

Audition Monologues for
Red Herring
by Michael Hollinger

FEMALE MONOLOGUES

MAGGIE 1: First time he walked into the station was a couple months after V-J Day. Dressed like a dandy and wearin' a smile like it was some kinda secret weapon. He said he was a writer – “gonna be the next Raymond Chandler,” he said. Only he was sick of hardboiled clichés, needed to know what real crime’s about, maybe I could help? And there’s that smile again... I’m still a rookie, wet behind the ears, still green. So I start sneakin’ files home, bring’em back the next day. He copies details – reports, procedure – mundane stuff. Six weeks later we’re headin’ to City Hall, and I can just picture the dedication page of his hardcover debut: “For Marguerite, my wife, with love.” Then I wake one fine spring morning to find one man and one file missing.

MAGGIE 2: I made deviled scrod, my mom’s old standby. Measured everything twice, terrified of blowing it. Set the table fancy... I make him shut his eyes, lead him to the table, even put the fork in his hand. He takes one bite. Smiles. Takes another. And starts to gag. I mean bug-eyed, blue in the face. I’m sure I screwed up the recipe – not enough butter, too much tabasco...? Turns out he’s allergic to fish. If you can imagine such a thing. So I drag him out to the Dodge, throw him in the back, and run a dozen red lights on the way to the hospital, prayin’ like a nun. Doctor said if we got there two minutes later... If I knew then what I know now... I would have stopped at every light.

MALE MONOLOGUES

JAMES: All right, we’ve only got a few minutes. Listen carefully: Tomorrow night at ten you’ll meet a man named Hermes on the Boston Fish Pier. That’s his code name, in case we get caught. You’ll be traveling as “Jane Smith.” I already booked a room for you at the boardinghouse across from the harbor. Now the man will be waiting on Pier 17 under a billboard for kippers. When you get close, just pull out the microfilm. Now there’s a secret code that’ll let you be sure you’ve got the right man, and you’ve got to memorize it. You say, “A wonderful bird is the pelican.” And he says, “His bill will hold more than his belican.” There’s more. You say, “He can take in his beak.” And then he says, “Food enough for a week.” And you say, “But I’m damned if I see how the helican...” You’re willing to commit a capital offense but not to curse???

FRANK: Here. Anniversary present. Four months, seventeen days since you first called me an arrogant, pig-headed idiot. Two tickets to Havana. It’s our honeymoon. This travel guy in Quincy says to me, “How’d you like to get on a slow boat to Cuba?” Some kind of special promotion or somethin’. I figure what the hell; then I figure, What The Hell. So. You want to honeymoon with me in Havana? Say yes. I know it’s outta the blue, it’s just... You been good for me. Got me off the bottle, blew the dust off my life. And I think I been good for you, too. We belong together like a pair of bum shoes. We could get married on the boat. Get the captain to marry us. I’m not getting’ any better lookin’, if that’s what you’re waitin’ for. You’re not gettin’ any better lookin’ either. What do you say?