

BY MOUTH | Martin Garrison, Producer
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ROLE: **MAC**

MAC: Ed's drinking partner, also in his 50's. Mac was once a Police Lieutenant but was fired for graft. Big and unkempt, his pipe dream is to return to the force and be cleared of all wrongdoing.

3 takes + pickups = \$200.

IMPORTANT: Looking for ACTIVE, natural, well-paced reads rather than SLOW, self-indulgent "actor-y" ones.

Be mindful of UNDERSCORING for emphasis-- and THROW AWAY non-emphasized words (please no reads emphasising every word).

Don't let the above make you rush or act stilted--simply keep it in mind.

For those who want an edge (casting process will be slow), read the entire SCRIPT before auditioning.

PLEASE READ MAC LINES 817-850

MAC LINES BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE

Enough to wake the dead, Till he heard a damsel [rap,
rap, rap], On a window right over his head."

BESS HOPE [with fuming irritation]: Bejeez Rocky--can't
you keep that crazy bastard quiet?

WILLIE: "Oh, come up," she cried, "my sailor lad, And
you and I'll agree, And I'll show ya the prettiest [rap,
rap, rap], That ever you did see."

NARRATOR: Rocky shakes Willie by the shoulder roughly.

ROCKY: What d'yuh tink dis dump is, a dump?

BESS HOPE: Go on--lock him in his room!

ROCKY: Come on, Bum!

WILLIE: No, please, Rocky--I'll go crazy up in that room
alone! Please, Bess--let me stay--I'll be quiet!

BESS HOPE [immediately relents--indignantly]: What the
hell you doing to him, Rocky? I didn't tell you to
beat up the poor guy--leave him alone, long as he's
quiet.

WILLIE: Thanks, Bess--you are an esteemed lady.

BESS HOPE [to Ed & Mac]: Leave it to that Dago to keep
order and it's like bedlam in a cathouse. [brief pause]
And you two barflies are a hell of a help to me, ain't
ya? Eat and sleep and get drunk--all you're good for,
bejeez! Well, you can take that "I'll-have-the-same"
look off your mugs--there ain't gonna to be no more
drinks on the house til hell freezes over!

MAC [winking at each other]: Sure, Bess.

ED: That's right.

BESS HOPE: Yeah, grin--wink, bejeez! Fine pair of slobs
to have glued on me for life!

THE CAPTAIN: Have I been drinking at the same table with
a bloody Kaffir?

JOE [grinning] Hello, Captain--you comin' up for air?
Kaffir--who's he?

THE GENERAL: Dot's a nigga, Joe--dot's joke on him. He's
still plind drunk, the bloody Limey chentlemen! A great
mistake I missed him at the pattle of Modder River.
Vit mine rifle I shoot damn fool Limey officers py da

672 THE CAPTAIN: There was a time when my conversation was
673 more comprehensive.

674 BESS HOPE: How much room rent do you owe me, tell me
675 that?

676 THE CAPTAIN: Sorry--addition has always baffled me.
677 Subtraction is my forte.

678 BESS HOPE: Think you're funny, eh? Showing off your old
679 wounds! This ain't no Turkish bath! Put on your clothes
680 for Christ's sake! Lousy Limey army! Took 'em years to
681 lick a gang of Dutch hayseeds!

682 THE GENERAL: Dot's right, Bess--gif him hell!

683 BESS HOPE: No lip out of you, neither, you Dutch
684 spinach! General, hell! Salvation Army, that's what
685 you'd be General in! Bragging what a shot you were, and,
686 bejeez, you missed him! And he missed you! And now the
687 two of ya bum on me. You've broke the camel's back this
688 time bejeez! You pay up tomorrow or out you both go!

689 THE CAPTAIN: My dear lady, I give you my word of honor
690 as an officer and a gentleman, you shall be paid
691 tomorrow.

692 THE GENERAL: Ve swear it, Bess! Tomorrow vidout fail!

693 MAC [twinkle in his eye]: There you are, Bess. What
694 could be fairer?

695 ED: Ya can't ask any more than that. A promise is a
696 promise.

697 BESS HOPE: I mean the both of you, too! An old grafting
698 flatfoot and a circus bunco steerer! Fine company for
699 me, bejeez! Couple of con men living in my house since
700 Christ knows when! Getting fat as hogs, too! And ya
701 ain't even got the decency to help me upstairs where
702 I got a good bed! Let me sleep in a chair like a bum!
703 Keep me down here waitin' for Hickey to show up,
704 hoping I'll treat ya to more drinks!

705 MAC: Ed and I did our damndest to get you up, didn't
706 we, Ed?

707 ED: We did--but you said you couldn't bear your flat
708 because it was one of those nights your memory brought
709 poor Harry back to ya.

BESS HOPE [face instantly turns sad; mournfully]:
Yes, that's right, boys--I remember now. I could almost
see him in every room just as he used to be--and it's
twenty years since he--

LARRY: By all accounts, Harry nagged the hell out of
'er.

PARRITT: Really?

JIMMY: No more of this sitting around and loafing. Time
I took hold of myself. Must have my shoes soled and
heeled--and shined--first thing tomorrow morning.
A general spruce-up. I want to have a well-groomed
appearance when I--

LARRY [sardonically]: Tommorow.

MAC [with a sigh, calculating]: Poor old Harry--you
don't find 'em like him these days. A more decent man
never drew breath.

ED [similarly calculating]: Good old Harry--a man
couldn't want a better brother than he was to me.

