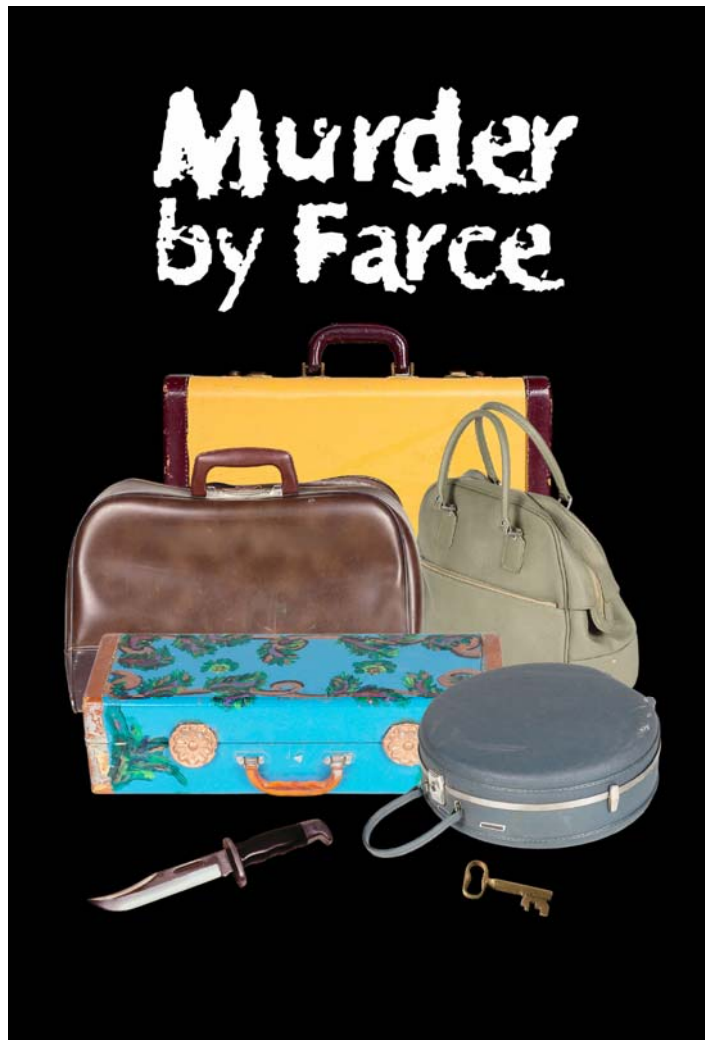


Murder by Farce



Kory Howard

Norman Maine Publishing

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Murder by Farce was first performed on Oct 1, 2012 at Manti High School, Manti, Utah.

TONY FRANSTEIN: J.T. Ransom

BRONSON: Gavin Rouska

VANEETA: Mikaela Dineley

KARINE CULLIMORE: Brynn Schiffman

GREGORY DECKER: Chris Olsen

DREYSON WILLARDS: Ty McKenzie

MRS. NANCY WALKER: Brittnie Sorensen

GIRL SCOUT: Jaycie Hill

OFFICER HARDY: Aaron Worrell

OFFICER JANE WINTERS: Paige Deleeuw

DR. MADISON: Todd Sawyer

Murder by Farce

FARCE. A reclusive billionaire has invited a gold digger, a business teacher, a personal secretary, an underwear inspector, and a bratty teenager to his mansion to solve a murder—his own! Shortly after the guests arrive, they discover that they are trapped inside the mansion with a “dead” body, a tray of peanut butter sandwiches, and the prospect of winning one billion dollars if one of them can solve the mystery and discover the identity of the “murderer.” Plot twists and hilarious situations abound in this delightful farce, which provides plenty of opportunities for actors to showcase physical humor.

Performance Time: Approximately 90 minutes.

Characters

(5 M, 5 F, 1 flexible)

TONY FRANSTEIN: Billionaire whose only friend is his butler, Bronson; wants to avenge anyone who has done him wrong; dressed in a tuxedo, shiny shoes, and a clean white shirt; male.

BRONSON: Tony's lawyer who is posing as Tony's British butler; wears traditional butler attire and speaks with a bad English accent; male.

VANEETA LEE: A gold digger who wants to marry Tony for his money; hair is professionally styled, wears a glittery dress and large earrings, bracelets, rings, etc.; female.

KARINE CULLIMORE: Tony's personal secretary who is secretly in love with him; female.

GREGORY DECKER: Egotistical bully who tormented Tony throughout high school and is now employed as a men's underwear inspector; male.

DREYSON WILLARDS: Punk teenager who totaled Tony's car because he was texting and driving; male.

MRS. NANCY WALKER: A high school business teacher who flunked Tony; old and wrinkly; female.

GIRL SCOUT: Girl Scout who is selling cookies door to door; wears a Girl Scout uniform; can be played by an adult dressed as a girl; female.

OFFICER HARDY: Veteran cop who doesn't really care about his job; male.

OFFICER JANE WINTERS: Rookie cop who takes her job seriously; female.

DR. MADISON: Tony's elderly doctor; flexible.

Setting

Tony's mansion.



