that infamous clothes line was named ... Modesta Villa. Her house was actually not far from here, situated right next to where the train was coming through town. And don't be confused on that point. The train WAS coming through ... one way or another. Back then, the railroad was the biggest employer in California and not to be trifled with.

Even though the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific assured all displaced land owners “fair compensation” for laying tracks across their property, no matter what promises had been made, the man in charge wasn’t about to give out a single cent he didn’t have to. That man liked to be called “Professor” and was a villainous despicable money-grubbing rotten to the core, blight on humanity, a man willing to tell a lie as easily as take a breath.

Let’s see ... where was I? ... Oh yes ... it was March of 1889 when Capistrano was still part of Los Angeles County. The swallows were coming back to California and apparently so was the son of a local hotel owner. His name was Barry Meddlesome. Up until then he had been travelling the globe as a newspaper reporter. I don’t know why he returned. Maybe he just had enough of getting shot at while reporting on wars. Maybe he just wanted to see that girl he left behind. That girl was named Molly Coddle. (*gazing at an aged photo frame*) Molly had a look that would light up an entire room when she entered. And when she sang ... well ... she sounded pretty much ... like an angel. Just having her in town actually gave these dusty old streets of San Juan a little bit of class. (*pause*) It’s been nearly 50 years, yet there are times when I hear that train whistle blowing ... that I can’t help but remember the day that “reporter” returned to town, I really wish he hadn’t ... but that’s all history now.

**(LIGHTS FADE on THE NARRATOR as he EXITS)**

**(SOUND EFFECT – TRAIN WHISTLE TWICE)**

**(LIGHTS COME UP on PAIGE TURNER)**

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card and then says)*

**CUE-CARD – UNION STATION – CHICAGO 1889 (EXITS)**

*(We now hear a commotion in the back of the theatre as our Hero BARRY MEDDLESOME enters from the rear of the audience carrying a suitcase or bag. BARRY is walking towards the stage. He is joined by cast members dressed as train passengers to join in singing the chorus of the song. At the song’s end BARRY exits through a door “LINES WEST”).*



**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – (*heard from rear of the theatre*) –  
I was a reporter you know ... sending back stories for the Santa Ana Standard. Only newspaper worth putting ink on paper. When I took the job, they said I would only be away for six months. But that was nearly two years ago. I know ... I know ... that's a long time to be away from home, but I guess there's always one more story going on somewhere that needed to be written. (*pulling out a small framed picture of Molly*) Did I mention that I have a girl waiting for me back home? At least I hope she's still waiting. The loveliest gal you've ever had the pleasure to gaze upon. (*showing the audience, the picture*) simply beautiful. Wherever I went, I always took this picture with me. Finally, I told my editor that he could fire me if he had a mind to do so, but I was heading back to my home in San Juan Capistrano.

**(MUSIC STARTS)**

**(SOUND EFFECT – TRAIN WHISTLE)**

**(SPECIAL EFFECT – SMOKE MACHINE)**

**SONG – BACK TO CAPISTRANO**

Words by Ray Sherwood & Gary McCarver

Music by Bert L. Rule

**VERSE** (*verse sung as a solo by BARRY MEDDLESOME*)

Don't make me wait – Pal. Oh, don't make me wait.  
I just can't be late – Pal, I can't hesitate.  
I am going home ... never again to roam.  
It's getting late, Pal, but still I'll explain,  
I've got about five minutes left to catch my train.

**CHORUS** (*first chorus also sung by BARRY MEDDLESOME*)

I'm going back to my Capistrano, to that wild and woolly town  
that's where I'll be found.  
I'll be on that train going west.  
Forget all the rest. It's the place I love best.  
I'm going back to a lovely gal who waits for my return.  
In Capistrano I'll be asking her to be my bride.  
To a little church we'll wander side by side.  
Oh, hear that whistle blowing,

Pal I must be going. Back to Capistrano ... Goodbye.

**CHORUS** (*this second chorus is sung by the entire cast*)

He's going back to his Capistrano, to that wild and woolly town  
that's where he'll be found.

He'll be on that train going west.

Forget all the rest. It's the place he loves best.

He's going back to a lovely gal who waits for his return.

In Capistrano he'll be asking her to be his bride.

To a little church they'll wander side by side.

Oh, hear that whistle blowing,

now he must be going ... Back to Capistrano ... Goodbye.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Goodbye everyone.

(*BARRY EXITS through the door with the "LINES WEST" sign*)

**VOICES OF CAST LEAVING STAGE** – (*staggered*) –  
Goodbye.

(*EVERYONE ELSE EXITS*)

(**SOUND EFFECT** – *TRAIN WHISTLE*)

**LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK**

## ACT 1 SCENE 1

**The Place:** The Home of Modesta and Rosa Villa  
and the Meddlesome Inn in Old San Juan  
**The Date:** March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1889  
**The Time:** It is early in the morning – the sun is dawning

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card and says)*  
**CUE-CARD – SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO 1889 (EXITS)**

**(LIGHTS COME UP SLOWLY)** *Lights come up on Modesta Villa's home sitting next to the railroad tracks in Old San Juan Capistrano. There is a clothes line draping on the ground with one end attached to the side of the house, we see multiple wash tubs, wash boards in each, and railroad tracks crossing through the side of her backyard and right through her family's vegetable garden. We can see into Modesta's home where the fireplace has many pictures of happier times on the mantle as well as on the wall. The family is poor and has had to take in washing to survive since the loss of Modesta's husband who was crossing his own backyard and was hit by the train. There are several bouquets of flowers at the edge of the railroad tracks. A sign on the cottage reads "Clothes Washed / Lave La Ropa". Modesta's daughter Rosa is busy on the back porch of their home preparing a meager vegetable basket to take with her to market as she delivers bundles of the washing to the Meddlesome Inn. Doing washing is very important to the family to keep food on the table and pay the mortgage. We see some of the washing neatly lined up in piles and bundles next to the wash tubs. Modesta grabs a bundle or two and sighs as she laments as to what her life has become. She enters the home. We see her gently kiss her hand then touch the face of a man in a picture on the mantelpiece over the fireplace.)*

**(SOUND EFFECT –EARLY MORNING BIRDS)**

**MODESTA VILLA –** *(said loudly from inside the home)* Rosa ... be sure to prepare those bundles of sheets and clean clothes for the Meddlesome Inn.

**ROSA VILLA –** *(yelling back)* I already did that mother.

*(THE JUDGE is slowly walking over to the house holding two messages or letters to deliver to MODESTA.)*

**ROSA VILLA** – Good morning Judge ... what do we owe the pleasure of seeing you so early this morning?

**THE JUDGE** – I wish this were a pleasure call Rosa. Unfortunately, ... I have two messages to deliver to your mother.

**ROSA VILLA** – You have always been a friend of our family. But you didn't need to come over so early just to deliver telegrams.

**THE JUDGE** – Rosa, is your mother home?

**ROSA VILLA** – Of course ... she's always getting bundles of washing ready for me to deliver for the day at this time of the morning.

**THE JUDGE** – Could you see that she gets these messages right away? *(THE JUDGE hands ROSA two envelopes)*

*(MODESTA comes through a door and walks to THE JUDGE)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – Good morning Judge ... The last time I saw you so early in the morning was when the train ... *(gasps and drops something that she was carrying)* ... *(pause)* this must be bad news.

**ROSA VILLA** – Mother the Judge was kind enough to bring over these. I was just saying ... *(handing her mother the envelopes)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – *(interrupting her daughter's conversation ... ripping the first envelope open to read it)* – It's from the railroad. It says *(reading)* that they "are denying our claim"? It also has some legal words I don't understand. It is signed by "Craven Steele, Esquire".

**ROSA VILLA** – But Mother ... we are not claiming anything ... we just want them to pay what they promised when they ran those tracks through our vegetable garden.

**MODESTA VILLA** – I should have expected this when they wouldn't take blame for your father being killed by the train.

**THE JUDGE** – That was indeed a tragic accident.

**MODESTA VILLA** – Who would expect to be hit by a train when walking in their own back yard?

**THE JUDGE** – It did seem that the railroad laid train tracks just a little too close to your back door.

**MODESTA VILLA** – (*opening letter*) I hope this other envelope holds better news. It's from the bank ... Oh my!

**ROSA VILLA** – What does it say? (*very concerned*) Mother?

**MODESTA VILLA** – It says ... that "the bank has sold our mortgage. And if we don't pay it in full immediately the new owner will take our home". We were so close to paying off the mortgage. Only one more payment and the home would be ours. But now, what-ever shall we do? (*MODESTA breaks into tears*) If your Papá were only alive ...

(*PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card*)

**CUE-CARD** – AAAAH! (*PAIGE EXITS*)

**ROSA VILLA** – Don't cry mother ... he would want us to be strong.

**MODESTA VILLA** – Rosa ... I cry only because the world is so beautiful, and life is so short. Of course, you are right ... we must be strong. (*drying her tears and then composing herself*)

(*ROSA VILLA grabs several large bundles of clean clothes*)

**ROSA VILLA** – I will deliver these bundles to The Meddlesome Inn ... I'll be back as soon as I can.

**THE JUDGE** – Modesta? It's mighty strange that the bank would sell a mortgage when there's only one more payment to be made. (*pause*) Humh? There's something about this that just doesn't smell right to me.

**ROSA VILLA** – These clothes are clean and freshly washed, Judge!

**THE JUDGE** – No ... not the clothes. I meant ...

**MODESTA VILLA** – I know what you meant. If anyone can help ... it is you Judge. You have always watched out for the people of San Juan.

**THE JUDGE** – *(to MODESTA)* I promise to see what I can find out. *(to ROSA)* Rosa. Here ... let me take those. I am heading over to the Meddlesome Inn anyway.

*(THE JUDGE helps ROSA is carry several bundles of clothes as the LIGHTS FADE on MODESTA. In the dimming light MODESTA goes to her mantelpiece and after looking at the picture frames on it and selects one of her departed husband Hector. She lovingly touches an old sombrero also hanging near her fireplace or on the wall somewhere.)*

**ROSA VILLA** – Judge ... Did you hear about the goldfish that walks into a bar and then the bartender asks, "What can I get you?" The goldfish says, *(beat)* "just water."

**THE JUDGE** – ... This is going to be a long walk isn't it.

*(LIGHTS FOCUS TIGHT on the conversation between THE JUDGE and ROSA as they walk towards the Meddlesome Inn carrying their large bundles of clean clothes for delivery.)*

**ROSA VILLA** – *(prying)* So? ... Word has it around town that you've been sparking with Miss Molly ... *(they stop walking to talk)*

**THE JUDGE** – ... So that's the "word" around town?

**ROSA VILLA** – Are you going to ask her to become "Mrs. Judge Eagan"?

**THE JUDGE** – Where might you have heard that?

**ROSA VILLA** – When you're washing clothes all day ... people forget you're there ... and things slip out as they are talking.

