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*Dramatic Publishing*

**"SMART, SLICK, SWIFT AND SEXY."**  
—NEW CITY STAGE

# D.O.A.



**BY ELIZABETH LOVELADY**  
**BASED ON THE SCREENPLAY BY RUSSEL ROUSE AND CLARENCE GREENE**

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***Melodrama. By Elizabeth Lovelady. Based on the screenplay by Russell Rouse and Clarence Greene. Cast: 5 to 12m., 4 to 9w.*** Frank Bigelow walks into a police station to report a murder: his own. One day earlier, the small-time accountant kissed his girlfriend goodbye and left on a trip to San Francisco with mysterious intentions. Shortly after he arrives, he's invited to join a group of businessmen celebrating a successful week with their clients. After a wild night, he wakes feeling ill. A doctor and detective arrive to deliver tragic news—Bigelow has been poisoned, and he only has hours left to live. Bigelow frantically searches the city for his killer. Will he unravel the mystery before his time runs out? An adaptation of the 1950s classic noir film, *D.O.A.* will keep audiences on the edge of their seats. With cigar-smoking detectives and gun-toting femme fatales, *D.O.A.* includes all the noir tropes plus updates to the story that will appeal to modern audiences. *Flexible set. Approximate running time: 60 minutes. Code: DG2.*



*Strawdog Theatre, Chicago, featuring (l-r) Mickey O'Sullivan and Scott Cupper. Photo: Tom McGrath. Cover design: Cristian Pacheco.*

ISBN: 978-1-61959-109-7



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Based upon the screenplay by  
RUSSELL ROUSE and CLARENCE GREENE

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ISBN: 978-1-61959-109-7

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*D.O.A.* received its premiere production at Strawdog Theatre's Hugen Hall, Chicago, from March 5 to April 5, 2016. Artistic Director: Hank Boland; Hugen Hall Artistic Director: Anderson Lawfer.

## CAST

Frank Bigelow.....	Mickey O'Sullivan
Cop/Haskell/Dr. Schaefer .....	Wm. Bullion
Cadwell/Lewis/Halliday .....	Scott Cupper
Sue/Mrs. Philips .....	Carol Ludwick
Captain/Welch/Majak.....	Joe Mack
Harry/Bartender/Chester.....	Sean McGill
Kitty/Jane/Ms. Rakubian.....	Mallory Nees
Elaine/Ms. Foster .....	Kelsey Rhiann Shipley
Paula/Jeanie.....	Megan Skord

## PRODUCTION

Director .....	Elizabeth Lovelady
Violence Design .....	R&D Choreography
Set Design .....	Mike Mroch
Light Design.....	John Kelly
Costume Design .....	Raquel Adorno
Props Design .....	Jamie Karas
Sound Design .....	Heath Hays
Stage Manager .....	Becca Levy
Production Manager.....	Liam Fitzgerald

# D.O.A.

## CHARACTERS

*With suggested doubling*

FRANK BIGELOW (m): 30s-40s

PAULA, JEANIE (w): 20s-30s

ELAINE, MS. FOSTER (w): 20s

KITTY, JANE, MS. RAKUBIAN (w): 30s

SUE, MRS. PHILIPS (w): 40s-50s

COP, HASKELL, DR. SCHAEFER (m): 30s-40s

HARRY, BARTENDER, CHESTER (m): 20s-30s

CADWELL, LEWIS, HALLIDAY (m): 30s-40s

CAPTAIN, WELCH, MAJAK (m): 40s-50s

PLACE: Several locations in Sacramento and San Francisco, Calif.

NOTE: It is essential that the frequent location changes happen as swiftly and smoothly as possible to maintain the frantic energy.

TIME: August 1951



# D.O.A.

## SCENE 1

*(Music.*

*Lights up.*

*A police station in San Francisco. The CAPTAIN sits at a desk. FRANK BIGELOW stumbles into the office, looking like death warmed over. He addresses COP.)*

BIGELOW. I want to report a murder.

COP. Where was this murder committed?

BIGELOW. San Francisco. Last night.

COP. Who was murdered?

BIGELOW. I was.

