

# WHO'S DYING TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

**By Pat Cook**

© Copyright 2000

## **PERFORMANCE LICENSE**

The amateur acting rights to this play are controlled exclusively by PIONEER DRAMA SERVICE, INC., P.O. Box 4267, Englewood, Colorado 80155, without whose permission no performance, reading or presentation of any kind may be given. On all programs and advertising this notice must appear: "Produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., Englewood, Colorado."

**COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK  
IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.**

All other rights in this play, including those of professional production, radio broadcasting and motion picture rights, are controlled by Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., to whom all inquiries should be addressed.

**Pioneer**  
Drama Service, Inc.

**For preview only**

## WHO'S DYING TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

A Murder Mystery-Comedy

By PAT COOK

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<u># of lines</u>
ANNOUNCER.....smooth as silk offstage voice	7
REGINALD SMARMY .....oily game show host, not too bright	102
BARNEY LUTZ .....first contestant	15
CLOVIS DARNELL .....director of the show; that's all she cares about	109
MAC ROONEY.....old-timer, writer for the show	49
PHOEBE KENDALL.....makeup lady	26
CLEO CARRUTHERS.....wise-cracking assistant director	60
DENNY PERKINS .....stage manager, she is something of an "armchair detective"	149
SAM DITHERS .....second contestant, nervous	37
SAM'S MOTHER .....Sam's lifeline; we only hear her voice	8
SAM'S FATHER.....the same	7
BERTHA HOGGENS.....boisterous, self-important mayor	37
MYRTLE CLUMPH.....city councilwoman	6
NOLA BARTEL .....another	17
SUE BANDERGILL.....another	7
EFFIE GOMPERS.....another	18
HENRY POMEROY.....newspaper editor, has eyes for Denny	72
SALLY DEAN RIVIERA .....rival TV show host; even slicker than Reginald	61
JESSE MARLOWE .....sheriff, something of a hick	143
BARBARA PHILPOT .....Jesse's bumbling deputy	36
SOFIE MONDELLO .....eccentric lady who confesses to everything	29
JOYCE MANSFIELD .....bigwig with the network	47
DEDE McCOY .....dead body (part may be double cast)	n/a
FRIEDA SOAMES .....fourth contestant, as bold as any mercenary	8
HARVEY PAUL .....another smooth offstage voice	1
PARKER JONES .....security guard	11
KATE WILLIAMS.....runner up for contestant	14

For preview only

FLORENCE HOOD .....	another	11
MARY LOU LYNCH .....	another	13
STAGE HANDS.....	at least two	1
EXTRAS .....	as desired, for additional councilwomen	

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

TIME: The present.

PLACE: A theater stage in Old New Plunkettville.

ACT ONE, Scene One: During the show. The first contestant dies to be a millionaire... literally!

ACT ONE, Scene Two: An hour later. Everyone sit tight, the sheriff's here.

ACT ONE, Scene Three: The next day. The second contestant buys the farm.

ACT ONE, Scene Four: After the show. Everybody had motive and opportunity, and we even have a confession, but still no killer.

ACT ONE, Scene Five: A day later. Nobody's a millionaire, but everybody's dying.

ACT TWO: Another day later. All is chaos, but justice is finally done.

## SETTING

The setting for this intrigue is the traveling set for the hot game show "Who's Dying to be a Millionaire?" Each week this fast-paced quiz show travels to a different city and broadcasts from a large theater. This week the show's set up on just such a spot in Old New Plunkettville. The show set is CENTER STAGE and consists of the host's swivel chair situated near the contestant's small couch or love seat. A small table stands next to the swivel chair and a coffee table is in front of the love seat. A telephone sits on the coffee table. This area is carpeted and has plants around the chairs. Further UPSTAGE LEFT, against the wall, several folding chairs are set up.

The theater stage itself is complete with the standard three walls. Four doors are located on these stage walls. STAGE RIGHT, a door leads to the backstage and technical area. An UPSTAGE RIGHT door leads to the dressing rooms. UPSTAGE LEFT, a door leads outside the building, and the final door, located STAGE LEFT, leads to the prop and costume rooms and out into the theater.

For preview only

# WHO'S DYING TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

## ACT ONE

### Scene One

Before the LIGHTS come up, we hear the ANNOUNCER.

**ANNOUNCER:** Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen, to the second half of our show. Every afternoon we come to you with cash in hand and questions to answer! The moment you've all been waiting for! The question everybody wishes we would ask each and every one of you! And now... *(A SPOTLIGHT COMES UP on BARNEY, who sits on the love seat. He squints at the bright light.)* ...Barney Lutz, we ask you! "Who's Dying to be a Millionaire?"

