

SCENE BREAKDOWNS FOR AUDITIONS

**Below each Scene is a brief description of what happens before or during the scene.*

Scene 1: Theodore, Kitty, Jim, Bob, Millie, and Norma

After a successful dinner, Theodore announces that Norma and Bob will now go after the deviants, like loose women and homosexuals, in the department and fire them.

Scene 2: Jim, Bob, Millie, Norma, and Barbara

Before this moment, Norma and Millie have found out that Bob and Jim called their bank and have limited Norma and Millie's access to any money funds. That is the final straw, and the quartet come to terms with their toxic arrangement.

Scene 3: Barbara and Norma

Barbara surprises Norma at Bob and Millie's apartment, and a cat-and-mouse game ensues.

Scene 4: Jim and Bob

Bob announces to Jim that he has found a way to send Barbara packing and their arrangement in tack...which gets Jim a little bit horny.

Scene 5: Kitty and Millie

Kitty and Millie have a heart-to-heart discussing family and life.

Scene 6: Millie and Norma

Norma is beginning to feel the effects of the perfect arrangement and confides in Millie.

SCENE 1

Jim. *(entering followed by Bob and Theodore; all men have two drinks)* Six Baxter Special's as promised!

Millie. Oh, nummy nummy nummy! *(men pass out the drinks to the ladies)*

Norma. Save your excitement until after you've survived one, Millie dear.

Bob. I'd like to propose a toast. To Jim and Norma Baxter, the best next-door neighbors and friends anyone had. And to Mr. Sunderson- it's a pleasure to work for you, but even more so to welcome you and your lovely wife as new friends.

All. Hear, Hear!

Theodore. If I could add to the tributes. To you, Martindale. As fine a host to us as he is an employee to the Department. How long have you been to the Personnel Security Board?

Bob. Since its inception, '48.

Theodore. Your methods of identifying anti-American sympathizers have resulted in the removal of thousands of security risks. You're on the front lines of the new war, Martindale. And don't think I'm ignoring your contributions, Mrs. Baxter. Your efficiency is absolutely essential. Fine Americans, both of you.

Jim. Well, I'm about to bust my buttons. My little woman, a real-honest-to-goodness-patriot!

Norma. Jim, really. Thank you sir. It's my honor.

Bob. An honor for us both.

Theodore. That's why I requested this gathering. To celebrate your next bold step in service to our country.

Bob. I'm sorry, sir?

Norma. Next step?

Millie. Bold. He said bold.

Kitty. Bold in what way, Teddy?

Theodore. It is the intention of our higher-ups to expand our scope beyond just Communists. There are other security risks within our ranks.

Norma. What kind?

Theodore. Persons vulnerable to blackmail. Drunkards. Loose women. General moral turpitude. *Deviants*.

Millie. Oh! I don't know if I should be hearing this.

Theodore. It's a harsh reality, Mrs. Martindale. We are no longer living in the simple times we once took for granted.

Norma. I don't understand what you mean by...deviants, Mr. Sunderson.

Theodore. I wouldn't expect you to, Mrs. Baxter. It's unfortunate that you and Martindale will soon be well-versed in their behaviors. I speak of gentlemen who prefer... well...ah...the company of *other* gentlemen.

Kitty. Teddy, you don't mean fags do you?! (*everyone looks at Kitty*) Well, that's what they call themselves.

Jim. No, Mrs. Sunderson. I think that's the word other people use.

Bob. (*to Jim*) The word is immaterial.

Kitty. But surely, Teddy, you'd find them when you check for mental illness.

Millie. Oh yes! Wouldn't you?

Theodore. They are a far cagier opponent than we realized. Getting around the tests for mental stability.

Jim. Perhaps it's because they're not unstable.

Millie. No, Jim. That's not it.

Kitty. Can't argue with science.

Bob. I work in Personnel, I'm no analyst. I wouldn't begin to know how to check for mental deficiency,

Theodore. Martindale, you have an extraordinary eye for detail. And there are clues. These perverts have a certain carriage, a demeanor. They read motion picture magazines. Attend the opera.

Bob. So we interview every fellow who's seen the opera?

Norma. I've dragged Jim to the opera a dozen times.

