

Little Luncheonette of Terror

Book by Tim Kelly

Music by Bill Francoeur

Lyrics by Bill Francoeur and Steven Fendrich

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For preview only

LITTLE LUNCHEONETTE OF TERROR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<i># of lines</i>
PETE.....owns luncheonette	135
MARLENE.....student, admires Pete	105
MRS. BERSERKER.....Pete's mother	44
SARA LEE.....waitress	27
GEORGIA.....another	21
PATTY.....high school student	9
MAXINE.....another	9
LUCY.....another	16
SKIPPER.....another	11
BUFORD.....another	16
STINKY FLANAGAN.....young mobster, known as "King"	39
DELILAH JONES.....partner in crime	24
MONGO.....It Came From The Center Of The Earth	115
SHERIFF BILLY BOB.....big man in town	33
ROBBER.....but not a good one	160
MISS FOGG.....school librarian	25
MOLLY.....stock car racer	26
TREE LADY.....pine trees are her passion	21
FANTASY MAN.....proof of Mongo's powers	
DR. JUDD.....scientist	
EXTRA STUDENTS.....as/if desired	

SYNOPSIS

PLACE: Pete's Luncheonette—across the highway from Sylvester Stallone High School, Desert Country, California.

TIME: The Present.

ACT ONE: Afternoon

ACT TWO: Later

LITTLE LUNCHEONETTE OF TERROR

SEQUENCE OF MUSICAL NUMBERS

OVERTURE	Band Medley
THE PLACE TO GO, THE PLACE TO BE	Pete, Marlene, Mrs. Berserker, Students
MY SON	Mrs. Berserker
STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENIN'	Pete, Students
ORDINARY MONGO	Mongo, Students
LITTLE LUNCHEONETTE OF TERROR	Mongo, Students
ENTR'ACTE	Band Medley
I'M THAT KIND OF GUY	Pete
WE ARE WHAT WE READ	Students
SO MANY CHANGES	Pete, Marlene
MY HONEY BUN -	Mongo Fantasy Man, Girls
MONGO MAMBO	Mongo, Students, Sheriff, Judd, Mrs. Berserker, Pete, Marlene
THE PLACE TO GO, THE PLACE TO BE (REPRISE)	Pete, Marlene, Company
CURTAIN CALL/FINALE	Company
EXIT	Band Medley

There is a PRODUCTION-REHEARSAL TAPE for this play. See INSIDE BACK COVER.

LITTLE LUNCHEONETTE OF TERROR

ACT ONE

SETTING: Interior of luncheonette, located in a small desert community, California. UP CENTER is the counter, with stools/chairs placed in front. Behind the counter are shelves with cups, plates, coffeepot -- the usual items found in a fast food diner. At the RIGHT END of the counter is a cash register and telephone. DOWN RIGHT CENTER and DOWN LEFT CENTER there is a table. Each table has three chairs. ENTRANCE into kitchen is STAGE LEFT. ENTRANCE into luncheonette from outside is STAGE RIGHT. The washrooms and door to parking lot are located OFFSTAGE, DOWN RIGHT. Below the kitchen entrance, on a table, is a fantastic-looking electronic communications system -- a Citizens Band Radio gone bananas with coils, wires, colored bulbs, hand microphone. There's a stool in front of this rather large and amazing "machine." The FORESTAGE represents "outside the luncheonette," but it also functions as an "all-purpose" playing area. (NOTE: The preceding describes the basic set. For suggestions on a more elaborate scene, CONSULT PRODUCTION NOTES.)

AT RISE: LIGHTS HIT THE FORESTAGE. (Luncheonette in darkness)
Most of the CAST is in view. Sings to the audience: (*Music: "The Place To Go, The Place To Be."*)

CHORUS: (*ALL Sing.*)

If you're lookin' for a place to eat,
Try a half-a-block down the street.
So you're new, just arrived in town,
Come on along, let me show you around.
We've got a place you won't believe,
Once you stop, you'll never leave,
It's a place you won't forget,
Step right into Pete's Luncheonette . . .

'Cause it's the place to go, the place to be,
Try Pete's Luncheonette and you'll have to agree,
That it's the place to go, the place to be,
Come on, everybody, take a chance, and follow me.

STUDENT ONE: (*Sings.*) You'll agree Pete's the best around,

STUDENT TWO: (*Sings.*) 'Sides, it's the only place to eat in town.

STUDENT THREE: (*Sings.*) You may think his cookin's plain,

STUDENT FOUR: (*Sings.*)

But there ain't never been a case of ptomaine

GIRLS: (*Sing.*)

Betty Crocker would be proud of Pete,

Spoon in hand, grease at his feet.

BOYS: (*Sing.*) You'll get a meal you won't regret,

ALL: (*Sing.*)

Step right into Pete's Luncheonette!

'Cause it's the place to go, the place to be,

Try Pete's Luncheonette and you'll have to agree,

That it's the place to go, the place to be,

Come on everybody, take a chance, and follow me.

GIRLS: (*Spoken.*) But wait! (*Sing.*) There's more in store for you,

ALL: (*Sing.*)

Thrills and chills and screams and gore in store for you . . .

PETE: (*Sings.*)

You're probably wonderin' 'bout the stories you've heard

They're only half-true, some are absurd.

