

THE HOPE LOVEJOY SHOW



Clint Snyder

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*To self-help writers
and talk show hosts—
two of my worst enemies—
you know what you did.*

THE HOPE LOVEJOY SHOW

SPOOF. In this episode of “The Hope LoveJoy Show,” the phony, narcissistic, and self-promoting host, Miss Hope LoveJoy, interviews a series of guests who have all “benefitted” from “reading” her self-help book, *The Ultra Hush-Hush Top-Secret Secret*. Guests include a socially awkward woman who dresses up her pet guinea pigs in cute little outfits, an illiterate ex-con who found true love when she bashed a prison visitor over the head with LoveJoy’s book, and an overzealous fan who kidnaps critics and keeps them locked in an underground bunker, where she reads passages of LoveJoy’s book to them and they eventually go insane.

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(2 M, 4 F, 2 flexible, opt. extras)

MISS HOPE LOVEJOY: Phony, narcissistic, and self-promoting host of the TV talk show, "The Hope LoveJoy Show."

TAMMY PINKLEY: Socially awkward guinea pig owner; wears overalls, large glasses, and a pink hairclip.

BELINDA POWER: Large, overbearing ex-con; illiterate and speaks with a southern accent.

REESE POWER: Belinda's mousy, submissive boyfriend who she calls her "Reese's Cup"; speaks in a southern accent.

CHRIS/CHRISTINA POWER: Reese's "troubled" son/daughter; flexible.

CELIA HICKS: Overzealous fan and head of the Miss Lovejoy Fan Club.

POLICE OFFICER: Wears a police uniform; flexible.

EXTRAS (opt.): As Audience Members. (See production note below.)

AUTHOR'S NOTE

There are many opportunities for audience interaction and the use of extras in this show. For example, an extra can hold up an "applause" sign at certain points during the show. If there are enough extras, you may even create a mock audience section that provides laugh track reactions to the dialogue or chants "Lovejoy" in a "Jerry Springer" style. Actors should play the characters with seriousness and be careful not to play up the humor too much as it is meant to be absurd.

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SETTING

TV talk show set.

SET

TV set of "The Hope Lovejoy Show." There is a coffee table CS. There are several chairs and one larger, more comfortable chair for Miss Lovejoy.

PROPS

Cordless microphone
Glasses
2 Handcuffs

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SOUND EFFECTS

Boxing bell

"Word of the Day" noise

Talk show intro/exit music

"WE'RE ALL JUST GUINEA PIGS,
RUNNING ON A WHEEL."

—TAMMY

THE HOPE LOVEJOY SHOW

(AT RISE: The set of "The Hope Lovejoy Show." There is a coffee table CS. There are several chairs and one larger, more comfortable chair that Miss Lovejoy uses. Miss Lovejoy is holding a cordless microphone and standing in front of the audience CS. Her tone comes off as phony.)

LOVEJOY: *(To audience.)* Welcome back to "The Hope LoveJoy Show," where I, Miss LoveJoy, help show you folks how to live better, more fulfilling lives by following my teachings and purchasing my products. Today on my show we're bringing in people from all over that were once just like you, viewers at home, sad and pathetic. If I know you, which I do, then you're probably microwaving a TV dinner for one right now while you scrub the cat pee out of your carpeting. But you don't have to fear anymore because my next guest was once a bigger loser than you. *(Excited.)* Come on out...Miss Tammy Pinkley!

(Excited, Tammy runs out, waving to the audience. She is wearing large glasses and overalls and is socially awkward.)

LOVEJOY: It's great to have you on the show, Tammy.

TAMMY: Thanks! I'm so excited to be here!

LOVEJOY: I can see that.

TAMMY: *(To TV camera.)* Hi, Mindy! Hi, Jerry! Hi, Waldo! Mommy loves you!

LOVEJOY: You have kids?

TAMMY: Those are my guinea pigs. I like to think of them as my children, though. They each have their own little personalities, and I dress them up in cute little outfits.

LOVEJOY: Right. *(Nonchalant.)* Now, when did you first realize you had no life?

TAMMY: *(Not offended.)* Well, I was sitting at home reading your book, “Miss Hope LoveJoy’s Ultra Hush-Hush Top-Secret Secret,” and it just spelled it out for me.

