

NOSE AS LONG AS A TELEPHONE WIRE

by Martin R. Collin

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NOSE AS LONG AS A TELEPHONE WIRE

A One Act Dark Comedy

by Martin R. Collin

SYNOPSIS: An imaginative scoundrel applies for an important job at a prestigious firm and finds himself with more questions than he can handle as he, himself, becomes the prey and target of a larger trickster at his interview. *Nose as Long as a Telephone Wire* has a wonderful collection of colorful, wild, and magical characters who create the otherworldly lies and truths in this humorous tale of deception, revelation, duplicity, and shenanigans.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4-6 females, 5-6 males, 0-3 either; 0-11 extras; gender flexible, doubling possible)

| | |
|--|---|
| NATHAN (m)..... | An interviewer at a prestigious firm and a television game show host. Confident and initially reserved but transforms into a slick game show host/announcer as the story develops late in the script. <i>(94 lines)</i> |
| MARTIN (m)..... | An imaginative liar. Confident. <i>(100 lines)</i> |
| ELAINE (f)..... | The Secretary, a small cog in a large organization. <i>(2 lines)</i> |
| SCOTTISH DOCTOR (m)..... | Scottish brogue. A happy medical professional. <i>(1 line)</i> |
| SCOTTISH NURSE (f)..... | Scottish brogue. A happy medical professional. <i>(1 line)</i> |
| HBO EXECUTIVE (m/f)..... | Sharp, smart, and slick. An operator. <i>(1 line)</i> |
| TALL BASKETBALL PLAYER (m/f)..... | Can talk the talk and walk the walk. <i>(1 line)</i> |
| RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS (m/f)..... | Intergalactic, devout and holy. <i>(3 lines)</i> |

- GRANDMOTHER (f)..... Over the river and through the woods. Sweet and loving but cannot run faster than a rampaging lion. *(1 line)*
- POLISH STRONGMAN (m)..... A savage beast/hunk of a man, who is the reigning show-stopping celebrity at The Greatest Show on Earth. *(1 line)*
- PRESIDENT
- ABRAHAM LINCOLN (m) The 16th President of the United States. *(1 line)*
- MISS SHERMAN (f)..... Elderly spinster fourth grade teacher. She carries a wooden ruler and knows how to use it. *(6 lines)*
- THEODORE R. CAMP, ESQ. (m)..... Family Lawyer. A stately patrician with briefcase. *(9 lines)*
- SANDRA POLLOCK (f)..... The ex-girlfriend. Charming, emotionally hurt, defensive. *(6 lines)*
- MOM (f) She can make anyone feel guilty. You know her well. *(7 lines)*

EXTRAS:

- SCOTTISH MOTHER (f)
- A PERSON IN MOUSE MASK AND WHITE GLOVES (m/f)
- THE LION (m/f)
- ARAB FARMER (m/f)
- ISRAELI FARMER (m/f)
- REPUBLICAN (m/f)
- DEMOCRAT (m/f)
- CAT (m/f)
- DOG (m/f)
- BEAUTIFUL FRENCH WOMAN (f)
- TATTERED FRENCH MAN (m)

CAST DOUBLING

ACTOR 1 (m): Martin

ACTOR 2 (m): Nathan

ACTOR 3 (m): Scottish Doctor, Republican, Mister Camp, Polish Strongman

ACTOR 4 (m): Basketball Player, President Lincoln, Democrat

ACTOR 5 (m): HBO Executive, Frenchman, Religious Official, Israeli Farmer

ACTRESS 1 (f): Sandra, Grandmother, Cat, Scottish Mother

ACTRESS 2 (f): Elaine, Frenchwoman, Mouse

ACTRESS 3 (f): Mom, Scottish Nurse, Lion, Arab Farmer

ACTRESS 4 (f): Miss Sherman, Dog

DURATION: 30 minutes.

TIME: Present day.

SETTING: Office and Game Show Panel.

SETTING

A stylish modern office with a desk, and an executive's chair, and an additional chair for an interview appointment. This office setting will transform into a television studio game show setting with a dramatic light change, four podiums (or music stands) off-stage to set the scene, and the introduction of four surprise guests.

COSTUMING

All of the costume suggestions here are only recommendations and are to be used only as a guide. Feel free to find your own creative costuming solutions. This show could look great in cardboard hats, bathrobes, wire hanger antlers, mom's old nightgown, homemade beards and whiskers, and old pajamas. There are great opportunities here to create a homespun look with a glue gun and some imagination and a pile of good-hearted volunteers and cast members. Note: I have no idea how a religious official on Uranus dresses to perform a traditional wedding service (see below).

