

CALLBACK #7

*Johnny, Cioffi, Belling, Georgia,
Stor + Carmen, Bambi, Oscar, Nikki*

JOHNNY
Come on, boys and girls, rise and shine, we'll start with the new version of "In the Same Boat,"
your breakfast orders are waiting downstairs—and Lieutenant Cioffi is here.

CIOFFI

(entering)

Morning, folks.

BELLING

Welcome back, Lieutenant, to your marathon production of *No Exit*.

CIOFFI

I've just come from Sid Bernstein's autopsy—

BELLING

Did they drive a stake through his heart, just to play safe?

GEORGIA

Chris, not in front of his widow! How are you holding up, Carmen?

CARMEN

You all sent out for breakfast and nobody thought to tell me?!

GEORGIA

Well let's at least be considerate of his daughter.

BAMBI

Step-daughter. And even though I was his very own step-flesh and step-blood, he was as cold to me as he was to my mother.

JOHNNY

Breakfast is gonna be cold if you don't eat now, folks.

*(MOST COMPANY EXIT; OSCAR, NIKI, BOBBY, BELLING,
AARON, JOHNNY, CARMEN stay.)*

OSCAR

Well at least this time all of us have an alibi. Everyone was standing around the stage when Sidney got the old heave-ho.

CIOFFI

No, the coroner says Bernstein was struck on the head before he died. Someone knocked him out backstage before you rehearsed Georgia's number, then wrapped the counterweight rope around his neck, knowing that when the curtain fell, the rope would finish the job if he wasn't dead already. Bernstein recovered consciousness just in time to die.

My God.

~~AARON~~ *Georgia*

CARMEN

The first time my husband was ever accused of being hung.

**The preceding line may be cut*

CIOFFI

So, you see, he could have been killed by any person with access to this stage. Including you, Johnny.

JOHNNY

What does that mean?

CIOFFI

We found a copy of "Variety" with words cut out of it in the stage manager's office ... your office.

JOHNNY

Chris and Oscar have keys as well.

CIOFFI

Then it seems you three gentlemen are my first official murder suspects.

BELLING

Well it's an honor just to be nominated.

CIOFFI

But everybody is still under suspicion. I found this little black book in Bernstein's breast pocket.
(produces a black book)

Look familiar?

(APPROPRIATE REACTIONS from cast.)

Each page has the name of a company member and a notation in Bernstein's personal secret code, obviously a memo of why each of you were being blackmailed.

NIKI

No!

(As all look at her.)

Meaning "No, I wasn't being blackmailed" but also meaning, "No! I've just found more death threats."

(brining her script to Cioffi)

And they're covered with my fingerprints once again!

CIOFFI

That's all right, Miss Harris, you've already proven yourself to be forthcoming, and trustworthy, and just so very nice.

NIKI

Well thank you.

CIOFFI

"Dear Sidney: end the show or it's the end of you."

OSCAR
Oh my god! Sid Bernstein died for nothing. He told me that he was gonna close the show.

CARMEN
When did he tell you that?

OSCAR
In his office right before he got hoisted. He said someone had just that minute changed his mind about keeping *Robbin' Hood* open and said I should save my money for his next Boston show. Then I saw him go upstairs to watch Georgia rehearse her big number. He gave me back the very last check I wrote him.

CARMEN
You can give it back to me. I am not closing this show. C'mon, Oscar, let's put this check in a safe place.

OSCAR
It felt very safe in my pocket.

Finis
(*CARMEN EXITS, OSCAR follows.*)

NIKI
Lieutenant? What's the matter?

CIOFFI
It's been troubling me since yesterday. I just don't—I mean, why is it that Bobby—

BOBBY
What.

CIOFFI
I mean, of all the people on this stage, you—

BOBBY
All right, Lieutenant, spit it out.

CIOFFI
You ought to be in the Fort Henderson Square Dance number.

(*A beat.*)

BOBBY
Beg pardon?

CIOFFI
You'd stop the show. After all, wouldn't Rob Hood go to the big picnic disguised as Alan O'Dell?

AARON
It makes sense!