

# On the Air!

By

**Bret Jones**

# ON THE AIR!

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*To the first cast of On the Air!  
Thank you!*

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ON THE AIR! Premiered in July of 2006 at East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma. The opening night cast and crew were as follows:

Marty Sinclair.....BJ Echard  
Lee Marshall.....Adam Randell  
Candi Morgan.....Ruth Richardson  
Ted Holtz.....Affonso Landess  
Mitzi Anderson.....Melanie Logan  
Charlene Fontaine.....Lacie Skaggs  
Rudy Bloom.....Michale Perry  
The Shroud.....Catie Canton

Set-----BJ Echard, Adam Randell, Melanie Logan, Bret Jones,  
Michale Perry, Affonso Landess, Lacie Skaggs, Ruth Richardson  
Shroud cloaks-----Julie Jones  
Props-----Ruth Richardson, Lacie Skaggs  
Stage Manager-----Catie Caton  
Lighting Designer-----Adam Randell  
Lights-----Chris Hicks  
Sound-----Sam Caton

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## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*The radio studio of WLL, circa 1943. This is the performance area where actors, technicians, and musicians create radio drama. There are microphones littered about from SR to SL. There is an organ at UL. There are music stands, stools, a sound effects table, and microphone cords all over as well. At UC there is a glassed in booth where the sound men, director, and other personnel sit during broadcasts. The sound booth sticks out from the main wall--there is a door on the SR side of the booth where people can enter/exit. There is a door at SL that exits into a hallway--down it are offices, bathrooms, and storage. There is another door at SR that leads to a hallway that connects to the lobby area and managerial offices for the station. There is a fourth door on the US wall just outside of the sound booth door--it leads to a connecting hallway and more offices. The lights come up on MARTY SINCLAIR who is standing behind a microphone at CS. He holds a script in his hand. There is no one else around.*

**MARTY.** Need a finish that shines? Need a gloss to that grimy, dirty old floor? Need a glow that never goes away? Then it's time to buy Winona's floor wax--that two-tone, heavy shine wax that leaves floors happier, healthier, and grime free. *(CANDI MORGAN enters through the UC door, unseen by Marty. She stands and watches him.)*

**MARTY.** And Winona herself checks every batch of her floor wax to make sure--to make certain--that every housewife in America gets the best floor wax available. That's Winona's Floor Wax. Now in the quart, gallon, and keg size for your convenience. Now back to our show... *(Candi applauds and Marty jumps.)*

**CANDI.** That was great, Marty.

**MARTY.** Don't do that!

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**CANDI.** Do what? I was just listening. And you sounded great. Mr. Marshall needs to know that you've been working on it.

**MARTY.** Mr. Marshall? He doesn't want me on the air. Rolling up cables, yes. On the air--not a chance.

**CANDI.** There's always a chance. I'm rooting for you.

**MARTY.** Candi--don't.

**CANDI.** Well, I am. You have one fan. And you would do great announcing Winona's floor wax.

**MARTY.** I wish Winona felt that way.

**CANDI.** You can't help it that she's a monster.

**MARTY.** She thinks her wax will help win the war. Did you hear her talking to Mr. Marshall the other day? Said that all of our tanks should be coated with her wax.

**CANDI.** Why?

**MARTY.** I have no idea. Something about a happier, healthier tank. I don't know. But it doesn't matter, anyway. She didn't like my voice and that was enough for Mr. Marshall.

**CANDI.** She doesn't have good ears. That's all. What does she know about voice talent? She sounds like a frog with hemorrhoids.

**MARTY.** *(taking the microphone)* Which I have the perfect product for: Poodle Doodle!

**CANDI.** Poodle Doodle?

**MARTY.** That's right! If your doodle is in a poodle, get Poodle Doodle! When the itching, burning--

**CANDI.** Marty!

**MARTY.** --and throbbing won't away, make it go away with Poodle Doodle!  
*(She steps closer to him.)*

**CANDI.** *(Laughing.)* That's funny! If only Mr. Marshall were in the sound booth!

**MARTY.** I don't stand a chance around here.

**CANDI.** You'll get another shot at it. Don't worry so much. *(She steps closer to him.)*

**MARTY.** You're doing it again.

**CANDI.** What am I doing? *(She moves closer to him.)*

**MARTY.** That. That's what you're doing.

**CANDI.** I don't have any idea what you're talking about.

**MARTY.** Oh, yes you do, Candi. Now stop it. *(She again moves closer to him.)*

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**CANDI.** Marty, I'm only offering moral support.

**MARTY.** You're also making it hard to breathe. Now stand over there.

**CANDI.** Is that Bay Rum you have on today?

**MARTY.** You're changing the subject.

**CANDI.** No. That's the very subject I wanted to discuss--how you smell today.  
*(He takes her and holds her at arms' length.)*

**MARTY.** We've had this discussion already. We are co-workers. Get that?  
Workers, as in we work together. And "co," as in together under the same roof.

**CANDI.** That's pretty close to what I had in mind.

**MARTY.** Candi! Please. I am trying to be a professional here. I want to be on the air. I don't want to be a sound techie the rest of my life.

**CANDI.** I'm still thinking about the "co" part. Could you go over that again?  
*(She is putting on the flirt and he is having trouble resisting.)*

**MARTY.** It's not right. Dating someone in the office. It's just not professional. It's not that I don't like you. I do.

**CANDI.** Oh, good. That's a very good first step.

**MARTY.** You're making this very difficult.

**CANDI.** I hope so. I really do.

**MARTY.** But I want to do so much more. I have to make an impression around here. I want to be a voice on the air. I want to do more than just announce the sponsor. I want to be on *Majestic Theatre* or *Making the Rounds*. It's discouraging being told no all the time.

**CANDI.** Those are two of the biggest shows on the air, Marty.

**MARTY.** See. See. That's what I mean.

**CANDI.** What do you mean?

**MARTY.** That. That tone.

**CANDI.** What tone?

**MARTY.** The one that means I'm dreaming too big. That I don't have a shot. That's the tone I'm talking about. You have no idea about what I want to do with my life.

**CANDI.** I'm just the script girl around here, Marty. Is that it? I just walk around and type away for our writers and make copies and make coffee and whatever else needs doing around here! Is that it? I wouldn't have any idea about dreams, now would I?

**MARTY.** That's not what I meant.

**CANDI.** For your information, I have a couple of dreams, too. And they go beyond

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mimeographing scripts.

**MARTY.** I know that--I'm sorry.

**CANDI.** You don't know anything. You don't even know when a girl is making a pass at you. You're so blind to nothing but this lousy microphone. *(She hits the microphone.)*

**MARTY.** Hey, don't do that. That's expensive equipment.

**CANDI.** Don't you think I would like half the world to hear my voice on the air, too?

**MARTY.** Well, sure. I'm sure--

**CANDI.** --you didn't know anything about it.

**MARTY.** No. I didn't.

**CANDI.** You know what show I want to be on? Do you?

**MARTY.** *Corman's Cavalcade?*

**CANDI.** No.

**MARTY.** *Daring Desperados?*

**CANDI.** Never! That show is too racy for a good girl like me.

**MARTY.** Right. What about *Mary Contrary: Ranch Lady of the West?*

**CANDI.** No. All those pale in comparison. *(She pauses.)* The Shroud. *(He and stares at her.)* What? I'm serious.

**MARTY.** I can see that. Don't you think that you could do the--

**CANDI.** --now you're doing it!

**MARTY.** What am I doing?

**CANDI.** That tone!

**MARTY.** *(Realizes it.)* You're right. You're right. Sorry. It's just--well, you know--The Shroud. Wow.

**CANDI.** Wow is right.

**MARTY.** *(Takes the microphone at CS.)* "There in the midst of darkness, stands one man fighting for the cause of justice--a warrior of light. One man known in the circles of his fellowmen as--The Shroud."

**CANDI.** *(Steps up to the microphone and joins him. They are both fairly talented.)* "The Shroud. Holding up the torch of justice in a darkening world is Reed McKenzie--one-time world traveler and adventurer--is now The Shroud." *(They laugh at each other.)*

**MARTY.** That was pretty good, Candi.

**CANDI.** Oh, go on.



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**MARTY.** No, really.