**BARNEY:** *(Voice cracking.)* I do! I am! I'm here! What?

**ANNOUNCER:** And here he is again, the man with the million-dollar smile, the million-dollar charm and the million-dollar question, Reginald Smarmy! *(LIGHTS COME UP on the SHOW SET, highlighting REGINALD in his swivel chair. SOUND OF APPLAUSE. It dies down.)*

**REGINALD:** Thank you, Herb. And welcome back to the only quiz show that comes to you! Each and every week we travel to a different city in this great nation of ours. And why? To give away money! *(He gestures at the audience and we hear the SOUND OF APPLAUSE.)* Well, our contestant, Barney, has been busy today and he's just about to go for the five hundred thousand dollar question. Now, I'm sure you all know the rules but I'll just run through them one more time in case somebody out there has been living in a cave. *(He laughs at his joke and then stops.)* Our panel of judges chooses contestants from each city we visit by a well thought-out plan of dragging them in off the street. Then, for every correct answer they give, they earn money! Each question has four possible answers, one of which our contestant may choose of his own free will. *(He gives the rest of the instructions very rapidly, leaving BARNEY visibly confused.)* Or the contestant may pass his turn to the next contestant, in which case they divide the earnings. Or he may choose someone in the audience to answer it for him by calling out "May Day!" Or the contestant may also spend half of his earnings to buy vowels, in which case we show him all the vowels in the answer but not in the correct order. Or the contestant may play his "Mother, May I?" card for a phone call to his mother and/or father. If they are not at home, he loses his turn, his card

and has to find his own way home. (*During the instructions, BARNEY is counting on his fingers to keep it straight in his mind.*) Or... (*He looks OFF RIGHT and holds his right ear as if there is a transmitter in it that he is listening to.*) What? (*Back to the audience.*) Oh, that's it.

**BARNEY:** (*Hand up.*) What was that middle thing?

**REGINALD:** (*Rises and moves behind the love seat and speaks right in BARNEY'S ear.*) Okay, Barney, answer this one correctly and you win five hundred thousand dollars! And a chance to answer the one-million-dollar question! Are you prepared?

**BARNEY:** Yes.

**REGINALD:** Are you ready?

**BARNEY:** Yes!

**REGINALD:** Are you excited?

**BARNEY:** Yes!

**REGINALD:** Great! Tell us about yourself. (*He sits in his chair again.*)

**BARNEY:** What?

**REGINALD:** How did you get to be on our show?

**BARNEY:** I'm not real sure. (*He indicates outside.*) I was going bowling—

**REGINALD:** That's fine! And how is it you know so much about so many things?

**BARNEY:** I watch a lot of television and—

**REGINALD:** That's swell! Are you married?

**BARNEY:** I was engaged once but at the last minute, this gang of Gypsies rushed in—

**REGINALD:** (*Mock laughter.*) Ha, ha, ha! What a story! And now, Barney Lutz! (*He pulls out a card from his jacket.*) Here's your question. For five hundred thousand dollars... (*BARNEY grabs the arm of the love seat with both hands as if getting ready to blast off.*) ...just answer this question. Are you prepared?

**BARNEY:** Get on with it!

**REGINALD:** He's ready. All right. (*He reads.*) "What is the shape of the White House Oval Office? It is: A. Oval. B. Trapezoid. C.

Parallelogram. Or D. Vanilla?" You have ten seconds. (*Dippy MUSIC PLAYS.*)

**BARNEY:** Uh...

**REGINALD:** What is your answer? Hurry, before the gun goes off.

**BARNEY:** May I stand?

**REGINALD:** Is that your answer?

**BARNEY:** No! I'm asking! May I stand? (*REGINALD looks OFF RIGHT again and then nods to BARNEY.*)

**REGINALD:** Yes, you may stand.

**BARNEY:** (*Rises and paces a bit.*) Oval... Trapeze... Parasol... Vanilla sounds good.

**REGINALD:** Is that your answer?

**BARNEY:** I got it! (*He snaps his fingers.*) Oval! (*Just after he speaks, a GUN FIRES. BARNEY'S eyes widen and he gasps.*)

