

# Old Hams

Bob Rinfret





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Old Hams was first performed by the Habersham Community Theater, Clarksville Georgia. Written and Directed by Bob Rinfret.

The original cast was:

Rose Blume: Alta Moseley  
Clara Voyiant: Millie Adcox  
Iris Blume: Kathy Palmer  
Eddie Chambers: Jack Molnar  
Gus Hall: Jeremy Miller  
Louise Crockett: Vanessa Tribble  
Ben McCallister: Justin Dudkiewicz  
David McCallister: Patrick Rose  
Sarah Davis: Lisa Ayers  
Announcer: Justin Dudkiewicz

Production notes:

1. (Pg. 38) The shelves in the living room should be loose so that they can be easily replaced when Louise knocks them over.
2. (Pg. 51) In this crowd scene, you can use extra actors, crew, or friends. No one has any lines. It just has to look like there are a lot of people milling about. All exit when Ben enters on stage.
3. (Pg. 65) The item used to hit Louise should be a break-away type item such as a bottle or vase.

OLD HAMS

by

Bob Rinfret

CAST

(In order of appearance)

NURSE CROCKETT (LOUISE): A former nurse with a checkered past.

RADIO ANNOUNCER: Voice only. Can be male or female.

ROSE BLUME: 70s – 80's. Tall. Self-assured. Fiasty.

IRIS BLUME: 70's – 80's. Rose's younger sister.

MADAME CLARA VOYANT: 70s - 80's. a retired mystic.

EDDIE CHAMBERS: 70's – 80's. Tall, leadingman type.

GUS HALL: 70's – 80's. Eddie's life-long friend. Short, stout.

BEN MCALLISTER JR. (BEN): 50's. The family attorney.

DAVID MCALLISTER: 20's. Ben's nephew.

SARAH DAVIS: 20's. Granddaughter of Ophelia Davis.

Place

The parlor of a Victorian-style mansion in Burbank, California.

Time

The present.

Scenes: *All scenes take place in the parlor of the Mansion.*

ACT I

Scene I Mid-morning

Scene II Later the same day

Scene III The next morning

Scene IV A few days later

ACT II

The next day Mid-morning

ACT I  
Scene 1

*Setting: The parlor of a Victorian style house in need of repair and upkeep. There is an arched opening UL leading to the front door. There is another arched opening UR leading upstairs to the bedrooms. At Center, between the two arches, is a bank of tall windows. DR is a swinging door leading to the kitchen and DL a closet. There are plenty of photographs and memorabilia. There is a large, comfortable couch CR with an armchair, reading table and lamp next to it. In the RC of the room is a dining table, big enough to seat four. There is a desk up CL, between the front door and the closet. There is a telephone on the desk.*

*At rise: NURSE CROCKETT (LOUISE) enters from the bedrooms UR wearing a nurse's uniform. She goes to the window and looks out, then turns and goes towards the kitchen. She passes a radio which sits on the table near the couch, turns it on and exits to the kitchen DR. The radio should be brought up slowly as the scene starts. The voice-over leads into the Obituary.*

ANNOUNCER: Stocks were slightly higher today at the close of trading. Turning to local news, Miss Ophelia Davis, a well-known character actress in motion pictures and television, was laid to rest today at Eternal Gardens Cemetery here in Burbank. Miss Davis, a veteran of more than 50 films and TV shows, was 87. The funeral was attended by many well-wishers and media. She will be greatly missed.

*(ROSE and IRIS enter UL through the front door. Both wear black attire appropriate for a funeral. They are followed by CLARA who dresses gypsy-style with layers of bracelets, rings, and garnish.)*

ANNOUNCER: In other news, the State Lottery Commission announced today that it has been nearly a year since a 25 million dollar winning ticket was drawn but not claimed. The deadline for redeeming that ticket is one week from today. After that, the prize is forfeited. Once again those winning numbers are 6-12-20-40-45 and 50. Now turning to sports—

ROSE: Will you turn that thing off? It's depressing enough coming back from a funeral, but to hear that someone is just letting 25 million bucks sit around is too much. *(IRIS turns off the radio)*

CLARA: Maybe if I try, I can get a vision of who has that ticket and get them to share their good fortune with us. Umm! I am getting something, but it's fuzzy.