- NATHAN – Dark conservative three-piece suit, tie and watch.
- MARTIN – Dark conservative three-piece suit and colorful-loud tie.
- ELAINE – Contemporary colorful business skirt and business blouse.
- SCOTTISH DOCTOR – Lab coat, scrubs, tartan sash and tam.
- SCOTTISH NURSE – Nurse’s uniform or scrubs with tartan sash.
- SCOTTISH MOTHER – Dark long peasant dress and tartan sash.
- HBO BUSINESS EXECUTIVE – Very sharp business attire.
- A PERSON IN MOUSE MASK AND WHITE GLOVES – Mouse mask, black tuxedo tail coat, and white gloves.
- TALL BASKETBALL PLAYER – Basketball uniform and shoes.
- THE LION – A lion costume or mask.
- RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS – Pasta colander for hat, long black choir robe and colorful sash.
- GRANDMOTHER – Grey wig, wire-rimmed granny glasses, wedding dress.
- POLISH STRONGMAN – Caveman clothing: animal skin tunic over one shoulder, wild wig, bushy eyebrows.
- PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN – Tall stove pipe hat, long black coat, black beard.
- ARAB FARMER – Long tunic, long over vest, head dress, rope belt.
- ISRAELI FARMER – Peasant shirt, vest, dark pants, yarmulke or black Greek fisherman’s hat.
- REPUBLICAN – Suit and red tie.
- DEMOCRAT – Suit and blue tie.
- CAT – A cat costume or mask.
- DOG – A dog costume or mask.
- BEAUTIFUL FRENCH WOMAN – Sultry chanteuse long dress and long neck scarf or feather boa.
- TATTERED FRENCH MAN – Beret, neckerchief, striped sailor shirt, and vest, dark pants.
- MISS SHERMAN – Dark conservative ladies suit jacket, long dark skirt, white blouse.
- THEODORE R. CAMP, ESQ. – Dark conservative three-piece suit and conservative tie.
- SANDRA POLLOCK – Contemporary colorful skirt and blouse.
- MOM – Grey hair, wire-rimmed glasses, bad shoes, bangly/jangly jewelry, nasty sweater, large purse and loud dress.

PROPS

- Executive Office Desk with Office Supplies
- Executive Desk Chair
- A Chair
- Intercom/Phone
- Strange Looking Bottle (Klamflok)
- Napkin
- Paper Credentials File (resume and assorted papers)
- Baby Doll
- Hospital Gurney or Stretcher
- Watch
- Basketball
- Small Bouquet of Flowers
- Large Book (Bible of Uranus)
- Cell Phone
- 2 Glasses of Water
- Hand Held Microphone
- 4 Podiums or Music Stands
- Briefcase
- Ruler
- Large Purse

SOUND EFFECTS

Short audio clips of the following sound effects listed below will enhance the surprise factor and spectacle of the production. Please feel free to use additional audio effects and recorded music clips as well to introduce the show, to introduce or to end the various scenes, and to enhance your own production.

- Cell Phone Ringing
- Audience Applause
- Dramatic Drum Roll
- Game Show Music
- "Hail to the Chief" (this song is in the public domain.)

LIGHTING SUGGESTIONS

Light the office/interview conversation with a pleasant and warm wash to create a private conversational moment.

The stage directions in the script suggest moments when light changes will enhance the telling of the story. For example: fade down this pleasant warm lighting for the interview to black with each arrival of a new character or short scene generated from within the interview conversation—and then—fade up and light the new character or short scene with a spot or a new light command. At the end of the short scene, fade it to black and slowly fade up on the interview once more.

When the scene shifts from the interview office to the game show, I recommend using a much more dramatic lighting effect to accompany the surprise, the music, the announcer, and the drum rolls. There are many things you could use to announce this change, strobe, chase lights, spots, colors; however, the overall effect simply needs to be a shift from a small intimate private job interview conversation to a nationally televised public event.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This wonderful collection of colorful, wild, and magical characters can be played by a cast of 26. This is an awesome large cast opportunity for a variety of large and small cameo roles. However, at the director's choosing, a smaller company, as few as 9 actors or actresses, of animated, talented, and quick changing individuals with a pile of props, wigs, and costumes could also create the otherworldly lies and truths displayed on the stage. Be creative and have fun with the casting.

