

MITCH MACLAY SINGS JUST FOR YOU

A Play in One Act

by

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CHARACTERS

CHRISTOPHER WOOD

Early-30s. Program Director and morning board operator for radio station TRU-92. HE capitalizes on the invisibility of his medium by dressing in casual clothing including baggy khakis, sneakers with no socks, and a comfortable T-shirt sporting the logo of an alternative band. His cynical attitude and occasionally snide veneer reflect the mind-set of an up-and-coming industry man who somehow made a wrong turn only to find himself, inexplicably, in rural Iowa.

LORALIE KENT

Early- to mid-20s. Evening board operator for TRU-92. SHE is dressed in simple slacks, blouse and stocking feet at rise -- with a fresh, natural, cheerful face that's wasted on the radio. Her eccentricity and inclination for seemingly pointless chatter disguise her high level of intelligence -- an asset that's thwarted only by her rose-colored naiveté.

SETTING

Radio station TRU-92 in a small Iowa town

TIME

A Saturday in the late-1980s

SCENE 1

(The second story front office of TRU-92. The furnishings and decor are about 30 years behind the times. The overall atmosphere is drab, bordering on depressed. A doorway UC leads to a hallway. Entranceways DR and DL lead to the air studio and sales offices, respectively. A large, battleship of a desk sits R, with a chair behind it. There's a monstrous IBM Selectric typewriter and phone on the desk. A logo reflecting a style from years ago hangs on the wall behind the desk, reading "TRU-92, Tried and True by You!" A wastepaper basket sits on the D side of the desk. A monitor speaker hangs on the DR wall. A bank of file cabinets line the UR wall. There's a sofa L, with a dead potted plant U of it. A small end table sits on the D side of the sofa. A water cooler sits next to the UC door. A large clock hangs on the wall above it. It reads 4:30.)

(AT RISE: The stage is dark. After a moment, there's a sound as SOMEONE hurries through the UC door and flicks on the lights. They reveal CHRIS in a state of disarray -- a bagel in his mouth, carrying a knapsack and the morning paper, fiddling with a wad of keys. He doesn't see LORALIE sleeping on the sofa, as he dumps the paper and sack on the front desk, and exits DR. A moment later the monitor speaker comes to life with the sound of a ROOSTER crowing. LORALIE sits up on the sofa. Half awake, SHE crosses in her stocking feet R to the monitor.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER

(Voice on the monitor.)

Good morning, Iowa! It's 4:30 and TRU-92 now begins another broadcast day.

(LORALIE turns off the monitor, crosses UL, snaps the lights back off, and returns to her slumber on the sofa. CHRIS enter DR. Confused, he crosses UL to the light switch, snaps the lights back on, and turns on the monitor as he exits DR. Bland MUSIC emits from the speaker. LORALIE sits backs up, stumbles DR to turn off the speaker, UL to the light switch to snap it off, and back to her sofa. CHRIS enters DR. Confused and cautious, he crosses UL to the light switch, turns it back on. Then off. And then on again, confirming it works. He turns on the monitor as he exits DR. Bland MUSIC again emits from the speaker. LORALIE sits back up and shuffles DR to the monitor as CHRIS re-enters DR. The two nearly run into each other and scream.)

CHRIS
Jesus Christ!

LORALIE
Oh, heavens!

CHRIS
How'd you get in here?
(He regards her a moment.)
Lori?

LORALIE
Loralie.

CHRIS
You scared the hell outta me!
(Turns off the monitor.)
What're you doing here? You get locked in or something?

LORALIE
No, I spent the night.
(Indicates the sofa.)
Right there.

CHRIS

Why'd you do that? They kick you out of your place?

LORALIE

Heavens, no. I just didn't want to miss him. I wanted to be here when he came. I had to be here. So I slept here after sign-off, after my shift last night.

CHRIS

(Crossing DR.)

That's highly unusual behavior, Lori.

LORALIE

Loralie.

CHRIS

Who've you been talking to?

LORALIE

Well, Mr. Owens might have said something.

CHRIS

Something about what?

LORALIE

Something about someone. About a special visitor.

CHRIS

(Exiting DR, to himself.)

Jesus Christ, Owens. I don't need a sidekick. Not today.

LORALIE

(Yawning.)

How can you get up this early? And run around like that? If I didn't know otherwise, I'd guess you came straight from the farm.

(SHE wanders off DL, continuing
offstage.)

Up with the rooster and all.

CHRIS

(Entering DR, searching for the paper.)

Farm? Only thing we grow back East is kooks.

(Finds paper, examines front page.)

But it looks like you got your fair share of those around here, too.

LORALIE

(Enters DL, carrying a cup of coffee.)
Mrs. Davidson from up past the Gulch? She's the
kookiest person I've ever met -- from around here, at
least. Lives all alone in that great, big farm house
with about a hundred cats she's named after every
character in every Robert Mitchum movie there ever
was. Boy cats and girl cats. Says Mr. Mitchum and her
used to go steady back before he went out to Hollywood
and got to be a big star. Of course no one remembers
that far back except her, so who can say?

CHRIS

You know Mrs. Davidson?

LORALIE

(Sits on sofa, pulls shoes from
underneath it and puts them on.)
Everyone knows Mrs. Davidson.

CHRIS

Would you tell her to stop calling?

LORALIE

She calls?

CHRIS

Every God-damn morning! She wants the relative
humidity for the Gulch. Then she tells me the
station's never been the same since we took Kissin'
Cousin Cal's Country Cow Pies off the air.

LORALIE

Country Cow-field.

CHRIS

Whatever.

LORALIE

Cousin Cal's passed on.

CHRIS

Yeah, I know. Dead. Fifteen years!

LORALIE

What do you say?

CHRIS

I tell her, "Cousin Cal's no longer with us, ma'am." Every morning I tell her that. Then I make up something. Sixty-three percent humidity. Eight megabits and rising. Something. She's nuts! Relative humidity.

LORALIE

I told you she was kooky. Anyway, the humidity? That'd be for Felix. Big yellow tabby with white paws. Felix Bowers from "Fire Down Below." 1957. Robert Mitchum, Rita Hayworth. Jack Lemmon, too. I think.

CHRIS

How do you know that?

LORALIE

I am a student of popular culture. My mother saved every copy of Confidential, Hit Parader and Photoplay ever published beginning in 1951. I spent many rainy days of my impressionable youth browsing showbiz tales of yore.

(Pause.)

Anyway he's got a sinus condition or something. Felix. I heard Doc Wilkinson talking it over with Pete Stanley over at the R-X. Dry days are the worst.

CHRIS

(Looking in her cup.)

