

Women Behind Bars

A New Play

by Tom Eyen

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



New York Hollywood London Toronto

SAMUELFRENCH.COM

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *WOMEN BEHIND BARS* is subject to a Licensing Fee. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. In its present form the play is dedicated to the reading public only.

The amateur live stage performance rights to *WOMEN BEHIND BARS* are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc., and licensing arrangements and performance licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur Licensing Fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a licensing quotation and a performance license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Licensing Fees are payable one week before the opening performance of the play to Samuel French, Inc., at 45 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

Licensing Fee of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

Stock licensing fees quoted upon application to Samuel French, Inc.

For all other rights than those stipulated above, apply to: International Creative Management, 730 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10019.

Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured in writing from Samuel French, Inc.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing and advertising for the play: "Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc."

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play and their licensing agent, Samuel French, Inc., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees.

No one shall commit or authorize any act or omission by which the copyright of, or the right to copyright, this play may be impaired.
No one shall make any changes in this play for the purpose of production.
Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised in their own interests to apply to Samuel French, Inc., for written permission before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre.
No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

WOMEN BEHIND BARS
A NEW PLAY BY TOM EYEN

(CHECK ONE)

- _____a black and blue comedy
 - _____the greatest B-movie ever told
 - _____a film for the stage
 - _____a documentary of a Catholic Childhood
 - _____a tribute to all the wonderful kids at
Warners, Universal and Republic and what
they did to our minds.
- For Ron Link and all the women behind bars

WOMEN BEHIND BARS was first performed at THE NEW YORK THEATRE ENSEMBLE October 17th, 1974. It was transferred Off-Broadway to The Astor Place Theatre where it opened May 1st, 1975. It was produced by Craig Baumgarten, Alan Eichler and Ron Link. It was directed by Mr. Link and stage managed by Zarko Kalmic and Lisa Persky. The sets were designed by Herbert Nagle, lights by Lawrence Eichler and costumes from the past and Warren's father, Mr. Creswell Sr. The title song was written by Mr. Eyen. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

THE MATRON *Pat Ast*
 (The evil that men are)
 LOUISE *Leslie Edgar*
 (Everyone hates Louise including Louise)
 BLANCHE *Hope Stansbury*
 (A butterfly waiting for her Streetcar)
 Jo-Jo *Ann Collier*
 (Harlem's answer to Edward G. Robinson)
 CHERI *Sharon Ann Barr*
 (The big blonde. Her morals were low, but her price high)
 GRANNY (Sarah Lee Crocker) *Mary Boylan*
 (The religious old lady with a chip on her tongue [also plays warden])
 GLORIA *Helen Hanft*
 (A real Camel Girl. She'll walk a mile to the chair)
 ADA *Madeleine leRoux*
 (Too much speed had slowed her down)
 GUADALUPE *Maria DeLanda*
 (San Juan's Greatest export)
 MARY-ELEANOR *Mary-Jenifer Mitchell*
 (The innocent destroyed by the system)

The one man's name in play should not be included in program but rather inserted on the top of questionnaire handed to audience as they leave theatre. This protects the surprise of the Matron turning into a man in the middle of the play (and how the world loves a good surprise!).

* Questionnaire is at end of play

TIME

New Year's Eve 1952 to New Year's Eve 1959.

PLACE

The Women's House of Detention, Greenwich Village, U.S.A.

SETTING

A prison cell dominates the entire Stage with bars crossing Upstage. A sliding door of bars is part of this bar section. The only furniture needed in the cell are two long benches and one rocker for Granny. A small room nestles into Stage Left which houses the matron. In the Matron's room is a lamp, a large chair, a table and a pull down Murphy bed that comes out of the wall and a sealed iron door next to it. A wall in the room is decorated with recent paper clippings and magazine pictures of current movie stars and baseball players. A dressing screen is also seen. In other words, the prison cell is very simple while the matron's room is very busy. The matron's room should be elevated slightly to give the feeling of another part of the prison.

There is a walkway between the bars across the back of stage and the backdrop. On this walkway we see Louise patrolling the women. The backdrop is basically black with a large white shadow painted on it which is created by a green-shaded overhead light. This white shadow is used to project the slide credits upon.

MUSIC

The background music should be soundtrack music of the 50's. In the original production the themes from RAT RACE and MAN WITH A GOLDEN ARM were used to critical acclaim. In addition, an original theme song entitled, WOMEN BEHIND BARS should be played as audience is leaving or arriving. Song is at end of play script.

LIGHTING

Should create the illusion of a B Movie. Direct overhead lighting and footlights will help create this mood along with standard stage lighting designs.

Women Behind Bars

ACT ONE

First image: The Stage is visible and the lights are on a dim preset. The soundtrack of "Rat Race" or "Man With the Golden Arm" or the original theme song at end rises in the darkness. A slide projector flashes the main title of "Women Behind Bars" on the wall through the bars. The following credits were used in the original production (each number is one slide).

1. *Women Behind Bars*
2. *Starring*
3. *Three names (of actresses)*
4. *Three names*
5. *Three names*
6. *And introducing (the girl playing MARY)*
7. *Lighting designer*
8. *Set designer and costume designer*
9. *Miss (girl playing GLORIA) costumes designed by Delores of Puerto Rico*
10. *Screenplay by Tom Eyer*
11. *From an original idea by Jean Paul Sarte and Bernie Gluckman*
12. *Directed by*
13. *Produced by*
14. *The producers of this motion picture wish to thank the United States Army without whose help this film would never have been made.*
15. *Slide of the House of Detention (or a prison)*

As slide number 15 appears a GOD-LIKE VOICE sounds over the vision of the prison.