MARLENE: (*Sings.*)

So what if paranoia's gripped the town,

So what if people keep their shades pulled down.

MRS. BERSERKER: (*Sings.*)

Remember the day the earth stood still,

Could it be happening at the hamburger grill?

PETE: (*Sings.*)

No need to fear, no need to fret.

You'll be safe at Pete's Luncheonette . . .

ALL: (*Sing.*)

'Cause it's the place to go, the place to be,

Try Pete's Luncheonette and you'll have to agree,

That it's the place to go, the place to be,

Come on everybody, take a chance!

Yes, it's the place to go, the place to be,

Try Pete's Luncheonette and you'll have to agree,

That it's the the place to go, the place to be

Come on everybody take a chance, and follow me.

ALL: (*Shout.*) Follow me!

CAST MEMBERS EXIT FORESTAGE, LEFT and RIGHT. As they do, LIGHTS FLASH at the "radio machine" and the STAGE LIGHTING COMES UP FULL. PETE is seated at the radio. He wears a cook's apron, has receiver mike in his grip, speaks Citizens Band radio code.

PETE: (*With enthusiasm.*) We have a 10-2 now . . . 10-5 to base . . . you're 10-11 on us . . . Give me your 10-20 . . . You are getting out 10-92 now . . . You are definitely 10-99 . . . (*PETE is 18, not bad looking. He's a hard worker and has an overactive imagination. Although he's always getting into some mess, we like him at once. His "boyish enthusiasm" is that appealing. A bit of an eccentric, he wears a different color sneaker on each foot. As PETE prattles on [See Production Notes for radio code translation], MARLENE, a high school student, pretty, ENTERS RIGHT. She moves on to the DOWN RIGHT table, her interest on PETE. He doesn't notice her. She carries an encyclopedia volume.*) 10-9 your last 10-20 . . . You are definitely 10-99.

MARLENE: Hello, Pete.

PETE: What? Huh? (*Turns.*) Oh, hello, Marlene. Be with you in a minute. (*Back to mike.*) I've got a 10-1. (*Shift in tone.*) I'd better decode. Maybe that'll help. (*Serious.*) Your signal is weak . . . I can't get your message . . . This is Bulldog. Repeat. This is Bulldog . . . Unable to receive your message. (*He listens. Nothing. Shakes hand mike. If it can be managed, some loud "static" would prove effective.*) Darn. I lost him.

MARLENE: Who was it?

PETE: I wish I knew. I've been getting the strangest frequencies all week. They've been getting louder and louder.

MARLENE: What does he sound like? You can tell a lot about a person by the sound of his voice.

PETE: No voice.

MARLENE: No voice?

PETE: Not one word. Not even heavy breathing.

MARLENE: Then how do you know there's anybody there?

PETE: That's another strange thing. You may not believe me, Marlene. (*Pause.*) I "just" know. It's this "weird" feeling that takes over.

MARLENE: It may sound creepy, Pete, but I know exactly what you mean. The atmosphere in this town is becoming totally strange. Yesterday I saw a cat walking down the street.

PETE: That's not strange.

MARLENE: He was walking backwards.

PETE: (*Impressed*) Far out.

MARLENE: Mrs. Ratkiller said the Indian corn she had nailed to her front door -- "popped."

PETE: The heat.

MARLENE: Indian corn has never popped before. Heat or no heat.

PETE: Sure wish I knew what it all means. (*Points to book.*) What are you reading?

MARLENE: Reading? I'm not reading anything. (*Looks at volume.*) Isn't that amazing?

PETE: What?

MARLENE: I didn't even know I was carrying this. It's an encyclopedia volume. "X," "Y" and "Z." (*Frowns.*) Is there such a thing as teenage senility?

PETE: Search me. How about a dish of soft ice cream?

MARLENE: (*Notices Pete's sneakers.*) Pete, what a funny pair of sneakers you're wearing. One shoe is one color and the other shoe is another color.

PETE: That's all right. I've got another pair just like them at home.

MRS. BERSERKER'S VOICE: (*From DOWN RIGHT.*) Petey!

MARLENE: Who's that?

PETE: Mom.

MRS. BERSERKER'S VOICE: Petey!

PETE: I wish she wouldn't call me Petey. I'm old enough to vote. "Petey" is a kid's name. (*PETE's overbearing MOTHER ENTERS from DOWN RIGHT, shopping bag in her arms. Celery stalks or something leafy sticking out from the top. She wears a long coat.*)

MRS. BERSERKER: Ah, there's my baby boy. Hello, Marlene.

MARLENE: Hi, Mrs. Berserker.

MRS. BERSERKER: (*Moves CENTER.*) Take this into the kitchen. Fresh vegetables. I got them with double coupons down at the Piggly Wiggly.

PETE: (*Takes bag.*) Mom, I wish you wouldn't do this. If I want something for the luncheonette, I'll buy it myself. I'm on my own now. (*MRS. BERSERKER reacts as if an arrow has pierced her heart.*)

MRS. BERSERKER: Is that any way to speak to a concerned parent who loves you?

PETE: Ah, come on, Mom. Don't make me feel guilty.

MRS. BERSERKER: What a thing to say. Why would I want to make you feel guilty? (*Takes out hanky, dabs at the corner of her eye.*) He never writes.

MARLENE: Pete, you shouldn't be so insensitive.