BESS HOPE: Twenty years, and I've never set foot out of
this house since the day I buried him. Didn't have the
heart. Without him, nothing seemed worth the trouble.
You remember, Ed, you, too, Mac--the boys were going to
nominate me for Alderman. It was all fixed. Harry was so
proud. But when he was taken, I told them, "No, boys,
I can't do it--I haven't the heart--I'm through."
[defiantly] Oh, I know there was jealous wise guys said
the boys was giving me the nomination because they knew
I couldn't win. But that's a lie--I knew every man,
woman, and child in the ward--I'd have been elected
easily.

MAC: You sure would, Bess.

ED: A dead cinch. Everyone knows that.

BESS HOPE: Sure they do. Still, I know while he'd
appreciate my grief, he wouldn't want it to keep me
cooped up in here all my life. So I've made up my mind
I'll go out--soon--take a walk around the ward, see all
the friends I used to know, get together with the boys
and let 'em deal me a hand in their game again. Yes,
bejeez, I'll do it. My birthday, tomorrow, that'd be the
right time to turn over a new leaf. Sixty, that ain't
too old.

MAC: Why it's the prime of life--

ED: And the wonderful thing about you, Bess, you keep young as you ever was.

JIMMY: Get my things from my laundry--they must still have them. Clean collar and shirt--socks, too--I want to make a good appearance. I met Dick Trumbull on the street a year or two ago--he said, "Jimmy, the publicity department's never been the same since you got--resigned. It's dead as hell." I said, "I know--I've heard management is at their wit's end and would only be too glad to have me run it again for them." He said, "Sure, they would, Jimmy--only take my advice and wait a while until business conditions are better--then you can strike 'em for a bigger salary than you got before, don't you see?" I said, "Yes, I do see, Dick, and many thanks for the tip." Well, conditions must be better by this time--all I have to do is get fixed up with a decent front tomorrow, and it's as good as done.

BESS HOPE: Poor Jimmy's off in the land of tomorrow again. Bejeez, he takes the cake!

LARRY [guffaws sardonically]:

THE CAPTAIN: I'm sorry, General, we had to postpone our trip again this year. We'll make it next year, even if we have to work and earn our passage money, eh? England in April! I want you to see that.

THE GENERAL: And I vil enjoy it, Captain. But de veldt! Py Gott, dere is space to be free, the air like vine is, you need no booze to be drunk! My relations vill so surprised be. Dey vil not know me, it is so many years. Dey vil be so glad I haf come home at last.

JOE: I'll make my stake and get my new gamblin' joint open before you boys leave. You got to come to the openin'. If you're broke, I'll stake you to any game you chooses. If you wins, dat's velvet for ya. If you loses, it don't count.

BESS HOPE: Jimmy's got them smoking the same hop.

NARRATOR: But soon the three are asleep again.

LARRY: By God, this bughouse will drive me stark, raving loony!

BESS HOPE: What? What d'you say?

LARRY: Nothin', Bess. Just had a crazy thought in my head.

BESS HOPE: Crazy is right--yah old wise guy! Wise, hell!
A damned old fool Anarchist-I-Won't-Work-er! I'm sick of
you--and Hugo, too. You'll pay up tomorrow or I'll start
a Bess Hope Revolution! I'll tie bombs to your tails
that'll blow ya out to the street! Bejeez I'll make your
Movement move! [cackles]

MAC & ED [guffaw]:

ED: Bess, you sure say the funniest things. [pause]
Hell, where's my drink? That damn Rocky's too fast
cleaning tables--why, I'd only taken a sip of it.

BESS HOPE: No, you don't! Any time you only take one sip
of a drink, you'll have lockjaw or paralysis! Think you
can kid me with those old circus con games? Me, that's
known ya since you was knee-high, and, bejeez, you was a
crook even then!

MAC: It's not like you to be so hard-hearted, Bess.
It's hot, parching work laughin' at your jokes so early
in the mornin' on an empty stomach!

BESS HOPE: Yah! You, Mac--another crook! Who asked you
to laugh? Bejeez, Harry'd never forgive me if he knew
I had you two bums living in his house, throwin' ashes
and cigar butts on his floor. "That Mac is the biggest
drunken grafter that ever disgraced the police force,"
he used to say.

MAC: He was angry because you used to get me drunk.
But he knew I was innocent of all the charges.

WILLIE: Lieutenant Mac--are you aware you are under
oath? Do you realize what the penalty for perjury is?
Come now, Lieutenant, isn't it a fact that you're as
guilty as hell? Gentleman of the jury, the court will
now recess while the D.A. sings a little ditty he
learned at Harvard. [sings] "Oh, come up, " she cried,
"my sailor lad, And you and I'll agree. And I'll show
you the prettiest [rap, rap, rap] That ever you did
see."

BESS HOPE [threatening]: Rocky!

WILLIE: Please, Bess--I'll be quiet--don't make him
bounce me upstairs--I'll go crazy alone! [pause]
I apologize, Mac--don't be sore--I was only kidding you.

NARRATOR: Seing Bess relent, Rocky returns to the bar.

MAC: Sure, Willie, kid all you like--I'm used to it.
[pauses--then seriously] But I'm tellin' ya--some day
before long I'm going to make 'em reopen my case.
Everyone knows there was no real evidence against me,
and I took the fall for the ones higher up. This time
I'll be found innocent and reinstated. My old job on the
force. The boys tell me there's fine pickings these
days, and I'm not getting rich here, sitting with a
parched throat waiting for Bess to buy me a drink.