ROSE: Great! When it clears up, let us know. And see if you can contact Elvis while you're at it.

IRIS: Wasn't it a lovely funeral? I don't think I've ever been to a nicer one.

ROSE: I don't like funerals. They're creepy. Why couldn't we have a party like Ophelia would have wanted? Lay her to rest, then celebrate her life, not cry over it.

IRIS: Now, Rose, you know we can't afford that kind of thing. Besides, she deserved a decent funeral.

ROSE: Ophelia would have liked us to have a party in her honor, not some stuffy ceremony with a bunch of strangers lurking around. Who were all those other people anyway?

IRIS: Oh, just some fans and reporters I suppose. Anyway, I think Ophelia would have liked the attention.

ROSE: Well, I don't. And, I don't think it was such a good idea to let Eddie give the eulogy either.

IRIS: Why not? I thought he did a wonderful job.

ROSE: Are you serious? He couldn't get any of the names straight. He called Reverend Howard "Reverend Ike." He referred to Ophelia as Oprah. And then thanked everyone for coming to the show and hoped they had a good time.

IRIS: He does have his little lapses.

ROSE: Little! I'm surprised he got his own name right.

IRIS: Yes, I remember, he always was the strong silent type.

ROSE: He was silent for his own good, if he wanted to keep working. Luckily they had cue cards in television, or I doubt he ever would have made a living.

IRIS: Well, don't say anything to him about it. I wouldn't want to hurt his feelings. He did the best he could, and that's good enough for me.

CLARA: Umm! Umm!

ROSE: There she goes again. I swear, Clara, you sound like a Mixmaster.

CLARA: I'm getting something, but it's not very clear. I just can't seem to focus. I see great misfortune. I see betrayal. I see—

ROSE: Stuff it, Clara! You've been seeing death and destruction for sixty years so cut the act.

CLARA: What act? I'll have you know I was considered the greatest medium in my time. Why, I was a consultant to the biggest stars in Hollywood. Flynn. Gable. Bogart.

ROSE: Bologna! You got invited to all those parties because you got lucky once and predicted that *It Happened One Night* would win the Oscar. What have you done lately?

CLARA: These visions take great thought. I cannot predict when I will have one or if it will come true. But you mark my words, one day you'll see.

ROSE: If it does, the only way you'll know about it is if you see it on CNN.

CLARA: I see something else, but it's all so foggy. The aura in this room is very negative.

ROSE: Will you can it? That act was cute years ago, but what we need now are real answers to real problems, not visions.

CLARA: My visions are not to be taken lightly. I *do* see troubled times ahead.

ROSE: Like, I need *you* to tell me that. Besides how can things get worse than they are?

IRIS: What do you mean worse? We've got a roof over our heads and food on the table, that's a lot more than what some other folks have.

ROSE: Yes, but for how long? You know that sneaky attorney of ours is just itching to get his hands on this property and with Ophelia gone he may finally get his chance.

IRIS: Wait a minute. Didn't Ophelia have a daughter? I seem to remember her living here for a while and then moving to New England.

ROSE: I remember her, too, but didn't she pass away years ago?



IRIS: Oh yes, now I remember, Ophelia was very sad about that for quite a while.

CLARA: You know, I keep getting a vision of a young woman, but it's cloudy. I wonder if that has anything to do with it?

ROSE: Try a different frequency, and get back to us.

CLARA: Roger! (*Closes her eyes and chants*) Humm!

IRIS: I still think you're wrong about Mr. McAllister. I refuse to believe that he would do such a thing as to put us out, just like that, after all this time.

