

MURDER AT THE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Written by Josh Nichols

This murder mystery can be adapted to various settings but was originally written as a dinner theatre with some interaction by audience members.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ages listed below are reflective of the characters rough ages though much younger actors can play some of the parts.

HANK MILLER: 65 - 80, male. Husband to Myrtle. An old curmudgeon who begrudgingly takes care of his wife. He can lose his temper and is easily annoyed.

MYRTLE MILLER: 65 - 80, female. Wife to Hank. Appears to have memory issues. Carries a stuffed cat who she thinks is real.

EMMA JONES: 25 - 40, female. A giddy, upbeat member of the retirement center staff. Does her job with a smile on her face even though she is easily stressed.

OTTO SMITH: 65 - 80, male. An ex-mobster who is laying low in retirement. He still thinks he's the top dog.

AARON DAVIS: 30 - 45, male. The son of GORDON. A busy man trying to find a forever home for his father. He is very motivated to find him a place to stay.

GORDON DAVIS: 65 - 80, male. Father of AARON. An ex-detective who is underestimated. He wants to remain independent. Sharp and sarcastic.

CHESTER ANDERSON: 65 - 80, male. Humorous yet sleazy. He'll do anything for a quick buck.

HAZEL BAKER: 65 - 80, female. A former actress and a bit of a flirt. Raspy voice and over the top.

PRE-SHOW NOTES:

This script was originally performed as a dinner theatre. Prior to the show starting and while the meal was being served, various characters were able to mingle throughout the audience greeting them and welcoming them out of reanimation. This is at your discretion and you may wish that certain characters not be seen before their scheduled entrance.

These interactions were in character and helped in establishing some character traits for the audience. This can be a very entertaining portion of the evening if you choose to implement it. For example, Emma helped some of the guests to their seats via wheelchair. Hank would flirt with audience members. Otto walked around being rude to people. Myrtle greeted people and introduced them to Mr. Fuzzykins. Aaron, Gordon, Hazel, and Chester did not participate in this portion of the evening.

ACT I

The audience members are residents of the retirement community. Sometimes the cast will address them as though they are residents. The name of the venue can be used if desired such as the “Venue Name Retirement Community.”

AARON enters on a cell phone.

AARON: ... now listen here! You tell Nancy I want it on my desk right away in the morning or she'll be out of a job!... No! I don't care about the quarterlies or the Johnson report right not. If Nancy doesn't want to be a single street mother feeding her kids out of a dumpster she'll have them on my desk in the morning! ... Yes, black coffee, two sugars and a blueberry scone... ON... MY... DESK... in the morning!

EMMA enters followed by GORDON.

AARON: I gotta go. *(hangs up the phone)*

EMMA: *(to AARON)* Oh well there you are! We've been looking everywhere for you! *(to GORDON loudly)* AS...I...WAS... SAY... ING... this is our main hall, you'll find meals, recreation and many of our residents socializing and living out their golden years. *(greets various members of the audience as if they are residents).* Our main room has multiple exits *(like a flight attendant would instruct)* Two in the front, two in the rear but please note your closest exit may be behind you *(laughs at her own joke).* Also, due to federal regulations and the amount of oxygen tanks in the room, the no smoking sign is always illuminated! *(laughing at herself).* Okay, okay, I'm done. Sorry! Now, our facility is broken into smaller “wings”... *(laughs)* okay, really I'm done! Our facility is broken into smaller “sections” so that the residents really get to know each other and become family.

AARON: Wow, this place is great isn't it Dad?

GORDON says nothing.

EMMA: *(assuming he did not hear/understand, she replies very loudly and slowly)* ISN'T... THIS.. GREAT!?

GORDON says nothing.

EMMA: Well there's still much much more to see!

AARON: I don't really think we need to see much more, I think it's a "yes" from us, right dad?!

EMMA: Oh, I'm sorry, I thought I mentioned this on the phone but we have no openings at the moment

AARON: What!?! Ugh, I don't know how much longer I can keep doing this. We've been to every retirement community within 200 miles and they're either full or totally out of our price range. This was a perfect fit for us. Are you sure you have no openings?

EMMA: I'm sorry, but it's a one out, one in sort of scenario right now.

AARON: *(disappointed)* Oh good, now I just need to know who I have to bump off to make room .

EMMA: *(shocked)* Oh my... well...

AARON: *(recovering)* Oh, I'm sorry, just a little joke! We just thought this was the one! I mean this place is perfect!

EMMA: Well, we do our best!

HANK enters.

HANK: Hey uh, Emma.

EMMA: One moment Mr. Miller. I'm just showing our space off to a potential future new neighbor for you. *(to AARON)* Anywho, I think you'll find that our residents really love it here.

HANK: Emma, I think you maybe...

EMMA: Well hey there Mr. Interrupty Pants. *(to AARON)* One moment, please. *(to HANK)* Alright, what can I help you with?

HANK: Well it's Ted, he's...

EMMA: Mr. Williby or Mr. Morrison?

HANK: Williby, he's kinda blue.

EMMA: Oh no! Is he still out of sorts because his daughter didn't visit again?

HANK: I have no idea...

EMMA: Oh it's just terrible her doing that to him. He seems so lonely and she doesn't keep her promises to visit. Darn it! It makes me so gosh darned cross with her.

HANK: Don't hold back. Look, I think you should probably go help him out.

EMMA: I'll swing by as soon as I'm done with my tour.

HANK: Well, he'll probably be dead by then.

EMMA: What?!

HANK: Like I said he's blue. I think he's choking on a hard candy.

EMMA: What?! Oh my word! (*starts to exit*) Why didn't you tell me!

HANK: What the hell do you think I'm doing?