**REGINALD:** (*Jumps to his feet.*) That was close! (*He looks OFF again.*) Did he make it, was he in time? (*He claps.*) He was! Barney Lutz, you have just won five hundred thousand dollars! (*He slaps BARNEY on the back, and BARNEY falls to the floor, dead as a doornail. REGINALD looks out.*) And now a word from our sponsor! (*He sits, ever-smiling, in his chair.*)

**CLOVIS'S VOICE:** (*FROM OFF RIGHT.*) We're into the commercial! (*LIGHTS COME UP FULL on the rest of the STAGE AREA. The STAGE becomes a flurry of activity as CLOVIS, MAC, PHOEBE and CLEO rush IN from various directions. PHOEBE begins patting down REGINALD'S face with a makeup sponge. CLOVIS, wearing a head microphone, paces around the STAGE, looking up at the lights. MAC and CLEO stand behind REGINALD. MAC hands a bundle of cards to REGINALD. DENNY ENTERS and looks down at BARNEY. [NOTE: The following lines must be delivered quickly, practically one on top of another. The feeling to give the audience is that all this action is taking place simultaneously.]*)

**CLOVIS:** (*Yells.*) We still have too many shadows in this area here! Bring up the baby spots! Listen to me, Harold, this is your director speaking!

**PHOEBE:** (*To REGINALD.*) I wish you wouldn't sweat so. It will simply spoil your new shirt.

**CLEO:** (*Looking at her watch.*) This is quite a big theater!

**MAC:** Ah, this is nothing. I remember once, when I was head writer for “Your Money or Your Wife,” we once played the coliseum.

**DENNY:** (*Snaps her fingers over BARNEY.*) Hello?

**REGINALD:** But I look good, right? You’re the makeup lady, you ought to know.

**PHOEBE:** You always look good, Reggie.

**CLEO:** Fifty-five seconds before we come out of commercial! (*CLOVIS shoots her a look.*) This is your assistant director speaking. (*She smiles smugly.*)

**DENNY:** (*Kneels down and looks more closely at BARNEY.*) Hello?

**CLOVIS:** That’s fine! But now I’m getting an echo! Sound? (*She looks in another direction.*)

**REGINALD:** Just as long as I look good.

**PHOEBE:** Did you put on lipstick?

**DENNY:** Mr. Lutz? (*She bends over and listens to BARNEY’S heart.*)

**REGINALD:** (*To PHOEBE.*) Just a dab.

**CLOVIS:** (*Yells at REGINALD.*) Don’t forget, the mayor’s waiting to see you after the show!

**PHOEBE:** (*To REGINALD.*) After I told you not to? The union will have my card!

**CLEO:** Forty-five seconds! Mac, have you written Reginald’s speech for the mayor?

**MAC:** Nothing to it. I once wrote an entire episode for “Space Goat” in ten minutes.

**PHOEBE:** (*To REGINALD.*) Stop wiggling!

**DENNY:** (*Looks up.*) Uh... somebody?

**CLOVIS:** And that intro music was too loud again, Harold!

**CLEO:** Forty seconds.

**CLOVIS:** (*Rushes over to REGINALD.*) Did you hear me, Reg? The mayor and council will be here right after the show.

**REGINALD:** Waiting for my words.

**MAC:** (*Gives REGINALD another card.*) No big deal. I once had to rewrite the Encyclopedia Britannica in—

**DENNY:** (*Shouts.*) Hey! (*EVERYONE stops and looks at her.*)

**CLOVIS:** There's no need to shout, Denny. A good stage manager always commands respect without shouting.

**DENNY:** Well, respect this. Our contestant seems to be dead!

**CLOVIS:** Dead?! (*She rushes over and looks down at BARNEY.*) He can't be dead! (*MAC and CLEO move to BARNEY.*)

**DENNY:** Tell him that.

**REGINALD:** (*Leans forward, casually.*) He has to answer the big question.

**PHOEBE:** (*To REGINALD.*) I said stop wiggling! (*She shoves him.*)

**REGINALD:** Sorry.

**CLEO:** He can't do this to us.

**CLOVIS:** (*Yells OFF RIGHT.*) Bring in the next contestant!

**CLEO:** Imagine, him dying like that.

**DENNY:** We don't have to imagine it—he's right here.

**MAC:** Ah, I remember once on "Digger McBain, Private Eye," I wrote an episode that had eighteen people killed.

**DENNY:** But this is real!

**MAC:** Well... then, that's different.

**CLOVIS:** (*Calls OFF RIGHT.*) Next contestant!

**CLEO:** Twenty-five seconds! Shouldn't we, like, move him before we go back live?

**DENNY:** You can't move a body! It's tampering with evidence!

**CLOVIS:** (*She calls OFF RIGHT.*) Two stage hands out here to move Mr. Lutz! And where's the next contestant?!

**SAM:** (*ENTERS RIGHT and walks up behind the love seat.*) I think I'm the next contestant. (*He holds out a hand.*) Sam Dithers. (*Nobody shakes his hand.*)

