

Murder on the Lust Boat

By Tony Schwartz & Marylou Ambrose

Cast of Characters:

Tony Terrafirma: Lounge singer

Tina Terrafirma: Lounge singer; Tony's wife

Fiona Helmsworth: Owner of ship; a real sea witch

Hamilton ("Ham") Helmsworth: Fiona's henpecked husband

Captain Ivah Dinghy: Incompetent ship's captain

Monique Lewdinsky: Perky activities director with lustful itinerary

Caprice Rutledge: Guest on ship; goes "jogging" frequently

Butler Rutledge: Caprice's dorky, frustrated husband

Rico, Man of Mystery: Cool, exotic, man of few words

Setting

TIME: The present

PLACE: The cocktail lounge of a luxury cruise liner. (*See Production Notes for details on properties and set décor.*)

NOTE: This play was written to be performed in a variety of venues, but not all of them will have a real backstage area. Consequently, the script usually only designates *when* the actors enter and exit, not whether they enter and exit stage right, left, or center. That's up to the director and depends on the venue. In our shows, we hang a curtain upstage center as a backdrop, so the actors often enter and exit upstage, from either side of the curtain. However, they may also enter and exit downstage stage right and left or even from the audience.

Murder on the Lust Boat

Master of Ceremonies: Welcome to the (*Insert your company's name*) production of *Murder on the Lust Boat*. Tonight, you're part of the action. So keep your eyes and ears open for clues, because someone will be ruthlessly murdered, and it's up to you to guess "whodunit" and why.

How many of you have been to a murder mystery before? Well, this show is a little different. We won't ask you to take a part, or get up on stage, or do anything but watch if you don't want to. So you shy people can come out from under your tables now and just relax and enjoy the show. Your main job is to pay attention and play detective—and then to vote at the end. The first

(Insert how many prizes you have) people to correctly guess the murderer and the motive will win a prize. I'll explain the voting process to you in more detail after the show.

And now—on with the show!

Scene One

About 9 p.m. in the Afterglow Lounge of the cruise ship nicknamed "The Lust Boat." Tony and Tina Terrafirma are center stage. Tina is holding a drink with a little umbrella in it. The glass should be one you can't see the liquid through. There are two high tables on either side of the stage. Rico sits at one table and Butler and Caprice sit at the other. They're supposed to be part of the audience, so they don't hear Tony and Tina's conversation. The other characters Tony and Tina talk about are either in the audience or near the stage somewhere.

Tony: I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. This ship never stops rocking! I'm addicted to Dramamine! *(removes pill bottle from pocket and pours some down his throat)* Oh, if only we could work in Vegas again.

Tina: You know Vegas is out! We've been blacklisted there. And Atlantic City. And just about every other major show town, thanks to you!

Tony: Hey hey hey -- I told you not to mention being blacklisted ever again. *(glances around to make sure no one else heard)* I don't want to hear about it anymore, and I sure don't want anyone else to know.

Tina: Okay, okay, calm down. I hate this cruise ship gig as much as you do. But we were hurting for cash and we were desperate. Looking back, maybe we shouldn't have borrowed that money from Fiona. Or signed a contract promising to perform on this ship until the loan is paid off. I'm afraid we'll be here for the rest of our lives!

Tony: You're right. But it's too late now. We're stuck on this rust bucket.

Tina: *(Opens evening purse, takes out an "Alka-Seltzer" – actually a white Necco wafer – drops it into glass, and stirs it with little umbrella)* Want one? *(offers him an "Alka-Seltzer")*

Tony: Sure, why not? *(sucks on it)* You know, this job *does* have a few benefits....

Tina: Oh yeah? Name one.

Tony: Well, you get to watch all the passengers from up here on stage. They don't even realize it. You can learn a little about each one and then pretty much figure out their whole story. Like Butler and Caprice Rutledge over there. *(points to couple sitting at one table)* All he wants is a little quality time with his wife, and all she wants to do is jog. Right. Who's she "jogging" with? Just about every guy on the ship, I suspect.

Tina: You can learn a lot from watching the crew too. Like Captain Dinghy over there. *(points to Captain, who's standing in the real audience somewhere. perhaps trying to read a compass or*

a nautical map) He's not the brightest bulb in the chandelier, but I kind of like him. All he talks about is retiring and getting off this ship and away from Fiona.

Tony: His brain is already retired. The rest of him just hasn't caught up yet.

Tina: Oh, but he's sweet. That witch Fiona keeps threatening to fire him so he doesn't get his pension. When she says "Jump!" he says "How high?" She has the poor guy bussing tables, swabbing the decks, cleaning the swimming pools. She's really got him under her thumb.

Tony: The Captain's not the only one. What about Fiona's husband, Hamilton? (*points to Ham, who's offstage, perhaps putting a golf ball*) He'd like something useful to do, but she won't let him. So poor Ham spends all his time hitting golf balls into the ocean or playing Blackjack. I've heard he owes a bundle of money in the casino.

Tina: And Monique Lewdinsky (*point out Monique, who's standing nearby, consulting her clipboard*). She's so sweet, so perky, so . . . French! With Monique as activities director, it's easy to see why this ship is nicknamed "The Lust Boat"!

Tony: And finally, there's the sea witch herself – Fiona Helmsworth. Talk about your queen of mean. I feel sorry for Ham. I feel sorry for all of us who have to deal with her. And she . . . uh, oh, she's staring at us. We're in big trouble now. As usual.

Fiona: (*angry, as usual*) Why are you two standing around? The guests are waiting! Now get this show started!

Tony: We're working on it. (*Goes upstage and fiddles with the sound equipment*) Uh, we're having a little problem with the sound equipment for our lounge act.

Fiona: Lounge act? That's for sure. You do more *lounging* than singing. Every time I try to catch your act, you're on break.