Set

Tony's mansion. The room is ornately decorated with fancy pictures, candle sconces, wall sconces, and other decorations. There is a Victorian-looking sofa with a side table SL. There is a plush chair with a side table and lamp SL. There is also a drinks table with a pitcher of water, several glasses, and a tray SL. There is a desk with drawers, chair, and a telephone USC. At SR there is a chair and a table with a lamp on it. Behind the SR chair is a bookshelf. A window with large curtains is SR. Two staircases positioned off center to SL ascend in opposite directions, leading to doors that lead to the rest of the house. In the center of the staircases is a door that leads to the kitchen. There are two doors leading to the rest of the house DSL and DSR. The mansion entrance is located USR. There is a coat rack next to the USR door.

Synopsls of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Tony's mansion.

Scene 2: Tony's mansion, later that evening.

Intermission

ACT II: Tony's mansion, moments later.

Props

Knife (plastic)	Statue
Fake blood	Pair of golden boxers
Wristwatch, for Bronson	Assorted boxes of Girl Scout cookies
Telephone with telephone cord	1 Box of Thin Mints Girl Scout cookies
Cups	2 Boxes of Samoas Girl Scout cookies
Tray with cups and glass of water	\$100 bill (fake)
Pitcher of water	Tray of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
Pen	Misc. purse items
Assorted suitcases	Envelope with note
3 Purses	Vase
5 Coats or jackets	Bottle of sparkling cider
Pocket mirror	Rat poison box
Makeup	Smarties candy (for rat poison)
Pair of ripped men's underwear	Will
2 Folded pieces of paper	
Old-fashioned door key	
Scissors	
Piece of phone wire	
Wad of money	
"Valuable" artifact	

Sound Effects

Thud
Door rattling

This blows.
Were stuck in a house
with a dead guy rotting,
no good food,
and only water to drink.

—Dreyson

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Tony's mansion. Tony and Bronson are struggling. Bronson is dressed as a butler and drives a knife into Tony's chest. Tony clutches the knife and blood oozes all over. Bronson checks Tony's pulse. Bronson checks his watch, goes to the table on the SL wall, mimes taking something out of his jacket pocket, and places the object on the side table. Bronson walks over to the phone and pretends to cut the cord. Bronson goes to the door, pretends to lock it, and mimes turning on the lights. Bronson casually walks back to Tony's body.)

BRONSON: (Looking at his watch.) Exactly 10.5 seconds.

(Tony rises from the floor.)

TONY: Great! That should be plenty of time.

BRONSON: Are you sure that was necessary? I mean, the fake blood and everything?

TONY: Bronson, I told you before, we need to make sure it looks real. My death can't look real unless it's done as real as possible. Just make sure you don't have a real knife when the time comes.

(Bronson goes to side table SL and pours a drink for Tony.)

BRONSON: But it'll be dark. No lights, remember?

TONY: Bronson, you're so simpleminded. Realistic murder equals realistic sounds and timing.

BRONSON: (Under his breath.) That's the least of your problems.

TONY: What was that?

BRONSON: Oh, nothing. Just one problem: You moved last time.

TONY: Hey, do you know how hard it is to hold in a sneeze?

BRONSON: Well, just be sure not to move. In fact, don't even breathe.

TONY: And you be sure everything goes according to plan.

BRONSON: (*Sarcastic.*) With five frantic people thinking that you've been murdered? That should be no problem at all. (*Goes to the back table where cups and drinks are stationed. Pours himself a drink and downs it.*) I still don't get the point of all this. I mean, why go through all the trouble?

TONY: Bronson, you know that I'm dying. A couple of weeks ago, my doctor gave me only two more weeks to live. This is probably my last night alive.

BRONSON: Yes, but still...don't you think it's pretty morbid to fake your own murder and make all those poor people freak out?

TONY: Trust me, they're not *poor* people. They deserve what's coming to them. The way they treated me when I was alive is the only thing morbid around here.

BRONSON: What do you mean *was* alive? You are still alive.

TONY: Now, no joking, Bronson. You have to be serious the whole time. This whole hoax rests on you. Do you have your accent down?

BRONSON: (*Fake English accent, posing as a butler.*) But, of course, sir. May I offer you another drink?

TONY: What country is that?

BRONSON: England?

TONY: Excellent! You remember all the other details?

BRONSON: Yes. Lights go out. You die. I put the envelope on the table, cut the phone line, lock the door, and turn on the lights...then pretend to freak out. (*Feigns flailing his arms around and looking surprised.*)

TONY: Great. Let's sign the will now. I doubt we'll have a chance later, plus, I could die at any moment. (*Takes a piece of paper and pen from his pocket.*) This should be one of the greatest days of your life, Bronson.

BRONSON: I still can't believe you really want to leave everything of yours to me. You're worth millions.

TONY: Why not? You've been my only friend for so long, it's only fitting.

BRONSON: Well, thank you. I'm sorry it has to end this way.

TONY: Oh, don't be. It'll all be worth it to finally get back at these people who have hurt me so deeply. I'm just thankful that I have you as a friend to help.

BRONSON: You're too kind. Thank you, Tony. Maybe I'll tell you goodbye now, just in case you die before I can.

TONY: Goodbye to you, Bronson. Should we practice one more time?

BRONSON: No, I think five times was enough. I'm sorta tired of killing you. Plus, who knows what will actually happen. Something is sure to go wrong.

TONY: Don't be such a pessimist. Think murderer, criminal, partner in crime, secret spy, undercover agent, el matador...
(*Slight pause.*) ...Think butler!

BRONSON: Butler?

TONY: Sure. The butler always commits the murder and tries to get away with it. But this time, he will.

[END OF FREEVIEW]