GOD-LIKE VOICE. The women's House of Detention. New Year's Eve 1952. A traumatic jailbreak.

WOMEN. Jailbreak! (*Sound of sirens, alarms, whistles and general outbreak.*)

(*At which point they appear hysterical from all over the theatre heading for the Stage. Some come from rear of house, some from sides and all trying to get over the bars which cross the Upstage. They ad-lib trying to escape and as they fruitlessly try to get over the bars, the MATRON appears with her flunky assistant LOUISE. All the women now hover in one grouping on Stage Left of the sliding bar door. The MATRON slides the bar door open and in the shadowy light slightly resembles Orson Welles.*)

MATRON. All right girls, the party's over. Did you think you were going to make it? That's why you're all here, 'cause you didn't make it. We run a clean prison here. We respect those who respect us. If you're straight with us, we'll be straight with you. If you give us co-operation, we'll give you love.

GLORIA. (*Appearing smoking like a chimney stack in the days of Oliver Dickens.*) Oh yeah? That's a bunch of bullshit (bull), Diesel Truck!

CHERI. (*Imitating her like the parrot she is.*) Yeah, that's a bunch of bullshit (bull)!

MATRON. (*Grabbing CHERI, as she's afraid of GLORIA, and throws her on bench.*) Yeah! We are real American here, so if any of you mothers try that shit (trick) again, I will personally stick broom sticks through your ears! Okay Louise, get these rejects into line-up and make it fast!

LOUISE. Okay you miserable tramps, you heard the Colonel, get into line. Come on move those tired legs. Get into line up. LINE UP! (*Blows whistle. They form line facing back until they give their name. LOUISE blows a whistle for each to turn around.*)

BLANCHE. Blanche Kaminsky. 929350 Sodomy and shoplifting.

JO-JO. (*Carrying a battery radio which she dances to.*) Jo-Jo "The Bounce" Washington 429870. Hunting out of season. (*LOUISE blows whistle for Jo-Jo is lying.*) Assault with a deadly weapon, my battery radio!

CHERI. Cheri Netherland. Plaza 81212. Soliciting, extortion, and peddling without a bicycle. (*Whistle.*)

GRANNY. Sara Lee Crocker. 130072. Manslaughter. (*Beat.*) Nine times.

GLORIA. Gloria Jean Kojax. 533236. Killing my hairdresser. (*Whistle.*) Murder One and tax evasion. (*Whistle.*)

ADA. Ada Morris. 123456. (*Lights match.*) Arson. (*Whistle.*)

GUADALUPE. Maria, Guadalupe, Marguerita, Theresa, Santanos. 331331. Prostitution, possession of drugs and failing to pay off Con Edison.

LOUISE. Alright girls, contrary to any impressions you might be under, this is not a cocktail party, so let's move those legs and move 'em fast, fast, fast. (*She leaves.*)

CHERI. Fast? Fast!? Are you ready for her? I've been going so fast, I can't come down. GLORIA? You got a down?

GLORIA. Yeah . . . my whole (fucken) life!

CHERI. Granny I can not sleep.

GRANNY. Ah, you'll get used to it. How long you been here anyway?

CHERI. Thirteen years tomorrow.

GRANNY. (*In rocker, with bible.*) That's nothing! I've been here forty-two years and I sleep like a baby.

BLANCHE. Why, I just don't understand why I'm here. I'm innocent, ya hear, innocent. I don't belong here. It was a frame up I tell you! A frame up!

Jo-Jo. Sure it was Dixie Peach. Next thing you'll be telling us your family owned Belle Rive.

BLANCHE. How did you know?

GUADALUPE. I thought we was going to make it out this time. I want to go home! I want to go home! I want to see my familia again. I want to see my father again . . . Emiliano Santanos; I want to see my mother again . . . Anna Maria Santanos; I want to see my brother, Wilfredo Santanos; I want to see my sister, Gloria Santanos; I want to see my first cousin, Juan Santanos and my second cousin . . . (LOUISE grabs her and covers her mouth.)

MATRON. TAKE HER OUT! (Said to LOUISE. LOUISE takes her out.)

GLORIA. Even for a Puerto Rican that girls got alot of relatives.

MATRON. I'm taking her to Section Ten. Anyone else causing a disturbance can join her. There's lots of room down there . . . in Section Ten.

CHERI. Gee, poor Guadalupe. Few people have ever come back from Section Ten the same.

ADA. (Totally into herself until now. She is in daze.) I was in section ten . . . for two whole days—once. It didn't phase me—at all. (She falls to floor in a faint. All women circle her and stare at her on the floor. Silence. ADA staring up.) Don't stare at me. If you loved me you wouldn't stare at me. If you loved me you'd bury me. BURY ME! PLEASE, BURY ME! MY FLESH IS ROTTING. PLEASE! BURY ME! (Desperately pulling on the women who ignore her.)

GLORIA. (Coolly blowing smoke.) That girl is a real (fucken') up. With her around you don't need downs.

CHERI. Yes I do, Gloria!

BLANCHE. (Going over to ADA who is now back on the floor.) You know, Ada, you're just dreadful, dread-

ful do ya hear? No wonder they treat us like dogs when you act like that. (*Confidentially.*) Now listen, honey, if we want respect, we have to act like ladies. Do ya hear?

ADA. Yes mama dear, I'd like some Dr. Pepper now. (*BLANCHE slaps her.*)

BLANCHE. Don't call me your mama. I'm not old enough to be your sister!!

Jo-Jo. Hey Gloria, have you got an extra smoke?

