

Warren Adler

Libido



Stonehouse Productions
New York, NY

Also by Warren Adler

PLAYS

The War of the Roses
Dead in the Water
Windmills
Knight of the Ocean Sea
The Sunset Gang (*Musical*)

SCREENPLAYS

Random Hearts
Private Lies
Target Churchill
American Quartet
American Sextet
Funny Boys
High Noon in Hollywood
Housewife Blues
Madeline's Miracles
Regrets Only
Treadmills
Silvergate

TELEVISION

The Sunset Gang

Adapted for PBS' American Theatre Series Trilogy

Starring Uta Hagen, Harould Gould, Jerry Stiller and Doris Roberts who was nominated for an Emmy Award for 'Best Supporting Actress in a Mini Series'

SELECT FICTION

The War of the Roses
The War of the Roses - The Children
Target Churchill
Washington Masquerade
Random Hearts
Trans-Siberian Express
American Quartet
American Sextet
Mourning Glory

For more information on Warren Adler's complete catalogue visit www.warrenadler.com

About the Playwright: Acclaimed author and playwright Warren Adler is best known for *The War of the Roses*, his masterpiece fictionalization of a macabre divorce. *The War of the Roses* was adapted first, into the Golden Globe and BAFTA nominated blockbuster hit film starring Danny DeVito, Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner, and Adler subsequently developed the staged version based on the original novel.



Shortly following the success of *The War of the Roses*, Adler fueled an unprecedented bidding war in a Hollywood commission for his then unpublished novel *Private Lies*. He went on to option or sell a dozen of his works to film and television including *Random Hearts* (starring Harrison Ford and Kristin Scott Thomas), *Trans-Siberian Express*, *Funny Boys*, *Madeline's Miracles* and *The Sunset Gang*, which was adapted into a trilogy for PBS' American Playhouse Series. The trilogy based on his short stories starred Uta Hagen, Harold Gould, Jerry Stiller and earned Doris Roberts and Emmy nomination in the "Best Supporting Actress in a Mini Series" category.

The Sunset Gang musical received an off-Broadway premiere with music composed by L. Russell Brown ("Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree", "C'mon Marianne" - *Jersey Boys*) with lyrics by Adler himself. The *New York Times* called it, "A bittersweet musical about aging and desire...a deeper examination of love and loyalty among people over 60." His other stage works include *Knight of the Ocean Sea*, *Dead in the Water* and *Windmills*, which opened at the BTA Theatre – Theatre Row and was produced by John Patrick Shanley in New York.

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By
Warren Adler

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance)

INTERN (Molly) – 21, White House intern to the President of the United States of America, spirited, youthful.

INTERN'S FRIEND (Betty) – Late 30's, divorcee, single mother with two children.

PRESIDENT (John) – Early 50's, President of the United States of America, charismatic, handsome.

PRESIDENT'S WIFE (Jill) - Late 40's, blonde, fiercely ambitious in both her marriage and politics, she has retained her "college sweetheart" attractiveness.

INTERN'S MOTHER – 50's, well groomed, former sex kitten that still simmers under the surface.

ACT ONE

Scene One

1998, evening. The White House INTERN's (Molly) studio apartment in Washington D.C. Her apartment reflects her personality, decorated with the enthusiasm of a recent college graduate. There are cheaply framed posters of era-specific rock and pop stars, and conspicuously, a large picture of the current President. "Frozen" by Madonna plays in the background.

The INTERN sits with the INTERN'S FRIEND (Betty), who is anxious and slightly fatigued. They are in serious conversation, restless; from time to time they rise, pace nervously.

INTERN: He loves me. I know he loves me. And I love him with my soul, Betty. With all my soul. We have a deep spiritual bond between us.

INTERN'S FRIEND: *(Sarcastically)* A match made in heaven.

INTERN: Yes. As if it were preordained.

INTERN'S FRIEND: By God?

INTERN: Could be. Yes.

INTERN'S FRIEND: And he told you this?

INTERN: He...he's very spiritual. He made it clear.

INTERN'S FRIEND: And I suppose you kneel down in worship.

INTERN: I'm Jewish. We don't do that.

INTERN'S FRIEND: I didn't mean....

INTERN: I know what you meant. I'm not exactly stupid.