**CANDI.** I was just playing.

**MARTY.** I think you've got real talent. I mean it.

**CANDI.** You mean it?

**MARTY.** I just said I did. You should audition for Mr. Marshall. Maybe you could sell Winona's Floor Wax.

**CANDI.** Be careful, Marty. A girl may get the wrong idea.

**MARTY.** About what? *(She touches his face.)*

**CANDI.** About a lot of things.

**MARTY.** Candi, I already told you.

**CANDI.** I heard you. But who said anything about listening?

*(MITZI ANDERSON enters through the SR door. She is breathless and in a bit of a hurry.)*

**MARTY.** Hey, Mitz. How's tricks? *(Mitzi can't catch her breath. She has something very important to tell them.)*

**CANDI.** What's wrong, Mitz? Is your girdle on too tight again? I told you about that.

**MARTY.** *(Grabs the microphone.)* Want that trim, slim figure that will melt the boys' hearts? Like that hourglass figure that looks like it's been poured from a glass? Does your tum-tum hang low? Then it's Secure Girdle for you! That girdle that puts the cinch on anything that hangs below your belt, ladies. That's Secure Girdle--the guaranteed girdle. *(Mitzi hits him on the shoulder.)*

**CANDI.** What is it, Mitzi?

**MITZI.** *(Breathless.)* Can't--catch my--breath.

**CANDI.** I can see that. Too many cigarettes?

**MARTY.** Need a smoke that won't black your lung?

**CANDI.** Marty, we get the joke.

**MARTY.** You're not laughing, though.

**CANDI.** You should take the hint.

**MITZI.** Un--believable. This--is--amazing.

**CANDI.** What are you saying, Mitzi? What's she saying, Marty?

**MARTY.** No idea. I can't make out breathless and undecipherable. Maybe I need my Captain Riptide decoder ring.

**CANDI.** You have one of those?

**MARTY.** Doesn't everybody? *(She looks at him.)* Hey. It's Captain Riptide. He's

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my hero.

**CANDI.** I thought The Shroud was? *(Mitzi reacts and points.)*

**MARTY.** What? What is it, Mitzi?

**CANDI.** Oh, great. Charades. I don't play that game, Mitzi.

**MITZI.** The--Shroud!

**MARTY.** Yeah. Isn't he the greatest? Did you hear last week's episode?

**CANDI.** She doesn't care. She's about to have a fit. Get her a stool. *(He does so. Mitzi sits down.)*

**MARTY.** So The Shroud has to go down to the wharf and become part of the fog to overhear the crooks' plan. Ingenious, huh?

**MITZI.** The--Shroud!

**CANDI.** She's sounding very Boris Karloff right now. Mitz, honey, you've got to get off the Chesterfields.

**MARTY.** That's right. *(Going into his bit again.)* Are you needing a smoke--?

**CANDI.** *(Cutting him off.)* --oh, no you don't. She's about to bust with news. I'm intrigued.

**MARTY.** You didn't let me finish about The Shroud.

**CANDI.** I listened to it, Marty. It was great.

**MARTY.** I had no idea his death shroud gave him those powers.

**CANDI.** Now you do. Mitz. We're all ears.

**MITZI.** I've--been--telling you!

**CANDI.** Take a deep breath.

**MITZI.** *(Does so and calms down.)* The Shroud!

**CANDI.** You've said that already.

**MARTY.** Three times, in fact. He's great, isn't he? What I would give to be on that show. Brother! *(Mitzi touches her nose with her fingertip.)*

**CANDI.** What? *(Mitzi touches her nose with her fingertip again.)* What? Do I have a boogey? Marty, do I have a boogey? *(She bends back to let Marty look up her nose.)*

**MARTY.** No. You don't have a--boogey. A boogey? Since when do you call it--

**MITZI.** *(Waves her hands for attention.)* The Shroud is coming here!

**CANDI.** What are you talking about?

**MARTY.** Mitz, it's just a radio show. It's not real life. There is no real Shroud. *(Mitzi hits him.)*

**MITZI.** I know that, dummy! It's coming here! They're coming here!

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**MARTY.** Wait a minute! What are you talking about? It's coming here? What is she saying?

**CANDI.** The Shroud is coming here! As in the show?

**MITZI.** Yes!

**MARTY.** The program is coming here? *(They are all getting excited)*

**MITZI.** That's what I've been trying to tell you two! *(TED HOLTZ enters suddenly from the SL door. He is excited and out of breath. It's obvious he likes Mitzi.)*

**TED.** You'll never guess what's coming over here to do their show!

**MARTY.** The Shroud!

**TED.** Mitzi, you weren't supposed to tell!

**MITZI.** I told! Sue me!

**MARTY.** What's going on, Ted? Is this a joke of some kind? That's my favorite show. Is this Candid Radio? Is someone behind the door over there with a microphone about to say it's all a practical joke?

**TED.** Marty, calm down. It's no joke. It's really very simple: WQV is being remodeled right now. The contractors took out a wall they weren't supposed to, so no studio for The Shroud.

**CANDI.** Oh, wow.

**TED.** Oh, wow is right. So Steven Grant, their producer, called Marshall to see if they could use our studio for tonight's broadcast. *(They all hug each other and are excited.)*

**CANDI.** Wow!

**MARTY.** I can't believe this! I've died. I have actually passed from this earthly coil and have made it to radio heaven.

**TED.** Now, it won't be a cake-walk, Marty. We've got work to do. We've got to the mikes checked and test the wiring and the sound output.

**MARTY.** It's fine, Ted. I've already done all that.

**TED.** This is The Shroud, Marty! This is the number one adventure program on radio today! We re-check everything.

**MARTY.** You're right. You're so right! I can't believe it, I can't believe it, I can't believe it!

**MITZI.** He's excited.

**TED.** I can see that. Marty...

**MARTY.** Yes, Ted?

**TED.** Your best work, okay, Marty?

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**MARTY.** Gotcha. A-number one! *(He takes his opportunity by going to CS and grabbing a microphone. Candi will follow suit. Mitzi and Ted have seen them do this before and watch. Marty goes into his bit.)* You think you're so tough? Do ya? You only come up to my chin.

**CANDI.** *(Grabs another microphone.)* Which one?

**MARTY.** Yucka, yucka, yucka.

**CANDI.** I bet I'm tougher.

**MARTY.** Oh, yeah?

**CANDI.** Yeah. Hand me that phone book. I'll rip it in half.

**MARTY.** *(Runs to the sound effects table and rips one page of paper.)* And now for page two. Yucka, yucka, yucka.

**TED.** Marty. Candi. C'mon now. *(They ignore him.)*

**MARTY.** You know I'm so poor. I have no money.

**CANDI.** How poor are you?

**MARTY.** They say I'm a pauper.

**CANDI.** Congrats! A boy or a girl!

**MARTY.** Yucka, yucka, yucka.

**TED.** Guys. We've got work to do. Mr. Marshall—*(They continue running through bits.)*

**MARTY.** My uncle works very hard.

**CANDI.** He does? Where does he work?

**MARTY.** At a nuts and bolts factory. He does nuttin' all day.

**CANDI.** Nuttin'? And they haven't fired him yet?

**MARTY.** No. He does nuttin'. They're really happy with his work.

**CANDI.** Then I want his job. How can I apply?

**MARTY.** You can't. You have to have very special training to do nuttin'.

**CANDI.** I do nuttin' everyday and I didn't have to train for it.

**MARTY.** You're thinking of a different kind of nuttin'. His nuttin' isn't the nuttin' that means you're sitting around doing nuttin'. His nuttin' is the nuttin' that keeps him doing nuttin' all day.

**CANDI.** I think that's what I said.

**TED.** Marty. Guys. Earth to Marty...Candi. Hello!

**CANDI.** And does he go home tired everyday from doing nuttin'?

**MARTY.** He's exhausted. He does so much nuttin' that they have to give him an extra day off just so he can catch up on his rest.

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**CANDI.** I should be so lucky. I do so much nuttin' I should get a week's paid vacation!

**MARTY.** Not that kinda nuttin'! Pay attention.

**CANDI.** How much is that? Remember, I'm a pauper!

**MARTY.** Congrats! A boy or a girl!

**TED.** Marty! Candi! That's enough. C'mon now. *(They stop and smile at each other.)* Didn't I hear that last week on the radio somewhere?

**MARTY.** Could be.

**CANDI.** Now, Ted, you know all our stuff is original.

**TED.** Sure it is. We've got to tidy up around here. If The Shroud crew is coming over, we've got to make sure this place is running in tip-top shape.