Tina: I'm sorry Fiona. But we're still trying to get our sea legs. My stomach doesn't feel so good, either. Can't you activate the de-rocking system?

Fiona: The de—what? Stop with this nonsense and get this show started. Now!

Tony and Tina go upstage by sound equipment. Fiona spots Capt. Dinghy)

Fiona: (*to Captain*) You! Come here! (*Capt. Dinghy looks scared as he approaches her*) What are you doing talking to the guests? Stand at attention when I talk to you! Why aren't you busy doing something?

Capt. Dinghy: Well . . . I . . . uh . . . I don't have anything to do right now, so I thought I'd mingle with the guests. They seem to enjoy it when I . . .

Fiona: *(she cuts him off)* Do you want me to find something for you to do? How about waiting on tables? Washing pots and pans in the kitchen? Vacuuming one of the swimming pools?

Capt. Dinghy: Oh please, Fiona. It's degrading when you make me do those things. I'm the Captain! I'm in charge of . . .

Fiona: Nothing! You're in charge of nothing! I'm the boss! So if you ever want to see that precious pension you're always talking about, you'd better get busy. Now, go and navigate something!

Capt. Dinghy: Right, I'll go navigate something. *(he walks away)* I'll go steer something. *(looks at his hands)* Now, let's see. Port is left. Or is it right? No, starboard is left. No . . . *(he exits)*

Ham cautiously approaches Fiona. He's carrying a golf club and has golf balls in his pocket.

Ham: Fiona. . . . dear . . . why are you always picking on him like that? He's Captain Ivah Dinghy -- the man at the helm of this ship -- and he deserves more respect.

Fiona: Who are you to stick your nose in my business? I told you to stay out of my affairs! Now beat it -- you're useless.

Ham: That's not true. I could be useful if you'd just give me something to do. You never let me do anything!

Fiona: And you never will. Useless baggage. What was I thinking when I married you? Now get lost! And keep your nose out of my business. *(Ham begins to walk off, head down)* Go on . . . and don't turn around. I don't want to look at you.

On her last line to Ham, Capt. Dinghy strolls by and Fiona grabs his arm.

Fiona: *(suddenly flirtatious)* Well Captain., now that we're alone, I *can* think of a few manly things you might do. Things that would keep your retirements out of jeopardy.

Capt. Dinghy: Oh, really? What did you have in mind?

Fiona whispers in his ear and his eyes nearly pop out of his head.

Capt. Dinghy: Oh no! I couldn't! I'm good friends with your husband. I couldn't do that to him. *(trying to get on her good side)* I mean, otherwise, I would, in a minute. Uh -- I need to check the anchor! *(he runs off)*

Fiona: *(yelling after him)* Get to work! *(She turns to Tony & Tina)* And what are you two looking at? I told you to get this show started! Now! *(she steps to one side of the stage)*

Tony: *(nervously)* Good evening. I'm Tony and this is Tina and we're the Terrafirmas. We're here to, uh, entertain you tonight here in the beautiful Afterglow Lounge. Uh, does anyone have

a request? (*Asks real audience members. Let's hope they request something. Whatever it is, Tony and Tina don't know it and should ad lib an answer. If no one in the audience requests a song, Caprice should request "Sea of Love." They don't know that, either. No matter what else is requested, Rico should finally ask for "The Godfather Theme."*)

Tony: The Godfather Theme? We don't know the words. Sorry, no can do. (*Rico gives him a threatening look and Tony gets scared.*) Oh, well, okay, we'll just hum it. (*He starts humming the theme and sounds like a real idiot*)

Tina starts humming along, too. It really sounds stupid. Now Tony tries to do a Marlon Brando imitation, saying, "I've got an offer you can't refuse."

Rico: Okay, knock it off now! (*to himself*) What a couple of idiots.

Tina: (*to Tony, blaming him*) Well, that went over like a lead balloon. Got any ideas for an encore?

Tony: It wasn't my fault, you're flat!

Tina: (*looking at her breasts*) I am not!

Tony: What? No, not your breasts, your singing!

Tony and Tina ad lib arguing as Monique comes over to break it up.

Monique: (*French accent*) Now, now, Monsieur Tony. No fighting on zee Lust Boat! Zee Lust Boat is a happy boat, no?

Tony: (*calming down*) Well . . . I guess . . .

Monique: There now. All better. Now, how about you two kiss and make out?

Tony: You mean kiss and make *up*.

Monique: No -- ha, ha, ha. I mean kiss and make *out*.

Tony: Oh no. Right here on the stage? I couldn't.

Monique: No, no, no, now come on. It's all right. Kiss, kiss, kiss!

(Still mad at each other, they grudgingly kiss.)

Monique: (*to audience*) I know, why don't we *all* kiss and make out! Yes? Would you like that? You just find the cute little girl to your right, or the handsome gentleman to your left -- oh, just pick anybody you want, all right? And I will count to three and blow the whistle, and we will all

kiss and make out! Okay? Are you ready? One, two, three! (*blows whistle*) KISS AND MAKE OUT EVERYBODY!!!

Monique: (*to Butler and Caprice*) Why are you two not kissing and making out?

Butler: I'm trying, but my wife just isn't interested.

Caprice: (*looking everywhere but at Butler*) Yes, that was great. Very romantic. Everybody kissing. That was wonderful.

Monique: Yes, but I don't see you two kissing.

Butler: That's what I've been trying to tell you.

Monique: Mrs. Rutledge, you see everybody kissing and making out? It's so nice, yes? Now you two join in and kiss and make out. You need me to blow the whistle again? Hmmmm?