MRS. BERSERKER: Some cauliflower, bunch of celery, head of romaine. Only trying to be of help.

MARLENE: Pete understands that. Don't you, Pete?

PETE: Yeah. Sure. 'Course.

MRS. BERSERKER: I thought when Petey graduated from high school last June he would go on to Chiropractor College and make

his mother proud. Never did I think he would open up a pitiful greasy spoon.

PETE: Pete's Luncheonette is not a greasy spoon.

MARLENE: It's popular, Mrs. Berserker.

MRS. BERSERKER: So is the freeway. (*Gesture to the room.*) "Pete's Luncheonette -- Home of the World Famous Chili Eggroll." It's a wonder I can look the neighbors in the face.

MARLENE: I think the eggroll was one of Pete's better ideas.

PETE: Thanks, Marlene.

MRS. BERSERKER: This boy could have been president of the United States if he only studied harder.

MARLENE: There's plenty of time. He's only eighteen.

PETE: (*Defeated*) Thanks for the vegetables, Mom.

MRS. BERSERKER: You mean it?

PETE: I mean it.

MRS. BERSERKER: (*Brightens.*) You're a good boy, Petey. Squirrely, but good. (*Notices sneakers.*) What unusual sneakers. (*PETE sighs, ENTERS kitchen.*)

MARLENE: Aren't you hot in that coat, Mrs. Berserker?

MRS. BERSERKER: Funny you should notice, Marlene. I haven't been able to take this coat off. Isn't that curious?

MARLENE: Strange things are happening, Mrs. Berserker. A little while ago, Pete was telling me the most amazing bit of news.

MRS. BERSERKER: Really?

MARLENE: He's been getting strange frequencies.

MRS. BERSERKER: He could have been bitten by a tick. I'll make an appointment with my doctor.

MARLENE: No, no, Mrs. Berserker. On that radio over there. (*MRS. BERSERKER takes a step toward radio, points a finger at it.*)

MRS. BERSERKER: Radio. Bah. One day I'm going to throw that contraption in the compost. Mark my words. No good will come of it. When will that boy grow up? When he was five years old he built what he thought was a stairway to the stars -- and when he tried to climb up he broke his leg. When he was ten he built a submarine for desert use. He nearly suffocated. Now this "luncheonette." Heaven only knows where he got the money.

MARLENE: Garage sales. When it comes to garage sales, Pete is the best in town.

MRS. BERSERKER: Pots and pans.

MARLENE: Usable furniture, bicycles.

MRS. BERSERKER: My son, the junkman.

MARLENE: He's terribly inventive, Mrs. Berserker. Give him credit for that.

MRS. BERSERKER: You understand my boy, Marlene. Take my advice. Marry him and start a family. Otherwise, who knows what will become of Petey. *(Sighs)* My son -- "the fry cook with strange frequencies." *(SARA LEE and GEORGIA, waitresses in uniform, ENTER RIGHT. NOTE: If director wishes, a third waitress can be added.)*

SARA LEE: Hello, Mrs. Berserker.

GEORGIA: Hiya.

MRS. BERSERKER: Hello, Georgia. Hello, Sara Lee. Late for work, aren't you?

SARA LEE: We were taking a break.

GEORGIA: Besides, there's never any business until school's over.

SARA LEE: Hot day, isn't it?

MRS. BERSERKER: It's August. What did you expect -- snow?
(GEORGIA goes behind the counter. Usual "waitress business.")

SARA LEE: Can I get you something, Marlene?

MARLENE: Not right now, thanks.

SARA LEE: Mrs. Berserker?

MRS. BERSERKER: I never eat in here. It would only encourage my son.

MARLENE: The food is really very good.

MRS. BERSERKER: *(To MARLENE.)* That ugly-looking radio has no business being in a luncheonette. It's stupid. All those wires and things.

MARLENE: *(Music: "My Son.")* It's Pete's pride and joy. He built it himself.

MRS. BERSERKER: My son, the inventor. *(Sighs.)* Ah, well. What can a mother say? *(Sings.)*

My son, gee whiz, I don't know what his problem is,

Always been the same old song.

My son, oh my, makes a mother want to cry

Tell me, where did I go wrong?

My son, the tinker, he's a stinker,

Trying to find his way in life.

And though he's a fruitcake, I love him

My only one, my son. My one and only son,

And though he's driving me insane,

He's my joy, my boy, my son.

My son, eeh gad, he's such a silly lad,

He leads a very nerdy life.

My son, oh my, no matter how I try,

I just can't find the boy a wife

My son, the ding dong, he's a ping pong,

When it comes to set'ling down.
And though he's a twinkie, I love him,
My only one. My son, my one and only son,
And though he drives me up a wall,
He's my joy, my boy, my son.

MRS. BERSERKER: (*Over music. Spoken. Brightens.*) Remember my words of wisdom, Marlene. Marry the boy today and change his ways tomorrow.

MARLENE: (*Spoken.*) But, Mrs. Berserker, I'm too young to think about marriage.

MRS. BERSERKER: (*Spoken.*) No girl is too young to think about marriage. I speak from experience.

MARLENE: (*Spoken.*) I don't know if Pete even likes me.

MRS. BERSERKER: (*Spoken.*) Rubbish. He's always talking about you. He adores you.

