

FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY

A MUSICAL

ORIGINAL TEXT AND LYRICS

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Original Book and Lyrics by Frank Gagliano / Music by Claibe Richardson  
FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY

“An aura of melancholy hangs in the air;  
 there’s a funeral going by in Bodoni County.  
 A daughter of Alzheimer Mary is buried today:  
 Alzheimer Mary cannot comprehend the news. . .”

FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY is a 21st Century combination Our Town/Spoon River/Jacques Brel on acid.

FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY was first developed at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center’s Musical Theatre Conference, then at the Vineyard Theatre’s Musical Workshop in New York, and then, by a Workshop in Pittsburgh.

FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY is a musical revue (of sorts), in which the inhabitants of a mythical American County (most of whom want to get out) step out and sing their angst away. Songs range from the opening number, “BUY ME A TICKET OUT,” — to the Bush-era anthem, “REAGAN’S LEGACY: I DON’T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME,” — to the sung monologue, “A SONG OF LIFE FOR ALZHEIMER MARY” — to the realistic sung scene, “CUL-DE-SAC,” in which a bunch of teenagers and a grieving mother explore Perry Carrington’s suicide — to the satiric and surreal sketch, “DANCING WITH JOY,” in which two innocents, Eubie Copocolo and Joy, walk into a travel poster to escape Bodoni County, and which features Joy’s raunchy song, “SAND DUNE BLUES.”

Overseeing it all is the Master of Ceremonies Jonathan Overview, who chronicles the fables and foibles of Bodoni County’s inhabitants, and whose need to become more than a Point Of View, culminates in his haunting song, “NOVEMBER IS MY TIME,” an autumnal moment that changes Jonathan forever — and which poignantly, and lyrically, brings down the curtain on a note of compassion.

## CHARACTERS

(Played by a company of **eight to ten** actor/singers)

Yours Truly, Jonathan Overview

Gussy (Woman)

Barney Coglin

Irene Pallazzo

Father Paulus

Lureen Little

Roger Bromley

Florence Coldwell

Charlene Smedley

William Kinsolving

Ziggy Kellmer

Tom Anderson

Marian Axelbean

Remo Cramer

Mr. Tarlton

SonnyDavid

Mrs. Carrington

Eubie Copocolo

Old Matilda Trimble

Joy, The Poster Girl

Vivian Grady

Alzheimer Mary

Benjamin Bernhard (played by Jonathan Overview)

### Time

The Present

Place "Despair Lookout" on Limbo Hill  
overlooking Bodoni County, USA

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

(Sung words indicated in script by ALL CAPITAL LETTERS)

### PART ONE: SLOW PAN

#### FIRST ENTRY: GUSSY TRIES TO GET OUT!

“THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR”. . .Jonathan Overview

“A TICKET OUT”. . .Florence Coldwell

#### SECOND ENTRY: LONGINGS

“HEAD WALTZ”. . .William Kinsolving

“WANTING”. . .Charlene Smedley

#### THIRD ENTRY: CUL DE SAC

“AND THE SONG TAKES OVER”. . .David

“LOSING HIS HAIR”. . .Sonny

“AND ONE NIGHT” (Aria). . .Arlene Carrington

#### FOURTH ENTRY: ROMP

“CARDBOARD CITY ROMP”. . .Tom Anderson and Ensemble.

#### FIFTH ENTRY: JONATHAN OVERVIEW MAKES A DISCOVERY

#### SIXTH ENTRY: GUSSY’S FATE/JONATHAN’S HOPE (PART ONE FINALE) “FANFARE”

(Fragments)

“A TICKET OUT” Reprise. . .Ensemble.