Caprice: Yes, the whistle. Very effective. It's wonderful everyone kissing. I think I'll go for a jog now. Suddenly, all this kissing, I uh, I need to jog. Whew (*fanning herself*) I really need to jog now! It's been fun chatting. Bye bye. (*She jogs out of the room*)

Monique: (*To Butler*) Poor Mr. Rutledge. Well, maybe you two can kiss and make out later. In the meantime, I have some very important announcements to make. (*She moves to center stage and consults her clipboard*) At 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, we have Tickle Me Twister on Deck #2. Be sure to wear comfortable clothes! Then at 2 p.m., join me for Bowling for Bimbos in the bowling alley on the lower deck. Finally, at 4 p.m., how about an arousing – I mean *rousing* – game of naked co-ed wrestling in the Mazola Room next to the wedding chapel? Be sure to arrive 15 minutes early to get greased up!

Well, that's it for announcements. How about I blow the whistle one more time and we all kiss and make out again? Would you like that? (*She gets ready to blow her whistle, and then spots Rico sitting all alone and goes up to him.*) Oh, look at this mysterious stranger all alone. Why sir, you should go and find someone to kiss and make out with like everyone else! Everybody, lets show him how to do it. I'll blow the whistle and . . .

Fiona comes from behind and grabs Monique by the shoulders and spins her around. Monique starts blowing the whistle repeatedly, like a distress signal.

Fiona: Monique! I've warned you about these lustful activities aboard my ship!

Monique: (*scared, stammering*) But, but, but, but . . .

Fiona: No buts! This is a ship for romance. People are supposed to come here and rekindle the romance in their relationships. Instead, you have them starting up new romances with everyone else. They're turning into swingers! They arrive with one person and leave with another! People are getting divorced and then blaming me. I'm being hit with lawsuits left and right!

Monique: But, but, but, but . . .

Fiona: Enough with the buts. Now you listen to me. This time you've gone too far. You're going to stop all these lustful high-jinx on the high seas, or I'll fire you! Or maybe I'll arrange to have a few skeletons fall out of your closet. How would you like that?

Monique: I think I'll get back to my duties now. *(she runs off)*

Captain Dinghy approaches Fiona

Capt. Dinghy: Fiona, why don't you lighten up? Don't be so hard on her. She's just trying to do her job.

Fiona: And who are you to try and tell me how to run MY ship? You of all people. You incompetent fool!

Capt. Dinghy: Hey, hey, I am not! Why, I'm the Captain of this boat . . .er, barge . . .I mean *ship*!!

Fiona: See? Let it be known that you're Captain in name only!

Capt. Dinghy: That's not true. I'm well trained for this job.

Fiona: Oh Ivah, please. What training do you really have?

Capt. Dinghy: *(pulls out matchbook and reads it)* Training? Why, I went to the "Close Cover before Striking School of Seamanship and Diesel Repair."

Fiona: *(rolling her eyes and laughing)* Wow, that's something to be proud of. Can you even swim? Enough of this nonsense. The fact of the matter is, if you don't shape up, you're shipping out. And so is your precious pension.

Capt. Dinghy: Aw, come on now Fiona. I . . . *(The lights go on and off, and suddenly Capt. Dinghy takes command. He says the following lines to the audience.)* Remain calm folks. Nothing to worry about. Just a small electrical problem. We're working on it. Nothing to be alarmed about.

Fiona: *(impressed; flirting again)* Why Ivah. You're so manly when you take charge like that. You know, if you were a little more cooperative, I could be a little more reasonable, my dear Captain.

Capt. Dinghy: *(in a panic)* Lifeboat drill! Lifeboat drill everybody!

Fiona storms off. In the section below, two audience members come up on stage. They were selected before the start of the show.

Capt. Dinghy: *(to audience)* Folks, we need to have an “Abandon Ship Drill.” Now, you people in first class, if the ship starts sinking, there will be rescue helicopters landing on the fantail to fly you to safety. I guess that would be aft . . . uh . . . in the back of the boat somewhere. You folks in second class, you’ll all receive one of these life jackets. *(Monique brings him a life jacket and he puts it on someone.)* And those of you in steerage, you’ll all receive one of these. *(Monique brings out a child’s blow-up swim toy and Dinghy puts that on someone.)* And you people who happen to be in the swimming pool -- keep swimming!

Fiona returns.

Fiona: What the hell was that?!?

Capt. Dinghy: That was a lifeboat drill.

Fiona: A lifeboat drill? Do you even know the difference between a lifeboat and a lifejacket?

Capt. Dinghy: Uh, yeah. That fellow over there has a lifejacket on. *(Points to the guy he put it on)*

Fiona: How many lifeboats do we have?

Capt. Dinghy: *(a beat)* I don’t know.

Fiona: Great! We’re going to end up like the Titanic, you idiot! Go and count the lifeboats. And try not to hit an iceberg!

Capt. Dinghy: *(a beat)* In the Caribbean?

Fiona: With you, anything is possible.

Ham approaches Fiona

Ham: Why don’t you stop picking on Ivah. He’s not doing anything wrong. He

Fiona: And what did I tell you about interfering in my business? You’re useless. All you do is waste your time in the casino and knock those golf balls around.

Ham: I could be useful if you’d just trust me with a real job on this ship. I could do something productive.

Fiona: Stick with golf. Now, do us a both a favor and go play with your balls somewhere. *(She’s referring to Ham’s golf balls, which he always has in his hands or in his pockets. The balls should be obvious to the audience! He also carries a golf club all the time.)*

She walks away and Capt. Dinghy approaches Ham. They talk as Rico listens.

Ham: She's at it again, the bitch.

Capt. Dinghy: I'm glad you're married to her and not me. I hope marrying all that money was worth it.

Ham: What money? *I never see any of it. Fiona gives me a small allowance once in a while, that's it. (looks at his golf club)* I love this game. One of these days, I hope to play it on dry land.

Capt. Dinghy: What's that in your other hand?

Ham: Huh? Oh, my balls. *(shows him golf balls.)* Anyway, like I was saying, Fiona never gives me any money, and I've been going "overboard" on the gambling lately.