CAPTAIN. Your name Bigelow? Frank Bigelow?

BIGELOW. That's right. Well, do you want to hear me out or don't you, Captain? I don't have very much time.

CAPTAIN. Go ahead, Mr. Bigelow.

BIGELOW. Well, this involves some other people, Captain. A number of other people.

CAPTAIN. You tell it any way you like.

*(Music.)*

## SCENE 2

*(A non-descript accounting office in Sacramento. BIGELOW sits at his desk with KITTY sitting opposite him. She is flirting heavily.)*

BIGELOW. I don't think we took any depreciation on that new equipment last year.

KITTY. Oh no, we didn't. I remember you said we could include it all this year.

BIGELOW. Of course we can, sweetheart.

*(BIGELOW shouts to PAULA in the other room.)*

BIGELOW *(cont'd)*. Paula.

PAULA. Yes, Mr. Bigelow.

BIGELOW. Get me a copy of Ms. Holis' '48 tax return, will ya? Oh uh ... you better get the '47 too.

PAULA. Yes, Mr. Bigelow.

*(PAULA exits to retrieve the tax return. KITTY pulls a hanky out of her cleavage and begins to dab her neck.)*

KITTY. Sure is a scorcher, isn't it? When we finish here, why don't you take me out for a cool drink, Frank?

BIGELOW. Sorry Kitty, I'm leaving for San Francisco today, but I'll be back in about a week. Maybe then?

*(PAULA returns with the tax returns.)*

PAULA. Here you are, Mr. Bigelow.

BIGELOW. Thanks, Paula.

KITTY. Paula, why don't you come down to the salon and let me give you a permanent? It makes your hair so much easier to manage in all this heat.

PAULA. I can't afford it right now, maybe next month.

BIGELOW. Here it is. No, we didn't take the depreciation. Well, we can do it this year.

KITTY. You work it out any way you think fits. Have a nice trip, Frank.

BIGELOW. Sure Kitty, see you when I get back.

KITTY. Bon voyage! *(She kisses BIGELOW on the cheek, then turns to leave.)* Why don't you come down anyway, Paula? We'll uh ... work out a deal on that permanent?

PAULA. Thanks, maybe I will.

*(PAULA waits for KITTY to leave.)*

PAULA *(cont'd)*. I want to go with you, Frank.

BIGELOW. Now, Paula. I'm just going on a little vacation, you know that.

PAULA. But a vacation would be more fun with the two of us? Wouldn't it?

BIGELOW. And who would be here to watch the office?

PAULA. You don't want me there, do you?

BIGELOW. I'll be gone less than a week.

PAULA. And I suppose you just made up your mind to take this little vacation at nine o'clock this morning?

BIGELOW. No, Paula. I meant to tell you about it a few days ago and I guess I forgot.

PAULA. Oh, you forgot?

BIGELOW. Paula, don't be like that.

PAULA. Don't be like what? You just drop a little announcement that you're going away. Not tomorrow or next week or next month, but today. No explanations. Nothing.

BIGELOW. I just want to get away from this town for a few days, that's all.

PAULA. Get away from this town or get away from me?

BIGELOW. Come on, Paula. Try to understand.

PAULA. How can you ask me to understand? Just go! But don't expect me to be waiting for you when you get back!

BIGELOW. Paula. Please, Paula. Come on, turn around.  
Look at me. Come here.

PAULA. Why do you do this to me, Frank? Why can't you be honest with me? Do you have to go?

BIGELOW. I'm going, Paula.

PAULA. You can go to blazes for all I care. *(She begins to cry.)*

BIGELOW. Oh Paula ... Come on now. Fix your face.

*(He offers her a hanky. She takes it and wipes her eyes.)*

PAULA. I know ... I'm being foolish.

BIGELOW. It must be the heat that's got you all worked up.  
I tell ya what, if it doesn't cool off, close the office early for the rest of the week? How's that?

PAULA. Maybe you do need some time alone. Maybe we both do. I know what's going on inside of you, Frank. You're just like any other man, only a little more so. You have a feeling of being trapped. Hemmed in, and you don't know if you like it.