EMMA: Oh Mr. Davis... (*talking loudly to GORDON as though he can't hear*) I...AM...SORRY.. MR. WILLIBY... NEEDS ME! (*as she exits*) Mr. Williby I'm coming! Elevate your feet! Breath through your nose! Turn your head and cough!

GORDON: What a bitch.

AARON: Dad?!

GORDON: What?

AARON: She's been nothing but nice to you.

GORDON: (*mimicking the nurse loudly speaking*) OH... REALLY? DO...YOU...THINK...SO? Treating me like I'm a little kid or some dog.

AARON: She was just making sure you could hear everything okay.

GORDON: I can hear better than you!

AARON: Well how would she know that?

GORDON: Hmm, how about asking me, huh? The older I get the less people ask me anything. Like whether I want to move into this dump or not.

AARON: Oh come on, we've been through this, I'm busy with work and wouldn't be home enough to take care of you. It's not fair to leave you home alone all day.

GORDON: What, do you think I'm gonna make a mess on the carpet? Tear up the furniture. I'm a grown man not a Shih Tzu.

AARON: That's not what I'm saying. Besides this place is nice and they have all sorts of fun and games, and...aaaannnd...a shuttle for the mall! Huh, huh?!

GORDON: Oh whoopee, I'll spend the rest of my life in a geriatric amusement park with a mall shuttle. (*looks to the sky*) Don't take me now God, I'm already in heaven.

AARON: Shhh...don't joke about death in a place like this. Some of these folks probably don't have long left.

HANK: Hey! You got a problem with old people pal? You might find that YOU don't have long left!

AARON: No, I didn't mean... I just... um... I hope that man is going to be okay.

HANK: Who?

AARON: Mr. uh... Mr. whatever his name is? The man who's choking.

HANK: Ha! You're new here. He's not choking... I just like to keep it interesting around here.

GORDON: *(laughs)*

AARON: Oh that's terrible!

HANK: Meh, what do you know? You wait until you get my age. You gotta cause a little mischief just to make sure you're still alive. Besides, making Emma run around like that keeps her tush firm. She's nice right?

AARON: She's very nice.

HANK: That was a rhetorical question. Keep your hands off her tush. I got dibs.

AARON: No, not that! I meant she's a very nice person. Not her "tush."

HANK: *(defensive)* Oh you don't think it's nice? You think you can do better?

AARON: No, I mean, she has a very nice tush but.. I mean, no... you know what? I'm done with this.

GORDON: Well, I mean you are single now you may want to start putting yourself out there so you don't end up dying alone like me.

AARON: Dad, you're not gonna die alone and I'd appreciate you not sharing my personal business with strangers.

GORDON: Oh, soooo sorry! Your personal business? You were talking to the tour guide about my bowel movements... I didn't think your relationship status was off limits.

HANK: So your wife, is she hot?

AARON: What is wrong with you?

HANK: Ha! There's my answer. She can't be more than a four or you'd brag about it.

AARON: "If" I put a number on her, which I wouldn't because that's shallow and demeaning, I'd have you know she's a solid eight... was ... an eight. We're divorced now. You know, this is none of your business!

HANK: Well I mean that's kinda subjective. Give me a baseline, what would you rank Emma?

AARON: I wouldn't. I don't even know her.

HANK: What a prude, just give her a number.

AARON: Absolutely, not.

HANK: Okay, let's try another route, give me some ranks on some dirty pictures (*He reaches into pockets to pull out pictures*).

AARON: No!

HANK: It's either Emma or these naughty photos.

AARON: Oh my gosh, fine! She's is a seven! Would you please just leave me alone?! Don't you have some oxygen to huff or some spongebath to get?

HANK: You think she's only a seven and your ex is an eight! Yowza, can I get her number?

MYRTLE enters holding a stuffed cat.

MYRTLE: Hank? Hank?!

HANK: (to AARON) Shoot, it's my wife...ixnay on the ushtay and the eight-ay! Yah Myrtle, I'm here... I'm here.

MYRTLE: Hank have you seen Chester? He said he's going to feed Mr. Fuzzykins.

HANK: Myrtle you've got to quit this. Our cats have been dead for 10 years... 10 years. Dead. Yet every morning you still put out fresh milk for 'em.

MYRTLE: Oh Hank you're such a jokester. Mr. Fuzzykins still has all nine of his lives left.

HANK: Well I only have one and you're killing me.

MYRTLE: Hank you're such a hoot. Mr. Fuzzykins would you like to go get a special treat? Maybe some sardines or some heavy cream?

HANK: Please no! Myrtle, I can't take that smell.

MYRTLE passes by AARON and stops.

MYRTLE: Oh hello there, are you here for the birthday party?

AARON: Excuse me?

MYRTLE: Mister Smith's birthday party.

AARON: Oh no, I'm here showing my dad around. He's hoping to move in.

MYRTLE: Oh good, I thought you might be related to Otto, (*still speaking sweetly*) he's a terrible person. Just a garbage human being really.

HANK: He's ex mob. They could never pin anything on him and now he's too old for them to care.

MYRTLE: (*to GORDON*) And who might you be?

GORDON: I'm Gordon Davis and that's my son Aaron.

MYRTLE: Gordon, it's good to meet you. So how are you, health-wise?

GORDON: I'm fine.

MYRTLE: Oh really, no memory issues, glaucoma, memory issues... bunions?

GORDON: Uh.. no...

MYRTLE: That's impressive. So no diseases or anything?

GORDON: I mean, I have a bad back sometimes.

MYRTLE: Oh dear, that's good to know. They make medicines for that.

HANK: Myrtle, would you please leave the poor man alone, huh?

MYRTLE: Hank, why do you always rush me?

GORDON: (*to HANK*) It's fine, really.

