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Dramatic Publishing

The Controversial Rescue of Fatty the Pig



By Catherine Bush

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The Controversial Rescue of Fatty the Pig

Comedy. By Catherine Bush. *Cast: 3m., 2w.* Cherry Blevins' house has burned down—her second house in five years. While trying to help save Cherry's 300-pound pet pig, Fatty, from the flames, Cherry's brother Floyd and his wife, Connie, are arrested for assault by local law enforcement officer Deputy Dwight Omuhundo. But did they truly assault Dwight? And what started the fire? And why in the world was Cherry keeping a pig for a pet?! As these four characters tell the judge their version of what happened that night and why, they begin to reveal not only the events leading up to the fire, but also all the lost hopes and dreams that make them what they are today. In doing so, they realize that the disappointments of the past don't necessarily dictate the relationships of the future and that, by attempting to rescue Fatty the Pig, they may have miraculously rescued themselves. *Area staging. Approximate running time: 80 minutes. Code: CQ3.*

*Cover image: Barter Theatre, Abingdon, Va., featuring (l-r)
Wendy Mitchell Piper, Nicholas Piper and Rebecca Reinhardt.
Photo: Leah Prater. Cover Design: Jeanette Allig-Sergel.*

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CATHERINE BUSH



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The Controversial Rescue of Fatty the Pig was first produced by Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Va.

Producing Artistic Director Richard Rose
Director Mary Lucy Bivins
Dramaturg Katy Brown
Set Designer Cheri Prough DeVol
Costume Design Colleen Alexis Metzger
Lighting Designer Josh Wilson
Stage Manager Cindi A. Raebel

Original Cast:

Floyd Blevins Nicholas Piper
Dwight Omuhundro Sean Campos
Connie Blevins Wendy Mitchell Piper
Cherry Blevins Rebecca Reinhardt
Judge Ron Smith

The Controversial Rescue of Fatty the Pig

CHARACTERS

FLOYD BLEVINS: a 30-something night manager of the local Quik Mart, fraught with broken dreams and a frail ego, who hopes to escape the world of Twinkies and gas pumps by being elected the county's next deputy water commissioner ... whatever that is.

DEPUTY DWIGHT OMUHUNDRO: a local deputy and true-blue believer in the sovereignty of the law. He is also a die-hard fan of television fishing shows, which he watches in hopes of catching a glimpse of his long-lost father ... who may or may not be a fisherman.

CONNIE BLEVINS: Floyd's wife and local church secretary whose ensemble usually includes a string of pearls, which are curiously absent today. She hates cigarettes, pigs and her sister-in-law, Cherry—not necessarily in that order.

CHERRY BLEVINS: a cigarette-smoking, tough-ass waitress at the local pancake house who secretly dreams of being a chef as famous as Boyardee. Her pet pig, Fatty, is part of her secret plan to break into the culinary world in a blaze of glory. Now, if she could only learn how to cook ...

JUDGE: the local circuit court judge so desperate to escape judging the local fourth grade spelling bee that he's willing to listen to the stories behind a controversial pig rescue. He is heard in voice-over only.

SETTING

The stage is divided into four playing areas, differentiated with set pieces, lighting, etc.

L, the dining room, consists of a cheap dinette table with two chairs, representing Cherry's kitchen and the dining room of the Circle K Pancake Hut. A pack of cigarettes, a lighter and an ashtray reside on the table.

R, the living room, consists of a recliner. Resting on one arm of the recliner is a television remote control. This represents Dwight's living room, Floyd and Connie's living room and the living room of Floyd and Cherry's childhood home.

UC, the church, consists of a wooden pew with a Bible sitting on it. Behind the pew is the outline of a white peaked roof with a steeple. Atop the steeple is a small cross. This represents the various churches referred to in the play. The pew is also used to represent a bench in the Courthouse as well as the front seat of the car.

DC is the courtroom.

The Controversial Rescue of Fatty the Pig

ACT I

AT RISE: *The stage is black. In the dark, we hear a judge's gavel bang loudly, then the voice of the never-to-be-seen JUDGE.*

JUDGE. Next case, bailiff ...

(We hear a paper being passed to the JUDGE.)

JUDGE *(cont'd)*. Let's see, what do we have here ... The State of Kentucky versus Floyd and Connie Blevins. The charge—assaulting an officer of the law ...

(Lights up. Four people stand in a line in the courtroom facing downstage. From L to R they are DEPUTY DWIGHT OMUHUNDRO, FLOYD BLEVNS, CONNIE BLEVINS and CHERRY BLEVINS.)

JUDGE *(cont'd)*. Your name, Officer?

DWIGHT. Omuhundro, your honor. Deputy Dwight Omuhundro.

JUDGE. And you are the arresting officer?

