

# Gen. Bingo

Jonathan M. Zaley and Mary A. Zaley





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## GEN. BINGO

by

Jonathan M. Zaley and Mary A. Zaley

### PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

This play is interactive with the audience from the moment they walk through the front doors into the facility. If possible, house staff (ushers, concessionaires, etc.) should be dressed in military uniforms or some fashion thereof to add to the atmosphere.

The audience will be playing bingo as part of the show just prior to intermission, for a chance to win a frozen turkey. Show programs with bingo cards inserted within should be given to each audience member (one program per person) upon entering the room.

There are great PR opportunities with this show to generate press coverage:

**FOOD PANTRY DRIVE:** Since many bingo regulars bring good luck charms to their bingo games, encourage ticket buyers to bring in a box of *Lucky Charms*® cereal for an extra bingo card that gives them an extra chance to win the frozen turkey. (For every box of *Lucky Charms*® they bring in, give them an additional card...the more boxes of cereal, the more cards they get.) All boxes of *Lucky Charms*® collected will then be donated to the local food pantry.

**COLOR GUARD:** Local VFW or American Legion members should be invited to the show in exchange for bringing in the colors (flags) at the start of the show. This makes a great local PR story!

**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY CELEBRATIONS:** This show should be sold to the local festivals held during the Independence Day holiday. Many of these festivals have Bingo Tents in conjunction with the amusement rides and entertainment. It is a perfect tie-in with this patriotic holiday. The Food Pantry Drive mentioned above could also be tied into this festival show!

Audience participation games will be done throughout the show. The following items will need to be prepared prior to the audience arrival:

**GENERAL BINGO SONG:** The room should be divided into 5 sections and 5-1/2" X 8-1/2" signs with the letters in the word 'BINGO' should be placed on each table (one sign per person at each table...all people at same table having same letter). The majority of the room should be divided among 'B,' 'I,' 'N,' and 'G.' The "O" signs should be placed at one single table (with the smallest number of people) furthest from the stage, thus giving Major Payne "the table to pick on" during this routine.

**FLAG BINGO:** Payne will need a poster board size layout of a bingo card with appropriate squares blocked in to demonstrate to the audience how this version of bingo is played.

**MILITARY MANEUVERS:** Items Payne will need for this game include:

- Foam hopscotch game already assembled and kept backstage until needed.
- Three (3) sets of plastic toy western pistols and holsters in an Army green duffel bag held backstage until needed.
- Three (3) women's wigs (preferably one of each, blonde, brunette and redhead) in an Army Green duffel bag held backstage until needed

The audience participation parts of this show are what make it a lot of fun...both for the audience as well as the cast. Have fun performing it...feel free to adlib and improvise with your audience because you never know what will happen from performance to performance.

Thanks for performing my play! Have fun!

Jon Zaley

**Gen. Bingo**

(That's "General Bingo" for all you civilians out there!)

by

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**CAST**

**MAJOR DARREN AARON PAYNE:** *Vietnam Veteran, newly-appointed lodge president of his local VFW, proud American, not as slim and in shape as he used to be in his military days, and tends to run the lodge as if he were still in the army.*

**DOROTHY 'DOT' WHITE:** *Elderly, patriotic, God-fearing Catholic woman who is experienced in life and likes to meddle in other peoples' business. Stubborn and set in her ways, she cannot relate to liberal, 'free-for-all' thinking and the lack of pride in our country that is seen in younger generations, including her daughter, Ruthie.*

**RUTHIE WHITE:** *Today's younger generation kind of woman with live-in boyfriend, all the latest tech gadgets, just trying to find her place in society. Daughter to Dot, who loves and respects her mother, but doesn't understand her old-fashioned ways and can't stand her meddling in her life. Tries to remedy this by spending quality time with her mother, such as participating in Dot's favorite past time, bingo.*

**SETTING:** *Present time. Location should be made to feel as if the audience is attending their local VFW hall for Wednesday night bingo. Entrance way into hall has signs posted, such as:*

*"No one under 18 admitted"*

*"25¢ per Bingo Card/5 for \$1.00"*

*"Jackpot Bingo Wins \$500"*

*Main room is set up with long rows of rectangular folding banquet tables, covered with paper tablecloths.*

*On front stage is a long rectangular table covered with paper tablecloth where cast will perform.*

*A side stage is also in place where bingo caller table is set up with bingo ball cage and master bingo card. A large numbered BINGO board is behind this table. An American flag on a pole is off to the side behind the table with other veteran flags (Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, POW, state flag).*

*(UPON AUDIENCE ARRIVAL: MAJOR PAYNE, dressed in U.S. Army (Vietnam War) dress uniform, is in the lobby handing out bingo cards and striking up improv conversations with the audience as they arrive.)*

**PAYNE:** Did you do your calisthenics today, mister? I do 500 sit-ups every day at 0:600. Keeps me in tip-top shape. Can't you tell? *(slaps his belly)*

Tuck in that shirt and straighten those pants. We run a tight lodge around here, soldier!