### PART TWO: CENTERS OF PAIN

#### SEVENTH ENTRY: FANFARE

“AN AURA OF MELANCHOLY”. . .Overview and Ensemble

“IT WAS IN FACT A DEER”. . .Marian Axelbean

#### EIGHTH ENTRY: TESTIMONY

“I DON’T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME”. . .Ziggy Kellmer

#### NINTH ENTRY: CANTO “ALZHEIMER MARY SPENDS THE DAY. . .” (Aria). . .Nurse Vivian Grady

#### TENTH ENTRY: BODONI COUNTY FABLE #2 (DANCING WITH JOY)

“SAND DUNE BLUES”. . .Joy

#### ELEVENTH ENTRY: PERSONHOOD?

“NOVEMBER IS MY TIME”. . .Jonathan Overview as Benjamin Bernhard

#### FINALE

”A LOT OF UNHAPPY NEIGHBORS”. . .Ensemble

## PART ONE: SLOW PAN

At curtain: Upstage center, on a platform, a Door-Sized Book that will be opened, and with pages that will be turned, throughout. On the cover is printed: "The Bodoni County Songbook Anthology."

Jonathan Overview enters, holding a large quill pen. Throughout, Jonathan will narrate from this platform, from other spots on the stage, and from the aisles. Until indicated, Jonathan stays apart from the ensemble.

### JONATHAN OVERVIEW

"From The Bodoni County Songbook Anthology." Coming to you from "Despair Lookout" on Limbo Hill, overlooking the entire County of Bodoni; from whence, Yours Truly, Jonathan Overview, will proof read—as he is required to proof read? — the ten entries in this pretentious, but admittedly, theatrical, oversized gaudy, giddy, gilt book! —and to make corrections with the use of this outdated, but admittedly, theatrical quill—in order to chronicle a day in the life of an American County—BODONI COUNTY! —whose residents will step forward and sing their angst away! So that said proof-read Songbook Anthology can be interred in the Celestial Musical Library of Human Folly.

(JONATHAN OVERVIEW opens the Anthology.)

On left side is printed: "Part One: Slow Pan.")  
 On the right is printed: "First  
 Entry: Gussy Tries To Get Out.")

### JONATHAN OVERVIEW

(Continued)

PART ONE: "SLOW PAN." FIRST ENTRY: --GUSSY TRIES TO GET OUT!

(SOUND: The loud shuffling footsteps of the ENSEMBLE, off stage)

THAT SOUND YOU HEAR IS THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS—NERVOUS FOOTSTEPS—ON SPIKED HIGH HEELS, TOO SPIKED FOR SUCH A TINY WOMAN.

(GUSSY enters, miming the carrying of two large valises. When she gets stage center, Gussy stops and walks in place. The shuffling footsteps continue off stage)

SHE'S WALKING DOWN A DOWNTOWN STREET, CARRYING TWO LARGE VALISES; HEADING FOR THE GREYHOUND—THAT'S GUSSY, ALL GUSSIED UP, GUSSY; PROBABLY THE BEST CLEANING LADY THIS COUNTY HAS EVER SEEN. . .THOSE OTHER SOUNDS, THEY'RE OTHER FOOTSTEPS, TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH GUSSY.

(The ENSEMBLE enter, still shuffling; position themselves around the stage, and focus on GUSSY. They keep shuffling in place)

THEY ALL KNOW WHAT SHE'S UP TO, WHERE SHE'S GOING, WHO SHE IS GOING TO--BECAUSE GUSSY WROTE A LETTER TO THE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. . .

(The ENSEMBLE stop shuffling)

### GUSSY

To all to "whom" it may concern: Gussy's leavin' this burg forever. I'm leavin' my husband, Marvin, an' I ain't even gonna take care of his mother

## GUSSY

(Continued)

no more neither—buttin' into our lives like she does all'a the time—and livin' under the same stinkin' roof, mind you! An' I'm leavin' all you cheap-O's, too; with your superior ways and grand houses an' apartments that break my back; an' I'm leavin' for the man I love—an' who loves me— an' who ain't doin' me no damned favor! —Mr. Harold Hardy—that's who loves me—Mr. Harold Hardy; the Bob Edens top sausage salesman for this region—who loves me and—yes!—made love to me—on my own special self. —Well here's Gussy's bulletin, folks! —On Monday mornin' next, Harold Hardy, Mr. Bratwurst-Of-The-Year, will step off one bus—at the downtown Greyhound—and take Gussy onto another bus— one that will take the happy couple to private parts unknown! Un-sincerely yours, Gussy.