Kitty. I've taken you to the opera, Ted-oh no! (*sudden "realization"*) I never suspected.

Theodore. Kitty! Oh for the love of pete. This is precisely the sort of silly speculation a proper criterion will avoid.

Norma. Absolutely, sir.

Bob. I'll consider very carefully what the Department should be looking for.

Theodore. Well then. (*holds up glass*) To our new endeavor. (*the group drinks again*) You know that Baxter Special's not half bad. Kitty, shall we?

Kitty. Millie, Normie, this has been such fun. (*as shaking hands with Millie*) Millie, dear, you should meet my manicurist. I've got an appointment tomorrow! We'll make a day of it. I'll phone you tomorrow.

Theodore. The hens have hatched a plan! To spend our money, right Martindale?

Bob. Appears that way, sir.

Theodore. Mrs. Baxter, Mr. Baxter. Mrs. Martindale, my thanks for your gracious hospitality. Next time we'll host.

Bob. I'll help you collect your car, sir.

(*Kitty, Theodore, and Bob exit among good-byes from the others*)

SCENE 2

Bob. You two drew the battles lines. We were just responding in kind.

Millie. What is going on?

Norma. I went to the bank and attempted to make a withdrawal. They said they had to phone my husband first. Mister Baxter placed a restriction on the account. I explained that my paychecks from my own job went into that joint account, and he said it was still bank policy. The husband has ultimate say. I was so fucking humiliated.

Millie. What the hell are you guys doing?

Norma. Millie, Barbara Grant got fired today!

Bob. There was a complaint filed. We had to act quickly.

Norma. Who filed the complaint?

Bob. I did.

Millie. What a fair trial. Accuser, judge and executioner. That's my darling Bob!

Norma. You sent me on a fool's errand to Capitol Hill so you could set your little plan in motion. What else are you up to, Bob?

Jim. You two are out of control!

Millie. You're not suppose to be controlling us.

Jim. We were just trying to protect our side.

Norma. This isn't a battle. It was never suppose to be about choosing sides. We want you to be a part of this!

Bob. Why would we engineer the destruction of our own lives?

Jim. I'm a teacher. I will never work again, anywhere! Do you even care?

Millie. We care, but you're missing the bigger pictures. In the long term, it's the best thing! We fight now, demand to be recognized, and then it's over!

Norma. The group is considering some sort of public demonstration-

Jim. No, Norma. I forbid it!

Norma. You don't have a say in this, Jimmy? *(knock on door)*

Bob. Who's that?

Norma. You left me with no money. I was literally down to my last dime. So I used it to make a phone call. *(she opens the door and Barbara enters)*

Barbara. *(as walking past Bob)* Mr. Martindale *(looking at Jim)* Mrs. Martindale.

Bob. Barbara, this is a private matter.

Barbara. I'm not here to attack you, Bob. Our group is in need of decisive leadership and you're a natural. The time has come for a change.

Bob. We seem to be at odds on whether now is the best time for a change, Barbara.

Barbara. We're being attacked. That's the best time to fight back.

Bob. What is this "we"? You sleep with men. Hell, you've got a closet full of minks!

Barbara. Regardless of the gender of the participants, good sex is not easily found and always worth fighting for.

Jim. God, you're fabulous.

Bob. Jim!

Jim. What? Look at her!

Norma. Picture it Bob. If we came forward in the positions we hold, and took a firm stand, it could change everything.

Bob. I'd be ostracized. I would be confessing to sodomy and to defrauding the United States government. Barbara wants us to be martyrs.

Millie. You want to stay home, you stay home. But we're going to the meeting tonight, and we're going to go public when the time comes.

Bob. Then you can't be in this house. You can't be in our lives. I have to protect myself and Jim.

Millie. Yes, protect Jimmy. Since Paul Partridge didn't want your protection. Or Sam Hudson.

Jim. Who?

Norma. Come off it, Jimmy. Did you really think you were the first person Bob offered this little arrangement to?

Bob. Jim, I can explain but *(Jim steps away from Bob)*

Barbara. A house of cards inevitably falls. This is your opportunity to do the right thing.

SCENE 3

Norma. What brings you to see Bob?