You call that coffee?

LORALIE

It was in the pot.

CHRIS

That's not coffee. That's milk.

LORALIE

(Crosses R, sits on sofa.)

Why do you get here so early?

CHRIS

Like to read the paper, see what's news. Put something together. Unless you wanna use that crap they feed over the wire. Anyway, sign-on's 4:30. So this isn't early.

LORALIE

Are you gonna put him on the news? If you were, I don't think you should. Could make for a mob scene right here at the station, and Mr. Owens wouldn't like that much. It's not every day we get a big time celebrity paying a visit. And from what I hear, even though he's a big star and all, Mr. Maclay's really a private sort of man. Private and sensitive. Uses phony names when he travels. Really! I heard that once. Likes to keep to himself. Who could blame him? What with all those women screaming and throwing themselves at his feet. Poor man.

(To herself.)

I wonder what name he's using today?

CHRIS

(Putting down paper.)

What're you talking about?

LORALIE

What am I talking about? I'm talking about Mitch Maclay, international recording star! Mitch Maclay star of stage and screen. That's what I'm talking about! Did you forget? Heavens, tell me you could forget! Mitch Maclay coming right here, this morning! Promoting a new album. Feathers! It's only the comeback of the decade. I'm getting dizzy just thinking about it!

CHRIS

Could I get you to be dizzy somewhere else? Please? Look, this thing -- it's not -- well, it's not really a big deal. You know? It's not an all-hands-on-deck kind of station function.

LORALIE

But ...

CHRIS

Owens is out of town. Terry's out for the day. But I've got it covered. I appreciate your enthusiasm, though.

LORALIE

He is?

CHRIS
He is what?

LORALIE
Out for the day.

CHRIS
Who?

LORALIE
Terry.

CHRIS
Yuh.

LORALIE
That's funny. He told me that two weeks in Tahoe
gobbled up all his time. Being a real sour puss about
it, too.

CHRIS
Look, I gave him the day off. Okay? I mean, I'm not
playing favorites. Do you -- do you want a day off?
Apparently not. You're here. Now. I mean, you've moved
in and taken up residence.

LORALIE
I'm sorry. Is something bothering you? Am I bothering
you?

CHRIS
No! No. It's just. Look -- he probably isn't even
gonna show. You know?

LORALIE
What do you mean?

CHRIS
I mean, they were supposed to confirm by phone
yesterday, and they didn't. So I imagine the whole
thing's probably been called off.

LORALIE
So he cancelled?

CHRIS
No, not exactly. But he's not coming. In all
likelihood. Probably. Not.

LORALIE

How do you know that?

CHRIS

I know that because I know that. Look. He's washed up. Why do you think they'd send him to some dinky FM in rural Iowa? A real star doesn't need that. Capitol's worried about the new album. They're worried everyone's forgot who he is. Besides, reliability isn't his thing. They had to fish him out of a bottle just to get the album finished. So even if I had got a call yesterday ...

LORALIE

(Floored.)

I can't believe you'd say that about Mitch Maclay.

CHRIS

Believe it. More than once. They say.

LORALIE

Where'd you hear that?

CHRIS

I read it. You people ever read out here?

LORALIE

Where'd you read that? The tabloids? Did the Inquirer say that?

CHRIS

Rolling Stone said that.

LORALIE

Rolling Stones. What do the Rolling Stones know? Rock and roll stars. They're your real drinkers.

CHRIS

(Starts to correct her.)

Not ... Never mind. I just wish you'd go home.

LORALIE

Mitch Maclay is simply showing his appreciation to his devoted following. A new album, a nation-wide tour, and stops along the way to meet the locals. He's very gracious that way, you know.

CHRIS

Gracious. He's gonna make a "gracious" five-minute stop here, big sparkling toothy smile and all, begging for airplay. It's pathetic.

LORALIE

Mitch Maclay does not have to beg for airplay. They still play "Waitin' and Hopin'" every day on the radio. Hundreds of times a day. Thousands, more likely. I'd play it myself, if I could.

(Singing.)

Waitin' and hopin', for you to be mine ...

CHRIS

Let me ask you this: Do you honestly think when they find out we're automated Maclay or any of the weasels from Capitol are gonna give a rat's ass about TRU-92?

(Gesturing DR.)

No, they're gonna take one step inside that studio, see those big reels of tape rolling around all by themselves, not a record in sight, and make a bee-line for the door. In and out, two minutes. Tops.

LORALIE

You don't figure they know, do you? We're automated?

CHRIS

Probably. Yeah. That's probably it. They figured that out, and decided to bag it.

LORALIE

Well, I'm willing to take my chances. And, besides, two minutes is all I need.

CHRIS

(Back to his paper.)

All you need, huh?

LORALIE

When Mitch Maclay walks through that door, the first thing he's gonna see is Loralie Kent standing right here, extending her hand toward his picturesque stature. "Hello and welcome to TRU-92, Mr. Maclay," I'll say. "My name's Loralie Kent, and if there's anything you need to make your stay more pleasant, you just give a holler." And then he'll probably give that big, shy grin like he's giving on that album cover.

LORALIE (Continued)

Which one's that? ... "Mitch Maclay Sings Just for You," 1954. The one with the big golden retriever on it, and Mitch sitting there under that big oak, head kicked back like he was remembering a real sweet time he had with some lucky lady? And he'll say something like, "Pleased to meet you, Miss Kent. Mind if I call you Loralie?"

CHRIS

(Immersed in the newspaper, trying to tune her out.)

Doesn't anything ever happen out here? Don't you people ever steal shit? Or run your cars into things? Or kill each other?

LORALIE

I don't know why you're so intent on writing news. It's not even on the log.

CHRIS

What?

LORALIE

The program log. They scratched the news.

CHRIS

Who scratched the news?

LORALIE

I figured you did. You're the Program Director, aren't you?

CHRIS

I didn't scratch the news.

(CHRIS exits DR.)

LORALIE

Well, it is Saturday. Not much happens on Saturdays anyway. Except this one, of course.

CHRIS

(Entering DR flipping through the pages of the log.)

I can't believe this.

LORALIE

You think we oughta try to spiffy up the station a little for Mr. Maclay?

CHRIS

(To himself.)

Why am I here?

LORALIE

I could run a vacuum. At least around the front office here. Someone should've perked up that plant with some water.

(Exiting DL.)

Maybe there's still time.

CHRIS

Drake mails us a reel of crappy currents every other week. Some office in Burbank calls all the shots. They wanna scratch the news, they scratch the news. What do they need us for? Why am I here? Why are you here?

LORALIE

(Entering DL with a watering can.)