INTERN'S FRIEND: I never said you were stupid. Naïve, but not stupid.

INTERN: I'm not naïve either. That man loves me.

INTERN'S FRIEND: He told you that?

INTERN: In words and body language. Very clear body language.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Yes indeed. Body language. The exclamation point, particularly. And you believe him?

INTERN: Of course I believe him. I know his heart. Underneath, he is a deeply unhappy man. The chemistry between them is long gone. I am his true love. I fill his real needs. In every way that a man and woman can. He confides in me.

INTERN'S FRIEND (*Aghast*) He confides in you? On what? The Middle East? Social security? Global warming? Nuclear proliferation? Revising the tax code? What?

INTERN: Don't be silly. He confides in me on what is in his heart. One human being to another.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Oh! Has he discussed the future with you? Baby, he is married to an ambitious woman who has plans of her own. They are two peas in a pod. This...this great love can't go anywhere. Don't you get it? All you are to him is....

INTERN: I don't want to hear it. You sound like my mother used to sound.

INTERN'S FRIEND: You told your mother?

INTERN: Of course I told my mother. We have a strong mother-daughter relationship.

INTERN'S FRIEND: And what was her advice?

INTERN: Follow your heart, if you must know. If he were a nobody, it wouldn't matter. Haven't you ever been in love?

INTERN'S FRIEND: Love? You know what your problem is baby? You're too young to understand about men, what truly drives them. They will do anything, cheat, lie, say whatever furthers their designs...just to gratify their primal desires. Their first and only love is what they have between their legs. Believe me, baby. I know. Been there. They are not wired for permanence. Wham bam, thank you ma'am. In. Out. Over. Especially powerful men. Politicians are the worst. Hypocrisy is their stock in trade. They use their status to manipulate, take advantage. It disgusts me. I can tell you stories from my own experience. My ex-husband.... The memory still burns inside me. Men like him should be punished, neutered like they do to animals.

INTERN: Like him? No way. Believe me, Betty. I know a lot about men, more than you think. I know you've had some bitter experiences, disappointments, divorce. But, in this situation, my heart and body tell me the absolute truth. I too have primal desires. Is that something women are not supposed to have? Well, I do, and they focus exclusively on him. And his on me. We love each other. Can't you understand that?

INTERN'S FRIEND: Sorry baby. It's off my radar.

INTERN: Maybe it's because...well, you've forgotten what love is, real love. You want my honest opinion, Betty? You should get laid more.

INTERN'S FRIEND (*In a burst of anger*) Who has time for that? I'm a single mom. I have kids, a job. I work my ass off. You think working for the government is stable? Say something out of line, you know, of a different political philosophy and they get their backs up, transfer you around. Makes you tense and insecure. Never mind that. What's the big deal about getting laid anyway? I've done my share. It's not what it's cracked up to be. Trouble with you young people...you're oversexed.

INTERN: I hope so. I feel lucky. I have these deep orgasms.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Jesus! Besides, he is old enough to be your father. You are his Lolita.

INTERN: I love being his Lolita. Older men have fallen in love with much younger women. We're no exceptions.

INTERN'S FRIEND: I see you've done your research.

INTERN: Sometimes younger women have more in common with older men.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Sure. Inflates their...egos. Sends them down memory lane into their stupid adolescent fantasies of the time when they were dirty minded little boys. Young flesh, I suppose it recharges their declining libidos. Along with a handful of little blue pills.

INTERN: He doesn't need any enhancements. He has *moi*. Believe me. We are very well matched in that area. Very well.

INTERN'S FRIEND (*With rising exasperation*) You are being exploited Molly. Exploited. He's the big kahuna. He can fuck anybody he wants. Don't you get it?

INTERN (*Laughing*) Exploited? That's ridiculous. I know he can have anyone he wants. But he chose me. He picked me. And yes, I picked him. He is my choice, forever and ever.

(*The INTERN'S FRIEND is baffled, exasperated, and confused.*)

INTERN'S FRIEND: What I don't understand...how do you manage it? How dumb can he be, taking such risks? I mean, the man is surrounded by Secret Service, various aides. His whereabouts are monitored like no other person in the world. He can't leave his office without a retinue of protectors.

INTERN: He doesn't have to leave his office.