(GUSSY joins the ENSEMBLE, who again shuffle and make machine noises as they regroup)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR, ARE THE SOUNDS FROM THE PRESS GAZETTE; THAT'S THE BUILDING ALL THAT CROWD FOLLOWING ARE NOW PASSING. LISTEN OUTSIDE THE BUILDING, SOUNDS OF MEN LOADING PAPERS ONTO TRUCKS. INSIDE, IN ONE LITTLE CLOSET-SIZED OFFICE, THE SOUND OF ONE EMPLOYER THINKING. . .

(BARNEY COGLIN, wearing a visor shade and sleeve garters, steps forward from the ENSEMBLE, as the ENSEMBLE stop shuffling, and focus on BARNEY)

## BARNEY COGLIN

Everyday, in every way, I, Barney Coglin, wait for people to croak! I write obituaries." Obits?" For the Bodoni County Press Herald Gazette? The perfect job. For me. Because I love dealing with dead people. Because live people turn you down—or suffocate you—or make demands; sit at nearby tables in cafeterias, slurping soup at you with frightened eyes that HATE you, want REVENGE on you and—as mother so delicately puts it!—"they eye your crotch for a well-aimed kick in the Brussel Sprouts." But here—well—I have lots of obits started on the El Dispicabilus, Scumbagius, Populiius Bodonius!—who are still alive; and it's my job to

## BARNEY COGLIN

(Continued)

keep their files updated until they—"buy the farm?"—"eyeball the slugs?"—"suck the Chemlawn?" So what I do is, I create fantasies! —devise app-ro-priate, soul-satisfying finitos! for all of them! —Here's one I'm working on for Vincent Cromley. Soooo—Mr. Furniture Store, Commode-Face CEO: you would not take back that defective couch, huh? —therefore—tsk tsk—you'll have to get yours in one of your own ADJUST-O-MATIC beds! —by being BENT to death!—during one of your nightly attempts at auto fellatio! AHha!—AND —as my grand final—I'm taking one of those perfumed insert mailers—the kind you can tear out? —and I'm going to poison EVERY BODONI COUNTY, TURNED UP, SNIFFING NOSE—PERMANENTLY! God, I love this job!

(BARNEY rejoins the ENSEMBLE,  
who shuffle again as they regroup)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR ARE THE SOUNDS FROM THE CHURCH BELLS--FROM SAINT ALEXANDER'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH. OUTSIDE, GUSSY AND HER PILGRIMS, PASS BY; INSIDE, THE SOUND OF FATHER PAULUS IN THE PULPIT--LAUGHING!

(FATHER PAULUS, wearing a Greek Orthodox cross around his neck, steps forward from the ENSEMBLE, as the ENSEMBLE stop shuffling, become parishioners, and focus on FATHER PAULUS)

## FATHER PAULUS

My dear--Faithful--parishioners! How delighted I am, this morning—that you're here. . .after what happened last night! We were hosting a dinner for that group of God's Gay children who had fled the persecution in Red County—when we were attacked! YES! Some strangers—and some parishioners, I'm sorry to say—invaded—our dinner, and threatened God's Gay children and us—physically. But, as if divinely inspired—Mrs. Pataurus—at the Moussaka tray? —took a spatula of her excellent dish and slung it into the face of one of the invaders! And before you knew it—the hot lemon soup, the steaming meat balls, the chicken with oregano, and even the apricot pastries were FLYING ALL OVER THE

## FATHER PAULUS

(Continued)

PLACE! And when Mrs. Cotsorilis started advancing on those invaders with her shish kabobs— still on the skewers!—well, those cowards retreated! And my soul was given a reprieve. . . .For, I must confess that I have been on the verge of leaving this parish. . . .I have lived and seen many sad things in my many years—but the fear and hate so many of our Bodoni County Christians have for the weekly influx of God's Gay children seeking a haven from persecution —and the attack against us last night because we were ministering to, and comforting, them. . . .tested my faith, as it has never been tested before. —But last night's fight—for the moment, anyway!—has made me want to stay. —And so—just in case!—I'm asking for many more cook/soldiers for tonight's special service and Social. I especially need some young marksman with a slingshot, to man the calamata olives!. . .—Theodore Pakadapalopolis?  
—Ah. Bless you.