Capt. Dinghy: Again? I thought you gave that up.

Ham: Oh please, don't lecture me.

Capt. Dinghy: Are you winning?

Ham: Losing.

Capt. Dinghy: Uh oh. How much you in for?

Ham: A hundred thousand, plus interest.

Capt. Dinghy: Plus interest? The casino is charging you interest?

Ham: No, I borrowed gambling money from a loan shark, and now they want me to pay up.

Capt. Dinghy: Are you nuts? Those guys play tough. They'll break your knee caps. Or you'll end up in the ocean with cement shoes. Your gambling won't be the only thing that went overboard!

Tina interrupts and asks Capt. Dinghy to help with a sound problem (ad lib). Captain ad libs an apology to Ham and goes to help Tina.

Rico, who's been listening to Capt. Dinghy and Ham's conversation, invites Ham to sit at his table.

Rico: Hi there.

Ham: What? *(distracted)* Oh, hi. I'm Ham.

Rico: Rico. *(They shake hands)*

Ham: *(nervous, wiping his brow)* Yeah, nice to meet you.

Rico: I couldn't help overhear your conversation with the Captain. It sounds like you've got a problem.

Ham: (*looking around nervously*) You overheard that? Yeah, I do have a bit of a gambling problem. But keep it to yourself. I don't want my wife to find out.

Rico: How much do you owe?

Ham: A hundred grand plus interest.

Rico: Wow, that's a lot of money.

Ham: Yeah, you'd think my bitch of a wife would let me have some of hers.

Rico: I think you have a problem.

Ham: I *know* I have a problem.

Rico: (*slightly threatening*) Maybe you should take care of your problem before your problem takes care of you.

Scared, Ham scurries away from Rico's table. He stops center stage and talks to himself.

Ham: I think that Rico fellow is a hit man! I think the loan shark sent him here to collect the money from me – or rub me out if I don't pay up! (*he exits*)

Fiona returns and approaches Tony and Tina.

Fiona: All right you two. Where's the music?

Tony: We're on break.

Fiona: On break? On break from what? You haven't done any work yet!

Tina: Sorry Fiona, but we're seasick. It's affecting our vocal cords (*attempts to sing, makes croaking sounds, coughs*)

Tony: Yeah, yeah, our voices are shot (*demonstrates by singing off key*)

Fiona: Bull! I want some music and I want it now! (*gestures to the audience*) These people came to the Afterglow Lounge to hear singers, and all they've seen and heard so far are you two gossiping and fiddling with the sound equipment. So start singing "My Way"!

Tony: (*confused, misunderstanding her*) Your way? Uh, sure, we'd be happy to . . . just what is "your way" of singing?

Fiona: *(shaking her head in disbelief)* Not my way of singing, you idiot, the song “My Way”!

Tina: Sorry, we don’t know that one.

Fiona: *(rolls eyes)* Then what *do* you know?

Tony: How about an audience participation number. I know just the thing! *(starts singing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.” Do it in “round” style with different sections of the audience starting at different times.)*

Monique hears the music, runs onto the stage, and starts singing along enthusiastically.

Fiona: *(so dumbfounded she lets the singing go on for a while; finally, she shouts)* Stop! Stop the singing! Are you crazy? Nobody comes on a cruise to sing “Row, Row, Row, Your Boat!” They want sophisticated, adult entertainment!

Monique: Oui, oui, that’s what I give them, Fiona, *adult* entertainment! But you say, “No, no, don’t do that!” Monique is confused.

Fiona: Don’t act coy with me, Monique. You know perfectly well what I’m talking about. You’ve got all these people horny as toads with your “kiss and make out,” “naked limbo,” and “Mazola wrestling”! I need to curb these lustful activities before I’m sued right out of business. We need something more wholesome, but not children’s songs! *(turns to Tony & Tina).* You know **what I mean**, don’t you?

Tina: *(misunderstanding)* **What I mean?** Can you hum a few bars? Maybe it’ll come back to me.

Fiona: *(utterly frustrated)* I can’t take it anymore! Did they empty out the asylums the day I had the job fair? Everyone on this boat is insane, stupid – or both! *(starts to walk away, but Ham stops her.)*

Tony & Tina walk behind sound equipment & Monique walks to Butler’s table to give Fiona & Ham the stage.

Ham: *(on his knees, begging)* Please, please Fiona. You’ve got to help me! I owe the mob a lot of money and now there’s a hit man on board. It’s that Rico fella. He’s going to kill me. I know it. He’s here to kill me!

Fiona: *(laughing, she grabs Ham’s collar and lifts him up off the floor)* Get up off the floor and act like a man, you stupid little fool. Why should I help you?

Ham: *(meekly)* Because I’m your husband?

Fiona: In name only. I loathe you. I despise you. Now get away from me before I kill you myself!

Ham: *(walking on his knees toward her)* So . . . does this mean you won't pay off my gambling debt?

Fiona: I don't think sooooo. Now get out of here! *(Ham stumbles to his feet and runs off)* The stupid idiot thinks Rico's a hit man. But he's no hit man. I've been watching him myself and I know exactly who he is. He's Gordon Blue, the famous cruise ship restaurant critic. *(Gordon Blue rhymes with Cordon Bleu)*

Fiona heads toward Rico's table as if she's going to introduce herself to him. She stops nearby and observes him, while the attention switches to Monique and Butler at his table.

Monique: Monsieur Butler, you're all alone. Where is your wife? She is all the time out jogging.

Butler: I know. I spent a lot of money to come on this cruise so Caprice and I could have a second honeymoon. But all she does is jog. She's so addicted to the sport, she even gets up in the middle of the night to do it!

Monique: *(looks away, raises eyebrows as if to say "ooo la la"; then turns back to Butler and acts sympathetic)* And she doesn't want to kiss and make out very much either.

