

RICE-N-BEANS

(A Farce)



The Players

BILL

CONNIE

GEORGE

JAY

STAGEHAND

Casting Notes:

BILL is played by a Clinton look-alike whose voice imitation is near perfect. His dress is causal-presidential, an open-collar starched pink shirt, with a faded but still obvious quarter-sized blue ink spot at the bottom right of his left breast pocket. The stain has thinly puddled at the pocket's bottom seam and runs left and down to its lowest center point, creating a subtle line pointing left. Bill is made-up to hide all skin tone, he looks sun-starved but still, almost, healthy.

CONNIE should be reasonably recognizable as Janet Jackson, a little plump is better, but definitely not fat. She is costumed in a black leather bustier with silver studding, most of the studs are obviously 22 slugs, but some are larger caliber. The right breast cup is missing, allowing her naked breast to sag noticeably below the level of the pert-implying remaining left cup...not unattractively, just natural. Beyond the minimum required to accentuate the

J.J. imitation, her make-up must include loud and shiny lipstick, a cool-red color, and enough enhancement of her right breast areola to the make it appear the size and shape of a large-man's clenched fist viewed from the top. She also wears a realistic looking, plastic Halloween wig, matching the Supreme's early-70's hairstyle, over her long, straight, J.J. hair hanging out from under the wig.

GEORGE is played by a Bush look-alike whose facial expression imitation is near perfect...especially the not-quite-catatonic vacant stare, the scary-almost-crazy "I'm strong and stable" glare, and the rich-kid-smart-ass Mona Lisa grin. He is dressed news-conference-presidential, his shirt collar and tie so tight he has trouble speaking whenever he gets angrily "puffed-up". His make-up is thick, an orangey fake-suntan color, and over the course of the play runs in growing globs down his face, staining his collar.

JAY is played by a John Kerry look-alike, wearing an obvious prosthetic Leno-chin, strapped on, the black strap splitting in two at the ears like a child's bedtime retainer strap. He's dressed in a very expensive but shiny pen-stripped suit, dark shirt, and off-white tie. He wears no socks with his wingtips. The sprayed-on black spot in his hair is just a little over-sprayed onto his forehead.

STAGEHAND should be unmemorable except for a large, oddly bulbous butt, tentatively supporting dirty white carpenter jeans while exposing a full 12 inches of butt-crack.



The Stage Set

A dais, center stage, at least four to no more than six inches in height, only big enough to accommodate the rest of the props, with just enough room to walk around all without falling off. It is covered with a cheap looking, very long, shag carpeting, in a presidential blue with red and white flecks. The dais vertical surface is covered with a cream-colored countertop material and is filthy, smeared with mop-slop...some of which is stained a reddish-brown that could be dried blood, and splattered here and there with small, unidentifiable, chunks of something.

A cheap rectangular folding card-table, 20x42 inches,

draped three sides with stark-white butcher's paper, waxy side out, placed rear-center of the dais. The paper is hung precariously with haphazardly placed (some vertical, some horizontal), foot long strips of inch-wide masking tape, hurriedly torn from the roll leaving skinny tails at the ends of each piece...these tails are mostly curled. The padded vinyl top of the table has several cigarette burns of varying lengths.

Two cheap folding card-table chairs, behind the table, each pressed close to the table legs, one at each end. Bill sits at Connie's right hand (stage left), their chairs directly face the audience.

A folding director's chair, unstained-canvas strap back and seat, sits slightly forward of the table at Connie's left hand (stage right), and is turned 90-degrees facing along the length of the table's front. The canvas seat sags forcing George's knees together, but even so this chair is tall enough that he can't quite touch the floor with his toes pointed downward.

A short side table, too short to be a comfortable match in height, sits in front of and slightly toward the rear (stage right) of the director's chair. This table is just barely large enough to hold a pitcher of water and a short water-glass sitting precariously along side the pitcher's large handle. Both pitcher and glass are clear, both are filled to the brim with water, and both are sweating.

A low-back swivel chair, upholstered in a non-descript light canvas color and comfortably padded, positioned opposite (stage left) and facing George's chair. It is the perfect height for Jay and sits its side table's width closer to the dais front than George's chair.

A side table, matching Jay's chair perfectly, sits behind his chair. It is slightly larger than George's, though all that is visible on it is a coffee mug. Also on this table, out of view of the audience, is a large...foot-long, 1-inch thick, half-broken cigar.

A floor lamp, matching the height of the Stagehand, sits just to Bill's right (stage left). It has a very thin pole, an inch wide, and a simply-shaped, unadorned, opaque

shade, just large enough to obscure the Stagehand's head.

Two exit signs, with the typical red letters, hang in the dark far stage rear...from their size they appear to be at least 30-feet away. One floats over Jay's head, high up near the bottom of the raised curtain. The other is low, visible under George's chair. Both are on at curtain open and remain on throughout the play.

Lighting Notes:

The house lights lower at curtain open but remain uncomfortably high, just short of distraction, throughout the performance.

The stage lighting rises, all aspects together, after the play begins. Only the dais is lit, the stage all around it and beyond remains dark.