**THE JUDGE** – What else exactly has “slipped out” about me?

**ROSA VILLA** – Some people say that Miss Molly had a beau once that left town and broke her heart. And after a respectable amount of time YOU have been courting her.

**THE JUDGE** – Is that so?

**ROSA VILLA** – My mother also says that you took the stage to Los Angeles to secretly buy Molly a ring.

*(THE JUDGE reaches into his pocket he produces a little box and opens it up to show the audience an engagement ring)*

**THE JUDGE** – Obviously not secretly enough. Does she know?

**ROSA VILLA** – Does who know?

**THE JUDGE** – Molly ... Does she suspect how I feel about her?

**ROSA VILLA** – Not on account of me, Judge. I see her every week and she almost NEVER talks about you.

**THE JUDGE** – Oh? *(said sadly)*

**ROSA VILLA** – I'm sorry. I didn't mean that the way that it sounded.

**THE JUDGE** – No apology needed. I've never been a man for open displays of affection, but when I give her this later today *(holding up the ring box)* ... all of that will change. In all of my days I have never found anyone that I wanted to give a ring to ... until now. And Molly is that “one”.

**ROSA VILLA** – Sooo? The word is right about you and Molly?

**THE JUDGE** – I think that it might be best if we attended to delivering these bundles of clothes.

*(THE JUDGE holds up some bloomers from the bundle and is embarrassed by them and ROSA giggles .)*

**THE JUDGE** – But in answer to your question ... yes ... the word is definitely right.

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT as THE JUDGE and ROSA VILLA EXIT)*

*(LIGHTS FADE UP on MODESTA as she ENTERS from her home carrying a small framed picture and the two telegrams. She talks to the photo of her departed husband.)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – Since you have been gone ... my love ... there are so many troubles. First the train ... and now the bank wanting to take our home away. It seems so hopeless. What should I do ... what ever should I do?

*(MODESTA wipes a tear. Then talks to the photograph)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – As time passes, your picture remains young just like that day you gave it to me. *(pause)* You would be so proud of Rosa. If you were only here to see her. She is smart and strong ... and helps me every day with the clothes washing. She reminds me so much of you. She even has your terrible sense of humor. I never knew how sad it would be when someone you KNOW becomes someone you KNEW, but at least I have my memories and this photograph of you.

*(MUSIC STARTS)*

### **SONG – PORTRAIT OF MY DREAMS**

Words by Arthur Freed & Gary McCarver

Music by Oliver G. Wallace

*(sung by MODESTA talking to the picture of her husband.)*

### **VERSE**

Moments of true happiness.  
Memories of a lover's kiss.  
Visions of a life of bliss.  
You hold in your sweet caress.



## CHORUS

Portrait of my dreams ...  
Your picture brings to me thoughts of lost loves  
and family and friends.  
Yet, it's bittersweet,  
to think of days and youth and times  
That I will never see again.  
(and) though, the years they pass,  
you smile as sweet at me just like the day we met so long ago.  
(1<sup>st</sup> time through CHORUS) My love ... your eyes still gleam.  
(2<sup>nd</sup> time through CHORUS) Now ... as tears they stream.  
I thank you for this portrait of my dreams.

### REPEAT CHORUS

*(Modesta returns inside her home and gently sobs as she places the picture on the fireplace mantelpiece as **LIGHTS FADE** on her)*

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card and ...)*  
**CUE-CARD – AAAAH!**                      *(PAIGE EXITS)*

*(**LIGHTS COME UP** on the on the porch of the Meddlesome Inn)*

*(TRUDY LITE is getting ready to teach piano. All the while MOTHER MEDDLESOME is seen sitting in a rocking chair petting a stuffed cat. MOLLY CODDLE is sipping on a cup of coffee and grimacing as it is horrible coffee. A coffeepot and cups are on a table near the piano. The raised porch is appointed with furnishings of the day. A "Meddlesome Inn" sign hangs from the roof and a small sign reads "Rooms for Rent" another says, "Piano Lessons Taught by Trudy Lite".)*

*(TRUDY STOPS PLAYING MUSIC A MOMENT TO TALK)*

**TRUDY LITE** – Thank you so very much Mother Meddlesome for a place to teach piano lessons.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Trudy ... you're here most of the time playing that piano anyway ... with times as tough as they are ... might as well have one of us bettering themselves.

*(MOTHER MEDDLESOME starts dusting with a feather duster)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – I simply won't be satisfied until everything in this hotel is in apple pie order for paying guests.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – The Inn is always so neat. I wouldn't worry ...

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Molly, don't tell me that worrying doesn't help. All the things I worry about don't happen. So it must do some good. *(dusting)* Trudy ... hand me that guest register.

**TRUDY LITE** – Yes ... of course. *(TRUDY resumes playing)*

*(THE JUDGE and ROSA now come back on stage and approach the steps leading up to Meddlesome Inn. THE JUDGE stops to start conversation from below the porch. ROSA however doesn't stop and takes her bundles of clothing up the stairs into the Inn.)*

**THE JUDGE** – Molly ... you are looking quite ... lovely today.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Oh this old thing.

**THE JUDGE** – You never fail to light up a room ... no matter what you wear.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Thank you kindly Judge.

**THE JUDGE** – Please ... I have asked you to call me Richard.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Thank you kindly *(pause)* "Richard". What brings you to the Inn so early this morning? Breakfast has already been served.

**THE JUDGE** – *(reaching into a pocket to retrieve the small ring box and then fiddling with it as he speaks)* Molly ... actually ... I was hoping that we might be able to take a walk and talk about something that I have meant to discuss for some time now.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Of course. You have always been a dear friend ... If you could give me a moment to get my wrap ...

*(DAN DRUFF ENTERS through the squeaky spring hinged screen door. It slams. He walks to edge of porch.)*

**DAN DRUFF** – *(interrupting loudly as he enters)* Good Morning everyone ... Another beautiful day here in San Juan Capistrano!

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – *(to MOLLY)* Now there stands a man with an open mind. So open ... you can feel the draft from here.

**DAN DRUFF** – *(loudly)* So ... Judge ... Seeing you here this morning ... I guess it's TRUE then that the bank is foreclosing on the Villas ... we could use the peace and quiet. *(laugh)*

**THE JUDGE** – *(distracted from MOLLY)* How in blazes would you know that? I only got the telegraph this morning... there's always the chance that ...

**DAN DRUFF** – ... *(quickly interrupting)* Chance that she finds a wad of cash in the pocket of one of those shirts she is always washing. *(laughing)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – *(chastising DAN)* I don't hear you complaining when they are mending and washing YOUR shirts.

*(SCANTILLY CLAD walks past the Piano from inside the Meddlesome Inn towards MOTHER MEDDLESOME. She picks up an apple from a basket on the piano and takes a bite from it as she walks over to see the disagreement growing.)*

**THE JUDGE** – *(getting angry)* I'm starting to think I made a mistake asking you to be sheriff ... You are getting a little too big for your britches.

**DAN DRUFF** – What are you talking about Judge?

**THE JUDGE** – Sometimes I think that you're not playing with a full deck. Dan, as you get older I don't even think you are in the same game!

**DAN DRUFF** – Judge. I dislike your "in-sin-u-endoes"!

**THE JUDGE** – *(getting even more angry)* Forget about a fountain of youth Dan ... what you really need is a fountain of “Smart”.

*(THE JUDGE walks up the stairs and pours himself a coffee)*

*(ROSA VILLA enters through the screen door, walks down the steps and gathers the remaining two bundles of washing from THE JUDGE. She carries them up the stairs and into the Inn.)*

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Sooo? What have I missed?

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – That man with the star on his chest is named Dan Druff. He used to be a gold prospector ... but it just didn't pan out for him. *(pause)* so he settled here in San Juan.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – That other fellow looks like he's getting pretty steamed up with him ...

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – The Judge and Dan used to be good friends but since the Judge appointed Dan as sheriff they have been quick to fly off the handle when near each other,

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Dan was a good enough barber ... but so far has been a sorry choice for sheriff. San Juan has never been a swanky place like Chicago or San Francisco ... but at least it was always a SAFE place to live.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Oh ... you are talking about those “accidents” that happened over by the train tracks?

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Accidents? ... Highly Unlikely.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Hasn't the sheriff gotten any suspects?

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Dan's not much more than a lump on a log.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Most people in town say that our new sheriff has enough sawdust between his ears to bed an elephant. *(laugh)*

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Also ... It's pretty convenient that he always seems to be out of town whenever something awful bad happens.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Actually that sounds pretty “IN-convenient”.

**DAN DRUFF** – I can hear every word you are saying ... ladies.  
...

**THE JUDGE** – (*getting in Dan's face*) In that case Dan ... tell me how is it that the private contents of the United States Mail and telegraph are now public information?

**DAN DRUFF** – Well. Ahhh ... Actually ...

**THE JUDGE** – How do you know so much about this matter of the Villas and the bank? Explain yourself!

**DAN DRUFF** – (*looking at MOTHER MEDDLESOME for advice*) Actually ... I only ...heard it over breakfast this morning.

**THE JUDGE** – Horsefeathers!

**DAN DRUFF** – No. Actually it was flapjacks and bacon.

**THE JUDGE** – Dan ... I don't have the time for this right now. Molly and I were about to take a walk ...

**MOLLY CODDLE** – (*interrupting*) ... It is perfectly all right Judge ... I mean “Richard”. Please excuse me I left my wrap in my room ... we can take our walk later. (MOLLY EXITS)

**THE JUDGE** – (*to MOLLY*) ... Well, of course. Until later then.

(*DAN DRUFF turns to try to make a hasty departure as MOLLY EXITS into the hotel. THE JUDGE approaches DAN DRUFF and stops him*)

**THE JUDGE** – Not so quick Dan. I am truly disappointed in you, as a friend and as a sheriff. The private contents of the

U.S. MAIL ... as breakfast conversation? I made you sheriff and what I have done ... I can undo ...

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – (*interrupting*) Judge ... Dan must have heard about the foreclosure from a guest here at the Inn.

**THE JUDGE** – A guest? What guest?

(*MOTHER MEDDLESOME approaches THE JUDGE*)

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – I reckon he's some kind of big bug with the railroad. His assistant calls him a railroad ty-FOON.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – ... you mean "Tycoon".

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Right "Tycoon". He's staying at the Inn with a his "assistants". Here's one, "Scantilly Clad".

**DAN DRUFF** – (*chuckling*) "Scantilly Clad".

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – (*said sternly to DAN*) In case you were wondering, "Scantilly" is a family name. It was my grandmother's name. (*to THE JUDGE*) Your honor, most people just call me Tilly.

