

WHERE IS BARTRAM?

by
DC Copeland

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Cast List

BARTRAM HAIRSTREAK: a proactive butterfly.

BONNIE: an anxious Florida Bonneted bat.

FLO: a timid Florida Leafwing butterfly.

TIGGER: a flamboyant, hyper tiger beetle.

JAWS: a ruthless excavator.

Location/Time

Miami, Florida/Present

Federally Endangered Species

Bartram's Hairstreak butterfly

Florida Bonneted bat

Florida Leafwing butterfly

Polygala Smallii plant

TBD Federally Endangered Species

Miami Tiger Beetle

SUGGESTED NOTES ON STAGING

Keep it simple. The tree can be a tall black step ladder securely fastened to the stage. A black 4x4 is slid through it to serve as the branch. The actors are dressed in black (with character costumed accents).

JAWS' S/FX are suggestions only (see appendix). Using a voice changing microphone-speaker system that works through the mask is another option.

Echolocating S/FX is [linked](#) to the script so the actor can try to duplicate the sound of the Florida Bonneted bat.

The SLIDE SHOW (attached) is a summation of the ongoing effort to save the characters' homes and includes pictures of Bartram and his endangered friends. It also includes a call to action for the audience to email the mayor of Miami-Dade County to stop the development. It can be projected or ran on a monitor. Or not used at all.

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SETTING: One of the world's rarest forests, a section of Miami-Dade County's last intact tracts of endangered pine rockland.

AT RISE: BONNIE is hanging upside down from a tree branch and FLO is sitting on the branch on the other side of the "tree trunk." Bonnie is anxiously looking around.

BONNIE

Where is Bartram?

TIGGER, a Miami Tiger Beetle, runs onto the stage. He's wearing oversized sunglasses and is wrapped in an iridescent cape. He runs, stops, doesn't move-- and then runs, stops, pauses again, and looks out over the audience.

BONNIE

Tigger! Stop that! You're making me crazy!

TIGGER

Stop what?

FLO

Bonnie, relax. It's just Tigger's way.

BONNIE

Yeah, well it's making me crazy... Where is Bartram?

TIGGER

Bartram's not here?

BONNIE

We can't have a meeting without Bartram!

FLO

Why not?

BONNIE

Because Robert won't allow it.

FLO

Who's Robert?

BONNIE

The guy who wrote the book on how to hold a meeting.

FLO

Does he live in the forest?

BONNIE

No! Not everybody lives in the forest you know.

FLO

Too bad for them.

TIGGER

Yeah, too bad for them.

BONNIE

Where is that crazy little butterfly?

FLO

Give him time. You know him, probably smelling the roses.

BONNIE

“Smelling the roses?” We don't have time for that! Time is of the essence! Our lives are at stake for crying out loud!

Bonnie starts [echolocating](#). Tigger goes nuts, jumping up and down and zipping around the stage and stopping short for a second to grab his head before doing it again.

TIGGER

Tigger no like! Tigger no like!

FLO

(Grabbing ears)

Whoa, Bonnie, what's up with that? It's not dark yet.

BONNIE

(Stops echolating)

Just calling Bartram. It's his ring tone. Tigger, stop it already!

Tigger stops short, looks around and slowly removes his hands from his ears.

FLO
His ring tone? Do I have a ring tone?

BONNIE
Yes.

TIGGER
Do I?

BONNIE
No.

FLO
How come I never heard it?

TIGGER
Good!

BONNIE
Because I never needed to call you.

FLO
What, I'm not worthy?

TIGGER
No, you're *LUCKY!*

BONNIE
You're very worthy. You're an endangered species for crying out loud.

FLO
Yeah, what's up with that? I don't feel "endangered."

TIGGER
Me neither. But I do feel... special. Da-da-da-Dum...
(Tigger strikes a pose and runs his hand along his
iridescent cloak while humming a tune.)

BONNIE
You are special, Tigger. We all are. Tigger, for your size, you're the
fastest thing on the forest floor. And the baddest thing too.

TIGGER
Darn tootin.' They don't call me a *Tiger* Beetle for nothing.
(Growls.)

BONNIE

Flo, you're a master of disguise. When you're flying, our world is lit up in flashes of color. But when you rest on a leaf, you vanish. None of us can do that.

FLO

(Preening.)

Yeah, I am pretty good at that.