GLORIA. Yeah, I do, what about it? (*They glare in freeze.*)

ADA. (*Flying around.*) I'm flying, everyone. Look, I'm flying.

GRANNY. (*Rocking.*) Cheri, prison is hell on earth. It's only due to the Bible that I have endured so long.

CHERI. Gee Granny, are you a lifer?

GRANNY. Yep, me and Jesus going to be here forever.

CHERI. What ya in for?

GRANNY. Poisoned nine husbands. What's your rap?

CHERI. Me? I'm just a C.P.—a common prostitute from Baltimore . . . nothing special.

GRANNY. Everyone's special in the eyes of the Lord, Cheri. Even a dirty whore like you.

ADA. (*Grabs GRANNY's Bible and runs.*) Bible! Bible! I'm going to burn the Bible! Burn Bible, Burn! (*They grab ADA. Return Bible to GRANNY.*)

Jo-Jo. I said! "Hey Gloria, have you got an extra smoke?"

GLORIA. Look, BITCH. I got nothing extra. Everything I have got is the bare minimum. That is why I'm in this steel trap. Because I tried to get something extra, something that sniffed of the sweet smell of success, something that would lift me out of the sour stink of failure! Ha, my old man Rocko Pagano, left me when I was seventeen with a kid to support. I had nothing so I scraped and hustled and stole and I tried to get me and my little Johnny a better life—but I got caught, caught by the system and everything

I did have was taken away from me. I was stripped of everything and now you stand there and ask me if I got anything extra? What do you want from my life, you filthy nigger? (or filthy moocher).

Jo-Jo. A smoke honey, not a (fucken') monologue, (tense beat).

CHERI. Be cool, Jo-Jo.

Jo-Jo. (*Knocking CHERI to the floor with the flick of a wrist and going on.*) You think you've had hard times? You don't know what hard times are. I've paid my dues with interest! When I was only sixteen my own father bought me a cemetery plot, real fast. Know why? Because I was on junk! Heroin! And there is nothin' you can do for anyone on Heroin, but buy them a cemetery plot, real fast. But I didn't die—I bounced back! Jo-Jo Washington always bounces back! Yeah, give her room, give Jo-Jo some room cause she's bouncing! Ohhhh watch her bounce! She bounces so good! (*Stops dead to GLORIA.*) and she's going to bounce right in your ugly face.—Hard times, baby? Shit! You ain't had none woman, you spoiled white slut.

CHERI. Hey! can I tell my story now? (*GLORIA knocks her out of way. GLORIA and Jo-Jo glare at each other and walk away. CHERI not to be stopped.*) Hey girls! Look at my new fingernail polish!

BLANCHE. Where'd you get that?

CHERI. I have connections.

BLANCHE. She's been sleeping with the Matron again.

CHERI. What'd you say?

BLANCHE. I said, you're probably sleeping with the Matron again.

CHERI. (*Pulls vibrator from BLANCHE's robe.*) You've had this vibrator on your temples so long your minds worn out.

BLANCHE. Listen Honey, people who live in brick houses shouldn't throw shit.

CHERI. You two bit nigger lover.

BLANCHE. Well if there's one thing I hate . . . it's a vulgar bitch.

CHERI. What'd you say magnolia blossom?

BLANCHE. I said, "If there's one thing I hate it's a vulgar bitch!"

(They fight. LOUISE is blowing whistle and all the women gang around. They fight screaming and having a good time. MATRON now enters with MARY ELEANOR. Everyone stops and stares at the new arrival.)

MATRON. Now that's no way to greet our new guest is it girls? *(They look at sweet innocent MARY ELEANOR who is wearing forties street clothes with a little hat.)* Don't be afraid honey, they won't hurt you. They like chicken. *(She pushes MARY into the crowd of women.)* Now get out of those cheap clothes and into this Dior designed prison gown. *(Throws the prison uniform at her and exits laughing. LOUISE closes door.)*

MARY. *(Running to closing door.)* NO! NO! Don't leave me here. Please. I didn't do anything wrong. I don't belong here! *(GLORIA advances to MARY like a hungry fox. GLORIA brings MARY down to center of cell. GLORIA walks toward her.)* I'm sorry I didn't mean that you did. I mean— *(Begins crying.)* Oh, I don't know what I mean. I'm so confused. *(BLANCHE moves towards MARY who is standing with GLORIA.)*

GLORIA. Back off Blanche! *(To MARY.)* Let me take your coat, you're gonna be here a while. Get undressed.

MARY. Here?

GLORIA. *(Smirks.)* The dressing rooms are full. What's your name?

MARY. *(Taking off blouse and skirt shyly.)* Mary-Eleanor.

GLORIA. Mary-Eleanor, I'd like you to meet the ladies.

MARY. Hi. (*They stare at her. There is tension in the air you could cut with a sharp knife.*)

GLORIA. Hey Jo-Jo, let's have some nice music on the radio.

Jo-Jo. Sure Gloria, I'll turn on the hit parade. (*She does.*)

(*SONG: Teresa Brewer, Music, Music, Music or a good 1952 favorite.*)

GLORIA. (*Grabs MARY.*) Do ya wanna dance? (*MARY pushes GLORIA away.*)

CHERI. I just love Teresa Brewer. She's so positive!

GLORIA. I said, (*Grabs MARY.*) "Do ya wanna dance?"

MARY. No, thank you. (*Gets away from GLORIA.*)

GLORIA. Hey! SHE don't wanna dance!!! (*Women close in on MARY.*)

MARY. Hey what's happening? What's happening?
MATRON, NO! NO! GET AWAY FROM ME.
MATRON I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.
HELP, HELP!