MARLENE: (*Spoken.*) I mean as a marriage prospect.

SARA LEE: (*Spoken. Jovial.*) He's already married. (*Points to radio.*) To that!

SARA LEE & GEORGIA: (*Spoken.*) Ha, ha, ha!

MRS. BERSERKER: (*Sings.*)
My son, my one and only son,
And though he's giving me a rash,
He's my joy, my boy, my son.
My one and only son,
Listen to a mother's desperate plea,
Save my joy, my boy, my son!

MRS. BERSERKER: Marlene, I'm counting on you to save my son from himself. (*Starts out.*) "Strange frequencies." Ha! It's time for me to leave.

MARLENE: Wait! I'll walk you to your car. (*PETE ENTERS AS they EXIT, DOWN RIGHT.*)

PETE: Goodbye, Mother. (*To waitresses.*) Better check in back and make sure we're ready for the afternoon rush.

SARA LEE: Sure thing.

PETE: And check my new walk-in cooler. Make sure it's working all right.

GEORGIA: It's working. I locked myself in yesterday and nearly froze. (*They EXIT. PETE notices the radio. Perhaps the lights flash or we hear static*)

PETE: The radio. Someone's trying to make contact. There could be an emergency! (*Dashes to stool, sits, picks up hand mike, fools with unit.*) This is Bulldog . . . Repeat: This is Bulldog. We're 10-8 and ready for call. Give me your 10-10. What's your location? (*Listens . . . surprised he can hear something*)

[even if the audience cannot]. Suddenly, PETE's eyes seem to pop out. He swallows hard and when he speaks, his voice is zombie-like, his words carefully spaced.) Set . . . the . . . coordinates . . . yes, yes . . . I understand. (He mechanically fools with some dials. As suddenly as he went into his "trance," he snaps out of it. It's as if he can't remember the previous seconds. Back to his CB routine, normal voice.) 10-5 to base . . . do you need assistance . . . advise . . . I'm standing by . . . that's a 10-4. (KING ENTERS from RIGHT. He's about PETE's age, but affects the aura of a much older person. In size, he towers over PETE. He fancies himself something of the classic "Godfather" type, talks "movie-mobster-tough." He wears a dark shirt and a white tie, gloves, jacket with exaggerated shoulders, tinted glasses. On his head is a wide-brimmed hat. KING watches and listens.) Bulldog here . . . does anybody need Smokey . . . should I contact Local Yokel . . . somebody there? Bulldog here.

KING: Hey, you, Mr. Bulldog. How about some service? Don't you believe in good customer relations?

PETE: (Into mike) 10-20 for a few minutes . . . standby.

KING: Who you talking to, Bulldog?

PETE: (Stands.) I'm not sure. It sounded as if someone needed help.

DELILAH'S VOICE: (From OFFSTAGE, RIGHT.) King! Where are you, King?

KING: In here, Sugar Cube. (In totters DELILAH, 16 or 17. And like KING, she pretends to be much older. She's dressed in whatever is the latest extreme in teenage fashion -- the "funnier" the better. Her voice is cartoonish. She's not the brightest girl in town.)

DELILAH: (Notices PETE.) Who's this?

KING: Calls himself Bulldog.

DELILAH: Bulldog? Ha, ha. Whoever heard of a human person being called Bulldog? It ain't natural. Ha, ha, ha.

KING: Ha, ha, ha.

PETE: (Offended.) That's not my real name. It's my CB handle.

DELILAH: Huh?

PETE: Handle. A nickname. Another operator might have a name like Maple Syrup or Spider Man. My real name's Pete.

KING: Pete, huh. Pete Berserker?

PETE: That's right.

KING: Just the boy I'm looking for. (PETE senses these two are not routine customers)

PETE: Hey, don't I know you?

KING: Anything's possible in this day and age.

PETE: You used to go to Sylvester Stallone. You dropped out in your junior year. *(Thinking.)* Your name's uh, uh, uh. Stinky Flanagan! *(KING and DELILAH cringe)*

KING: *(Hard.)* Never mind what my name was. These days I call myself -- "King."

DELILAH: Yeah, that's right. His name is "King." *(Snarls at PETE.)*
And don't you forget it.

PETE: King Stinky Flanagan?

KING: *(Brisk.)* I'll ignore that. I'm in business for myself.
(Introduces.) This here is my secretary, Miss Delilah Jones.

DELILAH: *(To KING.)* You want I should takes notes?

KING: What for? You can't read.

DELILAH: I can if I write slow.

PETE: *(Sotto.)* Boy, Dumdum City.

KING: Sit.

DELILAH: Your word is my command. You're the King. *(She sits, table RIGHT.)*

KING: *(Takes CENTER.)* I'll come directly to the point, Pete. I'm in the protection racket and I'm branching out. Why fool around with words? Time is money. Each week you will pay me a large percentage of your earnings.

PETE: Are you cracked?

KING: *(Insistent tone.)* Each week you will pay me a large percentage of your earnings. Otherwise --

PETE: Otherwise what?

KING: Watch. *(KING strolls to PETE, grabs him and bounces him up and down several times.)*

PETE: Ow! Ow! Ow! *(KING drops him.)*

DELILAH: And that was just for appetizers.

KING: Terrible accidents could happen in this luncheonette. Torn curtains, broken windows.