**REGINALD:** The conditions I have to work under. (*Two STAGE HANDS rush IN RIGHT.*)



**CLOVIS:** Move him back there somewhere.

**STAGE HAND:** Right. *(One of the STAGE HANDS grabs BARNEY'S feet and the other one grabs his shoulders.)*

**DENNY:** That man just died. Doesn't that bother any one here?

**CLOVIS:** No time, we have—

**CLEO:** *(Holds out her wrist watch.)* Fifteen seconds!

**SAM:** *(Watches the two STAGE HANDS lift BARNEY and begin to carry him OFF RIGHT.)* What did... who...?

**CLOVIS:** We'll worry about it after the show. *(She yells.)* I'm still getting an echo!

**SAM:** *(As the STAGE HANDS carry BARNEY OFF RIGHT.)* Did he miss the last question?

**PHOEBE:** There. *(A final dab.)* And don't pick at anything!

**CLOVIS:** *(Shoves SAM into the love seat.)* You sit here. *(She smiles.)* You'll do fine. Enjoy yourself!

**SAM:** What?

**CLEO:** Five seconds!

**CLOVIS:** Everybody off! *(In one troop movement, the TECHNICAL CREW sprint OFFSTAGE in all directions, except for DENNY, who is staring out, dumbfounded. CLOVIS rushes back ON and yanks DENNY OFF RIGHT.)*

**REGINALD:** *(Leans forward.)* Ready?

**CLOVIS'S VOICE:** *(FROM OFF RIGHT.)* And... go! *(LIGHTS GO DOWN on the STAGE AREA, leaving only the SHOW SET LIT.)*

**REGINALD:** *(His usual oily self.)* Well, we're back. Our next contestant is also vying for the five hundred thousand dollar question. *(He swivels to SAM.)* So, Sam? Nervous?

**SAM:** Uh... what's the penalty if you miss a question?

**REGINALD:** *(Mock laugh.)* Ha, ha, ha! You have a grand sense of humor. Now! *(He yanks a card from his jacket.)* Are you prepared?

**SAM:** I don't think I have enough insurance.

**REGINALD:** Answer this question and your next one will be for one million dollars. Okay, listen closely. Here is your question.

**SAM:** Read it slowly. *(He looks around as if preparing for an ambush.)*

**REGINALD:** The category is sports. *(Reads.)* “Many years ago, an indoor sport was created whereby the players would try to throw a ball through a basket. Now, for five hundred thousand dollars, this sport is called: A. Fishing. B. Basketball. C. Macramé. Or D. Macaroni?” What’s your answer?

**SAM:** Macaroni, didn’t he invent the telegraph or bran flakes or something?

**REGINALD:** I’m the one asking the questions here.

**SAM:** *(Thinks out loud.)* “Stuck a feather in his hat and called it Macaroni.” *(To REGINALD.)* What was the question again? *(Just then a SIREN SOUNDS, and SAM falls off the love seat onto the floor, covering his face with his hands.)*

**REGINALD:** Aw, I’m sorry. Your time is up.

**SAM:** That’s what I was afraid of!

**REGINALD:** *(Rises.)* I mean our time is up for today. Will you come back tomorrow and go for the big question for one million dollars? *(He looks out and gestures at the audience. We hear the SOUND OF APPLAUSE.)*

**SAM:** *(Takes his hands away from his face and looks out.)* How much?

**REGINALD:** One million dollars.

**SAM:** *(Stands up and brushes himself off. He looks out boldly.)* You bet!

**REGINALD:** *(To the audience.)* And you be here tomorrow, same time, same channel, you hear? And find out, once again, “Who’s Dying to be a Millionaire?” *(He puts an arm around SAM and smiles broadly.)*

**CLOVIS’S VOICE:** *(OFFSTAGE.)* And we’re off the air! *(LIGHTS COME UP on the rest of the STAGE AREA. CLOVIS, CLEO and MAC all rush ONSTAGE.)*