**THE JUDGE** – (*sternly said to DAN*) With a name like "Dan Druff", I wouldn't be so quick to laugh at other people's monikers.

(*MAY WHEE enters to greet SCANTILLY CLAD*)

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Oh ... and here is my employer's other assistant her name is "May Whee".

**MAY WHEE** – Mais oui.

**DAN DRUFF** – (*sarcastically*) "Assistants" ... sure. (*EXITS*)

**MAY WHEE** – Mais oui.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – He paid two weeks in advance for three rooms and tips well. That's all I need to know about the man.

**THE JUDGE** – That doesn't explain how he has access to the private content of letters and telegrams. What's this man's name?

*(THE PROFESSOR CRAVEN STEELE enters from the screen door of the Meddlesome Inn. THE PROFESSOR's two assistants walk over to each of his arms. He is wearing a vest and he wears a tall black top hat.)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – The reason that I knew the content of the telegram is that I was the one that sent it. *(extending his hand)* The name is Tiberius Mack ... but I prefer to be called ... "Professor".

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS! *(PAIGE EXITS)*

**THE JUDGE** – You know a lot about me ... why is it that I've never met you before?

**THE PROFESSOR** – That is precisely the reason I am visiting this quaint little hamlet of San Juan Capistrano ... to personally meet you.

**THE JUDGE** – To meet me?

**THE PROFESSOR** – You ARE the famous Judge Eagan ... are you not?

**THE JUDGE** – Why ... yes. *(pause)* YES, I am. *(pause)* But I'm not sure what you mean by "famous"?

**THE PROFESSOR** – You are so very modest sir. The stories of your horses have even reached the offices of the chairman of the Railroad. He wanted me to personally meet with you.

**THE JUDGE** – My horses? I only bought them two weeks ago.

**THE PROFESSOR** – I meant the "horses" on the stagecoach.

**THE JUDGE** – Oh ... you heard about THAT?

**THE PROFESSOR** – Heard about that? Of course, we heard about that! It was in all the newspapers. People say that you are some kind of hero!

*(THE PROFESSOR pulls out the Santa Ana Standard newspaper with headlines “THE JUDGE ... Local Hero”.)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – It says here that people call you the “King of San Juan Capistrano”.

**THE JUDGE** – That story might just be a bit of an exaggeration.

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(reading from the newspaper)* Let’s see here ... it says you were coming back from Los Angeles ... climbing out of the window of a moving stagecoach ... with runaway horses ... Correct so far?

**THE JUDGE** – Well I suppose.

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(continuing reading the newspaper)* And ... after the driver was shot ... you took him to a doctor ... and still managed to get the stagecoach to San Juan Capistrano ON TIME! ... That is quite some story!

**THE JUDGE** – Actually, we were a few minutes late in arriving.

**THE PROFESSOR** – A mere trifle! You are definitely the kind of man WE need on our side. *(grabbing and shaking the Judge’s hand)*

**THE JUDGE** – “Your side”? Which side might that be?

**THE PROFESSOR** – The kind of man who has single handedly convinced California law-makers to split Los Angeles into two counties ... with this part of the state to be named after some citrus fruit?

**THE JUDGE** – That would be “Orange County”. The Legislature is meeting right now and is not expected to make a decision for several days. How is it that you know so much about this matter?



**THE PROFESSOR** – Ladies ... if you will excuse us for just a moment.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Of course.

**MAY WHEE** – Mais oui.

**THE PROFESSOR** – (to *MAY WHEE*) Not now, but maybe later, my dear.

**THE PROFESSOR** – (to *THE JUDGE*) It is my business to know things ...

**THE JUDGE** – Things?

**THE PROFESSOR** – For example ... things like ... you are currently several votes short on having your proposal to allow secession from Los Angeles County to pass. It doesn't look good.

**THE JUDGE** – Several votes? How in blazes would you know that?

**THE PROFESSOR** – As I said, it is my business to know things. I also know that there are several votes that can be obtained at a minimal inconvenience. (*pause*) I can tell that you are a man of the world, one that understands that sacrifices must be made for the greater good.

(*PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card and then says ...*)

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS!                      (*PAIGE EXITS*)

**THE JUDGE** – Sacrifices? What sacrifices?

**THE PROFESSOR** (*ignoring the question*) – That is why I am here ... for the “greater good” of San Juan Capistrano. The “greater good” of this fine state of California. I have the responsibility of making sure that there are no delays in laying tracks all the way to San Diego.

**THE JUDGE** – I don't understand ... tracks are already laid.

**THE PROFESSOR** – I am just saying that your past assistance

has been invaluable and just a few more obstacles might need to be removed to assure the train's permanent right of way through San Juan.

**THE JUDGE** – (*angrily*) Helped you? ... I hadn't even met you until a few minutes ago ... when we started this conversation.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Maybe not directly ... but indirectly you have helped by approving our right of way through your town. As the train comes to town so does prosperity.

**THE JUDGE** – I had no idea that I was ...

**THE PROFESSOR** – (*interrupting THE JUDGE*) To tell you the truth ... I've been rich, and I've been poor ... and believe me ... rich is better.

(*THE PROFESSOR walks over towards his assistants*)

**THE PROFESSOR** – Oh Ladies? Let's enlighten the Judge on how the world REALLY works?

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Certainly Professor.

**MAY WHEE** – Mais oui.

**THE PROFESSOR** – (*To THE JUDGE*) She doesn't understand a single word of English. Isn't that correct my dear?

**MAY WHEE** – (*nodding*) Mais oui.

**THE JUDGE** – I see what you mean.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Too often people in public service such as yourself Judge ... get the short end of the stick.

**THE JUDGE** – I live pretty comfortably.

**THE PROFESSOR** – No one is ever comfortable enough. I hate this crime doesn't pay" malarkey. Crime is perhaps one of the biggest businesses in the world and pays quite handsomely.

**THE JUDGE** – You are aware you are talking to a judge, sir?

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – THE PROFESSOR won't hold that against you. He is a lawyer himself. Something about making crime pay twice.

**(MUSIC STARTS)**

**SONG – LOOK FOR THE SILVER LINING**

Words by Bud De Sylva & Gary McCarver

Music by Jerome Kern

**VERSE 1** (*SCANTILLY CLAD sings with THE PROFESSOR*)

Please don't be distracted if we sing to you a while.  
For he's got the secret that's sure to make you smile  
There's a simple way to make your every dream come true!  
Remember every word we say to you ... they're true ... we  
swear to you

**CHORUS** (*SCANTILLY CLAD sings with THE PROFESSOR*)

Look for the silver lining in every pocket,  
vault or bank you can find.  
Remember, some fool, out there is pining,  
to give you all his hard-earned riches  
... even down to his last dime.  
Don't let gold slip through your fingers.  
A life of luxury ... it don't come for free.  
So simply look for that silver lining,  
and when you find it, give half of it to me.

**VERSE 2** (*SCANTILLY CLAD sings*)

Whenever you come on the scene the people face disaster.  
As for skills of treachery, he's become a master.  
I am sure his evil plan will lead him to great wealth.  
We'll find a way to keep some for ourselves.

**REPEAT CHORUS**

**(SOUND & SPECIAL EFFECT – TRAIN WHISTLE & SMOKE)**  
*(BARRY MEDDLESOME arrives with bag in hand and walks in*

*front of THE PROFESSOR and THE JUDGE as they talk)*

**THE PROFESSOR** –... So Judge ... I have a little favor to ask. Hardly worth mentioning. But first ... have you ever thought what it would be like to be the RICHEST MAN in this one horse town.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – *(interrupting the conversation)* Talking of “riches” ... Don’t you know Gentlemen ... that money won’t keep you warm at night.

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(distracted)* Don’t be too sure of that sir. *(pause)* Ladies? *(Both of THE JUDGE’s assistants join him and then take to his arms as THE PROFESSOR laughs)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(to THE JUDGE)* I think we may have to continue our conversation in another location ... it’s getting a little too crowded here for my liking. Judge ... how about a drink over at the Swallows Inn?

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*  
**CUE-CARD** – SHAMELESS PLUG *(PAIGE EXITS)*

**THE JUDGE** – *(fiddling with the ring box)* I should probably stay here a while longer. I had hoped to see Molly and ...

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(interrupting)* Sure ... sure. Do what you must. I guess your dream of this “Orange County” is not as important to you as I was told it was. *(turning to leave)*

**THE JUDGE** – *(thinking)* I suppose one FREE drink won’t hurt.

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(to his assistants)* Ladies ... this way. *(to JUDGE)* And Judge ... who said anything about FREE?

*(THE PROFESSOR, THE JUDGE, MAY WHEE and SCANTILLY EXIT)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Son ... you are a sight for sore eyes ... it is so good to have you home.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – It’s great to be home. By the way ... who is that Professor person anyway?

*(BARRY hugs his mother)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – I'd keep your distance from the Professor. He is slicker than a gravy sandwich. Life is too short as it is ... and there's no reason to make it any shorter.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – What do you mean?  
*(DAN DRUFF enters to refill his cup of coffee)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Things in town have changed some since you've been gone. Families leaving, mayhem and unsolved murders.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Mayhem? Murders? What a surprise with DAN acting as Sheriff. *(laugh)* Didn't he used to be the town barber?

**DAN DRUFF** – Still am on Mondays and Wednesdays. Not enough money in the town budget for a full-time sheriff. *(DAN EXITS)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – *As for that "Professor".* Whether I like it or not ... anyone willing to pay \$5 for a room is welcome. But enough of this talk of troubles ... my prodigal son has *(sternly)* "FINALLY" returned.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Working for the newspaper ... there is always one more story ... one more assignment to cover.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – ... Or "one more reason to forget where your home and family are? *(moving to TRUDY's piano)*

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Never! My heart has always been right here in San Juan Capistrano.

*(MOLLY CODDLE comes back out of the Meddlesome Inn.)*

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Speaking about hearts. I had thought that you forgot all about mine. *(They draw closer and closer together.)*

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Molly ... how could I ever forget you?

**MOLLY CODDLE** – I thought you were gone for good. You left without hardly a word.

*(BARRY and MOLLY draw closer and closer together.)*

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – I didn't know what to say. I've never really been one for goodbyes.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – You are a writer ... a reporter. You couldn't leave me a letter ... not even a note ... not even a post-card.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Molly ... I'm just not that good at putting my feelings into words ...

**MOLLY CODDLE** – You must be joking ...

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – I'm telling the truth ... if I were joking I'd be saying ... *(said fast)* A guy walks into a bar with a newt on his shoulder. The Bartender asks "What do you call that?" The guy says, "I call him Tiny ... *(beat)* because he's my newt!"

*(MOLLY slaps BARRY on the face then EXITS in tears)*

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Was it something I said? Molly. Wait up. Please let me explain. "My Newt" means very VERY small.