MATRON. (*In her room.*) HA HA HA HA . . .

GRANNY. GET THE BROOM. GET THE BROOM.
(*ADA gets broom and gives it to BLANCHE.*)

MARY. HELP! GOD FORGIVE THEM, HELP!
HELP! (*The rape scene freezes as light comes up on MATRON's room. She is reading a wrestling magazine—reading the pictures that is.*)

MATRON. For twenty-two years I've watched the losers of the world come through those gates and they're all alike. They're all innocent to themselves. No matter what they did, they didn't do it. Their brother did it, their parents did it, their hand did it, their insanity did it, their heart did it, but never their minds. No one will admit to evilness. That's why I'm here, to make those sick sons-of-a bitchin' losers know their evil. (*She smiles.*) For twenty-two years that's

been my contribution to society. I'll help you too if you get confused. (*End of freeze in cell. MARY is left shattered.*)

GLORIA. Here kid, put this on you might catch cold. (*Drops prison outfit on MARY: Pause.*) Smoke?

MARY. (*Getting dressed.*) No thank you I don't smoke.

GLORIA. Well you better start! Smoke it!

MARY. (*Stuttering and crying.*) Why? Why? Why?

ADA. Why . . .

GLORIA. Why the little rape? That was nothing. Only standard initiation for new inmates. It could have been more fun if you went with it. Of course, some of us have more fun going against it. Right, Cheri?!

CHERI. Gloria, give me a break! (*Posing on bench.*)

MARY. I want to see the warden! (*All girls look at her.*)

GLORIA. What'd you say?

MARY. I said, "I want to see the warden!"

GLORIA. Well, I wouldn't say that if I were you, the girls around here don't much care for a stoolie.

ADA. I wanted to see the warden—once, that was so long ago. It was the turn of the century . . . and I was a queen—

BLANCHE. Queen of Diamonds—

ADA. —and I was riding in a carriage and . . . (*GLORIA shoves MARY into ADA. ADA stops, stares.*)

CHERI. You know Granny, the new kid looks sweet. I used to live next door to a girl like that, a real virgin type, she never lost it till she was at least eleven!

GRANNY. You're all sinful with your shenanigans. The lord is my sheperd and I his sheep, and where he leads I shall follow, but I hope he doesn't go into any pizza stands, can't stand those (fucken') greasy Guinea's.

Jo-Jo. Hey, dixie peach, what you say, how about you and me sitting next to each other during the movie tonite?

BLANCHE. I beg your pardon! Are you talkin to me? Are you insinuating that a Mississippi debutante would sit in a dark room next to a darkie? WHY really! It's enough to make my grand grandma's body roll over.

JO-JO. Yea, that's what I say about all you white Mississippi trash, you all have a tendency of rolling over.

MATRON. Okay, bring her in. (LOUISE *drags in GUADALUPE who's in trance.*)

LOUISE. Hey, mira mira everybody! Guadalupe just got back from a lovely vacation.

GLORIA. YEAH, one of those cheap package deals where they put you in a backroom for three days with a sunlamp and then tell you you're in Bermuda.

MATRON. Watch it Gloria! One more wisecrack and you're getting a one way ticket to Section Ten.

GLORIA. Yeah! You're too cheap to buy anyone a round trip! (MATRON *stares at GLORIA. GLORIA stares at MATRON. Beat of tension. MATRON leaves.*)

JO-JO. Tell us Guadalupe, how was it down there in Section Ten? (GUADALUPE *stares into space like ADA.*)

GUADALUPE. Ah! Ah!

ADA. Ah! Ah!

GLORIA. Oh terrific, now we have two zombies to cheer us up.

BLANCHE. (*Running to GUADALUPE on bench.*) Oh Guadalupe, talk to me. Talk to me. Don't you recognize me? It's Blanche. Blanche you're best friend. Don't you recognize me? DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ME? (*She turns dramatically.*) She doesn't recognize me.

CHERI. I have an idea! There's only one way to wake up a Spanish girl! Get a cha-cha on the radio. (*She flicks on radio.*)

(*A cha-cha comes on immediately and all girls cha-*

cha. After about ten seconds GUADALUPE jumps up full of life and dances too. She and GLORIA dance together until GLORIA grabs her hair a bit. GUADALUPE stops abruptly. Music stops.)

GUADALUPE. Hey! What are you trying to do? Make an ass of Guadalupe? Huh? I wanna see my third cousin Jose Paula Santanos. I wanna see my fourth cousin, Raul Santanos. I wanna see my Uncle Manilito Santanos from Newark, New Jersey. (*To MARY.*) He give you a really good—

GLORIA. Here hon, have a cigarette break. (*Puts a banana in her mouth.*)

GUADALUPE. (*Spitting it out.*) Guadalupe no eat American yellow banana!

ADA. (*Standing on bench.*) Hey look at me everybody! I'm walking on air over Niagara Falls. No one can reach me! (*GUADALUPE swears at GLORIA in Spanish.*) No one can reach me!

MARY. (*To audience in Downstage spot.*) It was unreal those first few days. It was like nothing I had ever known. A nightmare would have been a welcomed relief. Human beings caged like wild animals. There's something about bars that makes people wild animals. I counted the seconds, which slowly turned into minutes, which poured into hours and took days to become days. (*Takes bucket.*) And the days became like thorns that I could not pull out of my body.—and I become exposed to every imaginable human perversion. (*Begins scrubbing floor.*)

MATRON. (*Approaching her.*) Hi, sweetie. How do you like it here after four months?

