

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN
“FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY”
ORIGINAL BOOK AND LYRICS, FRANK GAGLIANO
MUSIC, CLAIBE RICHARDSON

Yours Truly, Jonathan Overview (JO)

(Age: Actually—ageless) Jonathan Overview (JO) is one of the best Celestial Annotators up there. If JO does go human — as he constantly partitions (badgers) Boss Clarence that *that’s* what he wants — Boss Clarence would hate to lose him. Jonathan is a lot of fun around the holy water cooler. He has great skills as a Master of Ceremonies: Always the first choice to host the yearly Golden Celestial Awards. Glib. Witty. Articulate. Charming. Ageless. Wry sense of Humor. Delights in observing the absurdity and foibles of people. Admires their tenacity in the face of some kind of (what he is told is—) pain, which, as merely a Point of View, he cannot experience — just witness. JO is a bit tired of the same old, same old, celestial job. Somehow, (BC’s) Bodoni County’s absurdities make him WANT to become human more than in any place whose foibles he’s had to document. OBSTACLE: He needs permission. His journey is to get that permission to witness human pain. But, when he does get the permission, he turns it down. Soon as he becomes the character of Benjamin Bernhard and penetrates Benjamin’s *center of pain* by singing, “*November Is My Time*,” he realizes that he hasn’t earned the pain of being human. Develops great empathy for human frailty on his journey of becoming more human. Chances are, JO will be an even better annotator of human folly from now on. Sings good, too.

Gussy (Woman)

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Bodoni County’s premiere, super efficient, sought after, cleaning woman. Struggled through High School — never graduated. Didn’t “have a head” for study. Known as (and has played the part of) “the good slob.” Had a skill for cleaning and could show a “pleasant face” to her clients—while harboring a great hatred for the people she’s had to work for—*and* a hatred for her loser husband — *and* his nasty mother (who lives with them). The only customers Gussy genuinely likes in Bodoni County are Florence Coldwell and Flo’s mother — though Gussy senses that, like her, Florence also longs for a little romance and adventure out of BC. Gussy feels that she, herself, is losing out on life. Now that Gussy’s found a lover who will take her away from BC (“to private parts unknown”) — she satisfies her great WANT to let all of Bodoni County know what she thinks of them — *before* she busses out of there with her salesman lover. So. In a letter to the *letters to the editor* section of the *Bodoni County Press-Herald Gazette* (the BCP-HG), she *publicly* boasts of her immanent, joyous, escape from BC — and smugly

GUSSY

(Continued)

feels that there are no more obstacles to her want. Soon she'll be outta there. By end of first act curtain, Gussy will find out that she's wrong. Obstacle will win out.

Barney Coglin

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) An only child, he was prone to torturing cats and bullying handicapped kids. Took a journalism course at the *Bodoni County Community College* (the BCCC), joined the *Bodoni County Press-Herald Gazette* (the BCP-HG) and was assigned to writing obituary columns when the obits job opened up. Found he had a skill for it. Came to love it. Keeps all bios of prominent people up-dated and — in his isolated cubby-of-an-office behind the furnace in the basement of the BCP-HG — he loves to fantasize about unique ways to *do in* the town folk he despises — and that's just about everybody. He did fall for the very tall skinny lady in slacks who is a coffee and pastry wagon Barista in the building. But he gave up being interested in her when she made the sign of the cross and the Italian *Malocchio* sign the last time he bought his latte from her. Barney lives with his mother, has a perpetual grin, is addicted to gang-bang porn, and is plotting to blow up the furnace one day.

Father Paulus

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) On the verge of losing his Faith. Has come to believe there is a streak of insanity in the Bodoni County gene pool and that God has become too impotent to stop the insanity. Was a patron of the *BC Bar and Grill and Reception Space* that (infamous) day he was enjoying a glass of chilled Greek Retsina wine in the bar area upstairs, and the wedding party downstairs erupted into a shoot out: A drunken brawl had erupted and everyone pulled out legally carrying automatic weapons and started shooting wildly, a baby's head was literally blown off — and the mother — when she saw the blood gushing out of her baby's headless neck — lost her mind, pulled out *her* legal Klock weapon, and began shooting. The shoot out became nationally known as "*the Bodoni County slaughter of the good guys.*" In despair, Father Paulus had applied for a parish job in Australia — but then, when the raid against the gay parishioners in his BC church happened, and the parishioners fought the attackers off, he *temporarily* decided to stay a bit longer. Soon, Father Paulus and parishioner Theodore Pakadapalopolis will fall in love and Father Paulus will be trapped in Bodoni County permanently.