Mitch Maclay. I wanna meet Mr. Maclay. I thought I told you that.

CHRIS

No, I mean ... Why are you here? Working here.

LORALIE

Oh, I don't know. Beats working at Bomgaars, I guess. All that feed dust kicks up my allergies.

(Pauses, to herself.)

I don't really know why I'm here.

(LORALIE waters the plants L.)

CHRIS

This isn't radio. It's baby-sitting. It shouldn't be like this. It wasn't like this. Jocks didn't just load up cart machines and push buttons. There was a personality aspect to the whole thing. It was a show, not just a shift.

LORALIE

It's not so bad. You get to meet interesting people.

CHRIS

Name two.

LORALIE

Mitch Maclay. That's one. And you. You're kind of interesting. But you should switch to decaf.

CHRIS

(CHRIS looks in his cup and puts it down on the desk.)

Look, Lora ...

LORALIE

Loralie.

CHRIS

I'm sorry.

LORALIE

(Over-emphasizing.)

Lor-a-lie.

CHRIS

Look you're late nights, off at midnight. I'm mornings, on at 4. Our paths don't exactly cross on a daily basis. In fact, I don't think I've ever seen your face.

LORALIE

Company Christmas party, last year.

CHRIS

Really?

LORALIE

Terry and me swapped shifts so I could attend. That was my first TRU-92 Christmas party since I started here seven years ago. Always wondered what I'd been missing. Turns out, not much. Anyway, Mr. Owens had a few too many whiskey sours. Cornered me by the ladies' room, patted me on the bottom, told me I must be Santa's most-favoritest radio elf. You -- the new guy standing back taking in all the shenanigans -- you saw it all across the room, marched up to me afterward, all knight-in-shining-armor-like, asked me if I wanted you to knock his block off.

CHRIS

That was you?

LORALIE

I'm the only lady on the air staff.

CHRIS

Huh.

LORALIE

I declined, but appreciated it anyway.

CHRIS

Right. I kinda remember that. I guess. Anyway,
Loralie, look, I've got -- Really?

(LORALIE nods.)

"Knock his block off?"

LORALIE

Your words.

CHRIS

Huh. Anyway, look, I've got a hundred things going on
today ...

LORALIE

Doesn't look like you have a hundred things going on.
What with the automation and all. Running things for
you.

CHRIS

... And arguing with you about whether this guy ...

LORALIE

Mitch Maclay.

CHRIS

Right. So. You see?

LORALIE

Not really.

CHRIS

Would you just go home? Please.

LORALIE

Well, truth be told, there is another reason I wanted
to see you this morning.

CHRIS

Okay.

(LORALIE hesitates.)

Well?

LORALIE

I'm awful sorry, but I might have to give you my notice. Sometime soon.

CHRIS

People come, people go. It's radio. Who's sorry? That thing in the other room almost runs itself anyway. No offense, but we'll all be obsolete. Matter of time.

LORALIE

Now I know two weeks is standard. And may well be I'll give you that two weeks. Even more, if I can. But it might be out of my hands.

(CHRIS shrugs.)

You're being awful understanding.

(Nervous laughter.)

I nearly thought you'd go through the roof!

CHRIS

Through the roof?

LORALIE

Well, with your upbringing and all. A lot of folks seem to think you people from New York are high strung, but I don't really see it.

CHRIS

Jersey, actually. Listen, Lori --

LORALIE

Loralie.

CHRIS

Right. I'm gonna guess you're a great jock. You've got spunk, obviously. And if just half of that came across behind the mic, they'd love you. If you had the chance to do more than read index cards. And I'd guess you'd clean up in the book. If we had a book. Out here on the prairie. But business is business. I'm not gonna hassle you for that. You're climbing the food chain. The big fish eat the little fish. The little fish eat the shit.

CHRIS (Continued)

You're tired of eating the shit, so now you're gonna be a big fish.

LORALIE

That is an unpleasant explanation.

CHRIS

Well, a bigger fish, I'd guess. But, trust me. Giving notice isn't any reason to spend the night here. Waiting for some poor man's Vic Damone isn't either.

LORALIE

Vic Damone is a poor man's Vic Damone.

CHRIS

Right. So we're agreed, right? Go home. Relax. Have a pop. Sleep.

(Exiting DR.)

How'd the Yanks do last night?

LORALIE

(Done watering, SHE crosses R and leafs through the newspaper on the desk.)

If it's all the same to you, I'd like to wait for Mr. Maclay. I know deep, deep in my heart he'll be stepping through that door. Like I said, it's not every day Chickasaw County gets a big-time celebrity paying a visit. And if this doesn't sound too silly, I have to say, I've always been a little sweet on the man. Even though R&R was saying last week he appealed to what they call the "older demo" and all. And, yes, I know, he's old enough to be my father. But he was a fine looking man. Still is, in my unqualified opinion.

(Finding the score in the paper as CHRIS enters DR examining a fistful of wire copy.)

Looks like ...

LORALIE

They lost.

CHRIS

They lost.

CHRIS

Damn it!

(Inspecting the wire copy closer.)

God-damn it!

LORALIE

(Pauses.)

Must be awful difficult living so far from your favorite ball team. Well, from your home and family then. That's gotta be difficult. So far away, I mean.

CHRIS

(Putting wire copy on desk.)

Look, I'm gonna be here all afternoon. Like I said, Terry's out. I'm doing a double.

(Bringing LORALIE to the UC door.)

I guarantee the minute Maclay steps his king-of-the-middle-of-the-road butt through that door, I'll call you. Lickety-split. Quicker than a hog'll take to mud.

LORALIE

Oh, no! I couldn't risk that. I'm a very heavy sleeper. And with my body clock being set to second shift, I can't put a single foot on the floor before noon. This morning being a rare exception.

CHRIS

No risk. You've got my personal guarantee.

LORALIE

(Breaking away from him and crossing L to sit on the sofa.)

If it's all the same to you, I'll just wait for Mr. Maclay right here. I promise I won't get in your way. You just go about your business. And I'll be right here. Just waiting. If that's okay with you.

(CHRIS goes back to his wire copy. A few beats pass. Silence. LORALIE re-adjusts herself on the sofa once. Then twice.)

LORALIE

I always imagined the morning shift would be so busy. It being morning and all.

(Pause.)

CHRIS

Just between me and you ... I might have a little something in the works myself. Nothing's finalized, but the East Coast might be calling me back.

LORALIE

Gosh, Mr. Owens sure won't be happy. He said getting a New York Jew in here really turned things around.

(Catching herself.)

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sure he meant that in the best possible way.

