

# *Life's Little Ups & Downs*

A bizarre 1953-style soap opera

A radio-play by Anthony E. Palermo

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## **The full script & appendix runs 38 pages.**

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### **TRUNCATED SCRIPT**

August 6, 1999  
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## Copyright information

### *Life's Little Ups & Downs* (radio-play)

By Anthony E. Palermo

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### **CHANGES:**

The only changes to the text permitted are changes to genders of characters(Sir to Ma'am, "Raymond" to "Ray," "Dr. Debbs" to "Dr. Debbs", etc.)

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### **NOTE: Musical underscore tracks are also part of this play.**

All music composed by Anthony E. Palermo

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## Billing And Credit Requirements

Producers of *Life's Little Ups & Downs* must give credit to Anthony E. Palermo in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play, and all instances in which the title of the play appears in advertising or publicizing the production, including posters, programs, and playbills. The name of the Author must also appear on a separate line, immediately following the title of the play, and must be in type size not less than 30% of the size of type used in the title of the play.

Billing shall be in the following form:

(name of producer)  
presents

# *Life's Little Ups & Downs*

A bizarre 1953-style soap opera

by ANTHONY E. PALERMO

Musical score composed & arranged by  
ANTHONY E. PALERMO

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## Author's Biography

NOTE: Up-to-date text of the two bios is available at: [ruyasonic.com/tp-bio-playwright](http://ruyasonic.com/tp-bio-playwright)  
You can cut & paste the text there into your playbill or program and thus not have to worry about typos. Cuts are permitted to fit the space available. Please include the final sentence and website URL, as many newcomers to radio drama attend productions by troupes like yours.

### **Pretty long bio:**

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is a radio dramatist, performer, and educator based in Los Angeles. He has done over 2500 shows—on NPR and Satellite Radio, as well as in audiobooks and on-stage with L.A. Theatre Works, California Artists Radio Theater, numerous theatre troupes, and on national tours. His holiday-themed plays, *A Christmas Carol*, *It's A Wonderful Life!*, *Auntie Scrooge—a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol*, and *The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow* have seen hundreds of productions around the world since 1996. His sound effects work on Yuri Rasovsky's *Sherlock Holmes Theatre* contributed to its winning an Audie Award—the Oscar of audiobooks. He directed the 60th anniversary production of Norman Corwin's *On a Note of Triumph*—for which he also re-created Bernard Herrmann's orchestral score. He provided live sound effects for shows such as Eric Idle's *What About Dick?* [currently on Netflix as a radio-show-on-film], CART's *Together Tonight*, *Good House for a Killing*, LATW's *Hamlet*, *A Doll House* and *Copenhagen*, as well as performing 65 solo shows at the California State Fair. His *Sonic Storytelling Studio* at San Francisco's Exploratorium is a permanent exhibit that has seen thousands of visitors since 2006. His *Sparx Sound Effects Extravaganza* assembly programs and workshops are popular with schools and colleges across California, the U.S. and the world. He also hosts the RuyaSonic radio drama website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. [www.RuyaSonic.com](http://www.RuyaSonic.com)

### **Much shorter bio:**

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is an award-winning radio performer, dramatist, and educator who has produced dramas and workshops for broadcast, stage, and schools. He hosts the RuyaSonic radio drama website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. [www.RuyaSonic.com](http://www.RuyaSonic.com)

## Cast of Characters

Announcer	The announcer (m/f)
Pitchman	Announcer for Klenso commercials (m/f)
Barbara Jones	Wife, mother, homemaker (f)
Raymond Brown	Barbara's brother, age 27 (m)
Audrey Snead	Barbara's arch-enemy (f)
Gloria Brown	Raymond's estranged wife (f)
Little Jimmy	Barbara's 10 year-old son (m/f)
Susan Foley	Barbara's best friend (m/f)
Dr. Debbs	Family doctor (m/f)
Sam Jones	Barbara's spouse (m/f)
Mystery Caller	Phone caller/Blackmailer (m/f)

### NOTE:

The above list is for a cast of 11. A smaller cast of 7 can be used if the following roles are combined for one actor each:

Announcer/Mystery Caller  
 Pitchman/Gloria Brown  
 Raymond Brown/Sam Jones  
 Audrey Snead/Little Jimmy

Four sound effects artists and two walla artists are also required.

SCRIPT NOTE: Asterisks besides a cue number (for example: 3\*) indicate that the performer of that cue wait for music or a sound effect to establish itself and in some cases, await a signal from the director to begin. It is recommended that the master script be marked with a hand-lettered "Q" to the left of these special cues, so they stand out better.