BONNIE

And me, well you know what I can do.

TIGGER

(Holding head.)

Yeah, make me crazy.

FLO

--Fly through the woods on the darkest nights without running into anything!

TIGGER

And hang upside down on a branch all day and not get a headache, whoop-de-do-- but wouldn't you *rather* be wearing my coat of many colors? Da-da-da-Dum.

(Tigger pauses to model his cloak and hum.)

FLO

You know, Tigger, it isn't all about *you*.

BONNIE

That's right, Flo, it's all about *us*. Thanks to Bartram's chance encounter with the human, now we know we're also... *endangered*.

FLO

Yeah, what did he call him?

BONNIE

A "scientist," whatever that is. Told him he and me and you-- and even you, Tigger-- are all on some kind of "endangered species list."

TIGGER

(Assumes a boxer's stance, throws punches.)

Just try to "endanger" me. I'll show 'em..

FLO

(Rolls eyes, shakes head dismissively)

Yeah, sure you will. Bonnie, what did we do to deserve that?

BONNIE

From what I can tell, being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Humans want to live where we do. But Bartram says not to worry 'cause we got an Uncle Sam looking out for us.

TIGGER

(Shadow boxing.)

Uncle who?

BONNIE

Uncle Sam.

TIGGER

Never heard of him.

BONNIE

I think he's a human.

TIGGER

We doan need no stinkin' humans taking care of us as long as you got Tigger the Tiger Beetle on our side.

(Throws an upper cut and growls.)

FLO

So, Bonnie, can't we all live together?

BONNIE

No. According to Bartram they need to remove our forest so they can live here.

TIGGER

(Dancing in the ring like Muhammad Ali.)

“According to Bartram; According to Bartram.” That's all I hear.

You got a thing for him or somethin'?

Suddenly the LIGHTS FLICKER and JAWS ENTERS, scaring the fauna with its flashing lights, snapping jaws, and its booming mechanical voice. When the excavator opens its jaws with a grinding metallic SOUND it's taller than the tree. Jaws bites the tree and shakes it hard. Scared, Flo grabs the “tree” and holds on for dear life. Bonnie grabs the “branch,” swings her legs off to an upright position beside the tree, and cowers in fear. Tigger is darting about the stage looking for an exit.

JAWS

Ha!.. Ha!.. Ha! You guys make me laugh. You're history and you don't even know it. Stop!

Jaws drops its excavator jaws in front of Tigger. Tigger slides to a stop and just shakes.

TIGGER

Dubba-dubba-do-dubba-dubba-do-do...

BONNIE

Who are you?

JAWS

(Whipping around to Bonnie.)

Your worst nightmare.

FLO

(Cringing)

What's a nightmare?

JAWS

Are you kidding me, you little... What the heck are you anyway?

BONNIE

She's a Florida Leafwing and I'm a--

JAWS

A "Florida Leafwing"? What the heck is that?

FLO

A.. A cute little butterfly?

JAWS

Cute? You look like a dead leaf-- shaking in the wind. Ha-ha-ha!

BONNIE

Yeah, that's her defense against big bullies like you.

JAWS

Whoe, aren't you the brave funny looking... thingie.

BONNIE

I'm a Florida Bonneted Bat. See how my ears go over my eyes?
Like a bonnet?

JAWS

"Like a bonnet"? Are you kidding me? Is that all you got going for you?

BONNIE

That and I'm "*endangered*." So is Flo. And so is Tigger. You better not mess with us or Tigger will be all over you.

Jaws turns to Tigger. Tigger is still shaking in place.

JAWS

Oh, I'm so scared.

Jaws shoves Tigger to the ground. Tigger rolls onto his back and, with his arms and legs pointing upward, shakes uncontrollably.

BONNIE

Oh, you in trouble now. Uncle Sam will be all over you.

JAWS

“Uncle Sam”? I hate to tell you this but he's got more important things on his mind. You're history.

BONNIE

But we're *protected!*

JAWS

Were.

BONNIE

But Bartram said a great University owns our world and is sworn to protect it *forever*.

JAWS

Ha!..Ha!..Ha! Forever is history too. They sold you out, little squishy thingies. Make room for Walmart!

Jaws opens his jaws as wide as they will go to a great clanging SOUND and descends on the tree.

BONNIE

Wait a minute!

Jaws pauses, mouth open wide.

JAWS

What?