**CLOVIS:** *(Yells out.)* I want to run a sound check before tomorrow, Harold!

**CLEO:** You okay, Reg?

**REGINALD:** Of course, I’m the best. Great show, wasn’t it?

**MAC:** Yeah, if only our ratings were as big as your ego.

**REGINALD:** Right. *(He catches himself.)* Huh? *(SAM moves to CLOVIS.)*

**MAC:** We'd sure have a hit.

**REGINALD:** How can people not tune in? We're giving away one million dollars!

**MAC:** Everybody is giving away one million dollars! One channel is sticking the contestants out on a desert island.

**SAM:** *(To CLOVIS.)* Can I leave now?

**CLEO:** Of course, we haven't actually given away that million dollars yet.

**MAC:** Amazing, huh? *(He winks at CLEO.)*

**CLOVIS:** *(To SAM.)* You be back tomorrow, same time.

**SAM:** Okay, I just want to settle a few things with my loved ones. *(He sighs and EXITS RIGHT.)*

**CLEO:** Where's Mr. Lutz?

**CLOVIS:** Who?

**CLEO:** The other contestant. The one who died.

**CLOVIS:** Oh, him. *(She realizes.)* What?

**CLEO:** He fell over dead, you saw it!

**CLOVIS:** So much to remember! *(PHOEBE ENTERS LEFT, followed by MAYOR BERTHA, MYRTLE, NOLA, SUE and EFFIE. EFFIE is carrying a plaque and NOLA is carrying a "Key to the City.")*

**CLEO:** *(Looks OFFSTAGE RIGHT.)* Where's Denny?

**PHOEBE:** Right this way, Mayor! *(She says this last word to alert the OTHERS, who ALL turn to see them approaching.)* Everyone is so excited about your visit.

**CLOVIS:** *(Crosses to BERTHA.)* Mayor... *(As she passes MAC, he whispers in her ear.)*

**MAC:** Hoggens!

**CLOVIS:** Hoggens, this is indeed a pleasure! *(She holds out her hand and the two shake.)*

**BERTHA:** No more a pleasure from you than from us and we are all

here to partake in this same... pleasure. (*The COUNCIL LADIES all look at each other and roll their eyes.*)

**MAC:** What'd she say?

**BERTHA:** And where's that charming host of yours?

**REGINALD:** (*Ever charming.*) I think she means me! (*He moves to them and bows deeply, causing the COUNCIL to swoon a bit.*) This is indeed... (*He whips out a card from his jacket and reads.*) ...an honor! But wait, you cannot possibly be the mayor. Aren't you still in high school?

**CLEO:** (*To MAC.*) I swear, you could smear him on a cracker.

**BERTHA:** Now, now, young man, I know about your reputation and with all the charm and wherewithal that you dispense your... charm and wherewithal.

**SUE:** (*To the other COUNCILWOMEN.*) Tell me again how she got elected. (*A couple of the them shush her.*)

**BERTHA:** I am here, along with our City Council (*She indicates the other COUNCILWOMEN.*), to present you with this plaque. (*She holds out nothing and looks at her hand. She looks back at the others.*) Where's the plaque?

**EFFIE:** Here, here! (*She hands the plaque to BERTHA.*) You still owe me fourteen bucks for that!

**BERTHA:** (*Yanks the plaque from EFFIE.*) Gimme! (*Turning to REGINALD.*) Sir, I award you this plaque on behalf of the citizens, residents, constituents, denizens, natives and habitants of Old New Plunkettville.

**DENNY:** (*Rushes IN STAGE RIGHT.*) Clovis? (*CLOVIS shushes her, indicating that she is busy. DENNY waits awkwardly through the following exchange.*)

**REGINALD:** Why, thank you. I shall cherish this until my dying day, such a tribute, such a gesture!

**PHOEBE:** Put it with the others?

**REGINALD:** Right. (*He hands the plaque to PHOEBE.*)

**CLOVIS:** (*Grabs the plaque away.*) Wait, where's publicity?

**HENRY:** (*Rushes IN UP RIGHT, carrying a camera.*) Somebody call for me?

**CLOVIS:** Who're you?

**HENRY:** Henry Pomeroy, editor and chief of the "Old New Plunkettville Pilot." Sorry I was late, I was covering the stockyards.

**MAC:** Glad somebody finally did it.

**HENRY:** (*Moves DOWNSTAGE and aims his camera at the GROUP. CLOVIS gives the plaque back to REGINALD, and he and the MAYOR'S group pose with REGINALD holding one side of the plaque and BERTHA holding the other.*) That's nice, everybody together, little family portrait here. Now, everybody say "Gorgonzola."

