

LIFE AT 21 LANE

a play in one act by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

MAIN CHARACTERS:

DARLENE: Twenty-two-year-old basic school teacher

PRISCILLA: Twenty-five-year-old business woman

WELLER: Fifteen-year-old schoolboy, reputed gunman

BANJO: Fifty-three-year-old jack of all trades

TINY: Thirty-year-old barmaid

GWEN: Forty-five-year-old business woman

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS:

JUICY BARNES: Twenty-year-old reputed gunman

PABLO: Eighteen-year-old reputed gunman

JONATHAN: Thirty-year-old bus driver

SIDNEY: Removal van driver

SERGEANT BRENT WRIGHT: Forty-five-year-old
policeman

MEDA: Thirty-one-year-old factory worker

**CORPORAL SAM JEPSON: Thirty-six-year-old
policeman**

**CORPORAL JACK WINSTON: Thirty-three-year-old
policeman**

**CONSTABLE EVERALD NOTICE: Twenty-six-year-
old
policeman**

**TREVAN 'DEUCE' MC KOY: Seventeen-year-old
reputed gunman**

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SCENE ONE

(In Priscilla's living room. There are some couches, whatnot, entertainment center. A flat screen television set sits in the middle of the entertainment center.)

DARLENE (Sitting on a couch): Where is Wella? How come he hasn't come home from school as yet? Today, big Friday evening, that boy is joking. I can bet that all the teachers and students have gone home.

PRISCILLA: Are you sure that he went to school?

DARLENE: From our mother died, he has gotten from bad to worse. Mister Banjo never even came here one day to talk to him. He is a real dead stock.

PRISCILLA: You can say that again. Anyway, they have some new schools where bad boys like him can go.

DARLENE: Let us try to get him into one of them. I don't want him to go anywhere and get mixed up with bad company again.(Enter Banjo. He is dressed in jeans, t' shirt, a pair of long boots and dark glasses. He is clean shaven and has a bald head)

PRISCILLA: Mister Banjo, what are you doing here? You never heard that mummy died, look how long now?

BANJO: How could I have heard? I was working down in St. Elizabeth.

DARLENE: She is dead and buried. We phoned you. We sent messages. Lord Mister Banjo, you could have treated her better than that.

PRISCILLA: It must have been Gwen, who stopped him from coming. Look at what mummy did for you and you treated her so bad.

BANJO: I lost my phone. That's why you weren't hearing from me. (Bows his head, then covers it with his hands.)

DARLENE: We know that you and our mother broke up a long time ago, but at least you could have phoned us to find out about her. You must have known that she was sick and in and out of the hospital.

BANJO: It's just last week that I got back another phone and I decided to come and find out if everybody was all right. Everybody I talked to on my way up here said that she got a good turning out.

DARLENE: Lots of people came and I never heard anybody complaining that they never got enough to eat or drink.

BANJO: I'm glad to hear that. Where is Wella?

PRISCILLA: We were just talking about him. Look how long school over and he hasn't come home yet.

BANJO: Are you sure that he went to school? All he's good for is to keep bad company. Police will soon come for him.

BANJO: Anyway, that's not what I came here to talk about. Where is Roselyn's bank book?

PRISCILLA: What did you say, Mister Banjo? Repeat what you just said. You are asking for our mother's bank book?

BANJO: So, what's wrong if I ask about it? It's only the two of us names were in it and now that she is dead, I want it.

DARLENE: (Laughs) So you never knew that she took out your name and put Priscilla's and my name in there. It's the money that she had in there we used to bury her. We are using the balance to send Wella to school.

BANJO: (Stands up) Both of you are lying. The amount of money that was in the account would bury Roselyn and still leave money to educate Wella up to University level. I bet that it will soon finish. I bet that both of you went in there and used it off. When it finishes, don't come to me for any money for Wella. I'm going to the bank on Monday to find out about it.

PRISCILLA: Mister Banjo, from our mother died, six months now, this is the first time we are seeing you. Where were you all this time? You claimed that you lost your phone. Look how cheap phones are, you should be able to buy another one. I know that you are lying.

BANJO: That's none of your business, girl and I want both of you off the place too. How soon can you come off? I promised Gwen and my brother's woman, Naomi, to move them up here by next week. And remember that it's only your clothes you have here. I own all of the furniture and everything else.