LOVEJOY: You mean the book moved you to make this realization about your life?

TAMMY: No, no, it said it right there in the pages. It said, “If you are reading this, then you have no life.” And you know what? I had to agree.

LOVEJOY: The truth was undeniable?

TAMMY: No, the book actually says that right after “You have to agree.” So, I did. I have to say it has made a world of difference in my life.

LOVEJOY: What sort of amazing differences has my book—for the unbeatable price of \$24.99—made in your life.

TAMMY: Well...before I had read your book, I was feeding my guinea pigs three times a day, which can be bad for their digestive system. But after I read it, I said to myself, “Tammy, now you’re gunna stop that.” And I did.

LOVEJOY: And...?

TAMMY: The guinea pigs seem to be much healthier. They still look at me with those sad eyes like they want to be fed, but I was strong and ignored those sad little eyes no matter how hard it was.

LOVEJOY: I meant...have there been any changes besides that?

TAMMY: Ummm... *(Thinks. Lovejoy starts to worry.)* Well...I got this pink hairclip! *(Points to her hairclip.)*

LOVEJOY: *(To audience.)* Beautiful! A truly touching story from a woman who has so much to teach us!

TAMMY: I do?

LOVEJOY: Oh, don’t be modest. This one hairclip has sparked a major change in your life. You may not see it yet, but you’re an entirely new woman.

TAMMY: I never thought of it that way.

LOVEJOY: That’s why I am the host. This hairclip means that you are taking steps to beautify yourself inside and out.

Why, if it wasn't for the heavily armed security guards, I'm sure the audience members would be crawling up on the stage just to get closer to the aura of beauty that simply radiates off you.

TAMMY: Wow.

LOVEJOY: Wow is right. Look at you...the perfect model of beauty and... *(Pause, searches for a word and clears her throat.)* ...femininity.

(Tammy burps.)

TAMMY: Oh, excuse me.

LOVEJOY: No need, dear. You have nothing to apologize for. Burps are like your body's way of reminding you it's there and it's gassy. *(Realizes.)* That sounds deep. Someone write that down. I want a nickel every time someone says that.

TAMMY: *(Rambling.)* One time when I was little, I swallowed a nickel. Mother thought the doctors might have to amputate my stomach, but then I ate a bunch of Brussels sprouts—and I don't really like Brussels sprouts—so I threw up the Brussels sprouts, but also the nickel. Then Mother said they wouldn't have to cut out my stomach anymore.

LOVEJOY: It's a mystery why you're still single, a charming young lady like yourself.

TAMMY: It's okay. Personally, I like a little mystery in my life.

LOVEJOY: Ohhhhh, a mysterious bachelorette! You won't be on the market long after this show.

TAMMY: No, I meant my Nancy Drew mystery series collection. I adore her.

LOVEJOY: Well, that's... *(Searches for word.)* ...exciting, too.

TAMMY: It really is. I carry the books with me wherever I go, and I'm always on the prowl for a good mystery of my own. I don't know if you know this or not, but in my spare time I'm teaching myself to be a P.I.

LOVEJOY: A...petite Italian?

TAMMY: (*Slightly offended.*) Private investigator.

LOVEJOY: That sounds enriching.

TAMMY: It is. In fact, I've already solved two mysteries.

LOVEJOY: Two? Goodness!

TAMMY: Yes, see, the first was an overdue library book. I tracked it down and took the liberty of burning down the criminal's home.

LOVEJOY: A woman that takes action! I like it!

TAMMY: The second was some gum stuck under a table.

LOVEJOY: Did you burn down his home as well?

TAMMY: No, but I told his mother, and I'm pretty sure he got a stern talking to.

LOVEJOY: Now, as interesting as your life is, Tammy, why don't we try to focus a little more on my affordable life-changing literature.

TAMMY: Oh, your book, "The Ultra Hush-Hush Top-Secret—"

LOVEJOY: Secret, yes. Let's focus on that. What was the main message that you got out of it?

TAMMY: Like, you write in your book, "I can be anything or do anything as long as I focus really hard on it."

LOVEJOY: And are you focused?

TAMMY: Like a laser or some sort of high-powered microscope.