WILLIE: Of course, you'll be reinstated, Mac. All you
need is a brilliant young attorney to handle your case.
I'll be straightened out and on the wagon in a day or
two. I've never practiced but I was one of the most
brilliant law students in Law School and your case is
just the opportunity I need to start. You will let me
take your case, won't you, Mac?

MAC: Sure I will and it will make your reputation,
Willie.

NARRATOR: Ed winks at Bess, shaking his head, and Bess
does the same.

LARRY: I'll be damned if I haven't heard their visions a
thousand times? Why should it get under my skin now?
[pause] I wish to hell Hickey'd turn up.

ED: Poor Willie needs a drink bad, Bess--and I think if
we all joined him it'd make him feel he was among
friends and cheer him up.

BESS HOPE: More circus con tricks! Harry had you sized
up--he used to tell me, "I don't know what you see in
that worthless, drunken, petty-thief brother of mine.
If I had my way," he'd say, "he'd get booted out into
the gutter on his fat behind." Sometimes he didn't say
behind, either.

ED: Remember the time he sent me down to the bar to
change a ten-dollar bill for him?

BESS HOPE: Do I Bejeez! [cackles]

ED: I was sure surprised when he gave me the
ten-spot. Harry usually had better sense, but he was in
a hurry to get to church. I didn't really mean to do it,
but you know how habit gets you. Besides, I still worked
then and the circus season was going to begin soon, and

1098 ROCKY: Dat's what we was wonderin'.

1099 CORA: He ought to be here--me and Chuck seen him.

1100 ROCKY [excited]: You seen Hickey? [nudges Bess]
1101 Hey, Boss, come to--Cora's seen Hickey.

1102 NARRATOR: Bess is instantly awake and everyone--except
1103 Hugo and Parritt--begins to rouse hopefully.

1104 BESS HOPE: Where'd you see him, Cora?

1105 CORA: On de next corner--he was standin' dere. I kidded
1106 him, "How's de iceman, Hickey--how's he doing at your
1107 house?" He laughs and says, "Fine." And he says, "Tell
1108 de gang I'll be along in a minute--I'm just figurin' out
1109 de best way to save dem and bring dem pease."

1110 BESS HOPE [chuckles]: Bejeez he's thought up a new gag!
1111 It's a wonder he didn't borrow a Salvation Army uniform
1112 and show up in that! Go out and get him, Rocky--tell him
1113 we're waitin' to be saved!

1114 NARRATOR: Rocky goes out, grinning.

1115 CORA: Yeah, Bess, he was only kiddin'--but he
1116 was...different somehow.

1117 CHUCK: Sure, he was sober, Baby--we ain't never seen him
1118 when he wasn't on a drunk.

1119 CORA [uncertain] Sure. Gee, ain't I dumb?

1120 BESS HOPE: Sober? That's funny--he's always lapped up a
1121 good starter on his way here. Well, bejeez, he won't be
1122 sober long--he'll be good and ripe for my birthday party
1123 tonight at twelve. [chuckles with anticipation; to all]
1124 Listen--he's fixed some new gag to pull on us--we'll
1125 pretend to let him kid us, see--and we'll kid the pants
1126 off him.

1127 ED: Sure, Bess!

1128 MAC: Righto!

1129 JOE: Dat's de stuff!

1130 JIMMY: We'll fix him!

1131 THE CAPTAIN: You bet your life!

1132 THE GENERAL: O' course!

1166 HICKEY: Thanks, Rocky--I'm going up in a little while to
1167 grab a snooze--haven't been able to sleep lately an' I'm
1168 tired as hell--a couple of hours will fix me.

1169 BESS HOPE: First time I ever heard you worry about
1170 sleep. Bejeez, you never would go to bed (cackles
1171 suggestively) Get a few slugs in ya and you'll forget
1172 sleepin'. Here's mud in your eye, Hickey.

1173 WILLIE: To Hickey!

1174 ED: Hickey!

1175 JOE: To you, suh!

1176 MAC: Bottoms up!

1177 JIMMY: To your health!

1178 THE CAPTAIN: Cheers!

1179 THE GENERAL: Vat's right!

1180 HICKEY: Drink hearty, boys and girls!

1181 NARRATOR: All drink but Hickey.

1182 BESS HOPE: Bejeez is that a new stunt, not drinkin'?

1183 HICKEY: No, I forgot to tell Rocky--you'll have to
1184 excuse me, boys and girls, but I'm off the stuff.
1185 For keeps.

1186 BESS HOPE: What the hell-- [then choosing to play along]
1187 Sure! Joined the Salvation Army, did ya? Take that
1188 bottle away from him, Rocky--we wouldn't want to tempt
1189 him into sin. [chuckles]

1190 [The gang laughs.]

1191 HICKEY: No, honest, Bess, I know it's hard to believe
1192 but--[pauses then simply] Cora was right--I've changed.
1193 I mean, about booze. I don't need it anymore.

1194 NARRATOR: They all stare a bit uneasily.

1195 BESS HOPE [her kidding's a bit forced]: Yeah, go ahead,
1196 kid the pants off us, bejeez! Cora said you was coming
1197 to save us--well, go on--start the service--sing a
1198 God-damned hymn if you like--we'll all join in the
1199 chorus.

1200 HICKEY [grinning]: Oh, hell--you don't think I'd come
1201 around here peddling some brand of temperance bunk,

2218 ROCKY [astonished, amused and irritated]: Can yuh
2219 beat it--I've heard youse two call each odder every name
2220 yuh could tink of but I never seen ya--[indignantly]
2221 A swell time to stage your first bout, on de Boss's
2222 boithday! What started it?