MARY. (*Scrubbing floor.*) I don't think I'll ever get used to it, but I'll try to be a good prisoner so I can make parole.

MATRON. (*Has a small suitcase, opens it.*) How would you like some nice things to make your life here a little more bearable? (*MARY looks.*) I got some

nice lipstick, cold cream, fingerspolish, a year's subscription to House and Garden, a self rechargable vibrator guaranteed for life.

GLORIA. Who's life, diesel truck? For some people around here that's a real short guarantee.

MATRON. Keep talking Gloria, and I'll lock you into Section Ten for the holidays.

ADA. I was in Section Ten once. It was a real holiday. Daddy was there and he held me. He held me, down and he beat me. (*Running to women.*) BEAT ME! BEAT ME! BEAT ME! If you loved me you'd BEAT ME!

GLORIA. Honey, if I really loved you I'd shoot you.

Jo-Jo. (*Back to MARY.*) Don't buy nothing kid. I don't think you want to pay the price.

CHERI. Look, I'll let you use my lipstick.

BLANCHE. Don't buy nothing unless you've got lots of blood to spend.

MARY. (*Ignoring girls. To MATRON.*) How much is it?

MATRON. Very little. You know if your nice to me it will be very little. The name's Pauline, but the girls around here just call me Paul.

MARY. That was my husband's name, Paul.

MATRON. What a coincidence. (*The girls are playing craps in background.*)

Jo-Jo. "Snake-eyes!"

MARY. I sure would like a lipstick, but I don't have much money.

MATRON. (*Moving in.*) How much do you have?

MARY. Just my salary from the laundry.

MATRON. Why don't we go up to my room and discuss it?

MARY. Now?

MATRON. Now. (*They go off to the MATRON's room.*)

GRANNY. That matron don't miss a trick. She even put the make on me when I first came here.

GLORIA. Yeah, some people are real desperate, you old witch!

GRANNY. Dear lord look over the lambs of your flock, for all men are equal in your eyes, but a dirty dyke is a whole nother ball game.

GLORIA. I'm gonna take that Bible and shove it down your vicious throat. (*Holding GRANNY's neck.*)

Jo-Jo. Cool it, Gloria! Leave the old girl alone!

CHERI. You wouldn't kill her would you?

GLORIA. (*Tightening her fingers.*) Look, I'm a lifer and one more life doesn't mean shit to me. Don't mess in Jo-Jo!

Jo-Jo. Remember our pact! We don't touch the old lady! (*GLORIA lets GRANNY go. She falls to the floor choking.*)

GRANNY. Haven't met one bull dyke yet with a sense of humor. (*MATRONS' room. LOUISE is in MATRON's dressing gown.*)

MATRONS. What are you doing, Louise?

LOUISE. Oh, I wasn't doing nothing, don't beat me, don't beat me. It makes me feel so good to be in your shoes and your gowns and your jewelry.

MATRONS. Would you mind waiting outside?

LOUISE. Outside? What's happening? Have there been any new developments? Outside?

MATRONS. No, I just want to talk to Mary. It's routine.

LOUISE. Routine? Routine! Oh sure, I understand. I'll just take my Modern Screen and my alboline cream with me Pauline and if you need me just whistle Dixie backwards. (*Exits.*)

MATRONS. As you can see we hire the handicapped.

MARY. Oh, that's nice!

MATRONS. (*To MARY.*) Why don't you have a look around . . . while I go behind the screen and change into something more comfortable, O.K. baby? (*MATRONS drops down Murphy bed from wall. Meanwhile back in another part of the penitentiary.*)

CHERI. Gloria, why don't you leave Granny alone? She hasn't got much more time.

GLORIA. Does anybody?

ADA. Does anybody have any gold paint? I've run out and I haven't finished painting the butterfly's wings . . . a butterfly needs gold wings in order to fly. I need some paint!

(MARY puts on lipstick in compact mirror, MATRON throws clothes over as she talks from behind dressing screen.)

MARY. This lip paint is delicious.

MATRON. (Yelling.) It's cherry, a new kind I got from Lamstons on Sixth Avenue.

MARY. Where's that? (Sits innocently on bed.)

MATRON. A block away, don't you know the area?

MARY. No, I come from Long Island, Ronkonkoma.

MATRON. What are you, an Indian?

MARY. No, just a girl, confused.

MATRON. Tell me Mary, have you ever made love to a woman?

MARY. Huh?

MATRON. I said, have you ever made love to a woman?

MARY. (Pause.) Oh god no! I've never heard of such a thing! (Goes for door.) The door won't open! The door won't open!

MATRON. Know why? (MARY looks out in fear.) It's locked! Don't be afraid. (Still throwing clothes over.)

MARY. (Faking sickness.) I—I—I have a headache.

MATRON. There on the table are some aspirin. Have one. (MARY takes one.)

MARY. They don't taste like aspirins.

MATRON. They're a new kind I got called—gualudes! (Girls in cell are listening through an imaginary wall between cell and MATRON's room.)

MARY. Everything seems so blurry—like a dream.

MATRON. Now Mary, I'm going to come out and stand before you semi-naked. (MARY goes into shock.

MAN *comes out semi-naked, and mouths words of* MATRON.) —And make love to you.

MARY. Paul! I don't believe you're here!

MAN. (MATRON'S *voice*.) I had to see you, Mary.

MARY. You don't sound like Paul.

MAN. (MATRON'S *voice*.) I have laryngitis.

MARY. Are you okay?

MAN. (MATRON'S *voice*.) I'm okay are you okay?