LOVEJOY: What, specifically, did you focus on?

TAMMY: Well, mostly on my career as a private investigator.

LOVEJOY: And I see you've been quite successful in your goal.

TAMMY: Oh, yes.

LOVEJOY: Good. Good. You know, this top-secret secret was passed on to me through generations of successful people—Isaac Newton, Einstein, Aristotle, Marie Curie, Stalin—they all knew it.

TAMMY: Really?

LOVEJOY: Really. And after thousands of years, I've decided to publish it. Did you know that George Washington knew the ultra hush-hush top-secret secret?

TAMMY: He did?

LOVEJOY: He did. So, basically, if you don't buy this book, not only will you be completely unsuccessful at everything you do, you'll be saying you hate George Washington, and you may as well say you hate America, too, because there is nothing less patriotic than hating George Washington.

TAMMY: I think that's a crime, isn't it?

LOVEJOY: Yes, thank you, Tammy. If you don't buy this book, then you are committing treason against your country. *(To audience.)* Speaking of crimes, our next guest has been in and out of jail for most of her life, but after reading my book, this jailbird decided that nobody was going to stop her from finding a lovebird of her own. *(Excited.)* Give it up for...Belinda Power!

(Belinda Powers enters. Tailing closely behind Belinda, Reese enters looking downward. Belinda is a large, commanding woman with a southern accent. Reese is a mousey, effeminate man with a southern accent.)

BELINDA: Hi, Hope!

LOVEJOY: Hello, Belinda! I see you've brought a little friend with you.

BELINDA: He's more than a friend, Miss LoveJoy.

LOVEJOY: Ohhhhh...is this the *love connection* you were talking about? What a beautiful young man! *(To Reese.)* What's your name?

REESE: *(Nervous.)* Ummm...it's Reese, ma'am, miss, uhh, Miss LoveJoy.

BELINDA: *(To LoveJoy.)* He's my little Reese's Cup. *(Laughs.)* Sometimes I just want to eat him up with a spoon and a big glass of lemonade. *(Gives Reese a noogie and laughs loudly.)* Isn't that right, my little Reese's Cup?

REESE: (*Nervous.*) Y-yes. That's correct.

LOVEJOY: You seem nervous, Reese. Is something wrong?

BELINDA: He's just happy to be here.

LOVEJOY: You know what I do when I'm nervous sometimes? (*Rises from her chair and talks directly to the audience in a cheesy, commercial way.*) Whenever I'm getting ready for a show and have the jitters, when I'm getting ready to write another life-changing inspirational book, or when I suddenly contract diabetes and find myself low on blood sugar, I make sure to reach for a nice refreshing can of Jim's Root Beer. Mmmm...taste that corn syrup. (*Sits back down and resumes the interview.*)

REESE: That was strange.

LOVEJOY: You know what's also strange, Reese? How they manage to pack so much flavor into one little can of Jim's Root Beer. So...how has my book changed your lives?

BELINDA: It's really the only reason we're even together.

LOVEJOY: You used my book to spark your relationship?! That's wonderful! (*Leans in.*) Tell me more...

BELINDA: I was just sitting in my prison cell, and all of a sudden, the book cart lady comes rolling around with all her books. Since I couldn't get to the weight room till morning, I grabbed a bunch and yours was on top.

LOVEJOY: And then you read it and became so moved by my poetic words that you changed your ways and found you a man?

BELINDA: No. Reese started walkin' by my cell to visit his mother, and I grabbed your book and clocked him one over the head and stole his wallet. When he came to, he told me he liked aggressive women.

REESE: (*To LoveJoy.*) I do.

BELINDA: (*To LoveJoy.*) We've been inseparable ever since.

LOVEJOY: (*Disappointed.*) Wait. You didn't read my book at all?

BELINDA: No, I actually can't read. Lately, though, my little Reese's Cup has been reading me all sorts of fairy tales.

REESE: It's true. I read "The Wizard of Oz" to her just a little bit ago.

BELINDA: But it didn't really make much sense to me, to be honest. This Dorothy girl, God bless her, she doesn't have much brains.

LOVEJOY: It must be awful...being stupid like that.