Lureen Little

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Knew she found a home when she drove her truck into Bodoni County and smelled the chemical smell that was perfume to her cute nostrils. Wants to stay there with her just-found love, Barney Sharkey. She's a free spirit and loves what she calls,

Lureen Little

(continued)

“the romance of trucking.” But, because her biological clock is ticking, she wants to settle down with Barney and raise a family in this community that understands that a chemical graveyard in BC can bring in the big Government bucks and so, keep her and Barney employed forever —with Barney Sharkey, perhaps, becoming the sole breadwinner. Scary obstacle: BC do-gooders may persuade the BC Board of commissioners to *vote down* Bodoni County as a national chemical dump (that’s why she’s so effective in her defense of BC as a chemical graveyard; she passionately NEEDS the township to give a “Yes” vote). Lureen is very simple and sweet and loves Barney — and Dolly Parton; in fact, she has kept a picture of Dolly in her wallet, and a little big breasted statue of Dolly hanging from her rear view mirror, and had images of Dolly all over her truck — including on all her hub caps. She’s loved the trucker’s life, is a superb trucker, but has another important reason to stop trucking: Since the first operation — her trucker’s piles have returned. She’s also discovered that BC is world renowned for its *Piles and Anal Fissure Clinic* (the PAFC). So — besides Barney’s attractive big neck — the clinic is a big plus for them to settle in Bodoni County. Barney’s image, of course, has replaced Dolly’s on half of her hub caps.

Roger Bromley

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) The Iraq War is on and Roger has joined the National Guard, hoping, among other things, to be stationed out of Bodoni County and get to see the world. But he becomes too valuable as a computer nerd at *Fort Bodoni County* and is forced to stay. He’d also like to leave because he needs an excuse to get away from partner Darleen Simmons—now a pain in the ass. And that’s a serious obstacle, because Darleen is the only woman he’s ever known who will satisfy his strange sexual needs (and so, it’s difficult for him to leave her, but he’s sure he’d overcome that obstacle—with the fantasy hope of shipping out and finding some contortionist Scheherazade cutie, versed in the erotic ways of Omar Khayam and who will teach him new Iraqi *in-the-sack* desert tricks). For extra cash, Roger also moonlights by servicing computers at BC’s Office Depot and Walmart’s computers.

Florence Coldwell

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Outwardly, Florence is an emotionally measured and seemingly calm and reasonable person. She was once told that she “had a face a camera could love.” The man who said it was a salesman of television cameras who was helping to set up new equipment for Bodoni County *Access TV*. He and Florence met when *BC Access TV* televised a high school debate that Florence was overseeing. Florence succumbed to the salesman’s charms one night, but nothing longer lasting came of it. Nor did she think that it would; figured, *he*

Florence Coldwell

(Continued)

figured, she wasn't worthy of him to take her (and her mother?) away from BC. Though somewhat burned out as a teacher, she is still an excellent high school teacher and a sensitive caretaker for her ailing mother (her father ran out on them when Florence was a teenager). Inwardly, Florence's despair and self loathing and low self esteem are monumental. She wants — in every way — to get out and away from her Bodoni County self. Her obstacle is a soul-deep paralysis—an inability to make a move on her own. Florence's cleaning woman, Gussy, who has made a public announcement that *she's* getting out, has triggered Florence's desire to follow suit (*If Gussy can do it. . .!*) The song, "A Ticket Out," is an internal scream for help; finally rendering an impotent rage— mixed with an insurmountable paralysis — and with an understanding that she can't go it alone. And probably never will.