MYRTLE: You see! He likes me and Fuzzykins (*Holds the cat up to her ear*) What's that Mr. Fuzzykins? Oh you like Gordon too? Oh isn't that nice. He doesn't just like anyone but he's taken a shine to you!

HANK: Myrtle, leave 'em alone, huh? (*to GORDON*) You'll have to forgive her. She's gotten a bit aloof in her old age. She used to be a real shrew but she doesn't got that spunk anymore.

MYRTLE: Hank you are always putting that nose in my business. (*to GORDON*) He's lost some of his manners over the years we've been married.

HANK: Myrtle, you have to get ready for the birthday party.

MYRTLE: Oh, heavens. Is it my birthday already?

HANK: Not you, Otto.

MYRTLE: What was that?

HANK: (*louder*) Otto!

MYRTLE: Oh, what a mean man. You didn't invite him to my birthday party did you?

HANK: (*blood pressure rising*) It's HIS birthday!

OTTO enters. He uses a walker slowly and takes the entire duration of his lines to get to his eventual exit.

OTTO: Did someone say birthday boy?!

HANK: Nobody said “birthday boy.” The last time someone called you a boy you were... well you were just...I mean it was... the point is you're old.

OTTO: Ouch! Easy on me fella, my heart can't take a zinger like that one! (*referring to GORDON*). Looks like we got some fresh meat.

MYRTLE: This is Mr. Davis and his father Mr. Davis. Oh dear, I must be seeing double. Well, I've already warned them that you're a real shit heel.

OTTO: What?!

MYRTLE: A meanie.

OTTO: What?! Awww come on Myrtle, I'm a pussycat, you know that. Speaking of pussycats, how's Mr. Fuzzykins doing?

MYRTLE: He's quite all right.

OTTO: (*a bit aggressive*) Oh he looks like a fat cat.

MYRTLE: Actually he has an empty tummy. Chester was supposed to bring him food.

HANK: Can't trust Chester for anything, what a loon. Look Otto, just leave her and the cat be. You know she's gone a bit crazy these last few years.

MYRTLE: What do you mean Hank?

HANK: Never you mind, Myrtle.

OTTO: Well, Myrtle are you coming to my birthday party? (*trying to intimidate her*) I'm expecting you to bring me a big gift. And, if you don't... well I'm afraid Mr. Fuzzykins will be sleeping with the fishes.

MYRTLE: Oh you're so silly Mr. Fuzzykins would never sleep with the fishes! He'd put them in his big old tummy. What a hungry hungry kitty! If anyone tries to get close to Mr. Fuzzykins he'd scratch their eyes out.

OTTO: (*getting angry*) Don't mess around with me!

HANK: Listen here bub! You leave my wife alone!

OTTO: What do you care, you just called her crazy yourself!

HANK: Yea! But I'm the only one that can call my wife crazy so back off!

OTTO: Okay big man, I'll see you and the misses at the party!

HANK: Well maybe we won't be coming to the party!

OTTO: Suit yourself. It's not often you get cake with real frosting around this place though. Usually it's all that sugar free diabetes crap.

HANK: Damn. Fine, maybe you WILL see us there but I'll have my eye on you!

OTTO: Ha! See you there. (*exits*)

MYRTLE: Well Hank, I better go get ready for my party!

HANK: Oye!

MYRTLE: *(to GORDON)* Goodbye then, we'll talk soon! *(exits)*

GORDON: Nice to meet you.

HANK: *(approaches GORDON)* Hey you leave my wife alone!

GORDON: What do you mean?

HANK: *(mockingly)* What do you mean?! I see what you're doing,

HANK and GORDON get into a "sword" fight with their canes.

HANK: Trying to steal my wife!

HANK tried to strike GORDON with his cane but GORDON blocks it with his cane.

HANK: "Nice to meet you!"

HANK strikes again and is blocked again.

HANK: And bragging about being a pillar of health.

HANK has one final attempt but is blocked again.

HANK: Leave her alone, got it?!

GORDON: I'm not trying to steal anything. Besides, weren't you just going on about Emma's tush and my son's ex-wife?

GORDON tries to strike HANK and HANK blocks it. They are locked struggling with their canes and eventually both give up.

HANK: Mind your own business...

He gets cut off as EMMA talks offstage.

EMMA: (off) Hank!

HANK: Uh oh...

EMMA: (enters) Hank! We have to have a talk!

HANK: Damn! She knows Mr. Williby is still alive, I gotta scoot! (to AARON) Now listen, you don't say a word to her you got it! You never met me! Got it!

AARON: I wish we never met!

HANK: That's it! Stick to that story!

EMMA bursts in and slowly and sternly "chases" HANK during the following.

EMMA: Mr. Miller! I know you may think it's funny to joke about death but...

HANK: Joke about death! Never!

EMMA: Oh really? You weren't joking about Mr. Williby choking to death?

HANK: No! Never! The man was at death's door clinging to his last glimmer of light!

EMMA: Mr. Williby was taking a nap! I thought he was unconscious, ripped him out of the bed and started trying to

dislodge the candy. Cheese and rice! I may have broken one of his ribs!

HANK: Well I guess he won't feel it since he's dead.

EMMA: He's alive!

HANK: A miracle! Hallelujah!

EMMA: Mr. Miller!

HANK: Uh... uh... I think you need to talk to Aaron here about harassing the guests.

EMMA: What?

HANK: Yea, he's been real rude to me and...*(trying to come up with something)* aaannnd...and he was objectifying women!

AARON: I was not!

HANK: Was too!

AARON: Was not!

HANK: Was too! *(to EMMA)* He said that you were a seven?

EMMA: A what?

HANK: A seven, like on a scale of one to really really hot... he said you were a seven... shameful him putting a number on you.

AARON: Listen here!

HANK: Well that's my queue *(exits quickly)*.