Visit Tony Palermo's Radio Drama Resources website at [RuyaSonic.com](http://RuyaSonic.com)

INTRO - INT. RADIO STUDIO - AFTERNOON  
(ANNOUNCER, PITCHMAN)

1\* MUSIC: [MUS-1] "LIFE'S LITTLE UPS & DOWNS" THEME--ESTABLISH, THEN  
UNDER

2\* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] We bring you now, "Life's Little Ups... and Downs." (PAUSE) The moving story of Barbara Jones--wife, mother and homemaker--raising her family in the quiet town of Yoxpokpetl--a town not unlike your own. Listen each weekday as we follow the Jones family through the laughter AND the tears of (PAUSE) "Life's Little Ups... and Downs."

3. MUSIC: "LIFE'S LITTLE UPS & DOWNS" THEME. UP FULL. LET IT  
FINISH.

4\* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] Our program is brought to you by the J.D. Klenn company, makers of Klenso detergent. In the modern age of 1953, smart housewives, like Barbara Jones, use Klenso for all their cleaning needs. Shouldn't you?

5\* PITCHMAN: [CUE] Ladies, when it comes to household tasks, you need help. Help like Klenso detergent--the powerful cleaner used by millions. Klenso scrubs deep down to give you the cleanest clean money can buy. Take that sinkful of dirty dishes and apply a generous dose of Klenso. You'll see the grease and grime wash away before your very eyes. Klenso is a fast-acting cleanser--perfect as a spot remover, yet gentle enough to wash fruits and vegetables. So, for waxy floors, dirty doors, and all manner of household jobs, use Klenso. Now available in the new, "family" size. Klenso, the modern way to clean.

1. **MUSIC:** [MUS-2] EPISODE INTRO. DUCK FOR V.O. QUICK FADE AFTER THE LINE: "AS BARBARA SAYS".
- 2\* **ANNOUNCER:** [CUE] And now, Klenso presents, "Life's Little Ups... and Downs." (PAUSE) Barbara Jones is at the hospital visiting her brother, Raymond Brown--who recently returned home after disappearing two years ago while on a jungle safari. Barbara was overjoyed to find Raymond alive, but he became seriously ill just weeks after his return. At Yoxpokpetl Memorial Hospital, we join Barbara and Dr. Debbs at Raymond's bedside as Barbara says...
- SCENE 1: INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**  
(BARBARA, DR. DEBBS, RAYMOND)
3. **BARBARA:** [CUE] Is there anything you can do for Raymond, Doctor Debbs? He was fine when they found him in the jungle last month. It was only lately that he became ill.
4. **DR. DEBBS:** I'm not sure, Barbara--
5. **BARBARA:** (URGENTLY) Doctor, could it be... island fever?
6. **DR. DEBBS:** Perhaps, but frankly, I'm puzzled, Barbara. Raymond appears to be perfectly normal...
7. **BARBARA:** (HOPEFUL) Normal?
8. **DR. DEBBS:** ...but in a catatonic state. One moment there's muscular rigidity and mental stupor, the next...great excitement and confusion.
9. **RAYMOND:** (MUMBLES) VOOO VOOO VOOO VOOO VOOO VOOO
10. **DR. DEBBS:** There, there, Raymond. (TO BARBARA) It could be some form of memory loss or amnesia. (PAUSE) Observe him as I clap my hands...
11. **LIVE SFX:** DR. DEBBS CLAPS HANDS (1-2-3)

1. RAYMOND: No no. No! No...li-li-li little people. People. No. No (SHOUTS) No-No-No-No!
2. DR. DEBBS: (COMFORTING) It's OK, Raymond. (TO BARBARA) He seems deathly afraid of children. I've never seen anything like it, Barbara.
3. RAYMOND: (CRAZILY) No! Little people. Little heads. Little little...No NO! NO! NNNNNNNNN! (HALTS)
4. DR DEBBS: Now, see Barbara? He's catatonic--frozen stiff. His eyes stare blankly. He's mute. (CALLS OUT) Nurse! Another sedative, and double the strength. (EXITING) Excuse me, Barbara. Nurse...
5. BARBARA: Oh, Raymond. Raymond! It's me, Barbara! Can't you hear me Raymond. Can't you hear me? (SOBS)

## PRODUCTION NOTE:

Put Raymond AND the sound effects through a reverb, to make it appear that we are hearing his thoughts. As he speaks, sound effects fade in and out for a montage. His story will halt suddenly with a scream and we will return to the external world of his hospital room.