**BERTHA/NOLA/SUE/MYRTLE/EFFIE:** What? (*HENRY snaps the flash.*)

**MYRTLE:** He did it to us again!

**HENRY:** That's my front page photo.

**SUE:** Will you wait until we're ready?! (*REGINALD hands the plaque back to CLOVIS and starts to walk away.*)

**BERTHA:** Wait, we also have the Key to the City. (*She holds out a hand. NOLA hands her the "Key."*)

**DENNY:** Clovis?

**CLOVIS:** What is it?

**DENNY:** Sally Dean's here!

**CLOVIS:** Just what I need! What's she doing in Old New Plunkettville?

**MAC:** Sally Dean? Keep her away from Reginald!

**BERTHA:** Mr. Smarmy, we would also like to present you with the Key to the City.

**NOLA:** (*To BERTHA.*) That's twenty-two fifty.

**EFFIE:** (*To NOLA.*) You'll never see it.

**BERTHA:** (*To REGINALD.*) This is a pledge of our city's generous welcome and will open any door in our fair community, as our token of... (*They all pose again as HENRY gets ready to take the picture.*) ...welcome!

**HENRY:** (*Flashes another photo.*) Very nice. (*He winds his camera.*) A plaque and a key. Mr. Smarmy, you should really feel honored. Last time they gave away both of those it was to the new ape at the zoo.

**MYRTLE:** Pomeroy, you just focus your camera and leave the talking to us.

**REGINALD:** Ladies, your generosity is exceeded only by your beauty, grace and elegance.

**SUE:** *(To REGINALD.)* I got new earrings specially for the occasion!

**REGINALD:** *(Through a frozen smile.)* Good for you. *(HENRY sees DENNY and looks curiously at her. She sees him looking at her.)*

**BERTHA:** How do you like our fair city, Mr. Smarmy?

**REGINALD:** Please, call me Reggie! *(He kisses her hand.)*

**BERTHA:** Oh hohoho... *(She shows her hand to the other COUNCIL WOMEN. REGINALD hands the "Key" to PHOEBE, who also takes the plaque from CLOVIS. The GROUP chats quietly. After talking to BERTHA for a moment, CLEO EXITS RIGHT.)*

**HENRY:** *(To DENNY.)* Well, look at you. You haven't changed a bit! *(He takes her hand.)*

**DENNY:** *(Not sure who he is.)* Uh... neither have you! *(Trying to be gracious.)* How have you been?

**HENRY:** Same old same old.

**DENNY:** I didn't know you'd be here.

**HENRY:** I believe you have gotten prettier, though.

**DENNY:** You're just saying that.

**HENRY:** No, I truly mean it. Newspapermen always tell the truth.

**DENNY:** Yeah, sure.

**HENRY:** We have to have dinner tonight.

**DENNY:** Well, okay, sure. One question?

**HENRY:** What?

**DENNY:** We've never met, have we?

**HENRY:** Right.

**DENNY:** *(Throws down his hand and glares at him.)* I can't believe I fell for that!

**HENRY:** What time shall I pick you up? *(DENNY stares at him for a beat and then turns and EXITS briskly RIGHT.)*

**SALLY:** (*ENTERS RIGHT, all smiles and charm.*) What a show—it was absolutely delicious!

**CLOVIS:** Sally Dean!

**MAC:** Somebody run interference! (*CLOVIS lopes over to SALLY. CLEO ENTERS RIGHT with a cup of water and crosses to BERTHA to give it to her.*)

**EFFIE:** (*Awestruck.*) Sally Dean Riviera!

**REGINALD:** (*Scowling.*) Where? Somebody give me a club.

**SALLY:** I saw the whole show, and it was amazing!

**CLOVIS:** Sally Dean, what a joy to see you. Why don't you leave? (*At this moment BERTHA raises her cup to her lips and starts to take a sip.*)