MARY. Hold me Paul. I'm frightened. I thought I'd never see you again.

MAN. (MATRON'S *voice*.) I love you Mary. (*Holding her gently on the bed, he begins making love to her.*)

MARY. I love you Paul. (*The bed begins squeaking.*)

MAN. (MATRON'S *voice*.) That's it Mary. Go with it. Oh Mary, it feels so good.

MARY. Oh Paul, it's been so long. It feels so good.

MAN. (MATRON'S *voice*.) I love you, Mary.

MARY. I love you, Paul.

(*The lights in the MATRON'S room go into a colorful dim on the two bodies making love while the cell lights rise on all the women up against the imaginary wall listening for noises and cheap thrills. The bed squeaks through-out the next scene.*)

GRANNY. Well, do you hear anything?

CHERI. Yeah. I hear my whole life being played back. (Mary: I love you.) That's been my theme song ever since I left Baltimore when I was fifteen. (Matron: I love you.) All I had was one suitcase and a U.S. roadmap with a bright red line straight to Hollywood drawn on it. (Mary: I love you.) —but the law stopped me in Columbus, Ohio for soliciting. (Matron: I love you.) I wasn't soliciting! I was being loved! (Mary: I've always loved you.) I'm getting out of here in only fourteen more years and then I'm getting right back on that bright red line straight to

Hollywood! (Matron: I love you!) *Oh, how they're going to love me there!*

BLANCHE. (*Sitting there suddenly in a diamond tiara and a big gold fan.*) I feel sorry for Cheri. She lives in a dream world.

GLORIA. What a terrific way to spend Christmas Eve listening to bed squeaks! (*LOUISE enters with a Christmas tree. Lights go off in MATRON's room.*)

LOUISE. Surprise girls! A Christmas tree from the Warden. Merry Christmas!

ADA. Christmas? Why didn't someone wake me?

GRANNY. Bless the warden. She's a good woman. I've only seen her once in forty-two years but she had a kind face.

GUADALUPE. I wish I were a home where my mama is making a big a pot of chili and an-cha-la-das and all my brothers and a sisters are unwrapping their presents,—cracker jack prizes.

ADA. I won my life in a cracker jack box. (*Stares at women.*) Anyone want to win it back? (*LOUISE lights the tree. MATRON replaces MAN with MARY in the darkness of her room.*)

BLANCHE. Hey! What do you all say? Let's all sing Silent Night!

MARY. Oh faster, Paul faster!

MAN. (*MATRON's voice.*) Faster Mary faster.

MARY. I love you, Paul! I love you!

MAN. (*MATRON's voice.*) I love you, Mary! I love you!

MARY and MATRON's VOICE. (*Ecstasy.*) AHHHHH!

(*Lights in MATRON's room returns to reveal MATRON with MARY. MARY wakes from her drugged state and screams.*)

MARY. AHHHH! You're not Paul! Paul was shorter!— I have sinned! Let me out of here! Let me out of here. (*The door opens this time. She re-enters cell. All women stop singing and stare coldly at her.*)

GLORIA. Well, well . . .

JO-JO. Don't buy nothin' kid, cause I don't think you want to pay the price.

CHERI. I'll let you use my lipstick.

BLANCHE. Don't buy nothin' ya hear, unless you've got lots of blood to spare.

ADA. (*In daze.*) I wanted to see the warden, once, it was so long ago. (*MATRON enters cell.*)

LOUISE. Just something routine, Pauline?

MATRON. What are all you girls staring at? You know sometimes you all give me the creeps, I come in here to wish you all a Merry Christmas and what do you all do? Stare!

ALL. (*Mocking.*) Merry Christmas, Pauline.

MATRON. You're all a bunch of losers, but don't worry your pretty little heads about it, that's why I'm here. I'M going to straighten you all out. Okay girls, it's recreation time.

LOUISE. (*Tosses them ball.*) Okay girls, play ball. (*Girls play catch as a spot finds MARY.*)

MARY. Isn't it funny how life changes so quickly. Two months ago it was spring. (*Birds chirp.*) A lovely spring. I had just gotten married to Paul, my childhood sweetheart in Ronkonkoma. We had just bought a small house, near mama. Then one day shortly after, Paul took me for a ride. We stopped to get some gas, and suddenly Paul changed! He was holding up the station. I jumped out of the car and screamed: "No Paul, it's wrong!" But he couldn't hear me. There were some boys playing ball next to the station. They made a lot of noise.

ALL. "Foul!"

MARY. "No Paul, it's wrong!" But he couldn't hear me; and then he handed me the gun and took off. Everything happened so quickly they never caught him, but they booked me for robbery with a dangerous weapon. Seven years with good behavior. (*She turns.*) LOUISE helps pad MARY's stomach. Whistle.)

MATRON. Gloria's team wins 203 points, pays three to one.

GLORIA. Cigarettes for the week.

Jo-Jo. That ain't fair!

MARY. (*With back to audience.*) Life isn't fair but I must go on. There is no victory to be won here only survival.

CHERI. Look at Mary!

MARY. And then things mushroomed into total disaster, all possible circumstances to further entrap me appeared from nowhere. (*She turns revealing protruding stomach.*)

CHERI. She's pregnant!

BLANCHE. My God! It's a miracle! The matron has knocked her up!

Jo-Jo. (*Grabs BLANCHE.*) I'd sure like to knock you up, Dixie buns.

BLANCHE. Get your hands off me, darkie!

GRANNY. I'll say a prayer for her.

CHERI. Oh, terrific!

GRANNY. Dear lord, save the poor whore and her little bastard. Because as disgusting as they are, at least they ain't Puerto Ricans.

