# The Lottie & Bernice Show

*By L. Don Swartz*

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## DEDICATION

*To Debby and Joann for always making me laugh.*

## STORY OF THE PLAY

Two old grumpy Polish ladies, Lottie and Bernice, become trapped in a television studio by a blizzard and end up taking over Western New York's favorite morning show "Buffalo Yak." Well, they do have some help; there are the two constantly bickering janitors, Hal and Sal who agree to handle the editorials. Candy Bickel, a wildly ambitious station intern who sees the blizzard as her break into media stardom, takes over the news desk. Neurotic program director Virgil Mooch tries to help despite the fact that being on-camera makes him throw up. Lloyd Block, the station manager tries to hold everything together, while at the same time drowning his sorrows because of his deteriorating domestic situation. Things, of course get much worse as the audience witnesses the funniest bad TV ever broadcast.

## ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The world premiere performance was at the Ghostlight Theatre in North Tonawanda, NY, on May 1, 2008. The production was directed and designed by L. Don Swartz and the cast was as follows: Debby Koszelak Swartz *(Bernice)*, Joann V. Mis *(Lottie)*, Don Swartz *(Hal)*, Jesse Swartz *(Sal)*, Vanessa Stipkovits *(Candy)*, Greg Blarr *(Mr. Block)*, Paul McGinnis *(Virgil)*, Daniel Arrasjid *(Man Caller)*, Julie Senko *(1st Woman Caller)*, and Joy Ann Wrona *(2nd Woman Caller).*

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**
*(4 m, 3 w, extras)*

LOTTIE: Grumpy old Polish lady.

BERNICE: Grumpy old Polish lady.

HAL: Paranoid janitor.

SAL: Know-it-all janitor.

CANDY: Ambitious media intern.

LLOYD BLOCK: Station manager with a crumbling marriage, drinks too much.

VIRGIL MOOCH: Neurotic program director and fan of '70s pop music; throws up on-camera.

VOICE-ONLY ROLES:

MAN CALLER: Voice of the weatherman and character who calls-in to the "Buffalo Yak" show.

1st WOMAN CALLER: Mr. Block's wife (Betty) and a character who calls in to the "Buffalo Yak" show.

2nd WOMAN CALLER: A character who calls in to the "Buffalo Yak" show and Sister Mary Brigita.

EXTRA: Cymbal player.

## SETTING

A television studio in Buffalo, New York. The studio is a cozy talk show set with two tall stools center, in front of windows that look out onto a cityscape that is not Buffalo, but was most likely on sale. SL is an elevated news desk with a slide screen above it. SR is an open flexible space used for special segments. On the wall in this area is a sign that reads “Buffalo Yak!”

## PROPS

Push broom
Mop bucket
Lunch for Hal and Sal (Sal’s is in Tupperware)
Pencil
Oversized purses for Lottie and Bernice (containing toilet paper roll, toilet seat, bright red lipstick, Kleenex, snacks)
Aprons
Grocery bags with bloody deli-wrapped packages
Pan
Exercise mats and balls
Neck brace
Flask
Clothing for fashion show
Whiskey bottle and shot glass
Cigarette
Cymbals and a music stand

# ACT I
## Scene 1

*(AT RISE: HAL and SAL, two janitors, are sitting at the news desk, having their lunch. There is a push broom and a mop bucket nearby. It is early morning. They eat for awhile. Sal is making yummy sounds.)*

HAL: What are you eating?
SAL: Ten-bean salad.
HAL: What?
SAL: Ten-bean salad.
HAL: Ten-bean salad? What are you talking about? There aren't even ten beans. Where do you get off calling it ten-bean salad?
SAL: Aren't ten beans? Where have you been? You've got your kidney bean. Your chili bean. Your pinto bean.
HAL: Pinto bean? There is no such thing as a pinto bean.
SAL: There is too a pinto bean.
HAL: Pinto bean? They're naming beans after cars, now?
SAL: A pinto is also a horse, for your information.
HAL: They're naming beans after horses?
SAL: They could be. Come to think of it, the pinto bean is kind of shaped like a horse.
HAL: A bean shaped like a horse?
SAL: May I finish? You got your kidney bean. Your chili bean. Your pinto bean. Your lima bean.
HAL: You mean Lima bean.
SAL: Lima? It's lima. It's always been lima.
HAL: They come from Lima, Peru. Not lima, Peru. Proper pronunciation is Lima.
SAL: Who's eating a Lima bean? Nobody's eating a Lima bean. It's lima. So, you got your kidney bean, your chili bean, your pinto bean, your lima bean, your green bean, your yellow waxed bean, your garbanzo bean, a.k.a. the chick pea.
HAL: Is it a pea or a bean?
SAL: What does it matter?

HAL: It matters if someone is claiming he's got a ten-bean salad and he's slipping peas in there. That's why it matters.

SAL: Your best authorities on the subject consider it both a pea and a bean. For my purposes I will count it a bean. A garbanzo bean. May I continue? You got your kidney bean, your chili bean, your pinto bean, your lima bean, your green bean, your yellow waxed bean, your garbanzo bean, your lentil bean, your navy bean.

HAL: What the hell is a navy bean?

SAL: It's a bean.

HAL: Prove it.

SAL: Prove it? What do you mean, prove it? *(Digs ones out of the container.)* Here. That's a navy bean. *(HE throws it at HIM.)* You got your kidney bean, your chili bean, your pinto bean, your lima bean, your green bean, your yellow waxed bean, your garbanzo bean, your lentil bean, your navy bean and your butter bean. Ten beans.

*(VIRGIL, the show director, enters quickly.)*

VIRGIL: Oh, this is great! Just great! Mr. Block! Mr. Block!!! *(HE is gone.)*

SAL: You want to try some?

HAL: No, thank you. I am not a fan of the legume.

SAL: Not a fan of the legume? Legumes are good for you. Are you kidding me? Everyone is trying to eat more legumes. There are tribes in South America that eat only legumes. They live to be 150. They graduate from high school at like 85. *(HE puts a spoonful in his mouth.)* Pay now or pay later.

HAL: Yeah, I'll be the one paying later.

SAL: Suit yourself.

HAL: You suit yourself. Besides, I don't eat from Tupperware.

SAL: You don't eat from Tupperware? What's that mean?

HAL: I don't eat things that have been stored in Tupperware.

SAL: What's wrong with Tupperware?

HAL: Causes cancer. It's a proven fact.

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