CHRIS

Episcopalian.

LORALIE

Well, Mr. Owens seems to think you're of the Jewish persuasion. People always like to exaggerate.

CHRIS

Why would he ...? And how is that ...? I'm from Jersey. New Jersey? It's across the river.

LORALIE

I know where New Jersey is. Thank you.

CHRIS

Hoboken.

LORALIE

Is it nice?

(Phone RINGS.)

CHRIS

For a kid of a single mom and a dead-beat dad? Living in a one-room apartment? Peachy.

(Picking up phone from desk.)

TRU-92, tried and true by you. Chris Wood speaking.

(Rolls his eyes at LORALIE.)

Yes, Mrs. Davidson. You're up early this fine Saturday. ... Yes, I've got the forecast right here.

(HE doesn't.)

Relative humidity 68 percent. ... Yes, none too shabby. ... Well, now Mrs. Davidson, I think we've talked about this before, you and I. That wasn't a programming decision as much as it was a natural and unavoidable consequence of Cousin Cal's death. ... Yes, Chickasaw County lost a true pioneer of the airwaves that day, rest in peace. ... And you, too. And "Hello" to Felix. Bye-bye now.

(Hanging up.)

CHRIS (Continued)

Nuts.

(CHRIS begins leafing through a radio trade journal at the desk. Pause.)

LORALIE

Was that Mrs. Davidson?

CHRIS

(Not looking up.)

Yup.

(Pause.)

LORALIE

Have you ever met a celebrity? Horse-feathers! Of course you have, being from the city and all. But I mean, a real big-time celebrity? I met Peter Billings once, the weatherman for Channel 9? But he wasn't any big time celebrity. I mean, outside Iowa folks wouldn't know him from Abel. He was doing the weather at some Chevy dealership, and Dad'd brought me along shopping for a pick-up. Something used, but not abused, Dad said. And right along 6:30, Mr. Billings read the weather live on the air, then signed autographs. All the other folks rushed up to him, but Dad said it'd be better if I stayed back and waited my turn, ladylike. And wouldn't you know just before he gets to me, he sticks that cap back on his pen, gets in his car and drives away. So I guess I never really did meet a celebrity, after all. Not yet, that is.

CHRIS

(To himself.)

Video killed the radio star.

(A high-pitched electronic SQUEAL sounds offstage R and continues over the following dialogue. CHRIS checks his watch.)

Seventeen minutes past sign-on. New record.

(CHRIS exits DR as LORALIE tidies up the sofa. SHE folds the blanket she'd been using, fluffs the pillow, and places them both on the back of the sofa. The SQUEAL stops.)

CHRIS enters DR carrying a large empty reel and a massive tangled snarl of audio tape.)

CHRIS

Well, another gold reel just shit the bed.

LORALIE

Oh my.

CHRIS

You didn't wanna hear "The Piña Colada Song" again anyway, did you?

LORALIE

I love that song.

CHRIS

(Crossing L to her at the sofa.)

Great. Here you go.

(Dumping the mess in her arms)

Put that back together, you can hear it again.

(LORALIE starts threading tape back onto the reel. CHRIS crosses R and sits at desk.)

It's my unqualified opinion that hunk of junk in the other room isn't exactly state-of-the-art 1980s technology. But the silence sensor works like a charm. So there's that.

LORALIE

Mr. Owens bought that tape automation system used. It's from the '60s. Saw a classified ad and paid twice as much to have it shipped from California as he paid for it. I'd guess.

CHRIS

(Back to his newspaper.)

Worth every penny.

LORALIE

(Jumping up.)

Heavens! I can't be doing this here! What if he walks through the door!

(SHE hurries off DR with the tape.)

CHRIS

It's 4:30 in the morning. He's not due for five hours.
And I told you, in all likelihood he's not coming.

(To himself.)

Please go home.

(Calling off R.)

Hey, don't worry about that. Just dump it somewhere.

LORALIE

(Enters DR, crosses to sofa.)

Wanna see something neat?

(SHE pulls a cardboard bankers box from
behind the sofa, lifts the lid,
searches through a series of folder
tabs, pulls a magazine out and displays
it for CHRIS.)

Photoplay, May 1955. Adorning the cover, our hero,
Mitch Maclay.

CHRIS

You really have moved in.

LORALIE

I just wanted a little light reading to prep for
today's soirée. In anticipation of meeting the man
himself. Figured I might ask Mr. Maclay to sign one or
two.

(Pulling a Sharpie out of her back
pocket.)

If he has the time.

CHRIS

(Crossing R to box.)

This is --

LORALIE

Pretty amazing, right?

CHRIS

Crazy and a little frightening. All of these --

LORALIE

Have Mitch Maclay in them, right. Somewhere.

(Rifling through the files.)

Some it's the cover, like that one. Some there's just
a mention.

CHRIS

You got those alphabetized?

LORALIE

Chronological.

(Pulls out another issue and jumps to a bookmarked page.)

Hit Parader, September '62. Little mention of his then-latest single climbing the charts. "Waitin' and Hopin'," #27 with a bullet. Soon to be Top 10, as we both know now. Nice little photo there. Beautiful smile.

CHRIS

(Takes the magazine from her and examines it.)

I don't know what to say. "Sorry," I guess, comes to mind.

LORALIE

(Pulling another issue.)

August 21, 1970. Cashbox magazine. Mitch a little shaggy around the neckline. Sign of the times, I suppose.

CHRIS

(Crossing L to desk and sitting.)

You know that's all a bunch of shit, right?

LORALIE

Christopher Wood, you have a foul mouth. Did you know that?

CHRIS

That's fair.

(Picks up newspaper to read, but can't let it go.)

Thing is, that's all image, right? That guy's got managers, agents, label reps all working to paint some kind of picture.

LORALIE

So?

CHRIS

What I'm saying is, none of it's real. You think you know the guy, but you don't. You've bought what they're selling hook, line and sinker.

LORALIE

Well of course I don't know Mitch Maclay, personal like. What difference does that make? I can still enjoy the persona. Is that the word you city folks use? Persona?

CHRIS

(Growing agitated.)

It makes a difference, because it's not just fiction. Because there are real consequences to someone being an asshole.

LORALIE

Woody, I don't know how someone with such a loose tongue trusts himself behind an open microphone. Anyway, Mitch Maclay --

CHRIS

And would you stop using his name? Just stop saying it.

LORALIE

Well ... It is his name.

CHRIS

Seriously? Are you serious? You think that's a real name?

LORALIE

Real as any other, I suppose.

CHRIS

Arnold Melnick.

(Lets it sink in.)