**CANDI.** Are they sending over their staff of writers?

**TED.** No. They've got the script already. It's The Shroud, Candi. They stay weeks ahead on the scripts.

**CANDI.** Unlike around here. Boy, that gives me little to do.

**MITZI.** You can help me, then.

**CANDI.** Oh, hurray for me.

**MITZI.** They're sending Rudy Bloom over early this afternoon to look the place over. He'll need an escort.

**CANDI.** Rudy Bloom. You mean, Rudy Bloom? As in: *(She imitates him.)*

"The makers of Sheldon Gasoline bring you The Shroud! Fighter of the good fight! Making the wrong right!?" That Rudy Bloom?

**MITZI.** That Rudy Bloom. He and Charlene Fontaine are coming over to get a lay of the land.

**MARTY.** Charlene Fontaine? Oh, wow. Her voice is like heaven.

**CANDI.** You're thinking of Rudy's. Smooth as silk. He could sell me a chewed piece of bubblegum with that voice.

**MARTY.** A thousand come-backs are churning in my mind.

**CANDI.** Which will go unsaid.

**MARTY.** Right. I can't believe this is happening.

**MITZI.** I can't believe your uncle does nuttin' and gets paid for it. *(No one moves. Mitzi is known for not being the brightest bulb at the station.)*

**MARTY.** Uh, Mitz, that was just--

**MITZI.** --I mean, this is war time. You know? How someone could get paid and be tired from doing nuttin' all day is beyond me.

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**TED.** Mitz, hon, that was just a--

**MITZI.** --I do nuttin' around here and Mr. Marshall chews me out about it. He doesn't like nuttin' being done around here.

**CANDI.** Mitzi, sweetie, we were just doing a bit—*(She doesn't hear them. She moves to the SR door.)*

**MITZI.** --well, I've got to get back to doing nuttin'. Don't tell Mr. Marshall.  
*(She exits.)*

**CANDI.** And now we know why she's called "Ditzi" Mitzi...If brains were trains...

**TED.** What?

**CANDI.** If brains were trains.

**TED.** I heard you. How does it finish?

**MARTY.** Not you, too, Ted. C'mon.

**CANDI.** I was talking about Mitzi...If brains were trains.

**TED.** And I said what?

**CANDI.** Well, I don't know.

**TED.** You don't know?

**CANDI.** I don't know how it finishes! Just: if brains were trains.

**TED.** Now who's the ditz?

**MARTY.** I thought we were talking about Mitz?

**CANDI.** Yeah. And her mind being on the fritz.

**MARTY.** *(Picks up on the rhymes.)* With her it's always hit or mitz.

**TED.** Oh, very funny. Don't you have work to do?

**CANDI.** And aren't things just the pitz?

**MARTY.** We have a cream for your ugly zitz!

**TED.** Okay, okay, okay. You guys could go on forever.

**CANDI.** And all of this started because of poor Mitz.

**MARTY.** And her being a ditz.

**CANDI.** Her mind on the fritz!

**TED.** Okay! If you haven't noticed, some people take offense to those kind of things. *(He begins straightening up cords and stools. Candi and Marty exchange looks.)*

**CANDI.** Do my ears deceive me?

**MARTY.** I think someone around here has developed a crush. *(Ted ignores them and goes about his work.)*

**CANDI.** Naw. Can't be. Sound men are cold, icy creatures with a heart of stone.

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**MARTY.** Hey, watch it.

**CANDI.** Well. Not all of them. (To Ted.) Ditzzi Mitzi—(*Ted ignores her.*)

**MARTY.** Ditzzi, fritzi, Mitzi! (*Ted ignores them both.*)

**CANDI.** Ditzzi, fritzi, Mitzi!

**MARTY.** Ditzzi, fritzi, Mitzi!

**TED.** All right! You've had your fun! (*To Marty.*) Get to work! Right now! The Shroud folks will be here at any minute and this place is a dump.

**MARTY.** It's a radio station, Ted. I think it's in the design.

**CANDI.** You're really hung up on her.

**TED.** I don't know what you're talking about. Get that—(*He can't find the word. They have him frazzled over Mitzi.*)

**MARTY.** What? Get that--thing? Is that the technical word for it?

**TED.** Get that—(*He waves his arms.*)

**CANDI.** He's smitten, I do believe.

**TED.** All right, all right! So I'm smitten!

**MARTY.** Smitten? You've been listening to Helen Drake: Street Lady, haven't you? They use that word all the time on that show.

**CANDI.** (*In the soap opera vein.*) Guilty! Oh, I am so--guilty!

**TED.** She doesn't even know I'm alive.

**MARTY.** Who, Helen Drake?

**CANDI.** Marty, he's serious.

**TED.** Did you see the way she left the room?

**MARTY.** Yeah. She opened the door and closed it behind her.

**TED.** Absolute beauty. The way she turned the knob and twisted her head back to us. Beautiful.

**MARTY.** She did all that? Did I miss something?

**CANDI.** Marty. (*To Ted.*) Why don't you tell her?

**TED.** Tell her what?

**CANDI.** How you feel about her?

**TED.** Are you crazy? She is way out of my league. Way out of the ball park for me.

**CANDI.** That's foolishness.

**TED.** Anyway, she's got dozens of boyfriends.

**CANDI.** She does not. You're just making up excuses now.

**MARTY.** Yeah. C'mon, Ted. Think of how The Shroud would handle it.

**TED.** The Shroud is just a radio show.

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**MARTY.** Just a radio show? It's the radio show!

**TED.** And he just fights crime. What does he know about love?

**MARTY.** His alter ego, Reed McKenzie knows. Don't you listen to the end every week. It's where he takes his faithful companion, Dana Pierce--

**CANDI.** --Charlene Fontaine--

**MARTY.** --into his arms and tells her how grateful he was for her help in solving the crime.

**TED.** He's just a voice on the radio. And we don't even know whose voice it is.

**MARTY.** But that's part of the selling point. No one knows who The Shroud really is.

**CANDI.** Except for Dana Pierce--

**MARTY.** --his faithful companion. He takes her into his arms at the end of every show.

**CANDI.** Show him. *(Marty takes Candi into his arms without realizing he is playing into her hands. Ted is watching intently.)*

**MARTY.** And he says to her: Dana, darling--

**CANDI.** Yes, Reed, dearest?

**MARTY.** If it weren't for you coming in at the last at the old abandoned warehouse--

**CANDI.** --yes, Reed, darling?

**MARTY.** I just don't know what would have happened to me--and The Shroud.

**CANDI.** I only did what I could, Reed, dear.

**MARTY.** Dana. One day when evil is vanquished. One day when the fight is done I will...

**CANDI.** --yes, Reed?

**MARTY.** I will take you away from all this and I will--once and for all--make you my own.

**CANDI.** Once and for all?

**MARTY.** Once, for all.

**CANDI.** Promise?

**MARTY.** You have my word--as Reed McKenzie--and as The Shroud! *(He takes her into his arms and she waits for her kiss. He realizes what he's doing and pushes her away.)*

**CANDI.** What? Am I that repulsive?

**MARTY.** Uh. Oh. Uh. So you see, Ted. That's how The Shroud does it.



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**TED.** This is crazy! C'mon. We have work to do. I'm over here dreaming about Mitz and you're over there pitching woo as The Shroud and we have better things to be doing.

**CANDI.** Do you think she's worth dreaming about?

**TED.** Yeah, I do.

**CANDI.** Then don't stop.

**MARTY.** Yeah, Ted. Just once take her into your arms and see what happens.

**TED.** Oh, c'mon. That never works. You listen to too much radio.

**MARTY.** You never know. One time. That's all it will take. Do it and find out.

**TED.** Nuts!

**MARTY.** Really.

**CANDI.** I thought you didn't approve of dating within the office?

**MARTY.** Can't you see he's crazy for her?

**CANDI.** And that makes a difference?

**MARTY.** It makes all the difference in the world, Candi.

**CANDI.** I see. It makes perfect sense now.

**MARTY.** What does?

**CANDI.** Nuttin'. I mean, nothing.

**TED.** So you think I ought to just take her into my arms and tell her how I feel?

**MARTY.** What could it hurt?

**TED.** My already shaky ego, that's what.

**MARTY.** You'll never know until you know.

**CANDI.** How profound. Don't we need to get to work around here?

**TED.** Yes, we do. Marty, I want every microphone checked and double-checked with the board in the booth. We run a sound check in one hour. Got it?