William Kinsolving

(Age: Between 40 to 62 years of age) William's song, "Head Waltz," is more than just a desire for him to heal his crippled body in order to waltz again: It's a fantasy to reclaim what was *the essence* of his life — his whole *raison d'être*, back in the day, when he was the reigning waltz teacher of the one Arthur Murray dance studio in Bodoni County. He was also, of course, expert at teaching the Lindy, Fox Trot, Rhumba and Peabody — but the elegance of the waltz to him had a spiritual dimension the other dances never had and that spiritually recharged him throughout his waltzing life. And, somehow, his waltzing instructions gave Bodoni County a spiritual center, too; perhaps, thinks William, the only spirituality BC ever had. William has never been married—is married to all things "Waltz," in what he calls, "his waltz room— with the world-class collections of opera recordings (some rare), books and dance DVD's and art, worth —when he brought a sampling of his collection to The Antiques Road Show — \$250,000. William even took to *talking* in three quarter time. And when he talked and taught the waltz, the dancers caught the spiritual magic. Then William's pinched nerve in the sciatic area of his lower right back developed into a crippling condition. At first, William tried teaching from his wheelchair. Too frustrating. At the institution he's living in, "Head Waltz," is the first time he hears a waltz in his head. Soon he'll hear waltzes in his head (*a waltz tinnitus*) all the time. Everywhere.

Mary Beth Scott (MBS)

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) MBS studied teacher education with Florence Coldwell at the BC Junior College. They even taught together at the same high school for a while. Then MBS slipped into school administration — has been there ever since. And the years have flown by — keep *flying* by — and, while she doesn't care for administration, MBS is

Mary Beth Scott (MBS)

(Continued)

competent doing it, and has no burning desire to do anything else. In fact, she seems to be *looking for* a desire — a *want*. For her luck to change. To what? Or for time to stop moving, so that “*luck*” can have a breather to place her — *where?* In *what?*—In some kind of a computer app? In a man? Tonight she’s waiting for Roger Bromley — a private in the National Guard —to show up. Roger’s girlfriend Darlene (a friend of MBS) has left Roger and confided in MBS what Rogers “*strange sexual needs*” are. MBS met Roger at Office Depot and they hit it off and MBS doesn’t find Roger’s purported sex needs to be out of reach and, perhaps, her luck will change with men tonight—with Roger. But time, tonight, also is moving on and Roger and his *strange sex needs* most likely, will not be showing up. And another night will have gone by. MBS is an alcoholic, but has been dry for years. Tonight she will hit the bottle again, perhaps even start on drugs—and still, the days, she knows, will keep moving on.

Harry Grunding

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) The loner. And the dreamer. Always. Has no close friends. A lover of Jane Austin, Charles Dickens, Eudora Welty; the poetry of Emily Dickens and the writings of Mark Twain. And silent film romances. And the romantic film comedies of Ernst Lubitsch (He has worn out three DVD’s of “*The Little Shop Around The Corner*”). He has a crush on the film actress Ava Gardner. While reading, he always listens to the *complete* ballads of Ava’s one-time husband, Frank Sinatra. At the moment, Harry’s favorite Sinatra song is the Van Heusen/Mercer, “*Singing To Empty Tables.*” His other favorite songs are the Dietz/Schwartz “*Dancing In The Dark*” and “*Haunted Heart.*” Harry is a Fed Ex driver servicing south Bodoni County. He recently traveled a new route past a town called *Marianna*, which he quickly fantasized as being a real woman. And every time he approached the Exit ramp to the town of *Marianna*, Harry would play the CD of Sinatra’s, “*This Is All I Ask.*” *Marianna*, as a fantasy woman, has become an obsession. Harry’s want is to get the courage to get off the interstate and head down the ramp to find and confront *his* *Marianna* in the town of *Marianna* — even though he knows his true love — if she materializes —will never love *him*. Today, he almost *does* satisfy his want to drive down the ramp, but the obstacle and pain of probable rejection from her is too strong to overcome. He continues straight on the interstate — living in his fantasy —probably listening to Sinatra’s, “*I’m A Fool To Want You,*” and/or, “*Love Locked Out*”— and/or the Mills Brother’s rendition of “*Paper Doll.*”

Reverend Tarlton

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Truly destroyed by the suicide of Perry Carrington. Truly desires some closure for the tragedy. A decent, and

Reverend Tarlton

(Continued)

very empathic man. He is a close friend of Father Paulus and Paulus's new lover, Theodore Pakadapalopolis.