*(giving the evil eye)*

Forgot your lodge pin today, eh? Drop and give me 20!

*(to someone entering in sneakers)*

Put a spit shine on those shoes, mister! This isn't high school ROTC! Show some pride!

Stand up straight! Stick out that chest! Suck in that gut! Now do it all at the same time!

*(to an attractive woman entering)*

Ma'am, you look awfully familiar. Didn't I see you perform in a USO show with Bob Hope? You were the one in the short skirt, weren't you?

What are you smiling for? Wipe that grin off your face! You shouldn't be having any fun yet! All the fun's in there *(pointing to main room)*.

*(to a slow moving busload of people)*

Move it! Move it! Move it! This isn't a cattle convention!

Remember now, no cheating allowed.

*(slapping his riding crop against his hand)*

Don't make me whip you into shape!

You look hungry enough to eat the south end of a northbound billy goat!

*(ONCE AUDIENCE IS SEATED: If this is a luncheon [or dinner] show where the audience has a meal prior to the show starting, once audience is seated, the bugle call for mess time is heard and PAYNE makes an announcement from Bingo caller stage.)*

**PAYNE:** Chow is now being served! Let's eat! *(loud enough to be overheard by audience as he exits stage)* Certainly smells better than the rations they served us in the mess hall! Enjoy, and I'll see you in a little while.

*(DURING THE MEAL: PAYNE schmoozes with the audience at each table explaining his calling of bingo numbers is background atmosphere for the show and has nothing to do with the actual game of bingo that the audience will play just prior to intermission. If he hears someone yell out, "Major Payne, we can't hear you," or "what number did you call?" PAYNE tells them he will come over there and smack them upside the head (as he whacks his riding crop on the table.)*

*(JUST BEFORE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START: The following can be done one of two ways...or both ways in combination. Option 1- Use one [or two in sync] scrolling lighted signs above [or on both sides of stage] where the following message scrolls by so audience can read the message. Option 2 - Lightning flickers above the stage, house lights flicker, and a loud thunderous crackle occurs as pre-recorded, reverberating Godly, George Burns-ish voice is heard)*

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I have your attention, please. *(Much louder thunderous boom and lightning flicker)* AHM! *(clearing throat)* That's better. Ladies and Gentlemen...this is God. My children, please pay attention to these important instructions, or I may make you build me an ark like I did my son, Noah...or walk around in a desert for 40 years like I did to my son, Moses, and his gang of scallywags...or, well you get the picture. During this show, Major Payne will be announcing bingo numbers as part of this play. These numbers ARE NOT for an actual game of bingo, but rather are just background atmosphere as part of this show. Just before intermission, my son, Major Payne will indeed invite you to play an actual game of bingo with the bingo card on the back of your program. Until then, just sit back and enjoy the show. *(Thunderous boom)* Thank you for your attention. I'll now go in peace...but remember...I am everywhere and I will be watching you. Say goodnight, Gracie.

*(Once the meal is over or if the show does not include a meal, then PAYNE will lead the audience in song to warm-up the audience for what's up ahead. Spotlight hits PAYNE on bingo caller's stage.)*

**PAYNE:** *(blows whistle)* A-TEEENNN-HUUUTTT! I said, A-TEEENNN-HUUUTTT!

*(pointing at whomever may be in the audience still talking)* Now if any of you civilians out there have any notion that you are just going to sit back and watch this show, you have another thing coming to you! Because you see, this is an AUD-I-ENCE PAR-TI-CI-PA-TION show. And what does that mean? I'll tell you what it means...IT MEANS YOU PARTICIPATE!

You will get off your butts and do what is told of you. No questions asked. No whining...no pouting faces. Just buck up and handle it! Is that understood? I said, IS THAT UNDERSTOOD? When I ask you a question your answer should be, "YES SIR, MAJOR PAYNE, SIR!" Now is that understood? *(wait for audience reply)*. I can't heeaaaaar you? *(leaning towards audience with hand cupped behind his ear waiting for audience reply...)(once audience replies with 'Yes sir, Major Payne, sir')* GOOD!!