**MARTY.** Sure, Ted. But I'm tellin' ya, I've already done it.

**TED.** Do it again. *(Marty gets to work. Candi watches him glumly and then crosses to the SL door.)*

**MARTY.** Is the organ hooked up, Ted?

**TED.** I thought you said everything was checked?

**MARTY.** I didn't check the organ. *(He traces the cord to the organ. Candi hits a cord when his head is next to it. He jumps.)* Hey!

**CANDI.** Just seeing if you were still alive down there!

**MARTY.** Candi! *(LEE MARSHALL enters through the SL door in a hurry.)*

**CANDI.** Mr. Marshall.

## ON THE AIR!

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**LEE.** Hello, Candi. Gentlemen. We have a situation here. We have to shake a leg now. Don't be shocked, but--

**TED.** --they know, Lee.

**LEE.** Who told them?

**TED.** Mitzi did.

**LEE.** That girl. Always stealing my thunder. Can you believe it? Right here at WLL--The Shroud. What a great day for us. Is everything wired for sound in here?

**MARTY.** Yes, sir, Mr. Marshall. I'm checking everything again to make sure.

**LEE.** Good. Very good, Marty. *(Marty smiles at him.)* What? Forget it. I know that look. How many times do I have to tell you? You're a sound man, not an actor.

**MARTY.** What did I say? I was just smiling.

**LEE.** And I know that smile. You're a grease-ball, Marty, and I don't want anything gumming up the works around here. This is our chance to show that WLL can play with the big boys.

**CANDI.** I like the sound of that.

**LEE.** This is no time for, for--

**CANDI.** For what?

**LEE.** That! We are professionals here and I want The Shroud cast and crew to know it.

**MARTY.** Right. Professional. *(He goes back to checking cables.)*

**TED.** They sent word that Rudy Bloom and Charlene Fontaine are coming over after while to check things over. *(Lee freezes.)*

**LEE.** They are?

**TED.** Yeah. A secretary called and said so. Is that bad?

**LEE.** Uh, no. Not really. I just thought they would arrive tonight for the broadcast. That we wouldn't have to—

**TED.** What's that, Lee?

**LEE.** What? Oh. Sorry. Lost in thought.

**CANDI.** Need help finding your way back?

**MARTY.** Candi...

**LEE.** What's that? No. Let's make sure everything is secure around this place. And here are the ground rules: Marty, you're a sound man, not an actor. Ted, whatever they want, make sure they get it--no matter how bizarre. And Candi, play chaperone.

**CANDI.** Play chaperone? What for?

## ON THE AIR!

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**LEE.** I said so. Didn't you hear me? Rudy Bloom likes the extra attention.

**CANDI.** So?

**LEE.** So? His voice sells thousands of gallons of Sheldon Gasoline every week. They call him the "silver-tongued devil." The sponsor pays him more than he does--  
*(He hesitates to say her name.)* Ms. Fontaine. *(They all notice.)*

**TED.** Do you know her, Lee?

**LEE.** Know who? Oh. No, no. Of course not. Whatever gave you that idea?

**TED.** Oh, nothing. Nothing at all.

**LEE.** Anyway. Rudy likes the extra attention.

**CANDI.** What's that supposed to mean?

**LEE.** You know.

**CANDI.** I don't believe this. I'm a script girl, Mr. Marshall.

**LEE.** I'm not asking you anything to difficult. Just be nice to the man.

**CANDI.** You're wanting me to play, play--babe, broad, dame, doll, twist, muffin! Is that it?

**LEE.** That's pretty harsh, Candi.

**CANDI.** Well, that it?

**LEE.** In a word: yes. Will you do it? *(She sees Marty watching her. She sees a chance for jealousy.)*

**CANDI.** Sure. I hear that Mr. Bloom is quite the handsome man.

**LEE.** It depends on what you mean by handsome. Handsome as in handsome, or handsome as in he uses his hands--some.

**CANDI.** Oh, swell.

**LEE.** If you mind, Candi, I'll ask Mitiz. to show him around.

**TED.** Mitzi!

**CANDI.** No. No, I'll do it. I look forward to meeting a radio professional. *(Marty reacts, but goes back to checking the cords and microphones.)*

**LEE.** And remember, everyone: this is our shot to show the rest of the world what WLL is really made of.

**TED.** Oh, swell. *(Mitzi enters from UC door and is doing her breathing thing again.)*

**CANDI.** Great. More charades. Okay, Mitz, we're ready. Sounds like?

**LEE.** What is it? *(She starts pointing and shaking her hands in the air.)*

**MARTY.** Something has flown away. Is that it? *(She shakes her head no.)*

**TED.** Take a breath, Mitz. *(She does so.)*

## ON THE AIR!

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**CANDI.** C'mon, Mitz, what is it? *(Mitzi takes another breath.)*

**MITZI.** They're here! *(This causes panic and everyone scrambles. The following dialogue overlaps.)*

**TED.** Check the cables, check the cables!

**CANDI.** I haven't had time to powder my nose!

**MARTY.** Got it! Got it!

**LEE..** Get out of the way! I've got to get out of here! *(Mitzi is trying to take another breath. Marty gets wrapped around a cord, but he doesn't notice. Ted runs into a microphone with his head and gets a bit dizzy. Candi goes to assist him, but gets caught in the same cable that Marty is caught in. Ted backs into Lee, who pushes him forward and he whacks the microphone again. This time he falls backward onto the floor, tripping Lee, and Lee lands on top of him. Marty and Candi get wrapped tighter into the cord and they fall on the floor--Candi on top of Marty. Mitzi is standing above them still trying to catch her breath. And it is at this moment of moments that RUDY BLOOM and CHARLENE FONTAINE enter through the SR door. No one moves.)*

**RUDY.** What round are we on in here?

**CHARLENE.** My, my, my. And I thought WQV had its charm. We've been missing out, Rudy.

**RUDY.** You said it.

**CHARLENE.** Who's winning? Or, should we ask? *(The piles of bodies attempt to untangle from each other.)*

**CANDI.** Mitzi, help us up.

**RUDY.** Oh, no, don't help on our account. I'm intrigued to see how you'll get out.

**CANDI.** *(From the floor.)* And you are?

**RUDY.** Rudy Bloom. At your service. *(He helps her get untangled. Candi sees that he really is a handsome man. She sees her chance.)*

**CANDI.** Why thank you. Candi Morgan.

**RUDY.** Naturally. And may I unwrap you sometime? *(She forces a smile.)*

**CHARLENE.** Rudy. Really.

**RUDY.** Just a joke. Get it? Candi? Wrapper?

**CANDI.** I got it. *(She forces a fake laugh.)* What a sense of humor you have. *(Marty is still on the floor. Lee and Ted are still trying to get up.)*

**MARTY.** I could use some help down here, please.

**RUDY.** Of course you could. *(He makes no move to help him. No one does.)*

## ON THE AIR!

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**MARTY.** Thanks, I'll manage.

**RUDY.** Of course you will. What we're we doing here? Or, should I ask?

**CANDI.** Uh, rehearsing.

**RUDY.** What for? *Witches' Cauldron*? There were enough bodies on the floor to make *Lights Out!* jealous. *(Mitzi tries to assist Ted and Lee.)*

**LEE.** Don't bother, Mitzi. I can get up.

**CHARLENE.** *(Recognizing him.)* Why, if it isn't Lee Marshall. Hello, Lee. *(Lee stands up.)*

**LEE.** *(Hiding the fact that he knows her.)* And you are?

**CHARLENE.** Now, Lee. Take a closer look, now. It's me. Charlene Fontaine. You remember me.

**TED.** You two have met before?

**LEE.** No. Never.

**CHARLENE.** Now, Lee, of course we have. We met at the WQV Christmas party a few years ago and you took me out and we--

**LEE.** --oh! Charlene... Fontaine. Right! How could I forget? It's been a long time, huh? *(He slaps her on the shoulder and she jolts.)*

**CHARLENE.** I didn't think it had been that long ago. In fact--

**LEE.** --boy, how time flies, huh? Brother! Good to see you again. Hello, Rudy.

**RUDY.** Marshall. We've come over to make sure that everything's--

**LEE.** --absolutely. And I leave you in capable hands. Candi, will show you around and Ted, will go over all the sound and tech stuff. Got it?