DELILAH: Awwwful things. Like someone could turn on the faucets in the washrooms and you could have a flood.

PETE: *(Hand over his ears.)* Stop!

KING: Hop to it, Delilah.

DELILAH: One flood coming up! *(DELILAH stands, EXITS DOWN RIGHT. PETE moves to stop her.)*

PETE: You can't do that!

KING: *(Stops him with an outstretched arm.)* Yes, she can.

PETE: There's a sheriff in this town.

KING: I wouldn't get any fancy ideas about calling him. We're wasting time, but talk is cheap.

PETE: If it's cheap, you ought to know.

KING: I get the impression you don't want to play nice. I'm only going to say this once; pay close attention. If you don't cooperate, I wouldn't want to be in your sneakers. (*Checks PETE's sneakers.*) I wouldn't be in those sneakers, no matter what.

PETE: Get lost.

KING: (*Shoves PETE.*) Don't push your luck. I'll be seeing you, Bulldog.

DELILAH: (*ENTERS.*) One flood. Awwwful mess. The floor's going to warp. Hee, hee, hee.

KING: Let's make tracks, Delilah.

DELILAH: Whatever you say. You're the King. (*KING and DELILAH move RIGHT.*)

KING: (*Turns back.*) The flood's just a small sample, Bulldog.

DELILAH: Bulldog? Ha, ha. Woof, woof. (*KING and DELILAH EXIT.*)

PETE: Flood! I'd better get a mop. (*ENTER MARLENE.*)

MARLENE: Well, your Mother is safely on her way home. Who were those two characters who just left?

PETE: I'll explain later. Right now I have to go to the bathroom.

MARLENE: That's all right. Take your time.

PETE: It's a plumbing problem. Would you watch things here for a minute?

MARLENE: Sure. (*PETE EXITS. ENTER GEORGIA and SARA LEE from kitchen.*)

GEORGIA: Well, we're ready for the afternoon rush.

SARA LEE: And I think it's coming now. (*Sound of excited hubbub from OFFSTAGE RIGHT.*)

STUDENTS: I'm hungry! I'm thirsty! Boy, was school a drag today! You said it! It won't be any better tomorrow! (*STUDENTS thunder into luncheonette, take seats at tables, counter. They are PATTY, MAXINE, LUCY, SKIPPER, BUFORD. Extra students (CHORUS) can be added. MARLENE sits. As STUDENTS grab seats, they yell out their orders and, fast, SARA LEE and GEORGIA write down the requests.*) I'll take a root beer float! Taco! Super Cheeseburger! Fries! Foot long doggie! Lemon Danish! Coke! Jelly doughnut! Squirt! 7-Up! Mountain Dew!

LUCY: (*When the commotion ebbs, softly.*) I'll have a small dinner salad.

SARA LEE: (*Moves into kitchen.*) Super cheese! One order fries! Small dinner salad! Foot long bow-wow! (*GEORGIA busies herself with filling the drink requests.*)

SKIPPER: How'd you beat us in, Marlene?

BUFORD: Cut class?

MARLENE: Miss Fogg had me send a telegram for a new set of encyclopedias.

LUCY: Telegram? What's wrong with a telephone?

MARLENE: She couldn't get through on the telephone. She seemed desperate.

PATTY: Miss Fogg orders a new set every week. There's nothing in the school library but encyclopedias. It doesn't make sense.

PETE: (*ENTERING.*) What a mess! I'd better get an "Out of Order" sign for the bathroom. No telling what will happen next.

BLUFORD: Gosh, things are weird all over the place!

STUDENTS: (*Ad Libs.*) Nothing seems normal.
No telling what will happen.
The whole world seem topsy-turvey.
Etc. (*Music: "Strange Things Are Happenin'."*)

CHORUS: (*ALL sing.*)
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
I got a feelin' that I'm never gonna wake up tomorrow.

STUDENT ONE: (*Sings.*)
Went to bed, late last night,
I reached over and I turned out the light.
When I layed back to rest my head . . .
I felt something underneath my bed!
(*Big STUDENT reaction with gasps, etc.*)

CHORUS: (*ALL sing.*)
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
I got a feelin' that I'm never gonna wake up tomorrow.

STUDENT TWO: (*Sings.*)
Went downtown, to see a show,
I had my goodies, I was ready to go,
The lights went out, the movie came on . . .
I looked down and all my goodies were gone!
(*Bigger STUDENT reaction.*)

CHORUS: (*ALL sing.*)
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
I got a feelin' that I'm never gonna wake up tomorrow.

STUDENT THREE: (*Sings.*)
After school, I was bakin' a snack.
I put the cookies on the oven rack,

The power was off, or so I learned . . .
Tell me, how did all my cookies get burned?
(Biggest STUDENT reaction.)

PETE: (Sings.)

I got a frequency I don't understand,
It's the strangest thing I've ever seen.
I've got to figure out the source if I can,
Tell me, who has the key, to this mystery?

CHORUS: (ALL sing.)

Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere.
Strange things are happenin' ev'rywhere,
I got a feelin' that I'm never, better stay together,
Feelin' that I'm never gonna wake up again.
(At the end of song, students return to their various tables.)

PETE: That reminds me; the controls on the range have been turning on and off. I'd better check them. (EXITS to kitchen.)