Would you buy an Arnold Melnick album? Join an Arnold Melnick fan club? Or buy a particular brand of breakfast sausage if Arnold Melnick said it was tastier?

LORALIE

I suppose not. I'm partial to bacon.

CHRIS

There you go. When you think of Mitch Maclay, think of Arnold Melnick. Because that's his real name.

LORALIE

Well, what's a name anyway? A rose by any other name.

CHRIS

It's not just the name. Obviously. I'm just saying, be careful who you give the benefit of the doubt to. Sometimes there's stuff below the surface. Nobody really ever knows anyone. Much less someone they only read about in magazines.

LORALIE

Or listen to on the radio.

(Pause.)

CHRIS

Why'd you call me Woody?

LORALIE

It's your name, isn't it? Christopher Wood? "Woody in the Morning?" Before that, host of "Morning Wood" back at Rock 102, Schenectady?

(Smiling sweetly.)

Turns out we do read here on the prairie. Trade papers, at least.

(Tucking magazines back into the box.)

And the occasional celebrity gossip magazine.

CHRIS

Look, I get worked up sometimes. Over nothing.

LORALIE

If that's an apology, there's no need.

(Brightening.)

Beside, when Mitch Maclay gets here ...

CHRIS

He's not coming! How many times ...

LORALIE

How do you know that? What makes you say that?

CHRIS

The guy's a heel!

LORALIE

But you don't even know him! Do you? Like you said:
Nobody really ever knows anyone!

CHRIS

I know a thing or two. Enough ... well, enough to have
an opinion. Trust me.

LORALIE

Is this a problem you have with celebrated
personalities in general? Or just Mr. Maclay
specifically?

CHRIS

Never mind. It's nothing. Waste your day if you want,
but don't tell me I didn't warn you. He's not coming.

(BLACKOUT.)

(END OF SCENE 1.)

SCENE 2

(The same scene, but the clock on the wall reads 12:10. There are a few stacks of cartridge tapes on the desk, and a couple paper airplanes litter the floor. CHRIS sits R, his feet on the desk, staring at the ceiling in deep contemplation. He kneads a rubber ball in his hand. LORALIE sits on the sofa. SHE's made great progress putting the tape back on the reel that was nearly destroyed in the previous scene.)

LORALIE

Well?

CHRIS

Give me a minute.

(HE continues to ponder.)

LORALIE

There's a time limit --

CHRIS

No there isn't! Since when's there a time limit?

LORALIE

Only stands to reason.

CHRIS

It's coming.

(Thinks some more.)

Bill Haley.

LORALIE

(Without a moment's hesitation.)

Ronnie Van Zant.

CHRIS

Oh, come on. How long have you been keeping that one
in your back pocket? Okay.

(He thinks some more.)

I got nothing.

LORALIE

You concede?

CHRIS

Wait a minute! I'm still in it. Marc Bolan.

LORALIE

(Without hesitation.)

Hank Williams.

CHRIS

Give me a break.

LORALIE

What?

CHRIS

The game's called "Dead Rock Stars."

LORALIE

Heavens! You give me a break. Karen Carpenter was yours. And Kyu Sakamoto?

CHRIS

What about Dink Johnson? I don't even think that's a real name.

LORALIE

It is! I swear on my mother's grave. If she wasn't still alive and in very fine health for a woman her age.

CHRIS

What kind of name is Dink?

LORALIE

Episcopalian, I think.

CHRIS

So can we call this a draw?

LORALIE

A draw? Heavens, in what manner could this possibly be considered a draw?

CHRIS

Okay, fine. Well, going by the clock on the wall and the fact they haven't bothered to call, I'm tempted to offer Mitch Maclay.

LORALIE

(Dead serious.)

Christopher Wood, do not even joke about a thing like that.

CHRIS

Fine. You win.

(HE bounces the rubber ball to her and starts shuffling and labeling the cartridge tapes on the desk.)

Do you believe me now? He was due three hours ago. Please. Go home.

LORALIE

I appreciate your persistence. But I'm afraid you're stuck with me. For today at least.

(SHE bounces it back to him.)

CHRIS

What'd you mean earlier? When you said two minutes is all you needed. With Arnold Melnick.

LORALIE

I don't recall.

CHRIS

You said, "Two minutes is all I need."

LORALIE

I don't know. For bragging rights, I suppose. To say I actually met the man behind the voice? To make an impression?

CHRIS

Why do you need to make an impression?

LORALIE

(Exiting DL.)

You want more coffee?

CHRIS

(Calling off L.)

I'm just curious what you meant.

LORALIE

(Entering DL, bringing coffee to CHRIS
R.)

Okay. So. Promise you won't laugh?

CHRIS

I can never make that promise. I reserve the right to laugh.

LORALIE

(Crossing L.)

The truth is, since the age of 12, since the day I saw Janis Ian perform on "The Mike Douglas Show," I have fancied the life of a singer-songwriter.

(SHE pulls another cardboard box from behind the sofa.)

CHRIS

How many of those you got back there?

LORALIE

(Piling through the box, which contains LP records, 45s and a collection of paper.)

Well, songwriter, at least. The singing part I can take or leave, I suppose. Mostly leave. Of course, without the singing part many up-and-coming songwriters never get their songs sung. So the singing part comes in handy, at least in the beginning.

(SHE holds up a fistful of paper and sings an improvised song.)

Oh, it's late in the mornin'. And Mitch, he's a comin'--

CHRIS

(Crossing L and taking the papers.)

So these are all --

LORALIE

Songs. Some of them are just beginnings. Or ends. Or middles. But some of them ...

(SHE pulls one from CHRIS's hands.)
... are nearly ready to show around.

CHRIS
(Looking at another sheet.)
This song's apparently called "Resume."

(SHE tries to snatch it from him, but
CHRIS turns and crosses R.)

LORALIE
Goodness! I don't know how that got mixed in there.

CHRIS
So that's your plan? That's why you're leaving TRU-92?
(Crossing to her L.)
You're gonna pitch Mitch? Show him your songs, slip
him a resume? Then what? You think he'll sweep you
away?

LORALIE
Well, no. I didn't say I was leaving the station. Not
definitely. I'm simply casting a line. Laying some
groundwork. But ... Well, that's networking, right?
Isn't that what you city folks call it? Networking?

CHRIS
(Looking behind sofa.)
Jesus, is that a suitcase?

LORALIE
No. Well, maybe. Just an overnight bag.

CHRIS
Please tell me you didn't break your lease and put
your stuff in storage. You know, it's not like the
Partridge Family bus. There isn't a seat waiting for
you in the back.

LORALIE
(Snatching the resume from him.)
I know that, Chris.