**SALLY:** Especially the part where the guy died.

**BERTHA:** (*Spits out her sip of water.*) Died?!

**PHOEBE:** (*To BERTHA.*) Why don't we all wait in the green room, what say?

**BERTHA:** What did she say, about somebody dying and—

**CLOVIS:** No need to bring that up now, Sal! (*She tries to usher SALLY OFF RIGHT.*)

**SALLY:** (*Pulls away from CLOVIS.*) I just had to find out where you came up with such a gimmick!

**REGINALD:** So! (*He paces deliberately toward SALLY, as if a gunfighter at high noon.*) Sally Dean Riviera.

**SALLY:** (*Paces toward REGINALD in the same fashion.*) Reginald Smarmy.

**REGINALD:** You look so much older in person.

**SALLY:** Not all of us can afford multiple plastic surgeries. (*The two HOSTS are now nose to nose.*)

**HENRY:** I think I see another photo op! (*He aims his camera.*)

**CLOVIS:** (*Jumps in between HENRY and the two HOSTS.*) There'll be time enough for pictures later.

**PHOEBE:** In the green room!

**DENNY:** (*ENTERS RIGHT.*) Clovis, I just heard from Harold up in sound.

**CLOVIS:** Not now, Denny.

**HENRY:** Denny? That's your name?

**DENNY:** Can't you see I'm busy?!

**HENRY:** Hey, you think this is just a hobby with me? (*He indicates his camera.*)

**REGINALD:** (*To CLOVIS.*) What's she doing here? (*He points to SALLY.*)

**CLOVIS:** Ask her!

**REGINALD:** (*To SALLY.*) What're you doing here?

**SALLY:** Oh, I just thought I'd drop by and watch you flounder on live television!

**REGINALD:** What?

**PHOEBE:** The green room is just this way. (*She indicates the STAGE RIGHT door.*)

**REGINALD:** (*Lunging at SALLY with hands extended as if to choke her.*) Why, you! (*SALLY recoils as MAC and CLEO restrain REGINALD. They talk to him quietly during the following dialogue, gradually releasing him and allowing him to straighten his clothing and compose himself.*)

**BERTHA:** (*Moves to CLOVIS.*) What did she just say about someone dying? (*The other COUNCILWOMEN follow her.*)

**CLOVIS:** Just a small problem. The man apparently... he fell over and... he probably had a...

**BERTHA:** He died?

**CLOVIS:** A little.

**DENNY:** But our sound man said he didn't use our sound effect for the gun.

**HENRY:** Wait, what gun?

**DENNY:** We have a sound effect to signal time is up. But we didn't use it. The guy was getting ready to—

**CLOVIS:** Don't be ridiculous, we all heard it.



**DENNY:** That's just it. Mr. Lutz didn't die of natural causes! He was shot!

**CLOVIS:** Shot?!

**HENRY:** I think I smell a story! *(He aims his camera at the GROUP.)*

**SALLY:** *(Smiling.)* This just gets better and better!

**REGINALD:** What's going on here? *(EVERYONE is now in a group, with HENRY, DOWNSTAGE, ready to get his next shot.)*

**CLEO:** He was murdered?

**SALLY:** Well, that sure answers that question.

**REGINALD:** What question?

**SALLY:** Who's dying to be a millionaire?! *(EVERYONE turns and looks at her as HENRY snaps another picture. Right after the FLASH, the LIGHTS BLACKOUT.)*

End of Scene One

## ACT ONE

### Scene Two

**LIGHTS UP FULL:** An hour later. JESSE is standing near the love seat taking notes in a small notepad. BARBARA is using a metal tape measure to gauge the distance between the onstage doors. CLOVIS and CLEO are sitting in the contestant love seat. They watch JESSE anxiously. He swaggers with his own self-importance but just comes across as a small town country hick.

**JESSE:** Now, what I'd like to do here is just ask you all a few questions, if that'd be all right.

**CLOVIS:** Sure, Sheriff. We never knew the man until he showed up for today's show.

**JESSE:** Can I ask the questions first?

**CLOVIS:** Go ahead.

**JESSE:** Thank yew. Now. *(He looks at his pad.)* How well did you know Barney Lutz?

**CLOVIS:** As I said, we only met him when he showed up for today's show. I have no idea how he found out about it.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE: Swivel chair; small couch or love seat; small table; coffee table; telephone; plants; carpet; several (at least three) folding chairs.

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene One: Note cards (REGINALD, MAC); makeup sponge (PHOEBE); head microphone (CLOVIS); plaque (EFFIE); Key to the City (NOLA); camera (HENRY).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Two: Note pad and a couple of pens or pencils (JESSE, HENRY); metal tape measure (BARBARA).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Three: Note card (REGINALD).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Four: Tape measure, note pad and writing utensil (BARBARA); whistle (CLOVIS); business card (JOYCE); official looking document (JESSE).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Five: Head microphone (CLOVIS), makeup supplies (PHOEBE); camera (HENRY).