AT RISE: *A stylish modern office. NATHAN sits at his desk, leafing through a paper credentials file, preparing to interview MARTIN for an important position in his firm. MARTIN enters.*

NATHAN: *(Welcoming MARTIN.)* Good morning, good morning. Please sit down.

MARTIN: Thank you.

NATHAN: Finally able to meet you.

MARTIN: Thanks.

NATHAN: Sit down. Can I get you something to drink, coffee?

MARTIN: I don't suppose you have any Klamflok?

NATHAN: *(Speaks into intercom/phone.)* Elaine, would you get us a bottle of Klamflok for our guest? Thanks. *(To MARTIN.)* Now then, I'm glad that you decided to interview.

MARTIN: Happy to be here.

NATHAN: We are always looking for bright, verbal, accomplished candidates, applicants, contenders, and contestants, such as you, who can bring that special something to our clients, customers, and market.

ELAINE enters with a strange looking bottle and a napkin.

NATHAN: My my, that is a decent size Klamflok. Thank you, Elaine.

ELAINE nods and smiles, sets down the drink, and exits.

MARTIN: *(To ELAINE.)* Yes, thank you. *(Takes a long swig of Klamflok and wipes his mouth with the napkin. To NATHAN.)* And, thank you for the invitation. I see this as a great opportunity.

NATHAN: *(Nervously.)* Shall we begin?

MARTIN: *(Anxiously smiling.)* Yes. Let's begin.

NATHAN: Well, what can you tell me about your childhood? What is your earliest memory?

MARTIN: *(Confidently.)* Well, I was born in a Scottish castle in the year 1257.

NATHAN: *(Shocked at the confidence in this obvious lie.)* No, you were not. How can you say that? What are you talking about? I knew

your mother's OB/GYN. He was a Jewish guy from Akron, Ohio. You were born in January ...

MARTIN: That's not the way I remember it.

NATHAN: (*Doubtful.*) That's not the way you remember it? You remember your birth?

MARTIN: Of course I do. It was my birthday. My first birthday. Everybody remembers their first birthday.

NATHAN: I don't remember my first birthday. (*Speaks into intercom/phone.*) Elaine, do you remember your first birthday?

ELAINE: (*Offstage.*) Yes, I was born in Saint Luke's Hospital in Duluth, Minnesota. My mother was there. It was in April.

NATHAN: (*Dubious.*) Elaine?

ELAINE: (*Offstage.*) I am pretty sure I came to the party naked, but when I got home, I was dressed in pink.

NATHAN: (*Shakes his head and hangs up intercom/phone.*) Look, you're not that old.

MARTIN: Yes, I am.

NATHAN: No, you're not.

MARTIN: Yes, I am.

NATHAN: You're lying.

MARTIN: No, I'm not.

NATHAN: Yes, you are obviously lying. Anyone born in 1257 has been dead for years, hundreds of years, thousands of years. What are you...?

MARTIN: That's not the way I remember it.

NATHAN: And just what do you remember? Tell me what you remember.

Light fades down on the interview, and lights fade up on: SCOTTISH DOCTOR and SCOTTISH NURSE enter rolling out SCOTTISH MOTHER who holds a baby doll on a hospital gurney.

SCOTTISH DOCTOR: Hoot mon! That is a wee, bonnie bairn. A regular fat coney. Congratulations, Missus. Time of birth, Nurse O' Clanahan, is 10:37 A. M.

SCOTTISH NURSE: January 28, 1257.

Light fades down. SCOTTISH DOCTOR, SCOTTISH NURSE exit pushing, SCOTTISH MOTHER in darkness. The lights fade up on the interview.

NATHAN: What was that?

MARTIN: I have a very good memory.

NATHAN: I know. I think I just saw it.

MARTIN: Listen, my grandmother told me that I was born in a Scottish castle in 1257, and grandmothers know a lot of old things. They're old.

NATHAN: Look, how do you expect to get a position in this company if the first question I ask—the warm up—the get to know you—the ice breaker—the appetizer to get you comfortable—is answered with an obvious lie and a blatant and insulting response? (*Meaningful pause.*) Do you want to work here?

A pause.

MARTIN: Well, you know, I've been thinking...

NATHAN: What?

MARTIN: I do have other offers.

NATHAN: Other offers?

MARTIN: Yes, the folks at HBO offered me my own series.

NATHAN: (*Surprised.*) HBO?