Butler: You don't say. Believe me, it's been a long time since we had any of *that* going on in our marriage.

Monique: Well, I'm very familiar with all the jogging tracks on this ship. Perhaps I can help you find her. Would you like that?

Butler: Well, it's a start. Sure, let's go look for her.

Monique: Okay, come with me.

They start walking in one direction as Caprice jogs over from the other direction. She jogs past Rico's table and gives him a flirty look. Tony & Tina come out from behind sound equipment.

Tony: I've never seen anybody jog so much.

Tina: Yeah, well, you call it jogging, I call it running around.

Caprice overhears that remark and gives them a dirty look. She goes over to her table and Butler & Monique notice her.

Monique: Here she is, Monsieur Butler. *(to Caprice)* So nice to have you back. I'll leave you two lovebirds alone. *(Monique exits)*

Butler: There you are. I'm so glad you're back. I've been looking all over for you.

Caprice: Yes, well, I've been out jogging

Butler: So what else is new?

Caprice: And I'm sooooo sweaty. (*Wiping her neck and chest in a sexy way & winking at Rico*) That track on the top deck is just incredible.

Butler: Yes, well, you know dear, I spent a lot of money on this cruise so we could rekindle the romance in our marriage. If I'd known this ship had a jogging track, I never would've picked it. Since you took up jogging a year ago, you're never home. Can't you just take a break for a little while so we can have some fun? (*whining*)

Caprice: I *am* having fun! I'm having the time of my life! Look, Butler, you ignored me for years while you played the hotshot lawyer. All your clients, your divorcees, they were more important than me. So I took up jogging. Now jogging is my life. Jogging in the morning, jogging at lunchtime, jogging in the evening. There's no **release** quite like jogging.

Butler: I don't hear you complaining about the money I made in my law practice. Who do you think paid for this expensive cruise? And those \$500 jogging shoes. (*attempt at being forceful*)

Caprice: Aren't they great? I love my jogging shoes! (*looks at shoes affectionately*)

Butler: I think those shoes get more attention than I do. I work hard to pay for all this stuff, and all I want is a little quality time together. Is that too much to ask? (*back to whining*)

Caprice: (*barely looking at him*) Right. And we'll have some quality time -- as soon as I get back. Right now I'm going for a jog on the poop deck, and then I think I'll fan my tail all over the ship. I mean, I'm going to the *fantail* for another jog. Then I'm going to change for dinner. See you later! (*jogs away from table*)

Butler: Poop deck? Fantail? But, but, but. . . .

Caprice jogs out. Tony and Tina walk center stage.

Tony: There she goes, jogging again! Like we said earlier, you stand up here long enough, and you can learn a lot about the passengers on "The **Lust Boat**"!

The lights blink again.

Capt. Dinghy: (*Walks onstage & talks to audience. He has a package of light bulbs in his hand.*) Don't worry folks, don't worry. Just a minor electrical problem. (*holds up light bulbs*) I'm on my way to fix it right now. I've got it covered.

Tina: (*to Tony*) I don't have a lot of confidence in him. (*laughs scornfully*). Really! Like one package of light bulbs is enough for this whole boat. (*She's as dumb as the Captain*)

Tony: *(looks at her like she's nuts, then plays along)* Riiiiight . . . I'm sure the problem is the light bulbs. Or maybe they're blinking the lights because it's last call in the bar. *(now starts yelling)* OR MAYBE THIS FRIGGIN FRIGATE IS SINKING, TINA! DID THAT EVER OCCUR TO YOU? MAYBE WE HIT AN ICEBERG! MAYBE . . .

Tina slaps him across the face or shakes him hard.

Tina: Get a hold of yourself, Tony! You'll scare the guests! *(looks out at audience and smiles sheepishly)* I'm sure everything is fine. Look on the bright side. If Capt. Dinghy is busy screwing in light bulbs, that means he's not actually steering the ship, right? The vice captain must be steering it.

Tony: I think you mean the first mate. And yeah, it's a relief to know he's not actually at the helm.

Tina: For all we know, Fiona is steering it. **HELM**sworth at the helm!

Tony: *(laughs)* I'm feeling calmer now. Let's get back to work . . . I mean, back to people watching. I still haven't figured out that guy. *(points to Rico)* He's a mystery man.

Tina: I overheard Ham saying that guy's a hit man! But he doesn't look like a hit man to me. I hope he's a Dramamine salesman, because we're almost out. Want one, honey? *(she hands him the bottle)*

Tony: Yeah, thanks. I feel awful. *(takes a pill)*

Tony & Tina walk behind sound equipment.

Fiona enters. She calls to Monique and Capt. Dinghy. Dinghy still has the light bulbs.

Fiona: Monique, Capt. Dingbat, get over here! I've heard there's a famous cruise ship restaurant critic on board. He travels in disguise and writes reviews for travel magazines. His reviews can make or break a ship! His name is Gordon Blue.

The following silly exchange should happen very fast.

Monique: Gordon Blah?

Capt. Dinghy: Gordon who?

Fiona: Gordon Blue!

Monique: Blah?

Fiona: Blue!

Capt. Dinghy: Who?

Fiona: Blue, Blue, Blue! Oh, whatever! The important thing is, I think Mr. Rico over there is Gordon Blue.

Monique: No!

Fiona: Yes!

Monique: No!

Capt. Dinghy: Uh oh . . .

Fiona: Will you two shut up! Now I want you both on your best behavior. Ivah, start acting like a Captain.

Capt. Dinghy. *(salutes)* Aye aye, sir, er, Ma'am. *(exits)*

Fiona: And Monique – no more of those lustful activities.

Monique: *(resigned)* Oui, oui. I'll go work on the bingo game now. *(exits)*

Tony & Tina have been listening and approach Fiona.

Tony: Did I hear you correctly? Mr. Rico is a famous cruise ship critic?