**RUDY.** Sure.

**LEE.** When will--you know who arrive?

**RUDY.** Who? Oh. The Shroud? Because of all the identity hullabaloo, he doesn't arrive until he wants to.

**CHARLENE.** That's right. And he shows up in costume. A full cloak that covers his head and goes all the way down to his feet. It's very dramatic. I don't know if I've ever seen his face. *(Marty is still getting out of the cables.)*

**RUDY.** This is a rather big broadcast for you, isn't it, Marshall?

**LEE.** The biggest. And we want to extend everything and anything to you to make this happen for us.

**RUDY.** It could mean the big time for your station if this all works out. "The Shroud broadcasts from WLL." I can just read the headlines in Radio Guide.

**LEE.** We all can. Candi, show Rudy around. Ted?

## ON THE AIR!

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**TED.** I know. Don't worry about it. *(Charlene holds out her hand. Lee tries to exit.)*

**CHARLENE.** Did you forget someone, Lee?

**LEE.** Oh. Uh. Ms. Fontaine. *(He takes her hand quickly and exits through the UC door. Mitzi is finally catching her breath. She is completely enthralled with Rudy and Charlene.)*

**MITZI.** Wow.

**LEE.** *(Offstage.)* Mitzi!

**MITZI.** Gotta run. *(She exits through the UC door. Marty finally stands up.)*

**CANDI.** This is Marty Sinclair, Mr. Bloom. *(Rudy doesn't even look at him.)*

**RUDY.** Of course. And he is?

**CANDI.** One of the sound men here at WLL.

**RUDY.** One of the little people. *(Marty snarls. Ted glares at him.)* And you?

**CANDI.** Script girl.

**RUDY.** Without you there would be no show, would there?

**CANDI.** No. It's a very important job. A very professional job. *(She takes him by the arm and leads him to the SL door.)*

**RUDY.** And this leads where?

**CANDI.** The rest of the station? Would you like a tour?

**RUDY.** Candi, if you're leading the way, I follow. *(They exit. She grins widely at Marty.)*

**TED.** Marty, get the cables out of Ms. Fontaine's way.

**CHARLENE.** They're not in my way. Marty Sinclair, is it?

**MARTY.** Yes, ma'am. And you're Dana Pierce. *(She laughs at him.)*

**CHARLENE.** Charlene Fontaine.

**MARTY.** Oh, yeah. I--I'm a fan of the show.

**CHARLENE.** I can see that. *(She holds out her hand. He reaches for it and kisses it lightly.)*

**MARTY.** Nice to make your acquaintance.

**CHARLENE.** Likewise. *(To Ted.)* And you are?

**TED.** Ted Holtz. Head sound man around here.

**CHARLENE.** Excellent. I don't use a stool. I stand up like every good radio actress. I like mineral water that is room temperature. I will also need an ashtray as I smoke during the broadcast. I also require that you fade my microphone down during the broadcast when I don't have any lines. I just like it that way.

**TED.** Got it. Marty--

## ON THE AIR!

---

**CHARLENE.** --I'm not finished, honey. I also take my gin with tonic. Heavy on the gin, light on the tonic. I like it tall and cold. I like one right after the show is over. Got all that?

**TED.** Got it. Marty--

**CHARLENE.** Listen, Ted, this is important. I'm one half of the show--the other being The Shroud lurking about. My voice drips honey and I practically make whoopee with the microphone to see that the show is a success. I'm temperamental, sensitive, and a pout when I think it will get me my way. Make me sound good and treat me nice and I purr like a kitten. *(She takes Ted's face in her hands. He melts like butter.)* Got all that, Ted?

**TED.** *(Swallowing hard.)* Got it. *(His voice squeaks.)* Marty--

**MARTY.** The cables, Ted. I'm checking the cables. *(He hasn't been as he has been equally enthralled with Charlene.)*

**TED.** The cables, Marty.

**MARTY.** I heard you. Right. The cables. *(He twists anew in a wad and gets caught. Charlene puts her arm through Marty's.)*

**CHARLENE.** You work too hard, honey. Listen, if Rudy gets a tour, I want one, too.

**TED.** I'll get Mitzi. *(He makes for the SR door.)*

**CHARLENE.** Mitzi? A female? Oh, no. I'll take Marty here. Cute men escorting me around is also in my contract. Let me go powder my nose and you can show me around. *(She begins to cross to the door SL.)* This way?

**TED.** Yeah. Back around and then to the right. *(She exits. Marty takes the microphone.)*

**MARTY.** Need a man to show you around? Tired of the same old men who are looking like grandpa? Want a man's man? A titan? An Adonis? Then it's Marty Sinclair for you. He shows you a good time. He'll razzle-dazzle you!

**TED.** He'll check the microphones! Get to it. *(Marty does so.)*

**MARTY.** It'll happen someday, Ted. I guarantee it.

**TED.** What's that? Oh. Your dream.

**MARTY.** Yeah, my crazy dream.

**TED.** I hope it does, Marty. I really do.

**MARTY.** Do you?

**TED.** Yeah. But until then: check the microphones!

**MARTY.** Right! Checking! *(He traces cords to the control room where they are*

## ON THE AIR!

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*plugged in.)*

**TED.** I'm going for a coffee. Want anything?

**MARTY.** No, I'm fine.

**TED.** Good. I'll be back in a few. *(He exits through the UC door. Marty is tracing the cables and begins humming--this is The Shroud's theme music--very heroic and brash.)*

**MARTY.** *(Quoting from the show.)* "McKenzie, while traveling in the Himalayas of the Orient, encountered a strange, yet wise monk who trained him in the ways of fighting evil. Taken by evil forces himself, the monk left McKenzie his last valued possession--his funeral shroud. Leaving with this final and powerful gift, McKenzie established himself in the underworld as The Shroud--hero for truth and right." *(He hums the tune again. He follows the cables to the control room. Some of the cables go through the door. He enters the sound booth on his hands and knees following a cable. He disappears. As soon as he enters the door, Lee enters through the SR door. He is somewhat frazzled.)*

**LEE.** *(Whispering.)* Hello? Ah, good. *(Charlene enters from the SL door. Lee sees her and tries for the SR door.)*

**CHARLENE.** Uh, I don't think so, Lee.

**LEE.** What's that? Oh. Ms. Fontaine.

**CHARLENE.** You can drop the Ms. Fontaine business, Lee. It's me. Charlene.

**LEE.** Well, if you want to be informal with me, that's fine.

**CHARLENE.** Informal. We were almost engaged!

**LEE.** Keep that down! Do you think I want my staff finding that out? *(Too late, Marty has popped his head up in the booth and is startled by what he sees.)*

**CHARLENE.** Big deal. It was everything but the ring, as I recall.

**LEE.** I recall differently.

**CHARLENE.** Then your memory's fuzzy. Let me refresh it for you. *(She pulls him to her and plants a kiss on his mouth. Marty is aghast and stumbles.)*

**LEE.** What's that? *(Lee jerks around.)*

**CHARLENE.** My heart, sweetie. I haven't stopped thinking about you.

**LEE.** I noticed. Uh, Charlene, you have to know that I'm married now.

**CHARLENE.** Happily?

**LEE.** Does it matter?

**CHARLENE.** It might. Are you?

**LEE.** Sure.



## ON THE AIR!

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**CHARLENE.** How does Mrs. Marshall feel about it?