DWIGHT. Yes, sir, I sure am.

JUDGE. As well as the officer assaulted ... ?

FLOYD. Now, see your honor, this here is the problem. If anyone was assaulted in this situation it was *me!*

JUDGE. And you are ... ?

DWIGHT. Your honor, this here is ...

FLOYD. I can speak for myself, boy.

(He turns back to the JUDGE.)

FLOYD *(cont'd)*. My name is Floyd Blevins, your honor—and this here is my wife, Connie, and my sister, Cherry.

(CHERRY waves.)

JUDGE. Cherry ... ?

FLOYD. Cherry Blevins.

JUDGE. I have no record of a “Cherry Blevins” being arrested ...

FLOYD. Oh, she warn’t arrested, your honor. She’s here as a material witness.

JUDGE. Witness ... ?

FLOYD. To validate my good character and vouchsafe my innocence. Ain’t that right, Cherry?

(CHERRY shrugs noncommittally.)

JUDGE. Mr. Blevins, this is *not* a trial. We have no need of witnesses. This is merely an arraignment.

FLOYD. This is a travesty of justice, is what this is, your honor!

JUDGE. Mr. Blevins ...

FLOYD. Your honor, I know you’re a busy man. I’m a busy man, too. So let me just cut to the chase. This whole thing was just a big misunderstandin’. Me and Connie are both law-abidin’ citizens ...

CONNIE. *I’m* blamin’ this whole mess on Cherry. Cherry and her cigarettes, not to mention her plain bad luck.

CHERRY. It’s true. I have bad luck.

FLOYD. I would never assault an officer of the law and neither would Connie.

CONNIE. How many houses can a person have burn down on ’em, anyways?

JUDGE. Wait a minute! Deputy Omuhundro, will you please explain what happened?

DWIGHT. I ain't exactly sure where to start, your honor.

JUDGE. Try the beginning, Deputy.

DWIGHT. Yessir. Well—the call come in at 9 o'clock that night. I know it was 9 o'clock 'cuz my fishin' show'd just ended.

JUDGE. Fishing show?

DWIGHT. Yessir. Every night after supper, I set in my recliner ...

(Lights up on the living room. DWIGHT crosses to the recliner.)

DWIGHT *(cont'd)*. And watch my fishin' shows. The one I was watchin' this particular evenin' was on ESPN. I remember because they was doin' some trophy fishin' off the coast of Florida. *(He picks up the remote and clicks on the "television.")* That's the kinda fishin' where they strap the fishin' pole to you and you ride around in one of them big boats. I love them big boats. Just look at that one, will ya? Look at it!

(DWIGHT points to the television and sits on the recliner. FLOYD walks over and looks at the television.)

DWIGHT *(cont'd)*. That there is a Chris Craft Catalina 26! They just come out this year. A man could catch one heckuva fish with a boat like that. I sure wish I had one.

FLOYD. Where you gonna use a boat like that? This is Kentucky, boy. There ain't no ocean here.

DWIGHT. I don't care. I still want one.

JUDGE. I'm sorry. Did somebody mention a house burning down?

CONNIE. That was me, your honor.

JUDGE. And you are ... ?

CONNIE. Connie Blevins, Floyd's wife.

JUDGE. Right. And your house burnt down ... ?

CONNIE. No, sir. It warn't my house. It was Cherry's. She's Floyd's sister.

(CHERRY waves at the JUDGE.)

CONNIE *(cont'd)*. And it warn't the first time she had a house burn down, neither.

CHERRY. I have real bad luck, your honor.

CONNIE. The first time was five year ago. Cherry was waitin' tables at the Circle K Pancake Hut when her whole house burnt down and her two cats with it.

CHERRY. What'd you have to bring that up for?

CONNIE. Bring what up?

CHERRY. The part about Boo-Boo and Kitty dyin' in that fire.

CONNIE. It's part of the story. I'm explainin' to the judge here what happened, and this is just part of the explanation.

CHERRY. Well, maybe it's just an explanation to you, Connie, but to me that's a real painful memory that I don't appreciate you sharin' with just anybody. No offense, your honor.

JUDGE. None taken.

CHERRY. It was an experience that has scarred me emotionally, OK? Why, to this day, I can still hear the screams of my poor little kitties as that fire got ready to burn 'em up alive.

CONNIE. You didn't hear nothin' 'cuz you was waitin' tables down at the Circle K when it happened. Besides, Cherry—cats don't "scream."

DWIGHT. Yes, ma'am, they sure do. You throw a cat in a tub of water and it'll scream real loud.

(All turn and look at him.)

DWIGHT (*cont'd*). Cats hate water. In fact, there's an old superstition what says if you throw a cat overboard, it's sure to bring about bad storms and more'n likely sink your ship. And in certain fishing communities, the wives of the fisherman will keep their cats indoors in order to protect their husbands from peril at sea. They was talkin' about it on one of my fishin' shows.