Fiona: I think so. So you two better put on a good show tonight. No screw-ups, got it?

Tina: Do you think he reviews Vegas acts too? Tony, maybe he has connections in Vegas and he can get us off the blacklist! He might be our ticket off this ship!

Tony: Yeah, no more Alka-Seltzer!

Fiona: Have you two knuckleheads forgotten our arrangement? You owe me a nice chunk of change. I lent you money and you agreed to work on this ship until it's paid off. You aren't going anywhere!

Tina: Maybe Mr. Rico would lend us the money.

Tony: Maybe he'd back us until we got another job in Vegas.

Fiona: Right! Like that'll ever happen. Can you two even sing? I haven't heard one number yet. With your "talent," you'd be lucky to get a job in Vegas parking cars or checking coats! Hahahahaha. *(she walks away)*

Tony & Tina exchange very nervous looks when they hear this last sentence.

Tina: Do you think she knows?

Tony: Nah, we've got her fooled. I hope..... *(they go behind sound equipment)*

Caprice walks over to the table where Butler is sitting. She's dressed in a sexy cocktail dress now.

Butler: You look lovely, dear. That's a beautiful dress. Is it ... new?

Caprice: Of course it is silly. You can't wear just any old thing on a cruise ship. I just bought it. They have a lovely boutique on this ship.

Butler: I suppose it was expensive.

Caprice: Oh yes, very expensive. Thank you, dear.

Butler: Well, since you look so nice, and it cost me a fortune, and you're all dressed up -- which means you won't be jogging for a while -- do you think we could have some fun now?

Caprice: Fun? Why Butler, I'm having a blast!

Butler: I'm talking about the two of us having fun.

Caprice: You mean . . . together?

Butler: Yes, I mean together! The band will be starting up soon. Do you think we could dance?

Caprice: Dance? Why, uh, sure . . . I guess. Actually, next to jogging, dancing is my favorite thing!

Monique joins them.

Monique: Bonjour, you two lovebirds. I see you're finally together. So -- did you two kiss and make out yet?

Caprice & Butler say the next two lines simultaneously.

Caprice: Yes!

Butler: No!

Monique: You did or you didn't?

Caprice: *(bored)* I guess we didn't.

Monique: Well then, Mrs. Rutledge, how about a nice romantic dance to put you in the mood to kiss and make out? Mr. Tony, Mr. Tony, could you play a nice romantic song so we can all kiss and make out on the dance floor?

Tony: Sure we can. *(to audience)* Everybody, grab your favorite guy or gal -- or your husband or wife, if you must -- and get them up on the dance floor for some cheek to cheek dancing, Lust Boat style.

Tony plays a romantic song on CD player. Caprice & Butler dance. If there's room, encourage a few audience members to join in. After a while, Rico cuts in on Caprice & Butler. Butler storms off to his table. After the music stops and the dance floor clears, Rico and Caprice are still dancing romantically.

Butler: *(angrily taps Rico on shoulder)* Excuse me, excuse me! The music is over and you're still dancing with my wife!

Rico: *(stops dancing)* So what? You got a problem with that?

Butler: Yes, I have a problem with that. Stay away from my wife! *(pokes Rico)*

Rico: *(amused)* Wow, some tough guy. What are you gonna do, poke me to death?

Butler: I'll show you what I'm going to do about it. Come on Caprice. *(grabs her arm, but she resists)*

Caprice: Stop it, Butler. Don't make a scene.

Butler: I'll make a scene if I want to! *(Starts dancing around Rico with his hands up like a prizefighter; he looks ridiculous. Rico just stands there looking amused. Caprice rolls her eyes and looks embarrassed.)*

Monique sees what's going on and runs to break it up.

Monique: No, no, no, no. What are you two doing? No fighting on The Lust Boat. This is a friendly ship! Now, we need something where everybody can be nice to each other. Everybody happy. I know. EVERYBODY, CONGA!!

Play CD "Hot, Hot, Hot!"

Cast starts one or two conga lines around the room. Rico and Caprice end up in the conga line together, while Butler tries vainly to get someone to let him in the line. He wanders around clueless during most of the song.

During the conga is a good spot for Monique to take the men she's pre-selected for the hula lesson offstage and get them dressed (see page24 for details).

When dance is over, Rico returns to his table. Fiona goes up to him; she's holding a magazine. Lights blink again.

Fiona: *(offering her hand; they shake)* Good evening, sir. I'm Fiona Helmsworth, owner of this ship. I'm sorry, but I didn't quite catch your name. *(hoping he'll slip and say he's Gordon Blue)*

Rico: Just call me "Rico."

Fiona: *(looks disappointed)* Okay . . . Rico. I was just reading the most fascinating article by Gordon Blue, the famous food critic. Have you ever heard of him?

Rico: Doesn't ring a bell.

Fiona: I see. *(at a loss for words)* Well, are you enjoying your stay aboard my ship? How was tonight's dinner?

Rico: The service was lousy, the salad was wilted, and the steak was overcooked. The service in this lounge ain't much better. I've been waiting 20 minutes for a martini.

Fiona: Captain! Where is he? Captain!!!

Captain Dinghy: *(comes running)* What? Here I am. Aye, aye. *(salutes her)* What's the problem?

Fiona: *(snaps her fingers)* One martini -- now! For Mr. Bl . . . I mean, Rico!

Capt. Dinghy: Coming right up. It's on the way. *(runs off)*

Fiona: *(sucking up)* I'm so sorry sir, the service isn't usually like this. We're having an off night. It won't happen again. You'll see. The service will improve.

Rico: I certainly hope so!

Fiona leaves Rico's table and goes after Monique.

Fiona: Monique! I have a bone to pick with you.

Monique: Mon Dieu! What have I done now?

Fiona: I warned you about encouraging all these lustful activities on my ship. But you're still doing it.