**LEE.** Margaret? We're crazy about each other.

**CHARLENE.** Margaret? Sounds like a grandma to me. What would she say if she saw us like this?

**LEE.** Like what?

**CHARLENE.** This! *(She jerks him toward her and plants another on him. She is rough and melodramatic. She hurls him against the sound booth glass. Marty raises his head behind Lee's. He sees Charlene coming toward Lee and ducks.)*

**LEE.** Charlene! Please!

**CHARLENE.** Oh, now you're asking me! All right! *(She flings him across the studio and microphones go flying everywhere. She throws a couple of stools across the room. Lee is groaning and moaning in pain and trying to get back up.)*

**LEE.** Charlene! Don't! Stop!

**CHARLENE.** Your wish is my command, sweetheart! *(She jumps on him and kisses him again. He manages to get away from her and stands up. She stands up and plows him onto the sound effects table sending the props flying across the room. Marty is startled by all of this, but can't take his eyes off of it. He has a cable in his hands as he watches.)*

**LEE.** This is why I broke it off, Charlene! You're an animal!

**CHARLENE.** Tell me more, Lee! I love it!

**LEE.** Aahhh! *(She shoves him against the organ, which blasts out a tune.)*

**CHARLENE.** They're playing our song, Lee! *(She kisses him.)*

**LEE.** You're a beast!

**CHARLENE.** That's what they tell me! *(She tries to kiss him again, but he manages to get away. He stumbles over a stool and dives onto the floor at SR. Charlene senses someone in the booth and whirls around. Marty ducks just in time. She renews her lustful attack on Lee.)*

**LEE.** Don't! You're going to kill me, Charlene!

**CHARLENE.** One can only hope, baby! Pretending you didn't know me! Ha! That's a laugh! And I'll make a scene that will make Margaret's hairnet stand on end! *(She dives on top of him.)*

**LEE.** Charlene! *(He pushes her off of him. He stands up and runs for the UC door.)* Stay away, you maniac!

**CHARLENE.** You're flattering me, Lee. You better watch it. *(He exits and she chases him out. The studio is completely wrecked. Marty raises his head and his eyes*

## ON THE AIR!

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*bug out. He can't believe what he's seen. He comes out of the booth.)*

**MARTY.** Oh. Wow. Am I gonna die. Oh, brother! *(He exits through the SR door. As soon as he does the door at SL opens a crack. A cloaked figure looks into the studio. No one is there so he enters and crosses to the sound booth. He ignores the wreckage of the studio and finds a wire in the sound booth. He pulls out a big pair of scissors and cuts the cord. That done, he looks about, hears voices at SR, and he exits through the UC door. As soon as he does, Ted and Mitzi enter through the SR door. They both stare at the wreck that was once a studio.)*

**MITZI.** Jiminy.

**TED.** Holy mother of mercy! I'm going to throttle him! Do you hear me, Mitz? I'm going to throttle him within an inch of his life!

**MITZI.** Who?

**TED.** Marty! Who else?

**MITZI.** He did this?

**TED.** Do you see him? He's hiding from me because he knows I will murder him!

**MITZI.** Calm down, now, Ted. You don't know it was Marty.

**TED.** We have no time. They'll want a read-through of the script after while.

He starts cleaning up the mess. *(Mitzi helps him.)* You don't have to do that, Mitz.

**MITZI.** I want to. *(She moves stools back into place.)* And that's twice now.

**TED.** Twice now? What are you talking about?

**MITZI.** Twice now that you've calmed me Mitz.

**TED.** Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to--I just thought--

**MITZI.** --no, it's fine. It's fine. As long as it's not "Ditzi" Mitzi like everyone else around here.

**TED.** I would never do that.

**MITZI.** Never? Now, don't lie, Ted.

**TED.** Okay. Maybe once.

**MITZI.** Ted!

**TED.** All right. Twice! I'm sorry.

**MITZI.** I can't help it. I have those--those moments.

**TED.** What moments?

**MITZI.** Those moments when nothing makes sense. Secretarial work, not a problem for me. But I get confused sometimes.

**TED.** Don't we all?

**MITZI.** Not like me.

## ON THE AIR!

---

**TED.** Oh, now, Mitz, you do just fine.

**MITZI.** Do just fine. Sounds like my mother.

**TED.** What's she like?

**MITZI.** Bourbon, scotch, and gin.

**TED.** It's like that, huh?

**MITZI.** Yeah. Hey. This is nice.

**TED.** What is?

**MITZI.** Talking to you. Like this. *(He has his moment, but won't take it. He goes back to setting up microphones and cleaning up.)*

**TED.** Well, yeah. Me, too.

**MITZI.** Me, too what?

**TED.** Me, too. Talking. You know. That Marty I'm gonna let him have it for this.

**MITZI.** I wouldn't be so tough on him. I'm sure there's a good explanation for this mess.

**TED.** You think so?

**MITZI.** No. Not really. I just said that to cheer you up. Did it?

**TED.** What?

**MITZI.** Cheer you up?

**TED.** Sure. You always cheer me up.

**MITZI.** I do? When?

**TED.** Uh. Well. When you come in every morning and ask how I'm doing. Or, when you ask what I had for lunch. Or, when you take the time to see us work.

**MITZI.** All those times?

**TED.** Yeah. You know, Mitz.

**MITZI.** Yeah, Ted? *(He drops the cords he's had in his hand. He decides to take Marty's and Candi's advice. He moves in toward her.)*

**TED.** Mitz. I want to tell you something. Something important.

**MITZI.** What? Is my makeup messed up or something?

**TED.** No, no. You look fine. You look great, in fact. That's what I want to talk to you about.

**MITZI.** Well, thanks, Ted. Is it the dress? I thought so. I just bought this the other day and I just thought it was the cutest--

**TED.** --no. That you look great every day. I've been thinking about it a lot.

**MITZI.** A lot? Is it a little lot?

**TED.** Huh?

## ON THE AIR!

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**MITZI.** You said a lot. Is it a little lot?

**TED.** What? No. I'm talking about a lot lot.

**MITZI.** I follow you. A lot lot. Not a little lot. Are you paying a little for the lot? Or a lot for the lot?

**TED.** Mitz. What are you talking about?

**MITZI.** I just know that even now in war time it's hard to get a lot for a little. You can get a little lot, maybe for a little more than a lot. But still, there are a lot of lots out there that are a lot.

**TED.** Mitz! You aren't listening to me!

**MITZI.** Sure I am. And if you want my advice, go for a little lot. You never know what will happen after the war is over. You may find a lot of lot later on that you can afford. A lot of lots turn out that way if you watch for them. But it takes a lot of effort, believe you me.

**TED.** Mitz! You listen to way too much Abbott and Costello! I'm trying to say something important here.

**MITZI.** I know. I followed.

**TED.** *(Shouting because he is frazzled.)* No, you didn't! I'm trying to tell you that I love you!

**MITZI.** You don't have to shout it, Ted! I heard you!

**TED.** Did you?

**MITZI.** Did I what?

**TED.** Hear me?

**MITZI.** I did. What did you say? *(He takes her in his arms and holds her.)*

**TED.** Mitz. I love you. I've been trying to tell you, but you weren't listening.

**MITZI.** You have my undivided attention. *(They kiss each other and embrace. Candi enters from SL. She is out of breath.)*

**CANDI.** What did I miss? *(Mitzi and Ted are still kissing.)* I say: what did I miss? *(They are still at it.)* Hello! *(They hear her finally and break the kiss.)* How about some oxygen. It's good for the body. They are halfway ignoring her.

**TED.** I've wanted to do that for a long time.

**MITZI.** Why didn't you?

**TED.** I don't know. Afraid I guess.

**MITZI.** Now you're not.

**TED.** Not at all. *(They go for another kiss, but Candi steps in between them. She gets a kiss on each cheek from them.)*

## ON THE AIR!

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**CANDI.** Now that love has found its way, let's talk about my problems.

**TED.** Candi, we're in the middle of something here.

**CANDI.** So am I. That man!

**MITZI.** What man?

**CANDI.** That man!

**MITZI.** You said that already. Who are you talking about?

**TED.** Is it Marty? Where is he?

**CANDI.** Not Marty. Mr. Bloom! Do I have paw marks on my back? He can't keep his hands off me! I lost him a few minutes ago, but I know he's on the prowl looking for me. *(Rudy enters, looking for Candi.)*

**RUDY.** Hey. There you are. Where'd you run off to? One minute you're showing me the janitor's closet, which I liked by the way, and the next, my little piece of candy has gone. Get it? My little piece of candy? *(He laughs at this. Mitzi laughs and gets a glare from Candi. She tries to stifle her laughter.)*

**TED.** Mr. Bloom. Are you ready for that sound check?

**RUDY.** I trust you, Red.

**TED.** It's Ted.

**RUDY.** It ought to be Red. You look like a Red. *(He sidles up to Candi. Any other closets you want to show me around here?)*

**MITZI.** There's a really nice closet next to my office--

**TED.** --Mitz!

**MITZI.** There is!

**RUDY.** How 'bout it, Candi-wrapper? Or, better yet, why don't you hold my gum for me.

**CANDI.** Excuse me? *(As she opens her mouth to speak, he plants a kiss on her. Candi tries to break free. At that moment, Marty enters through the UC door. Candi sees Marty and decides to pull Rudy in closer.)*