Light fades down on the interview, and lights fade up on: HBO EXECUTIVE enters, MARTIN walks over to him.

HBO EXECUTIVE: Listen kid, you're a genius. You come out to LA. We'll probably film in New Zealand. I'll send the papers along next week. Lawyers talk, and accountants talk, and the tax men talk, and then we'll talk. I like your style, kid. I like doing business with a sharp kid like you.

Light fades down on HBO EXECUTIVE. HBO EXECUTIVE exits in darkness. Lights fade up on the interview. MARTIN returns to his interview seat.

MARTIN: Yes, HBO. They were very impressed with my childhood in Scotland.

NATHAN: *(Doubtful.)* Oh, come on...

MARTIN: And Disney has made offers.

NATHAN: Disney in Orlando?

MARTIN: I haven't heard back from them yet.

A PERSON IN MOUSE MASK AND WHITE GLOVES walks behind MARTIN and NATHAN, passes them, and holds up a white-gloved finger to a silent mouth and waves to audience.

NATHAN: Disney?

MARTIN: They said Tuesday. I think they said I would hear back on Tuesday.

NATHAN: *(Dubious.)* Tuesday?

MARTIN: And I am waiting to hear back from the Cavaliers.

NATHAN: The Cavaliers?

MARTIN: Yes, The Cavaliers. The Cleveland Cavaliers?

NATHAN: Like basketball? The Cleveland Cavaliers?

MARTIN: You don't believe me?

Light fades down on the interview. TALL BASKETBALL PLAYER enters bouncing a basketball. Light fades up on TALL BASKETBALL PLAYER.

TALL BASKETBALL PLAYER: Great shot and awesome defensive moves. You must have hit thirty-five shots in a row from the free throw line. Smokin! And your playing days in school were off the hook. You are tight and loose on the inside, and your three pointer ain't half bad.

Light fades down on TALL BASKETBALL PLAYER, he exits in the darkness. Light fades up on the interview.

NATHAN: Wait...

MARTIN: *(Defensive.)* You call my grandmother a liar. Why would I want to work at a place that calls my grandma a liar? I loved my

grandma. She used to make me rye bread toast with Land O'Lakes butter.

NATHAN: Listen...

MARTIN: She died, you know, when she was working at the circus. She was married to the Polish strongman and got eaten by a lion who went berserk when they traveled with the National Circus of Prague City.

GRANDMOTHER enters screaming with LION chasing her; they run from Stage Left to Stage Right and exit. MARTIN doesn't bat an eye. NATHAN follows and reacts to the scream and the chase.

NATHAN: *(Dubious.)* Polish Strongman? Uhh hunh...

MARTIN: That's what I was told. Yeah, it was kind of romantic. They met on Uranus.

NATHAN: *(Dubious.)* The planet, Uranus?

MARTIN: Yeah, and they were married by a religious official on Uranus.

Light fades down here on the interview. Enter POLISH STRONGMAN and GRANDMOTHER and RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS. A new light fades up as the couple and the RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS re-enact their vows in the language of Uranus.

RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS: Ziglot fig lowe three x squared panopoly kary a dig mo nel leek rah moo fan?

GRANDMOTHER: *(Overjoyed.)* Fuh bleg!

RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS: Oyna kan perry, ziglot fig lowe three x squared panopoly kary a dig mo nel leek rah moo fan?

POLISH STRONGMAN: *(Overjoyed.)* Fuh bleg!

RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS: *(Overjoyed.)* A kahn tell ope knee hie Uranus, poots seg lav eee kenseekie! Bate us law junko so keenseekie!

The couple kiss. Light fades out on the marriage ceremony and the light fades up again on the interview. POLISH STRONGMAN and GRANDMOTHER and RELIGIOUS OFFICIAL OF URANUS exit in darkness.

NATHAN: Okay, okay, okay, okay. Maybe, we should start again? I thought I would ask you to describe your days and life, a few questions about your childhood, and I now see this was the wrong approach.

MARTIN: What's wrong?

NATHAN: Wrong? (*Long awkward pause.*) We invited you here today because we want you working with our firm. You have a great resume and experience, and your references are outstanding.

SFX: a short music selection from "Hail to the Chief". PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN enters stage right.

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN: (*To NATHAN.*) The boy is outstanding. (*Shakes MARTIN'S hand. To MARTIN.*) My best to your mother.

SFX: a short music selection from "Hail to the Chief". PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN exits stage left. NATHAN does a double-take after PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN exits.

