

# THE WRONG SIDE OF THE LAW

A melodrama in two acts

By  
Dave Brandl

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## STORY OF THE PLAY

Flint Buckshot is away at a sheriffs' convention, so his daughter, Shania, is the deputy in charge – even though she never did get a horse, badge, or a gun to make it official-like! When two desperados, Saddleback Bertha and Sleazebag Barney, roll into town, they realize they've found easy pickings. Telegrams soon arrive reporting that Flint's been badly hurt. Smelling an opportunity, Bertha points out that since Shania is a novice, Barney should be the sheriff because he has considerable experience with law enforcement (although on the wrong side of the law!)

Suddenly a masked gunman appears, the same man who robbed the wealthy Priscilla Pompador, and it's none other than the sheriff himself! But will he and Shania, along with Wrandall Wright and his widowed mother, be able to convince the townsfolk the newcomers are wanted criminals? And will Wrandall, who's besotted with Priscilla, ever realize Shania is sweet on him?

Other fun roles include Mo, the grammar-obsessed telegraph operator; Mule Trayne, the stagecoach driver, and assorted townsfolk, some of whom are not very bright, quiet or sober.

## ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

*The Wrong Side of the Law* premiered July 23, 2004, at Theatre Suburbia in Houston, Texas. Doris Merten directed the show. Violet Birchill was the stage manager. The cast was:

Shania Buckshot: Nicole King  
Wrandall Wright: Benjamin Caldwell  
"Saddleback" Bertha Asbad: Lynne Hill  
"Sleazebag" Barney Stonehead: Glenn Dodson  
Widow Wright: Marilyn Faulkner  
Mo Samuels: Kathryn Collins  
Priscilla Pompador: Carly Rucker  
"Mule" Trayne: Tony d'Armata  
Foxy Calhoun: Linda Childers  
Rhubarb Jones: Morgan Granbery  
Pusky Maludo: Marylynn Coryell  
Col. Flint Buckshot: Joseph Miles  
Rosetta O'Flanagan: Amy Granbery

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(4 M, 5 F, 4 Flexible)*

**SHANIA BUCKSHOT:** Deputy of Alpine Junction, young and pretty, but inexperienced; in love with Wrandall Wright.

**WRANDALL WRIGHT:** Owner of the Wright Hotel and other businesses; in love with Priscilla Pompador.

**"SADDLEBACK" BERTHA ASBAD:** Con artist, mean and nasty.

**"SLEAZEBAG" BARNEY STONEHEAD:** Bertha's cohort, mean and not too bright.

**WIDOW WRIGHT:** Wrandall's mother, works with him, is suffering from many of the usual old-age ailments.

**MO SAMUELS:** Runs the telegraph office, obsessed with correct usage of the English language.

**PRISCILLA POMPADOR:** The beautiful, rich daughter of the local mine owner, a Southern belle, in love with herself, looking to leave town when she's of age.

**"MULE" TRAYNE:** Stagecoach driver, superstitious.

**COYOTE (OR FOXY) CALHOUN:** Townsperson, not very bright.

**RHUBARB (OR STRAWBERRY) JONES:** Townsperson, not very quiet.

**PUSKY MALUDO:** Townsperson, not very sober.

**COL. FLINT BUCKSHOT:** Sheriff of Alpine Junction and Shania's father; was in Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders under Priscilla's father, General Pompador, who gave him this job.

**ROSETTA O'FLANAGAN:** Orphan whose father worked in the local mine.

*NOTE: Mo, Coyote, Rhubarb, and Pusky may be played by men or women.*

Performance time about 70 minutes.

## **SETTING**

Wrandall Wright's Belly Up Saloon, Hotel, Restaurant, Bathhouse, and Dance Hall in the small mining town of Alpine Junction, high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, 1908.

There are three entrances: the front door to the street, a hallway that leads to the hotel, and a hallway to the storeroom. The bar has a few stools in front of it and a trap door behind it. The trap door need not be an actual working door, but may be any type of secret escape behind the bar. There are a couple of small tables with chairs around them. There is a sign that reads "Wrandall Wright's Belly Up Saloon, Hotel, Restaurant, Bathhouse, and Dance Hall. Spring, 1908."