EMMA: Hank! (*starts to run after him but is stopped*)

AARON: Um! Hey! Are we going to get a chance to finish discussing options for my dad?

EMMA: Right! Right! Oh I'm so sorry! It's so crazy around here and you two are so nice I forget you weren't already part of our big family!

GORDON: You know what, I gotta hit the can. How about you two keep chit chatting while I'm gone.

EMMA: Oh Mr. Davis, are you sure you think you can go alone?

GORDON: I think so, unless you want to help me aim?

AARON: Dad!

GORDON: I'm kidding... sheesh. Yes, I can go to the bathroom on my own. If I fall in I promise I'll call the National Guard to come fish me out. (*exits*)

AARON: I'm so very sorry about his behavior, I swear he's usually not like this.

EMMA: Don't you worry, I've seen it a thousand times. It's rarely easy transitioning to a facility like ours. It can be hard for the families and for the parents.

AARON: You're telling me. He's been going through this process kicking and screaming.

EMMA: If you don't mind me asking, if he's so against it then why are you touring facilities.

AARON: Well, my life has been a bit hectic lately. I work all the time and I just want him to be taken care of and I know I can't do that on my own.

EMMA: Like I said, I've seen this a thousand times and there are all sorts of reasons that residents come here. (*trying to be delicate*) The hard ones to watch are the ones where you think the family is too busy for their loved ones.

AARON: I want to make more time, I've just been going through a rough patch. On top of working so much, I just went through a nasty divorce.

EMMA: Oh no! I'm sorry to hear that. Were you married long?

AARON: Seven years.

EMMA: You sure like the number "seven" don't you..

AARON: Huh?

EMMA: Oh sorry!

AARON: I didn't mean to...

EMMA: I was just...

AARON: He was badgering../

EMMA: I mean...

EMMA: (*in a deep voice*) You're a nine...

AARON: Huh?

EMMA: (*trying to recover*) Dine! Here... is...where we dine.

AARON: (*teasing*) You said I'm a nine...

AARON teases her by staring while she struggles.

EMMA: No! To dine, you get in line... grab your wine... pair it with bo-vine. FINE! You're a nine! Better than a seven.

AARON: *(chuckling)* Look Mister... Mister... whatever his name is wouldn't leave me alone and I blurted out a number to shut him up. I shouldn't have done it, it was immature and I'm sorry.

EMMA: Oh, yea.. *(laughing awkwardly)* no prob-lem-o.

AARON: *(sounding a bit demeaning)* Besides you are definitely NOT a seven.

EMMA: *(shocked)* Oh...um...

AARON: You're much higher than a seven. *(smiles at her)*

Both lock eyes and EMMA giggles a bit and snorts. They are both interrupted and quickly about-face and gain distance from one another.

HAZEL: Heeeeeeeellllloooooooooo! I'm here!

EMMA: *(recovering)* Hi, hello, hey! Um, I'd like you to meet Aaron. His father might be moving into the facility.

HAZEL: Father?! You must mean grandfather! This handsome man is far too young to have such an old father.

AARON: *(being kind)* Well you are fetching yourself, misses?

HAZEL: Oh that's Miss Baker. Mrs. Baker was my mother's name *(laughs)*. I've been called worse! Jezebel, harlett, hooker, whore,

floozy in the jacuzzi, lot lizard. But, you can call me Hazel. The kids today would call me a lioness.

AARON: You mean a... cougar?

HAZEL: Oh no, cougars don't live as long deary. I've got more years of experience than you can count. I've been told I'm *(goes into a coughing fit and takes a hit of oxygen)* puuuurrrfect.

AARON: *(awkwardly)* Oh, well... that's nice..

HAZEL: *(looking him up and down)* I wouldn't say you're perfect. *(goes to him and grabs his shoulders)* Do I have your consent?

AARON: Huh?

HAZEL ignores any response from him and begins to "inspect" him. Feels shoulders, lifts chin, bends him over, asks him to lift his leg, etc. AARON doesn't comply but she pushes and moves him around.

HAZEL: Not terrible. Maybe a solid five.

AARON: *(confused by what just occurred but being playful to EMMA)* Well, I've been told I'm a nine.

HAZEL: Don't get cocky dear.

EMMA: *(chuckles)* Well I am going to go see about the final party details.

AARON: Uh... you're gonna leave me alone... with *(gestures with head)*

EMMA: What will you miss me?

Both approach each other as they overlap in conversation.

AARON: Uh no...

EMMA: I didn't mean..

AARON: I mean yea but...

EMMA: Sorry I just...

AARON: I mean go if...

EMMA: If you want..

EMMA: *(in a deep voice)* I'll never leave you!

Both abruptly stop talking and speaking. They both have wide eyes. EMMA quickly starts to exit.

EMMA: Okay I'm leaving!

AARON: You don't have to...

EMMA: *(embarrassed)* Nope. Nope. Don't talk. Don't even look at me.

AARON is smitten and smirks and chuckles to himself as she leaves.

HAZEL: Okay, well maybe we should get to business?

AARON: Business?

HAZEL: We gotta seal the deal sweetie. I'm not getting any younger.

AARON: *(realizing)* Oh! *(laughs awkwardly)* Um, I can't.

HAZEL: Oh, I should have known a handsome man like you would already be taken.

AARON: Oh no, I'm not taken.

HAZEL: No wife?

AARON: Nope.

HAZEL: No girlfriend?

AARON: No.

HAZEL: *(thinking)* No "special friend" who's just a gym buddy?

AARON: Um... no...

HAZEL: *(a bit offended)* Oh, so you just don't think I'm attractive?

AARON: Oh no, *(letting her down easy)* I'm absolutely flattered and you are very beautiful but I'm not sure about the age difference.

AARON starts to back up as she continues to be persistent. CHESTER enters and AARON almost bumps into him.