Barbara. I was doing a little shopping on Wisconsin, a new hat shop. I had a few things to cover with him at the office on Monday, but I thought I'd save us both the trouble and take care of it, seeing as I was merely a few blocks away.

Norma. Forgive me, I can't remember precisely, you just got back from-

Barbara. Scotland.

Norma. Don't they speak English there?

Barbara. A version of it, yes. One of those diplomatic nightmares- a meeting on neutral ground in Edinburgh between our people and the Koreans.

Norma. It's amazing anything ever gets accomplished. It really is.

Barbara. Sometimes I wonder if anything does. Everything was reassigned by Dale Ramsey. You know Dale, his wife had a baby? He'd asked to keep domestic for a while, but they're sending him to Burma. I do so hate to see a new father torn away from his child. It's important to support strong families, don't you agree?

Norma. Ah yes. Family is so important. Did you consult your supervisor?

Barbara. He told me I was needed on local matters. So I thought I'd best speak with Bob.

Norma. Bob's certainly in no position to override a department head. I'm sure they have their reasons.

Barbara. Really, Mrs. Baxter? Pick that up from the J. Edgar Hoover Handbook?

Norma. Barbara, I don't appreciate your hostility.

Barbara. Enlighten me, Norma. Why is the Personnel Security Board the only government agency that's capable of doing things quickly?

Norma. Barbara, really, even if- Look. Even if- if you've done nothing wrong you have nothing to fear.

Barbara. Is my name on a list or not, Mrs. Baxter?

Norma. I cannot say, and you know it. So stop asking, Barbara.

Barbara. Very well. Will you tell Bob Martindale something for me. Will you do that, at least?

Norma. Certainly.

Barbara. This little morality task force they're creating, the return of the Puritans, it's not Constitutionally sound. I have neither harmed anyone nor broken any laws. I am forty-six years old. I have lived m life as I see fit. I have enjoyed the company of a number of bedmates. That is my business. I am not vulnerable to blackmail because I have nothing to hide. I am not a security risk, and I won't be stoned like a whore in the public square to satisfy whatever it is Ted Sunderson hope to gain from this. And if you support them, you're just as bad as they are.

Norma. I'll show you to the door, Barbara.

Barbara. You're an intelligent woman, Norma. They hate that. Eventually they'll find a way to come for you as well.

Norma. I thank you for your candor. Good afternoon.

SCENE 4

Jim. *(entering from one side of the stage)* Millie?

Bob. *(off-stage, the opposite side)* No, it's me! I'm in the kitchen.

Jim. It's a pretty color. *(Bob enters)*

Bob. I still don't know quite know why I'm painting this one. Some misdirection for Kitty Sunderson.

Jim. You're home early. And I like it.

Bob. I took the afternoon off. Mildred's out, Norma's in the office. *(he gives Jim a big bear hug, and a quick pat on the butt)* Let's have a drink.

Jim. Are we medicating or celebrating?

Bob. It was a very good day There's a drunken lout in the Swiss embassy.

Jim. There are probably several.

Bob. An excellent point. But this drunk lout is the subject of a concern and they're calling him home. So guess who's moving to Geneva?

Jim. You. US?! No, that makes no sense. Who?

Bob. Barbara Grant!

Jim. Bob! But how? Isn't she still under investigation?

Bob. I'm glad you asked. The concern on Barbara was filed by Dale Ramsey. A real rat fink bastard that guy. Barbara Grant deserves a better class of accuser.

Jim. My, aren't we charitable.

Bob. And then there's Truett Sharpe-

Jim. Limp wrists and ascots?

Bob. He got rid of the ascots, still has the limp handshake. Truett has just become engaged...to his Columbian housekeeper.

Jim. What a conveniently-timed and utterly implausible romance.

Bob. I called Truett in, congratulated him on his impending nuptials, and reminded him of the heightened scrutiny over at Immigration and Naturalization. Told him I could make a few calls to smooth that over for his blushing bride. And then I said "Truett, do you recall last year's Christmas party, when Dale Ramsey made that pass at Barbara Grant and she slapped him right in the face"? And he said, "No Bob." And I said "Think hard about it, Truett. Are you *certain* you don't remember that? It would be so helpful if you did". And, lo and behold, he remembered!