Jay, and the area in front of the skirted table, are lit in warm, rich, and shadow-less, TV studio daylight. Bill is bathed in the soft and bedroom sexy, yellowish glow of the floor lamp. This glow washes over Connie's right side, mixing across her face and body with George's white glare, until her left side is lit as harshly as he is. George is flooded in harsh white light, an almost visible cylindrical fluorescent glare surrounds him, coming down from above.

Player Notes:

BILL is cross-legged the entire performance, right over left. Though not seen by the audience, this is obvious by where he kicks/taps the butcher's paper with his right foot and bumps the table with his right knee. He remains stiff, but not rigid, throughout the play, often doubling-up his chin to his neck and looking sneakily out from under the tops of his eye sockets. His hands remain on the table, loosely touching, right in front and overlapping the left a little, as if he is hiding something.

CONNIE sits rigid and erect throughout, hands palms down on the table and directly in front of her shoulders. Her eyes remain fixed straight ahead, moving only her head...never her shoulders, but still always turning her head, slowly...never her eyes, toward whomever she is addressing or attending. She is barefoot, her toes protruding from under the table's paper skirt, kneading and pulling at the shag carpet in varying degrees of furor.

GEORGE is sweating when the curtain opens and through some contrivance of seat or floor must sweat profusely, obviously, from beginning to end...his suit showing large dark-soaked patches at curtain close. This is not a nervous sweat, he is calm, the sweating is natural and ignored, accepted and unnoticed by all on stage.

JAY moves comfortably in his chair at will, sliding forward or leaning back during all, engaging his guests as required to keep the appearance of a conversation at ease. His tone is light and unemotional, uninvolved while remaining engaged.

STAGEHAND stands directly behind the floor lamp facing the audience, his pants zipper, bellybutton, and breast plate aligned with and hidden by its pole, his face is hidden by the lampshade. The shape of a roll of masking tape is obvious in his right pocket, pressing through his jeans. A cylindrical object, 12-inches long and about 1-inch wide, its impression visible in his left pocket, is pushed as far around to the outside of his thigh as this pocket will allow. He stands still and vertical whenever behind the lamp, but “at-ease”, slouching a little more than a soldier would but only front to back, and his hands are open and limp at his sides.



Curtain Open

Connie starts speaking just before the curtain opens, just after the house lights start to dim.

CONNIE

...but, as I've said several times before, there never was a silver bullet to...

GEORGE

But there was a smoking gun...

CONNIE

Yes, Sir...though no silver bullet, not to act on.

The stage lighting starts to rise, all but the floor lamp.

GEORGE

There was definitely a smoking gun.

CONNIE

Yes, Sir, there definitely was a smoking gun...

The stage lighting up, all but the floor lamp.

BILL

Oh, Baby.

The floor lamp switches on full.

CONNIE

...but no silver bullet. A smoking gun, for sure...

Bill's foot taping on the paper screen gets a little faster.

BILL

Oh, Baby, Oh, Baby.

CONNIE

...but no silver bullet to act on. We did a wonderful job, Jay, in such a short time, considering the chaos left to us.

Bill's taping slows again to its original pace.

JAY

Yes, you've said that before too, Connie...yes, often...but what finally happened to change your mind? When did you realize you were exposed to the public? No hiding it anymore?

BILL

Oh My! Oh...

Bill's taping stops completely for a few seconds, then resumes even slower just after the Stagehand coughs...a turn-your-head-and-cough cough. Connie turns her head away from Jay, past the Stagehand, to somewhere just short of looking at Bill, then turns back to Jay after she starts talking.

CONNIE

Well, Jay, hindsight is twenty-twenty, they say, some say, but shouldn't we always keep our hindsight forward, toward the future, if we're to use what we've learned from the past? That's what I always say, anyway, Jay, especially now, in times like these. And, of course, I agree completely with the President on this matter too.

JAY

What do you think, Mister President?

Jay is looking at George, who is looking at Jay but off in his vacant stare. Bill perks up but before he speaks sees Jay is talking to George. Disappointed, he sneaks his first little peek at Connie's exposed breast.

Mister President?

George's focus wakes up, and reaching for his water glass without looking away from Jay, he sticks his left hand into the pitcher...he leaves it there.

GEORGE

Why, yes, Jay, absolutely.

JAY

Yes...Mister President?

Bill perks up again, but recovers quicker this time and also stops

himself from taking another peek.

GEORGE

Absolutely! *(pause)*

George takes his hand out of the pitcher, resting his elbow on his armrest as he continues, water is dripping onto his lap.

Oh...OH...you know, what she said. I think...I agree...that Connie is in complete agreement with me on this matter.

JAY

How did you deal with this issue in your day, Mr. President.

BILL

(right on top of it) Pretty much the same way, basically, only with a completely different attitude and approach.

House lights suddenly slam full on. Stagehand swirls quickly round, his bulbous but knocking over the floor lamp. Bill's body jerks, violently kicking the paper screen. Connie jumps erect in her seat, bouncing a little before using her arm as a cradle. George kicks over his water table, immediately giving the audience his "how stupid are you" look. Jay watches the water slowly spread on the floor, then turns himself and his chair toward the audience.

What the f...

JAY

Okay then. More of the same when we come back.

Curtain close.

End