PRISCILLA: Darlene, it seems as if Mister Banjo is not in his right mind. Go and call Aunt Ruby for me. Are you getting mad, Mister Banjo? My mother's will read and she left the

place to me, Darlene and Wella. I never saw you bringing any furniture here yet. And you took everything that you owned with you when you were leaving the last time.(Exits Darlene)

BANJO: I am going down to Sammy's bar. And you see, if by the time I come back the two of you don't take out your belongings, I am going to throw them out onto the sidewalk and I'm not responsible for what happens to them. (Exits Banjo)

PRISCILLA: What a wicked man, Mister Banjo is turning out to be. Look how our mother looked after that man and in her hour of need he was nowhere to be found. God is going to give him his reward though. (Enter Wella)

PRISCILLA: Look at the time you are coming home from school, boy.

WELLA: What's that to you? That's none of your business.

PRISCILLA: Who are you being fresh with, boy? (Boxes Wella's face)

WELLA: What did you boxed me for? Is it you who is sending me to school? From my mother died any of you business with me?(Enter Gwen, she is Banjo's woman. She carries a broom and other implements, she is humming a tune)

PRISCILLA: Where are you going, Miss Gwen?

GWEN: What are you doing here, Priscilla? Banjo told me that, you, Darlene and Wella moved up to Miss Ruby's house. He said that he ran you off the place because none of you have any manners to him and it's us he wants to live here. My sister,

Naomi has gone to look for our mother. She isn't coming here until tomorrow evening.

WELLA: (Still has his hand over where Priscilla had boxed him) What is she saying, Priscilla? Banjo doesn't want us to live here anymore?

PRISCILLA: Miss Gwen, I know that you have children for Mister Banjo and Miss Naomi, is his brother, Scully's woman. Nothing what Mister Banjo told you is true. I am begging you to just come out of my place. You know me already and know that I'm a very serious woman. (Enter Darlene)

DARLENE: I don't see Aunt Ruby, Priscilla, it looks like she has gone to church. But wait, what is Miss Gwen doing here with broom and brush?

PRISCILLA: It's the same question I am asking her.

GWEN: I am not leaving here tonight until Banjo comes back. Go and pack up your things and call Sidney's van to move them up to your aunt's house, Priscilla, Darlene and Wella. Banjo said that it's only the clothes you are to move with because he owns all the furniture and everything else.

PRISCILLA: You know what, let me go and find Mister Banjo and try thrashing out this thing with him. I'll soon be back, Darlene and Wella. (Exits Priscilla)

GWEN: I am coming with you, Priscilla. Darlene, if Naomi's baby father, Scully, comes up here, tell him that I've gone down to Sammy's bar to look for Banjo. (Exits Miss Gwen)

WELLA (eating his dinner): Darlene, what's going on? It looks like Banjo wants to run us out of here, but how can he

do that and he doesn't own the place? (Enter two men. Both are masked) (One is burly while the other is tall and thin)

BURLY GUNMAN: This is a stickup. I want all the money that you have.

WELLA: I know that voice, it's Juicy Barnes. I must tell Dutch that you and Pablo came to my house and tried to rob me and my sister.

PABLO: I told you that it's here Killer lives and you didn't believe me.

JUICY BARNES: Killer, hold it down, no harm was done. I will see you in the morning. (Exits both Juicy Barnes and Pablo) (Wella continues eating his dinner. Finally, Darlene finds her voice.)

DARLENE: Wella, you are a gunman? They call you Killer? You are out there murdering people?

WELLA: So, what if they call me Killer? That doesn't mean that I have ever killed anybody yet. They only call me that because they and I are friends.

DARLENE: They say to show me your company and I tell you who you are. If you are keeping company with gunmen then you must be a gunman too. (Enter Priscilla)

PRISCILLA: I don't see Mister Banjo. He's hiding from us. (Looks at Darlene rather curiously)(Darlene still looks frightened.)

PRISCILLA: Why are you looking so frightened, Darlene?

DARLENE: Two of Wella's friends just tried to hold me up.
(Priscilla's hands fly to her mouth.)

WELLA (Has finished eating his dinner now): How do you know that they and I are friends?

DARLENE: They said so, Wella and you said so too.

PRISCILLA: You gave them any money?

DARLENE: It looks as if they have the same boss. When he said he was going to tell the boss on them, they left. They had on masks, but from he heard their voices, he recognized them.