INTERN'S FRIEND: And you just walk in. "Hi there, Secret Service, I'm going into the office to service the President." How can you do it without raising suspicions? They have to be in on the game.

INTERN: (*Giggling girlishly*) Where there's a will there's a way. You'd be surprised. The Oval Office is a private sanctuary. It has its little nooks and crannies. When he works late,

or pretends to, I bring him a pizza.

INTERN'S FRIEND: You bring him a pizza. You're joking.

INTERN: He gets a lot more than a pizza. Pepperoni and me. We're creative. *(She lowers her voice.)* Here's a little secret. The pizza has extras but I don't. No bra. No panties. Metal detectors don't pick that up.... *(She giggles.)* Always ready to go. I just love it. I can't get enough of him. I think of him day and night. Sometimes I keep things...you know, souvenirs.

INTERN'S FRIEND: What does that mean?

INTERN: Little presents. Keepsakes.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Love letters?

INTERN: Oh, no. Nothing in writing. We agreed on that.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Evidence.

INTERN: We do have to be discreet, Betty. He is a married man. *(Giggling)* But there are ways around even that.

INTERN'S FRIEND: What ways?

INTERN: Never mind. You'll think it's too weird.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Why would I think it's weird?

INTERN: I saved his...his gift of love. His essence.

INTERN'S FRIEND: His essence. Oh my God. Don't tell me. Not that. You don't mean his sperm.

INTERN: On my shrine. I will never ever wear it again. It is my shrine to my lover.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Gross. I don't believe this. That is sick.

INTERN: If you loved someone as much as I love him, you would understand.

INTERN'S FRIEND: I'm sorry but it does sound a bit weird to me. Really. Off the charts. Listen to me, baby. The whole thing is crazy. I want to put this kindly. You're being very, very...foolish. No. I can't be kind. You're being used. You're nothing more than a casual piece of ass to him. Worse, you think you're in love. You don't get it. It will end, and badly. It is not the first time he has done this. During that first campaign others came to light. Some women came forward later. Remember? You were not the

first nor will you be the last. It's his MO. He believes he's entitled to your body. That's not spiritual. That's carnal. He's a pussy hound. Can't you see that?

INTERN: Yes. He told me all about the others. They meant nothing to him. Nothing. I am the one, his soulmate. I satisfy all his needs, and I mean all. That Betty is true love. Someday...someday...after...you'll see, when all this is over. He will leave her. I'm afraid this is beyond your understanding.

INTERN'S FRIEND: I know I'm upsetting you. But what are friends for if not to tell you the truth? You're being bamboozled, bullshitted. Don't buy into it, Molly. Men like that must not get away with it. No way. You don't get to be President of the United States unless you're a master manipulator. You're heading for heartbreak, Molly.

INTERN: I knew you'd say that. My mother said that, too. At first. But then when I told her how much we meant to each other, she started to understand. The human heart tells the truth. I know what I feel. And I know what he feels. He's not exploiting me and I'm not exploiting him. We love each other and that's all that counts.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Poor baby.

INTERN: Poor baby? Betty, this is the most fabulous thing that has ever happened to me in my whole life.

INTERN'S FRIEND: No doubt about that. Hell, you might go down in the history books. Oh God can't I say it another way. I wish I could make you understand.

INTERN: You're the one that doesn't understand. You're my best friend. Why can't you see it from my point of view?

INTERN'S FRIEND: I do and it scares the hell out of me. Whatever happens, I want you to know that I am only trying to help you, to save you from grief. I want to protect you is all.

INTERN: He is a great man, Betty. I love his mind. I love his body. You cannot imagine the thrill of being in his arms. And the sex. Like...fireworks.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Try to understand. You're my friend. I want to protect you. You must understand. Everything I do and say is because I want to protect you....

INTERN: From what?

INTERN'S FRIEND: From yourself. And mostly...from men like him.

INTERN: We are people in love. That's a special place, Betty. If you're not in it, you don't know what it's like.

INTERN'S FRIEND: Poor baby. Someday you'll thank me. Someday.

(The INTERN looks demoralized.)

We hope you have enjoyed this free preview of *Dead in the Water*. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the entire script, please email Gargi Shindé at gargi@warrenadler.com.