HAZEL: Oh don't worry dear. You're not too young, I've had younger. I've gotten pretty good at spotting fake IDs. You can never be too careful.

CHESTER: I got what you want!

CHESTER walks over to the family member wearing a trench coat he faces away from the audience as much as possible and opens the trench coat flashing AARON.

AARON yelps when the coat opens expecting something lewd.

CHESTER: Yea, you like what you see?

AARON: Excuse me?

CHESTER turns around revealing his coat is full of various medical devices and pills.

CHESTER: Arthritis, stool hardener, psoriasis, stool hardener, erectile dysfunction, rectal dysfunction, stool... *(thinking)* uh... stool uh...

AARON: Softener?

CHESTER: Gross! Why would you want mushy stool?! Ya weirdo!

AARON: I think I'm fine

CHESTER: So it looks like Mr. Goody Two-Shoes is too good for my product

AARON: Why do you have all that stuff?

CHESTER: Hey why are you asking so many questions huh?!

AARON: Well this seems like a nice place. I just assumed they have your medications scheduled for you.

CHESTER: Ha! I guess I wouldn't need my kidney medication if I had to pay with a kidney to get it. They charge you an arm and a leg here and a couple organs to boot. All my retirement money is going to some pharmaceutical fat cat so he can buy bubble bath for his golden tub.

AARON: I think I'm getting a headache.

CHESTER: I've got something for that too. Do you want your headache to go away or do you not want to feel your face?

GORDON enters and CHESTER notices him.

GORDON: Well, I survived the pissar.

CHESTER: Hey! You're new. *(walks over and flashes him)* You like what you see?

GORDON: What the hell?!

CHESTER: I couldn't help but noticing you talking about the pissar. Have you ever set to yourself "Man, do I have to take a leak?!" But, you just don't want to walk all the way to the can? Well have I got something for you! *(pulls out a plastic urinal jug and displays it like a true salesman)* This four walled, wide-mouth, polypropylene PISS JUG!

AARON: Do the staff know that you're doing this?

CHESTER: *(looking around)* I said quit asking so many questions... the boss don't like it when people ask too many questions.

Meanwhile OTTO has entered.

OTTO: Hey my new friends are still here, eh?

CHESTER: *(to AARON)* I gotta go!

OTTO: Hazel, how are you my dear.

HAZEL: I'm not speaking to you! You louse

OTTO: What did I do!

HAZEL: You're a dirty rotten cheater!

OTTO: Ah, this again. Listen, it didn't work out. Case closed.

HAZEL: *(start to rush him)* I'll close you, you bastard!

HANK enters.

HANK: What the hell's goin on, what did I miss?!

OTTO: *(gets enraged and slowly but dramatically knocks over his own walker)* Stay out of this Hank. *(pauses a moment)* Ah shit...I need that. *(slowly moves to pick it up).*

HAZEL: You leave my Hanky Panky alone!

AARON: Hanky Panky?

HANK: *(nervous)* I... I don't know why she's calling me that...

HAZEL: *(loudly "whispering")* I think you left your little blue pills in my room, you'll have to *(sultry)* stop by again tonight to pick them up.

HANK: *(awkwardly)* Ha...Ha...oh Hazel, what a kidder... Ha. Ha.

MYRTLE enters.

HANK: Ah! Myrtle! My loving wife! My moon, my stars!

Hank runs to her and smothers her with affection.

MYRTLE: Oh Hank, stop it... you know you touching me upsets Mr. Fuzzykins.

EMMA enters with a tray of medications in cups, there are also many pill bottles on the tray. She also has a bunch of file folders/paper and a tray of cupcakes.

EMMA: Alright everybody it's pill time!

MYRTLE: Did you hear that Mr. Fuzzykins? It's time for yum yums for Mommy!

EMMA is sort of struggling with the trays.

AARON: Here let me help with that.

AARON grabs the pill tray and the files drop to the floor. AARON brings them to their destination. GORGON gestures that he will pick up the files. He does and follows AARON but starts to observe the files a bit.

EMMA: Oh thank you! You can set them right over there. *(flirting)* You're so chivalrous.

AARON: *(joking)* Yea, to carry a tiny tray like that you have to be pretty strong.

EMMA: *(lusting after him)* Yea, I can see that.

There is a awkward silence.

EMMA: *(snapping out of it)*.Aaaaaand I have cupcakes.

OTTO: Cupcakes? I thought we were having a real cake.

EMMA: Well, you get what you get and you don't throw a fit!

OTTO: Some party without a real cake!

HANK: Oh shut your pie hole!

OTTO: It may be a pie hole cause it sure as hell ain't a cake hole.

EMMA returns and make her way to where the pill tray is at.

EMMA: All right everyone come get em! If you all want to keep healthy and strong and live to 105 then you need to take your medicine! *(walks to OTTO who is on his way but still going slowly, she cheers him on like a dog).* Come on! Come on, that's a good boy!

Everyone converges on the pill tray blocking it from view. Each grab and take their medicine when it is given and slowly leave the area.

EMMA: Okay Myrtle, yep there you go. Hank! No cupcakes until later! Okay, here's for you CHESTER. No, just one cup.. Wait your turn Hank. Okay HAZEL, here you go.

HAZEL: Are these mine?

EMMA: Yes, see it has your name on it. Hank, that's not for you! That one is for OTTO. Here you go OTTO. And finally, here you go Hank. I said no cupcakes yet!. Okay, I think that's everyone.

OTTO: Are we getting this party started or what?

EMMA: Okay everyone, let's sing! On my count, 1, 2, 3!

EMMA moves away and rallies everyone to sing.

GORDON begins to look through the files.

CHESTER: (on 2) Haappy! **HAZEL:** (on 2) Happy birthday to you.