(FATHER PAULUS rejoins the ENSEMBLE,  
who become noisy City Council Officers and spectators )

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUND YOU HEAR IS THE BUZZ OF THE CITIZENS IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, IN THE CITY HALL BUILDING WHERE GUSSY AND A NOW LARGER ARMY TROOP BY.

(LUREEN LITTLE, wearing trucker's cap, backwards, steps out from the ENSEMBLE, who now become City Council Members)

## LUREEN LITTLE

--so Barney, Barney Sharkey --and I, Lureen Little--do want to thank you for hearing us. You see, Barney and I--got to know each other first from the CB's in the trucks. He owns his truck, of course; and I own mine. And that's how we got to discover--over our CB's?-- that we were in the same boat--well, actually, same "trucks," you know what I mean. And we soon discovered that we--each of us--were hauling chemical wastes and—wham!--at just about the time we got to know each other--and I really fell for that nice easy voice of Barney's, and his manners, and the way we liked the same music and stuff--about that same time, everybody stopped letting us dump our cargo--sometimes they wouldn't even let us drive through the towns at all! Until Bodoni County! We heard you all here

## LUREEN LITTLE

(Continued)

were considering putting a waste dump in the County--for the Federal revenues and all? That's why we're here--to testify in favor of your doing that. Because you see--you made it possible for Barney and me to meet—for the first time, in the physical flesh—just about ten minutes ago?—outside in the waiting room?--. . .and I mean to tell you, that in his three-dimensional personal self, Barney's even more of a terrific fella than I had even imagined from his voice alone—with those deep dimples and truly thick neck. So, if you do see fit to pass the ordinance, well, that means—selfishly--that Barney and I then could, maybe, settle down—open up a garage. Maybe. Here. Maybe. Become a team--raise a family! Like most of you, never leave Bodoni County—God, I hope so! Cause now, well, Barney and I have finally. . . touched each other. . . kind'a taken joy from each other's. . . —aura. If you follow me.

(LUREEN rejoins THE ENSEMBLE,  
who now march in military fashion)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUND YOU HEAR--ALONG WITH GUSSY AND HER MARCHING  
ENTOURAGE-- ARE THE SOUNDS OF THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN,  
MARCHING INSIDE THE ARMORY, ACROSS FROM THE BUS TERMINAL.

(The ENSEMBLE stop marching)

## ROGER BROMLEY

(Steps forward, wears National Guard hat)

C'mon, Colonel, isn't there someway you can get them to call up the unit? I don't mean you, personally—but somebody?! I mean —why the hell have we been spared? They do need just about everyone: Right? . . . —Are you kidding? "Afraid I'd lose my life?" It would save my life! What a gift! I'd get away from Charlene—from my job! From —What? . . . — "Roadside bombs? Charlene lobs bombs at me all the time! "Snipers?" I don't care about no stinking snipers!—Anyway, nobody snipes like Charlene! "The Desert?" What do you think Bodoni County is? "Skin boils?" Hell, Bodoni County gives me crotch itch! Please Colonel! Pull some strings! THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE EVER! —I'd get out! How else could yours truly, Computer-Nerd-on-weekends, Roger Bromley, ever get to do that!?