*(If lunch/dinner was served, PAYNE continues with following...)*

**PAYNE:** First off, we're going to do a little P.T. to work off that wonderful lunch we just had. All my veterans out in the audience know what P.T. is. It means Physical Training. Now for all you civilians out there, that's calisthenics. Now we're going to start off easy with a few little butterflies *(motioning circles with arms)*, a couple of side bends, then we'll work up to more difficult stuff...like 500 sit-ups, 100 push-ups and 16 laps around the parking lot!

So now everyone on your feet *(motioning the audience to rise.)* I said up on your feet! C'mon! Get up! Get up! Get up! Let's go! *(under breath)* Bunch of sissies!

Okay everyone stretch your arms out like this *(stretching his arms out wide to his sides and parallel to the floor)*, being careful not to poke your neighbor in the eyeball. *(Under breath)* Don't want to mess up those pretty white *(or whatever color)* tablecloths.

Now rotate your arms in a forward direction like this *(demonstrating to the audience)*. Oh, look at that. You look like a bunch of seagulls.

Good. Now rotate you arms in a backwards direction like this. Oh, that's wonderful.

Now try them both at the same time *(as he rotates one arm forward and one arm backward)*.

Oh sure, now we have to think, don't we! Excellent! That's enough of that.

Now let's do some side bends. First we'll do two to the right then two to the left, then back to the right again until I say stop. Is that understood? *(wait for reply)* I said, IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?? *(wait for reply)* Ready? Let's begin. *(counting out loud as he bends twice to the right)* 1, 2 *(counting as he bends twice to the left)* 1, 2 *(back to the right)* 1...*(stopping as having a back spasm)* Ow! *(pause)* Ow! *(as he reaches around for his back)* Well I think that's enough P.T. for one day, don't you? You can all sit down now.

*(once audience is seated and still)* Now that your blood is moving again, we're ready to warm you up for this show. I'm going to have a little fun with you, so bear with me. The room has been divided into 5 sections. How many sections did I say? *(hand cupped behind ear waiting for audience reply...once audience mumbles 'five')* That's, "FIVE, MAJOR PAYNE, SIR!"

Now, each section has little signs on their tables for each letter of the word "BINGO." Please pass those signs around to your fellow tablemates and let's get started.

*(as he points out each section)* Now we have the "B's" here...The "I's" here...The "N's" here...The "G's" here...and the "O's" *(looking way back into the audience)* way back there.

You are awake back there, aren't you "O's?" Paying attention? Can you hear me back there? *(wait for reply)* Did you "O's" get something to drink back there that the rest of us didn't? Better get them some coffee back there...make it BLACK...EXTRA STRONG!

*(demonstrating with a sign off someone's table)* Now, when I call out your letter, you will raise your sign high above your head and shout out your letter. Is that understood? *(wait for audience reply).* I said, IS THAT UNDERSTOOD? *(hand cupped behind ear waiting for required reply).* GOOD!!

Here we go now. B *(wait for tables with the letter B to raise signs above heads and shout out B...more than likely response will be minimal or poorly done, so PAYNE blows whistle and walks off stage into audience near 'B' tables)* Wake up! Are you people deaf? I said, B! *(wait for 'B's to hold up signs and shout B)* You have got to do better than that, 'B's. I expect perfection! *(instructing like a kindergarten teacher by holding someone's arm and lifting it above their head)*

Now when I call out your letter you raise your sign and shout out your letter. Let's try once more. Ready, set, B. *(wait for reply...if still poorly done, PAYNE finds a veteran sitting amongst the B tables and makes them a squadron leader where it is their responsibility to whip*

*the B tables into shape while PAYNE, with spotlight following him, moves into the audience and on to the other letters)*

Now let's see what the rest of you can do. And don't make me come over to your tables and whip you into shape as well.

Here we go...I *(wait for reply from I tables...if response is good, which may be the case since each letter will start competing to be the best, then...)* Not bad, not bad.

How about the N's? *(wait for reply from N tables)* Getting better.

How about G? *(wait for reply from G tables)*

Okay, here comes the biggie...and O? *(wait for reply from O tables which should be somewhat minimal if only a few O signs were distributed)* Could we get a little more enthusiasm back there? Try again...O *(wait for reply)*.

*(moving near B tables and their squad leader again)* Okay, let's see if we can get through this whole thing in rapid-fire machine gun style. Are you ready B squad leader? *(PAYNE with hand on shoulder of squad leader waiting for reply to question...if no response nor proper 'Yes sir, Major Payne, sir!' response then...)* I said, are you ready squad leader? *(wait for reply)*.