Biiiiirrrth!

Happy birthday to you.

Daaaaaay!

Happy birthday dear...

GORDON & AARON: (on 3) Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear Otto.

HANK: (after 3) blah blah

MYRTLE: (on 3) The wheels

Blah blah

on the bus go

Blah blah blah blah

round and round!

Blah Blah

round and round, round and...

OTTO: Stop! Stop it! STOP!

All stop except for MYRTLE.

MYRTLE: The wheels on the bus go round and round, round and round...

OTTO: I'm not much for singing, let's get to the party.

EMMA: This is the party.

OTTO: What a song and not even a whole cake? Where are the musicians? The booze? The strippers?!

EMMA: It's a birthday party not a bachelor party!

OTTO: Well if there ain't no party I'm outta here. (*walks to where the cupcakes are*)

HANK: What an ungrateful jerk!

MYRTLE: I told you he was a meanie.

CHESTER: Yea, stop being rude.

OTTO: What did you say to me?!

CHESTER: Nothing! (*slunks away*)

OTTO: I guess if I stand far enough back and squint this could look like a real cake. (*grabs the whole tray of cupcakes and exits*)

EMMA: Hey, those are for everyone!

OTTO: Ah, blow it out ya ass!

HANK: Those little frosted treasures were the only reason I came to this shindig. Come on Myrtle, let's go.

MYRTLE: Oh Hank, we should really stay at the party.

HANK: I said, let's go Myrtle!

HANK exits and MYRTLE follows.

EMMA: Oh don't leave!

CHESTER: Well, I'm out too. (*suspiciously*) I've got to uh... do some ... stuff. Yea, yea...stuff.

EMMA: This party was an absolute flop!

AARON: I think it was fine.

EMMA: (*lusting after him*) You're fine...

AARON: What?

EMMA: Huh? Nothing, um... (*imitating CHESTER*) I've got to uh... do some ... stuff. Yea, yea...stuff. (*exits*)

HAZEL has made her way close to AARON.

HAZEL: Hey big boy.

AARON: (*startled*) Ahh!

HAZEL: You remind me of an actor I worked with in a movie called "Murder in Outer Space."

AARON: Oh what did you do for work?

HAZEL: I was an actress of course, still am. The gigs change and they don't pay as much. I just got done filming a motorized scooter commercial last week and I'm on the short list for a new emergency alert wristband.

AARON: No kidding! I actually work at a film studio. I just work in the accounting department, nothing that fun.

HAZEL: Oh don't sell yourself short, I'm sure you have lots of influence. (*sultry*) I bet you have your own office with your very own casting couch. (*closes eyes and start smooching the air*)

AARON: (*walks away*) Nope! Just the numbers! I'll have to look up some of your films sometime though.

HAZEL: I can audition for you right now!

AARON: Like I said I have no influence.

HAZEL: Just give me a cue line!

Alarms start sounding across the building.

AARON: Well, that doesn't sound good!

HAZEL: *(acting)* Oh. You are right. That sound is not good! The sound! The sound! It pierces my soul!

AARON: What are you doing?

HAZEL: *(acting)* What are any of us doing in this crooked path we call life! Not to be, to be! I'll make you an offer you can't refuse!
(blandly) Stella.

CHESTER bursts in followed shortly after by HANK.

CHESTER: Okay, everyone we got a live one, but not for long! Get your wagers in!

Alarm sound stops.

HANK: I got five on a heart attack, on the toilet, age 83.

CHESTER: Got you in at \$5. Cause non-negotiable, extra points for location with an age tie breaker.

HANK: Yea I know the drill!

CHESTER: *(to HAZEL)* Hey, you want in on this action?

HAZEL: Oh yea, I'll do \$50 on slip in the tub, age 75!

CHESTER: \$50, wowee! You Scooter commercial check must have come in! *(to Aaron)* Well, what about you punk?

AARON: What? No! This is terrible, betting money on someone dying!

CHESTER: We all gotta die bub, no need to get your knickers in a twist about it.

AARON: I just don't think it's right.

CHESTER: Ohhhh noo! Is the poor wittle baby gonna cry? Did I hurt his feelings?

AARON: Stop it.

CHESTER: Oh, did that strike a nerve you little wuss? Huh!

AARON: Look, that's enough!

CHESTER: You ain't gonna bet? Then fight me! I'll kick your tush! *(Gets into a fighting stance and starts poking AARON)* Come on punk! Huh! Come on!

AARON: Stop it!

CHESTER: Come on! Take your shot!

AARON: You know what! Fine! Head injury in the hallway at 70 years old!

CHESTER: Ha ha! Got you down... how much?

AARON: How much?

CHESTER: The bet, you schmuck... how much are you betting?

AARON: I don't want to bet!

CHESTER: *(gets into fighting stance again)* Come at me!

AARON: \$20 okay! \$20. Now leave me alone..

CHESTER: Oooh man, you're gonna be broke. You gotta go for pneumonia or heart attacks. Oh, or broken hips, they're really in vogue this year. Meh, a life lesson... a \$20 life lesson. Anyone else want in? Nope? Okay I'm gonna go check the courtyard for bets.

CHESTER exits as MYRTLE enters.

MYRTLE: HANK, did you hear the alarm? What's happening?

HANK: Medical emergency, that alarm doesn't mean anything good. Probably someone on their way out.

MYRTLE: Oh dear!

HAZEL: *(pretending to sob)* Why! Why! Why! Death should come for me and not take an innocent! WHY! WHY!

AARON: I told you, I'm an accountant. I can't get you an acting job.

HAZEL: *(stops crying)* You're a tough caster, I'll figure you out.

EMMA enters.

HANK: Hey, what's going on?

EMMA: One of our residents is now with the angels.