Monique: But everyone is having such a good time. They are dancing and kissing and . . .

Fiona: Shut your mouth! I've had it with you. You're fired!!

Monique suddenly drops the French accent – which was phony -- and speaks with a Brooklyn accent.

Monique: *(in a panic)* You can't fire me! Where will I go? What will I do?

Fiona: Who cares? And fyi, when we reach port, the vice squad will be waiting for you and your true profession will be revealed.

Monique: No, No! You promised you wouldn't tell anyone. You promised!

Fiona: MADAM!!

Fiona storms off. Monique stands center stage, wringing her hands, on the verge of tears, as Tony approaches.

Tony: Monique? Did I just hear right? Did Fiona just call you "Madam"?

Monique: *(speaks with French accent again)* Oh no, no, no! You heard wrong. She was just, uh -- practicing her French. She called me Madame Monique. That's it! *(changing subject fast)* So, how shall we amuse the audience next, Mr. Tony? Did you have a song you wanted to sing?

Tony: *(glances back at Tina, trying to buy time)* Song? Did we have a song, Tina?

Tina: *(without thinking)* Song? We don't know any songs. *(rushes to center stage)* I mean . . . I know -- how about a Hula demonstration?!

Monique gets two or three men from backstage who were chosen from the audience before the play started. She took them out of the room during the conga line and had them dress in grass skirts, coconut bras, and leis. The audience should not see them until Monique brings them out. Once they're onstage, Tony plays a CD of Hawaiian music while Monique gives the men a few pointers and then has them dance.

After the hula volunteers return to their seats, Monique approaches Rico to see if she can learn more about him.

Monique: Well, well, Mr. Rico. I see you still haven't found anyone to kiss and make out with. Or have you?

Rico: *(looking bored)* I'm fine. *(takes a closer look at Monique)* Say, haven't I seen you somewhere before? Or maybe your picture somewhere? *(He takes her chin and moves her head back and forth)* Hmmmmm. Front, profile, front, profile . . . I know! The post office! That's where I seen your picture!

Monique: *(lapses back into Brooklyn accent)* You have cop's eyes!

Rico laughs as Monique runs to center stage and talks to herself in her real voice.

Monique: He must be with the vice squad. He recognized me. I know he did. I think I'm in biiiiig trouble. *(she exits)*

Caprice walks behind Rico and begins rubbing his shoulders.

Caprice: Did you know I'm a certified massage therapist? You look tense. How does this feel?

Rico: Great!

Butler comes to Rico's table and he's furious.

Butler: How many times have I told you to stay the hell away from my wife? And you! *(to Caprice)* I want to talk to you right now!

Caprice: Oh relax, Butler. I'm just doing my job. I'm a massage therapist, and Rico's a little tense. I'm just trying to help ease his pain.

Butler: Oh, he's going to feel pain all right. I'm fed up with you paying attention to every guy on this ship but me. Enough is enough!

Caprice: For 15 years you ignored me. I was all alone while you worked and worked and worked. Now, I've found ways to occupy my time and meet new friends. Like massage therapy and jogging. So butt out, Butler! *(She storms off stage.)*

Rico: Guess she told you.

Butler: Mind your own business and stay the hell away from my wife. I'm not telling you again. You better watch it or you could end up suffering some serious consequences.

Rico: *(gets up and looms over Butler)* Oh yeah, and just who's going to inflict these "serious consequences" on me?

Butler: *(doing his best to be threatening)* You just try me buster! *(He storms back to his table)*

Tony & Tina walk to center stage.

Tony: I tell you Tina, everybody thinks Rico is someone else.

Tina: I know. Ham thinks he's a hit man. Fiona thinks he's a restaurant critic. And I heard Monique babbling something about Rico being a vice squad cop.

Tony: I think he looks like someone who has connections in Vegas. We should go talk to him.

Tina: Let me go first.

Tony: Oh, by all means. Charm him, my dear.

They go to Rico's table.

Tina: Well, hello there.

Rico: (*slightly bored*) Hello.

Tina: I couldn't help noticing you've been all alone most of the night. That's kind of unusual on The Lust Boat. Are you enjoying you cruise?

Rico: It's okay.

Tina: You know, you look awful familiar. Have you ever lived in Vegas?

Rico: I've been there.

Tina: (*to Tony in stage whisper*) I told you! (*back to Rico*) Let me introduce my husband, Tony. Oh and I'm Tina. We're the Terrafirmas. I hope you caught our act.

Rico: (*unimpressed*) What act? So far, all I've seen are a couple guys in hula skirts.

Tina: (*ignoring his question*) We used to work in Vegas! Then we had to ... leave. (*stage whisper to him*) We were blacklisted.

Rico: Blacklisted? Why? Who'd you tick off?

Tina: The Big Guy. He (*gesturing toward Tony*) ticked off the Big Guy. Well, it's all because . .

Tony: (*in a panic*) Don't get into that!

Tina: (*ignoring him*) Yup, we were doing great until "somebody" wouldn't sleep with Wayne Newton.

Rico: (*to Tina*) Wayne Newton asked you to sleep with him and you turned him down?

Tina: What? Me? Oh no, not me. Him! (*points to Tony*)

Tony: (*very upset*) Damn it! How many times have I told you not to tell that story? It's humiliating! (*He walks behind sound equipment and pouts. Tina goes backstage.*)

Capt. Dinghy and Ham walk to center stage. Ham is extremely nervous, wiping his brow and shaking.

Ham: Oh Ivah, Ivah, I'm scared to death. I don't care what anyone says. I'm convinced Rico is a hit man and he's here to kill me. I'm positive!

Capt. Dinghy: I don't know Ham. Fiona says he's a cruise ship restaurant critic. She's been yelling at me to ship up or shape out . . . er, uh . . . shape up or ship in . . . whatever. What makes you think he's a hit man?