ROSE: I'll just bet it won't be long before he makes his move.

(*EDDIE enters UL*)

EDDIE: (*Turning back towards the door*) Will you hurry up? I've been waiting for ten minutes. Can't you move any faster than that? Remember, "Time waits for no one."

GUS: (*Off stage*) "Man."

EDDIE: What?

GUS: (*Enters*) "Man." It's "Time waits for no man." Not no *one*. And I'm going as fast as I can, but at my age, this is it. Besides what's your rush? You got a date or something? (*Laughs at his own joke*)

EDDIE: You should laugh. The last time you had a date, Nixon was in office. What took you so long?

GUS: I was putting the car away. It's not as easy as it used to be you know. That garage door sure seems to get smaller each day.

ROSE: You didn't put *another* dent in the car did you?

GUS: No, of course not. I just made the old one a little bigger.

EDDIE: I remember when we had limousines take us everywhere. Those were the days.

GUS: Yeah. Now if you see one, you have to get out of the way so's you don't get run over.

EDDIE: Not you. You'd stand there in the headlights, and go into your soft shoe routine. An old ham like you they should serve on rye.

GUS: Hey, I can do the same routines I did in the fifty's. *(He tries to do a soft shoe but grabs his back and moans)* Just not as well. Ow! Where's my back pills?

ROSE: Are you two through? We have bigger problems to worry about.

*(They all move to the center table and sit, reflecting on the day)*

EDDIE: *(After a moment of silence)* What kind of problems?

IRIS: We were just talking about Mr. McAllister. Rose thinks he's going to try to force us out of this house.

EDDIE: Oh, him. I don't like that shifty no-account. Now his father, Big Ben, there was a real gentleman. Give you the shirt right off his back. But Little Ben? Never. Oh, he might give you the shirt all right, but he'd charge you for the buttons.

IRIS: You're right. It was Ophelia's generosity that allowed us to live here. Now, I wonder what is to become of us.

CLARA: I'll try to foretell our futures. I see troubled times ahead. I see hardship and great difficulty.

ROSE: Don't you ever see anything pleasant out there? Why is it always gloom and doom with you?

CLARA: Hardship is always with us. Besides, if it doesn't happen, then you've got to assume you're ahead.

GUS: She's got a point.

CLARA: Besides, I keep seeing *numbers* of some kind. It's all very vague.

ROSE: Keep this up, and the only numbers you'll see are the ones on your room at the California State Home for the permanently confused.

CLARA: I know you don't think my visions are real, but I tell you I do see something. I just can't seem to focus in on it. I think I'll go up to my room. Maybe I can get a better picture. (*Exits UL*)

ROSE: (*Calling after her*) You do that. And be sure to let us know if and when your antenna is re-aligned.

IRIS: Will you stop that? Clara deserves more understanding and patience from us, not criticism. She means well, and who knows, maybe, some-day, one of those visions really will come true.

ROSE: Yea, well, I won't hold my breath.

EDDIE: Talking about this isn't going to make it better. There's got to be a way to keep this house out of Ben's hands. I'm too old to be looking for somewhere else to live. (*Embarrassed*) Besides I'd miss all of you.

IRIS: Eddie, that's so sweet.

(*NURSE CROCKETT enters from the kitchen*)

ROSE: Oh, great! Just when I thought life couldn't get any worse, the Bride of Chucky shows up.

LOUISE: I see everyone's *finally* back. Now maybe I can get dinner on table. (*To ROSE*) If you will *all* co-operate, that is. (*To IRIS*) I hope the services were nice.

IRIS: Yes, dear, they were lovely, thank you for asking. I still don't know why you didn't come along.

LOUISE: I didn't go, because...well, because I didn't think I'd be welcome.

IRIS: Oh, nonsense, you would have been perfectly welcome to join us.

ROSE: Yeah! Nothing would make me happier than to see you in a cemetery.

**END OF FREEVIEW**

**You'll want to read and perform this show!**