GEORGIA: Maybe that's why the hot chocolate is cold.

SARA LEE: And the ice keeps melting.

GEORGIA: But ice cubes always melt.

SARA LEE: Not while they're still in the freezer. (Suddenly lights begin to flash. Roar of rumbling. All react, shifting weight from foot to foot for balance.)

PATTY: Oh! Oh!

MAXINE: What's happening?

BUFORD: Hey! What's going on?!

SKIPPER: Earthquake!!!

ALL: Earthquake!!!

BUFORD: Feels like a seven point five!

PATTY: It's a big one, all right!

LUCY: The ceiling could fall! We could be crushed!

ALL: Oh! Oh! Oh!

SARA LEE: Quick! Out into the parking lot.

GEORGIA: We'll be safe there! (ALL rush OUT, DOWN RIGHT and RIGHT Ad Libbing -- "Hurry!" -- "This is it!" -- "The big one!" -- "Earthquake!" -- "Oh! Oh! As they dash from the scene, the lights on the radio begin to blink. The thing looks like a Christmas tree.)

PREPARATION FOR MONGO'S ARRIVAL: STAGE LIGHTS FLICKER wildly. SOUND OF RUMBLING intensifies. OPTIONAL MUSICAL EFFECT: "The Place To Go, The Place To Be" is PLAYED LOUD and FAST in a rather insane fashion. Radio machine flips out. BULBS FLASH. EXPLOSION behind radio,

and then . . . BLACKOUT! SOUND EFFECTS FADE and slowly, STAGE LIGHTS DIM BACK UP to normal and we see in the middle of the luncheonette -- MONGO! MONGO is a "thing" technically not of this surface earth. There are many possibilities as to his appearance [SEE PRODUCTION NOTES] -- but consider this because of the ease of mobility: MONGO is like a giant lizard.)

MONGO: *(Out to audience.)* It's I! Mel Mongol

PETE'S VOICE: *(ENTERING from kitchen, holding head.)* What hit me? *(Crosses in front of MONGO without getting a good look, lost in his thoughts.)* I wonder where everybody went? *(Shaking head.)* I think I need an aspirin. Double strength.

MONGO: Hello.

PETE: I think there's some aspirin in the bathroom. *(PETE EXITS into bathroom. A moment passes and he ZOOMS back out, wondering what on earth he was seeing.)* Hey! What's this!

MONGO: Hello, Bulldog.

PETE: Auuuuugh! *(Recovers.)* Sorry. *(Cautious step to MONGO.)* You know me? *(Pause.)* Whatever you are.

MONGO: You can call me Mongo. It's nice to finally meet you. *(NOTE: MONGO, despite his odd appearance seems both pleasant and friendly. Not unlike TV's "Alf" or Sesame Street's "Cookie Monster.")*

PETE: What do you mean -- finally?

MONGO: That was me -- the "strange frequencies." I followed your voice. Your voice has the exact vibration for my needs.

PETE: The radio! Of course. But, uh, where are you from?

MONGO: I'm not from outer space.

PETE: That's good to hear. *(Pause.)* I guess.

MONGO: *(Moves about.)* Nice place you've got here.

PETE: *(Leery.)* Thanks. Uh, if you're not from outer space, where do you come from?

MONGO: The center of the earth.

PETE: Wow.

MONGO: Sorry about the rumbles. It was the only way. You understand.

PETE: You mean the earthquake?

MONGO: It's not easy getting spit up from the center of the earth.

PETE: *(Bewildered.)* No, I guess it's not. *(Doesn't know what to say.)* Can I get you a sandwich?

MONGO: What's a sandwich?

PETE: It's something tasty between two slices of bread.

MONGO: What's bread?

PETE: Gosh, Mongo, what do you eat at the center of the earth?
MONGO: Rocks. (VOICES from STUDENTS, WAITRESSES returning.)
BUFORD'S VOICE: The luncheonette's still standing.
LUCY'S VOICE: I was terrified.
MAXINE'S VOICE: Me, too.
MONGO: (Delighted.) Oh, good. Company.
PETE: They mustn't see you. I've got to think about this. Center of the earth and all that. I know. Hide.
MONGO: What's "hide"?
PETE: Into the kitchen.
MONGO: What's "kitchen?" (PETE gets behind MONGO and shoves him into the kitchen.)
PETE: Quick!
MONGO: How rude. (STUDENTS, WAITRESSES ENTER RIGHT and DOWN RIGHT.)
MAXINE: What a quake!
LUCY: I wonder if there was any damage?
SKIPPER: I hope that Pete has earthquake insurance. (As they converse, they take seats at the tables and counter. SARA LEE and GEORGIA go behind the counter.)
MARLENE: They say, one day California will fall into the ocean.
SKIPPER: Surf's up!
ALL: Ha, ha. (SHERIFF BILLY BOB ENTERS. He's a buffoon. Enormous! NOTE: The laugh comes from the fact that no one could be this big! Consequently, actor is heavily padded; pillows to exaggerate the tummy, etc. He wears a Smokey Bear hat, sunglasses, side arms. He doesn't walk as much as slowly waddle.)
SHERIFF: What's the matter with you kids?
PATTY: It's Sheriff Billy Boob!
STUDENTS: Hi, Sheriff.
SHERIFF: Bob! Bob! Sheriff Billy Bob. (Into audience.) Darn kids never can get my name straight.
SKIPPER: Any trouble, Sheriff?
SHERIFF: Didn't none of you kids think it might be a good idea to call your parents and let them know you're okay? My car phone was ringing like jingle bells. (Pause.) 'Long as I'm here, I might as well eat something. What's the special?
GEORGIA: Whatever is left over from yesterday.
PATTY: As you see, Sheriff, we're all just fine.
SHERIFF: Well, next time there's an earthquake -- call home. It's only common courtesy. (To SARA LEE.) I need to wash my hands. I was eating a taffy apple in my vehicle and my fingers is stuck together. The upholstery's kind of gummy, too.