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO: Clipboard (PARKER); large manila envelope with photos, note pad and pen or pencil (HENRY); two crumpled pieces of paper, wallet with long string of cat photos (SOFIE); large purse with three bags of popcorn inside (KATE); large purse with three soda cups with lids and straws (MARY LOU); handcuffs (BARBARA); fried chicken and napkins (FLORENCE); key to BARBARA'S handcuffs (JESSE); note card and pencil or pen (MAC); pistol (SALLY); makeup supplies (PHOEBE).

### SOUND EFFECTS

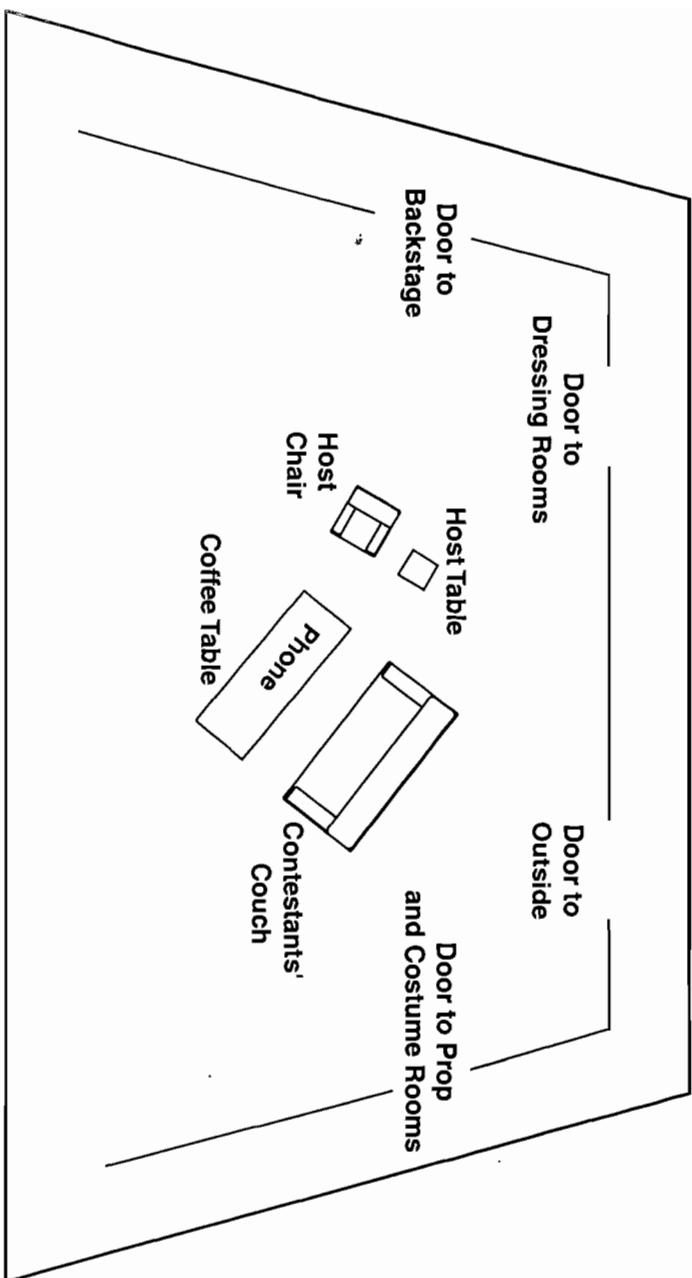
Applause, dippy music, gun, siren, phone ringing, radio being tuned in, static.

### COSTUMES

Contemporary attire. REGINALD should be wearing a tie and jacket. For ACT TWO, BERTHA needs an umpire's chest and leg protectors, a catcher's mask and an army helmet. She also has a metal garbage can lid hanging over the chest protector and another one hanging down her back. Of course, you can make variations on this, but make sure her face is concealed and that she looks as ridiculous as possible.

# WHO'S DYING TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

## Basic Floor Plan



## We hope you've enjoyed this script sample.

We encourage you to read the entire script before making your final decision.

You may order a paper preview copy or gain instant access to the complete script online through our E-view program. We invite you to learn more and create an account at [www.pioneerdrama.com/E-view](http://www.pioneerdrama.com/E-view).

Thank you for your interest in our plays and musicals. If you'd like advice on other plays or musicals to read, our customer service representatives are happy to assist you when you call 800.333.7262 during normal business hours.



[www.pioneerdrama.com](http://www.pioneerdrama.com)

800.333.7262

Outside of North America 303.779.4035

Fax 303.779.4315

PO Box 4267

Englewood, CO 80155-4267

**We're here to help!**