## **SYNOPSIS**

Act I: One spring day, 1908.

Act II: The next day.

*Some musical numbers may be performed at the start of Act II, such as period pieces by Stephen Foster or Gilbert and Sullivan.*

## **PROP LIST**

BEHIND OR NEAR THE BAR: Bottles and glasses; rack of keys to hotel rooms; Widow's bundle containing badge, gun and holster, and spur; Widow's rifle.

WRANDALL: Large sacks of grain.

BARNEY: Badge, prop gun and holster.

MO: Several telegrams.

MULE: Rope.

FLINT: Mask or scarf; gun and holster; badge.

SHANIA: Telegram.

ON TABLES: Optional card and poker chips.

## **Act I**

*(AT RISE: SHANIA BUCKSHOT and WRANDALL WRIGHT are in front of the bar in what appears to be a passionate embrace. There is soft moaning. After a beat, they slowly rotate, revealing that Shania has Wrandall in a headlock, and he is groaning. Wrandall is a small man. Shania is physically fit.)*

WRANDALL: Ow! I get it, I get it, already!

SHANIA: *(Releasing the headlock.)* Anyway, that's how we captured the Denver Desperado.

WRANDALL: *(Rubbing HIS neck.)* Your pa teach you that move?

SHANIA: Yeah. It's one of his favorites. He also showed me this one. *(Starts to reach for WRANDALL.)*

WRANDALL: No, Shania! Not again! I still haven't recovered from the last one.

SHANIA: Sorry, Wrandall. Sometimes I get carried away.

WRANDALL: Especially the last few months. Since about the time that your mother ...

*(SHANIA looks away. WRANDALL notices.)*

WRANDALL: Sorry. We all loved her. It must be very hard.

SHANIA: Yeah.

WRANDALL: So when does your pa get back?

SHANIA: The sheriffs' convention is supposed to be over today, and then a couple of days to get back here.

WRANDALL: So, for this past week, you've been the law in Alpine Junction?

SHANIA: I guess so. I've been his deputy since last year.

WRANDALL: Sounds official to me.

SHANIA: Though he never gave me a horse.

WRANDALL: Yeah.

SHANIA: Or a badge.

WRANDALL: True.

SHANIA: Or a gun.

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WRANDALL: Well ... he doesn't even carry one. Hasn't carried a gun for years.

SHANIA: I think I'd like the badge more. Then folks'd know I'm officially the deputy.

WRANDALL: Most folks in town know it. There hasn't been any trouble while he's been out of town, has there?

SHANIA: Not really. Just a disturbin' the peace and a couple of drunks. And they're regulars. Even locked themselves up. Seems like all I'm doin' is holdin' the doors. I guess that's what deputies are for.

WRANDALL: I need to pick up some supplies from the store. Can you watch things here for a few minutes?

SHANIA: Sure. I guess that's also what deputies are for.

WRANDALL: Thanks, Shania. *(HE walks behind the bar, then disappears.)*

SHANIA: Look, Wrandall, I'm sorry if I hurt your arm. *(SHE looks around.)* Wrandall? Wrandall?

BARNEY: *(Offstage.)* After you, my dear.

BERTHA: *(Offstage.)* Of course "after me." And cut that "dear" stuff.

*(SADDLEBACK BERTHA and SLEAZEBALL BARNEY ENTER. They are dressed in clothes that were probably fancy a few years earlier.)*

BARNEY: *(Walks to bar.)* Hey, can we get some service here, darling?

SHANIA: *(Walks behind bar.)* Uh ... sure. What would you like?

BARNEY: I think I'm in the mood for a ... banana daiquiri. *(Pronounces it dak-you-ree.)*

SHANIA: *(Looks at the bar inventory.)* A what?

BARNEY: A daiquiri? It's a new drink they have back East. *(Pronounces it dak-yee-ree.)*

BERTHA: It's pronounced daiquiri, you moron.

*(BERTHA slaps BARNEY on the arm. SHANIA notices, then looks back at the bottles.)*

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