SARA LEE: (*Indicates direction.*) Washroom's that way.

SHERIFF: I know. (*Moves DOWN RIGHT.*) Kids these days ain't got no more sense than gophers. (*As he EXITS, PETE ZOOMS BACK IN.*)

PETE: Was that the Sheriff?

BUFORD: (*To GEORGIA.*) What happened to my taco?

GEORGIA: Same thing that happened to everything else. Delayed by the earthquake.

SARA LEE: I'll get it. (*SARA LEE moves for kitchen.*)

PETE: No, no! Don't go in there!

SARA LEE: Don't be silly. (*SARA LEE EXITS to kitchen.*)

PETE: (*Moans*) Oh, nooooooooooo! (*SARA LEE SCREAMS. STUDENTS react, some stand.*)

GEORGIA: Sara Leel

STUDENTS: She screamed! What's wrong? She must have tripped or something!

PETE: Keep calm, keep calm! Everybody keep calm. I can explain. (*SARA LEE runs from the kitchen, terrified. She moves CENTER, her eyes wide. OTHERS stare in morbid fascination waiting for her to speak. Pause. SARA LEE screams again.*)

OTHERS: What's the matter with her! Sara! Sara! Sara Lee! Why are you screaming? Call an ambulance! She's over the edge! Etc. (*MARLENE and GEORGIA hurry to SARA LEE.*)

GEORGIA: Sara Lee, honey, you're so pale.

MARLENE: Why did you scream, Sara Lee?

SARA LEE: (*Points to kitchen.*) Because of what's in there.

LUCY: The kitchen?

BUFORD: Pete's cooking is pretty bad, I admit. But --

SARA LEE: I didn't scream because of Pete's cooking. I screamed because of -- (*Pause*) That! (*ALL look to kitchen. Pause for effect. MONGO ENTERS. ONLOOKERS are too stunned to react immediately. They gawk.*)

MONGO: (*Friendly fashion.*) I. Me. Mongo. What are your names? (*As one, ONLOOKERS "unfreeze," scatter and duck behind the tables, stand close together for protection.*)

ONLOOKERS: What is it! Does it bite! Is it animal or vegetable!

LUCY: Must be human. It talks!

MAXINE: So does my Uncle George and he's barely human.

PETE: (*Takes CENTER.*) It wasn't an earthquake, gang. It was Mongo here getting spit-up.

PATTY: Spit-up?

PETE: Spit-up from the center of the earth. That's where he comes from.

LUCY: Gross.

STUDENTS: Center of the earth?! (*STUDENTS remain skeptical.*)

PETE: No joke. Look at him. You can see he's "unusual."

SARA LEE: Is that what you call it?

PATTY: Kinda cute in a sick sort of way.

MONGO: I'm the last of my race.

STUDENTS: (*Sympathetic.*) Ooooooooooooooh.

MONGO: The center of the earth is filling up with all sorts of debris.
I have to look for a new home. One with a good source of
nourishment.

STUDENTS: Nourishment?

SKIPPER: (*Wary.*) What does he mean -- nourishment?

PETE: He eats rocks.

BUFORD: That's heavy.

MONGO: (*With great sincerity.*) I know I look strange to you. But,
remember, you look strange to me. I come in friendship. I
mean no harm. All I want to do is live in peace. Outside of
my appearance, I'm just a good ol' boy. (*As MONGO "sings,"*
STUDENTS relax, join in. Music: Ordinary Mongo.)

MONGO: (*Sings.*)

Way down south in the center of the earth,
Livin' in betwixt the mud.
I've been a-chewin' and a-stewin' since birth,
A gol' dern rock-eatin' stud.

Sittin' down there in a world of trash,
Like ta' 'bout to give me a fit,
Come a-rumble and a-crumble and a-crash,
Up I come with one big spit.

I'm just an ordinary, down-home, countrified Mongo,
A good ol' boy to the core.
Come a callin' from down yonder,
Knockin' on Pete's back door.
I, me, Mongo . . . yippy-yi-o-ki-ay!
I, me, Mongo . . . a friend that's ridin' your way.

Seems so long I've been on the trail,
Must be a sight to behold.
Doggone life has done gone stale,
Don't put me out in the cold.

I, me, Mongo, I'm your friend,
A straight shootin' buckaroo.
Your amigo, till the end,

A partner tried and true!!

CHORUS: *(ALL sing.)*

He's just an ordinary, down-home, countrified Mongo,
A good ol' boy to the core.
Come a callin' from down yonder,
Knockin' on Pete's back door.

MONGO: *(Sings.)*

I, me, Mongo . . . yippy-yi-o-ki-ay!