*(BARRY MEDDLESOME EXITS after MOLLY)*

**FADE TO BLACK**

## ACT 1 SCENE 2

**The Place:** San Juan Capistrano at the Meddlesome Inn

**The Date:** March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1889

**The Time:** Later that very same evening

**(LIGHTS UP on the Front of Modesta Villa's Home)**

*(We see MODESTA bringing a large basket of clothes down to one of three wash barrels containing wash boards as she is talking to herself she grabs a shirt and plunges it into the first barrel.)*

**MODESTA** – *(talking to her husband's photo then to herself)*  
People here in San Juan set store by the Judge's opinion on things ... maybe he can help. But what if he can't? What will we do then?

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*  
**CUE-CARD** – AAAAH! *(PAIGE EXITS)*

**MODESTA** – But even if he does help ... what am I left with? Every day doing the same thing over and over ... washing and scrubbing, boiling and starching, rinsing and wringing, sewing and mending ... always doing laundry. What kind of a life is that?

**(MUSIC STARTS)**

*(ROSA VILLA now joins her mother bringing more clothes to the wash barrels and optional washer women ANN TEAK, LILLY O'LANDRY & DEE SEMBER walk to other wash barrels. ROSA VILLA then strings a clothes line from the Villa home and places some clothing on it.)*

**MODESTA** – I do so wish I could be somewhere ... where there weren't so many clothes to wash.

**SONG – LAVÉ LA ROPA (Washing The Clothes)**

Words by Gary McCarver

Music by Victoria Yradier

**VERSE 1** (*MODESTA singing alone*)

Wash clothes ... Day in, day out, isn't there in life more?  
Wash clothes ... Scrubbing, mending until my hands are sore.

**Repeat – VERSE 1** (*ROSA and washer women also sing*)

Sun up until sun down this is where you'll find me.  
Sheets, shirts and bloomers, blouses and socks, that's all I  
see.

**VERSE 2** (*Solo by MODESTA VILLA*)

Wash tubs Soap and clothes lines, I use making a living,  
but when this day is done,  
then tomorrow, I start the same sad song.

**Repeat – VERSE 2** (*in Unison with ROSA and washer women*)

**VERSE 3**

<i>(MODESTA sings)</i>	<i>(ROSA and others sing)</i>
Lavé La Ropa ...	Washing and Scrubbing.
Lavé La Ropa ...	Boiling and Starching.
Lavé La Ropa ...	Rinsing and Wringing.
Lavé La Ropa ...	Hanging and Drying.

Doing the laundry ...	Blocking and Ironing.
Lavé La Ropa ...	Sewing and Mending.
Lavé La Ropa ...	Sorting and Folding.
Lavé La Ropa ...	Doing the laundry.
Lavé La Ropa ...	will it ever end?

**ROSA VILLA** – On the bright side. At least we have clean clothes.

**MODESTA VILLA** – It's easy to be cheerful when things are rosy.

**ROSA VILLA** – Oh ... you always say that mother. (*a small chuckle then changing the subject*) Oh ... did you hear about the rancher who has 200 head of cattle just outside of town. He used to think there were only 196 ... until herounded them up.



**MODESTA VILLA** – *(pause)* Telling me jokes won't cheer me up this time, dear. I didn't want to trouble you with this burden, but if we can't find a way to pay off the mortgage ... they will take away our home.

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – AAAAH! *(PAIGE EXITS)*

**ROSA VILLA** – Why not charge a toll to trains that come through our vegetable garden. We'd have that mortgage paid off in no time. *(laugh)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – That's it!

**ROSA VILLA** – What's it? I wasn't serious. I just thought ...

*(MODESTA grabs a small sign on a post that had a picture of tomatoes on the front and takes a laundry pencil to write the following words onto the back. It is pre-written on the sign "This land belongs to me. And if the railroad wants to run here, they will have to pay me ten thousand dollars.")*

**MODESTA VILLA** – No. You thought right. This land is ours and if the railroad wants to run through here they will have to pay what they owe us. Now they have no choice but to pay attention.

*(MODESTA grabs a clothes line and ties it to the modified vegetable sign stringing it across the railroad tracks)*

**ROSA VILLA** – Mother ... I'm not so sure this is a good idea. What if the railroad gets upset?

**MODESTA VILLA** – But, I have to do something.

**ROSA VILLA** – Maybe you should ask the Judge's before you do something rash.

**MODESTA VILLA** – Rash or not ... with or without the Judge's blessing ... something must be done.

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT on the VILLA Home)*

*(MODESTA and ROSA and any other washer women EXIT)*

*(LIGHTS FADE UP on the Meddlesome Inn. TRUDY LITE is finishing teaching a piano lesson with SCANTILLY CLAD as she plays scales.)*

**TRUDY LITE** – That finishes your first piano lesson.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – I never knew that there was so much to playing the piano. It seems so easy when you do it Trudy. Have you ever thought about doing this for a living?

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – SHAMELESS PLUG *(PAIGE EXITS)*

*(MOTHER MEDDLESOME ENTERS with a pot of coffee and places it next to the piano on a small table then grabs a cup)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – *(to SCANTILLY)* Tilly ... you know this Professor fellow pretty well ... the more I see of him ... the more I have this feeling that he's just too good to be true.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Honestly ... I even don't think good is in the Professor's vocabulary. Here's a helpful hint ... just remember that every word THE PROFESSOR says is probably a lie ... including "AND" and "THE".

**MAY WHEE** – *(nodding in agreement)* Mais oui.

*(THE PROFESSOR and DAN ENTER from the Inn for coffee.)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – I tell you what ... The Bedford Cannery just opened up for business right on the other side of the tracks and they are giving away free samples of dried fruit and the best fig marmalade you have ever tasted. Dan, why not come with us?

**DAN DRUFF** – Maybe later. Right now, this coffee is more than enough.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Suit yourself. Afterwards we we're going to head over to The Los Rios Tea Room for scones.

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*  
**CUE-CARD – SHAMELESS PLUG!**      *(PAIGE EXITS)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME –** Come ladies ...  
*(MOTHER MEDDLESOME, SCANTILLY, AND MAY EXIT)*

**DAN DRUFF –** One piece of advice to you. To have a good day, here in San Juan all you have to do is start with a cup of Meddlesome's coffee. *(DAN DRUFF pours THE PROFESSOR a cup of coffee.)*

**DAN DRUFF –** Once you taste the coffee they brew ... you'll know nothing WORSE can happen ... ALL DAY.

**THE PROFESSOR – *(Aside to audience)*** – Don't be too sure of that.

*(THE PROFESSOR takes a sip of coffee and nearly chokes)*

**THE PROFESSOR –** I take that back ... That is one truly horrible brew.

**DAN DRUFF –** If it's only "horrible" ... you caught it on a good day.  
Some days it doubles as paint remover. *(laugh)*

*(DAN DRUFF starts to leave, but stops in his tracks)*

**THE PROFESSOR –** A quick word with you sheriff.

**DAN DRUFF –** Sheriff? Looking around then *(realizing that THE PROFESSOR is talking to him)* Right ... Sheriff. Still not used to answering to that.

**THE PROFESSOR –** People obviously don't appreciate how CRITICAL you are to this town.

**DAN DRUFF – *(dumbfounded)*** I am? *(sure)* You're right ... I am.

**THE PROFESSOR –** And how TALENTED you are as sheriff.

**DAN DRUFF –** You'd be surprised at how little I hear that.

**THE PROFESSOR** – And what an important job you have.

**DAN DRUFF** – You're right! ... It is important.

**THE PROFESSOR** – I so hate to bother you, but the railroad would be in your debt if you could help us with "One More Simple Favor".

*(THE PROFESSOR fans money under DAN's DRUFF's nose)*

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS *(PAIGE quickly EXITS)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – But if you are too busy ... I suppose I could find someone else willing to personally hand deliver a document to our office in Pacific City.

*(THE PROFESSOR pulls away the money quickly then turns to leave but is stopped by DAN's quick reply.)*

**DAN DRUFF** – Deliver a letter? Why didn't you just say so? I've been meaning to head over to Pacific City ... for a visit.

*(DAN DRUFF takes off his sheriff's badge and puts it into his pocket and holds out his hand to accept the pile of money)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(handing a pile of cash and a letter)*

Same deal as last time. But, this time stay away longer ... in fact, stay for dinner.

**DAN DRUFF** – I don't know ... Pacific City is a good two-hour ride.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Of course the Railroad would be exceedingly grateful for your time. *(giving even more money to DAN DRUFF)* The least that the railroad can do is buy you a lobster dinner.

**DAN DRUFF** – LOBSTER? Never had lobster before. *(thinking)* So if anyone needs someone to do some 'sherrifin' ... you of course ... will tell them where I can be found.

*(DAN DRUFF EXITS)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(sarcastically)* Of course I will ... of course I will. Sheriff. *(yelling towards the exiting SHERIFF)*  
Have a good trip.

*(THE PROFESSOR looks around to make sure that no one is watching. Then he pulls a knife out of his pocket to make sure that it is sharp.)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(Aside)* But first I have this little job that needs attending to ... over near the railroad tracks.

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS! *(PAIGE EXITS)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(Aside)* Don't tell anyone will you?

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS! *(PAIGE EXITS)*

*(THE PROFESSOR EXITS with a over-the-top villainous laugh)*

*(MOLLY CODDLE ENTERS towards the Meddlesome Inn's porch and is quickly followed by BARRY MEDDLESOME)*

**MOLLY CODDLE** – I am still frightfully angry with you. Why did you leave me?

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Molly you have never been absent from my thoughts. In all of my journeys travelling the globe for the newspaper you were always with me.

*(BARRY MEDDLESOME pulls from his pocket a small framed photograph of MOLLIE to show to her and the audience)*

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Oh My! ... A picture ... of me.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – I didn't think I would be gone that long. I only planned on six months. But that was two years ago.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – I had all but lost hope that you would return.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – ... So... when they wanted to be

the new bureau chief in France, I told them forget it. And I came back here to you.

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD – AAAAH!**

*(PAIGE stays around for a moment)*

**MOLLY CODDLE –** I suppose that we all deserve a second chance. *(beat)* By the way ... did you say France?

*(BARRY AND MOLLIE keep drawing closer and closer)*

**BARRY MEDDLESOME –** Molly ... when I was a little boy ... my grandmother told me, two things that I'll always remember. First ... *"No one ever believes in rheumatism or in true love until after the first attack"*.

**MOLLY CODDLE –** And the second thing?

***(MUSIC STARTS)***

**BARRY MEDDLESOME –** That, in life *"we only get one love"*. Being away from San Juan I figured out that ... you are that *"ONE LOVE"*.