2223 THE CAPTAIN [forcing a casual tone]: Nothing, old chap.
2224 Our business, you know. That bloody ass, Hickey, made
2225 some insinuation about me, and the boorish Boer had the
2226 impertinence to agree with him.

2227 THE GENERAL: Dot's a lie! Hickey made joke on me, and
2228 Limey said yes, it vas true!

2229 ROCKY: Well, sit down, de bot' of yuh, and cut out de
2230 rough stuff.

2231 NARRATOR: Dumped into adjoining chairs, they turn their
2232 backs on each other as far as possible.

2233 MARGIE [laughs]: Lookit de two bums--like a coupla kids!
2234 Kiss and make up, for Gawd's sakes!

2235 ROCKY: Yeah, de Boss's party begins in a minute and we
2236 don't want no soreheads around.

2237 THE CAPTAIN [stiffly]: Very well. In deference to the
2238 occasion, I apologize, General--provided you do as well.

2239 THE GENERAL [sulkily]: Yes, I sorry, too--because Bess
2240 is goot lady.

2241 ROCKY: Aw ya mean yuh can't do better'n dat?

2242 NARRATOR: Ed and Mac enter together from the hall.
2243 Both have been drinking but are not drunk.

2244 MAC: I'm tellin' ya, Ed, it's serious this time. That
2245 bastard Hickey has got Bess by the hip. And you know it
2246 isn't going to do us no good if he gets her to take that
2247 walk tomorrow.

2248 ED: Yer damn right--Bess'll mosey around the ward,
2249 dropping in on everyone who knew her when. [indignantly]
2250 And they'll all give her a phony glad hand and a ton of
2251 advice about what a sucker she is to put up with us.

2252 MAC: She's sure to call on your relations to do a little
2253 cryin' over dear Harry. And you know what that S.O.B.
2254 thought o' me.

2255 ED [with a flash of his usual humor--rebukingly]
 2256 Remember, Lieutenant, you're speaking of my brother!
 2257 Dear Harry wasn't an S.O.B. He was a God-damned S.O.B.!
 2258 But if you think my loving relatives will have time to
 2259 discuss you, you don't know them--they'll be too busy
 2260 telling Bess what a drunken crook I am and saying she
 2261 ought to have me put in Sing Sing!

2262 MAC [dejectedly]: Yes, once your relations get their
 2263 hooks in her, it'll be as tough for us as if he wasn't
 2264 gone.

2265 ED [dejectedly]: Bess's always been weak and easily
 2266 influenced--now she's getting old she'll be an easy mark
 2267 for those grafters. [then with forced reassurance]
 2268 Ah, hell, Mac, we're saps to worry--we've heard her pull
 2269 that bluff about taking a walk every birthday she's had
 2270 for twenty years.

2271 MAC [doubtfully]: But Hickey wasn't egging her on those
 2272 times--just the opposite--he was saying "What you want
 2273 to go out for when there's plenty of whiskey here."

2274 ED [with forced indifference] Well, after all, I don't
 2275 care whether she goes out or not--I'm clearing out in
 2276 the morning anway--I'm just sorry for you, Mac.

2277 MAC [resentfully]: You needn't be--I'm going myself--
 2278 I was only feeling sorry for you.

2279 ED: Yes my mind's made up--Hickey may be a lousy,
 2280 interfering pest now he's gone teetotal on us, but
 2281 there's a lot of truth in some of his bull--hanging
 2282 around here getting plastered with you, Mac, is
 2283 pleasant, I won't deny, but the old booze gets you in
 2284 the end, if you keep lapping it up--so it's time I quit
 2285 for a while. [with forced enthusiasm] Besides, I feel
 2286 the call of the old carefree circus life in my blood
 2287 again. I'll see the boss tomorrow--it's late in the
 2288 season but he'll be glad to take me on. And won't all
 2289 the old gang be tickled to death when I show up on the
 2290 lot!

2291 MAC: Maybe--if they've got a rope handy!

2292 ED [turns on him--angrily]: Listen--I'm damned sick of
 2293 that kidding!

2294 MAC: You are, are ya? Well I'm sicker of you kidding me
 2295 about getting reinstated on the Force. Whatever you'd

like, I can't spend my life sitting here with you, ruining my stomach with rotgut. I'm tapering off, and in the morning I'll be fresh as a daisy. I'll have me a private chat with the Commissioner. [with forced enthusiasm] Man alive, from what the boys tell me, there's sugar galore these days, and I'll soon be ridin' around in a big red automobile--

ED [derisively--in a Chinese accent]: One Lung Hop put fresh peanut oil in lamp and cook Lieutenant nice fine poppy! It Lieutenant night off!

MAC [stung--pulls back a fist threateningly]:
One more crack like that and I'll [knock your]--!

ED [putting up his fists]: Yeah? You start it--!

ROCKY: Hey--are you guys nuts--it's de Boss's boithday party--sit down and behave!

ED [grumpily]: All right--only tell him to lay off me.

MAC [grumpily]: And tell him to lay off me.

NARRATOR: Hickey bursts in from the hall, excited.

HICKEY: Everything all set? Fine--half a minute to go--Bess's starting down with Jimmy. I had a hard time getting them to move--they'd rather stay hiding up there, kidding each other along. [He chuckles.] Bess don't even wanna remember it's her birthday now! [There's a noise from the stairs.] Here they come! [urgently] Light the candles! Get ready to play, Cora! Stand up, everybody! Get that champagne ready, boys!