*(PAYNE begins calling out each letter in rapid-fire succession and pointing in direction of tables as each letter is called out)* Okay! Ready, set...B *(pause for response)*...I *(pause for response)*...N *(pause for response)*...G *(pause for response)*...O *(pause for response)*.

Again! B...I...N...G...O!

Good. Now that I have you taking orders, it's time to put you to the test. Remember what you have just learned and follow along as we all join together to do the *Bingo Cadence* as you see it in your program. It's very simple. All you have to do is repeat after me *(give audience chance to find Bingo Cadence in program)*

Now, everyone repeat after me...*(sung in military march cadence)*

I don't know what you've been told *(audience should repeat cadence...if audience does not repeat, PAYNE should stop and give a disgusted look)* I said, everyone repeat after me! Now let's try it again!

I don't know what you've been told (*audience repeats*)  
 This here show's as good as gold (*audience repeats cadence*)  
 And if you heard what I just said (*audience repeats*)

(PAYNE claps 3 times as he says 'Clap your hands' and salutes as he says 'salute from your head')

Clap your hands and salute from your head (*audience repeats words and movements...if audience does not repeat words and movements*) I said this is an audience participation show, people. Work with me here! (PAYNE then repeats above line and movements before moving on)

Hi-Dee-Hi-Dee-Hi (*audience repeats*)

Hi-Dee-Hi-Dee-Ho (*audience repeats*)

Hi-Ho-Hee (*audience repeats*)

Sound off! (*audience says 'BING-O' as indicated in program...if audience messes up, PAYNE stops cadence*) Look people! It's right there in your program. I say 'Sound off.' You say, 'BING-O.' I say 'Sound off.' You say, what? (PAYNE cupping hand behind ear waiting for reply) 'BING-O.' That's right. Let's pick it up from there.

Sound off! (*audience says BING-O*)

Sound off! (*audience says BING-O*)

Cadence count...B-I-N-G-O...Bingo! (*as Payne is spelling out B-I-N-G-O, he should be pointing to each section to hold up their signs and shout out the letter...more than likely, the audience did not perform as expected by lifting up their signs as they spelled out 'BINGO.'* PAYNE should cross arms and give a more disgusted look than before as he paces back and forth.) I cannot believe you people. We just went through all of this less than 5 minutes ago. Is your memory that bad? As you spell out the word, BINGO, what are you supposed to do? I'll tell you what you're supposed to do...you're supposed to lift up your sign as you shout out the letters...B...I...N...G...O! It's that simple. (*throwing up his hands and shaking his head back and forth in disbelief*) If you were in boot camp, you'd be getting 20 push-ups for each of these mistakes!

(*getting tense and gritting teeth*) Let's take it from the top and let's see if we can't make it all the way through, and with lots of enthusiasm and smiling faces, okay? (*waiting for reply from audience*) I said, IS THAT CLEAR? (*cupping hand behind ear waiting for required 'Yes sir, Major Payne, sir' response...if not proper response*) That's 'YES SIR, MAJOR PAYNE, SIR!' (*waits for reply*) Good! Now let's try it again without stopping!

*(PAYNE repeats cadence from the top with audience following. If audience cannot get it right, PAYNE gives up and moves on or applauds the audience for making it through correctly)*

Now that we are somewhat warmed up, let's see if we can sing our theme song together. The words are in your program. Most of you are familiar with the children's song, *(singing)* *There was a farmer who had a dog and Bingo was his name-oh.* Our theme song follows that format. And if you remember from way back when you sang this as a child...and I know some of you have to remember back further than most of us...each time we sing the chorus, one letter goes silent until we do not sing out 'BINGO.' So as your letter comes up, you just lift your sign, but do not sing your letter. I will give you a break on this one. We'll go through it first, then do the whole thing in its entirety again where there will be no mistakes. Is that understood? *(wait for audience reply)*. I can't heeaaaaar you...I said, IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?? *(wait for reply)*. GOOD!! Here we go...

*(if the audience messes up at any point, PAYNE may adlib and stop the song to nicely verbally assault the guilty culprits in the audience. Examples:*

*Out a little late last night, soldier? CONCENTRATE!...or...Blood not reaching the brain just yet? PAY ATTENTION!...or...If we're moving too fast for you, we can slow it down a bit...WHEN PIGS FLY! Get with the program, will you?)*

*(PAYNE only)*            There was a general in the army and Bingo was his name, oh...  
*(Everyone sings)*        B-I-N-G-O  
                                   B-I-N-G-O  
                                   B-I-N-G-O  
                                   And Bingo was his name, oh...