I, me, Mongo . . . a friend that's ridin' your way.

MONGO & CHORUS: *(Sing.)* A friend that's ridin' your way!

(At the conclusion of the song, STUDENTS, WAITRESSES, PETE, MARLENE crowd around MONGO, who has completely charmed them.)

ALL: Welcome to topside, Mongo. You're okay. Make yourself at home. Pleasure to know you, Mongo. Unreal, but welcome, anyway.

PATTY: Mongo, how is it you know English and stuff?

MONGO: I listen in on Pete's vibrations. When he's at the radio, I pick up a fact here, a word there. I have so much to learn about surface earth. *(Looks about.)* This is my home now, isn't it, Bulldog?

PETE: *(Uncertain.)* I guess. Only --

BUFORD: Only what?

PETE: What are we going to do with him? I mean -- think of the newspapers, TV.

LUCY: Pete's right. The world will want to exploit Mongo.

MONGO: No, no, I want to live quietly. No publicity.

LUCY: He's shy.

MARLENE: If anyone finds out about this, they'll turn Mongo into a freak show.

PATTY: The military will want to see him. He could be, like, a secret weapon. Or something.

MAXINE: And doctors. Let's face it. Mongo is a scientific curiosity. They'll probably want to cut him up.

MONGO: Auuuuuuuugh! *(Terrified, MONGO runs and hides behind the counter.)*

MARLENE: Now look what you've done. You've scared him.

GEORGIA: It's alright, Mongo. She didn't mean it.

PETE: You can come out.

MONGO'S VOICE: *(From behind counter.)* No, no, no.

GEORGIA: He's terrified. Poor thing.

SHERIFF'S VOICE: *(From OFFSTAGE, DOWN RIGHT.)* There was water all over the washroom floor! I could have slipped! I could have sustained a conclusion.

End of Script Sample
For preview only

PRODUCTION NOTES

ON STAGE

Counter with cash register, telephone, chairs or stools. Behind the counter: shelves with usual luncheonette stock -- glasses, cups, coffee pot, etc. Tables (2), table chairs (6) Table with radio communication setup -- wires, coils, colored light bulbs, stool.

HAND AND PERSONAL PROPERTIES

ACT ONE: Apron, mismatched sneakers (PETE); encyclopedia volume (MARLENE), coat, paper bag with groceries, hanky (MRS. BERSERKER); pad and pencil (SARA LEE, GEORGIA); doorknob (SHERIFF); face mask, revolver (ROBBER).

ACT TWO: Eyeglasses, encyclopedia volumes (MISS FOGG); more volumes (STUDENTS); colorful "racing" jacket, tickets (MOLLY); clipboard (TREE LADY); cart or small wheelbarrow with "rocks" (PETE); sack (MARLENE); machine for detecting radiation (vacuum cleaner with hose), meter (DR. JUDD).

SOUND EFFECTS

Earthquake, thunder. Machine -- optional noise from Dr. Judd's radiation detector.

COSTUMES

As described in text. Modern. Special attention should be given to Sheriff's uniform since it has to be heavily padded.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 1) MONGO: Who knows what you look like when you come from the center of the earth? Be creative. MONGO can be "cuddly" in the manner of TV's Alf and Cookie Monster. Or, as suggested in the script, he can be "reptilian" -- dragon-like. Remember, MONGO must move rather fast, so the costume cannot be cumbersome or interfere with his speaking. The important thing to stress is his change in character. Once MONGO reveals his true nature it never wavers -- nasty and dangerous.
- 2) RADIO: Make the communication setup as fanciful as possible. It should be much more than simply a Citizen Band operation. Add the wires, coils, colored bulbs. Make it look "eccentric."

- 3) If you have the resources, don't hesitate to "dress up" the luncheonette. Practical walls, maybe a picture window behind the counter where audience can glimpse people about to enter (positioned entryway UPSTAGE RIGHT), jukebox, a telephone booth, posters, potted plants.
- 4) MONGO'S ARRIVAL: Play those sound and lighting effects for all they're worth. After all, MONGO is being "spit up from the center of the earth" and the earthquake aspect should be emphasized.
- 5) SHERIFF: The initial appearance will be a big laugh. He mustn't be "large" -- he must be huge, cartoonish.
- 6) ROCKS: Fake, of course, They can be purchased in any joke/magic shop. Or, paint cardboard to resemble them.
- 7) FLEXIBLE CASTING: Several roles can be played either male or female. For example, DR. JUDD can be male; ROBBER can be female; MOLLY can become "MATT - THE DUKE OF STOCK CAR RACING," TREE LADY can become TREE MAN, etc.

Extra STUDENTS can be added easily. Or, MOLLY, TREE LADY, FANTASY MAN, DR. JUDD can play additional STUDENTS in Act One.

8) TRANSMITTING IN CODE:

PETE: "We have a 10-2 now . . . 10-5 to base . . . you're 10-11 on us . . . give me your 10-20 . . . you are getting out 10-92 now . . . you are definitely 10-99."

Translation: Receiving well . . . relay your message . . . you're talking too fast . . . where are you located . . . you're getting weak . . . unable to receive your message.

- 9) STYLE: Musical should speed along without a single dead spot. Something is always happening. The acting should lean to be exaggerated.

If during rehearsals some funny bits of stage business should turn up -- use them.

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