JUDGE. I believe we're straying somewhat. The charge is assaulting an officer of the law ...

(*FLOYD crosses back down to the courtroom.*)

FLOYD. The thing is, your honor, it was real dark out. Even with that fire blazin', you couldn't see for shit. There was all these shadows, never mind all the smoke. So, I didn't even know that fella there ...

(*FLOYD points to DWIGHT.*)

FLOYD (*cont'd*). ... was an officer of the law because I couldn't hardly see him. Not that it matters because I sure as hell didn't hit him, *whoever* he was. I didn't hit *nobody*. And neither did Connie.

CONNIE. Your honor, cigarette smokin' should be outlawed.

JUDGE. What ... ?

CONNIE. I know I probably shouldn't say that here in Kentucky, this bein' a big tobacco-producin' state and all. But truth is it's a filthy, disgustin' habit. And it makes my hair smell awful, not to mention my clothes. Clothes which I have to *dry-clean*, unlike some people whose idea of dressin' up is puttin' on lipstick with her blue jeans and tube top.

CHERRY (*to the JUDGE*). Connie's a bitch.

(*We hear the bang of a gavel.*)

JUDGE. Young lady, there will be no name-calling in my courtroom!

CHERRY. I ain't callin' names, your honor. I'm just explainin' the way Connie is. Why, I told Floyd the first time he brung her home that she was bad news. I remember, I was settin' at the kitchen table ...

(Lights up on the dining room. CHERRY crosses to the table and takes a seat.)

CHERRY *(cont'd)*. And Floyd had just come back from drop-pin' her off ...

(FLOYD crosses to the dining room.)

CHERRY *(cont'd)*. And the first thing I said to him was...

(CHERRY turns to FLOYD.)

CHERRY *(cont'd)*. She's bad news.

FLOYD. You don't know nothin'.

CHERRY. I know bad news when I see it.

FLOYD. Huh.

CHERRY. What do you want with her, anyway? Why not just stick with Rhonda down at the Circle K? A woman what can flip flapjacks is a whole lot better catch than some snotty ol' church secretary wearin' a fancy string of pearls.

FLOYD. What's wrong with wearin' pearls?

CHERRY. Nobody with *sense* wears pearls.

FLOYD. I think they're real dignified.

CHERRY. *Dignified?*

FLOYD. Classy, even. She's a real lady.

CHERRY. A *lady*? All she did all night long was make fun of my cigarette smokin'. Every time I'd try to light up,

she'd start coughin' to beat all hell. That don't sound very ladylike to me!

FLOYD. You're just jealous, is all. She's somethin' you'll never be.

CHERRY. Floyd, listen to me! You're makin' a mistake!

(CHERRY turns to the JUDGE.)

CHERRY *(cont'd)*. But he wouldn't listen, your honor, so here I am, stuck with this pearl-wearin', snotty-ass sister-in-law, who's all the time makin' smart-alecky remarks about my cigarette smokin'...

(CHERRY flicks her lighter in order to light her cigarette. CONNIE starts coughing. CHERRY lets her lighter go out.)

CHERRY *(cont'd)*. I'm tellin' you, your honor, Floyd shoul-da stuck with Rhonda down at the Circle K!

JUDGE. Is Rhonda the one with the bleach blonde hair and the tattoo?

CHERRY. Yessir.

JUDGE. I see ...

FLOYD. That's it! Your honor, may I approach the bench?

JUDGE. What for?

FLOYD. I need to explain some things to you. Man to man—if y'know what I mean.

JUDGE. All right then. What the hell. You may approach, Mr. Blevins.

(FLOYD steps forward. CONNIE crosses back to the pew and sits. A spot comes up on FLOYD.)

FLOYD. The thing is, your honor—I liked Rhonda down at the Circle K. I liked her *real* well, if y'know what I mean. There warn't nothin' that girl wouldn't do in bed. But a man

with political ambition's got to be real particular when he's pickin' out a prospective wife. And Rhonda, bless her heart, warn't exactly fittin' material for a future deputy water commissioner. What I needed was someone more ladylike. What I needed was a *virgin*. So I married Connie, instead ...

(Lights up on the church and CONNIE.)

FLOYD *(cont'd)*. She was the secretary over at the Baptist church. I started goin' there when I realized I had a gift for politics. You probably know this already, your honor, but any man with political ambitions has got to be a God-fearin', church-goin' man. And I figured that Baptist church looked just as good as any of them other churches. So I joined up, got my ass "saved"—the whole nine yards. Even started goin' to them potluck suppers they're always holdin' down there. That's where I met Connie.