CHRIS
So this is your exit strategy? This is your two weeks'
notice? Warm up to a has-been and hope he takes you
under his wing? Sweeps you away to L-A?

CHRIS (Continued)

Sorry, I just thought ... I thought you were better than this.

LORALIE

I didn't give you my two weeks' notice! I simply said I might need to give you my notice sometime in the near future. Besides, you act like I'm propositioning him in a much less licit manner.

CHRIS

He'd probably like that. Look, you do whatever you wanna do.

LORALIE

Goodness, he's a married man. And old enough to be my father!

CHRIS

Absolutely. Married two times over.

LORALIE

Actually, for the record, Mrs. Maclay came about in 1971, when Mitch and the former Rebecca Sweeney tied the knot during a double-ring ceremony on O'ahu.

CHRIS

Right.

LORALIE

An intimate occasion attended by only close friends and family. Photoplay named it one of its "Sweetest Moments of the Year." And you can look that up.

CHRIS

Right. Except that was actually Arnold's second trip down the aisle --

LORALIE

There wasn't an aisle, it was on a beach --

CHRIS

Following his first marriage to Mary Ann Knight of Brooklyn, 1956. Followed almost immediately --

LORALIE

How do you know this?

CHRIS

(Pressing on.)

Followed almost immediately by divorce in '58 after 18 months of shameless womanizing including an illicit encounter with one Elizabeth Woodford of the Tri-State area in the summer of '57.

LORALIE

How do you know this? And I don't know this?

CHRIS

Why doesn't the whole world know it? Because he was Capitol's golden boy. Their cash cow. Seven Top 40 singles his first year out. Three went Top 10. His manager, his agent, they kept it quiet. No bobby-soxer wants to think her favorite heart-throb's got a ring on his finger.

LORALIE

Heavens, for someone who has no interest in Mitch Maclay, you seem to know a whole lot about him.

CHRIS

Yeah, well. Runs in the family.

(CHRIS stops short. HE goes back to his work at the desk. LORALIE pauses as it sinks in.)

LORALIE

Oh, feathers. But you ... But ... Mitch Maclay doesn't have any children. Does he?

CHRIS

You're the president of his fan club. You tell me.

LORALIE

No. Definitely. He does not.

CHRIS

You say so.

LORALIE

But ... Christopher Wood, you're not old enough ... Not to ... Are you?

(SHE hurries L to the sofa, pulls out the box of magazines, and begins tearing through them. SHE pulls out one and rifles through it.)

No.

(SHE tosses it aside, pulls out another. Finding the right page, SHE reads from it.)

"A representative for Maclay went on-record with this reporter only under condition of strict anonymity. He claims accusations the singing sensation fathered a bouncing baby boy with the Garden State femme fatale are entirely without merit." Confidential, May 1957. You're Mitch Maclay's love-child!

CHRIS

I'm not sure love had much to do with it.

LORALIE

Oh, heavens! And here I am going on and on about him all morning. And he is your father. Your flesh and blood! Mitch Maclay is your father!

CHRIS

So. I've got my reasons for feeling the way I do. Now can we stop talking about this?

LORALIE

If I thought I would meet Mitch Maclay and his son on the same day!

CHRIS

Could we? Stop talking about it?

LORALIE

Heavens! You have his eyes! I see it now! Yes, it's clear as day. Clear as the nose on your face. Goodness! You have his nose, too!

(SHE examines CHRIS closely from another angle.)

From the side. I don't see how I didn't see that before!

CHRIS

Now? Could we stop talking about it now?

LORALIE

I'm sorry. It's just ...

(SHE takes a deep breath, exhaling through her mouth. And another. And another.)

CHRIS

What's that? You okay?

LORALIE

(Sitting L.)

I'm fine. Everything's fine. Mitch will probably be here any minute now, and I just ... need to pull myself together.

CHRIS

I don't ... I mean, I don't spread that around too much. So maybe you could keep that between you and me.

LORALIE

(SHE locks her lips and throws away the key. Pause, and then a Tourette's-like outburst)

Oh-my-God-you're-Mitch-Maclay's-son!

(SHE catches herself and takes a deep breath, exhaling through her nose.)

I'm fine.

CHRIS

I think you might be the only person under fifty who might care.

LORALIE

I'm fine now.

CHRIS

(Dialing phone.)

Good. I'm hungry. You hungry?

LORALIE

I am hungry. I could not eat. Not now.

CHRIS

(Into the phone.)

Hi, could we get a large cheese, mushroom and black olive?

LORALIE

(Whispering.)

Pepperoni!

CHRIS

Cheese, mushroom, black olive and pepperoni.

LORALIE

(Whispering.)

No olives!

CHRIS

(Hand over phone. To LORALIE.)

Are you eating this or what?

LORALIE

Yes.

CHRIS

(Back on phone.)

Sorry. Large cheese, mushroom and pepperoni. ... No olives. ... Couple of Cokes. ... That's fine. ... Yeah, 15 Main Street, second floor. It's the TRU-92 office. ... No, Christopher Wood. ... Well, actually, Bobby Knight doesn't really work here. He is part of a ... a syndicated type of service we subscribe to here. ... I really don't know. L-A, probably. ... Yeah, so 30 minutes or it's free, right? ... Okay. Take your time. Please.

(HE hangs up and returns to his work.)

Another fan.

LORALIE

So you've never even met him?

CHRIS

Hmmm?

LORALIE

I can't believe you're so calm. I'd be, I don't know, flipping out. What're you going to say? You are going to say something, right?

CHRIS

I don't know. I don't know what to say. What do you say? To someone like that? He never admitted it, far as I know.

CHRIS (Continued)

Not to my mother, at least. She never got past the gatekeepers anyway.

LORALIE

Are you certain? I mean, is she certain ... he's the one?

CHRIS

What're you trying to say about my Mom, Loralie?

LORALIE

Oh, I didn't mean --

CHRIS

I'm just giving you a hard time. Yeah, she's pretty certain.

LORALIE

I'm so sorry. A boy oughta know his father. You know?

CHRIS

I don't know. I turned out okay.

LORALIE

Mostly.

CHRIS

Mostly.

LORALIE

But still.

CHRIS

You want to know the funniest thing about this?

LORALIE

What?

CHRIS

Actually there isn't anything funny about this.

(The alarm SQUEALS off R. HE exits DR.)

Duty calls.

(LORALIE thinks a moment, then crosses L and begins packing up her stuff. The SQUEAL stops.)

CHRIS enters DR, carrying another empty reel and a snarl of audio tape.)
 What're you doing?