BONNIE

What's a Walmart?

JAWS

It's the thing that hired me to eat you.

FLO

What kinda monster would do such a thing? What'd we ever do to it?

JAWS

You got in its way. Now prepare to *die!*

BARTRAM ENTERS flapping his wings for all he's worth.

BARTRAM

Whoa, hold on there, big fellow!

Jaws stops in mid chomp and looks down at Bartram.

BONNIE/FLO

Bartram!

TIGGER

Bar-tram-m-m-m.

BARTRAM

Sorry I'm late for the meeting, Bonnie. Saw a polygala smallii and just had to take a whiff.

JAWS

“Polygala smallii”?

TIGGER

Bar-tram-m-m-m.

BARTRAM

Yeah, its a darling little plant with bright yellow flowers and--

BONNIE

--And it's endangered too!

BARTRAM

Hope I'm not too late.

TIGGER

Bar-tram-m-m-m.

BONNIE

Oh, Bartram, you could never be too late.

JAWS

Not necessarily so. Prepare to *die!*

BARTRAM

Dude, lighten up. Take a chill pill.

TIGGER

Bar-tram-m-m-m.

JAWS

“Dude”? “Chill pill”? Aren't you afraid of me?

BARTRAM

I don't know. Should I be?

JAWS

Like *yeah*.

TIGGER

Bar-tram-m-m-m.

BARTRAM

Well, I'm not.

JAWS

What, are you nuts? I'm a big bad excavator and you're nothing but a little squishy thingie, like Mr. Tough Bug over there.

TIGGER

Bar-tram-m-m-m.

BARTRAM

Uh, I'm a butterfly, man. And an endangered one at that. My name's Bartram Hairstreak.

Bartram walks over to Tigger and helps him up.

TIGGER

Bar-tram-m-m-m.

JAWS

“Bartram *Hairstreak*”? What a name! Ha.. Ha.. Ha! Your name's longer than you are. Ha.. Ha.. Ha!

BARTRAM

(Whips around to Jaws.)

And that's *MR.* Bartram Hairstreak to you, sir.

TIGGER

(from behind Bartram, pointing bravely at Jaws)

You tell him, Bartram!

JAWS

And I'm *MR. JAWS* to you, you little pipsqueak.

Jaws tries to bite Bartram but the butterfly is too fast. Tigger, now exposed, starts shaking in place again.

TIGGER

J-J-J-Jaws...

Jaws pushes Tigger aside and runs after Bartram. Tigger assumes his “defensive” position again on the stage, his legs and arms shaking badly.

BONNIE/FLO

Bartram!

Bartram whips out a sheet of paper from under his wing as he continues to elude Jaws' jaws and waves it in front of its face.

BARTRAM

I've got a court order here, Mr. Jaws! You're to cease and desist all eating and swallowing of our homes!

JAWS

Whoopti-do! See if I care! I got lawyers, too!

Jaws chases Bartram into the AUDIENCE, chomping his terrible jaws together over and over again in an effort to eat the little butterfly.

BONNIE

Leave him alone, you big bully!

Bonnie swoops after Jaws, attacking it from the right with her tiny little bat fists and teeth.

FLO

Yeah, he's our friend!

Flo attacks Jaws from the left with her tiny little butterfly legs. Jaws stops chasing Bartram and turns on Bonnie and Flo. It catches Bonnie and tosses her onto the stage where she lies immobile next to the shivering Tigger.

BARTRAM

Bonnie!

Jaws catches Flo, and waves her from side to side before tossing her onto the stage where she falls in a heap next to Bonnie and Tigger.

BARTRAM

Flo!

Bartram rushes to their aid. As he kneels over them Jaws catches him in his jaws.

BARTRAM

Let me go!

Tigger, finally channeling his “tiger” genes, rolls over, grabs Jaws' leg and bites it hard!

JAWS

What! Why you little...

With Bartram struggling to free himself from Jaws' giant pinchers, Jaws tries to kick Tigger loose.

Bartram frees himself and, using a twisting back spin MMA move, elbows the excavator in the jaws. Stunned, Jaws' eyeball lights flash wildly as it tries to catch Bartram, dragging Tigger across the stage. When Jaws pauses to kick Tigger loose, Bartram uses that moment to climb onto its back and to reach behind its head to... yank out a set of keys. Jaws freezes and the monstrous SOUND he had been making is SILENCED. A puff of SMOKE rises from the top of its head.