NATHAN: Now, it says here that you have done quite a bit of traveling...

MARTIN: Oh yes, I love to travel. The planes, the trains, the new foods, the people...

NATHAN: My wife and I went to Cape May, New Jersey last summer, and the...

MARTIN: But last year when I got an opportunity to be a passenger on the Space Shuttle...

NATHAN: The Space Shuttle? NASA?

MARTIN: We only orbited the Earth three times but it was, wow, an experience of a lifetime!

NATHAN: The Space Shuttle?

MARTIN: Yes, my uncle is a commander and a scientist at NASA, and I had been asking him for years.

NATHAN: Okay...?

SFX: cell phone ringing.

MARTIN: Mind if I take this call?

NATHAN: No, go right ahead. *(Annoyed.)*

MARTIN: *(Answers cell phone.)* Hello? *(Pause.)* Uncle Jack! How are you? *(Pause.)* Yes, yes, my sneakers, ahunh, yes. *(Turns; to NATHAN.)* I left my shoes on the Space Shuttle. *(Laughs.)*

NATHAN looks surprised.

MARTIN: *(On Phone.)* I am so stupid sometimes. *(To NATHAN.)* I really am forgetful sometimes. *(On Phone.)* Yes, you too? Look, can I fly down there this weekend? And pick them up? *(Pause.)* Oh? *(Pause.)* You're not home? *(Pause.)* You are in Antarctica? Icebergs, Ahunh. Penguins, ahunh. Government contract? Ahunh. Secret government contract? Really? *(Pause.)* No way! *(Pause.)* Really? Really? *(Pause.)* You've got to be kidding! Really? *(Pause.)* Oh my! *(Pause.)* No way! *(Pause.)* The President?

NATHAN is annoyed; looks at his watch.

MARTIN: Listen, Uncle Jack, I got to go. *(Pause.)* Yeah, I am in the middle of a job interview. *(Pause.)* Yeah, a job interview. *(Pause.)* Thanks. I will. *(Pause.)* I'll talk to you. *(Pause.)* Bye. *(To NATHAN.)* Sorry about that. My uncle. Left my shoes...

NATHAN: On the Space Shuttle.

Uncomfortable, awkward pause.

MARTIN: So, how was the trip to Cape May?

NATHAN: Well, my wife and I stayed at her sister's place, right near the... wait a minute. I'm the one conducting the interview here!

MARTIN: Sorry, I know that. *(Enthusiastic job seeker voice.)* Look, my desire in working for a firm like yours is to use my good experience and make a real contribution to the work environment and community.

NATHAN: *(Doubtful.)* Have you had that kind of influence...

MARTIN: Well...

NATHAN: *(Skeptical.)* At any of your previous places of employment?

MARTIN: You see...

NATHAN: (*Doubtful, skeptical, but hopeful.*) And which of your experiences do you believe will allow you to make that kind of contribution?

MARTIN: Well, during my summer in the Holy Land, I did manage to negotiate a peaceful settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli farmers in a village land dispute. Water rights...

NATHAN: I see...

Light fades up on Up Stage Left. ARAB FARMER and ISRAELI FARMER enter with two glasses of water and toast peacefully.

MARTIN: And then last summer, I had an internship in Washington...

NATHAN: D.C.?

MARTIN: Yes, Washington D.C.. I actually lived in Arlington...

NATHAN: Oh, Arlington...

MARTIN: And I was able to create a bipartisan coalition between house democrats and republicans for the creation of a new jobs program in the District.

NATHAN: A bipartisan coalition? In that ugly gridlock?

MARTIN: Oh, believe me! That was not easy.

New light fades up on Up Stage Right. REPUBLICAN and DEMOCRAT enter rolling and fighting, and wrestling on the floor.

MARTIN: They were actually arguing and the wrestling and wrangling on the floor of the House. It was like nothing I had ever seen before.

NATHAN: Sounds like you are the kind of person who can even get cats and dogs to get along?

Light fades down on MARTIN and NATHAN. Enter: two actors in CAT and DOG masks, in follow spot, and they stroll across the stage from stage left to stage right as old and lifelong friends. They will be followed by the peaceful ARAB FARMER and ISRAELI FARMER strolling off stage as friends stage right. At the same time, REPUBLICAN and DEMOCRAT stop their wrestling, and see the ARAB FARMER and ISRAELI FARMER, and DOG and CAT peacefully exit. The REPUBLICAN and DEMOCRAT both get the idea at the same time.

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