NARRATOR: Rocky and Chuck go behind the bar. Margie and Pearl light the candles on the cake. Cora puts her hands over the piano keys. Everybody at the table stands up--Hugo the last, suddenly coming to and scrambling to his feet. Bess and Jimmy appear from the hall, and Hickey looks up from his watch.

HICKEY: On the dot--it's twelve! [like a cheerleader] Come on now, everybody:

HICKEY/WILLIE/PEARL/MAGGIE/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK/JOE/
THE CAPTAIN/THE GENERAL [spiritless except Hickey]:
Happy Birthday, Bess!

[Cora begins playing.]

2490 [He grabs his schooner and takes a greedy gulp--
 2491 then sets it back down on the table.]

2492 HUGO [in an arrogantly disdainful tone, as if he were
 2493 rebuking a butler]: Dis vine is unfit to trink--it has
 2494 not been properly iced!

2495 HICKEY [amusedly]: Always a high-toned swell at heart,
 2496 eh, Hugo? God help us poor bums if you ever get to
 2497 telling us where to get off! You'd be drinking our blood
 2498 beneath those willow trees! [chuckles--then as he goes
 2499 on he becomes more moved and obviously sincere] A toast,
 2500 Ladies and Gents! To Bess Hope, who's been a friend in
 2501 need to every one of us! Here's to the old gal, the
 2502 best sport and the kindest, biggest-hearted gal in the
 2503 whole world! Here's wishin' ya all the luck there is,
 2504 and long life and happiness! Come on, everybody!
 2505 To Bess! Bottoms up!

2506 MAC/ED/WILLIE/JOE/JIMMY/PEARL/MARGIE/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK
 2507 [they've caught his enthusiasm]: **To Bess!**

2508 [They drain their drinks down.]

2509 HOPE [deeply moved--her voice husky] Thanks, all of ya.
 2510 Bejeez, Hickey you old son of a gun, that's good of ya!
 2511 Bejeez, I know you meant it, too.

2512 HICKEY [moved]: Of course I meant it! And I mean it when
 2513 I say I hope today will be the best day of your life,
 2514 and in the lives of everyone here, the beginning of a
 2515 new life of peace and happiness where no pipe dreams can
 2516 ever nag at you again. Here's to that, Bess!

2517 NARRATOR: But this time he drinks alone--in an instant,
 2518 the attitude of the gang has become uneasy and
 2519 defensive.

2520 ROCKY [growls]: Aw, forget dat bughouse line of bull for
 2521 a minute, can't yuh?

2522 HICKEY [sitting--good-naturedly]: No, you're right--it's
 2523 Bess we want to hear from. Come on, Bess! [He pounds his
 2524 schooner on the table.] Speech! Speech!

2525 [The gang raps their schooners on the table.]

2526 BESS HOPE [lamely]: Bejeez, I'm no good at speeches.
 2527 All I can say is--thanks to everybody for remembering me
 2528 on my birthday. [bitterness coming out] Only don't think
 2529 because I'm sixty I'll be a bigger damned fool easy mark

2616 MAC [spitefully]: Yes!

2617 ED [spitefully]: That's right!

2618 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, you've hit it, Larry! I've noticed he
2619 hasn't shown her picture around this time!

2620 ED: He hasn't got it--the iceman took it away from him!

2621 MARGIE: Jeez, look at him--who could blame her?

2622 PEARL: She must be hard up to fall for an iceman!

2623 CORA: Imagine a sap like him advisin' me and Chuck to
2624 git married!

2625 CHUCK: Yeah he done so good wid it!

2626 JIMMY: Least I can say my Mary chose an officer and a
2627 gentleman.

2628 THE CAPTAIN: Look at him, chaps, he's sprouted horns
2629 like a bloody antelope!

2630 THE GENERAL: Pigger, py Gott--like water buffalo!

2631 WILLIE [sings his Sailor Lad tune]: "Come up," she
2632 cried, "my iceman lad, And you and I'll agree--"

2633 WILLIE/ED/JOE/THE CAPTAIN/THE GENERAL/MAC/
2634 PEARL/MARGIE/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK "And I'll show ya the
2635 prettiest [rap, rap, rap] That ever you did see!"
2636 [A roar of derisive, dirty laughter]

2637 HICKEY [joining in the laughter--enjoying the joke at
2638 his expense]: Well, boys and girls, I'm glad to see you
2639 in good spirits for Bess's party, even if the joke's
2640 on me. I admit I asked for it by always pulling that
2641 iceman gag in the old days. [w good-natured generosity]
2642 So laugh all you like.

2643 NARRATOR: But this time they don't laugh--they only
2644 stare at him with baffled uneasiness.

2645 HICKEY: Well, this forces my hand--your bringing up the
2646 subject of Evelyn. I didn't want to tell you--not yet--
2647 I wanted to wait until the party was over. But you're
2648 getting the wrong idea about poor Evelyn--and I've got
2649 to stop that.

2650 NARRATOR: As he pauses, there's a tense stillness in the
2651 room.

need one after the hell of a night I've had-- [Scowls]
That son of a drummer--I had to lock him out. But I
could hear him through the wall doing his spiel to
someone all night long. He was still at it with Jimmy
and Bess when I came down just now. But the hardest to
take was that flatfoot Mac trying to tell me where
to get off! I had to lock him out, too.