BELINDA: I know, poor girl. *(Misses the insult.)* Anyways, if she was smart, then she would have just taken those nice red shoes to a pawnshop and gotten herself a plane ticket home instead of dealing with all that flying monkey nonsense. I just don't get it.

LOVEJOY: *(Flat.)* I'm not surprised. *(Switching gears, tone changes)* Now, you say this has been a positive experience for you both?

BELINDA: Oh, yes, we're both very happy.

(Belinda lets out a hearty laugh and slaps Reese playfully across the back. Reese staggers, almost falling out of his chair.)

LOVEJOY: It seems that you have inadvertently been following my teachings then. I write a lot about how positive experiences are generally good things. You see, our heads are just like big magnets. You have either positive or negative thoughts.

BELINDA: Like on the refrigerator?

LOVEJOY: Exactly. When we think positive thoughts, positive things fly at us from all directions. I had my own team of scientists verify this.

BELINDA: That must be true then.

LOVEJOY: Precisely. This is why I felt that I had to write my book...for the good of humanity and for the low, low price of \$24.99.

REESE: But the only reason you actually get those positive things by focusing on them is because you are being goal-oriented, not because of some magical magnetic forces. That's not really a secret at all.

LOVEJOY: Oh, you poor dear, you still don't get it. She must have hit you over the head with that book a little too hard.

(Laughs.)

BELINDA: Oh, no! My baby's gonna need brain surgery!

LOVEJOY: Don't worry too much, Belinda. With the power of my book, you'll be able to get through this. You care a lot for him?

BELINDA: Oh, yes, I just don't know what I would do without him. I would have nobody to help watch over Chris.

LOVEJOY: Chris?

BELINDA: He's our son, Miss Lovejoy. An angel. An absolute angel.

REESE: Well...

BELINDA: Well, what?

REESE: Chris did insult my mother that one time.

LOVEJOY: Have you talked about this?

REESE: No, not really.

LOVEJOY: You can't have people walking all over you like that. You need to have your say.

REESE: I always thought that—

LOVEJOY: *(Excited.)* I have a surprise for you waiting backstage. *(Shouts.)* Come on out here, Chris! *(Chris walks out and politely waves at the audience. To Chris.)* How are you?

CHRIS: I'm very well. Thank you, Miss Lovejoy.

LOVEJOY: You're welcome.

CHRIS: Your hair is so perfect. How do you get it like that?

LOVEJOY: Oh, you know, just hairspray and bobby pins.

CHRIS: Are those really your eyes?

LOVEJOY: *(Confused.)* Yes.

CHRIS: Wow, from here I thought they had to be contacts. Your eyes are just so beautiful.

LOVEJOY: Well, thank you. *(Switching gears.)* Now, you're clearly an out-of-control teen. Do you want to explain to the audience why exactly you like making your parents so upset.

CHRIS: I'm not quite sure what you mean, Miss Lovejoy. My parents and I actually get along fine.

LOVEJOY: No, no, you're clearly misinformed. What I heard from your father, here, is that you verbally abuse his mother. Your grandmother. Flesh and blood.

REESE: It actually wasn't that big of a deal...

LOVEJOY: *(To Chris, indicating Reese.)* He is infuriated from what I understand, and I think you owe him an apology.

REESE: Really, it's okay.

LOVEJOY: *(To Reese, tone darkens.)* Who asked you! *(To Chris, tone lightens.)* I know this must be a very difficult time for you...with the way you look. It must be hard making friends being as hideously ugly as you are. I can understand why you might take it out on your grandmother.

CHRIS: Grandma and I get along pretty well.

LOVEJOY: Is that why you insulted her?

CHRIS: Oh, Dad was just talking about one time when she made peanut brittle, and she didn't know I was allergic, so when I didn't eat any, she took it the wrong way, but I apologized, and now we're fine.

LOVEJOY: You don't have to cover up your mistakes with lies. We all make mistakes. Believe it or not, when I was your age, I told my grandma her skin looked like someone took a skeleton and smeared mashed potatoes all over it.

CHRIS: That's disgusting.

TAMMY: Sometimes I'll make myself a whole pot of mashed potatoes just to make castles and towers out of it. It's just like sand...only it's potatoes.

[END OF FREEVIEW]