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD – AAAAH!** *(PAIGE EXITS)*

**MOLLY CODDLE –** Oh My!

*(BARRY MEDDLESOME and MOLLY CODDLE move center stage getting closer together and then join hands as BARRY sings his song to MOLLY)*

***(SPECIAL LIGHTING EFFECT – pink light or mirrored ball effect to represent their love.)***

**SONG – ONLY ONE LOVE**

Lyrics by George Cohan & Gary McCarver

Music by George Cohan

**VERSE:** *(Sung by BARRY and MOLLY as indicated)*

**BARRY:** There is something you should know  
**BARRY:** That I learned so long ago. "We all get one love"  
**BARRY:** Only one love ... and you are that ONE for me.  
**BARRY:** I never could forget your face.  
**BARRY:** You've traveled with me every place.  
**BARRY:** You are my one love ...  
**BARRY:** in my heart ... right from the start.  
**BARRY:** I never knew that was so true ...  
**BARRY:** until you were so far away.  
**ALOTTA:** It's plain to see ... how happy we would be,  
**ALOTTA:** Now that you're here to stay.  
**BARRY:** I came back here as quickly as I could.  
**ALOTTA:** And brought a ring, exactly as you should.  
**ALOTTA:** 'Cause there is ...

**CHORUS** (*Sung by BARRY and MOLLY as indicated*)

**BARRY:** Only one love.  
**ALOTTA:** Yes that is true.  
**BARRY:** In this whole world, and my love ...  
**ALOTTA:** that one is you.  
**BARRY:** I've never felt this way with others before ...  
**ALOTTA:** and I'll bet I've met a hundred (thousand) or more  
**BARRY:** Yes there is only one love.  
**ALOTTA:** That's you for me  
**BARRY:** Now Darlin', look what you've done. Oh can't you see?  
**BOTH:** You make my heart begin to sing.  
**BOTH:** With all the happiness you bring.  
**BARRY:** And it would break my heart so if you told me to go,  
**BARRY:** 'cause you're everything to me.  
**BOTH:** You are my one love. Only one love for me  
**ALOTTA:** Yes there is ...

**REPEAT CHORUS**

(*BARRY gets on one knee with the ring for MOLLY*)

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – (*fumbling for words*) So Molly ... will you ... aaah? What I mean is might you consider ... aaah?

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Yes ... yes of course I will marry you. This

is the happiest day of my life. We must tell your mother ... right this very moment. There is just so much to do.

*(BARRY and MOLLY rush into the Meddlesome Inn)  
(At the same moment THE JUDGE walks around the corner where he has quietly been watching. He has the ring box in his hand that he had planned to give to MOLLY ... he sadly looks at it and then lets it drop to the floor as he slowly EXITS. He then re-enters quickly and picks up the ring box. Then he quickly EXITS again.)*

**LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK**

**INTERMISSION**



## ACT 2 SCENE 1

**The Place:** Lights come up on the San Juan Jailhouse

**The Date:** March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1889

**The Time:** Once again it is early in the morning

*(LIGHTS UP on PAIGE TURNER as PAIGE enters to sing)*

### SONG – ALL ALONE

Words by W, Dillon & Gary McCarver

Music by Harry Von Tilzer

**VERSE** *(by PAIGE TURNER only)*

To those out there who decided to arrive here late.  
I will bring you up to date. News in town is not so great.  
There've been murders, there's been mayhem.  
Plots and scheming too.  
Then there's this railroad tycoon who's bringing the train through.  
A gentle soul tried to stop him. She's waiting for her trial to begin.

**CHORUS** *(full Cast sings CHORUS with solo exceptions)*

**ALL:** She's ... all alone ... all alone. In the jailhouse is she.

**PAIGE ONLY:** Things were nice and cozy.

**PAIGE ONLY:** Now they're not so rosy.

**ALL:** Since she tied her laundry over railroad tracks  
to stop the train. She complained ...

**MODESTA ONLY:** ... But no one listened to my plea.

**ALL:** Now she's in a heap of trouble  
and needs help on the double.

**ALL:** No one's helping ... So, she's all alone.

**REPEAT CHORUS**

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT on PAIGE.)*

*(LIGHTS UP on the Meddlesome Inn)*

*(We see THE PROFESSOR talking with THE JUDGE.  
SCANTILLY CLAD and MAY WHEE holding his arms.)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – As you well know ... last year the railroad was extended from Santa Ana to Oceanside on its way to San Diego. But one little section here in San Juan Capistrano has always been a thorn in the side of the railroad. Some land owners were difficult and others ... had to be dealt with.

**THE JUDGE** – What precisely do you mean by ... “Dealt with”?

*(SCANTILLY CLAD and MAY WHEE step away so that THE PROFESSOR can have a conversation with THE JUDGE)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – It is probably better that you don't ask that question. Let's just say ... there is a plan under way that will remove one last troublesome thorn. Manifest destiny requires people like you and me. We do what is necessary ... to get things done.

*(THE PROFESSOR puts his arm around THE JUDGE)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – ... I see you ... as a man of ambition.

**THE JUDGE** – Has anyone told you that you are as subtle as a well thrown rock? *(Aside to the audience)* Hint ... Hint.

**THE PROFESSOR** – There is an old saying that you should keep your enemies close ... I prefer to put them on the payroll. The railroad now employs or has employed just about every politician in California. But I don't have to tell YOU that Judge.

**THE JUDGE** – I am beginning to really take a real disliking to you. Good day to you sir.

*(THE JUDGE turns to exit, but THE PROFESSOR stops him by placing a friendly hand on his shoulder)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – Usually by now people have moved into feelings of loathing and contempt for me. SOOO ... in my books, I would have to consider you A FRIEND. Besides, what does it really matter what I might do or how you might feel ... as long as you get your precious Orange County? Isn't that right Judge?

**THE JUDGE** – I said ... Good day to you sir! *(turning away)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – Before you go ... you should know that by simply playing your cards right ... you will be generously rewarded.

**THE JUDGE** – What in blazes ... are you trying to bribe a judge?

**THE PROFESSOR** – My dear sir, some day we ALL get tired of the toils and cares of life. You don't think I will be doing "this" the rest of my life. Imagine ... all the money you could want. Living in a veritable paradise. Beautiful women by your side. *(gesturing for his assistants to take THE JUDGE's arms)* Don't you ever think you deserve more than this dusty town filled with San Juan bumpkins?

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS *(PAIGE then quickly EXITS)*

**THE JUDGE** – Until earlier today ... I would have answered "no" ... but right now ... Well ... let's just say, you have my attention.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Excellent. In that case, I'll tell you more.

**(MUSIC STARTS)**

*(WARNING: shameless big production number is coming where the entire cast comes on stage dancing in Indian attire, wearing turbans, waiving streamers, holding cobras in baskets)*

**THE JUDGE** – Why is it that I have this strange feeling a song is coming on?

**SONG – BACK IN OLD BOMBAY**

Words by Walter Donovan, Ballard MacDonald & Gary McCarver  
Music by Harry Carroll

**VERSE** *(sung by THE PROFESSOR)*

If you're tired of this life. Sick of toils cares and strife.  
Take a simple tip. Take a little trip to a paradise in India far  
away. Back to old Bombay.

**CHORUS** (*EVERYONE sings*)

Back in old Bombay ... where the palm trees sway.  
Tropic breezes blow ... wa-wa bushes grow.  
Find a lovely maiden playing on her sitar.  
Watch the girlies sway ... in that oriental way.  
Pack your bags and come away.  
When you visit ... you will stay. Back in old Bombay.

**REPEAT CHORUS**

(*MAY WHEE and SCANTILLY take each arm of THE JUDGE*)

**THE PROFESSOR** – So? Can I count on you for “One Simple Favor”?

**THE JUDGE** –The lesser of two evils is still evil. (*pause*)  
What is it that you need me to do?

(*PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card*)

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS! (*PAIGE walks to the side*)

**THE PROFESSOR** – Not here. Let’s talk at NAME OF A LOCAL RESTAURANT.

(*PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card*)

**CUE-CARD** – SHAMELESS PLUG! (*EVERYONE EXITS*)

**THE PROFESSOR** – The first thing you need to know is that there is going to be a trial here in town.

(*LIGHTS START TO FADE as THE PROFESSOR and THE JUDGE EXIT talking about events soon to come.*)

**THE JUDGE** – A trial? Why wasn’t I told of this ...

**THE PROFESSOR** – (interrupting) ... you just were.

**FADE TO BLACK**

## ACT 2 SCENE 2

**The Place:** San Juan Capistrano  
**The Date:** March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1896  
**The Time:** The local courthouse

*(LIGHTS FADE IN as cast ENTERS from rear of theatre)*

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS AND HOLDS UP A CUE-CARD)*  
**CUE-CARD – SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO 1889 (PAIGE EXITS)**

*(Townfolk noisily come from the rear of the theatre to the stage while talking. The following are several fast-paced overlapping vignettes.)*

**SCANTILLY CANTILLY CLAD –** Trust me sweetie ... the best way to hold a good man is tight in your arms. Don't let a good man go or you'll be left with only "bad" men to choose from.

**MOLLY CODDLE –** Sounds like you are speaking from experience?

**MAY WHEE –** Mais oui.

**THE JUDGE –** THE PROFESSOR is my least favorite kind of man. I think some people are alive ... only because it is illegal to kill them.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME –** I have this feeling that illegal or not ... that hasn't stopped THE PROFESSOR in the past.

**TRUDY LITE –** Why is it that ninety percent of the lawyers give the other ten percent a bad reputation.

**THE PROFESSOR –** I believe ... It doesn't matter who's RIGHT ... only who's LEFT. *(maniacal laugh)*

**DAN DRUFF –** Who would dare defy the railroad?

**THE PROFESSOR –** You know "who". Haven't you been paying attention?

**DAN DRUFF** – I was speaking “rhet-ori-cally”.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – You don’t even know how to spell rhetorically. *(she slowly walks off to take her seat)*

**DAN DRUFF** – How stupid do you think I am? ... Don’t answer that.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – I suspect you’ll try to win this case against Modesta by hook or by crook?

**THE PROFESSOR** – Since I don’t have a hook, what was that other choice?

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Lawyers are the only people who can write a 10,000-word document and call it a “brief”.

**DAN DRUFF** – *(muttering)* Don’t know how to spell? I’ll show them! ... I have half a mind to ...

**THE JUDGE** – *(The JUDGE takes his seat as DAN DRUFF approaches.) (interrupting)* Half a mind? *(laugh)* Dan ... Don’t overestimate yourself *(beat)* If you don’t mind ... let’s stop this lollygagging ... and just get started with these proceedings.