GUADALUPE. Puerto Ricans? You say Puerto Ricans? And what's wrong with Puerto Ricans? You're all prejudice! You're all after Guadalupe.

CHERI. Ignore her Chi-CHI. She hasn't got much longer with us.

ADA. Two minutes would be too long to live here, I'm only going to live one and a half minutes longer.

GRANNY. I wouldn't want to live much longer, now that the spicks have moved in.

GUADALUPE. I'm going to kill you! I'm going to kill you! Then Guadalupe will be a great Puerto Rican hero and they will erect a statue of me on Central Park West and all my people will be drawn to it.

GRANNY. The only thing a statue of you would draw would be a lot of pigeon shit.

GUADALUPE. (*Now hysterical.*) Now I'm really going to kill you, you yankee witch!

GLORIA. Get it down, Guadalupe.

GRANNY. I haven't met a Puerto Rican yet I couldn't kill with cockroach spray. (*Spraying with Black Flag.* GUADALUPE held down by GLORIA as MATRON enters the cell with guard.)

MATRON. (*Grabs GUADALUPE.*) Okay you spic! You've had it! This is the last time this grease mop is getting into trouble. Get the scissors, Louise.

GLORIA. Oh, the hair!

LOUISE. I've been waiting for this. (*Goes to get scissors.*)

GUADALUPE. Ooh no, not my hair! No! No! I never cut my hair. It has come with me from childhood. My grandma used to brush it for me. It's the only memory of her I have. Here cut off my arm, but no not my hair. It's all I have left of my pride. Please, don't cut my hair! (*LOUISE comes with the scissors.*)

MARY. (*To GLORIA.*) I'd die if they cut my hair.

GLORIA. Be quiet. Don't let them know your weakness. They'll use it against you.

LOUISE. One hot scissors!

(*The GUARD, MATRON and LOUISE stand in front of GUADALUPE who is now on her knees. She is not seen. All the women watch in horror as the MATRON begins snapping the scissors. LOUISE throws patches of hair over her shoulders to the audience. This is done by having patches of hair in her pocket along with a short wig which the GUARD and LOUISE put over GUADALUPE's long hair or if a long wig is used simply remove this while the MATRON is cutting hair and laughing. After awhile of this, the three back away from GUADALUPE and we see her with very short hair. A Spanish crew-cut.*)

GUADALUPE. (*Feeling her head frantically.*) MY HAIR!

MARY. (*Feeling a sudden pain in her stomach.*) MY STOMACH!

MARY and GUADALUPE. AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!
(MATRON, GUARD and LOUISE leave.)

GLORIA. (*About MARY.*) The kids in a bad way.

CHERI. Maybe we should contact her parents.

GLORIA. Kids like her don't have parents.

BLANCHE. I wouldn't want to have my baby in a prison. I'd fly to Sweden.

Jo-Jo. She's having a baby not a sex change.

ADA. I was born in a prison. There have always been walls around my life and prison bars around my dreams . . . (*To BLANCHE.*) I'm going to burn your skin.

BLANCHE. Say, what's this girl Ada in here for anyway?

CHERI. She tried to jump off the Brooklyn Bridge.

BLANCHE. Well, can't a girl die if she wants to?

CHERI. Yeah, but not when you've got both your parents tied to you.

ADA. I was only trying to fly. I wanted us all to fly together. (*Flies around.*) I'm flying. Look at me everybody, I'm flying! I can fly!

GLORIA. She can say that again!

BLANCHE. Why isn't the poor thing in a sanitarium?

GLORIA. She is in here Blanche because it's cheaper.

BLANCHE. But prison life isn't easy, Gloria!

GLORIA. No life is easy. I don't get you Blanche. You act like this is some kind of sewing circle, it's a jail, a prison, a cage.

ADA. (*To GLORIA.*) Thank you mama, you brought me some ice cream.

GLORIA. (*Continuing.*) It's a nut house!

(LOUISE enters carrying a large white cake.)

LOUISE. Hey, Guadalupe, look! It's a present from your Uncle Manny from Newark!—a real ice box cake!

CHERI. Gee, I wonder if there's a file in it?

GLORIA. A file? That cake is big enough to hide a crowbar in it.

GUADALUPE. Hey everybody, look! (*Lifts fake front revealing a caged chicken.*) There's a chicken in here! Now Guadalupe has someone to love. I am going to name it Rosalita after my Grandmother! (*Looks at LOUISE.*) You won't tell anyone about this will you, Louise? (*Hiding chicken.*)

LOUISE. Me? Do I look like a stoolie? Mum's the word. (*She leaves as the MATRON appears in an outrageous 40's outfit with foxes around shoulders and a large white straw bag and veiled hat.*)

MATRON. Bye, girls.

CHERI. (*Looks at MATRON.*) If that's the way dames are looking on the outside, I'm glad I'm in here.

MATRON. I'm going out on a date with a man. A real man.

GLORIA. I wonder what her name is.

MATRON. I'll pretend I didn't hear that Gloria. He's going to take me to a drive-in movie on Long Island. They're showing "THE BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL" with Lana Turner and Kirk Douglas—and when the big love scene comes on we're going to pet and he's going to run his hot sweaty hand up my leg—(*She demonstrates on herself.*) and I'm going to squirm in my seat and then my flesh is gonna start crawling and the inside of my treasure chest is gonna start steaming and burning and nothing will put it out but his long fire hose—and then I'll just grab his long fire hose which will make him start talking to me dirty—

BLANCHE. (*Getting carried away.*) Oh dirty! Talk to me, dirty! (*Women are becoming aroused.*)

MATRON. —real dirty—and then like a good Catholic girl, I'll act shocked!—which will make him start talking even dirtier and dirtier—and then he'll take off my panties with the nice lace fringe—you know the ones, Blanche.