CHESTER: Who?

EMMA: Otto.

HANK: How'd that happen?

As EMMA relays the story she gets overcome with emotion and apparently finishes. AARON start to talk only to be interrupted by EMMA continuing the tale.

EMMA: They're still piecing things together but witnesses say he was walking out of his room and he looked a bit wobbly, he started stumbling around and eventually sat in a nearby wheelchair.

AARON: That's terrible, I can't...

EMMA: Maintenance was carrying a heavy piece of equipment and accidentally bumped the wheelchair which started moving and hit the ramp sending him hurtling toward an evening meal cart.

AARON: Oh no, I wonder...

EMMA: A bit shaken, he got out of the wheelchair and slipped on the food that spilt on the floor so he grabbed onto a staff member to steady himself. The staff was holding a bedpan and when she was grabbed got startled and the bedpan flew in the air and landed on Otto's head and he fell down.

AARON: Well, now that you've told the whole story? I guess...

EMMA: By that time, the maintenance workers had gotten down the ramp with the equipment but didn't see him on the floor and

one of them tripped on Otto and the equipment fell and... and crushed his head.

EVERYONE: Oh! Ahhh! Ouch!

AARON: Is... is that all?

HANK: Isn't that enough?

AARON: It was just a long... it kept going...

CHESTER: So you're saying he died of... a head injury.: In the hallway?

HANK: And on his 70th birthday.

AARON: Oh shit...

HANK: Damn!

HAZEL: Can't win 'em all.

CHESTER moves to AARON and pushes a wad of money onto his chest.

CHESTER: Well, you got lucky punk.

AARON looks dumbfounded. CHESTER exits.

GORDON: So you said he was woozy.

EMMA: Yes, but now... now he's gone.

HANK: It'll be a small funeral.

MYRTLE: Oh Hank! A man is dead.

HANK: What? He was a jerk, you didn't like him either!

GORDON: And then he sat down in a wheelchair, right?

EMMA: Yes, and it turned out to be a vehicle of death!

HANK: If that happened to me, I'd sue.

GORDON: You'd sue? You'd be dead?

HANK: Well, I'd haunt this place at least. Nobody kills me and gets away with it.

HAZEL: Ooooo... vengeance looks good on you Hank!

CHESTER enters quickly laughing.

HANK: What's so funny?

CHESTER: Oh man, he needs a closed casket funeral.

AARON: You're terrible! Why would that be funny?

CHESTER: (*chuckling*) Cause I don't think they'll be able to get it closed. He's at full salute!

EMMA: What are you talking about?

CHESTER: You know? His little soldier is awake and ready for battle!

HANK: I knew he was a pervert.

EMMA: What do you mean...oh...OHHH? Ohhhhh!

HAZEL: Well, that's the way he would have wanted to go out.

GORDON: He died from taking the wrong pills.

CHESTER: What?

GORDON: He died from taking the wrong pills!

HANK: Are you an idiot? We just said he died by getting crushed.

GORDON: I heard. But if he didn't take the wrong meds none of that was likely to have happened.

EMMA: Beg my pardon but what are you saying?

GORDON: (*mockingly to EMMA*) OTTO! (*mimes walker*) TOOK! (*mimes grabbing*) THE WRONG! (*crosses arms*) PILLS! (*mimes taking pills*)..

AARON: Dad, why don't you let us handle this.

GORDON: Who do you think you're talking to? I know what I'm talking about.

HANK: Okay fancy pants, tell us why you think he took the wrong pills.

GORDON: Well as we've been told, after he died his "little soldier was in full salute." He didn't hang himself which rules out a common cause of priapism. That means that he more than likely ingested sildenafil.

MYRTLE: Bless you!

CHESTER: Sid a who-za whata-fil.

GORDON: Sildenafil... the little blue pills.

EMMA: Oh dear!

GORDON: But he didn't need them. I've met at least four of his lady friends on my tour including Mrs. Baker.

HAZEL: We stopped seeing each other. The cheatin' bastard! I want a one-woman man.

CHESTER: Are you kidding?! You have a new man every other-day!

HAZEL: And?

CHESTER: So you can sleep around but he can't.

HAZEL: I want a man's full attention until I grow tired of them and move on. Don't hate the player. Birds fly, fish swim and momma plays the field. *(stands next to AARON)*

AARON: *(laughs awkwardly)*

HANK: *(to GORDON)* This makes no sense, you think he died because he took wee wee pills but he didn't need the pills? Do YOU need some pills to help you think?

GORDON: Those pills could have reacted with his heart medication. He's had three heart attacks, a quadruple bypass, and was on the list for a new heart. Any nitrates could have combined with those pills and may have caused his blood pressure to plummet. All of the subsequent events were unfortunate but the pills were the first domino.

MYRTLE: How did you know he had heart issues and what medications he took?

GORDON: I looked through a bunch of patient files. Emma brought them in when distributing the pills earlier.

EMMA: Oh no! Mr. Davis, you can't look at those files, they're private records. I use them to verify which medications are needed!

GORDON: You're right, I shouldn't have looked but I was curious... and bored.

AARON: Dad! Why would you do that? We're trying to get you into this place!

EMMA: Oh, you should be ashamed of yourself.

GORDON: (*sarcastically*) I know, I feel terrible. I feel so bad I had better give a call to corporate and apologize for taking a look at such secure records that were carelessly left out in the open for a member of the public to riffle through. Now, should I ask for Mr. Cooke when I complain about the careless staff? I think he's the CEO at least that's what the brochure said.

EMMA: (*nervous*) Well.. I mean.. Mr. Cooke is a busy man. (*faked excitement*) But Yay! We all learned a lesson today and we'll chalk it up to experience. All is forgiven!

GORDON: Uh huh.