SCENE 2: INT. RAYMOND'S MIND - TWO YEARS AGO  
(RAYMOND, PIGMY VOICES AS WALLA)

- 6\* MUSIC: [MUS-3] JUNGLE FLASHBACK-[BED]-CONTINUE. DUCK FOR VOICES.  
CUT ABRUPTLY ON "YAAAAAAA--"
- 7\* RAYMOND: [CUE] Barbara. I-I hear you, Barbara. It's me, Raymond. I-I...can't...speak. (SIGHS) If you could only read my thoughts... The misery I've-- (PAUSE) My trip. My safari trip... The plane (PAUSE) ...flying... over the jungle...
8. LIVE SFX: PLANE FLYING--UNDER
- 9\* RAYMOND: The jungle...so dense, so green (LOSING IT) so so so so...foggy. The lightning that night.
10. LIVE SFX: THUNDER. WIND--UNDER



- 1\* RAYMOND: The storm. Pilot couldn't couldn't couldn't  
couldn't couldn't...
2. LIVE SFX: PLANE ENGINE SPUTTERS.  
PLANE CRASHES.
3. LIVE SFX: JUNGLE SOUNDS - BRUSH. BIRDS. CONTINUE UNDER  
SOFT JUNGLE DRUMS--UNDER
- 4\* RAYMOND: (HALTING) Alive. Hurt. Alone. Days. Weeks.  
Can't...think. No food. Only...drums. The drums.  
Inside my head. Pounding. Pounding...
5. LIVE SFX: DRUMS INTENSIFY--CONTINUE
6. RAYMOND: Then...voices. People. Little people.
7. WALLA-WALLA: PIGMY VOICES: "UWALLA". CONTINUE. BUILD.
- 8\* RAYMOND: Little people. Little heads. (PAUSE) Heads. I  
sleep. The fever...dreams. Nightmares.
9. LIVE SFX: PIGMY VOICES. COUGHING. BUILDS. SHAKERS.
10. RAYMOND: The little people...They...they...start to die.  
They blame me...me. Blame me... No. NO!
11. LIVE SFX: ANGRY PIGMY VOICES: "BROO-SHA". SHOVELING DIRT-  
CONTINUE. DRUMS BUILD. SHAKERS BUILD.

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The full script & appendix runs 38 pages.

SCENE 3: INT - HOSPITAL - SECONDS FROM PREVIOUS HOSPITAL SCENE  
(BARBARA, LITTLE JIMMY)

- 1\* BARBARA: [CUE] Oh, Raymond. Speak to me! Speak to me! Don't just sit there staring. It's Barbara. Barbara! Can't you hear me, Raymond? Ohhh. (SOBS UNDER)
2. LIVE SFX: TELEPHONE RINGS (3X)
- BARBARA FEEBLY PICKS UP THE PHONE HANDSET.
- 3\* BARBARA: (TEARY) Hel--hello? This is Raymond Brown's room-- Barbara Jones speaking. (SNIFFLES)
4. LITTLE JIMMY: [PHONE FILTER] Hello Mama! It's me, Jimmy. Mrs. Murgatroyd let me out of class so I could call and sing happy birthday to Uncle Ray.
5. BARBARA: I-I'm sorry Jimmy. But Uncle Raymond is uh... sleeping... now. He can't come to the phone. He's very sick, Jimmy.
6. LITTLE JIMMY: How sick is he, Mama? How sick is Uncle Ray?
7. BARBARA: Dr. Debbs says, he's...catatonic. It means he's can't move, Jimmy.
8. LITTLE JIMMY: Cat-a-what? He can't move?
9. BARBARA: No, Jimmy. He can't.
10. LITTLE JIMMY: He's like a... like a...petrified tree?
11. BARBARA: (SOBS) Well, sometimes... sort of...
12. LITTLE JIMMY: Wow! (PAUSE) Petrified? Uncle Ray? Do you think Uncle Ray could come to school? For show and tell maybe? Huh?
13. BARBARA: No, Jimmy. He's very ill. Uncle Ray needs...rest. (BRIGHTENS) When I get home, I'll... bake some cookies for you and your sister, Sally.
14. LITTLE JIMMY: Petrified cookies, Mama?

1. BARBARA: (CHUCKLES) Peanut-butter cookies, Jimmy.
2. LITTLE JIMMY: OK. Well, g'bye Mama!
3. BARBARA: (TENDERLY) Goodbye, darling.

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7\* MUSIC: [MUS-4] SAD TRANSITION--[BRIDGE]. QUICK FADE AT END!

8\* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] Across town, at the Jo-Dee Beauty salon, Audrey Snead--a woman bent on destroying Barbara Jones--is giving a manicure to Raymond's soon-to-be ex-wife, Gloria Brown. They are discussing Gloria's heartless plans for Raymond's future. We join them as Audrey says...