(ROGER BROMLEY rejoins THE ENSEMBLE,  
as FLORENCE COLDWELL steps forward,  
bringing on her own counter stool,  
as THE ENSEMBLE dematerialize)

#### JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUND YOU HEAR ARE THE THOUGHTS OF THAT WOMAN OVER  
THERE--FLORENCE COLDWELL; SITTING IN THE GREYHOUND COFFEE SHOP;  
HAVING HER USUAL CIGARETTE, OAT BRAN MUFFIN FOR BREAKFAST. ON  
HER WAY TO WORK; LISTENING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENTS, THE BUS  
ARRIVALS, THE BUS DEPARTURES--;

(The same woman who played GUSSY now plays FLORENCE.  
Now she wears glasses, has a shoulder briefcase hanging from  
one shoulder, and holds a coffee cup in one hand and a muffin  
in the other. She sits on a stool and looks downstage at  
GUSSY'S freestanding Valises)

#### FLORENCE COLDWELL

—tracking Gussy's journey here. . . . I, Florence Coldwell, wait for Gussy  
to pass by the window out in the waiting room and go through the gate  
. . .so that she can wait for her man to get off one bus, to take her with  
him- on another bus. —God, I hate her—for catching a man who wants  
her--a salesman, yet. —But I love Gussy, too! For her guts and arrogance  
and—God!—I almost did something foolish. Nearly went to the bank--the  
branch near here opens at 8 AM—to withdraw all the life savings—in  
seventeen, one thousand dollar bills—to purchase a ticket, on whatever  
bus Gussy and Mr. Hardy get on—and sit across from them both and,  
maybe get some pointers on how to begin all over again. —Isn't that  
insane? —seventeen, one thousand dollar bills!—That's the cushion--  
Mama's cushion—and if I took it—and I can—the passbook is in both our  
names—if I took it—just disappeared—well, then—where would Mama be?  
Back in that low slime-life we left a long time ago—that's where; dumped  
into some snake pit or other with no loving, close kin—no personal care;  
That's where. And what about my kids? my students—there in the High  
School just down the block from here? Ha! Big laugh. This teacher is  
totally burned out; burned out in class —burned out with Mama. . .burned  
out with men. Please. . please. . .please. . .

FLORENCE COLDWELL

(Continued. SINGS)

SOMEBODY WRITE A CHECK OUT TO CASH,  
AND BUY ME A TICKET OUT.  
BODONI COUNTY GIVES ME A RASH,  
IF I HAD THE BACKIN',  
THEN I COULD GET PACKIN'!

NOBODY EVER GETS FAR FROM HERE,  
LEASTWAYS, NOT IN THE HEART;  
BUT A TRIP--THAT'LL DO FOR A START;  
JUST A TICKET AND I WILL DEPART. . .

OUT OF THIS TOWN.  
OUT OF THAT JOB.  
FAR FROM THE CONSTANT,  
SELF-PITYING MOAN;  
HELP ME TO RUN,  
HELP ME TO FLY  
OH, HELP ME TO GET OUT—  
I CAN'T DO IT ALONE!

LOVE WAS A SALESMAN WHO GOT AWAY,  
SO GET ME A TICKET OUT;  
GET ME A TICKET  
SO'S I CAN SCOUT,  
A NEW PANORAMA;  
SOME GLITTER, SOME GLAMOUR.  
BUSSES ARE LOADIN' OUT IN THE DOCK;  
WISH I COULD HITCH A RIDE.  
SOMETHIN' SAYS DOWN INSIDE  
GET YOUR TICKET TO GO AND HIDE. . .

FIND A NEW TOWN.  
GET A NEW JOB,  
GO GET A FUTURE,  
BURY THE PAST.

FLORENCE COLDWELL  
(Continued. SINGS))

MEET A NEW LOVE,  
ONE THAT CAN GIVE  
THE ULTIMATE "HOW TO"—LIVE  
A NEW LIFE AT LAST!

THEN, LIKE GUSSY,  
I, TOO, WILL STRUT  
OUT OF THIS RUT I'M IN. . .  
MY LIFE WILL HAVE THE CLOUT

AND I'LL NEVER LACK THE GUTS  
TO EVER NEED A TICKET OUT AGAIN. . .

I'LL FIND A NEW JOB; GET ME A FUTURE. . .  
BURY THE PAST, LIGHTEN THE LOAD;  
LEAVE THE DECAY. . .  
SO GET ME A TICKET--HEY. . .

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

End--First Entry!