## THE TRIAL BEGINS

*(LIGHTS TO FULL after THE JUDGE’s podium is rolled out from the wings. Two chairs are placed in front of it for THE PROFESSOR and for MODESTA who is wearing handcuffs. LIGHTS also COME UP on the 12 “JUROR” chairs that are simply part of front rows of the audience. Tape “JUROR” signs to the backs of 12 seats then tape a VERDICT envelope to the side of one seat or give it to an audience member selected in advance as the jury foreman. The envelope simply has VERDICT written in red on the outside and already has the verdict written boldly on a piece of paper inside it. DAN DRUFF stands at the podium wearing his badge.)*

**DAN DRUFF** – Come to order. All rise ... for the honorable Judge Richard Eagan. We will continue the case of the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads against Modesta Villa.

**THE JUDGE** – For those of you in the Jury... (*pointing to "Jurors"*) it will be your responsibility to determine the defendant's guilt or innocence after the testimony is given and evidence is reviewed. Sheriff would you please bring forward the evidence.

*(The sign has a picture of a tomato on one side and on the other it reads: This Land Belongs to me ... and if the railroad wants to run here they will have to pay me \$10,000. There is a small length of clothes line on it with a clothes pins and a pair of bloomers pinned to the clothes line.)*

*(DAN DRUFF brings the sign and gives it to THE JUDGE.)*

**THE JUDGE** – Modesta ... is this sign one of your making?

**MODESTA VILLA** – It was from my vegetable garden if that's what you mean? The garden the railroad put their tracks on.

**THE PROFESSOR** – (*as an outburst*) So YOU admit that the sign is yours?

**MODESTA VILLA** – I simply did not do what you said I did.

**THE PROFESSOR** – I object!

**MODESTA VILLA** – The trains are dirty, noisy and now I have to take in laundry to make ends meet.

**THE PROFESSOR** – (*to the jury*) Members of the Jury ... Don't be misled by this dark-eyed beauty's words ... then next thing she will tell you is that her chickens have quit laying eggs due to the train.

**MODESTA VILLA** – Well they have.

**THE PROFESSOR** – My point exactly.  
*(cozying up and speaking to the Jury) Come here often?*

**MODESTA VILLA** – My family been here in San Juan Capistrano longer than all of you and we never got a penny from the railroads when they put tracks outside our back door.

**THE JUDGE** – Is this true?

**THE PROFESSOR** – Of course not your honor ... we graciously sent a ... .. certified check to her mother many years ago.

**THE JUDGE** – Do you have proof of this sir?

**THE PROFESSOR** – What proof do we need. Look at her reputation.

**THE JUDGE** – That will be quite enough sir!

**THE PROFESSOR** – ... Who would you trust? A single mother ... or the great institution of this proud country of America ... the Santa Fe Railroad?

*(PAIGE TURNER holds up a Cue-Card and then says ...)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS!      *(EXITS)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – The only reason I'm single is that the railroad hit my husband while walking in his own backyard. He forgot that the tracks were there and just stepped out for some fresh air.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Where would we be without the railroad? I ask you. You may as well tell us all that "apple pie" is to blame.

**THE JUDGE** – That is quite enough... I said.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – *(to audience)* I like apple pie ...

**MODESTA VILLA** – *(interrupting)* ... I was born right here in San Juan Capistrano and I have every right to live here without a train running right through my vegetable garden. I was merely hanging up my clothes line like I always have since I was a child.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Balderdash!

*(PAIGE TURNER holds up a Cue-Card and then says ...)*



**CUE-CARD – BOO ... HISS!**

**MODESTA VILLA –** I only posted a sign so that the railroad would pay my family what it is was promised.

**THE JUDGE –** Is this the sign Modesta?

**MODESTA VILLA –** (*looking at it carefully*) Yes it is Judge.

**THE JUDGE –** And how is it that it is no longer posted on your property.

**MODESTA VILLA –** It must have been moved while I was in Santa Ana.

**THE JUDGE –** What were you doing in Santa Ana?

**MODESTA VILLA –** Planning a party.

**THE PROFESSOR –** A party?

**MODESTA VILLA –** The railroad told me that they were going to pay the money they owed my family and so I went to Santa Ana to talk to a bank and find out the best way to receive the payment. And then I arranged for a dance to celebrate victory against the railroad. Everyone was there ... you know ... even you came to party Judge.

**THE JUDGE –** Skip that part my dear ... what happened next?

**MODESTA VILLA –** We had music playing ... everyone was happy then the sheriff barged in and told me I was under arrest for obstruction.

**THE JUDGE –** Obstruction?

**MODESTA VILLA –** I told him it was just my clothes line and a small sign and I took them down when I left San Juan.

**THE JUDGE –** So the railroad has paid you the money?

**MODESTA VILLA –** Well ... No ... not yet ... but they promised they would.

**THE JUDGE** – Do you have that in writing?

**MODESTA VILLA** – Now that you mention it ... No. *(pause)*  
But a railroad official himself told me that I would be ... “taken care of”.

**THE JUDGE** – A verbal contract isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.  
*(pause)* Do you see that official in this courtroom?

**THE PROFESSOR** – I STRONGLY OBJECT to this line of questioning.

**MODESTA VILLA** – YES ...he is the one that keeps objecting and saying such bad things about me. The man ... is right there.

*(MODESTA points directly at THE PROFESSOR)*

*(PAIGE TURNER holds up a Cue-Card and then says ...)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS!

**THE PROFESSOR** – I OBJECT. I never said anything of the sort.

**MODESTA VILLA** – But you did.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Jury ... Who do you believe ... a bona fide officer of the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe Railroads or this woman.

*(PAIGE TURNER holds up a Cue-Card and then says ...)*

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS!

**MODESTA VILLA** – But Judge?

**THE PROFESSOR** – And it wasn’t just a clothes line we discovered over the railroad tracks ... we found two heavy fence posts laying across the tracks that could have derailed the train.

**MODESTA VILLA** – Oh! That is such ... a lie.

**THE PROFESSOR** – It was only by the sheer mite of two railroad agents that those fence posts were removed in time to avoid a catastrophic derailment of the train right here in San Juan. Our quick efforts prevented a tragedy of huge proportions. That sign was in fact posted blithely directly on one of those fence posts.

**THE JUDGE** – That is a very serious allegation. Modesta? ... What do you have to say for yourself?

**MODESTA VILLA** – It is JUST NOT TRUE ... It was only my clothes line.

**THE PROFESSOR** – And this sign? (*holding up the sign*)

**MODESTA VILLA** – Yes that was my sign, but it was only a small stick from the vegetable garden. I have no idea how ...

**THE PROFESSOR** – See ... she is already changing her story. You cannot possibly believe that we would have anyone arrested for a sign on small stick? What would be the motive in that?

**THE JUDGE** – So ... it was you that had her arrested?

**THE PROFESSOR** – And do you really believe that a simple woman could best the powerful Santa Fe railroad? Unacceptable! The railroad is California's largest employer and largest landowner what would be gained by persecuting her?

**THE JUDGE** – What Indeed?

**MODESTA VILLA** – You can't believe what he is saying Judge. I just don't understand. (*sobbing she places her head in her hands.*)

**THE JUDGE** – The witness may now step down.

**THE PROFESSOR** – But I have only just begun asking questions.

(*PAIGE TURNER holds up a Cue-Card*)

**CUE-CARD** – BOO ... HISS (*PAIGE quickly EXITS*)

**THE JUDGE** – That will be quite enough. The witness may step down.

**THE PROFESSOR** – But Judge ... Her defiance against the railroad cannot and will not be tolerated ...

**THE JUDGE** – One more outburst and I will have no choice but to have YOU arrested Mr. Steele.

**THE PROFESSOR** – *(said calmly)* It is Professor to you ... but I have made my point and the facts speak for themselves. Jury ... I rest my case.

**THE JUDGE** – Well in that case ... the jury can now deliberate.

*(PIANO EFFECT: play a short tune to express the passing of time like the theme from the old television game show “Jeopardy”)*

*(DAN DRUFF goes to the jury and grabs the pre-prepared Verdict envelope and takes it to THE JUDGE)*

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT on the Jury portion of the audience)*

**DAN DRUFF** – Here is the Jury’s Verdict Judge.

**THE JUDGE** – That was quick. *(opening the envelope and reading it)* In regards to the case of the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads against Modesta Villa ... the verdict is *(pause)* ... GUILTY.

**ENTIRE CAST** – *(staggered exclamations)* Oh my!  
*(DAN takes MODESTA by the handcuffs and starts to leave)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – *(calling to THE JUDGE)* Judge ... I could not have lifted those fence posts like they said. And I was twenty miles away at the time ... and that’s the honest truth.

**THE JUDGE** – But the jury has decided. And ... the law is the law. I am sorry Modesta, but there is nothing I can do. I will send this to the appeals court ... don’t lose hope.

**MODESTA VILLA** – Thank you Judge ... I know you will do your best. At least there'll be no more dirty laundry to wash.

*(DAN DRUFF as sheriff and MODESTA VILLA both EXIT)*

*(BARRY MEDDLESOME is holding a reporter's steno pad and a pen and approaches THE PROFESSOR and THE JUDGE)*

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – As a reporter for the Santa Ana Standard I just have one question ... Do you intend make things right and pay the Villa's what they are owed?

**THE PROFESSOR** – And ... why should I? *(laughing)*

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Professor, I thought that you were nothing but a self-centered blight on humanity, but I am afraid that I misjudged you.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Oh is that so?

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Now I know ... that you are also a thief. The Villa family deserves the money that the railroad promised them.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Not any more. And now that she's been convicted ... her land reverts to the railroad. If I were you, I'd not pick a fight with the railroad

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – ... And if I were you ... I'd not pick a fight with anyone that buys ink by the barrel ... *(Holding up a copy of the Newspaper)* Ever heard of the power of the Press?

**THE PROFESSOR** – Baaaah! *(mocking)* Ever hear the power of the press?

*(THE PROFESSOR walks away. BARRY walks to THE JUDGE)*

**THE JUDGE** – *(said to BARRY MEDDLESOME)* You do know that your newspaper will never let you print a story against the railroads.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Maybe not ... but I have to at least

try to do what's right. As a Judge you know that better than I.

**THE JUDGE** – Thank you for reminding me.

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – And besides ... they can't live without me. (*proudly*) You are now talking to the Santa Ana Standard's new Bureau Chief in France. Molly and I got ENGAGED and will be leaving on the train as soon as I send off this story on the trial.

(MOLLY CODDLE walks over towards THE JUDGE and BARRY. BARRY MEDDLESOME puts his arm around MOLLY CODDLE who now wears a huge diamond engagement ring.)

**THE JUDGE** – Engaged? That is ...I wish you both the very best.

(Even without a Cue-Card ... the audience will say "Ahhhhh")

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Why ... thank you ... thank you kindly.