**TED.** I don't guess he's ready for a sound check.

**MITZI.** Yeah. It's real hard to talk with your mouth full.

**MARTY.** Mitz! Hey, you two, let's break it up! We have to set the studio for a sound check. *(They break apart.)*

**RUDY.** Now that is more like it, Candi-wrapper.

**MARTY.** Candi-wrapper?

**CANDI.** That's what he calls me. What do you think about it?

**MARTY.** I'm trying very hard not to. *(Lee suddenly bursts through the SR door and*

## ON THE AIR!

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*runs very hurriedly across to the SL door. He exits. Everyone is frozen wondering what is going on. Charlene enters from SR and shuts the door behind her.)*

**CHARLENE.** Did anyone see a middle-aged, radio station owner run this way? *(They all point to the SL door.)* He won't get far. *(She takes a cigarette from her purse.)* Light anyone? *(The men all search for lighter in haste. Marty finally finds one and lights her cigarette. She holds his hand steady. He glares at Candi as she does as if he's enjoying it.)*

**MARTY.** In a race, are we, Ms. Fontaine?

**CHARLENE.** Was I running?

**MARTY.** No. But Mr. Marshall was.

**CHARLENE.** I do that to men.

**MARTY.** I can imagine.

**CHARLENE.** Can you? *(She playfully blows smoke in his face. He smiles. Candi frowns.)* I hope so. *(To Ted.)* Sorry about the mess. Things got out of hand.

**TED.** Oh. That's all right. Ms. Fontaine. A few hundred dollars damage is all right with us. *(She ignores this comment.)*

**CHARLENE.** *(To Rudy.)* And what have you been up to?

**RUDY.** I've been getting handy with Candi! *(He swats Candi on the rear. She glares at him, which he doesn't see.)* Get it!?

**TED.** Listen, folks, we have got to finish getting the studio cleaned up and get ready for a sound check.

**RUDY.** I never do those. You can run it without me. Have-- *(To Marty.)* what's your name again?

**MARTY.** Marty.

**RUDY.** Have Marty do it. We're just here to make sure things are on schedule. I don't do sound checks.

**CHARLENE.** Neither do I. But who knows? The Shroud may arrive at any time to check his microphone. He is very serious about his work.

**TED.** But just a few words from the script—*(Rudy laughs at him.)*

**RUDY.** That's not the way it's done. You handle that and at show time we'll be in our places. That's the way pros do it. And Charlene's right. The Shroud may show up for the sound check. If he doesn't, be worried.

**CHARLENE.** In the meantime, I never did get that tour of the station. Marty, was it?

**MARTY.** Yes, ma'am.

## ON THE AIR!

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**CHARLENE.** Show me around.

**CANDI.** *(Under her breath.)* And then she'll show you around.

**CHARLENE.** What was that, dear?

**CANDI.** Nothing, nothing.

**TED.** Listen, Ms. Fontaine. Marty and I have to get the studio ready to go.

**CHARLENE.** But I really would like that tour. *(Candi sees her opportunity.)*

**CANDI.** I'll do that. I've already shown Rudy around. I can do the same for you.

**CHARLENE.** But, I would rather--

**CANDI.** --have you seen our other studio? We have a crew in there right now doing the news. It's very interesting. C'mon, I'll show you. *(She grabs her and whirls her around to the UC door and they exit.)*

**RUDY.** Hey, hey, Candi-wrapper, what about me?

**TED.** You could grab a cable and check a mike.

**RUDY.** You've got to be kidding me. *(He exits through the UC door.)*

**MARTY.** It's getting pretty crazy around here, huh?

**TED.** Very. Now do you want to explain the wreck in here, or do I throttle you?

**MARTY.** Are you accusing me? You heard Ms. Fontaine say--

**MITZI.** Ted, sweetie--

**TED.** --yeah, angel?

**MARTY.** Angel? What's going on around here? I leave for just a few minutes and suddenly she's "angel?"

**TED.** So?

**MARTY.** Did you take my advice?

**MITZI.** What advice?

**TED.** Nothing. Listen, Mitz--

**MITZI.** --I thought it was angel?

**TED.** *(Looking at Marty and then back to Mitzi.)* Angel. We've got a lot of work to do in here...

**MITZI.** Gotcha. I need to check on some of the ad files, anyway. *(She kisses her finger and puts it on Ted's nose. He smiles.)*

**MARTY.** That is truly sickening.

**TED.** Hush up.

**MITZI.** Bye, sweetie.

**TED.** Bye, angel. *(Mitzi. exits through the SR door. As soon as she does, Lee enters from the SL door. He is disheveled.)*

## ON THE AIR!

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**TED.** Lee, where have you been? And what is going?

**LEE.** Going on? What do you mean? We're running a radio station here. I'm just--uh, checking things over.

**TED.** You look like you're on the run from somebody.

**MARTY.** Or, hiding, maybe.

**LEE.** Of course not. The idea is utterly foolish. *(He tries to laugh, but it comes out a whimper.)*

**TED.** *(Knowingly.)* Do you know how the studio got wrecked, Lee?

**LEE.** It was wrecked?

**TED.** Take a look around. *(He does so. The damage is everywhere from his encounter with Charlene, but he takes it in stride.)*

**LEE.** Looks normal to me. Just how a studio should look.

**TED.** Are you feeling well? You look a little pale. What's wrong?

**LEE.** Nothing. Just the jitters. You know. I need this to work out with The Shroud program.

**TED.** We all need it to work out.

**MARTY.** Mr. Marshall, I have an idea--

**LEE.** --oh, no, Marty. Not now.

**MARTY.** But--

**TED.** --not now, Marty. Cables, microphones.

**MARTY.** Right-o. Cables and microphones coming right up.

**LEE.** I've got to go. Things to--check out. Oversee--you know. That kind of thing. Check with the network about the show.

**TED.** Sure. Maybe you ought to lie down. You don't look so good.

**LEE.** Good idea. *(He crosses to the UC door. As he reaches it, it begins to open and he jumps into the sound booth and shuts the door behind him. Marty and Ted do not see this. Rudy enters through the UC door.)*

**RUDY.** Hey, where are the girls?

**TED.** Who?

**RUDY.** Candi and Charlene.

**MARTY.** *(Under his breath.)* On the run from you.

**RUDY.** What's that, pal?

**MARTY.** Nothing, not a thing. Lost them, huh?

**RUDY.** I think they lost me. You don't think Candi is trying to avoid me, do you?

**MARTY.** Nah. Why would she?



## ON THE AIR!

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**RUDY.** That's what I'm thinking. You know, they call me the "silver-tongued devil" in certain circles.

**MARTY.** Why is that?

**RUDY.** That's what I want to show Candi! *(He laughs at his joke. No one else does.)* Get it?

**MARTY.** Yeah. Afraid I did. Well, I'm sure they're just checking out some of the offices and maybe the other studio. *(Lee pops his head up. Rudy turns toward the booth and Lee ducks.)*

**TED.** Marty, get the announcer microphone right at center, okay?

**MARTY.** Got it. *(He does so.)*

**RUDY.** That's right, pal. That's my microphone. My golden vocal cords are gonna sell Sheldon gas tonight by the truck load.

**MARTY.** Sure.

**RUDY.** Look. I'm gonna go scouting for the dames, okay? They come this way, tell them to wait for me. That Candi is a hot muffin. *(He exits through the SR door. Lee stands up and is about to exit from the sound booth. As he is about to exit the booth, Candi and Charlene enter from the SL door. Lee sees them and ducks.)*

**CANDI.** And back to where we started.

**CHARLENE.** Well. It's nice. I mean, all things considered.

**CANDI.** What things considered?

**CHARLENE.** Have you been to WQV, honey?

**CANDI.** Can't say that I have.

**CHARLENE.** If you had, you'd know. This place is charming. Quaint, really, but it's no WQV.

**TED.** Marty, get the sound effects stuff back on the table.

**CHARLENE.** Hello, gents. Hard at it?

**MARTY.** Yeah. We should have it ready in no time.

**CHARLENE.** I'm sure. Has anyone seen Lee--uh, Mr. Marshall?

**TED.** Sure. He was in here just a few minutes ago. He took off. I think he went to get some rest.

**CHARLENE.** In his office?

**TED.** I think so.

**CHARLENE.** What's the quickest way?

**CANDI.** *(Pointing to the UC door.)* Through there.

**CHARLENE.** Thanks. *(Just as she passes the sound booth, Lee raises his head and*

## ON THE AIR!

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*she sees him. She enters the sound booth as Lee tries to hide from her. She shuts the door behind her and the others think she's exited through the UC door.)*

**CANDI.** I don't like that woman!

**MARTY.** Oh, c'mon. She's not that bad.

**CANDI.** You can't get past her big blue eyes! That's your problem!

**MARTY.** I thought they were hazel?

**CANDI.** Marty! And Mr. Bloom is no better. I'm ready for this to be over with! And did you hear her complain about our studio here?