BIGELOW. Look Paula ... I'm gonna be honest with you ...

PAULA. I know you had a bad experience. I know all about it.

BIGELOW. But you don't know what it can do to two people, Paula. And the woman always gets hurt worse than the man. I don't want you to get hurt, darling. More than anything in the world I don't want you to get hurt.

PAULA. I thought that we'd be married by now, Frank. It's been three years.

BIGELOW. Is now the right time to talk about this?

PAULA. No.

BIGELOW. Good girl.

PAULA. Just go. Go to San Francisco. I don't like it, but I'm convinced that you must go. I want you to be very sure, Frank. If it's right between us, and I believe it is, we'll

have something really wonderful together. If it isn't ... we should both know it as soon as possible. So you see, even if I could stop you, I wouldn't do it now.

BIGELOW. Smart girl, Paula. Don't worry yourself about it, and I'll see you in a few days.

*(BIGELOW picks up his suitcase and moves into the hotel.)*

### SCENE 3

*(San Francisco hotel, later that same day. It's very busy; the hotel is crawling with salesmen and their clients. As BIGELOW gets himself settled, there is a knock on the door. HASKELL enters.)*

HASKELL. Say, I'm awfully sorry to bother you but would you mind if I used your telephone?

BIGELOW. No, go right ahead.

HASKELL. I'm just across the hall here. One of the boys is using my phone and he's been on it for a half hour. I just want to call downstairs.

BIGELOW. Sure.

HASKELL. Thank you. *(On phone.)* Room service please. *(To BIGELOW.)* Things really picked up the last few days, didn't they? Write up much business?

BIGELOW. I'm not here on business.

HASKELL *(on phone)*. It's Mr. Haskell in 617. Would you send up another couple of bottles of bourbon? And some scotch? Oh, and some more ice, too. All right, thank you. *(Hangs up the phone. To BIGELOW.)* Not a salesman? What brings you to San Francisco then?

BIGELOW. Is it always like this around here?

HASKELL. No, it's market week. And it's the last day too! The whole town's ready to cut loose! You here all alone?

BIGELOW. Yes, I just got in town.

HASKELL. I'm Sam Haskell.

BIGELOW. I'm Frank, Frank Bigelow.

HASKELL. Why don't you join us for a drink, Frank?

BIGELOW. I don't want to barge in on your party.

HASKELL. Oh, nonsense. It's not a party, just a few of the boys entertaining some pretty buyers. You know, the usual thing. Some drinks and some laughs. It's no party, come on.

BIGELOW. Well ...

HASKELL. Come on. You're here to relax, aren't you?

*(BIGELOW's phone rings.)*

BIGELOW. Just a moment.

HASKELL. Sure, sure, no problem.

*(BIGELOW answers the phone. PAULA is on the other end of the line.)*

BIGELOW. Hello?

PAULA. Hello?

BIGELOW. Oh, hi Paula.

PAULA. Hi Frank! How was the trip?

BIGELOW. Fine. Just fine.

PAULA. Having a miserable time, I hope.

BIGELOW. Well, I don't know, I just got in.

HASKELL. Come on, Frank! I got a drink with your name on it!

PAULA. What was that?

BIGELOW. Ah ... Market week. The place is crawling with travelling salesmen. *(Covering the mouthpiece of the phone.)* This is long distance from my office in Sacramento. Give me a minute, and I'll take you up on that drink.

HASKELL. Don't take too long! You're on vacation, remember?  
(Leaves FRANK's room.)

BIGELOW. Sorry, Paula, what were you saying?

PAULA. Well, Charlie Anderson found out that you went away and he asked me to go out with him.

BIGELOW. Oh, really? How did he make out?

PAULA. I'm considering it.

BIGELOW. Is that what you called to tell me?

PAULA. I'll have you know that this call is strictly business, Mr. Bigelow. Did a Mr. Philips phone you? A Eugene Philips of San Francisco?

BIGELOW. No.

PAULA. He phoned the office three times today. He said that he wanted to get in touch with you immediately. He said it's most urgent and imperative that he reaches you at once.

BIGELOW. What did he want?