BARTRAM

Here, Tigger!

Bartram tosses the keys down to Tigger and, like the badass butterfly he is, jumps off of Jaws, landing on the stage in a crouching superhero pose before flying over to his friends.

BARTRAM

Bonnie! Flo! Speak to me!

A moment passes before Bonnie echolocates. That high-pitched sound wakens Flo.

BONNIE

Bartram, you saved us!

BARTRAM

So did Tigger!

BONNIE/FLO

Tigger?

TIGGER

What? I'm a Miami *Tiger* Beetle, for crying out loud.
(Growls.)

BARTRAM

I couldn't have done it without him. Or you guys! Thanks for coming to my aid. We're safe for now but Jaws' boss doesn't give up easily. This is an on-going battle for truth and justice for endangered species everywhere!

BONNIE

Oh, Bartram, you sound like a... super hero!

BARTRAM

We're all Super Heroes when fighting to save the world and all of its living things.

FLO

But how can we win the battle? According to Jaws, we're nothing but a bunch of little squishy thingies.

BONNIE

Yeah, it's not like there's a lot of us to make a difference. There's only a few of us. We can't do it alone.

BARTRAM

We won't have to. As long as we got friends in high places--

FLO

--Like Bald Eagle?

BARTRAM

Not really. He's endangered too.

TIGGER

Like Uncle Sam?

BARTRAM

Uh, I don't think so. From what I hear, he's kinda busy.

BONNIE

Then who, Bartram? Who?

Bartram turns to the AUDIENCE.

BARTRAM

Them.

Bonnie, Tigger, and Flo turn to the Audience.

BONNIE/FLO/TIGGER

Them?

BARTRAM

Them.

(To Audience.)

Will you help save our homes?

Hopefully someone will shout "Yes!" Bartram stands and channels Jimmy Stewart in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

BARTRAM

Thank you! Are there any others? Thank you! Thank you! You don't have to be a big shot or even an adult. All you need to be is part of the *human* species. The human species that cares about all living things-- even the little squishy thingies like us. Call your congressman or woman. Write your president. Send them emails. Whatever works for you. Otherwise... you'll never see us again. And that would be sad because I like looking at you. You're beautiful. Hopefully enough of you like looking at us too and will want to know that we're still alive and well and living happily ever after in our own little world.

BOOMING VOICE

Why isn't the excavator excavating? We got a store to open! Things to sell! Turn it on remotely!

Jaws snaps back to life with a loud roar and a mighty wave of its jaws. Smoke puffs from the top of its head.

BARTRAM

Please, hurry.

(Cont'd)

Bartram and his friends, scared, fly and run into each other before EXITING on each side of the stage as the LIGHTS DIM TO A SINGLE SPOT on Jaws. It growls, climbs the ladder, and waves its mighty jaws from side to side over its head making it look bigger than it really is. LIGHT/SOUND DROP. BLACK OUT. SILENCE. A moment passes before SLIDE SHOW fades in and appears on the dark stage showing the actual endangered species and a challenge to the audience to contact the Mayor of Miami-Dade County to protest the zoning of this land for development.

SLIDE SHOW COPY

Walmart is coming to one of the world's rarest forests, Miami-Dade County's endangered pine rocklands and only you can stop it. Pine rockland is found only in South Florida, the Bahamas and Cuba. Today less than 2 percent remains of South Florida's share of this forest because of development.

It is home to animals, insects, and plants found no where else on earth such as the Polygala Smallii, the Florida Leafwing, the Florida Bonneted Bat, and the Bartram's Hairstreak.

In July, 2014 88-acres of the pine rocklands-- land given to the University of Miami by the federal government-- were sold by the university to a developer for \$22-million.

Aside from the 158,000sf Walmart, plans also include an LA Fitness center, Chik-fil-A and Chili's restaurants, and about 900 apartments.

CATCH 22x2

Unfortunately, since Uncle Sam no longer owns the land, his hands are tied in trying to protect habitat for endangered wildlife. To make matters worse, Miami-Dade County has an ordinance that requires forest protection only *after* the land is developed.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you are against building anything on the largest remaining fragment of disappearing pine rockland forest outside Everglades National Park, please contact Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez at <mailto:mayor@miamidade.gov>

END.

APPENDIX



JAWS

"Where is Bartram?"
By
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