SCENE 4: INT. JO-DEE' BEAUTY SALON - DAY  
(AUDREY, GLORIA)

9. AUDREY: [CUE] You have such lovely hands Gloria. (PAUSE) But I see you're not wearing your wedding ring--either of them. When are you having that useless husband of yours, Raymond, committed?
10. GLORIA: Not yet, Audrey. I need to convince my sister-in-law, Barbara Jones, that there's no other choice. Raymond's hopeless. He belongs in a mental hospital.
11. AUDREY: Of course, there's no other choice. I've heard tell, Raymond's a howling madman. You must have him committed (PAUSE) and before he recovers...that is, if he recovers.

1. GLORIA: Oh, I will Audrey, and once Raymond is gone, his part of Uncle Cuthbert's inheritance will be all mine. Then I can re-marry Steve Skelmsdale, my employer.

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**(several pages later...)**

1. AUDREY: But I'll never have my... Adam... again...

2. GLORIA: Oh, Audrey. That was ten years ago! Barbara merely baked the wedding cake. It was Adam who choked on it. I'm sure she didn't mean to--

3. AUDREY: (NEARLY CRYING) Before my eyes... (PAUSE) On our wedding day...

4. GLORIA: Audrey! Don't. Don't think that just because--

5. AUDREY: (ANGRY) Listen! I won't rest until Barbara Jones pays for ruining my life! (SOFTER) My unfortunate car accident may have left me crippled, but I'm going to torment Barbara Jones like she has tormented me! She'll pay. She'll pay. She'll--  
(SOBS UNDER)

6\* MUSIC: [MUS-5] TRAGIC TO HOMEY--[BED] FADE OUT AT THE LINE "SUSAN FOLEY..."

7\* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] Now home and preparing dinner, Barbara Jones discusses her worries about Raymond with her best friend and neighbor, Susan Foley...

SCENE 5: INT. BARBARA'S KITCHEN - DAY  
(SUSAN, BARBARA, MYSTERY MAN CALLER)

8. SUSAN: [CUE] More lemonade, Barbara? Give me your glass...

9. LIVE SFX: SUSAN PUTS ICE CUBES IN A GLASS. POURS WATER.

10\* BARBARA: Thank you, Susan.

11. SUSAN: So are you sure Jack-(AHEM)-I mean, Dr. Debbs, was right about your brother?

12. BARBARA: What do you mean, "right?" Dr. Debbs thinks maybe Raymond has some tropical disease he caught in that terrible jungle ordeal.

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**(several pages later...)**

8\* BARBARA: Ohhh! What a mess! These cookies are ruined!

9. LIVE SFX: PHONE RINGS-(3X) UNDER

10\* BARBARA: Oh! And there's the phone! Maybe it's my husband, Sam, calling from the office...

11. LIVE SFX: BARBARA PICKS UP PHONE HANDSET.

12\* BARBARA: Hello, Jones residence. Barbara speaking.

13. MUSIC: [MUS-6] STING #1 - MYSTERY CALL--[STING]--UNDER.

14\* MYSTERY MAN CALLER: [PHONE FILTER] Barbara, it's me. Don't hang up! I'm calling to see if everything is fine. It's been such a long time, but I need to see you and I...

15. SUSAN: Barbara, who is it?

1. BARBARA: (FAKING IT) Hello? Hello? Anybody there? Hello? Hmm, they... hung up.

2. LIVE SFX: BARBARA HANGS UP PHONE HANDSET.

3. MUSIC: STING FADES OUT.
- 4\* SUSAN: That's odd. What did they say?
5. BARBARA: (NERVOUSLY) Maybe Little Jimmy's playing one of his pranks. You know...
7. LIVE SFX: DOORBELL CHIME (DING-DONG 3X). DOG BARKS--UNDER
- 8\* SUSAN: Now the door! I'll get it, Barbara.
9. BARBARA: No, Susan! Wait! Oh! Down Fido. Down boy!
10. LIVE SFX: DOG BARKS--UNDER
11. BARBARA: Down Fido! Down!
12. LIVE SFX: BARBARA JIGGLES DOOR KNOB OPENS DOOR.
- 13\* MUSIC: [MUS-7] STING #2 - SCARY DOOR-[STING] DUCK UNDER VOICES.
- 14\* BARBARA: Who is it Susan? Who's there?
15. SUSAN: Nobody. Just a strange little package--all wrapped up. What do you think it is?
16. BARBARA: Let me see. I'll unwrap it and...
17. LIVE SFX: BARBARA UNWRAPS GIFT WRAPPING PAPER
- 18\* MUSIC: [MUS-8] RIP CHORD. LET IT FINISH.
- 19\* SUSAN: Oh, Barbara! What? It's...a horrible... little ...doll?
20. BARBARA: A...jungle...idol. Like the one Raymond brought back. Oooh. It has pins sticking in it. I'd better put.. Ow! My finger!
1. MUSIC: [MUS-9] STING #3 - PRICK/FAINT/SLEEP/WAKE. DUCK FOR VOICES, WHICH PLAY ALONG TO THE MUSIC.
- 2\* SUSAN: Barbara, are you all right? You're cut!