**MOLLY CODDLE** – Could you give the Judge and me a moment?

**BARRY MEDDLESOME** – Of course. I will be over at the train depot. Remember ... our train will be leaving in a few minutes. (*BARRY MEDDLESOME picks up two suitcases then EXITS*)

**MOLLY CODDLE** – (*calling after him*) I'll be right there.

**THE JUDGE** – You seem happy Molly ... are you happy?

**MOLLY CODDLE** – More than ever. I think that most people in life are just not happy ... and that's just so sad! (*pause*) Rosa told me the whole store of how you felt about me. I am so sorry.

**THE JUDGE** – The way that newspaper reporter of yours stood up to THE PROFESSOR... tells me he might almost be worthy of you. Maybe.

**(MUSIC STARTS)**

## **SONG – GOODBYE DEAR HEART**

Words by Maceo Pinkard & Gary McCarver

Music by Maceo Pinkard

**VERSE** (*Sung by MOLLY CODDLE to THE JUDGE*)

Lift your eyes and you'll see my friend.  
I've saved a smile just for you.  
I thought I'd wear it today goodbye ...  
to one who has been so true.  
Remember that tears are vain, although we won't meet again.

## **CHORUS**

Goodbye ... dear heart ... goodbye.  
Don't sigh ... dear heart ... don't sigh.  
Remember a smile is always worthwhile,  
when it's time to say "goodbye".  
Some day when your dreams come true,  
They'll bring happy thoughts to you.  
The heartache won't last ... as the years come and pass.  
So ... goodbye ... dear heart ... goodbye.

## **REPEAT CHORUS**

(*PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card*)

**CUE-CARD – AAAAH!** (*PAIGE EXITS*)

(*SOUND EFFECT – TRAIN WHISTLE*)

(*SPECIAL EFFECT – SMOKE MACHINE*)

(*MOLLY gives THE JUDGE that small photo that BARRY had.*)

**MOLLY CODDLE –** Richard. Here ... I just wanted you to have this. (*MOLLIE kisses him on the cheek and EXITS*)

**MOLLY CODDLE –** (*calling back to THE JUDGE as she leaves*) Goodbye And thank you ... thank you for everything. I will never forget you!

(*MOLLIE CODDLE EXITS*)

**THE JUDGE** – *(sadly to himself)* And ... neither will I.

*(THE JUDGE touches the spot that MOLLIE kissed. Meanwhile on the other side of the stage THE PROFESSOR has finally decided that he has maybe outstayed his welcome in town.)*

**THE PROFESSOR** – Come now ladies ... I believe that it is time that we departed this loathsome excuse for a backwater town.

*(DAN DRUFF ENTERS forcefully with hand cuffs walking to stand pretty near to MAY WHEE)*

**MAY WHEE** – Not this time! *(MAY WHEE holds a colt peacemaker and points it at THE PROFESSOR)* You've reached the end of the line Professor.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Good heavens! You speak English?

**MAY WHEE** – Of course I do 'Tilly. I always have.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – *(Aside)* – That was unexpected!

**MAY WHEE** – I am a special agent for the Railroad. *(pulling a badge out from her corset.)* I've been waiting for THE PROFESSOR to hang himself with the rope we've given him.

**THE JUDGE** – I suppose you finally got proof that he was behind all those murders here in town?

**MAY WHEE** – No harm came to anyone ... simply a ruse to keep THE PROFESSOR off guard. People were simply sent to vacation in a town east of here where no one would ever think to look, a town named ... "Hemet".

*(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS holds up a Cue-Card)*

**CUE-CARD** – HEMET? *(PAIGE then quickly EXITS)*

**EVERYONE** – Hemet?

**DAN DRUFF** – Now ... It's off to the Calaboose for you Professor Mack.



**THE PROFESSOR** – Calaboose?

*(DAN DRUFF puts handcuffs on THE PROFESSOR)*

**DAN DRUFF** – You know ... Calaboose, lockup, slammer, cell, clink, cooler, Hoosegow ... or jail.

**THE PROFESSOR** – When did you get so smart?

**DAN DRUFF** – I'm taking a correspondence course.  
*(DAN DRUFF holds up a small book with the following title in very bold print ... "Old West Vocabulary for Tenderfoots")*

**THE PROFESSOR** – Sheriff ... you could have walked away with the whole shebang if you'd just played your cards right.

*(THE PROFESSOR scuffles with DAN DRUFF. This is where he steals the Sheriff's handcuff key.)*

**DAN DRUFF** – Not a chance Professor ... I was working with the Railroad Police all along ... see I do get some things right.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – I guess even a blind hog finds an acorn now and then.

**MAY WHEE** – It's off to the Hoosegow for you Professor.

**THE PROFESSOR** – Curses ... you've not seen the last of Professor Tiberius Mack ... *(wrists in handcuffs)* Well on second thought ... maybe you have. Curses.

**MAY WHEE** – May Oui!

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Stop that!

**MAY WHEE** – Sorry ... an old habit.

*(MAY WHEE holds her gun to the back of THE PROFESSOR as she escorts him off stage. They both EXIT)*

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – *(to DAN DRUFF)* He may have been a rantankerous cuss of a boss ... But at least he was my rantankerous cuss of a boss. Looks like I'm unemployed Dan.

**DAN DRUFF** – I have a little confession to make. *(pause)* I'm not really all that good of a sheriff if you haven't noticed.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – I have a little confession to make. *(pause)* I'm not really all that "good".

*(As MAY WHEE and DAN DRUFF begin to exit, DAN reaches into his pockets searching for something that he can't find.)*

**DAN DRUFF** – That scoundrel. *(a small chuckle)* THE PROFESSOR stole my extra handcuff key.

**SCANTILLY CLAD** – Well ... that isn't a surprise. They say foxes grow grey ... but none of them grow good.

**DAN DRUFF** – You're probably right.

*(SCANTILLY CLAD and DAN DRUFF EXIT as MOTHER MEDDLESOME walks over to talk with THE JUDGE)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – I heard all about you and Molly.

**THE JUDGE** – I guess that it's true that there are no secrets in a small town.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Nope.

**THE JUDGE** – I suspect that it's also true what they say ... that none of us knows WHAT WE'VE GOT until we lose it.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Maybe ... but it's also true that we don't know what we've BEEN MISSING until it arrives.

**THE JUDGE** – Interesting ...

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – Personally I believe that it's better to be an optimist who is sometimes wrong than a pessimist who is always right. Come now ... let me pour you a nice strong cup of Meddlesome's Inn coffee. *(walking inside)*

**THE JUDGE** – Oh ... Let's not ruin the moment.

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – *(beat) As you trying to tell me that there is something wrong with my coffee?*

*(THE JUDGE and MOTHER MEDDLESOME laugh and EXIT)*

**MOTHER MEDDLESOME** – *(off stage) Seriously Judge you can tell me ... what's wrong with my coffee?*

**LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK**

**(SOUND EFFECT – TRAIN WHISTLE)**

## EPILOGUE

The Place: A dimly lit view of the town of San Juan  
The Date: Back to March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1939  
The Time: Still early in the evening

***(LIGHTS COME UP on PAIGE TURNER with Cue-Card)***

***(PAIGE TURNER ENTERS AND HOLDS UP A CUE-CARD)***  
**CUE-CARD – SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO 1939 (EXITS)**

***(LIGHTS COME UP on THE NARRATOR as he ENTERS)***

**THE NARRATOR** – And so ... that's about the end of the story. On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1889, the California legislature voted to split up Los Angeles and create the new County of Orange.

**THE NARRATOR** – THE PROFESSOR escaped from jail, but years later managed to lose all his ill-gotten gains in the crash of '29. Couldn't have happened to a more deserving soul.

**THE NARRATOR** – As for Modesta ... the railroad made it nearly impossible for her to have a fair trial. But since "the law is the law" ... there wasn't much I could do but appeal her conviction to the California Supreme Court ... but it didn't change anything. So the people of San Juan Capistrano never saw Modesta again after they took her away to San Quentin. Her only real crime being the desire for just a little peace and quiet. History books say that in 1891 she died in prison ... BUT they were conflicting account on how. Before I leave there is one part of the story I haven't told a living soul until now. As Judge I did have a few favors that were waiting to be cashed in, so let's just say I wanted to make sure that "justice was served" even if the letter of the law wasn't.

***(LIGHT DIMS on THE NARRATOR goes to warmer level)***

***(LIGHT COME UP on a FLASHBACK of the 1889 version of THE JUDGE and MODESTA VILLA off to the side of the stage)***

**MODESTA VILLA** – Judge ... I won't ask how you managed for me to just walk out of prison.

**THE JUDGE** – You don't have much time.

**MODESTA VILLA** – I take it then ... this is not an official pardon.

**THE JUDGE** – It took every favor I had saved up to have them turn their backs for an hour. You need to leave right away ... and I am sorry to say ... you can never go back to San Juan.

**MODESTA VILLA** – But Judge ... where can I go?

**THE JUDGE** – Anywhere you want. Here take this money ...and this train ticket to start you off.

*(THE JUDGE hands MODESTA a pile of money and ticket.)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – I just couldn't take you money ...

**THE JUDGE** – *(interrupting)* Just think of this as part of what the railroad owed your family. It should be enough to take you wherever you want to make a new start.

**MODESTA VILLA** – But Judge ... why are you doing this ... risking everything ... for me?

**THE JUDGE** – Sometimes, a person just has to do what's right!.

*(SOUND EFFECT – TRAIN WHISTLE)*

**MODESTA VILLA** – Please watch out for Rosa will you Judge?

**THE JUDGE** – She'll be fine. *(looking at his pocket watch)*. Now hurry ... your train's about to leave.

*(THE JUDGE picks up a carpet bag and hands it to MODESTA who looks around then quickly EXITS. The JUDGE EXITS.)*

*(LIGHTS FADE BACK UP on THE NARRATOR)*

**THE NARRATOR** – So where is that card? I have it somewhere. Oh ... here it is. Let me show you ...

*(THE NARRATOR pulls a yellowed postcard from his pocket)*

**THE NARRATOR** – It is nothing more than a simple postal card, but I've carried with me for nearly 50 years. No signature. Only four words written on it ... "No more dirty laundry". Just four words that remind me that I did the right thing. If you were wondering, it was postmarked Bombay. Nice place I hear.

*(THE NARRATOR starts moving towards the door)*

If I have any regret it is that I didn't give Molly that ring. Maybe if I had ... *(pause)* ... Well ... I suppose it's like that newspaper reporter said ... we only get "*one love*". Too bad we don't recognize that at the time. Even after all these years I can still remember the way a room would light up when she entered it.

*(THE NARRATOR gazes on an old portrait of MOLLY)*

***(MUSIC STARTS)***

**SONG – PORTRAIT OF MY DREAMS – A Reprise**

Words by Arthur Freed & Gary McCarver

Music by Oliver G. Wallace

*(Sung by THE NARRATOR)*

Portrait of my dreams ...  
Your picture brings to me  
thoughts of lost loves, and family and friends.  
Yet, it's bittersweet ...  
To think of days and youth and times,  
that I will never see again.  
(and) though, the years they pass ...  
You smile as sweet at me,  
just like the day we met so long ago.  
My love ... your eyes still gleam.  
I thank you for this portrait of my dreams.