LORALIE

I can't be here. Not now. I mean, these silly songs, they don't matter a bit. Not compared to you meeting your father the first time. I'm sorry, I've been so focused on myself.

CHRIS

Well, you can't leave now. You're too vested. Besides we've got pizza coming.

(Handing her the tape and reel.)

And I need you to put this back together.

(LORALIE sits and start to work on the tape. Almost to himself at start.)

She told me he was dead. Can you imagine? Telling your kid his father's dead when he isn't? I suppose that's easier. Easier for her, easier for me. What'd I know? It was more believable than the truth, right? Plenty of people die. Not a lot of people are celebrities. And when she did tell me the truth, I didn't believe her. Our neighbors across the hall'd just put down their cat. I was eight, and I really liked that cat. Maine Coon Cat. Black. Funny personality. We didn't have any pets of our own. Anyway, we were on our way out the door. I don't remember where we were going, but it was cold out and I was getting bundled up. And I asked her, "When they put animals to sleep, do they dream?" She looked at me ... seemed to think about it a second ... and then she said, like it was nothing, "Your father's not dead. He's a famous singer named Mitch Maclay." I guess it was just time she got it off her chest. It's not like I ever doubted her. Never pestered her about it. Anyway. Turns out they don't.

LORALIE

Don't what?

CHRIS

Dream. Any self-respecting mother would've busted out crying if their kid asked them that. Not mine. Tough, I'll give her that.

LORALIE

Now I'm gonna bust out crying.

CHRIS

Sorry. That was stupid. Telling you that.

LORALIE

No! It's good! It's good, Chris! You're getting in touch with your Divine Self.

CHRIS

What's that now?

LORALIE

Your Divine Self. It is the essence of all life that forms the core of your soul. It oughta help quite a bit when it comes time to meet Mitch.

CHRIS

Look, you're welcome to hang out and wait. But keep that crap to yourself. Okay?

LORALIE

Okay.

(BLACKOUT.)

(END OF SCENE 2.)

SCENE 3

(The same scene, but the clock on the wall reads 4:30. An empty pizza box pokes out of the trash can. A pile of paper napkins and a paper beverage cup and straw are on the desk. Another sits on the table R. Some LPs are scattered about the sofa and floor. LORALIE stands leaning against the desk. CHRIS sits on the sofa, deflated, with the rubber ball. They bounce it back and forth between them throughout the scene. It acts like punctuation at the end of each line.)

CHRIS

I'm gonna puke.

LORALIE

That's pleasant.

CHRIS

My limit for hanging around doing nothing is about nine hours. After ten or eleven, I start getting a little crazy. And by twelve, I feel like I'm gonna puke.

LORALIE

I try to maintain a positive attitude, which practically inures me to boredom. Once I spent no less than nine and a half hours waiting for a set of all-seasons to get put on my hatchback. Turns out the order'd slid under the counter soon as I checked in, so I ended up driving home --

(SHE suddenly perks up. SHE scurries to the door UC, swings around and crosses DL, snatches the soda cup from the table, crosses R to grab the cup and napkins off the desk, throws them all in the trash, hurries back to the door and exits UC. After a moment, SHE enters UC and crosses R to sit on the desk.)

LORALIE (Continued)

Fudge. Thought I heard someone. Anyway, maybe your upset stomach's really about something else. Do you think?

CHRIS

I guess I'll admit. Part of me hoped he'd show his stupid face. Just so I could punch it.

LORALIE

Day's not over. Your dream of punching Mitch Maclay's stupid face could still become a reality.

CHRIS

You really are an optimist, aren't you?

LORALIE

It's healthy, looking on the bright side. Or it seems it oughta be. Now you take my grandmother. Gram K., on my father's side, lived to 102. Passed away in her sleep on her birthday no less with a smile on her face. Well, the closest thing to a smile she could muster after the stroke. Never let a thing get under her skin.

CHRIS

Yeah? Where'd that get her?

LORALIE

Well, feathers, got her to 102, I suppose. And that's something. Oh, I got a great idea! You know what? You and I, we can work this thing out together. We don't even need Mitch Maclay! Are you familiar with the therapeutic method of role playing?

CHRIS

Are you fucking kidding me?

LORALIE

You be you, obviously, and I'll be Mitch and maybe we can work through some things so they sit more comfortable in your mind.

CHRIS

I'd rather chew glass.

LORALIE

It'll be fun. And it's good practice for when Mitch comes walking through that door.

CHRIS

I don't think --

LORALIE

(Jumping in to her role of MITCH.)

Nice to meet you, Christopher. Mitch Maclay. Real fine place you folks have here at TRU-92. Homey.

CHRIS

(Pauses, uninspired.)

It's a dump.

LORALIE

Oh, I wouldn't go that far. Seen plenty of worse on my travels around the country promoting the new album.

CHRIS

(Playing along but flippantly.)

Funny, Mitch. I was contemplating one of your earlier LPs just this afternoon. Maybe you could answer a question for me.

LORALIE

Happy to, if I can.

CHRIS

"Mitch Maclay Sings Just for You." Such a clever title. Where'd you come up with that?

LORALIE

Well, truth be known, that's the label's handiwork. Plenty of folks behind the scenes all pitch in getting an album out, and some things are just beyond my control.

CHRIS

(Dropping the act.)

This is stupid.

LORALIE

(Stepping out of character.)

No, it's not! Come on! Keep going!

CHRIS

(Heaves a sigh, back at it.)

Beyond your control?

LORALIE

(Back in character as MITCH.)

Well, it's really a team effort. I'm the one people recognize, but I'm really just the tip of --

CHRIS

Tip of the iceberg?

LORALIE

That's a good way --

CHRIS

So you'd probably say a good deal of what goes on in the House of Mitch is someone else's fault?

LORALIE

Well, I wouldn't --

CHRIS

Because no matter what a man's job is -- no matter how big he gets -- seems to me a man still oughta be a man. Fame, celebrity shouldn't change that, right? Step up and do what a man's gotta do? Don't you think?

LORALIE

(Stepping out of character.)

See! Feels good, right?

CHRIS

(Off and running now.)

Let me tell you something. I know lots of kids grow up without fathers. Or mothers. And for all kinds of reasons, I'm sure. And some are good reasons. Right? I mean, legitimate reasons. Circumstances that no one controls. And when I was a kid, I'll be honest: It didn't bother me too much. Other kids had dads who came home at the end of each day ... Ozzie and Harriet ... but I didn't. Fine. So what? Money was probably tight, but I never knew. My mother never let it get to me, because she never let it get to her. But that's not the point. Money, that's ...