Jim. You are very attractive right now.

Bob. So...a sworn affidavit from Truett will be on my desk tomorrow, proving Dale's complaint was nothing more than the rantings of a jilted suitor. I will close out that investigation, and Barbara Grant will be off the hook and on her way to Geneva. I said I'd take care of it. I took care of it.

Jim. Yes, you did. You're so handy. Look at you in your overalls. Wanna go next door and play handyman?

Bob. I should finish up in the kitchen.

Jim. Come on, babe. What's the use in hiding the fact we're deviants if we never...deviate?

SCENE 5

Kitty. Shall we box these up? If I hurry I can get these to the calligrapher by six. (*as her and Millie are boxing the invitations*) How often does she make it to Washington?

Millie. The calligrapher?

Kitty. (*with a laugh*) You goose. Your mother!

Millie. She takes a holiday at least once a year! Mother adores the cherry blossoms, and she...she...no. You know something? That's not true. Kitty? The truth is...I don't speak to my mother. We've had no contact for six years.

Kitty. Oh no! Why is that?

Millie. Because she's a terrible person. Mother wanted things for my life that I did not want, and I told her so. It quickly became evident we would never reach an understanding on that, and we said our good-byes.

Kitty. Oh Millie.

Millie. That's the truth. It's been quite some time since I've told that to anyone. But you've been mothering but lovely to me and I suppose...I wanted you to know me a little bit more.

Kitty. I'm sorry about your mother. Sometimes things just don't work out.

Millie. I suppose not.

Kitty. You know, sweetheart, I was the oldest of eleven. Yes. It's one thing to be a good Catholic, but I'm sorry, eleven children is just carelessness. I was expected to pitch in, to do my part. Before I married Teddy, I told him, "I've already raised ten. There will be no babies". And he was relieved. Teddy cannot stand children! I just had a good cry because I'd found this wonderful man and life with me, just me, was all he wanted.

Millie. That's really wonderful, Kitty.

Kitty. Of course, marriage without children, it's so unusual. People ask questions. I've found out if you simply say "Sometimes things just don't work out", it's enough.

That's the wonderful thing about polite society: people are dying to get the dirt on you, but there's no proper way to inquire.

Millie. Oh, they find a way eventually.

Kitty. I suppose they do. But phooey on all of them. Let 'em gossip. We women are the homemakers, Millie, it's our secret power. We're the ones who decide what makes a home.

Millie. Thank you, Kitty.

Kitty. Of course, my friend.

SCENE 6

Millie. Babe, do you want a drink?

Norma. No. Just come be with me. (*Millie crosses to Norma and holds her*) I'm sorry. This is...it's getting a little tricky, isn't it?

Millie. Yes, it is. But the arrangement gives us a lot of freedom other people don't have. I love our life.

Norma. When we're home. Alone. When we're home alone I love our life. When we're out getting manicures with Kitty Sunderson and gossiping about our husbands, I am frankly underwhelmed by my existence.

Millie. Everyone puts on a public face. People are entitled to private lives.

Norma. *Private* lives, not *secret*. Come on. When we all agreed to do this, did you really consider the fact that we'd be spending the rest of our lives playing house with Bob and Jimmy? Can you picture us at sixty, taking vacations to Atlantic City and staying in adjoining rooms, staging this elaborate display for the comfort of strangers? I love you Millie, and I'm growing weary of hating myself for it.

Millie. I understand.

Norma. I had hoped for children one day...but how? How could I ever bring a child into...whatever this is? So there goes another hope, another compromise for the world at large.

Millie. That's not an impossibility, darling. It's just not something we can do right now.

Norma. Are we actually laying down any plans for the future, or are we just exhausting ourselves with maintaining the here and now? Is our side different from the boys next door?

Millie. I don't know the answer to that.

Norma. I don't either. But I think there's trouble brewing. But you're on my side?

Millie. I'm no your side. I love you.

Norma. I love you too.

Millie. Let's get you into a bath.

Norma. That sounds marvelous.

Millie. We'll wash your hair, and you will hear the terrifying tale of how Kitty Sunderson got her name.