***(THE NARRATOR EXITS as LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK)***

# **CURTAIN CALL**

**(Everyone enters singing and taking their bows)**

## **Song – ‘TILL YOU VISIT AGAIN**

Words by Jack Drislane & Gary McCarver

Music by Chris Smith

**VERSE** *(sung by entire cast as they come on stage)*

We've come to the end of our story.  
It's sad but our time's now through.  
Reliving bygone days of glory,  
of Heroes and Villains with you.  
There's time set aside just for dreamin'.  
And time for things you've gotta' do.  
We're glad we spent this time together ...  
to share songs and laughter with you.

**CHORUS** *(sung by entire cast as they come on stage)*

After each melodrama ends ...  
After all of the fun is through.  
After all of our over-acting ...  
Every shameless plug we brought to you.  
It's that old story told again ...  
that heroes still win in the end.  
As you step through that door ...  
plan to come back once more ...  
we'll be saving a seat here for you.

**ENTIRE CAST** – Goodnight Everybody.

**(FADE TO BLACK as the entire cast EXITS)**

**LIST OF CUE-CARD SIGNS**  
**A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF PAIGE TURNER'S CARDS**

**SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO 1939**

**UNION STATION - CHICAGO 1889**

**SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO 1889**

**BOO ... HISS!**

**AAAAH!**

**SHAMELESS PLUG!**

**HEMET?**

(or name of another local town to pick on)



## PROPS & SET DRESSING

Bad puns and over the top acting is one thing ... but “Wardrobe is what really makes the Melodrama”. Get creative! There are countless sources for clothing and props that are appropriate for the late 1800s. Here are a few of my favorites. Vile Villains have a top hat and a black coat, cape or duster. Men wore lapelled vests or suspenders. And everyone had a hat of some kind or another. Ladies dressed in Victorian style western wear or wore corsets and lace.

Wild West Mercantile	<a href="http://www.wwmerc.com">www.wwmerc.com</a>
Texas Jack’s Outfitter	<a href="http://www.texasjacks.com">www.texasjacks.com</a>
Gentlemen’s Emporium	<a href="http://www.gentlemansemporium.com">www.gentlemansemporium.com</a>
Western Stage Props	<a href="http://www.westernstageprops.com">www.westernstageprops.com</a>
Village Hat Shop	<a href="http://www.villagehatshop.com">www.villagehatshop.com</a>

Most of what you need in the way of props for this Melodrama can be found in any established theatre’s prop room including as many noisy odds and ends to create the melodramatic sound effects that are expected in this genre of play. Funny props help make a great Melodrama ... for example a character can read a book with the title on it “Everything you wanted to know about Phobias... but were afraid to ask.”

## MELODRAMATIC SOUND EFFECTS

Throughout this Melodrama there are many spots for sound effects. Your sound effects wizard will undoubtedly find numerous opportunities to add in humorous effects. And don't forget the smoke machine whenever the train leaves or arrives in town.

### **SWALLOW BIRDS: (*When the word Swallow is uttered*)**

Twist a little bird call. (*Not too often*). Check a local camping outfitter.

### **BREAKING THINGS ... FALLING OVER CRATES:**

Manipulate and shake a crash box. (*A large potato chip or pretzel can that is filled with glass, wood, metal, chain & sand*)

### **THE SOUND OF TRUE LOVE:**

Use a small bell-tree or rack of chimes as our Heroine sees our Hero.

### **A FACE BEING SLAPPED:**

A "Slap Stick" (*2 15" x 3" boards connected by a fast spring hinge*).

### **GALLOPING, TROTTING, WALKING HORSES:**

Use coconut shells in gravel hoof box. Use them on a table or a book or on top of some pea-sized gravel. You "gallop" with a cup in either hand using a triplet rhythm - think: gid-dy-UP, gid-dy-UP, gid-dy UP. Which most people associate with a horse galloping. However, that would be a THREE-legged horse, so of course it's wrong, but most people prefer this triplet rhythm over the actual four-legged rhythm: gid-UP-gid-UP, gid-UP-gid-UP.

### **TRAIN WHISTLE:**

Go ahead and buy one from online toy shop ... save it for next year's melodrama ... you will undoubtedly need it.

## **ADDED BONUS**

### **A GUIDE TO MELODRAMATIC EMOTIONS**

Melodrama is essentially a theatre of emotions ... a gesture here, an inflection there. “Over the Top” facial and physical expressions that you might typify as sensational, sentimental or thrilling ... an exuberance of emotions rather than the more realistic motivations we normally experience. Melodrama is an audience participation style of entertainment and your villain may want to memorize several dozen snappy “come backs” to the inevitable heckler’s remark (also found in this script).

**Anger** – The actor’s hands are both shoulder high ... eyebrows are pushed toward each other ... with the actor’s face tense with a grimace ... hands in tight fists.

**Fear** – The actor’s face is turned to the right side... eyes wide ... with the right hand to the mouth, fingers curled under touching the top of the palm. Optionally both hands can come to the cheeks with the fingers extended.

**Grief or Sorrow** – The actor’s shoulders rounded ... head down and hands cupping the face. Shoulders rise up and down ... with an optional sobbing noise.

**Love (Female)** – The actor’s chest is held high with her head cocked a bit to one side the opposite leg goes out with foot pointed ... hands under the chin ... fingers entwined and bent at the first and second knuckles (almost praying), hands then go out towards her beloved with a broad smile on her face.

**Villainous Scheming** – One eyebrow up, the other down, a grimace on the face and hands rubbing together, if it is a really good plan, the Villain’s fingers often twiddle or there is some identifiable repeated affectation of some sort or another. If you have a black cape or duster - flourish it as you enter the scene.

**Feeling Overwhelmed** – Chin up bringing the face to look up, one arm dropped limp to the side, the other hand open with palm towards the audience on the top of the forehead.

# CHARACTER NAMING

“A rose by any other name ... would be just as thorny.”

Unlike melodramas, plays, and musicals provided by other companies ... with a HeroAndVillain.com play you have the freedom (and permission) to rename characters or even the play itself to better match your venue, town history, or even your own peculiar sense of humor. Just be sure to keep it family-friendly and G-rated. Should your town have a seaport instead of a stage station or train depot ... feel free to make the modification. If you want a “tannery” instead of a “cannery” or an “orchard” instead of a “vineyard” ... go for it. Melodrama is historically a platform for community involvement and people love local references. That is why the Cue-Card “shameless plug” is can be added several times during your performance to poke fun at local people, places or businesses. One such poke at a local town called “Hemet” can be changed to any other town you wish.

As for character names ... additional choices can be found on the heroandvillain.com website should you need inspiration.

Here are a few names if you wish to remoniker a character.

Alan Rench  
Kylia Moore  
Corey Publican  
Sal Ubrius  
Adam Baum  
Hooker Crooke  
Lance Boil  
Bill Foldes  
Brighton Early  
Chris Cross  
Craven Cash  
Craven Money  
Craven Power  
Craven Moore  
Craven Green

Forrest Green  
Foster Child  
Harden Rock  
Noah Way  
Owen Cash  
Pierce Hart  
Pierce Hyde  
Ray Zenz  
Richard Mann  
Seymour Paine  
Stan Still  
Ty Coon  
William Wynn  
Reed Toomey  
Lou Scannon

## **ADDED BONUS**

### **A FEW VILLAINOUS HECKLER RESPONSES**

Here are just a few heckler responses that your resident villain can use to keep control of the performance when a barrage of heckles ensue. A comprehensive compendium of responses can be found online at <http://www.heroandvillain.com>

I'm glad to see you're not letting your education get in the way of your ignorance.

A sharp tongue is no indication of a keen mind.

I can't seem to remember your name, and please don't help me! I'm not as dumb as you look.

He is always lost in thought -- it's unfamiliar territory.

I can't talk to you right now; tell me, where will you be in ten years?

I hear that you're a self-made man. It's nice of you to take the blame!

The trick, my friend, is to keep an open mind, but not so open that your brains fall out, my friend.

I'm busy working now. Can I ignore you some other time?

Some people don't hesitate to speak their minds because they have nothing to lose.

Obviously inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity.

What he lacks in intelligence, he more than makes up for in stupidity.

Nature not content with denying him the ability to think, has unfortunately endowed him with the ability to wildly make incoherent comments when other people are working.

He is as useless as a pulled tooth.

## **WHY PUBLIC DOMAIN MUSIC IS USED**

Here are a few reasons why the songs used in this Melodrama are derived from music with expired copyrights (i.e. in the Public Domain). Besides the fact that they “feel” right for the time period ... since they came from the late 1800s ... Under U.S. copyright law, any edition of sheet music that was first copyrighted before January 1, 1923 is in the public domain in the U.S., even if the copyright was renewed, the book that contained the sheet music is still in the public domain as long as it was initially copyrighted before January 1, 1923. Prior to 1998, U.S. copyright law featured a "75 year" rule whereby copyright on a musical work lasted 75 years from the first year it was copyrighted. In 1998, that was changed to 95 years. However, the 1998 law was not retroactive and works that were out of copyright before the law was passed are still out of copyright and anyone is free to use its music and lyrics in the U.S. without permission.

Even though this manuscript is protected by copyright, since the songs are in public domain ... they stay there and cannot be copyrighted again in their original form. However, some of the lyrics share only a passing resemblance to the original works from which they were derived, and as such, the new lyrics written specifically for this play are protected. Any copyright notice in this manuscript is for the play content and modified lyrics only. There are many Web sites with enormous data bases of works in the Public Domain and that is where the songs selected for this melodrama were found. If however some work used as the basis for this Melodrama's music wound up in a purported Public Domain database by mistake, please inform the author and immediately actions will be taken to remove that song from future publications of this manuscript.

**MELODRAMA REHEARSAL TRACKS Available Online  
visit [www.HeroAndVillian.com](http://www.HeroAndVillian.com) for details**

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING USING MELODRAMA OR MUSIC SCORE**

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Printed versions of all plays and music scores are available for purchase from **www.LuLu.com**. Order what you need and feel free to make modifications to fit your community.

**One last thing:** On all programs or playbills that you print, it is important that the following notice should appear:

**This is a [www.HeroAndVillain.com](http://www.HeroAndVillain.com)  
Great American Melodrama**



## **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

**THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE FOR THE CAST AND CREW  
TO MAKE NOTES REGARDING THIS MELODRAMA.**

**USE THIS FOR BLOCKING NOTES, CHOREOGRAPHY,  
AND MUSICAL DIRECTIONS. HAVE A GREAT PLAY.**