CHRIS (Continued)

See it's only when I started to get older ... right around college ... that I realized, truly, what a shit move you'd pulled. Not just on me, but on her. When she was trying to get past your wall, trying to get someone to listen. And your people releasing statements to the press denying it all. Denying everything! "Garden State femme fatale." Can you imagine? Reading that about yourself? And ... I know, that probably wasn't you. But it's the whole thing, right? The system, the star, the publicity machine. Polishing that image to a high shine. Maximizing profit. You drove a wedge through that family. Her father and her were never the same after that. Not up until the day he died. Fourteen years. And there's no putting that right. Not now.

(Pause.)

So maybe it doesn't matter. It's done. I'm here and you're somewhere that's not here and she's fine back in Jersey and maybe that's all that matters. She's in Jersey. You don't matter. Maybe in the end, you just don't matter.

(The SQUEAL sounds off R. Lost in thought, CHRIS seems not to notice. LORALIE exits DR. The phone RINGS. CHRIS crosses R, and sits to answer it.)

CHRIS

TRU-92, tried and true by you. ... Yeah, speaking.

(Slowly rising from the chair.)

Hey, how are you? ... Fine, we've been waiting. We were expecting you and Mitch this morning. Eight hours ago. ... I'm sorry to hear that. We've got one of his biggest fans here dying to meet him.

(The SQUEAL stops.)

Okay, understood. ... Well, no need to apologize. We'll catch him next time around. ... Yeah, that'd be great. We'll put them to good use. ... Compact discs would be great, but most of us are still using vinyl around here. ... Sure. Hey, is Mitch right there with you? ... Yeah, pass him a message, would you? Tell him Chris Woodford says "Hi." Chris Arnold Woodford says, "Hi." ... Use the full name. Please. Chris Arnold Woodford ...

CHRIS (Continued)

Who recently returned to his hometown of Hoboken ...
That's right. And tell him I hope we'll catch up some
other time. Back East. ... You, too.

(HE slowly returns the receiver to the
cradle, lost in a reverie.)

LORALIE

(Entering DR carrying a cartridge tape
with tape spilling out of it.)

Bomgaars spot. Want me to recut it?

CHRIS

It's an agency spot. The reel's probably out by
Terry's desk if you wanna re-cart it.

(LORALIE exits DL with the cartridge.
CHRIS crosses L and regards the LPs.
After a moment, LORALIE enters DL still
carrying the cartridge.)

LORALIE

I don't see it.

CHRIS

(Taking the tape from her.)

Just discrep it. I'll call it in Monday. We'll do
make-goods.

(HE crosses R to toss it in the trash,
while LORALIE sits on the sofa and
begins examining the LPs. CHRIS, still
lost in thought, turns and regards her
like one might a child at play.)

LORALIE

(In her own world, singing to herself.)

Waitin' and hopin', for you to be mine. I'm waitin'
and hopin', for some kind of sign ...

(To CHRIS.)

What'd they want?

CHRIS

Hmmm?

LORALIE

On the phone?

CHRIS

Nothing. Mrs. Davidson. It's wet up in the Gulch, apparently.

(Pause.)

Listen. I'm going home.

LORALIE

(Standing.)

Oh. Okay.

CHRIS

No, I mean ... I'm going home. Really.

LORALIE

Okay. But, what if he ...

CHRIS

(Tidying up the desk a bit, HE slings the knapsack across one shoulder, and turns to her.)

Look, we don't run into each other too often. So if I don't see you before you check in to the Brill Building, good luck with that.

LORALIE

Okay.

CHRIS

Seriously. Show that stuff around. Don't wait for someone to come asking about it.

(They regard each other a moment, before CHRIS crosses UC and exits. LORALIE sits on the sofa and looks around the empty office. SHE picks up a paper airplane from the sofa, sails it across the office and waits until it lands. And then she waits some more.)

(BLACKOUT.)

(END OF PLAY.)

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

This play is set in the 1980s, but is not intended to be nostalgia. LORALIE shouldn't sport big hair; CHRIS shouldn't wear neon colors; and the set should be 100 percent Rubik's Cube-free.

The period is significant for purposes of this play, because it's the autumn of an era when people like CHRIS -- who thrilled at the notion of working on-the-air -- still had a fighting chance. In the '80s, the presumption that working an air-shift meant creating a playlist and opening a mic at-will was rapidly becoming a quaint notion from a simpler time.

Radio jocks were increasingly finding themselves downgraded to "board operators," or, worse, stewards of broadcast automation systems. And, as a result, those inspired by depictions of radio found on TV ("WKRP in Cincinnati") or in popular music (Donald Fagen's "The Nightfly"), became increasingly dissatisfied, questioning their role in the workplace.

MITCH MACLAY is based on no single entertainer. He's punched from the template of any number of second-tier crooners whose heyday was in the 1950s and '60s -- but whose careers waned into the '80s and beyond.

On their best days, singers like MITCH were confused by casual fans with other celebrities who enjoyed similar good looks. And as their stars faded, they frequently were known to younger generations solely as "celebrity" contestants on TV game shows.

To avoid giving away the play's ending, producers may wish to list MITCH MACLAY as an additional character in their playbill. Fair warning: They do so at the risk of disappointing the audience along with CHRIS and LORALIE.

For the uninitiated, broadcast cartridge tapes like the one shown in this play strongly resemble 8-track tapes. So an 8-track from your local thrift store with label removed should satisfy all but the fussiest props master.

Producers should be careful not to run afoul of music royalty requirements during the few moments the audience hears TRU-92's air product.

An Internet search will likely reveal a number of royalty-free musical download options sufficient to cover those brief interludes.

Loralie is pronounced LORE-ah-lie. "TRU" in TRU-92 is spoken as a word, not as an acronym. So the station is pronounced "True ninety-two."

Finally, no disrespect is intended -- nor should be implied -- to Rupert Holmes's "Escape (The Piña Colada Song)."

ALTERNATE DIALOGUE

Producers who require an obscenity-free staging of this play may choose to make the following dialogue substitutions:

- p. 10 Change "steal shit" to "steal stuff."
- p. 13 Change "eat the shit" and "eating the shit" to "suck the mud" and "sucking the mud," respectively.
- p. 18 Change "shit the bed" to "bit the dust."
- p. 20 Change "bunch of shit" to "bunch of crap." Strike LORALIE's "Christopher Wood, you have a foul mouth. Did you know that?" Strike CHRIS's "That's fair."
- p. 21 Change "asshole" to "jerk."
- p. 39 Strike "fucking."
- p. 41 Change "shit move" to "crappy move."

MITCH MACLAY SINGS JUST FOR YOU