3. BARBARA: Just a pin prick, Suze. I-I...I'll I'll... be.. be all... all... righ-- (FAINTS)
4. LIVE SFX: BARBARA BODY DROPS TO GROUND (FA-LUMP)
- 5\* SUSAN: Barbara? Barbara? (FADING) Barbara! Barbara?
6. MUSIC: PRICK/FAINT/SLEEP/WAKE UP FULL. LET FINISH.

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(several pages later...)

2. BARBARA: Wait, Sam! This is your secretary's... fourth birthday this...
3. LIVE SFX: SAM SLAMS DOOR.
- 4\* BARBARA: ...year. Sam? Sam?
- 5\* MUSIC: [MUS-10] WRAP UP--[BED]. UNDER.

SCENE 7: RECAP/ADVERT/OUTRO  
(ANNOUNCER, PITCHMAN)

- 6\* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] Sam Jones is spending a lot of time at the office lately. Raymond Brown's illness appears to be getting worse--while Audrey Snead and Gloria Brown are planning to commit him to an asylum. The mysterious caller that Barbara Jones won't speak of--even to her best friend, Susan--has called once again. And was Barbara's nightmare just a dream? Or is she coming down with an exotic disease like Raymond? (PAUSE) We'll return to our story in just a moment.
7. MUSIC: WRAP UP THEME. LET IT FINISH.

1\* PITCHMAN: [CUE] Ladies, do you want your laundry to be scientifically cleaned? Then join the millions who use Klenso detergent--strong enough for the dirtiest dirt, yet mild enough to use in the bath. You may wonder how this miracle product can handle so many household jobs. The reason is that Klenso combines two of the most widely approved and time-tested ingredients known. And by giving your home a scientific cleaning, Klenso works better--infinitely better than any ordinary detergent. Follow the science--use Klenso, the modern way to clean.

2. MUSIC: [MUS-11] CLOSING THEME--UNDER

3\* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] Tune in tomorrow, when once again, Klenso will bring you-- "Life's Little Ups... And Downs"--Same time, same station. (PAUSE) Today's program was written and scored by Anthony E. Palermo. ("PAW-LAIR-MO")

4. MUSIC: CLOSING THEME UP. LET IT FINISH.

[OPTIONAL CREDIT SEQUENCE FOLLOWS ON NEXT PAGE]



1\* ANNOUNCER:

[CUE] Our program featured...

as Barbara Jones, \_\_\_\_\_,

as Raymond, \_\_\_\_\_,

as Susan, \_\_\_\_\_,

as Audrey Snead, \_\_\_\_\_,

as Gloria, \_\_\_\_\_,

as Dr. Debbs, \_\_\_\_\_,

as Little Jimmy, \_\_\_\_\_,

as Sam, \_\_\_\_\_,

and as the Klenso Pitchman, \_\_\_\_\_

Our sound effects artists were:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Our director was \_\_\_\_\_.

Engineering by \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm \_\_\_\_\_.

This has been a production of the \_\_\_\_\_

Radio Network.

--END OF EPISODE--

## Radio Skills School

### Microphone Technique:

- Sensitive and dead areas. Don't touch!
- Proximity effect. (Boomy if too close.)
- Proper distance for radio acting.
- Dynamics and distance. (Back off to yell.)
- Off mic use for distant sounds. Asides.
- Popping "P"s and S-S-S-Sibilance.
- Mic safety. (hitting, blowing, dropping)
- Assume every mic is always ON.
- Quiet script page turning.

### Radio Acting:

- Quiet in the studio.
- Don't cough, laugh, or talk during production.
- Watch the director. Wait for your cue. (Q)
- Speed equals excitement. Don't bore audience.
- Jump in if there's dead air.
- Wait for director's signal at end of show.

### Radio Direction "Sign Language"

- "Wait" - Open hand.
- "5-4-3---" - Finger count down.
- "Theme starting" - Form a "T" with hands.
- "Watch for cue" - Point to person then eye.
- "You're on" - Pointing finger.
- "Cut" - Finger slits throat.
- "Faster" - Move index finger clockwise.
- "Stretch it out" - Pulling taffy.
- "Come in/"Back off" microphone - Move hand towards/away from face.
- "Louder" - Elevate the hand, palm up.
- "Quieter" - Lower the hand, palm down.