**MARTY.** Ah, she just said WQV's are better. And they are. *(Lee stands up and tries to go for the door. Charlene stops him and pulls him back down to the floor. They both disappear. The others don't notice this.)*

**TED.** How would you know?

**MARTY.** I've been there.

**TED.** You have?

**CANDI.** You have? When?

**MARTY.** Lots of times.

**CANDI.** When?

**MARTY.** I used to go down there for the live broadcasts of The Shroud.

**CANDI.** You did? And is it that great of a place?

**MARTY.** It's big and the furnishings are really nice.

**CANDI.** And?

**MARTY.** That's it.

**CANDI.** That's all you remember?

**MARTY.** I was into the show. What can I say?

**TED.** Nothing. Check the organ.

**MARTY.** It works.

**TED.** Check it, anyway. *(Lee stands up and is mouthing for help from the others, who can't hear him. He presses his face against the glass. Charlene jerks him back down again. Just as Lee disappears, Marty plays a dramatic cord on the organ. It underscores Lee's disappearance.)*

**MARTY.** It works already.

**TED.** Fine. We need to make sure everything is patched in the sound booth.

**CANDI.** I can help with that.

**TED.** Good. *(Rudy enters through the UC door. No one hears or sees him at first.)*

**CANDI.** I don't have anything else to do.

## ON THE AIR!

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**RUDY.** Oh, yes you do, Candi, baby...

**CANDI.** Oh, yeah. That's right. I've got to powder my nose. *(She exits through the SL door.)*

**RUDY.** Dames. *(Lee lifts his head just visible over the sound board. He is in dire need of help. He reaches up. A heel of a woman's shoe goes above his head. He disappears again. And, of course, no one sees this.)*

**MARTY.** You said it.

**RUDY.** They're broads, every one of them. But who's to keep you warm at night. Am I right? *(He goes to the SL door. He crosses over a cable and Marty sees his chance. He "innocently" pulls the cable, which attached to a microphone. It pulls up between Rudy's legs.)* Hey, soundman, watch the merchandise!

**TED.** Marty!

**MARTY.** Oops. Sorry. Let me... *(He pulls the cable again and the microphone hits Rudy on the back of the head.)*

**RUDY.** Hey, jerk! That was the skull! *(Lee's jacket goes flying up in the air in the sound booth. Ted and Marty get RUDY untangled.)*

**MARTY.** I am so sorry, Mr. Bloom.

**RUDY.** I can see that. Red--

**TED.** --it's Ted.

**RUDY.** I would say you had some staff problems around here.

**TED.** I say that every day, Mr. Bloom.

**RUDY.** Then do something about it! *(He exits through the SL door.)*

**TED.** Marty! That was on purpose!

**MARTY.** It wasn't!

**TED.** Then what was it then?

**MARTY.** It was accidental--

**TED.** --accidental?

**MARTY.** Accidentally on purpose. There's a difference. *(Mitzi enters through the SR door.)*

**MITZI.** Has anyone seen Mr. Marshall?

**MARTY.** He left a few minutes ago.

**TED.** I think he was going to rest in his office. He didn't look so good.

**MITZI.** I've got some papers that he needs to sign. And he wasn't in his office?

**TED.** I don't know where he'd be then, Mitz.

**MITZI.** I love it when you say that.

## ON THE AIR!

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**MARTY.** He's probably off checking on the other studio. You know, making sure it's all running right. *(Lee stands up and is a complete wreck: his shirt is unbuttoned and his tie is up on his head. He looks like he's been attacked--because he has.)*

**TED.** You know Lee, he's very serious about the station here. *(No one sees Lee. Ted backs up to the sound booth window, still unaware of Lee.)* Well. It's back to normal. *(Mitzi and Marty stand by him. Charlene is tugging and pulling on Lee. He is struggling to bang on the glass to get their attention.)*

**MARTY.** I love radio.

**MITZI.** Yeah. So do I.

**TED.** There's some kind of magic to it. Getting pros together to do a show for the public. It's magic.

**MARTY.** Pure and unadulterated. *(Lee is mouthing "help me!" No one sees him. Candi enters through the SL door. She is on the run.)*

**CANDI.** You have got to hide me from that man!

**MARTY.** Who?

**CANDI.** You know who! Don't play coy with me!

**MARTY.** I would never play coy with you. Cards, maybe, but never coy.

**CANDI.** Marty! This is not the time! Did you know that man is married?

**TED.** Rudy?

**CANDI.** No! Joseph Stalin! Yes, Rudy Bloom! The adulterer!

**TED.** Well, so much for the unadulterated part, Marty.

**MARTY.** I can see that.

**MITZI.** Listen, hon, hide in here. *(Just as she whirls Candi around to the sound booth, Lee and Charlene disappear again.)* He won't think of you in there. *(She jerks the door open and pushes Candi in the sound booth without seeing Lee or Charlene. Just as she shuts the door, Rudy enters through the SR door.)*

**RUDY.** Where is she?

**MITZI.** Who?

**RUDY.** She!

**MITZI.** She who?

**RUDY.** She who!

**MITZI.** We don't have a she who here. Do we, Ted? Marty? That's a very peculiar name. I know a "he who", but he lives over in Brooklyn and carries the mail. Nice man, too.

**RUDY.** Where is she? *(Lee, Charlene, and Candi all stand up. Charlene's hair is a*

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*mess. Lee is a total wreck. And Candi is confused and they are all shouting at each other, which of course, can't be heard by anyone on stage.)*

**TED.** Mr. Bloom. We are but humble sound men--

**MITZI.** --and a secretary.

**TED.** That's right. And a secretary. We are trying diligently to get the studio ready for a sound check so that your show will be ready for tonight's broadcast. We are busy.

**RUDY.** Keep it up, Red, and I'll fix that for you. Listen. All of you. I don't know if you understand how things run up our way. But WQV keeps me in booze, money--just barely, and women because I sell them a lot of gasoline. And I'm bringing my deal down here to your--nice little station. And once I've made up my mind about a doll, she's mine! *(He is angry and flushed. This is startling to Ted, Mitzi, and Marty. Rudy storms off UC and exits.)*

**TED.** Uh--?

**MITZI.** I don't think he's a very nice man.

**MARTY.** If that isn't the understatement of the year. *(By this time, Charlene has climbed up Lee's back and Candi is trying to get her off of Lee. But somehow they both end up climbing on top of him. Lee is hanging on for dear life.)*

**MITZI.** It isn't?

**MARTY.** What?

**MITZI.** The understatement of the year.

**MARTY.** What are you talking about?

**MITZI.** You just said that what I said isn't the understatement of the year. What is?

**TED.** Mitz, honey, give it a rest.

**MITZI.** I just wanted to know. *(The two women in the sound booth lose their balance and end up pushing Lee against the glass. This time he hits it hard enough for everyone on stage to hear. As soon as they turn to see, all three of them disappear in the sound booth.)*

**TED.** What in the world was that?

**MARTY.** Candi must be messing around in there.

**MITZI.** I don't see her. *(They all three go around to the sound booth door. As they do, Lee and the women stand up. They are pushing against him--Candi is trying to keep Charlene off of Lee. Mitzi opens the door and Lee, Candi, and Charlene all plow over the other three in one big pile-up. All yell and scream as they pile up on the floor. The pile-up should be a complete mess of legs, arms, and bodies. The*

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*Shroud suddenly enters through the SR door. He is startled to see all of them and he runs off and exits through the SL door.)*

**MITZI.** What is that?

**TED.** Who was that?

**LEE.** *(In great anguish.)* Ugh...

**CANDI.** That--that--that--

**CHARLENE.** Oh, it was him.

**MARTY.** That was The Shroud! *(The lights go to Blackout.)*

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