NARRATOR: As he says this, Mac appears from the hall.
The change in his appearance and manner is identical to
Ed's and the others.

MAC: He's a liar, Rocky--it was me locked him out!

WILLIE: Come and sit here, Mac--you're just the man
I want to see--if I'm to take your case, we oughta have
a talk before we leave.

MAC [contemptuously]: You damned fool--ya think I'd have
your father's son for my lawyer? They'd take one look at
you and bounce us both out on our necks!

NARRATOR: Willie winces and shrinks down in his chair.

MAC: I don't need a lawyer, anyway. To hell with the
law! All I've got to do is see the right guys and get
'em to pass the word--they will, too--they know I was
framed. And once they've passed the word, it's as good
as done--law or no law.

ED: God, I'm glad I'm leaving this madhouse! [Key
unpocketed and slapped on bar.] Here's my key, Rocky.

MAC: And here's mine. [He too slaps key on bar.]
I'd rather sleep in the gutter than spend another night
under the same roof with that loon Hickey, and a lyin'
circus grifter!

NARRATOR: Ed spins on him furiously but Rocky leans over
and grabs his arm.

ROCKY: Take it easy now! [Rocky tosses the keys on the
shelf in disgust] You boids gimme a pain--it'd soive you
right if I didn't give de keys back to yuh tonight.

NARRATOR: They both turn on him resentfully, but there's
an interruption as Cora enters from the hall with Chuck
behind her. She is drunk, dressed in her gaudy best,
her face plastered with rouge and mascara, her hat on
but her hair disheveled.

3440 HICKEY [exhortingly]: Next? Come on, Ed--it's a fine
3441 summer's day and the call of the old circus is in your
3442 blood!

3443 NARRATOR: Ed glares at him, then goes to the door.
3444 Mac jumps up and follows him.

3445 HICKEY: That's the stuff, Mac.

3446 ED: Good-bye, Bess.

3447 NARRATOR: Ed goes out, turning right.

3448 MAC [glowering after him]: If that crooked grifter has
3449 the guts--

3450 NARRATOR: Mac goes out, turning left. Hickey glances at
3451 Willie who jumps up from his chair before Hickey can
3452 speak.

3453 WILLIE: Good-bye, Bess, and thanks for all your
3454 kindness.

3455 HICKEY: That's the way, Willie! The D.A.'s a busy man--
3456 he can't wait all day for you, ya know.

3457 BESS HOPE [dully]: Good luck, Willie.

3458 NARRATOR: While Willie exits and turns right, Jimmy, in
3459 a sick panic, sneaks to the bar and reaches for a glass
3460 of whiskey.

3461 HICKEY: Now, now, Jimmy--you can't do that to yourself.
3462 One drink on top of your hangover an' an empty stomach
3463 and you'd be cockeyed. Then you'll tell yourself you
3464 wouldn't stand a chance if you went up soused to get
3465 your old job back.

3466 JIMMY [pleading]: Tomorrow--I will tomorrow--I'll be in
3467 good shape tomorrow! [abruptly getting control of
3468 himself--clearing his throat] All right, I'm going.
3469 Take your hands off me.

3470 HICKEY: That's the ticket--you'll thank me when it's all
3471 over.

3472 JIMMY [in a burst of futile fury]: You dirty swine!

3473 NARRATOR: He tries to throw the drink in Hickey's face,
3474 but his aim is poor and it lands on Hickey's coat.
3475 Jimmy turns and dashes through the door, turning right.

4069 everybody? Sorry I had to leave you for a while.
 4070 But there was something I had to get settled--it's all
 4071 fixed now.

4072 BESS HOPE [mechanically voicing a hopeless complaint]:
 4073 When are you going to do something about this booze,
 4074 Hickey--bejeez, we all know you did something to take
 4075 the life out of it--it's like drinking dishwater--
 4076 we can't pass out--and you promised us peace.

4077 WILLIE/ED/JOE/THE CAPTAIN/THE
 4078 GENERAL/JIMMY/MAC/CHUCK/CORA: Yeah!

4079 HICKEY [bursts into resentful exasperation]: For God's
 4080 sake, are you still harpin' on that damned nonsense!
 4081 You've kept it up all afternoon and night--and you've
 4082 got everybody else singing the same crazy tune--I've had
 4083 about all I can stand--that's why I phoned-- [He gets
 4084 control of himself.] Excuse me, boys and girls--I don't
 4085 mean that--I'm just worried about you, when you play
 4086 dead on me like this. I was hoping by the time I got
 4087 back you'd be like you ought to be! Figured you were
 4088 deliberately holding back, while I was around, because
 4089 you didn't want to give me the satisfaction of showin'
 4090 me I had the right dope--and I did! I know from my own
 4091 experience. [exasperatedly] But I've explained that a
 4092 million times--by rights you should be happy now,
 4093 without a single damned hope or dream left to torment
 4094 ya! But here you are, actin' like a lot of stiffs
 4095 cheatin' the undertaker! [He looks around accusingly.]
 4096 I can't figure it--unless it's just pigheaded
 4097 stubbornness. [He breaks--miserably] Hell, you shouldn't
 4098 act this way with me--you're my old pals, the only
 4099 friends I've got. You know the one thing I want is to
 4100 see you all happy before I go--[rousing himself to his
 4101 old brisk, master-of-ceremonies self] And there's damned
 4102 little time left--I've made a date for two o'clock--
 4103 we've got to get busy right away and find out what's
 4104 wrong. [There's a long silence. He goes on
 4105 exasperatedly.] Can't you appreciate what you've got,
 4106 for God's sake--don't you know you're now free to be
 4107 yourselves, without having to feel remorse or guilt, or
 4108 lie to yourselves about reforming tomorrow? Can't you
 4109 see there is no tomorrow, now--you're rid of it forever--
 4110 you've killed it--you don't have to care a damn about
 4111 anything any more--you've finally got the game of life
 4112 licked, don't you see that? [angrily exhorting] Then why