## *'Life's Little Ups and Downs'* - Back story

Our program, now in its eighth year, takes place in the quiet town of Yoxpokpetl, population 10,000-- "a town not much different than your own", where everybody has at least heard of everybody else. The year is 1953. Our story concerns Barbara Jones, age 30, her family, friends and enemies.

When in high school, Barbara (then Barbara Brown), was engaged to Sterling Wood. Her best friend, Audrey Snead, helped them elope to New River City. Barbara and Sterling were secretly married, but "something" happened and Barbara came home alone. Sterling disappeared and was never heard of again.

Soon afterwards, Barbara's house burned down, killing her parents, but sparing Barbara, her brother- Raymond Brown, and dog, Fido. They went to live with Uncle Cuthbert MacGillicuddy, who'd won the Irish sweepstakes, but didn't let anyone in town know, including his family.

After high school, Barbara got a job at Kay's bakery. Audrey was engaged to Adam Hamilton, Barbara's next door neighbor. For Audrey's wedding, Barbara baked the wedding cake herself, but to everyone's horror, Adam choked on the cake at the wedding banquet and died. To worsen matters, the hearse bearing Adam's body was stolen and the body was never recovered. Audrey harbors an intense hatred of Barbara to this day and has vowed to destroy her.

Barbara went to stenographer school and became a court reporter. That's where she met Sam Jones, who was on trial for drunk driving. Sam was very charming and very sorry for his offense--Barbara liked his humility. He was acquitted when the arresting officer couldn't appear in court.

After a brief courtship, Barbara and Sam were married and bought a house. Barbara had a son, Jimmy, now ten years old, and a daughter Sally, seven. Sam is a workaholic at "the office" where his young secretary, Janie Allen, seems to have many problems. The Jones' next-door neighbor is Susan Foley, the local door-to-door cosmetics saleslady. Susan was widowed when her fireman husband died in a blaze five years ago. Susan has a teen-age daughter named Mona, who has had some trouble at school. Barbara and Susan became fast friends. Susan is a mystery fan and suspects everything. What's more, she's secretly having an affair with Dr. Jackson Debbs, of Yoxpokpetl Memorial Hospital.

Three years ago, Uncle Cuthbert told Raymond of the secret fortune. Raymond stole some money, and married Gloria Meadows, a hostess at the Hi-Hat nightclub. A year later, Uncle Cuthbert discovered the theft and confronted Raymond, who quickly left town on a safari--leaving Gloria behind. Raymond's plane crashed in "the jungle" two years ago and he was presumed dead. In the meantime, Uncle Cuthbert died and Gloria had gotten a job at a realty company and married her boss, Steve Skelmsdale.

Last year, on what would have been her 10th wedding anniversary, Audrey Snead tried to run down Barbara at a school crosswalk. Instead, she crashed her car and was paralyzed from the waist down. She became a manicurist at the Jo-Dee Beauty Salon, where she was befriended by Gloria Brown, who took pity on her. Audrey is taking advantage of Gloria to exact her revenge on Barbara.

Raymond Brown was recently discovered alive after two years in the jungle and returned to Yoxpokpetl. Barbara was very happy to be reunited with her brother, but Gloria certainly was not. Because Raymond wasn't dead, Gloria's marriage to Steve Skelmsdale was annulled and she reluctantly returned to Raymond. They didn't get along, partly due to Raymond's difficulty in adjusting to normal life after his terrible jungle ordeal. Just last month, Raymond was caught at the apartment of Harriet Appleby, Yoxpokpetl's town librarian. Audrey tipped Gloria off, who caught him and sued for divorce—then, somehow, she found out about the secret fortune. Gloria tried to stop the divorce proceedings, but Raymond refused. Lately, Raymond has become ill and admitted to the hospital.

## “Life's Little Ups and Downs” - Synopsis for Episode #829

As our current episode begins, Barbara Jones is visiting her brother, Raymond Brown, in the hospital. Dr. Debbs explains that Raymond is now catatonic, suffering from some unknown disease—possibly “Island Fever.” Raymond can't speak, but we learn of his jungle ordeal as he remembers it. Soon after, Barbara's 10 year-old son, Jimmy calls to talk to Raymond.

Audrey Snead and Gloria Brown are plotting to have Raymond committed to an insane asylum and Gloria declared his legal representative for the secret inheritance. Gloria pledges to help Audrey pay for an operation that will allow her to walk again. Audrey sobs as she recalls how Barbara baked the wedding cake that her groom, Adam, choked to death on.