FLORENCE  
(SINGS)  
BUT MAYBE NOT TODAY.

(FLORENCE COLDWELL exits with the counter  
stool)

(THE ENSEMBLE dematerialize)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

Ah, Florence Coldwell--you want a ticket out; while I, Jonathan Overview,  
want one in. I even petitioned to--

(THE BOOK slams shut)

Ohoh! He's angry!

(He rushes to THE BOOK and opens it)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

(Continued)

Sorry Clarence--Boss. See? I'm back on the job. A P.O.V.--a Point Of View.  
An omniscient Point Of View--ready for THE SECOND ENTRY.

(He turns the page)

Ahhhhh--describing what I'd feel--if I could feel. . .

(On the left page is printed:

"SECOND ENTRY: LONGINGS.)

ENTRY TWO: LONGINGS.

(On the right page: "HEAD WALTZ." WILLIAM  
KINSOLVING steps forward--just as a wheelchair rolls  
out from off stage. KINSOLVING sits in  
wheelchair—makes the wheelchair dance. One of the  
girls leaves the LONGING ENSEMBLE to join him)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

HEAD WALTZ. As told by CharacterLongingOne; Mr. William Kinsolving.

WILLIAM KINSOLVING

SOMEONE IS PLAYING A WALTZ IN MY HEAD DOWN ON THE STREET.  
I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHERE IT'S COMING FROM,  
BUT IT EXCITES MY FEET.  
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT A WALTZ ONCE AGAIN FILLS THE AIR.  
BUT SUDDENLY ONE TWO THREE  
WALTZES IN FROM EVERYWHERE.

WHIRLING AND SWIRLING ON SIDEWALKS OF MIRRORS THAT SHINE.  
HUNDREDS OF BODIES ARE SPINNING THERE;  
CAN I CUT IN WITH MINE?  
WILL THEY ALLOW ME TO LEAP OUT AND JOIN THE FUN?  
AND SWAY WITH THE PRETTIEST, WITTIEST,  
BEATING OUT ONE TWO THREE  
ONE.

I WANT MY DANCE TO BE GOING ON DAY AFTER DAY.  
EVEN THE BARS ON MY WINDOW LEDGE  
CAN'T KEEP MY WALTZ AT BAY.

WILLIAM KINSOLVING  
(Continued. SINGING)

I'LL GET THE WHEELS ON MY CHAIR TO GLIDE THROUGH TO THE SUN;  
AND FOREVER WE'LL ONE-TWO-THREE,  
ONE-TWO-THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE  
ONE.

(Stands with great difficulty;  
attempts to waltz with  
LONGING ENSEMBLE GIRL)

EVERYBODY IS NOW VIENNESE!  
EVERYBODY NOW TWIRLS ONCE AGAIN!  
TEENAGE GIRLS WEARING GOWNS OVER JEANS  
TURN AND DIP IN THE BREEZE  
IN THE ARMS OF THEIR LYRICAL MEN!

SO I'M ONCE AGAIN IN GREAT DEMAND!  
AND THE ELEGANCE I KNEW BACK WHEN--  
IS THE SOUGHT-AFTER THING THEY NOW WANT,  
AS THEY TAKE MY FRAIL HAND,  
AND I LEAD THEM AS I LED THEM THEN!

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH--

(Falls back into wheelchair. LONGING ENSEMBLE  
GIRL rejoins The ENSEMBLE)

I WANT MY DANCE TO BE GOING ON AFTER DAY!  
EVEN THE BARS ON MY WINDOW LEDGE  
CAN'T KEEP MY WALTZ AT BAY.  
I'LL GET THE WHEELS ON MY CHAIR TO GLIDE THROUGH TO THE SUN;  
AND FOREVER WE'LL ONE-TO-THREE,  
ONE-TWO THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE ONE

ONE-TWO-THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE,  
ONE-TWO THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE  
ONE

(KINSOLVING stands, rolls wheelchair  
offstage and rejoins the LONGING ENSEMBLE;

as CHARLENE SMEDLEY steps out . . .