Ham: Just by some of the things he's said. I'm going to go talk to him again, see if I can make him give himself away.

Capt. Dinghy: Well, good luck. And be careful, just in case you're right.

Ham cautiously goes over to Rico's table.

Ham: Er . . . uh . . . hi again. *(gives a little wave)*

Rico: Now what?

Ham: I, uh, see you're beginning to make some friends now. Getting acquainted with people,

Rico: Yeah, so what's it to you?

Ham: You . . . seem like a man who likes money.

Rico: Everybody likes money.

Ham: *(agreeing quickly)* Right, absolutely right. *(takes a deep breath and plunges in)* But just between you and me, my wife Fiona took out a very large life insurance policy on herself. If we were to arrange an "accident" at sea, we both could collect. You'd be a very rich man. And I'd be able to pay off my gambling debt.

Rico: "We," huh? An accident?

Ham: Yeah, you know what I mean. Someone in your line of work probably knows how to arrange "accidents."

Rico: *(amused)* Someone in my line of work, huh? Tell you what -- let me think about it.

Ham: Yeah, yeah. You think about it. *(scurries away)*

Tony has been listening to Ham and Rico's conversation. He calls backstage to Tina and she comes out.)

Tony: Tina, Tina! I think I found a way off this floating rust bucket! You're not going to believe what I just overheard.

Tina: What'd you hear, what'd you hear?

Tony: I overheard Ham and Rico talking. Apparently, Rico is a hit man.

Tina: Get out!

Tony: And I just heard them both plotting to bump off the old sea witch and split the insurance money!

Tina: How awful!

Tony: No, how wonderful!

Tina: Since when is killing someone wonderful?

Tony: Oh come on, who are you kidding? You hate Fiona. Everyone on the ship does. Probably everyone on the *planet* does. (*Tina nods in agreement*) So what do you think about this? We go tell Ham we know what he and Rico are up to. We say we want a third of the insurance money or we turn them both over to the authorities. Don't you see? We'll be rich! It's our ticket off this ship and back onto dry land forever.

Tina: Brilliant! (*sarcastic*) I never thought I'd say this, but parking cars and checking coats again sounds like heaven after this gig!

Tony: Ain't that the truth. But with a third of the insurance money, we won't have to work at all! Come on. Let's go talk to Ham right now. Oh Ham! We'd like a word with you. (*they motion to Ham, who's standing offstage*)

Ham: (*walks center stage*) What? Oh, you two. Not now. I have a lot on my mind.

Tina: We know *exactly* what you have on your mind. Like maybe bumping off Fiona?

Ham: Shhhhhh . . .not so loud. I mean, what are you talking about?

Tony: Stop playing dumb. I overheard you and Rico talking. We know everything.

Ham: (*wringing his hands*) It was a stupid idea. Please don't call the police!

Tina: Don't worry. Look, we like you, Ham. We're your friends. We'd never turn you in. As long as we get a third of the money.

Ham: A third?!? Are you crazy? Rico will never go for that. He's a dangerous man. I can't tell him you want a third.

Tony: (*threateningly*) Well, you better go tell him anyway. Get him to agree or we're turning you both in.

Tina: *(obviously enjoying the gun moll role)* Yeah, we'll turn you both in to the coppers and you'll end up doin' hard time! I'll bet they'll love your *golf* balls in prison!

Terrified, Ham sidles over to Rico's table.

Ham: Mr. Rico, we have a problem.

Rico: *We* have a problem? *I* don't have any problems.

Ham: Listen! It's that Tina and Turner over there. The Terracottas.

Rico: I thought it was Tony and Tina Terrafirma.

Ham: Whatever. Listen! They know about our plan to rub out my old lady. They want a third of the insurance money or they'll go to the authorities. I think you should put Ike and Tina over there in cement shoes!

Rico: *(amused)* You've been watching too many old gangster movies.

Ham: This is serious! You better think about it. *(he exits offstage)*

Monique walks past Rico's table on her way to center stage, where she's planning to hold a limbo activity. She's carrying a limbo pole. She tries to shield her face with her other hand, but it just amuses Rico. He takes advantage of the situation.

Rico: Hey there, poster girl.

Monique: What? Leave me alone! *(quickly runs to center stage)* Attention everybody! It's time for our nightly limbo event!

Tony starts limbo music, and then he and Tina hold the limbo poll. Monique goes into the audience to get volunteers. Select a few volunteers before the show to be sure you have enough, but let anyone take part who wants to. All cast members should be onstage for the limbo. Some can take part, but Caprice definitely needs to, since she loves to be the center of attention. Ham also needs to take part, but he can't have his golf club with him as he goes under the limbo pole, so he puts it somewhere near Rico's table in plain sight of the audience.

After the music stops and all audience members are back in their seats, Caprice stays center stage.

Caprice: *(to Tony & Tina, who are getting ready to put the limbo pole away)* Could I just try the limbo one more time with my friend Rico? Rico! Come on up here and let's show them how it's really done!

Tony and Tina say "sure" and continue holding the pole so she can do the limo, even though there's no music. Make sure the stage is cleared so the audience can see what happens next.

Caprice goes under the pole first, and then Rico. As he goes under the poll, his wallet falls out of his pocket. He doesn't notice. Then he returns to his table. (Or he can go backstage if alternate ending is used.)

Fiona sees Rico's wallet and picks it up.

Fiona: *(looks around to make sure no one's noticing)* Rico's wallet. Of course, I'll give it back to him. But first, let's have a look and see if he really is Gordon Blue. *(looks through wallet)* Credit cards, gas receipts *(takes a look at photo)*, photo of "Mom," ID card, badge . . . What? ID card and badge? *(looks closely at ID card)* He's . . . oh my God! He's an Interpol agent! Rico's an Interpol agent!

This has been the actual script minus the last eight pages revealing the end.