BLANCHE. (*Acting innocent.*) I don't know what you're talkin' about!

MATRON. —and then he'll start fingering around my hot active volcano and then he'll get on top of me and start pumping and pumping and pumping and pumping and pumping—and then my seething volcano will erupt—all over the back of his 1952 Nash Rambler with the pull down seats and it'll feel so good. Oh honey, it will feel so good. But he won't stop pumping. (*Acts out trying to fight a passionate lover.*) Ah! Ah! Ah! "Stop, Percy, Stop!" Ah! Ah! Ah! But he won't stop pumping and pumping and pumping and pumping and pumping and— (*Checks watch. Composes herself.*) Oh my goodness! I'm late for my date. (*All girls freeze and glare at MATRON. She has tortured them again.*) Cheer up girls, it's visitor's day. You all be good now and if your not. I'm going to lock you all into Section Ten! (*Throws a kiss as she leaves and slams sliding door.*) Goodnight, girls. Pleasant dreams.

GLORIA. They should give that woman an award for viciousness.

LOUISE. (*Sneaks in.*) Hey Mary. (*MARY's half-asleep.*) Hey, Mary-Eleanor. You've got a visitor. A man.

ALL. (*Still hot.*) A man!

LOUISE. Yeah, a real man! (*To MARY.*) He says he's your brother but he don't look nothin' like you. (*MAN appears. He is dressed like a hood.*) Okay, mister. You got five minutes.

PAUL. (*He struts in.*) Hi Mary. (*Women all become very aware of the MAN.*)

MARY. Paul! What are you doing here?

PAUL. I had to see you.

MARY. You're taking a big risk.

PAUL. I had to see you . . . to find out where you put the money.

MARY. Money, what money?

PAUL. The money from the gasoline station.

MARY. I never took it.

PAUL. You never took it? You never took it???
(Pushes her down.) You dumb bitch! (All the girls are getting hot watching him be macho manly:)

CHERI. Ohh, he's so tough!

MARY. (Revealing her stomach.) I'm carrying your child, doesn't that mean anything to you?

PAUL. Yeah, more alimony.

BLANCHE. (To other women panting.) Ohh he's real bad! (Girls begin to advance.)

MARY. (To PAUL.) Not a day has gone by . . .

PAUL. What did you think I left you there for?

MARY. I'm sure I don't know . . . why, why, why, why.

PAUL. TO GET THE MONEY . . . THE MONEY!
I LEFT YOU THERE TO GET THE MONEY!

MARY. Everything in the world doesn't come down to money!!!

PAUL. (Pause.) It does in Paul Glickman's world. There's only one way to get to the top in this country. Buy it . . . you buy your way there. I'm not sticking around Ronkonkoma the rest of my life.

GRANNY. I haven't seen another man besides the matron in 42 years! (All the girls encircling him.)

ADA. Hey everybody, that's my Daddy!

CHERI. He can be my Daddy any day.

PAUL. Hey ladies it's a big cage! Give me some room. Come on give me some air. Come on! Stop it. HEY THAT'S MY TIE! HEY LET GO OF MY BELT! (They become like mad animals, MARY ducks out and is crying from rejection on side of this grouping. MATRON laughs in her room with LOUISE as MAN is raped by ladies.) HEY THAT'S MY SHIRT, THAT'S MY PANTS, THAT'S MY COCK, OHHHHHH! (MATRON enters. Women all scatter innocently.)

MATRON. Okay mister, your five minutes are up. Now get out! We'll send you your clothes! (MAN exits cell. MATRON exits cell.)

MARY. (*Crying.*) I'LL NEVER LOVE AGAIN.
(*Sits on bench.*)

GLORIA. (*Going over to hold her.*) Shhh, don't say that Sugar. Don't ever say that. Not yet anyway.
(*She fondles MARY.*)

ADA. Someday, things will be more equal. The moon will be as important as the sun and not just another pretty ornament.

LOUISE. A letter for Mary!

PAUL. (*Downstage in spot.*) Dear Mary— Can you ever forgive me? I didn't realize what I had done to you. Somehow what happened that day I came to see you has opened my eyes. I see clearly now the violence of crime and living without regard for your fellow man or woman, as the case may be. I am a different man now with an honest job, and I go to church three times a week and confession every Saturday. I wait for you and our child. That is if you'll have me back. Sincerely, Paul. P.S. I love you Mary.

MARY. (*Looking up to GLORIA.*) I love you, Gloria.

GLORIA. I love you too, kid. (*PAUL's spot dissolves.*)

MATRON. (*In her room petting LOUISE.*) You know, Louise. (*LOUISE: purrs.*) When things go wrong, Pauline gets angry. When things go wrong, I can feel it through the walls. (*Purrs.*) The walls are my friends. They never change. You always know where they're at. I like to know where things are at. You know, Louise, (*Purrs.*) when people hide things from me I get crazy. I get real crazy when people try to hide things from me! (*Pulls LOUISE's hair and throws her on floor. Lights up on cell women looking very innocent.*) ALRIGHT, where's THE CHICKEN??? (*No one moves.*) I know that someone is hiding a chicken in this cell. I can hear it every night in my room. I haven't been able to sleep for weeks because of that damn chicken. WHERE IS IT??

BLANCHE. It's just Jo-Jo doing her animal imitations. (*Jo-Jo cackles.*)