MYRTLE: How could he take the wrong medicine, they have our names on the little cups. Mine says Myrtle.

GORDON: And that's exactly why I suspect... foul play.

ALL: *(except the AARON and GORDON say the word)* GASP!

GORDON: Well, one of the reasons.

EMMA: Foul play?!

GORDON: The hypotension could have caused a number of different death scenarios all of which could have been explained away as being associated with getting older. Due to his advanced age, it would be unlikely for them to perform a detailed autopsy or toxicology. We may not have known about the extra pills if it wasn't for Chester being a teenage boy in an old farts body,

CHESTER: Ha! He said fart!

HAZEL: Wow, you should be a detective.

GORDON: I am... well, I was a detective. I'm retired.

HANK: Well mister hot shot detective, how is all that foul play? He could have taken them by accident.

AARON: Dad, this is insane! You're not a detective anymore! He was an old man, he died. Don't turn this into some murder mystery.

HANK: Ha! "Murder at the Retirement Community," who'd go see that?

GORDON: The cups had names on them so there wasn't a likely mixup but I'm telling you that extra pills got added to his cup.

MYRTLE: Uh oh Fuzzykins, did Emma make a woopsie doopsie?!

EMMA: What?!

GORDON: No mistake. I've seen her records, she's too detailed to make that mistake on accident.

EMMA: Oh, well thank you Mr. Davis.

GORDON: If she gave him the extra pills it would have been on purpose.

CHESTER: Get her! She did it! Don't let her get away! *(charges toward the staff and tries to hold her)*

GORDON: I didn't say she did it! I haven't finished my investigation yet. I checked the inventory and it seemed they were all accounted for.

HANK: Why were you looking at the inventory?

GORDON: I was wondering where Chester might be getting his little stash at and thought I'd see if it was from the building's supply.

EMMA: What stash?

CHESTER: Stash, rash, bash, mustache! Ha! Nevermind him! Look over there!

CHESTER points and she looks.

GORDON: Look, all of us here are suspects as we all had access to the medications at some point.

EMMA: Okay, we need to call the police!

CHESTER: Hey hey! No need to get the pigs involved!

EMMA: A man may have been murdered!

GORDON: We should probably find some answers before we call the cops. It could get pretty messy if Mr. Cooke finds out about all of this.

HANK: What does the cook have to do with this?

MYRTLE: Oh, I think I'll have some dessert.

GORDON: Not "the cook," Mr. Cooke. The CEO? I brought him up like five minutes ago to intimidate Emma.

HANK: Ooooh yea, that was funny. She was shakin' in her shoes! She's so cute when she's nervous.

AARON: Okay this is crazy, you can call the cops or not but my dad and I are leaving. We don't want to be mixed up in all of this.

CHESTER: Sounds like someone who's guilty to me!

HAZEL: Oooooooo... I haven't been with a hardened criminal in years. You just went from a solid five to a solid five point six.

AARON: I'm not a suspect! I don't have any motive! You just met me!

EMMA: Oof... I hate to bring this up but... you did ask about bumping off a resident earlier.

AARON: That was a joke!

CHESTER: You have a sick sense of humor.

GORDON: Look we are ALL suspects, even you son, even me. One of the people in this very room murdered Otto and we have to figure out who and why...who knows if it could happen again.

MYRTLE: Oh dear, Hank. Take Mr. Fuzzykins to our room. He shouldn't have to hear all of this. You know he gets hairballs when he gets stressed.

HANK: Myrtle! Stop it with the cats already! 10 years Myrt! 10 years they've been dead!

MYRTLE: Hank, you be nice to Mr. Fuzzykins you big bully! Fine, I'll take him myself. (*starts to storm out*)

HANK: Ah, c'mon Myrt. (*to GORDON*) Now look what you did, trying to make me look like a real jerk, huh? You watch your back grandpa!

HANK chases after Myrtle and exits.

EMMA: Well, I need to go see how things are going. Good gravy, what a day!

EMMA exits.

GORDON: I'm going to go check out the scene and his room. (*starts to exit*)

HAZEL: Oh! I'll come with you! (*follows*)

GORDON: Please don't.

HAZEL: Oh you're funny.

GORDON exits and HAZEL follows.

AARON: *(to CHESTER)* Hey, I'm sorry about Otto?

CHESTER: What? Why?

AARON: Well, because you two, you know, "work together."

CHESTER: You need some lithium pills because your goin' a bit cuckoo? *(start to open coat)* How many you need?

AARON: None. Look, rememer you told me "your boss" wouldn't like me asking questions. I mean, he's a retired mobster isn't he? Aren't you pushing pills for him?

CHESTER: Ha! What a schmuck! He was not, is not, and will never be my boss.

AARON: Well, he is dead... I don't think you have to worry about him.

CHESTER: My point is I hated that piece of garbage. He may have been a big time gangster back in the day but he ain't got no teeth these days... literally and figuratively. Well, I'm gonna go.. you know... not be here right now.

AARON: *(follows him to exit)* Well wait a minute! If he wasn't "the boss" you were talking about then who was it? Hey, who's the boss?! Who's the boss?!

END OF ACT I

INTERMISSION

In a dinner theatre setting the characters were able to return after a few minutes to mingle around and interact with the audience, answer questions and try to throw off suspicion. In our showing, this was a time where dessert was served. We also allowed the audience to make guesses at this time and they were entered into a prize drawing if they made the correct guesses. The winner was announced at the conclusion of the show.

This portion of the evening is not necessary, but the audiences seemed to enjoy interacting with the actors in character and some who were mystery fans would be very inquisitive of the characters and try to figure out who did it.

END OF ACT I SAMPLE

Murder at the Retirement Community continues in Act II,
where the case gets solved.

Request the complete script free at joshnichols.me/murder-mystery-scripts/

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