the hell don't you get pie-eyed and celebrate--why don't you laugh and sing "Sweet Adeline"? [with bitterly hurt accusation] The only reason I can think is, you're putting on this rotten half-dead act just to spite me--because ya hate my guts! [He breaks again.] God, don't do that, gang--it makes me feel like hell to think you hate me--it makes me feel you suspect I must hate you--but that's a lie! Oh, I know I used to hate everyone who wasn't as rotten a bastard as I was! But that was before I faced the truth and saw the one possible way to free poor Evelyn and give her the peace she'd always dreamed of.

NARRATOR: He pauses and everyone in the group stirs with awakening dread--tense on their chairs.

CHUCK [with dull, resentful viciousness] Aw, put a cork in it--to hell wid Evelyn--what if she was cheatin'--an' who cares what yuh did to her--dat's your funeral--we don't give a damn, see?

CORA: Yeah!

ED: That's right!

MAC: We don't give a damn!

JOE: Xactly!

CHUCK [dully]: All we want outa you is ta keep de hell away from us and give us a rest.

[The gang grunts in agreement.]

HICKEY [as if he hadn't heard this]: The one possible way to make up to her for all I'd made her go through--and to rid 'er of me so I couldn't make her suffer any more--and she wouldn't have to forgive me any more! I saw I couldn't do it by killin' myself--like I wanted to for a long time--that would have been the last straw for her--she'd have died of a broken heart--she'd have blamed herself for it, too--and I couldn't just run away--she'd have died of grief and humiliation if I'd done that. She'd a thought I'd stopped loving her. [He adds with a strange simplicity] You see, Evelyn loved me--and I loved her--that was the trouble. It would have been easy to find a way out if she hadn't loved me so much--or if I hadn't loved her. But as it was, there was only one possible way. [He pauses--then adds simply] I had to kill her.

ED: Yes, Bess!

CORA: That's it, Bess.

THE CAPTAIN: That's why!

THE GENERAL: Ve knew he vas crazy!

MAC: Just to humor him!

DETECTIVE #1: A fine bunch of rats--coverin' up for a cold-blooded murderer.

BESS HOPE [stung into recovering all her old fuming truculence]: Is that so? Well, when Saint Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland they swam to New York and joined the Force! Ha! [She cackles insultingly.] Bejeez, we can believe it when we look at you, can't we, gang?

[The gang growls in ascent.]

BESS HOPE [goes on pugnaciously.] You stand up for your rights, Hickey--don't let this smart-aleck copper get funny with ya. If he pulls any rubber-hose tricks, you let me know! I've still got friends at the Hall! Bejeez, I'll have him back in uniform poundin' a beat where the only graft he'll get will be kipin' pencils from the blind!

DETECTIVE #1 [furiously]: Listen, you cockeyed old dame! For a plugged nickel I'd [give you a slap in the]--

NARRATOR: As he controls himself, his partner turns to Hickey and yanks his arm.

DETECTIVE #2: Come on, you!

HICKEY [with a strange mad earnestness]: Oh, I want to go, officer--I can hardly wait now--I should have phoned you from the house right afterwards--it was a waste of time coming here--I've got to explain to Evelyn--but I know she's forgiven me--she knows I was insane. [turning to the officer] No, you've got me all wrong, officer--I want to go to the Chair.

DETECTIVE #1: Bull-crap!

HICKEY [exasperatedly]: God, you're a dumb copper! Ya think I give a damn about life now? Why, you bone-head, I haven't got a single lyin' hope or pipe dream left!

DETECTIVE #2: Get a move on!

HICKEY [as he is walked towards the rear--insistently]:
All I want ya to see is I was out of my mind when I
laughed at her! I was a rotten raving lunatic or I
couldn't have called her a [bitch]--Why, Evelyn was the
only thing on God's earth I ever loved. I'd have killed
myself before I'd ever hurt her!

BESS HOPE [calls after him]: Don't worry, Hickey--they
won't give you the Chair--we'll testify you was crazy--
crazy as a bedbug--won't we, gang?

CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK [yell]: Dat's right!

THE GENERAL [yell]: Dat's right!

WILLIE/ED/MAC [yell]: We won't testify.

THE CAPTAIN/JIMMY [yell]: Don't worry, Hickey.

[From the hall comes the slam of the street door.]

BESS HOPE [with genuine sorrow]: He's gone--the poor
crazy bastard! Bejeez, I need a drink.

NARRATOR: The gang all grab their glasses.

BESS HOPE [hopefully]: Bejeez, maybe it'll have the
old kick, now he's gone.

NARRATOR: She drinks--and they all follow suit.

ROCKY: Yeah, Boss--maybe we can get drunk now.

NARRATOR: They all sit still--with hopeful expectancy--
waiting for the effect of the booze.

LARRY--[his voice full of pain and pity--in a whisper,
aloud to himself] May the Chair bring him peace at last,
the poor tortured bastard!