Sonny

(Age: Late Teens) Began losing his hair at the age of 11. Made fun of, of course. Deflects bullying by playing the asshole. Inside, he's dying. Of course — Sonny reasons — Perry killed himself "because he was losing his hair." Simple. Sonny is a little wild — has a lot of the young Jerry Lewis in him. His song is bouncy, jaunty, amusing. Inside, he's dying and ready to blow.

David

(Age: Late Teens) Smart, sensitive, musical; creates — and escapes into a magical environment — that his bullying father finally destroys. Even the gorgeous song David creates and wants to keep refining, can no longer protect him from that obstacle — the destructive rage and power of his father's rage. Therefore, Perry must have gone through something as devastating. And killed himself.

Lori

(Age: Late Teens) Very attractive. Always abused. Bright but needy; needy always wins out. Lori is desperate for affection — especially at the College Jock party where (overwhelmingly "needy?") she kids herself into believing it will simply be about contributing her fun-loving self to the grown-up proceedings. Her vulnerability is too painful to watch. Doesn't even have a melody — a song — to sugar coat her violation. She'd like to believe that this Perry Carrington killed himself because of his guilt in taking part in the jock rape. Perpetually innocent. She is obsessed with the Jody Foster film, "The Accused."

Mrs. Carrington

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) A woman in shock from the suicide of her son Perry and from the horror of her husband's — suddenly dangerous — eye. As she listens to Sonny, David and Lori, she is in too much of a shock to stop them sooner — but finally breaks through *their* personal views of her son's suicide and pressures herself to break into an aria to fully express the sudden horror and dread she now feels at her husband's dangerous eye — a blow up, enlarged, image that suddenly — and clearly drops in, lodged into her soul, as she sings, and that—suddenly — seems very menacing to her. She works at the Express counter of a Bodoni County Giant Falcon supermarket.

Tom Anderson

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) A generally popular and up beat pillar of the community who loses everything in the stock market bubble crash, but feels happy that — *though* he's lost it all— all of his comforts— he's landed a good sized cardboard hut for him and for his family (wife and two children). Tom is genuinely delighted now to be mayor of cardboard city and to host this year's new, stunning, joyous Romp. He will become the Busby Berkley of Cardboard City and bring glory to Bodoni County on a 60 Minutes TV segment devoted to the proliferation of Cardboard City's throughout the US.

Marian Axelbean

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) If Marian were asked, she'd answer truthfully — because she's a truthful person— she'd admit that she prefers animals to people. She lives alone with two dogs (one very old one, Misha), three cats and a pet Wambat. She's always had a secret desire to bring up baby lion cubs but, of course, a BC ordinance would not allow it. In future, BC will be inundated and overrun by hoards of deer, but today is the first time she sees a deer in the neighborhood. She is so overwhelmed by the event that she sees it as a sign of hope and has to sing about it.

Remo Cramer

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Always seemed the strange son in his family. Had a brother, Jackie, who died at age 16 by slipping on dog poopy and hitting his head on a Volkswagen fender (See Gagliano's musical, "*The Resurrection of Jackie Cramer*" at www.gaglianoriff.com). Remo's brother Jackie's funeral changed Remo from a nasty kid to a kinder more thoughtful person. He changed, further, when his one testicle recently, finally descended, and he began to see the world in a strange way. He is smart enough to keep the strangeness to himself. The strangeness, in a strange way, has made him even gentler — even sweet — and people tend to take to him and like having him around. He listens. He works as a bus boy in the *BC Sunset Village Retirement Haven* and the retirees like him a lot, especially since they are prone to giving monologues and Remo will stand at a table for five minutes or more and listen to one, before he returns to the kitchen. Even the Fed Ex man, Harry Grunding, who often delivers packages to *the Haven* and seems to be a loner, sometimes sits with Remo and shares a cup of coffee with him in the kitchen, and talks, in a shy way, about his girl friend, Marianna, who has the same name as the next town over. And Remo once was so in tune with Harry, that he confided in Harry about *Our Lady Of The Mall*, whom Remo had often seen in the BC South Hills Mall with bloody holes in her hands. Harry, Remo was happy to note, nodded knowingly and did not seem to find strange a lady whose hands always bled.