*(PAYNE)*                A vet of WW I & II and Bingo was his name, oh...  
*(Everyone)*            *(silent B sign)*-I-N-G-O *(repeat 2 more times)*  
                                   and Bingo was his name, oh...

*(Audience will mess up at this point, PAYNE shakes head in disgust.) I'm not tired, and I'm not proud. (PAYNE re-explains how this works and starts again from above second chorus.)*

*(PAYNE)*                He was a man with American spirit and Bingo was his name, oh...  
*(Everyone)*            *(silent B & I signs)*-N-G-O *(repeat 2 more times)*  
                                   and Bingo was his name, oh...

*(PAYNE)*                Respected by man, community and country and Bingo was his name, oh...

(Everyone) (silent B & I & N signs)-G-O (repeat 2 more times)  
and Bingo was his name, oh...

(PAYNE) The past president of this here lodge and Bingo was his name, oh...  
(Everyone) (silent B & I & N & G signs)-O (repeat 2 more times)  
and Bingo was his name, oh...

(PAYNE) Now this will be the tough part, so pay attention.  
He was a hero for all times, and Bingo was his name, oh...

(Everyone) (silent B & I & N & G & O signs) (repeat 2 more times)  
and Bingo was his name-oh!

For a gazillionth try with this letter thing, that wasn't too bad. Give yourselves a hand. I said, GIVE YOURSELVES A HAND, is that clear? (as PAYNE applauds the audience). The next time though, I expect PERFECTION!

*(Side stage goes dark as spotlight swings over to catch DOT and RUTHIE entering the room from the back and walking through the audience, clasping dozens of purchased bingo cards.)*

**DOT:** *(loudly exclaiming)* Oh no! We're really late! They're all here already. Why couldn't you pick me up on time for a change?

**RUTHIE:** Don't yell at me! How was I to know there was a fish fry before the bingo game, and all the good tables would be taken?

*(DOT, holding RUTHIE by the arm, now mingle their way through the audience up toward the front stage, all the while, improv-ing quick one-liner conversations with people as they work their way up.)*

**DOT:** *(putting her hand on a male audience member's shoulder)* Oh hi there! Good to see you, John! I haven't seen you lately. We'll have to get together and play cards sometime soon. Say hello to the family for me will you? *(As she walks away from person, DOT turns to RUTHIE and quietly gossips)* You know about John, don't you? He's the one who never wears a pair of matching socks anywhere he goes. Especially in the summertime when he's wearing his sandals. Whoowee...what a sight!

**RUTHIE:** Ohhh? *(questioning in disbelief that her mother just said that while also trying to look under the table at John's socks)*

**DOT:** *(pointing and waving to an audience member a few tables over then talking to RUTHIE)* Betty over there can hardly keep up with her husband these days, if you know what I mean.

**RUTHIE:** Oh yeah? Why's that?

**DOT:** She wishes the doctors would slow down his pacemaker a bit. He's a maniac in the bedroom!

**RUTHIE:** *(shocked look on her face. Nervously smiling at those around her that might have overheard her mother.)*

**DOT:** *(hugging an elderly female audience member)* My, my, my, my, my! It's been so long since I saw you last! How're those cute little grandkids of yours? We'll have to have a nice long chat after the bingo game so you can tell me all about them. *(Walking away, DOT turns to RUTHIE and quietly gossips)* You know what she's done don't you? She's spent those kids' inheritance on all this bingo playing, gracious sakes?

**RUTHIE:** Mother! You don't know that for sure, do you?

**DOT:** *(ignoring RUTHIE's question and waving to a man a few tables over)* Hi Bob! Your lawn is looking mighty fine! Better get your mower checked out though. I think the gear must be stuck or something. *(Pulls RUTHIE close to gossip)* Oh gracious. You know about him, don't you? He's been mowing the lawn in circles ever since he had that so-called run-in with a UFO.

**RUTHIE:** Huh?! *(shaking head in disbelief). Stop talking about people like that (saying between clenched teeth).*

**DOT:** *(cupping female audience member's face in hands)* Oh dearie! You look great after the operation! Just wonderful! Amazing! So good to see you! *(Pulling RUTHIE close)* She's had seven face lifts. The doctors had to use Crazy Glue™ on this last one!

**RUTHIE:** Mother!!

**END OF FREEVIEW**

**You'll want to read and perform this show!**