

TROUPE 621

Written By
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SOUL CHARACTERS:

EUGENE-- Executed Texan Thanksgiving Day serial killer, dressed in his exterminator's overalls but with his prison number taped across his chest, # 6-21. The seat of his overalls have black burn marks from the juice of the electric chair.

SISTER SALLY-- A Nun who choked to death due to premature transubstantiation during administration of sacred sacrament. She wears a nun's habit, conservative skirt.

DIDI-- A Dominatrix who died in a car crash when she mistook severe whiplash for a broken neck. She's dressed provocatively in black with long boots clutching a riding crop or some sort of whip-like object.

RALPH-- A Chubby High School Cutter killed by a festering infection from hidden, self-inflicted stomach wounds. He's dressed like a nerd.

TIME: ETERNITY

PLACE: REINCARNATION HOLDING CENTER

The stage is dark but we hear agitated and frightened whispering of three souls destined to become bed bugs, bewildered by their new location. One by one a darkened soul, wearing a white light necklace, wanders across the stage. The audience sees individual lights until they all bump into each other, creating a collective unit of light, a Soul Cluster of translucent bulbs. When this is achieved EUGENE'S boom voice shouts:

EUGENE's Voice

(off stage mimicking Soul Train's opening TV theme including musical riff)

It's a SOOOOOOOOOOOUUUUL Cluster of Light! *Ref:

Lights come up on the three souls destined to become bed bugs, huddled together. When they see each other they quickly react to this accidental intimacy. DIDI pulls away, ashamed of having her fear exposed. SISTER SALLY pulls away in horror at being hugged by the male Ralph.

RAPLH

Who said that?

DIDI

What the hell is a soul cluster?

SISTER SALLY

(drops to her knees, crosses herself)

Saints save us that hell is not where we are!

DIDI

(looks down at Sister Sally, smirks)

Get up, honey. I didn't command you to kneel....(*snaps whip*) yet!

RALPH

Please don't hurt her!

DIDI

Are you telling me what I can or cannot do, Chubby!?

SISTER SALLY

(rises)

Leave the lad be.

RALPH

(cowering)

Shouldn't we be friends?

DIDI

Where the fuck are we?

SISTER SALLY

Judging by your foul mouth I would expect it would be the inside of a toilet.

DIDI

Hey sister. Stop being so uptight. I got a riddle for you to calm you down—
what's black and white and red all over?

RALPH

A newspaper?

DIDI

Nope. A menstruating nun.

RALPH

(extends hand to Sister Sally)

My name's Ralph.

SISTER SALLY

Pleased to make your acquaintance, Ralph. (*shakes hand*) I'm Sister Sally. I work...worked as a lay sister (*Didi giggles, Sally turns to her*) watch it! I worked as a lay sister at the convent of St. Joseph the Betrothed Church of Perpetual Martyrdom.

RALPH

Pleased to meet you, Sister Sally. What's a lay sister?

SISTER SALLY

A lay sister serves the physical needs of cloistered nuns, cook and clean for them, so they can spend their time praying for humanity.

RALPH

How generous of you!

SISTER SALLY

It's a humbling avocation, Ralph.

DIDI

We got something in common, Sister Sally. Name's Didi but I'm known professionally as Mistress Mischief (*snaps whip*) and my avocation is humbling men. I once worked at a joint called Our Lady of Perpetual Misery, but I wasn't nobody's lay sister.

RALPH

I'm a....was a senior at Theodore Roosevelt High in the Bronx.

SISTER SALLY

You didn't graduate, Ralph?

RALPH

I was supposed to this Spring.

DIDI

(sneers)

You dropped out? Couldn't cut it, Ralphie?

RALPH

I keep telling everybody my name's Ralph, not Ralphie. And I cut it fine. Real fine.

RALPH pulls up his shirt to expose the red lined cutter's scars on this fake pillow belly. SISTER SALLY gasps, but DIDI walks over and admiringly runs her finger across this red scars.

DIDI

Hmmmmmm.....You are a fine cutter, Ralphie —these are strong, lovely lines.

SISTER SALLY

(crosses herself)

Saints alive! What kind of pain could cause you to hurt yourself like that, Ralph?

DIDI

I suspect it was the pain of pleasure, Sister.

SISTER SALLY

For the love of sweet Jesus, don't go mocking this poor lad's affliction, Didi!

RALPH

No, Sister Sally. There's some truth to what Didi says. (*SISTER SALLY crosses herself again*)

DIDI

Come of it, Sally! If anyone can understand the beauty of exquisite torture it's gotta be a nun. Don't you girls spend most of your day kneeling in front of a hot, totally buff near naked man oozing blood you love to swallow in cups? What the hell's more erotic than that?

SISTER SALLY

(waves hand in disgust at Didi)

You're one sick strumpet, Didi. You could never understand the difference between love and lust. Explain this truth of yours, Ralph.

RALPH

Cutting myself does make me feel good. My shrink said it releases addictive endorphins. And put me in control of my pain instead of the bullies who tormented me every day.