Ziggy Kellmer

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Upper middle class — part of a progressive family — *Ziggy* (an only child) never really had to work and, forced on him, was a moral and political progressive life and thinking of others with which he never really was comfortable. Now after lottery riches — and embracing the Annie Rynd Selfishness Is Key (SIK) philosophy, he can luxuriate in contributing nothing to others — except volunteering work for many of the BC corporate takers and for their conservative think tanks. Although part of a progressive family, he was home schooled. He did work in the local library once, shelving books, but he never read any — just the copy on the dust jackets. The dust jackets of the books of Annie Rynd intrigued him the most and he had now heard the audio CD's of all of them (her books have too many pages). He now also owns a personal armory of every conceivable military weapon and, because he basically has no morality, he will eventually run for governor. And win. He is never embarrassed. He *is* glib. Always up beat—especially now that he only needs to satisfy *his* wants — and laughs a lot. Can be a charmer. He's very happy. Bouncy, even. One would find it very difficult to make him a leading character in any work of fiction. Because Ziggy always gets what he wants. And always will. And takes great joy in that.

Vivian Grady

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Head Nurse at the BC Sunset Village Retirement Haven Medical Center and Alzheimer Unit. In her early years as a nurse in a major hospital in another County, she fell in love with a medical intern whom she married and who died a few years later from Lou Gehrig's disease. She never married again. A devoted nurse, skilled and caring — especially with Alzheimer patients and very especially with her Alzheimer patient, Mary Esposito — a woman who has endured much tragedy and pain in life, and with whom Vivian has come to love. Vivian is very attuned to the tragic in life. She stays current with all the advances in medicine and nursing and the latest in-patient care. She's an inveterate researcher and is constantly battling with the BC overseers of medicine to better fund and staff the medical institutions. She loses most of the fights but stays focused and committed. Her grand passion is grand opera and has a very extensive collection of Opera performances. She adores Verdi, but her tastes now run to more contemporary non-Italian operas: Berg's, "Wozzeck" and Janacek's, "The Makropoulos Affair." She knows that Mary Esposito — an inveterate Verdi lover — would never had understood. Vivian has recently discovered a lump in her breast and is waiting for results of a biopsy. But she is more worried at the way Mary Esposito seems to be failing. She has an old cat, Maxie.

Alzheimer Mary (Esposito)

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Mary Esposito has endured much loss in her life — some of it violent. Born in Italy, she was brought to

Alzheimer Mary

(Continued)

America, as a toddler. She was determined to assimilate. She's lost her accent (well—perhaps a lingering trace remains). She had been married to an American small business man — who was later killed in a robbery. Had many children — most of whom died. She's on Medicaid and cared for by the County — and by the great loving care of Nurse Vivian Grady. She came to the unit in the early stages of Alzheimer's and was able, then, to relate to Nurse Grady as a younger sister. Now, deeply in the final stages of the disease — and as she approaches death — her run-on mind replays a flashback of her life. And we get a glimpse of it. Nurse Brady — alas — does not.

Eubie Copocolo

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer). An innocent nerd in love with colored glass and trapped in a surreal Bodoni County he can't get out of — and who, because of his encounter with Joy (with whom he falls in love) — does find a way out.

Old Matilda Trimble

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) A sort of fairy godmother to Eubie, who councils him at key points in his and Joy's journey.

Joy

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) Looking for the key to get out of Bodoni County and finds it. Singer of the blues. Pretty, with a sweet, innocent, sexiness. Her raunchy song, "*Sand Dune Blues*," might just as well be "*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*." She even keeps her little bow tie on during sex with Eubie (who retains *his* bow tie through it all, too). Joy knows what she wants and goes after it and allows Eubie to join her on her journey out to the Island of Despair. Happy ending. Of sorts. For Joy. And for Eubie. They have, after all, escaped Bodoni County.

The Poster Girl

(Age: Whatever the age of the performer) She poses in a bikini on a poster beach. All the time. That's what she does.

Benjamin Bernhard

(Age: Whatever the age Jonathan Overview assumes, as he becomes Benjamin Bernhard) Benjamin is just getting over a loss and is permeated with a sense of the bleakness of November as it presages winter. Sings about it. Potent enough to have JO back out of his desire to be human. JO has not earned the pain.

ENSEMBLE (of Bodoni County citizens)

Take part in *Fanfare For Bodoni County*, *Cardboard City Romp*, *Mindless Age* and the final (Curtain) repeat of, "*The Song Takes Over*."