PARRITT [leans toward him--in a strange low insistent
voice]: Yes, but he isn't the only one who needs peace,
Larry--I can't feel sorry for him--he's lucky--he's
through, now--it's all decided for him. I wish it was
decided for me--I've never been any good at deciding
things--even about selling out. It was the tart the cops
got after me who put it in my mind. You remember what
Mother's like, Larry--she makes all the decisions--she's
always decided what I had to do--she doesn't like anyone
to be free but herself.

NARRATOR: He pauses, as if waiting for Larry to comment
--but he ignores him.

4735 was a goner. [Assuming the old kidding tone of the gang,
4736 but hesitantly, as if still a little afraid.] On de woid
4737 of a honest bahtender!

4738 BESS HOPE [her old self]: Huh! Bar-robber is more
4739 like it. You and Chuck ought to have cards in the
4740 Burglars' Union!

4741 [The gang laughs eagerly]

4742 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, it's good to hear someone
4743 laugh again! All the time that bastard--I mean--poor old
4744 Hickey was here, I didn't have the heart--Bejeez, I'm
4745 getting drunk and glad of it! [She cackles. Bottle being
4746 picked up.] Come on, gang--it's on the house.

4747 [Many drinks are poured.]

4748 BESS HOPE [sentimental]: Poor old Hickey--we mustn't
4749 hold him responsible for anything he's done--we'll
4750 forget that--and only remember him the way he was before
4751 --the kindest, biggest-hearted drummer who ever wore
4752 shoe leather.

4753 CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK: Dat's right, Bess!

4754 THE GENERAL: Vhat's all!

4755 JIMMY/THE CAPTAIN/WILLIE: Finest drummer!

4756 ED/MAC/JOE: Best scout!

4757 BESS HOPE: Good luck to you in Matteawan, Hickey!
4758 Come on, bottoms up!

4759 [They all drink.]

4760 NARRATOR: At his table--his hands tensely gripping the
4761 edge--sits Larry, listening intently.

4762 LARRY [cannot hold back an anguished exclamation]:
4763 Christ! Why don't he [jump for god's sake]--!

4764 HUGO [beginning to be drunk again--peers at him]:
4765 Vhy don't he what? Don't be a fool--Hickey's gone--
4766 he vas crazy. Have a trink. [then as he receives no
4767 reply--with vague uneasiness] What's matter with you?
4768 You look funny. What you listen for, Larry?

4769 CORA [tipsily]: Well, I thank Gawd me and Chuck did all
4770 we could to humor de poor nut. Jeez, imagine us goin'
4771 off like we really meant to git married, when we ain't
4772 even picked out a farm yet!

CHUCK [eagerly]: Sure ting, Baby--we kidded him we was serious.

JIMMY [confidently--with a gentle, drunken zeal]:
I may as well say I detected his condition almost at once. All that talk of his about tomorrow, for example. He had the fixed idea of the insane. It only makes them worse to cross them.

WILLIE [eagerly]: Same with me, Jimmy--only I spent the day in the park--I wasn't such a damned fool as to [try to]--

THE CAPTAIN [getting jauntily drunk]: Picture my predicament had gone to the Consulate. The pal of mine there is a humorous blighter. He would have got me a job out of pure spite. Instead I strolled about and finally came to roost in the park. [He grins with affectionate kidding at The General] And lo and behold, who was on the neighboring bench but my old battlefield companion, the Boer that walks like a man--who, if the British Government had taken my advice, would have been removed from his fetid pen on the veldt straight to the baboon's cage at the London Zoo, and little children would now be asking their nurses: "Tell me, Nana, is that the Boer General, the one with the blue behind?"

[The gang laughs uproariously.]

THE CAPTAIN: No offense meant, old chap.

THE GENERAL [beaming]: No offense taken, you tanned Limey! [going on--grinningly] About a job--I felt de same as de Limey here.

HUGO [with uneasy insistence]: What's matter, Larry--you look scared--vhat you listen for out zere?

JOE [with drunken self-assurance]: No, suh, I wasn't fool enough to git in no crap game--not while Hickey's around--crazy people puts a jinx on you.

MAC [with drunken earnestness]: You saw how it was--
no good trying to explain to a crazy guy that it ain't
the right time--you know how getting reinstated is.

ED: Sure, the same with the circus. The boys tell me the rubes are spendin' all their money buying food and times was never so hard. And I never was one to cheat for chicken feed.

4922 BESS HOPE [calls effusively] Hey there, Larry! Come over
4923 and get paralyzed! What the hell you doun', just sittin'
4924 there?

4925 NARRATOR: But Larry doesn't reply. Almost immediately,
4926 she forgets him and turns back to the gang.

4927 BESS HOPE: Bejeez, let's sing! Let's celebrate. It's my
4928 birthday party! Bejeez, I'm oreyeyed!

4929 HUGO [singing]: Dansons la Carmagnole! Vive le son! Vive
4930 le son! Dansons la Carmagnole! Vive le son des canons!

4931 [The gang howls derisively.]

4932 HUGO: Capitalist svine! Stupid bourgeois monkeys!
4933 [declaiming] "The days grow hot, O Babylon!"

4934 WILLIE/ED/JOE/THE CAPTAIN/THE
4935 GENERAL/JIMMY/MAC/CORA/ROCKY/CHUCK [taking it up]:
4936 'Tis cool beneath thy willow trees!

4937 [They pound their glasses on the table.]

4938 NARRATOR: In his chair--staring straight ahead--
4939 oblivious to all the racket, sits Larry.

4940 [The gang roars with boisterous laughter.]

4941 HUGO [giggles]:

4942 THE END