Meanwhile, Barbara is baking cookies with her best friend, Susan Foley. They discuss the seriousness of Raymond's illness and Susan wonders if insanity runs in the family. Barbara gets another mysterious phone call from someone who wants to see her. She's very secretive about this and won't even share it with Susan. A strange package arrives at the house, containing a jungle idol. Barbara pricks her finger on a pin sticking out of the idol and passes out.

The next morning, Barbara's husband Sam awakens her. Barbara is troubled by a nightmare. As Sam leaves, Barbara fears Sam is taking a little too much interest in his secretary, Janie, and her many problems.

## Radio Soap Operas - background

Here, we are producing a daytime serial. These were 15-minute radio shows that ran Monday through Friday with a continuing story and were often sponsored by detergent and soap companies. That's why they were called "soap operas." Like a musical opera, these shows were usually sentimental; full of calamitous stories based around women characters, their heartaches, problems and dreams. On radio, these shows ran 28 years, from 1932 to 1960, but many moved to television in the 1950s. Shows such as *Guiding Light*, *Another World*, *General Hospital*, and *One Life to Live* were popular TV soaps that were created by the same people--often women writer/producers who created the daytime serials for radio. Some modern TV soaps include *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scandal*, *Riverdale*, *Downton Abbey*, and *Game of Thrones*.

Millions faithfully listened to radio soap operas, which allowed them to vicariously live and learn from *others'* misfortune. There was plenty of hope and heartbreak to learn from. With all the divorces, betrayals, and sudden illnesses, radio soap operas had so much trouble that I wanted to lighten this soap to keep it from being too depressing, but also to give the sound effects artists more to do.

Radio soap operas had few sound effects. It was mostly doorbells, telephones, pouring lemonade, and baking cookies--as well as crippling car accidents. Our program contains the traditional soap opera elements of a sudden illness, some plotting enemies, and cookie baking, but we also have a radio montage of a catatonic remembering his jungle ordeal--or is it just a nightmare? The result is a bit comic, but not all soap operas were humorless and that's why our soap opera is called *Life's Little Ups and Downs*.

It's easy to laugh at the exaggerated situations and music in a soap opera, but that is not our intention here. We have a tragic story to which we are adding some adventure and that could be a bit tricky to pull off. Try to play the story straight and not make fun of the characters. Then see if your listeners laugh or cry.

Anthony E. Palermo, writer, composer, sound designer

## Casting Evaluation: *'Life's Little Ups & Downs'*

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CAST SIZE: 11 max or 7. Plus 4 sound effects artists.

_____	Announcer	The announcer (m/f)
_____	+ Pitchman	Announcer for Klenso commercials (m/f)
_____	Barbara Jones	Wife, mother, homemaker (f)
_____	Raymond Brown	Barbara's brother, age 27 (m)
_____	Gloria Brown	Raymond's estranged wife (f)
_____	Audrey Snead	Barbara's arch-enemy (f)
_____	+ Little Jimmy	Barbara's 10 year-old son (m/f)
_____	Susan Foley	Barbara's best friend (m/f)
_____	+ Dr. Debbs	Family doctor (m/f)
_____	Sam Jones	Barbara's spouse (m/f)
_____	+ Mystery Caller	Phone caller/Blackmailer (m/f)

Audition ratings: A through F

<b>Actor Name</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Bold?</b>	<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Accent?</b>	<b>Possible roles</b>

## Casting Monologues: 'The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of'

All actors are asked to read some lines, called "sides," aloud, to audition. The director will cast the roles in our production based upon these readings. Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues can also provide some "back story," giving an idea of who the characters are and what kind of story we are producing. Since radio actors often play several parts, we encourage the use of different voices or accents when auditioning for the different roles.

**ANNOUNCER:**

I'm the announcer. I introduce our 1953 soap opera and describe the setting for each scene. I make sure to mention our sponsor, Klenso detergent, the modern way to clean. At the end of the show, I entice the listeners to tune in again tomorrow for another episode of (PAUSE) "Life's Little Ups... and Downs."

**BARBARA JONES:**

Hello, I'm Barbara Jones, a dedicated wife and mother. I try to get through the day taking care of my family, but something always comes up--like poor Raymond's illness or a dropped tray of cookies. But I'm certain I'll get by. "Stay cheerful," that's what I always say.

**AUDREY SNEAD:**

I'm Audrey Snead, Barbara's ex-best friend. Years ago, my husband died and I hold Barbara Jones personally responsible. I was cheated out my happiness and I'll see to it that Barbara suffers for it--even if I have to turn the whole town against her.

**SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT**  
**The full script & appendix runs 38 pages.**  
**(several pages later...)**



## Sound Effects Cookbook: *'Life's Little Ups & Downs'*

### SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #1:

Hand claps  
Thunder  
Jungle sounds -brush-  
Shoveling dirt  
Cookie tray dropped  
Doorbell chime  
Dog barks

### SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #2:

Plane crashes  
Birds  
Coughing pygmys  
Telephone rings  
Telephone receiver picked up  
Telephone hangs up  
Ice cubes in a glass

### SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #3:

Plane flying, plane sputters  
Jungle drums  
Pouring water  
Cookie timer rings  
Body drops to ground

### SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #4:

Wind  
Shakers  
Door knob jiggled and door opens  
Door slams  
Gift wrapping paper crinkling

WALLA-WALLA: (could be handled by actors who are NOT at the mic)

Pygmy voices: "Uwalla"

Angry pygmy voices: "Broo-Sha"

## Sound Effects Cookbook: 'Life's Little Ups & Downs'

### Don't call it "foley"

In professional radio drama, the term for sound effects is... sound effects and the term for the person who performs and controls them is sound effects artist. "Foley" is a film production term in use only since the late-1980s and covers the replacement of sounds that we're not recorded well during the film shoot. A radio sound effects artist does everything a foley artist does and many more sounds--both live and pre-recorded.

#### [ ] DR. DEBBS CLAPS HANDS (3X)

Clap hands three times, like you're trying to wake somebody up. (X-X-X)

#### [ ] THUNDER RUMBLING:

Shake Thunder/spring drum SFX device.

Google-search for: Remo Thunder Tube 6 " diameter

#### [ ] JUNGLE SOUNDS -BRUSH:

Shake two little egg shakers -AND- make vocal animal sounds.

Google-search for: "egg shaker"

OR put some rice in a salt-shaker

#### [ ] SHOVELING DIRT:

Use a small hand shovel (or metal serving spoon) to dig into some dog food or cat litter.

#### [ ] COOKIE TRAY DROPPED:

Drop a metal cookie sheet tray with some cookies or cork-coasters on the tabletop. Make it sound "clattery."

#### [ ] DOORBELL CHIME:

Doorbell SFX device. (Ding-Dong)

Google-search "Greenbrook Tubular Hard Wired Ding Dong Door Bell Chime"

OR Google-search: "Sunlite Ding Dong Bell" (\$12 2-tone bike bell with good sound)

OR knock on the door (3X)

#### [ ] DOG BARKS:

Vocalize it. Inhale while saying "Rarf Rarf Rarf!"

--

**[ ] PLANE CRASH:**

Shake crash box SFX device. To make a crash box get a large popped popcorn canister (the 3-1/2 gallon cylindrical kind – available at office supply and grocery stores from October thru Christmas) and put pea-sized gravel, crushed soda cans, small chunks of wood and a broken up coffee mug (NO glass!). Then duct tape the lid shut—all the way around—where the lid meets the canister.

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**(several pages later...)**

## Engineer's Notes:

Three unidirectional mics would accommodate actors of various heights. Use an additional one mic for sound effects. A dual-CD player would allow for fast cross-fading of the music cues. However, a boom-box player will serve.

To simulate Raymond's dream, one dialogue microphone and the sound effects microphone should be processed through an (optional) reverb device.

## Telephone Voice Effects:

There is a scene with a through-the-phone voice. For that, you'll need to simulate the tinny tone of a telephone handset's through-the-earpiece sound. There are several ways to achieve this phone voice effect.

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## Pre-Recorded Music tracks:

The music cues are mostly BEDs--where music plays underneath dialogue. Let the music bed establish itself for a few seconds, then reduce the volume a bit to allow the actors' voices to be clearly heard. There are several BRIDGE music cues--where the music plays with no dialogue on top of it. The STING cues play underneath a line--but add urgency--keep the music volume beneath the dialogue throughout. The SPOT cue plays in the middle of a dialogue scene, with no talking while it plays.

Cue #	Volume	Title	Run Time
01		INTRO - Life's Little Ups and Downs theme [BED]	0:30
02		Episode Intro [BED]	0:30
03		Jungle Flashback [BED]	1:30
04		Sad Transition [BRIDGE]	0:19
05		Tragic to Homey transition [BRIDGE]	0:17
06		Sting #1 - Mystery Call [BED]	0:12
07		Sting #2 - Scary Door [BED]	0:09
08		Rip Chord #1 [SPOT]	0:04
09		Sting #3 - Prick/Faint/Sleep/Wake [BRIDGE]	0:35
10		Wrap Up theme [BED]	0:30
11		OUTRO - Closing theme [BED]	0:24

Music composed by Anthony E. Palermo.

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