WELLA: Which boss are you talking about, Darlene? I am not a member of any gang. Sometimes those guys ride past me on their bikes and wave to me. What do you want me to do?

PRISCILLA: You don't see that the boy is a gunman. Let us call the police to come and lock him up. Where is his school bag? I don't want anybody to come and shoot up my house looking for him. (Priscilla grabs up Wella's school bag which had been thrown into a corner of the room. She opens the bag. Wella is still seated around the table.)

DARLENE: You find any gun, Priscilla? (Priscilla is searching the bag)

PRISCILLA: No, it's only his books I see.(Throws back the bag in a corner of the room)(Enters Scully. He is carrying a huge bag.)

WELLA: (Laughs) I'm sure that neither of you ever saw me with a gun yet, so I don't know what Priscilla was looking for.

SCULLY: All of you are still here? But I heard that you had all left. I came looking for Gwen and Banjo down here and now I find the three of you. So tell me, Priscilla, Gwen and Banjo didn't come up here?

PRISCILLA: I don't know where your brother and your sister-in-law are, Scully. So, all you want to come up here to live too?

SCULLY: I would be living in my brother's house. I wouldn't be living in anywhere belonging to you.

DARLENE: Scully, all you who don't live anywhere getting fresh with people too.

WELLA: Hey Scully, you and Banjo want to run me and my sisters off this place?

SCULLY: (Ignores Wella) Banjo told me that he got the place now and he is going to take the big house and my woman and I can get the small one. I came to sleep here tonight because I neither have taxi nor bus fare to go back to my yard.

DARLENE: Your sister-in-law came here and left. She was looking for Mister Banjo and didn't find him. He is hiding from her. He said he was going down to Sammy's bar, but when Priscilla went down there she didn't find him.

PRISCILLA: Scully, the best advice I would give you is to go and look for your brother and find out what's going on.

SCULLY: If I don't find him it's right back here I am coming and you boy, Wella, watch what I'm going to do to you.

WELLA: It's you to watch what I'm going to do to you if you put back your foot up here again, tonight. (Scully whips out a knife)

SCULLY: Hey boy, do you think because your daddy is my brother, I am going to be afraid to do you something?

WELLA: Hey, Scully, anyhow you cut me, I must go for my gun and do you something. (Scully rushes at Wella with his knife, but he runs into a room)

PRISCILLA: Scully, mind you mash up anything for me.

SCULLY: Both of you must talk to him. He's talking to me like he and I are the same age. Everybody knows that he is a gunman, but that's not going to make me be afraid of him. I'm going to see if I find Banjo.(Exits Scully)(Enters Wella)

PRISCILLA: Wella, you must have some respect for your uncle.

DARLENE: He might have to help you out one of these days.

WELLA: (Hisses his teeth) Scully is worse than Banjo.

DARLENE: You threatened to shoot him. He can report you to the police and make them arrest you.

WELLA: He drew his knife on me and I didn't do him anything.

DARLENE: Come, let us go down to the station to report the robbery.

WELLA: Both of you didn't hear what I said. The men are going to say that I'm an informer and come to look for me.

PRISCILLA: Let them come, who told you to take up with gunmen?

DARLENE: Stay here and watch the place until we come back.(Exit women)

WELLA: It's my friends I am going to check right now. Both of you can stay there, about me to watch the place. When the two of you come back, Banjo might move in Miss Gwen and Naomi. I can always go up to my aunt's house to live.(The lights fade.)

SCENE TWO

(This is at Sammy's bar. Banjo and Scully are in the bar drinking. The bartender is a woman, Tiny. Two men and a woman are the only other customers. Music is playing in the background)(Enter, Priscilla and Darlene)

BANJO: Where are both of you going?

PRISCILLA: Your woman came down here and didn't find you. Where were you, Mister Banjo?

BANJO: What do you want to know that for?

PRISCILLA: Because she came to put us out of our house and it was you who put her up to it.

TINY: Order if you want anything. I don't want any quarrelling in my bar.

PRISCILLA: Tiny, I don't go to bars to drink and you should know that too. You ever see me in your bar yet? Then how come you are being fresh with me like that?

DARLENE: I wonder if she knows who we are? Hey bartender girl, you must have better manners than that.

BANJO: Don't worry yourself, Tiny, it's me they are arguing with. They are in my place and don't want to come out. I want to get rid of them.

PRISCILLA: You heard this man, telling lies about us. Who is in anywhere for you, Mister Banjo?

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