PAULA. I don't know, he wouldn't tell me. But he sounded deep, dark and mysterious, and quite agitated about something.

BIGELOW. Philips? Philips? Have we ... have we ever done any business with him?

PAULA. Not unless you've been keeping it a secret from me. I looked through all the accounts.

BIGELOW. Why'd you tell him you could reach me here? You know I'm on vacation, Paula.

PAULA. So you told me. But, this gentleman didn't seem to respect your temperamental moods the way I do. He was very insistent that he speak to you "before it's too late," as he put it.

BIGELOW. Well, call him back and tell him I changed my plans, and you can't reach me. Figure out what it is that he wants.

PAULA. He won't talk to me. I told him that I was your confidential secretary but I guess I didn't sound confidential enough.

BIGELOW. Well, if it's as important as he says it is, he can tell you. Otherwise, he'll just have to wait until I get home.

PAULA. My, aren't we adamant this evening. All right, I'll let him know if he calls back. Oh, and Frank ... ?

BIGELOW. Yeah?

PAULA. I ... I don't quite know how to say this.

BIGELOW. Say what?

PAULA. What I want to say is ... there's nothing you could do that you ever have to feel guilty about ... OK?

BIGELOW. Sure, Paula, thanks. I'll uh ... I'll call you tomorrow.

*(BIGELOW hangs up the phone and steps down the hall to where HASKELL is drinking with the other salesmen and clients. It is a rowdy group.)*

HASKELL. Hi-a Frank! You get that all settled?

BIGELOW. It was my secretary. Needed my help with something. Sometimes I wonder what it is I'm paying her for.

*(All the men laugh.)*

HASKELL. Let me introduce you to some folks. Hey quiet down a minute. Hey, will you quiet down a second? I want you to meet Frank Bigelow. This is Billy Welch.

WELCH. Hello.

BIGELOW. How are ya, Mr. Welch?

WELCH. Glad to know you, Bigelow.

HASKELL. And this is Jane Carlyle.

BIGELOW. Hello.

HASKELL. Jane's the prettiest buyer in San Francisco.

BIGELOW. Yeah, I can see.

ELAINE. Hey! I resent that.



JANE. You don't think I believe him, Elaine? He spreads that from coast to coast! It's good for my morale, anyway.

BIGELOW. Well, I think you're both stunning.

ELAINE. I'd buy what you're selling.

HASKELL. He's not selling anything; he's here on vacation!

ELAINE. Vacation? But you don't even have a drink in your hand! You're gonna need a lesson in how to let loose, Bigelow.

CADWELL. How about a little bourbon?

BIGELOW. Sure, that's fine.

CADWELL. Bourbon it is!

*(CADWELL pours BIGELOW a glass of bourbon. HASKELL turns to SUE, who is trying to dance with HARRY.)*

HASKELL. How's he doing, Suz?

SUE. There's nothing wrong with Harry's rumba that a few strong drinks wouldn't cure.

HASKELL. This is Sue, my wife, and Harry.

HARRY. Hello.

SUE. Hello.

BIGELOW. Good to meet you.

HARRY. How are you? Where'd you find her, Sam, on a dance marathon?

SUE. I bet you could do the rumba.

BIGELOW. I'm kinda rusty.

SUE. Anything would be an improvement after Harry.

HARRY. How do you like that?

BIGELOW. Well, here goes.

*(SUE dances with BIGELOW.)*

SUE. Hey! You're good!

HASKELL. Hey, my wife, she's a good dancer isn't she Bigelow?

BIGELOW. Yeah, sure.

ELAINE. Hey fellas! I thought you were going to show us a good time tonight? Is this "doing the town"?

JANE. That's right! We practically bankrupt our stores to buy everything you got. Then you keep us cooped in this hotel room.

SUE. I agree. This is my last night to howl before I go back to being a dutiful housewife.

WELCH. Well it looks like we're stuck, boys! This is where we blow all our commissions in one night.

SUE. And you're coming with us, Bigelow. Now that I've found a man who can dance, I'm going to hang on to him.

HASKELL. See, what'd I tell ya, Frank? Let's go to the Fisherman! No better place to let loose!

*(Music.)*