

Digging up Hoffa

Dave Carley





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ArtAge Publications

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DIGGING UP HOFFA

by Dave Carley

SYNOPSIS

The 1975 disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa continues to fascinate North Americans. A great deal of time and money has been spent looking for Hoffa's body. Meanwhile, in a tiny house in a Detroit suburb, Phyllis DeLong worries about her finances--and a septic system that has broken down. But Phyllis is a resourceful woman and she decides that desperate times require bold action...

CAST

PHYLLIS DELONG: Mid to late 60's.

RANDY/RANDI DELONG: Her son/daughter, late 30's.

TV SHOW HOST: Any age, any gender. Written as a man but can be changed with a few pronouns.

Place

A living room in a small home in a Detroit suburb.

Time

The present.

Setting: Regular lighting. There is sound offstage--a backhoe. Maybe occasional beeping.

At Rise: HOST is setting up camera. The conceit is that HOST is a videographer and runs the one camera and light. PHYLLIS and RANDY/RANDI are settling on a couch or chairs.

PHYLLIS: Is this OK?

HOST: A bit closer, please.

PHYLLIS: Move in, Ran. And where do we look, at you or the camera?

HOST: At me.

PHYLLIS: We talk to the Host, Ran.

HOST: The lights are going to seem a bit bright at first.

(Lights come up. They are indeed bright. RANDY shields eyes.)

RANDY: They hurt my eyes.

PHYLLIS: Move your hand down.

RANDY: It's too bright!

PHYLLIS: That's cuz you're looking at them. Look at the Host.

HOST: I can dim it a bit.

PHYLLIS: Randy's fine. How come you didn't want us to wear makeup?

HOST: We go for a natural look.

PHYLLIS: That's good cuz I never wear makeup. Makes me look like a corpse. How long do you think this will take?

HOST: Not long.

PHYLLIS: Randy likes his dinner on time.

RANDY: We're having chops.

PHYLLIS: He'll be hungry as a bear in an hour.

RANDY: I'm hungry now.

PHYLLIS: They'll have found what they want in an hour.

HOST: Sooner than that I hope. I only have a few questions, it shouldn't be more than ten minutes.

PHYLLIS: You're welcome to stay for dinner.

HOST: Thanks, but we'll have to get back to the studio. Depending what they find, that is. If they come up empty we'll be out of your hair in no time. If they do find something, you understand the police will have to be called.

PHYLLIS: I'm prepared for that.

HOST: Then your yard will be a crime scene and it'll be cordoned off.

PHYLLIS: I just want to do the right thing.

RANDY: Will that mean I can't go in the backyard?

PHYLLIS: Yes.

RANDY: Where will I go to the bathroom?

PHYLLIS: Never mind that.

HOST: It's just the backyard that'll be taped off.

PHYLLIS: The plumbing is out, so we're making do with the McDonald's on the corner.

RANDY: But I can go out back if it's an emergency.

PHYLLIS: That's enough, Randy.

RANDY: Behind the garage.

PHYLLIS: He doesn't want to hear that.

RANDY: It's the septic. It's busted.

PHYLLIS: He doesn't care.

HOST: We'll start? I'll record an introduction for this afterwards, outside the house. I'm just going to ask some questions for the camera, so when I make the sign (*demonstrates sign*) we'll start the interview. Mrs. DeLong, can you give your name and age?

PHYLLIS: Phyllis DeLong. 65.

HOST: And you?

PHYLLIS: Randy's 35.

RANDY: Randy Brian [Brianna] DeLong. Age 35.

HOST: I'll direct most of my questions to you, Mrs. DeLong, but Randy if you have anything to add, just pipe up.

PHYLLIS: He probably won't.

RANDY: I might.

HOST: OK. Here we go. (*gives sign*) Mrs. DeLong, it was a real surprise to get your phone call this week. Can you tell us what prompted you to call, after all these years?

PHYLLIS: I'd been watching your last show on "Unsolved Crimes" about Mr. Hoffa. I always watch "Unsolved Crimes" and I was especially interested in this one because I knew Mr. Hoffa personally.

HOST: You knew him—from—

PHYLLIS: I was a waitress at The Red Fox.

HOST: The Detroit restaurant where he was last seen. And you were working there when—

PHYLLIS: The day he disappeared.

(*sound of backhoe stops*)

RANDY: It stopped.

PHYLLIS: Maybe they hit something.

RANDY: Can I go look?

PHYLLIS: No Randy, wait. I was a waitress at the Red Fox, and often served Mr. Hoffa. You could call it a professional relationship, though I thought of him as a friend too. He was a generous man, he often ate at the Fox and we waitresses--we all wanted to serve him but his table was in my section so it usually was my--privilege. Mr. Hoffa was a very good tipper.

RANDY: He's dead.

PHYLLIS: They know that.

HOST: Actually, there's a theory he's still alive.

PHYLLIS: Oh, I know you had that man on last episode who said he was in hiding in Brazil, but that's silly. He only spoke English, why would he go someplace like that? Anyway, watching the show I thought about what I know, it all kind of came back to me--and I realized, after all these years, I should come forward.

RANDY: He's dead. His body is right out there.

PHYLLIS: Let me tell the story, Randy.

RANDY: My Dad helped bury him.

PHYLLIS: Randy! Some of what he's saying--can you--

HOST: We'll edit the tape. So you were saying you knew Jimmy Hoffa.

PHYLLIS: Yes. He ate at the Red Fox twice a week. Always sat in the same table, corner, facing out. Sometimes he ate alone, but usually he had work associates with him. He was a good tipper like I said. And I want this in: he was a gentleman. The restaurant had a German theme, so we had to wear these dresses--you know--they were very modest, nothing like Hooters, but they--emphasized our qualities--and some of the men who'd come there were--well, they'd ask for dates and such. But Mr. Hoffa--not a hint of that.

HOST: Where were you living then?

PHYLLIS: Here. Bert and I bought this place in 1970, a couple of months after we got married. That's a change in the world, huh. Bert was driving a delivery van and I was waitressing and we could still buy a house right off. Now I can barely keep it. I raised my three kids here.

RANDY: Darlene, Lori, Randy. Bang bang bang.

PHYLLIS: Not quite that fast. I had Darlene and Lori and then I went back to work. Randy came a lot later. A happy surprise.

HOST: What can you tell me about the events of July 30, 1975?

PHYLLIS: Well, this is the strangest thing. I have a very clear memory of that day. I suppose because of all the —fuss--that was made afterwards.

HOST: But you never made a police statement.

PHYLLIS: Bert said I should keep my nose out of it, for reasons I'm about to explain.

HOST: OK—

PHYLLIS: Mr. Hoffa always parked out back of the restaurant, car facing out, like he was ready for a fast escape. Always he sat in the restaurant facing out, too.

HOST: How do you know about his car?

PHYLLIS: I smoked in those days.

(RANDY gets up and walks off)

PHYLLIS: Where are you going?! *(to camera)* Sorry. *(to RANDY)* Get back here!

RANDY: I want to see how big the hole is.

PHYLLIS: Randy!

RANDY: *(offstage)* It's the length of the house already. I'm gonna go see how deep.

PHYLLIS: Get back here! *(RANDY returns)* Sorry.

HOST: You were telling me why you out at the back of the restaurant.

PHYLLIS: I was a smoker then, and every break I'd have one at the back door, the staff door, it faced the parking lot. And the first thing I noticed that day...

HOST: Sorry to interrupt – what time was this?

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!