DIDI

Of course it does.

RALPH

You know, Sister, bloodletting is an ancient practice. People used to do it to cure themselves.

SISTER SALLY

Pagans and barbarians did that, Ralph! Not the children of God!

DIDI

Hahahahaha! You're a virgin who wears a wedding ring married to a naked dead man with multiple wives that you kneel down in front of, how many times a day, so he can come inside of you? And you got the balls to call others barbarians?

RALPH

Stop trying to bully and belittle Sister Sally, Didi! Stop being cruel! This must be hell because even in death I can't escape the bullies!

SISTER SALLY

(pats Ralph)

Don't let her kind upset you, dear. She's so drenched in sin you can smell her fear.

DIDI

That stink isn't my fear. It's your bullshit!

SISTER SALLY

(turns her back to Didi)

How did you die from these cuts, Ralph? Those scars don't look that deep.

RALPH

I hid my wounds from everyone except at my final visit with my shrink, but it was too late. The infection festered to the point that antibiotics were useless. I was in coma for weeks.

DIDI

Talk about smell!

SISTER SALLY

What was it like being in a coma that long before the Lord called you?

RALPH

I discovered one really interesting truth

DIDI

Which is?

RALPH

The shock of birth is much greater than that of death.

SISTER SALLY

(crosses herself)

Blessed be the Lord. It's the comfort of the Holy Mother at the time of our death. Ah, then it must mean you weren't a homosexual, right son?

RALPH

I wasn't anything, Sister Sally except a victim of brutality. Guys beat me because I was weak and girls ignored and humiliated me because I was fat and quiet. I would have accepted love anywhere it was offered, Sister.

SISTER SALLY

Be careful, Ralph. Don't let the evil of others sprinkle the words of sexual deviancy onto your tongue. When I was a child I was told I was filled with beauty and enough talent to become a Broadway star. But I renounced all material reward in service to my Creator. But no one acknowledges the contributions of religious women. And our numbers are dwindling. We can't reproduce so we must recruit and are unable to replenish our ranks in this time of wickedness.

DIDI

"They can't reproduce so they must recruit." Isn't that a gay slogan, Sis?

SISTER SALLY

May the devil cause you to choke on the filth spewing out of your mouth. The last nun standing will be the one who shall turn off the light of truth. *(She holds her hand over her cluster of light).*

RALPH

Did you die quickly, Sister?

SISTER SALLY

(embarrassed)

I...I....died for my faith, Ralph.

DIDI

Hmmmmm. You're turning redder than a spanked ass. Fess up. How did you bite the big one?

SISTER SALLY

I...a....choked. I choked to death.

DIDI

Hahahahaha. A bride of Christ dying from poor gag reflex. That's precious. Dish the dirt, honey. A nun can't lie. How did it happen?

SISTER SALLY

Church documents recorded my death it as "suffocation from transubstantiation."

RALPH

What does transubstantiation mean, Sister Sally?

SISTER SALLY

It means I choked to death while taking communion, Ralph. Transubstantiation is when the priest puts the wafer in your mouth and once it passes into your throat it turns into the actual body of Christ. For some reason the wafer stuck in my windpipe and I couldn't breath.

DIDI

You choked on human flesh? Oh my God, you died of premature transubstantiation? That's disgusting!

RALPH

How did you die, Didi?

DIDI

By irony.

RALPH

Meaning?

DIDI

I died in a car crash.

RALPH

Yeah, so how's that ironic?

DIDI

It was from severe whiplash that ended up breaking my neck.

RALPH

Okay, but what's the irony?

SISTER SALLY

Ah, a blessing upon your pure, innocent, non-sexually deviated soul, my boy.

A roar of laughter is heard offstage and in walks EUGENE, carrying an axe dripping with red. He is large and in overalls with black streaked grill stains across the seat of his pants. He makes menacing faces as the three souls as he slowly advances towards them while repeating his earlier, decibel splitting chant.

EUGENE

Ah, it's a SOOOOOOOOOOOUUUUL Cluster of Light!

Eugene swings the ax wildly. Each reverts back to their human behavior. RALPH drops into a fetal position, cowering. SISTER SALLY falls to her knees and begins praying. DIDI refuses to be intimidated and stands her ground, smoothing out her whip.

EUGENE

The name is Eugene!

SISTER SALLY

Careful with that ax, Eugene.

DIDI

Whoever or whatever the fuck you are, you don't scare me! I love humiliating men. I am a daughter of the Goddess Inanna, who forced both gods and men into submission to her will.

EUGENE

(laughs)

You think your Mesopotamian fairy tales are gonna help you in here, you blood thirsty bitch!

DIDI

You keep giving me more of your lip and I'll whip that ax out of your hands and cut off your damn tongue with it.

RALPH is fascinated by the blood dripping from the ax and crawls over towards it. EUGENE and the two women watch in horror and fascination as RALPH compulsively licks the blood from the blade.

SISTER SALLY

Sweet Mother Mary and Joseph! Are you the wrath of the God? His vengeance? Have we been sent to hell because of the wicked lives we've led?