(Spot out on FLOYD as he crosses to the church. The sounds of a church potluck can be heard.)

FLOYD *(cont'd)*. Hey there.

CONNIE. Hello.

FLOYD. Mind if I set down?

(CONNIE shrugs and scoots over. FLOYD sits down.)

FLOYD *(cont'd)*. It's a nice potluck, ain't it? The food here's real good. The fried chicken, the mashed potatoes, the green beans ... all of it. The biscuits ... Only thing I didn't like was the macaroni and cheese. It's real dried up. But I reckon a dish like that's bound to creep in at a potluck—y'know, with everybody bringin' a dish to pass and whatnot. What dish did you bring?

CONNIE. The macaroni and cheese.

FLOYD. Oh. Well. Better luck next time.

CONNIE *(standing up)*. Excuse me ...

FLOYD (*grabbing her arm*). Hold on, now. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. You cook a whole lot better'n anybody I'm kin to. Please ... set back down here a minute.

(*CONNIE and FLOYD both sit.*)

FLOYD (*cont'd*). I'm Floyd Blevins, by the way.

CONNIE. Connie Turnbull.

FLOYD. It's nice to meet you, Connie Turnbull. You ain't from around here, are you?

CONNIE. How could you tell?

FLOYD. You're wearin' pearls.

(*CONNIE's hand goes to her neck and fingers the place where her pearls would have been.*)

CONNIE. Oh.

FLOYD. Nobody around here wears pearls. You look real dignified. Real ... ladylike.

CONNIE. Thank you.

FLOYD. You're welcome. You married?

CONNIE. No.

FLOYD. Ever been?

CONNIE. No.

FLOYD. Seein' anybody?

CONNIE. No. I just moved here. I'm the new church secretary.

(*CONNIE freezes. FLOYD crosses back to the courtroom and his spot reappears.*)

FLOYD. Did you hear that, your honor? A church secretary! As soon as I heard that, I knew I found the one for me. A church secretary who'd never been married was bound to be a virgin. Just what a man with political ambitions needed. So I upped and married her.

JUDGE. Mr. Blevins, I fail to see the relevance of this information to the case at hand.

FLOYD. Well, your honor, it's this way ...

CONNIE. Floyd, what're you talkin' about up there?

FLOYD. Connie, I have approached the bench. That means me and the Judge are havin' a *private* conversation.

CONNIE. Are you talkin' about me?

FLOYD. Connie ...

CONNIE. 'Cuz if you're talkin' about me, I think I have the right to know.

FLOYD. I was tellin' the judge how you was a virgin when we got married, OK?

CONNIE. What?! Your honor, may I approach the bench?

FLOYD. Connie, I ain't done yet!

CONNIE. Your honor, this is real important. I need to report a crime!

JUDGE. A crime ... ? Mr. Blevins, take a seat for the moment. Mrs. Blevins, you may approach.

(Spot goes out on FLOYD as he crosses back to the pew to sit. CONNIE approaches the bench. FLOYD glares at her as they pass each other. A spot comes up on CONNIE.)

JUDGE (*cont'd*). Well ... ?

CONNIE. Your honor, Floyd just committed perjury, but he didn't mean to, I swear. See, he really did think I was a virgin when we got married, and he was too drunk on our wedding night to know any different. I mean, *real* drunk. He kept callin' me "Rhonda" the whole time ...

I didn't plan on losin' my virginity before I got married, your honor. I'm a God-fearin' Christian, born and raised. I know the difference between right and wrong. I know it's a sin to

sleep with a man outside the confines of marriage. I told him that, too. I said to him, “Preacher Maggard, what we’re a-doin’ here is wrong. It’s a *sin*.” And Preacher Maggard said, “Judge not others lest ye be judged.” And then we did it. Twice. Right there in the church social hall. I tried to resist the temptation, but he broke me down like a shotgun.

See, your honor, the truth is ... I liked it. There’s somethin’ special ’bout sleepin’ with a man of God. It makes you feel like you’re that much closer to heaven. And it ain’t like he didn’t love me. In fact, I bet he woulda *married* me ... if he warn’t already married. So, I married Floyd instead. Floyd was the first man to treat me like a “lady.” Only thing is, somewhere along the way, he forgot I was a woman, too ...

(We hear a cellphone ring. It rings a second time.)

JUDGE. What is that? Is that a cellphone?

(Another ring.)

JUDGE *(cont’d)*. Who the hell brought a cellphone into my courtroom?

(Another ring. Everyone checks their cellphones. We hear a gavel slam.)

JUDGE *(cont’d)*. Damn it! Cellphones are strictly prohibited in this courtroom!

(Another ring.)

DWIGHT. Uh, your honor ... ?

JUDGE. Deputy Omuhundro, find that cellphone and arrest its owner!

(Another ring.)