EUGENE

Wrath of God? Hell no! I'm in transition, just like your sorry asses. I was forced to take this damned gig because I'm more experienced at rebirth than the three of you fools put together.

RALPH

(jumps up with red lips)

This isn't blood! It's cranberry sauce!

EUGENE

(angry)

That's right! It's cranberry sauce on my ax, not blood. You got a problem with that!?

DIDI

(laughs)

Cranberry sauce! Men who roar like lions (*snaps whip*) are always the biggest pussies.

SISTER SALLY

Sweet, Jesus. I feel like Daniel in the Lion's den.

EUGENE

(*He turns and points to the seat of his pants*)

And these ain't skid marks on my pants, but burn marks! The state of Texas electrocuted my young ass because my family ruined Thanksgiving dinner!

SISTER SALLY

Good Lord, why would they do that?

EUGENE

They ruined it because they know I'm very, very sensitive.

RALPH

I am too

DIDI

((Cracks Whip))

Even in death I gotta be surrounded by sensitive asses. You boys would be a helluva lot more sensitive after an hour with me, trust me.

SISTER SALLY

The only thing I trust about you is your commitment to wickedness.

RALPH

Why is there cranberry sauce on your ax, Eugene?

EUGENE

That ain't cranberry sauce, asshole! It's cranberry jelly! Cranberry jelly!

RALPH

What's the difference?

EUGENE

What's the difference? Are you sick in the head, boy? Cranberries are dwarf shrubs that slither as creeping vines. To plant 'em you gotta scrape off the topsoil to create a lil' DYKE around each one..... *(He demonstrates using his fingers)*

SISTER SALLY

(crosses herself)

Sweet saints, protect us!

EUGENE

Then you flood the sons of bitches!

SISTER SALLY

Like the Lord's great flood, blessed be his name.

EUGENE

When Ma brought out the cranberry sauce with the turkey, it wasn't real cranberry sauce made with real cranberries, but that cranberry jelly shit out of a can! Where all sitting at the table, supposedly filled with gratitude and they dump that fake shit on me! They were supposed to give me homemade not can, so I gave them homo-cide in return. *(Swings ax)* All of 'em!

DIDI

HOMO-cide on Turkey Day? Say, let me ask you a political question, Thor. If Turkey attacks Iran from the rear, would Greece help?

EUGENE

Wha...?

SISTER SALLY

Will you listen to the mouth on her!

RALPH

Where are we, Eugene. Why are we here?

DIDI

More important is how do we get out of here?

SISTER SALLY

How can you say we're not being punished for our sins?

EUGENE

(grabs and rubs his head)

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! I can't tell you anything unless I put on the Mask of Sanity.

RALPH

The mask of sanity?

Eugene lays down his ax and pulls out a homemade mask I created of the human heart. He wraps it around his face and thumps his heart with his fist as he speaks.

EUGENE

We are in a cosmic holding center awaiting our next incarnation.

SISTER SALLY

You're saying reincarnation is true? That's blasphemy, Eugene. Blasphemy!

EUGENE

There are many names for it. If you choose blasphemy, so be it.

RALPH

Does it hurt to be reincarnated? What' it feel like?

EUGENE

There is no pain. The transitioning will feel like dreaming in color.

DIDI

Christ, I've always felt like an old soul.

EUGENE

Indeed, But you are much younger than me.

RALPH

I've always felt clueless.

EUGENE

For good reason. This will be just your ninth incarnation.

SISTER SALLY

Have mercy on our souls!

EUGENE

Mercy is the point of our reincarnation. We shall keep going back until we get it right. We must gain understanding with each new trial.

DIDI

Get what right?

RALPH

Learn what lessons?

EUGENE

The lessons on how to make our human heart as pure as our soul.

SISTER SALLY

Ah, the embracing of divine compassion!

EUGENE

Where is the blasphemy in that, Sister Sally? *(Sister Sally shrugs.)*

DIDI

Fuck this Buddhist bullshit!

EUGENE

It's not religious. It's sacred truth.

RALPH

Sacred truth is sweet.

DIDI

Just like your cranberry jelly, Eugene. Not tart.

EUGENE

(pulls off mask)

Watch it, sister!

SISTER SALLY

I haven't said a word.

EUGENE

We must huddle together right now! It's the time for our soul cluster to journey to a new horizon!

Everyone huddles together as the individual lights now form a collective light.

RALPH

Eugene, is there any significance to your number six dash twenty-one?

EUGENE

Lemme put the mask back on to answer you. *(He straps it to his face.)* Yes, there's significance to number 621. It's code.

RALPH

Code for what?

EUGENE

Each one of those two numbers represents a letter of the alphabet. Letter number six and letter twenty one.

Ralph drops his arms and moves his mouth silently as his fingers count off the alphabet. He gets to six (the letter F) and then does the same for twenty one (U). When he realizes

the code says FU his mouth drops open in horror. Lights go to black as a guitar riff that sounds like a soul train chugging away is heard.

CURTAIN